

6-1-1948

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Recommended Citation

Fuerbringer, L. (1948) "Brief Studies in the Prophets," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 19, Article 38.
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol19/iss1/38>

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Concordia Theological Monthly

Vol. XIX

JUNE, 1948

No. 6

Brief Studies in the Prophets

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I

ZECHARIAH

In resuming these brief studies, we do so in response to repeated requests by readers of this journal in whom they had aroused interest not only to study in detail the Prophets in question, but also, on the basis of these brief studies, to preach on these Prophets before their congregations in Sunday evening and weekday services or to treat them in their Bible classes for adults. In past years we have published studies on Ezekiel, Daniel, Obadiah, and Jonah. On the present occasion we shall select Zechariah, the most prominent among the three post-exilic Prophets, whose book is the longest and also the most beautiful among the post-exilic prophetic writings. We thoroughly share Luther's opinion, who declares in his Preface of the year 1532: "This Prophet is of a truth one of the most comforting, for he proffers many lovely and comforting visions and presents many delectable and cheering words for the purpose of comforting and strengthening the saddened and scattered people so that they might begin building and establishing their government, something which up to that time had experienced great and varied resistance." (St. L., XIV:66.) Luther had already prior to this date interpreted this Prophet in a series of Latin lectures, probably begun at the end of the year 1525 and concluded in the last months of 1526. In the beginning of 1527 he also undertook the task of interpreting this Prophet in German and of publishing his lectures. This German work appeared in December, 1527, and, similar to his Latin interpretation, which has appeared in print in modern times, is provided with another preface which deals

with one special point. Both interpretations are found in our St. Louis edition, the German one in Vol. XIV:1768, and the translation from the original Latin in Vol. XIV:1978. In his preface to the German edition, Luther treats a thought which is especially notable in disturbed times, such as follow a period of wars. He speaks of irresponsible spirits who act haughtily, just as though the simple doctrine of faith, love, and cross had become outworn with them, and concentrate on figures of speech, mystical interpretations, and allegories, and tickle themselves with fine thoughts. "One devotes himself to Daniel, another to Revelation, and at once tackles what is either most difficult or what has the most allegories." In this connection Luther utters the well-known statement which still holds good today: "As the best and most useful teachers, and as their cream, should be considered those who can instruct the Catechism well, so that they correctly teach the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Creed," and in conclusion he remarks that he had issued his lectures on Zechariah for such as delight in reading their Scriptures at home and desire thereby to strengthen their faith.

THE PERSON OF ZECHARIAH

Zechariah, i. e., "Jehovah has remembered," was the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo, as the Prophet himself indicates in his book, 1:1,7. He was a member of a priestly family, Neh. 12:1,4, and as late as the time of Nehemiah was its head under the High Priest Joiakim, Neh. 12:12, 16, 26. In Ezra 5:1; 16:14; Neh. 12:16, Zechariah is designated as the son (*bar*) of Iddo. This, however, is no contradiction. The Hebrew word *bar* may also designate a grandson, inasmuch as the Hebrew terms for relationship, such as father, son, mother, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, and others, are frequently not employed in a literal, but in a wider sense. The Hebrew language has no expression for grandson at all, but instead employs the circumlocution "son of son." Perhaps the Prophet's grandfather was better known than his father, who possibly may have died at an early age. For this reason, too, he may have succeeded his grandfather, who had returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua from the exile, in the sacerdotal office, Neh. 12:4,16. His priestly descent, just as was the case with the Prophet Ezekiel,

is very noticeable in his book. In fact, in the case of all three post-exilic Prophets, the construction of the second Temple occupies the center of interest and is frequently the point of departure for prophecies dealing with the New Testament era.

