

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

ZECHARIAH 4-6

Over the years, if the Calvary Chapel movement had a theme verse, it would be **Zechariah 4:6**. Pastor Chuck would quote this verse to stress his dependence on the Holy Spirit. God's work is accomplished not by human strength or ingenuity, but by the influence of His Spirit.

If I heard it once, I heard it a million times, *'not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord...*"

But it's interesting to study that verse in its context - to delve into the circumstances that first provoked the statement. When we do, it gives us greater insights.

This is what we'll do tonight. Let's begin in 4:1...

"Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep." Recall God gives Zechariah a series of eight visions - all on the same night, February 15, 519 BC.

Zechariah has already seen four visions: the horses - the horns - the measuring line - and in Chapter 3, the trial of Joshua the High Priest, the religious authority.

And it's worn him out. The prophet is so fatigued he's fallen asleep. *It could be that he's fallen asleep in his own dream.* Either way, an angel has to wake him.

And it's no accident the fifth vision comes at *a point of physical exhaustion*. God is teaching us that when He does a work the power originates in His Spirit, not in us.

Now though the focus shifts to the civil authority of the day, Governor Zerubbabel, and his building the Temple.

As a priest, Joshua needed *access to God*, that's why in Chapter 3 we're told of **his cleansing**... Whereas Zerubbabel is tasked with *service for God*. He's to rebuild the Temple. Thus, Chapter 4 discusses his work and means - how God wants him to get the job done.

And both visions should interest us... The Christian life is also about *access to God* and *service for God*.

First and foremost, God wants to have *fellowship with us*, but that involves our *service for Him*. He wants us to work in ways that rely on His Spirit - not on ourselves.

Verse 2, "And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps.

Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." Zechariah tells us what he sees, but how it actually looked to Zechariah is hard to tell...

To untangle this vision, note at its center is a traditional seven branch Hebrew lampstand, or menorah. It most likely was the one in the Temple for it was made of gold.

The menorah has always been a symbol of the nation Israel. Even today a giant menorah sits outside Israel's Parliament Building, or Knesset, in West Jerusalem. The OT predicted the Jews would be a light to the Gentiles.

So Zechariah sees a gold menorah, and it's flanked by two olive trees. These trees feed the menorah with olive oil. And

Zechariah sees an elaborate feeder system that brings the oil from the two trees to its seven lamps.

And here's where the details are up for interpretation.

A collection bowl sits on top of the menorah (*how we're not sure*). But it feeds the lamps with oil through a series of pipes. And whether seven single pipes run to each lamp, or whether it's seven pipes feeding each of the seven lamps, or 49 pipes total - again we're not sure.

Either way the trees are fueling the menorah.

Verse 4, **“So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, “What are these, my lord?”**

Zechariah was not only a prophet, he was also a priest. He was aware of the Temple ceremonies. Especially those involving the menorah. He knew it was ordinarily the priest's job to replenish the oil in the lamps.

But in his vision the lamps were fueled supernaturally. No priest was involved. The olive trees dripped oil right into the bowl. Zechariah asks, *what does this mean?*

Zechariah is definitely not timid. He asks the angel three times in this chapter to explain what he sees. Perhaps, he senses the vital importance of this vision.

“Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” So he answered and said to me: “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.

Throughout Scripture olive oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Olive oil lubricates and softens, it soothes and heals, it lights

and warms, it refreshes and invigorates, it polishes and shines - all of which the Holy Spirit does spiritually in a Christian's life. It's a beautiful symbol.

God is telling Zechariah in this vision that if the Temple is to be rebuilt and the nation restored it won't be done through his own brains or brawn, but by the Holy Spirit.

And here's the lesson for God's people in every era, human know-how can never fuel the light of God. A dynamic witness requires the work of the Holy Spirit.

It's no surprise that in Revelation 1 the Apostle John sees seven golden menorahs. He's told they represent seven churches. Since Jesus told His followers to be the light of the world, how appropriate that the church is also represented as a lampstand. And we too are fueled, **'not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord.**

I've heard it said, **"If God removed His Spirit out of the world about 95% of what the church is doing would continue unhindered."** And sadly, that's all too true.

Today's church is notorious for substituting programs for power, gimmicks for grace, higher education for divine wisdom, pulpit training for spiritual anointing, marketing techniques for spiritual persuasion. We're depending on *our own flesh* instead of *on God's power*.

And it doesn't take us long to become as fatigued and burned out as Zerubbabel. He had been faithful to the task, but he lacked the fuel of the Holy Spirit.

