

Handout Zechariah Lesson 2

Zechariah’s visions and oracles in this lesson:

The fourth vision in 3:1-9a

The fifth vision in 4:1-14

The third oracle in 4:6b-10a

The sixth vision in 5:1-11

The high priests who served the covenant people from 520 BC, during the reign of Darius I, to about 405 BC during the reign of Persian King Darius II.

1. Jeshua/Joshua* was the high priest during the time of the first return from exile when Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel were governors (Ezra 5:2; Hag 1:1; Zec 6:11).
2. Joiakim son of Jeshua* was the high priest during the time of Ezra (Neh 12:10, 12, 26).
3. Eliashib son of Joiakim was the high priest during the time of Nehemiah (Neh 3:1, 20; 12:22, 23; 13:4, 7, 28).
4. Joiada succeeded his father, Eliashib.
5. Johanan succeeded his father, Joiada.
6. Jaddua succeeded his father, Johanan.

*Jeshua in Hebrew is the same name as the Aramaic form of Joshua (see Hag 2:2, 4), and Joiakim is the shortened form of Jehoiakim. Josephus recorded that both Ezra and Joiakim died before Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem.

What Zechariah sees in 3:1 is the reverse of the scene viewed from Yahweh’s location. The Angel of Yahweh is to the right of the throne while Satan is standing to the left of the Angel of Yahweh from Yahweh’s perspective:

Zechariah’s View	Yahweh’s View
Yahweh’s Throne of Judgment	Yahweh’s Throne of Judgment
Angel of Yahweh (left) Satan (right)	Angel of Yahweh (right) Satan (left)
Zechariah	Zechariah

Zechariah’s fourth vision of the cleansing of Joshua in 3:1-9a in February 520 BC is related to the prophet Haggai’s Third Oracle in December 520 BC in which Haggai gave a warning concerning ritual and spiritual purity and the promise that worthy ritual offerings guarantee blessings of prosperity (Hag 2:10-19):

- The warning that only spiritually pure people can make holy offerings (Hag 2:10-14)
- The promise of agricultural prosperity associated with holy offerings (Hag 2:15-19)

Zechariah 3:8-10 ~ The Coming of “the Branch”

8 “So listen, High Priest Joshua, you and the colleagues over whom you preside, for they are an omen of things to come, for now I shall bring in my servant the Branch, 9a and I shall remove this country’s guilt in a single day. 10 On that day, Yahweh Sabaoth declares, invite each other to come under your vine and your fig tree.”

The word “branch” or “shoot” is represented by eighteen different Hebrew and four different Greek words in the Bible, but the concept of the person known as the Branch or Shoot in the prophecies is associated with the Hebrew words *netzer* and *tesmach*. The eighth-century BC

prophet Isaiah was the first to prophesy the coming of “the Branch” or “Shoot” in Yahweh’s Divine Plan:

- *A shoot [choter = twig] will spring from the stock of Jesse, a new shoot [netzer] will grow from his roots. On him will rest the spirit of Yahweh, the spirit of wisdom and insight, the spirit of counsel and power, the spirit of knowledge and fear of Yahweh: his inspiration will lie in fearing Yahweh. His judgment will not be by appearances, his verdict not given on hearsay. He will judge the weak with integrity and give fair sentence for the humblest in the land. He will strike the country [land] with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips bring death to the wicked. Uprightness will be the belt around his waist, and constancy the belt about his hips (Is 11:1-5).*

The next prophecy of the individual called “the Branch” is from the 6th-century BC prophet Jeremiah:

- *Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall raise an upright branch [tsemach] for David; he will reign as king and be wise, doing what is just and upright in the country [land]. In his days Judah will triumph and Israel live in safety. And this is the name he will be called, “Yahweh-is-our-Saving-Justice” (Jer 23:5-6).*

And it is followed by Jeremiah’s third prophecy of “the Branch”:

- *Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall fulfill the promise of happiness I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah: In those days and at that time, I shall make an upright Branch [tsemach] grow for David, who will do what is just and upright in the country [land]. In those days Judah will triumph, and Israel live in safety. And this is the name the city will be called: Yahweh-is-our-Saving-Justice (Jer 33:14-16).*

Zechariah’s prophecy is the fourth:

- *So listen, High Priest Joshua, you and the colleagues over whom you preside, for they are an omen of things to come, for now I shall bring in my servant the Branch [tsemach],^{9a} and I shall remove this country’s guilt in a single day. ¹⁰ On that day, Yahweh Sabaoth declares, invite each other to come under your vine and your fig tree (Zec 3:8-10).*

And the fifth prophecy is also in the Book of Zechariah:

- *And say this to him, “Yahweh Sabaoth says this: Here is a man whose name is Branch; where he is, there will be a branching out (and he will rebuild Yahweh’s sanctuary). Yes, he is the one who will rebuild Yahweh’s sanctuary; he will wear the royal insignia and sit on his throne and govern, with a priest on his right [on his throne]. Perfect peace will reign between these two ... Then you will know that Yahweh Sabaoth has sent me to you. It will happen if you diligently obey the voice of Yahweh your God” (Zec 6:12,16).*

The prophecies in Isaiah and Jeremiah identify the Branch as a Messianic descendant of King David of the tribe of Judah and a fulfillment of Yahweh’s eternal covenant with David’s lineage to establish an eternal kingdom ruled by an eternal king of David’s royal line. Therefore, “the Branch” cannot be the High Priest Joshua who is a descendant of Aaron of the tribe of Levi.

The Third Oracle in 4:6b-10a is in three parts and concerns Zerubbabel:

1. He will succeed but only by the power of Yahweh’s spirit (verse 6a).
2. God will defeat his enemy and Zerubbabel will bring out the keystone of Solomon’s Temple to rebuild the new Temple (verse 7).
3. He will lay the foundation of the Temple and will finish building it (verses 8-10a).

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