

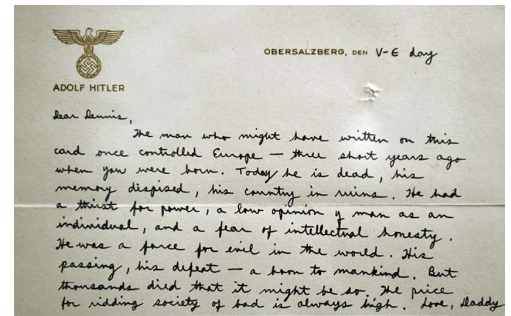
**GOD'S PLAN FOR A UNIVERSAL RULER**  
**ZECHARIAH 6:9-15**

In June 1945, three-year-old Dennis Helms received a letter from his father Richard, who happened to be stationed in Europe, who was working with the OSS in Germany and was writing on V-E Day:

**Dear Dennis,**

The man who might have written on this card once controlled Europe — three short years ago when you were born. Today he is dead, his memory despised, his country in ruins. He had a thirst for power, a low opinion of man as an individual, and a fear of intellectual honesty. He was a force for evil in the world. His passing, his defeat — a boon to mankind. But thousands died that it might be so. *The price for ridding society of bad is always high.*

Love, Daddy



The world has always had bad leaders — evil and wicked leaders. I suppose that every election cycle brings provokes some fears that we are going to receive rulers like that. And even if we escape a worst-case scenario, we also long for the best-case scenario. When will justice reign? When will just judges always do just things? Is such a time even possible? It is.

That is the very message of Zechariah in the sixth chapter of his prophecy. In the series of eight visions that were given to Zechariah in chapters 1-6, it is revealed that God will provide justice for His people — His wrath and anger in the world will be appeased and put to rest (6:8). The **LORD Almighty** will provide a universally just kingdom — in contrast to all that Judah and Israel had experienced throughout her history, including her recent history under Babylon and Medo-Persia. In the first declaration following those visions, it is revealed that God will also provide a just Ruler for the world — *the* just Ruler, the Messiah Jesus Christ.

**GOD COMFORTS HIS PEOPLE WITH THE PROMISE OF THE CROWNING OF JESUS CHRIST AS ETERNAL KING.**

In this passage (6:9-15) we see a picture (representation) of what God will do to bring about His King, and then the reality of who that King is and what He does —

1. The **PICTURE** of God's Kingly Gift (6:9-11)
2. The **REALITY** of God's Kingly Gift (6:12-15)
3. The **ENCOURAGEMENT** of God's Kingly Gift

## 1. The **PICTURE** of God's Kingly Gift (6:9-11)

- There is a definite shift in this book in 6:9.
  - ✓ Eight times, starting in 1:8, it has said something like, “I lifted up my eyes and looked...” indicating that Zechariah was receiving a vision from God.
  - ✓ Here it says ***The Word of the Lord came to me*** — that is another form of revelation, but it is verbal and not visual. This phrase occurs 110x in the OT and 9x in Zech. (1:1).
  - ✓ Both the visions and this direct speech are forms of special revelation — God declaring and revealing something particular about His nature and His (salvation) plan for His people.
  - ✓ We understand that God has revealed Himself to all people everywhere (*general* revelation) through creation and conscience (Rom. 1-2). That revelation is enough to condemn men for their sin, but it is not enough to reveal God's salvation plan. So, God speaks (primarily through Scripture and Christ) to reveal how sinners can be saved, and to reveal God's purposes for His people.
    - This revelation is given in propositional statements *outside of man* — no man has wisdom or ability to provide for salvation for himself or anyone else (Gal. 1:11-12).
    - This revelation (all God's revelation) is authoritative — it demands obedience and trust.
  - ✓ What did God reveal to Zechariah in this passage? The revelation is given in vv. 10-11.
- God commands Zechariah to ***Take an offering from the exiles...***
  - ✓ The verb is only ***take*** (“an offering” is added by the translators) — and it is not immediately clear what they are to take (which is the reason for many different translations):
    - “Take from the exiles...” (ESV)
    - “Receive the gift” (NKJV)
    - “Take the silver and gold” (NIV)
    - “Choose some people...” (NET)
    - Despite these differences, it is clear from v. 11 that what is received is ***silver and gold*** (whether it was a gift or an offering is irrelevant) and these men brought the precious metals to Zech.
  - ✓ The other question is the identity of the men listed in v. 10 — the names are common, but we just don't know with certainty who any of them are (including ***Josiah***).
  - ✓ The only things we know about them are that they are wealthy, and that they did not come back to Judah with the other returnees in 538 B.C. Some (for unknown reasons) straggled back to the land.
- The reason for receiving this valuable gift is given in v. 11 — ***make an ornate crown***
  - ✓ The crown is a particular kind of ***crown*** — it is a regal crown for a king. The word is plural (“crowns”). It might refer to a series of circlets that made up the crown, or perhaps it indicates the excellency and majesty of the crown.

