

Sermon Notes, Zechariah 6:9-15, Sunday 25th Oct 2026

Do you have photos around your house. Who of? You? Family? Friends? The challenge is choosing the best picture. Graduation? Holiday? Christmas?

What's your favourite picture of your favourite person?

As of this week, I have a new favourite portrait of Jesus.

The Bible contains 66 books – 39 rooms on ground floor (OT), 27 on first floor (NT). On first floor, many vivid colour pictures of Jesus. Walks off page in the gospels. Many portraits of him on ground floor. In every room.

Some give a really detailed view of Jesus from one angle. Deuteronomy 18 – God will raise up a prophet like Moses. 2 Samuel 7 – a son of David will rule the nations forever. Isaiah 53 – a servant of the Lord will take the sin of God's people on himself.

Get to the NT, discover all those pictures were speaking of the same person – Jesus.

Turns out this was not a new idea for the NT. Zechariah 6 – possibly the most complete portrait of Jesus in the OT. Not everything is here. Have to wait 550 years for Jesus in person. But breathtakingly beautiful.

How is this a portrait of Jesus?

Recap. The people had returned from exile, but rebuilding the temple had got stuck. This is the year 519 BC. Zechariah has been given many visions to encourage the people.

What happens today: More exiles come back, bringing silver and gold for the temple project. Zechariah is told to take some of it from them, and to make a crown for Joshua.

Question is: Why is Joshua being crowned? You might think it's a coronation ceremony. The people are being given a new king at last, and it's Joshua.

That's not what's going on. Here are three reasons.

1. Met two key characters in Zechariah: Joshua and Zerubbabel. Joshua = the priest. Zerubbabel = the governor, descended from King David. If they were to crown the next king, it would have been Zerubbabel.
2. Joshua doesn't keep the crown. After this little scene, it's put on display in the new temple.
3. See 3:8. Joshua is a symbolic figure. He represents things to come. The one to come will be "the Branch". This is OT language (especially Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15) for the Messiah, the promised king from David's line. So, they place a crown on Joshua's head and say "Here is the branch". They're not saying he *is* the promised king. It's a dressing-up party. They're acting out him being the future king (the Branch) that he represents.

Hence – this passage is a portrait of Jesus.

This is a rich portrait. Here are 4 things we learn about Jesus from this scene with Joshua.

Priest-King

He's a priest and a king.

In the OT, these two offices were kept separate. Priests came from the tribe of Levi; kings from the tribe of David.

Now they come together. The crown goes on Joshua's head, not Zerubbabel's. The passage doesn't hide the fact this is happening. Verse 11. Verse 13, "He will be clothed ... priest on his throne".

One person. Both priest and king.

Jesus is our high priest. His work is to bring people to God. He does his work by sacrificing himself on the cross for our sins.

Jesus is our king. He rules heaven and earth. Gloriously risen from the dead. Coming back to judge the living and the dead.

Get the order. They don't put a priest's robes on the king. They put a crown on the priest. He's priest who rules in triumph, rather than the king who deals with our sin.

So this is the kind of king we have. Not a harsh or unsympathetic king. A priest-king, who represents us, restores us, brings us into the presence of God.

Jury service. If you knew the person on trial, you have to sit that trial out. If you're on trial, you'd love to have 12 of your mates as the jury. But you can't. Your mates will be there for you whatever the verdict. 12 strangers will reach the verdict.

Jesus is both priest and king. He doesn't have to decide at any moment which hat he's going to wear. He truly is both at once.

What a beautiful combination: Gentle, strong, compassionate, victorious, forgiving, sovereign.

Builds the true temple

Verse 13a.

There's a puzzle in these verses over who builds the temple. 4:9 – Zerubbabel started it; Zerubbabel will finish it. We'll see in a moment that people from far away will come and build it.

Here, it looks like Joshua will build it. It's emphasised, "*it is he ...*" But it's not Joshua. It's the Branch, the person Joshua symbolises.

Zerubbabel will build his temple, but after him Jesus will come and he will build another.

In fact, the NT describes at least 4 ways in which Jesus builds a temple that is more glorious than Zerubbabel's. 1. Jesus' resurrected body is a temple, a place we can go to meet God (John 2). 2. The Christian church is a temple, built of the people – men and women, young and old; we're living stones (1 Peter 2). 3. If

you're a Christian, God's Spirit lives in you, making your body a temple for God's Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6). 4. When Jesus returns, there will be no temple building, because God himself will live among us on earth (Revelation 21).

Zerubbabel should finish his temple. Because, like Joshua, it's a symbol of things to come. Jesus, the Branch, will build the true temple, far more glorious than the shadows that came before it.