And the work proved to be too much. All the world's elbow grease is no substitute for the oil of God's Spirit.

Effort without energy equals exhaustion - and fire without fuel produces burn out! Remember, *“It's not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord...”*

Verse 7, *“Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!””*

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying: *“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands shall also finish it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.”*

What an assuring word to a discouraged Zerubbabel.

God's Spirit will help him **overcome the obstacles, complete the practical, and provide a spectacle.**

The challenge facing Zerubbabel in reconstructing the Temple was as formidable as moving a mountain. The governor came home with scant provisions and workers.

What will his skeleton crew be able to accomplish?

Zerubbabel's task of rebuilding God's Temple seemed about as impossible as moving a mountain. Yet if he trusts in the Holy Spirit his mountain will become a plain.

God's Spirit is into leveling mountains.

And notice, Zerubbabel's task involves the hands-on.

God's Spirit isn't just helpful in *spiritual* matters. The Spirit also impacts the *practical*. Here His involvement is the key to a construction project. The capstone was the trim work - the final stages - and if Zerubbabel relies on the Holy Spirit, what He'd started will be completed.

The Temple's certificate of occupancy wouldn't be the result of man's endurance, but the Spirit's intervention.

Finally, this all insured a spectacle. The odds were so stacked against Zerubbabel's efforts, everyone realized the credit for the rebuilding belonged to God alone.

This is why they shout, "**Grace, grace to it!**" A Temple from the ashes was obviously a work of God's grace.

When the Spirit is at work the glory goes to *God's grace* not *man's grit*. Everyone knew that the glory for what had happened belong to God and not Zerubbabel.

He says in verse 10, "**For who has despised the day of small things?**" We're told in Haggai 2 when the Temple was under construction, old geezers who remembered the beauty and grandeur of Solomon's Temple, mocked the smaller, cheaper, less ornate version of Zerubbabel.

This rebuilt Temple was *a hut* in comparison!

Yet here, God answers the critics, **don't despise the day of small things!** The *Lord* and *large* don't always go together. We have the tendency of thinking God is always into largess. The more... *the more divine*. We assume God doesn't work in small, silent, subtle ways.

J Vernon McGee wrote of this passage in Zechariah, "**We Americans are impressed with the big and brassy. We like our Christian work to be a success story. And we measure success by the size of the building and the crowds that come to it. Well, I am becoming more and more convinced that the Lord is working in quiet ways and in quiet places today.**" I certainly agree.

Perhaps God has you doing a small work by human standards. You disciple a single person, or teach a Bible Study for a handful of kids, or pastor a small congregation.

Don't despise the day of small things!

Who knows what great thing God is doing behind the scenes. Perhaps you're ploughing a field, or holding together a portion of the Kingdom of God that in years to come will somehow be the key to a glorious harvest.

Benjamin Franklin wrote, "For lack of a nail the shoe was lost; for lack of a shoe the horse was lost; and for lack of a horse the rider was lost; for lack of a rider the war was lost - all for the lack of a nail." The point is little things do matter! They're often strategic in God's plan.

I'm sure you know, termites do more damage than earthquakes, and matches are more destructive than volcanoes. Little things can prove to be powerful.

Once a man named Robert Shepard escaped from a jail in Charleston, using dental floss. He climbed a fence with a rope he made by braiding together 48 strands of mint-flavored, waxed dental floss. Your life may be a single strand of floss, but who knows how God may twist situations together to use you mightily.

Here's a great poem, "Shamgar had a oxgoad, David had a sling, Samson had a jawbone, Rahab had a string, Mary had some ointment, Aaron had a rod, Dorcas had a needle... all were used by God."

Verse 10 concludes, “For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.” A plumb is a carpenter’s tool. It’s a string weighted on one end with a stone. Drop it from the top of a wall, and it shows if the wall is level. Recall, in Chapter 3 we saw a stone with seven eyes. It was the Messiah.

Here, what Zechariah is doing, is after telling us how not to measure spiritual success - “*not by might nor by power*” - he now instructs us on how we can determine if a ministry is *on the level*. Stack it up against the stone!

Is the ministry reflecting and glorifying Jesus? Is Jesus being preached and worshipped? Is His love, and kindness, and gentleness on display? Are mercy and truth joined together in the ministry as they are in Jesus?

Zechariah is saying the name and nature of Jesus is the plumbline by which we measure spiritual success!