From the passages which have been quoted we further learn that Zechariah was active almost at the same time as Haggai, inasmuch as he entered upon his prophetic career only two months after Haggai, i. e., in the second year of Darius Hystaspis, in November, 520 B. C., Zech. 1:1; Hag. 1:1; Ezra 5:1; Zech. 6:14. Although Old Testament chronology elsewhere presents many difficulties, and many problems in connection with it have not yet been satisfactorily solved, the chronology of the Babylonian and Persian era can much more readily be fixed, since frequently the secular rulers are mentioned whose years of reign are known from profane history. Zechariah supported Haggai's efforts in fostering the construction of the Temple, as is indicated in the passages quoted from Ezra, and began his prophetic activity already at a youthful age, since in 2:4 (in the Hebrew text, v. 8) he is called a *na'ar*, a boy or youth. Accordingly, he must have returned from Babylon as a child. How long he exercised his prophetic activity is unknown. As late as the fourth year of King Darius, in December, 518 B. C., he received a revelation, 7:1. Undoubtedly, however, his activity extended beyond this date, since he attained a great age and was still living at the time of Nehemiah, Neh. 12:12, 16, 26. According to the indications in his own book, Nehemiah spent the time from 445 to 433 in Judea, since he expressly mentions the twentieth and the thirty-second years of the Persian King Artaxerxes I, Longimanus, 2:1; 13:6. The name Zechariah was rather common among the Jews, but the Prophet Zechariah is not to be linked with the Zechariah mentioned in 2 Chron. 24:20 and Matt. 23:35, nor with the one mentioned in 2 Chron. 26:5, and likewise not with the one appearing in Is. 8:2. This has been done repeatedly of late, since the modern critical view assigns the origin of the third part of the Book of Zechariah, chapters 9—14, to the pre-exilic period, and then links the Prophet with one of the two Zechariahs mentioned in 2 Chronicles and in the Book of Isaiah. Since in the Isaiah passage and in the New Testament parallel to the passage in Chronicles not only the name Zechariah is found, but also the name of

his father, Jeberechiah, Barachias, the opinion has been advanced that this Zechariah must be identical with the Prophet Zechariah, the son of Barachias. A somewhat more detailed investigation is in a position to show that there is insufficient ground for such an identification.

The Prophet's name, Zechariah, is of great significance. It means "Jehovah has remembered," i. e., He has remembered His people and has visited it, something to which the entire content of the book witnesses. God has returned His people from the seventy years of exile. He has permitted the construction of the second Temple, and religious worship and civil order have been restored. Above all, Jehovah will remember His people also in the future, will give it the Messiah, and will build Messiah's Kingdom, the Church of the New Testament, as the Prophet repeatedly predicts.

Zechariah, as has already been indicated, together with Haggai, is concerned about the rebuilding of the Temple, but his prophetic text is much more far-reaching. As a result, his book is more extensive than that of his contemporary, Haggai, and that of Malachi, who lived at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Zechariah in his presentation, as has been pointed out, likes to start from the Temple and its construction, and devotes special attention to the two leaders of the people: Joshua, in charge of religious and priestly affairs, and Zerubbabel, in charge of political and civil affairs, 3:1-10; 4:1-14; 6:4-13. Besides this, Zechariah has many contacts with Daniel, dispenses information concerning, and comfort for, the coming difficult times, and prophesies of the impending fate and conflicts and future glory of the people of God, the last of which, however, they will attain only after passing through great tribulations. This mode of presentation naturally grows out of the whole situation as it existed at the time. The people had become willing for the work of the Lord in erecting the Temple, as Ezra 5 indicates, and after a short time the Temple was dedicated. What was needed then was not so much admonition as rather instruction and comfort. The situation at the time seemed to contradict God's promises. Many Jews probably lived in the expectation that together with the return from the exile and the completion of the Temple the Messianic era, too, would soon begin. But, as it was, the situation of

