

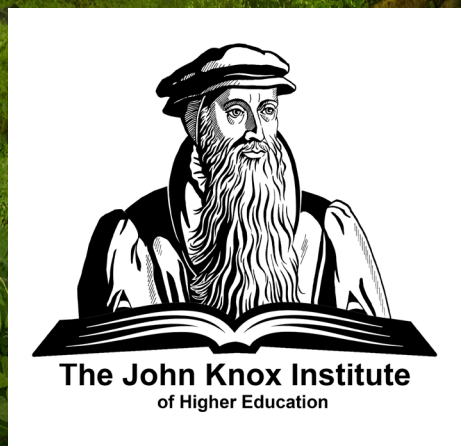
The Visions of Zechariah

VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. William Macleod

Lecture #10

Climax of the Visions:
The Crowning of Joshua



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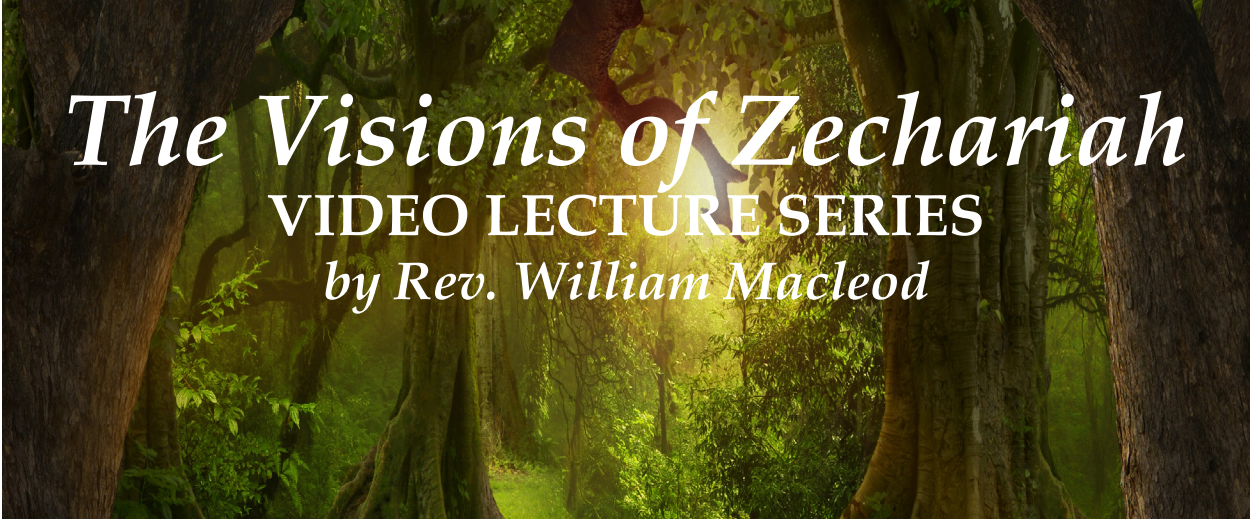
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The Visions of Zechariah

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Lecture #10 — Zechariah 6:9–15

Climax of the Visions: The Crowning of Joshua

We now come to our final lecture in this series on Zechariah's visions. This lecture is entitled, "Climax of the Visions," and it tells of the crowning of Joshua, and it's to be found in Zechariah, chapter 6, and verses 9 to 16.

In the eighth vision, we saw how God actively reigns over the earth, and the enemies of the Lord's people will be destroyed. Some have described this new section, Zechariah 6, verses 9–15, as the ninth vision, but it is not a vision as such. It's rather a symbolic acting out of a glorious truth. God commands the prophet to perform a symbolic action closely linked to the visions, building upon them, and yet focussing the faith of the Lord's people on the coming Messiah. Men and women in Old Testament times were saved by looking forward in faith to the coming Messiah, just as we are saved by looking back in faith to our Lord Jesus Christ and his finished work for on Calvary's cross. God makes his covenant of grace with men and woman, promising eternal life, but there is one condition or requirement, and that is faith. Of course we must also remember that faith "is the gift of God"—Ephesians 2, verse 8.

So first of all, verses 9 to 11, Make a Crown—"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Take of them of the captivity, even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah; Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest."

Here God speaks to the prophet. Several men had come from Babylon bringing gold and silver, a collection that had been made to help with the building of the temple in Jerusalem. Zechariah was instructed to go to the house where the men were lodging and take some of the silver and gold and "make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest"—verse 11. Some see the plural "crowns" as referring to several rings composing the one crown. However it's better to see it as a plural of intensity. He was to make a magnificent, a great, magnificent crown, not some mere token of a crown. This is emphasized by the fact that verb used is singular. It was one crown. He was then to place this crown, not on the head of Zerubbabel the governor, as you would have expected, but on the head of the high priest, Joshua.