“Then I answered and said to him, “What are these two olive trees - at the right of the lampstand and at its left?” And I further answered and said to him, “What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?”

Zechariah goes back to the two trees alongside the menorah, and the receptacles that pipe the olive oil.

“Then he answered me and said, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” So he said, “These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.” God does His work not by man’s might or power, but by

His Spirit, yet He still involves people. He uses people anointed by His Spirit.

How do you *overcome an obstacle*, and *complete the practical*, and *provide a spectacle* of God's grace to the world? Here's how, be a *receptacle of the Spirit!* You'll never get drained if you stay under the drip of the Spirit.

In Zechariah's day the two olive trees were *Joshua the priest* and *Zerubbabel the governor*. Here they're referred to as "*anointed ones*" or literally, "*sons of oil.*"

This is what I want to be a "*son of oil.*" I want to be known as a person anointed with the Holy Spirit.

This verse also speaks of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. During the Great Tribulation two men hold the earth accountable. And John refers to them by using the language of Zechariah. He calls them "*the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.*" Apparently, Zechariah 4 is a dual prophecy. It speaks of *two men in the past* and *two in the future*.

But for Zechariah the date was still February 15, 519 BC. It was still nighttime, and this is shaping up to be a very long night. So far the prophet has had five dreams.

The good news is they've all been comforting dreams, until the fifth. The last three are dire warnings to Israel.

Chapter 5, "*Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll. And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I answered, "I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits.*" A common sight at the beach are the

advertising airplanes pulling banners. Zechariah sees the banner without the plane.

And the scroll is huge. A “*cubit*” was the distance from the tip of the king’s finger to his elbow - about 18 inches.

That makes this flying scroll 30’ long by 15’ wide. It looked like a magic carpet flying across the sky.

“Then he said to me, “This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: ‘Every thief shall be expelled,’ according to this side of the scroll; and, ‘Every perjurer shall be expelled,’ according to that side of it.”

This scroll advertises God’s judgment. On one side it spoke of thievery - on the other side of perjury. The Jews had taken what didn’t belong to them; then lied about it.

And the fact, that God’s judgment was printed and advertised for all the world to see must’ve been sobering. A flying scroll gave the impression the judgment would come swiftly. *It was a scroll on the roll.*

Verse 4, “I will send out the curse,” says the Lord of hosts; “It shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name. It shall remain in the midst of his house and consume it, with its timber and stones.” This was a magic carpet you didn’t want adorning the floor of your house. Where the scroll landed it brought about a curse on the liar and the thief.

“Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, “Lift your eyes now, and see what this is that goes forth.” So I asked, “What is it?” And he said, “It is a basket that is going

forth.” Here’s Zechariah’s seventh vision. The prophet sees a woman sitting in a basket.

The Hebrew word translated “*basket*” is “*ephah*.” It was the equivalent of about 32 quarts. Thus, the basket Zechariah sees is about the size of a bushel basket.

“He also said, “This is their resemblance throughout the earth: here is a lead disc lifted up, and this is a woman sitting inside the basket...” Think of a genie in a bottle or a woman in a basket. But she’s not a godly woman. This is not the girl you’d want your son to date.

For “then he said, “This is Wickedness!” And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover over its mouth.” This woman is *a real basket case!*

Her name is “*wickedness*.” She’s incurably evil. And she wants to jump out of the basket and spread her sin and rebellion. That’s why the angel has to stuff her back into the basket and seal the top with a heavy lead lid.

Understand in ancient times the “*ephah*” was a Hebrew symbol for business - for commerce and trade.

This has led some Bible scholars to interpret this female basket case as a *girl of greed and covetousness*.

Before the Jews were deported to Babylon they were an agrarian people - mostly farmers. They earned their living off the land. But in Babylon the Jews learned the arts of banking, and finance, and trade. The Jews grew quite successful in banking and in merchandising.

Even today, Jews have a reputation for liking money.

It reminds me of the Jewish shopkeeper on his death bed. His family had gathered round him for the last time. The old man could barely see. He said, "*Honey, are you here?*" His wife replied, "*Yes, dear I'm here.*"

"David are you here?" "Yes Dad I'm here."

"Sarah are you here?" "Yes Daddy I'm here."

"Samuel, my youngest, are you here?" "Yes Pop I'm here."

Suddenly an angry look appeared on the old man's face as he said to his family, "*Well then, if all of you are here, who in the world is minding the store?*"

Hey, there's nothing wrong with making a buck, and I applaud Jewish industriousness - but a preoccupation with business can cause the best person to lose focus.