- ✓ While priests did wear headdresses (turbans), this word is never used for what a priest wore.
- ✓ The priest wore something made from linen with a golden plate in the front declaring “Holy to the Lord” (**Ex. 28:39**); the plate was attached to the turban with a blue cord. This crown appears to be entirely made from precious metals.
- ✓ I mention that this is not a priestly crown because of what happens next: the royal (kingly) crown is put on the head of **Joshua, the high priest** (v. 11; 3:1ff).
  - Joshua was among the first returnees to Judah and was instrumental in restoring worship and rebuilding the temple (Ezra 3).
  - Both in his official function as high priest and his leadership roles, Joshua is influential in the restoration of Judah. But he was not (and could not be) a king.
  - This royal crown was put on Joshua’s head, but he could not fulfill this prophecy because he was born from the line of Levi (Aaronic, priestly line) and not the line of Judah (David), from which the king of Israel must come. We must recognize that this was not *his* crown.
- ✓ Zechariah certainly understood something beyond a royal coronation was happening. But what?

## 2. The **REALITY** of God’s Kingly Gift (6:12-15)

- It has been said, “This is one of the most remarkable and precious Messianic prophecies, and there is no plainer prophetic utterance in the whole Old Testament as to the Person of the promised Redeemer, the offices He was to fill, and the mission He was to accomplish.” [Baron, quoted by Feinberg]
- This is a fine distinction, but it is important: when Zechariah says, **Then say to him** (Joshua) — what follows is spoken *to* Joshua, but it not *about* him (as if he is the ultimate fulfillment). Joshua is the illustration of a greater reality. And notice the declaration is made by the **Lord of Hosts** (almighty God).
  - ✓ Behold, **a man whose name is Branch** — this is a Messianic term (**3:8; Is. 4:2; 11:1**; Jer. 23:5; 33:15). The phrase “behold the man” was also “unwittingly” used by Pilate of Christ (Jn. 19:5).
  - ✓ What does the **Branch** do?
    - He will **branch** (sprout, grow) into prominence from **where He is** — suggesting the powerful growth of the Messiah out of the humiliation of Israel and the Davidic line. From the least of the nations and the lowest of positions in that nation will come the King of kings (cf. **Is. 53:2, 12**).
    - As the Branch, the Messiah exemplifies the power of God (Zech. 4:10) — just because it appears small and insignificant does not mean it is.
- As the Branch who branches out, notice what the uniqueness of what this prophecy says He will do:
  - 1) **He demonstrates His greatness by building the temple of the Lord.**
    - We know that Zerubbabel was appointed to rebuild the temple that was completed in 515 B.C. (**4:7ff**)
    - The declaration of the Branch’s building the temple is made in v. 12 and then repeated in v. 13 (with the emphatic pronoun — **He**). He *really will* build the temple (distinct from Zerubbabel).

- What other temple is going to be built? The Millennial temple (Is. 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-2; Ezk. 40-46).
- However great Solomon's Temple and the rebuilt temple were, and the MK temple will be, the Branch will also build a heavenly temple in which Messiah will rule and reign (Rev. 11:15-19).
- And then the Branch will ultimately become the eternal temple (worship) Himself (Rev. 21:22).

2) **He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne** —

- He will have majesty, glory, and honor that is fitting of this unique throne.
- This word **honor** is almost always used of God alone (Ps. 96:6; 104:1).
- The **Branch** bears the unique glory of God (Jn. 1:14) that fits Him to be seated on His throne — co-regent with the Father (Jer. 23:5; Is. 9:7; Rev. 5:13; Eph. 1:20). Cf. Ps. 110:1 (Mt. 22:44).

3) **He will be a priest on His throne** — a stunning statement, for the two roles could not be joined in one person because of the different tribal lineage that was required for the two positions.

- But this Branch combines the two offices in one person.
- Jesus could fulfill this role because He was from the tribe of Judah and a descendant of David (kingly line) and though not from the tribe of Levi (priest), He was of a higher priestly order — the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:14ff, v. 22). Joshua couldn't fill that role; Christ could.
- Then as King-Priest, He sits on the throne, ruling and affirming His role is complete (Heb. 8:1).

4) **He will provide the counsel of peace...between the two offices** —

- As the Branch in His two offices provides **counsel**, there will be **peace** — cf. Is. 9:6; 11:2, 6-7.
- The peace that He brings about is the peace of reconciliation between God and man.
- Judah has (and we have!) a sovereignly wise King who intercedes as priest to the Father.
- How glorious is this eternal King who is also Israel's (and our) Priest and intercessor.