This is fascinating. Never before had a high priest reigned in Israel. Neither was a king allowed to act as a priest. When King Uzziah, carried away with his own importance, entered the temple to offer incense, he was struck with leprosy—2 Chronicles 26:19. God punished him. But here we have a priest being anointed king. Clearly this is a prophecy of the One who will be both a Priest and a King. In the book of Genesis we are told that Melchizedek had been such a one as he was “king of Salem...and he was the priest of the most high God”—Genesis 14, verse 18. The psalmist prophesied of One coming who would be a King: “The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.” And he would also be “a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek”—Psalm 110, and verses 2 and 4. The Epistle to the Hebrews explains how this Melchisedec was like the Son of God, and so a type of the Messiah: “For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem”—or Sodom—“which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually”—that’s Hebrews 7, and verses 1–3. Joshua is crowned as a typical or symbolical figure. He represents the Christ who is coming.

It is interesting to notice that Joshua was first a priest before he was king. Our Lord Jesus first came and offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins before he was crowned. It was a once-for-all-time sacrifice on the cross of Calvary: “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified”—Hebrews 10:14. Following this great priestly act, he rose on the third day. Forty days later, we are told he ascended up to heaven and was anointed King as the Epistle to the Hebrews states: “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” and his Father said to him, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom”—that’s Hebrews 1, verses 3 and 8. Paul describes his exaltation which followed his humiliation: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”—that wonderful passage is in Philippians chapter 2, verses 6–11.

Zechariah is prophesying at a low point in the history of Israel. The Jews had just returned from their seventy-year exile in Babylon. They were attempting to resettle in the land of Israel. They were building the temple once more, but their resources were few. But here he is telling them that there is a great future ahead. A magnificent crown is placed upon the head of the high priest. The Priest whom Joshua symbolized was to be a great King, indeed the King of kings. The coming Messiah would “have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him”—Psalm 72, verses 8–11. Furthermore, his kingdom shall last forever. It is said of him, “Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations”—Psalm 145, verse 13. Daniel received a vision of this. He said, “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man

came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed”—Daniel 7. Verses 13–14.

What tremendous encouragement this would be to Joshua, Zerubbabel, and all God’s people, as they struggled to build the temple! And what encouragement it is to us, as we seek to build God’s church today, facing many cunning and powerful enemies! We are on the winning side! The Son of man who is our Savior, who by his priestly work atoned for our sins, is also the One who will reign forever and his kingdom will never be destroyed, and we shall sit with him in his throne and reign with him—Revelation 3:21.

Then verses 12 and 13, The Branch Will Build His Temple—“And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is THE BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”

Zechariah is told to address Joshua with these words from God: “Behold the man whose name is THE BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD”—that’s verse 12. The name “The Branch” obviously refers to the One who had already been spoken of in Zechariah chapter 3. He is the Branch of David and he would be the really fruitful Branch. “He shall see his seed”—Isaiah 53, verse 10. They would be as the stars of the sky and as the sand of the seashore for multitude. He is a man and truly a man. “He shall grow out of his place.” He shall branch out. There is a play on the word. He would not suddenly appear out of heaven to perform his saving work. He shall grow out of the root of David. Isaiah prophesies concerning him: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins”—Isaiah 11—verses 1–5.

Born in Bethlehem to the family of David, he would grow up in Israel, the great Son of David, who was also to be David’s Lord. He would not be a foreigner, but one of Israel. He would be anointed with the Spirit of God to enable him to perform his work. He would show mercy and kindness to the poor and the needy, but eventually he would destroy his enemies in his wrath. In his righteousness, he would justify poor. And those sinners who trust in him would be justified by him. But he would judge and condemn the proud Pharisees who trusted in their own righteousness. His great work will be to build the temple of the Lord. Now Zerubbabel is building the replacement for the temple which Solomon had built, but the temple The Branch will build is a glorious, spiritual temple which will be of a different order altogether.

Jesus said to the Jews, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body”—John 2:19–21. The Jews were very proud of their temple. It had indeed initially been built by Zerubbabel but then over a period of 46 years, was greatly extended and beautified by Herod. They were shocked at what Jesus said. Surely the temple of the

Lord would not be destroyed! However, it would not be Jesus who destroyed their temple but they themselves. In their rejection of Jesus the Messiah, they destroyed the temple. When Jesus died the all-important veil of the temple that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies where God used to dwell, was torn down. That destroyed the temple. And then in AD 70, the destruction of the temple was completed. The Jews rebelled against the Romans, the Romans came and destroyed the city, and burnt the temple with fire, and in fact, left not one stone upon another, as Jesus had prophesied.