We all need to make a living, but when profit becomes your bottomline - your only care - business ends up your downfall. This is what happened to the Jews in Babylon. They came back to Jerusalem worshippers of the Almighty bottomline. Greed, exploitation, deceit had become business as usual.

And God was not pleased.

This is also what's happened in America. This past week I heard Tucker Carlson interview a critic of the Harvard Business School. Author Duff MacDonald notes that their graduates think only of the bottom line.

There're now 70,000 Harvard graduates running the American economy. And their only responsibility is to their shareholders. They sense no accountability to the country, or to the environment, or to the general public, or to a sense of morality and honesty - let alone God.

Today, business is all about making a buck. The love of money has captured our hearts and is leading us down an evil path, just as it did the post-exile Jews.

God wanted Israel to be a *spiritual people* not a *material people*. That's why the angels slammed the lid back on the basket and took this girl back to Babylon.

It all gets summed up in the ultimate Jewish dilemma. *Have you heard of this... the ultimate Jewish dilemma? "A free ham sandwich!" What does one do? Save your money or bow to the laws of God?*

Well, the Jews returning from Babel were corrupted by Babylonian business, and it was a sin that stuck.

Verse 9, "Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven."

Here is the only place I know of in Scripture where an angel appears in the form of a woman. Usually angels materialize as men. And whether these two angels are good angels or demons we're not sure.

Notice they have "*wings of a stork.*" According to the Law of Moses a stork was an unclean animal. That would imply these are demons rescuing the woman named Wickedness and taking her back to Babylon.

On the other hand, the Hebrew word "*stork*" means "*faithful one.*" That might imply these were good angels banishing Wickedness back to her home in Babylon.

“So I said to the angel who talked with me, “Where are they carrying the basket?” And he said to me, “To build a house for it in the land of Shinar (which is Babylon); when it is ready, the basket will be set there on its base.”

Notice, God wasn't just concerned about getting the Jews out of Babylon. He also wanted to get Babylon out of the Judah. Thus, they take the basket back to Shinar.

And likewise, God's goal is not just to get Christians out of this world, but to get the world out of the Church.

Here's a lesson for believers. **God's plan of salvation includes sanctification, as well as justification.**

Certainly, in Christ we've been forgiven and restored to God. In the heavenly ledgers our sin is blotted out and the righteousness of Jesus is credited to our account...

But salvation doesn't just impact our record, it purifies our heart. God cuts out evil influences, and plants within us His Spirit. He gives us a new nature. In Christ *we're justified before God*, but *we're also purified in our hearts*.

God brought the Jews out of Babylon, and He brings us out of the world. But He also transported wickedness back to Babel, and He wants to drive the evil from us.

Yet, there may be an even deeper meaning here in Zechariah's seventh vision of the basket and the woman flown back to Babylon. In Isaiah 13-14, Jeremiah 50-51, Revelation 17-18 we learn that one of the events that will occur in the last days is the destruction of Babylon.

In a sense, the Bible is a Tale of Two Cities.

God's capitol has always been Jerusalem. It was the center of His plan throughout the Old Testament. It was His footstool, a place where He revealed His presence.

But Satan also had his a capitol. Babylon was the seat of rebellion and organized opposition against God.

Remember the first global revolt against God occurred in the plains of Shinar - in Babylon. Babel was the birthplace of paganism, and idolatry, and astrology, and the occult. Its infamous tower was no doubt an astrological observatory, and a Temple to false gods.

Nimrod, the Babylonian leader, was a type of the Antichrist. He captured men's souls and organized a kingdom in direct defiance to the commands of God.

Yet over the centuries the Babylonian cult moved its operation away from the land of Babylon or Shinar.

When Babylon fell to the Medes in 536 BC the pagan priests of Babel relocated their operation first to Asia Minor and the city of Pergamos - then later to Italy and its capitol of Rome. Tragically In Rome, many of the Babylonian practices became intertwined with Roman Catholicism. *The worship of Mary, the celibacy of the priesthood, praying to the saints* - have pagan origins.

In Revelation 17 we see a “mystery Babylon,” a false religious system, occupying a city on seven hills, which has traditionally and idiomatically been associated with Rome. Apparently, the apostate religion of the last days is linked to Rome, and by inference to Catholicism.

In Revelation 18 we're also shown the demise of a commercial and financial empire known as Babylon. John sees its fiery destruction as the world mourns.