You want to go and spend the day with a friend. That friend lives in London. Down on the train, back again – it's a long day. But worth it. So it's lovely when they say instead, "I'll come to you".

When Jesus the branch comes, God says "I'll come to you". He was doing this anyway in the Old Testament. God didn't *really* live in Jerusalem, so even then he came down to make himself accessible. But with Jesus, there's no journey required. You can pray to Jesus in heaven anywhere; go to a local church wherever you live; he's in your heart by his Spirit.

Brings peace

Verse 13. Because of Jesus' reign, there will be harmony, shalom, between the two.

But which two? Not, I think, between priest and king – that's too abstract. Between heaven and earth.

Political leaders come and go. But it's rare to get one who brings peace. Some support them, others don't. Nations fight. People have been rioting on the streets in some European cities. There are quarrels at home.

When the Branch comes, he'll bring true and lasting peace.

Isaiah 9:6-7. Micah 5:2-5a. Romans 5:1. Ephesians 2:14-18. Colossians 1:19-20.

Here is a king like no other. Peace between us and God, making it possible for his people to have peace with each other.

Gathers the nations

Verse 15a.

"Help to build". That's capturing the fact they literally build *in* the temple. They're doing some building. But they're not building the temple, that's been done for them. They're building in it. Hence, "help to build".

Zerubbabel built the temple in Jerusalem. Then Jesus comes to build the true temple. Then "those who are far away" come and join in the building, not building their own project, but building on the foundation that is Jesus.

"Those who are far away" refers to Gentiles, non-Jews, the nations. Ephesians 2:17.

This is the natural outworking of peace. Jesus comes to the throne and brings harmony. So instead of nations and races fighting each other, he gathers us. To come and join in the building work in his temple.

How do we respond to this Jesus?

This is an astonishingly complete picture of Jesus for the Old Testament. It leads you to worship him for being all these things at once.

But there are clues in the passage how God wants the people of Zechariah's day to respond to this scene. Here's what God wants us to do with all this.

Gaze

Verse 12. Literally "behold the man, the branch his name". Zechariah is like the MC introducing the main act. Joshua comes forward wearing his crown, and Zechariah says to the crowd: "Behold, the man, whose name is the Branch."

It might remind you of another story later in the Bible. John 19:4-5, literally "behold the man". There's the Branch. Only his crown is not made of silver and gold. It's a crown of thorns.

Zechariah and Joshua act this out with silver and gold. When the Branch does it for real, it's thorns. This is a twisted fulfilment of this little scene, one you'd never seen coming. But it's not less glorious. It's more glorious. Here is the one who was crowned priest, the sacrifice for sin.

He's not wearing those thorns now. Weirdly, the crown Joshua is given is plural. "Make a silver and gold *crowns* and put it on him". Revelation 19:11-12.

So Zechariah says, "behold". Stare. Gaze. Gawp. Admire. Adore.

This is the one whose name is the Branch.

Celebrate

Let's go back to the 4 people who contributed to this crown. Verse 10. They brought the silver and gold from Babylon. Quite possibly they organised the collection, and contributed generously themselves.

Now look what happens to the crown after the drama is finished. Verse 14.

They're the same people. Hen is probably a nickname for Josiah giving his character, gracious.

Let me rearrange the words slightly. "The crown will be in the temple of the Lord, as a memorial to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen son of Zephaniah."

The crown is put in the temple as a memorial. We'll come back to that. But it's a memorial specifically for those 4 people who made it happen.

Every time they go into the temple, they are encouraged that their generosity, their investment in God's plan, was worthwhile.

Lots of people here give very generously to God's kingdom here – time, money, gifts. This passage is meant to encourage us. See Joshua here wearing his crown. Everything we've given is worthwhile. Because it's for *this*.

Remember

Let's come back to the fact the crown is in the temple as a memorial.

God staged this little drama once. The full blessings of the Branch were in the future. But the main prop, the crown, was there to remind them. This really did happen. So this Branch really will come.

We easily forget things too. Not just where you put your keys. Life is tough, and we lose sight of God's grand plan. So what we need is a memorial. We look back and remember. Look back to this event from Zechariah 6. Look back to the crown of thorns. Jesus gave us bread and wine. "Do this in remembrance of me." We look back, we remember. It all happened. So everything in Jesus will bring about in the future really will come true.

Conclusion

My new favourite portrait of Jesus. What a beautiful picture. Joshua the priest, crowned king, to symbolise Jesus the Branch.

If you're not yet a Christian, doesn't this make you wish this was true? Wouldn't it be wonderful if Jesus really was all these things. This isn't make-believe. It is real.

So we are all invited: Behold the man, whose name is the Branch. Be encouraged and celebrate. Your own work building within his house is worthwhile. The full enjoyment of this is still in the future. So look long and hard, and remember.