How could Jesus build a new temple in three days? But Jesus was speaking of the temple of his body. And John then says, “When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said”—John 2:22. The Jews put him to death, but he arose again on the third day. But now a new temple is being built. Christians are the body of Christ: “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular”—1 Corinthians 12:27. Jesus said “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”—Matthew 16:18.

Zerubbabel and Joshua were struggling to build the temple, but here there is encouragement. The temple will indeed be built, but better still, a far more glorious temple will one day be built. It will be built of living stones. Peter could say, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house”—1 Peter 2, Verse 5. Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians that they were, “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit”—Ephesians 1:20–22. This temple, this spiritual temple will remain. In heaven, there will be no temple, because it is all temple—Revelation 21, verse 22. God will dwell in the midst of his people forever.

It is also said of the One who will build the temple, “He shall bear the glory”—verse 13. The Jews subjected Christ to the greatest humiliation they could imagine—mocked, buffeted, spat on, crucified, buried. But he shall be glorified. God shall raised him again. He “shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne”—verse 13. He ascended up to heaven. The psalmist prophesied: “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool”—Psalm 110, verse 1. Paul wrote, “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death”—1 Corinthians 15:25–26. It is interesting that Zechariah prophesies, “He shall be a priest upon his throne.” The Priest will become King. Joshua was first a priest before symbolically becoming king. Our Lord Jesus performed his priestly sacrifice before his exaltation and coronation.

And now, The Counsel of Peace between Them Both, verse 13. We notice these interesting words, “the counsel of peace shall be between them both”—verse 13. Some interpret this from the immediate context to mean that the counsel of peace is between the priest and the prophet, and that there will be no conflict between the two. However, here, obviously the Priest and King are the same person, so it is very strange to talk of some pact between them. Rather one should take a step back from the anointing of the priest, and see it as describing the relationship between the One who anointed the Priest and the Priest-King. Like the older commentators, it is best to see this as a reference to the covenant of redemption, which took place between the Father and the Son in eternity. The Father asked the Son if he would become a man to save the elect, and the Son replied that he would. Coming into the world, he said: “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart”—Psalm 40, verses 7–8. In his high priestly prayer, he began, “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also

may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him”—John 17, verses 1–2. In eternity, he had been given an elect by the Father. He had come to save them, to lay down his life, as the good Shepherd, not for everyone, but for his sheep—John 10, verse 11, and verse 14). He was facing the horror of Golgotha, learning obedience through the things which he suffered, as Hebrews 5:8 says, feeling the full pain involved in saving his people. He was obedient unto death, carrying out all that was agreed in the eternal covenant. The counsel of peace or the covenant of redemption was between them both. This eternal covenant underlies the covenant of grace which God makes with the elect and with their children.

And verse 14, The Reward for the Work—“And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the LORD.”

The action of these four men is praised. They made a collection in Babylon, and brought it to Jerusalem to help in the building of the temple. A crown was made from some of this silver and gold. Initially and symbolically, this crown was placed on the head of Joshua the high priest. Zechariah, having performed that symbolical act of crowning the high priest, the crown is now to be taken and placed in the new temple which is being built. And it is to be kept there as a memorial. It will be a memorial of what these four men did. No labor in the Lord is in vain—1 Corinthians 15:58. Jesus actually taught, “For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward”—Mark 9:41. But it will be especially a reminder to those immediately involved, and also to Israel in the future times, of the coming Messiah who will be the great Priest and the great King. The promised Priest King will surely come.

And then verse 15, Blessed Days Ahead—“And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

As gold and silver were taken from Babylon to make the crown, so from distant lands, people would come who would build the last, greatest, and spiritual temple of the Lord. The Samaritans were not allowed to join in building the second temple, but the Gentiles would be involved in building the eternal temple. This verse is looking forward to that day when, “The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising...thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee”—Isaiah 60, verses 3–5. The ships of Tarshish shall “bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God”—verse 9. And also, “The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee”—verse 10, in the same chapter. And also, “Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob”—verse 16.

The church truly has a bright future. The world looks at the church and despises it. Sometimes we ourselves, in unbelief, focus on the weakness of the people of God, but the great spiritual and eternal temple will be built. It will be composed of a multitude of people, living stones. John writes, “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb”—Revelation 7, verses 9–10.

We are to be optimistic. It is not some mere remnant of humanity which Christ came to save.

We are told that, “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved”—John 3:17. So many will be saved at the end of the day, that in a very real sense, the world will be saved. The church of God has a great future, both in this life and the next. Look with expectation for the great things God will yet do for his church. Think of the words of William Carey, the father of modern missions, who did such amazing work in India: “Expect great things from God, and attempt great things for God.” Let us not weary in well doing. Keep laboring for the Lord. Be optimistic, and we shall see great things in days to come. Amen.