- We also know that the crown does not ultimately belong to Joshua (v. 11) because of v. 14 —
  - ✓ **The crown will become a reminder in the temple...** It seems that immediately after having the crown put on him, Joshua took it off and it was placed in the temple.
  - ✓ Why in the temple? As a **reminder** — a memorial or remembrance (for the men who gave the gifts of silver and gold — the spellings are different; the individuals are the same — and all Israel).
  - ✓ What's ironic about this remembrance is that most memorials look backward to what has been done — e.g., Memorial Lane in Granbury dedicated to those from Granbury who gave their lives as first responders or military members. And many other memorials function similarly.
  - ✓ But this memorial is designed to *look forward*. This memorial anticipates God's final provision.
    - Whenever an Israelite went into the Temple and saw this crown, they "memorialized" the One who *would come* and combine the priestly and kingly roles.
    - Whenever we come to the table of communion, we remember Christ's work on the cross and anticipate when we will eat the next meal with Him in glory. We have a "future" memorial!
- There is one more unique aspect of this Branch (v. 15).

- ✓ ***Those who are far off...*** Who is that? People who are far away will come and build in the temple.
- ✓ This is a hint at the inclusion of the Gentiles into God's promises. The people of God will include believers from all nations (2:11; 8:22; Haggai 2:7-9; Eph. 2:13...). God is a missionary God.
- ✓ In God's grace, His provision extends to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8; Rev. 5:9).
- ✓ When Tattenai and others wrote to Darius to attempt to stop the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 5), this was an encouragement to the residents of Judah — "we not only have the protection of God now, but we will have the protection of God and a place of worship for all eternity."
- ✓ There is also a two-fold encouragement/warning in v. 15 —
  - *The encouragement* is that these things will affirm the truthfulness of Zechariah's prophecy — that ***the Lord of Hosts has sent me*** — they will have the joy of the temple and joy of knowing the dependability of God's revealed Word.
  - *The warning/exhortation* is that ***it will take place if you completely obey*** — This is an allusion to the Mosaic Covenant and the promise of blessings and cursings (Dt. 28:1ff). When the nation turns in faith to Christ, then they will experience the full and final blessings of God's promises.
  - [We should also note that this obedience will also be a gift of grace when God provides the Spirit of God so that they *can* obey (Jer. 31:31-34), something that we have started to experience through the inauguration of the New Covenant.]

### 3. The ENCOURAGEMENT of God's Kingly Gift

- The book of Zechariah and this prophecy were given to encourage the returnees to Judah to rebuild the temple and to have hope for the future. As we read Zechariah, we should also be encouraged and hopeful.
- ***Whatever opposition and suffering we experience on earth will be replaced by peace and joy in eternity.***
  - ✓ Some of us are tempted to be anxious about tomorrow. For some of us, what we are worried about is going to happen — we will have cancer, the car will be irreparable, we will get laid off, the guy won't call for a date, we will get cut from the baseball team, our father won't return our call.
  - ✓ For the believer in Christ, all those things are surpassed by the peace of Christ and the contentment of Christ. We *will* have trouble on earth. We *won't* have trouble in Heaven. We do well to remember both those realities (and stop assuming life on earth will always have Heaven's bliss).
  - ✓ There *is* suffering on earth, but it is always limited; there is only joy in Heaven, and it is unlimited.
- ***Set your mind (heart) on things above and in the future.*** (Think more about the Messiah and less about the mess.)
  - ✓ While that's a NT principle, it is also what is intended by this prophecy — the whole picture is a ***reminder*** (memorial, v. 14) of what is ahead for us.
  - ✓ Too often we are so earthly minded we are no heavenly good. Be fixated with Christ and what He will do (meditate on vv. 12-13; Is. 9:6-7; Col. 1:15-18; 3:1-4...).

- ✓ This prophecy (and all prophecy) is given to tell us what is coming and to make us confident in the God who made the promise. He cannot lie; whatever He has said will come about. If it has not yet happened, it simply means that He is being patient, offering opportunity for repentance (Rom. 2:4). [That also means that instead of despairing over the world, we should be actively evangelizing the world.]
- ✓ I know the temptation to be discouraged about our world; the only way out of that discouragement is by contentment in and meditation on the Christ who has overcome the world.
- *God has promised many blessings to Israel and us. We can rest in their certainty. He still expects and demands obedience* (v. 15).
  - ✓ There is a biblical principle that teaches that we consider the cost of following Christ. We should.
  - ✓ But we should also consider the blessing and privilege of following Christ. What goodnesses do we receive by being His followers? Cf. *Mt. 13:44-46*.
  - ✓ If you are not a follower of Jesus Christ, please consider the cost of not following Him *and* the blessing of following Him. This Messiah *is* an immeasurable blessing. He will never disappoint you. Would you give up (repent of) your sin which will always ultimately disappoint, and trust in Him for salvation — a salvation that will liberate you from the sin that is your struggle today?
  - ✓ If you are a follower of Christ, please consider the blessing of continuing in obedience to Him. Obedience will always satisfy you here, and it will satisfy you eternally when you see Him seated on His eternal throne.

**CONCLUSION:** Do you remember that letter that Richard Helms sent his son Dennis from Germany?

*The price for ridding society of bad is always high.* He was absolutely right. It is. And it will be.

But *Christ has paid the final price of ridding the world of all evil.* He will reign on His throne. That is the encouragement for all Israel, and all the world.

**BENEDICTION:** *Jude 24-25*