Here, Zechariah sees the two angels flying the woman in the basket back to Babel. They sit her on her pedestal. She's being returned to her ancient base of operation. I believe this is all in preparation for the final showdown between God and this rebellious world.

It could be that divine judgment won't come upon the world's evil commercial and religious systems until they are physically returned to their birthplace or Babylon.

Literal Babel will one day be destroyed. I believe the land of Shinar still plays a role in last days prophecy.

Zechariah sees his eighth vision in Chapter 6, "Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze." Most scholars identify these mountains as Jerusalem's eastern mountains - the Mount of Olives and Temple Mount - or its other name, Mount Moriah.

Four chariots are seen streaming through the Kidron Valley that cuts between the two mountains. It's also known in Scripture as "the Valley of Jehoshaphat."

The word "Jehoshaphat" means "Jehovah is Judge," and it's in this valley that the Prophet Joel says God will judge the nations of the world in the final battle.

Joel 3:2 tells us what will happen, "I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;

and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel...”

Most folks think of Armageddon, or Mount Megiddo, as the site of the final battle. But the valley stretching from Megiddo northward is just the staging area for the battle to end all battles. The actual fighting occurs in the valley between the two mountains of Jerusalem.

And notice these two mountains are depicted as “*mountains of bronze.*” Bronze or brass is a Scriptural symbol for judgment. Bronze has a high melting point.

It’s a metal that withstands heat. Bronze implements were used in the offering of the sacrifices. Thus, bronze was synonymous with God's fire, or judgment.

Verse 2 continues, “*With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses - strong steeds.*” With this eighth vision Zechariah’s visions come full circle. Remember in **vision one** he saw four horses that ride out into the world. They reported back that everyone was at ease and at rest.

The world was oblivious to their sin and selfishness. The world was hard-hearted and spiritually calloused.

Now we again find four groups of horses, but this time they’re pulling chariots - the implication is *war chariots.*

The horses of Chapter 1 survey the world’s sin, while the horses of Chapter 6 slay the world’s sinners. In this eighth vision the judgment of God is riding on the wind.

And it's interesting these are the same four horsemen the Apostle John sees on the isle of Patmos, 600 years later. In Revelation 6 John sees these same four horsemen. The white horse was ridden by the Antichrist, bringing a false peace. There's also the red horse of war, the black horse of famine, and the pale horse of death.

Here Zechariah sees the same last days riders who will execute God's judgment on a cold and wicked world.

Verse 4, "Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" And the angel answered and said to me, "These are four spirits of heaven, who go out from their station before the Lord of all the earth. The one with the black horses is going to the north country, the white are going after them, and the dappled are going toward the south country."

The word "*dappled*" means "pale."

"Then the strong steeds went out, eager to go, that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth. And He said, "Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth." So they walked to and fro throughout the earth. And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, "See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country." We know the Holy Spirit is grieved because of sin. Here He finds rest once sin has been judged and God's righteousness has been vindicated.

"Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: "Receive the gift from the captives - from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon - and go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah. Take the silver and gold,

make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.” Until now everything that's been going on has been in Zechariah's dream. But now the dreams are over, and the *dreamer* becomes a *doer*.

Three Jews return from Babel with gold and silver. Zechariah is to take the metals and fashion a crown for the High Priest. This crown had a symbolic purpose.

This ceremony of crowning was not for Joshua. I'm sure he was honored that he could stand-in, but he was not the subject of the ceremony. The crowning of the High Priest was predictive of the ministry of the Messiah.

It reminds me of a little Jewish town situated deep in the woods. The Jews were so isolated they feared they might miss the Messiah. Thus, they built a tower and hired a watchman to keep his eyes open for Messiah.

One day a stranger walked by, and the watchman greeted him. The stranger asked him, *"What do you do up in the tower?"* The watchman replied, *"I watch and wait for the Messiah."* The stranger asked again, *"How do you like your job? I'm sure it doesn't pay much."*

To which the watchman replied, *"I like my job, its true it doesn't pay much, but at least it's steady work."*

And the same could be said of all Jews. For centuries they've watched and waited for the Messiah.

God promised David a *"shoot,"* or *"branch"* to sprout from his family tree, and one day rule over His people, Israel. This Branch would establish God's everlasting Kingdom, and be its everlasting King.

The prophets of Israel reiterated the promise over and over again. By the first century AD the nation's anticipation was primed. It's one of the great tragedies of history that the Jews were so proud and hardhearted and self-righteous that they missed their Messiah when He finally appeared. Zechariah was appointed to pave the way for the Messiah by fashioning this symbolic crown for the High Priest and placing it on his head.

“Then speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: “Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord...” This is Messianic.

Notice the phrase, “*Behold, the Man...*”, or in Latin, “*Ecce Homo.*” Those are the exact words Pilate used to introduce his prisoner, Jesus of Nazareth, to the bloodthirsty mob in Jerusalem, “*Behold, the Man...*”

Pilate used this phrase to introduce the *Messiah, the Suffering Servant*. It's ironic here, Zechariah uses the same words to introduce *Messiah, the Conquering King*.

And notice the man who's being introduced is called “*the Branch.*” Again, this is the OT idiom for Messiah.

He is the shoot or offspring of David's royal family.

He's “*the Man whose name is the BRANCH*” - the emphasis being on His humanity. Messiah is a man.

Notice too, “*From His place He shall branch out...*”

Isaiah 53:2 said of the Messiah, “*He shall grow up a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground.*” He's a branch that

grows out of dry ground. He grows strong and tall in a barren place, in the midst of a wilderness.

And this was true of Jesus. He was planted in a wicked, spiritually barren world, but He drew His nourishment from heaven and lived a sinless life.

Jesus is a testimony that a person can bloom where they're planted. Sink your roots deep into God, *and not your surroundings*, and you too will flower and sprout!

Notice the final words of this prophecy, **“and He shall build the temple of the Lord...”** At the time, this was Zerubbabel's task, and he was successful. He built a second Temple that King Herod would later enlarge.

But a third Temple is coming. Scripture teaches that in the last days, at the midpoint of the Great Tribulation, the Antichrist will defile the Temple.

Apparently, it'll be rebuilt before the time of the end.

Currently, there's much talk and planning in Jerusalem of rebuilding a Jewish Temple. Given the politics we don't know how it will happen, but it will.

Yet none of these Temples will be built by Messiah. And that's the promise in verse 12. Messiah will build the Temple. I believe this happens after Jesus returns, and judges the nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

He'll build a Temple when His kingdom comes.

This is what Ezekiel 40-48 is all about. Jesus will construct the Temple that stands for a thousand years. This is the place we'll worship Him in His kingdom.

Remember, Jesus has good experience at building Temples. He's spent the last 2000 years building a spiritual Temple, called "*the Church.*" And after putting up with us, building a literal Temple will be a breeze.

Verse 13, "Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

This is a fabulous thought. Not only will Jesus be the future Temple's architect, He is also its star attraction!

A priest will sit on his throne and bear God's glory.

Remember, ancient Israel had a clearly defined separation of Church and State. The king was the civil authority and the priest was the religious authority. And God forbid in His Law for the two to get intertwined.

That's why when King Uzziah tried, God judged him swiftly. Uzziah got bored with government matters. He got the bighead and thought it would be cool to be a worship leader - so he took on priestly robes and overstepped God's bounds. He assumed a position God didn't give him. He entered the Temple to burn incense.

When the priest at the time, Azariah, heard what he was doing, he raced in to stop him. It was too late. The Scripture tells us, "Uzziah became furious... and while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD... and King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death..."

Obviously, the Lord was extremely serious about maintaining a separation between kings and priests.

But this is what makes Messiah's ministry so unique.

He is a king and a priest. Only the Messiah will have the right to sit on the throne **and** burn incense before God. The NT calls Jesus both **King of kings**, and **our great High Priest**. In Him the two offices will converge.

“Now the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the Lord for Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah.” Some scholars believe the crown made by Zechariah was in the Temple until Jesus' day. It was lost in 70 AD at the destruction of the Temple.

There are also people who consider Joshua's crown synonymous with the scepter mentioned by Jacob.

In Genesis 49:10, Jacob predicted, **“The Scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between His feet, until Shiloh comes.”** *Shiloh* is another name for Messiah. It could be this crown - like a **scepter, a sign of his royalty** - was in the Temple until Jesus presented Himself to Israel, and was rejected.

Perhaps Jesus will wear this crown made by Zechariah when He returns and reigns from Jerusalem.

Verse 15, **“Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the Lord. Then you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God.”** When Jesus returns

Gentile believers from all over the world will come to Jerusalem and build the Temple.

We read in Ezra that in Zerubbabel's day the Jew's Gentile neighbors were trying to sabotage the building of the Temple. When Jesus comes they'll pitch in and help.