the day and the promises seemed at variance. For this reason Zechariah so emphatically points to the fact that the coming of Messiah and the Messianic glory still lie in the future and that the nation would attain this glory only after passing through great tribulations. *Per crucem ad lucem; via crucis, via lucis.* It is at this point that Zechariah shows contacts with Daniel. He has the same objective as the latter, namely, to provide light and comfort against the time when the revelation of God's plan for salvation came to a standstill after the appearance of Malachi as the last Prophet, an era when the empires of the world were permitted to unfold and God's people had to suffer under their oppression. But it is especially in these chapters that Zechariah speaks very clearly and plainly of King Messiah, so that Luther, as we mentioned, calls him one "of the most comforting prophets." Zechariah is, as a more recent American interpreter has called him, "the prophet of hope," and his book is "the quintessence of Old Testament prophecy." He is particularly the "prophet of Holy Week." After he has already spoken in chapters 3:8 and 6:12 of the person of the Messiah under the Messianic name of "Branch," he proceeds, in 9:9; 11:12-13; 13:17; 12:10, to prophesy four events of Holy Week: the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, the betrayal and sale of the Good Shepherd, the piercing and beating of the Shepherd, and the scattering and re-assembling of the flock. Noteworthy is particularly also the development of the Messianic name Branch, or *tsemach*. This name has, so to speak, a history in the various Old Testament writings. First it occurs in verb form, *tsamach*, in one of the great Messianic prophecies in the last words of David, 2 Sam. 23:1-7. The accurate translation of the original Hebrew text of the fifth verse is: "Since all my salvation and all my delight, indeed, will He not let it sprout?" The King James Version has: "For all my salvation and all my desire, will He not make it grow?" In the writings of the Prophets the future Messiah is called "Sprout," "Branch," from the Hebrew *tsemach*. Thus, for instance, Is. 4:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15. In the frequently quoted parallels, Is. 11:2 and 53:2, the same thought occurs, but other Hebrew words are used. In the former passage it is *netser*, which reappears in the New Testament, Matt. 2:23, in Nazarene; in the latter the word used is *yoneq*. But in the Prophet Zechariah the real original ex-

pression *tsemach* comes particularly into prominence and is treated almost like a proper name of the Messiah, something which, indeed, it is. In Zech. 3:8 we read: "Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee, for they are men wondered at; for, behold, I will bring forth My servant, the Branch." And in 6:12: "And speak to 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." Very instructive is also the spelling of the word in our English Bible. In Is. 4:2 the word "branch" is printed with ordinary letters, and it requires proof that also in this passage the Messiah is meant, but in both passages in Jeremiah the word is printed like a proper noun with an initial capital. In both passages in Zechariah the entire word "branch" appears in capitals, evidently for the special purpose of indicating even to the most simple Bible reader that the word designates the Messiah.

THE BOOK

The Book of Zechariah clearly consists of three parts: chapters 1—6, chapters 7—8, and chapters 9—14. After a hortatory preface, accurately fixed as to its time and urging obedience to the Word of God, 1:1-6, follow as the first part of the book eight visions, 1:7—6:15, which the Prophet received during a night in February, 519 B. C., 1:7. It is, indeed, also possible to divide the book into two parts, and to regard chapters 7 and 8, although they clearly constitute a separate element, as nevertheless belonging to the first part (chapters 1—8), from which then the second part (chapters 9—14) is sharply distinguished. These night visions stand in intimate relation to each other. In their presentation they remind one of the Prophet Ezekiel, and they are interpreted for the Prophet by an angel. In general, the angels occupy a prominent position in the Book of Zechariah, as is also the case in the Book of Daniel, with which Zechariah has also other contacts. These eight visions—some recognize only seven, since the two mentioned in chapter 5 in a fashion belong together—are closely related. In their details they are in part difficult, but in the main entirely clear. All of them have the present state of Jerusalem and of the people as their point of departure, and refer to the consummation of

the Kingdom of God, a never-ceasing source of comfort for the faithful. Theodore Kliefoth, a commentator of the last century, especially prominent in the interpretation of the prophetic-apocalyptic books of the Scriptures—we mention in addition to his commentary on Isaiah also his work on Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation—says very fittingly: "The Prophet sees there the entire future development of the Kingdom of God, as well as that of the world power, in their mutual relations, beginning with the immediate present up to the ultimate destruction of the last anti-Christian world power and to the new holy earth."* We are, of course, at the moment passing over the fact that one cannot agree with all of Kliefoth's statements, since they have in part chiliastic color and, particularly, do not recognize the true Antichrist. Compare for this the discussion of his "Kirchliche Eschatologie" in *Lehre u. Wehre*, Vol. 34 (March, 1888), p. 65 ff. Kliefoth is also of the opinion that the second part of the Book of Zechariah, chapters 7—14, is identical in content with the first and, like the latter, embraces the entire future development of the Kingdom of God and of the world power from the time of Zechariah on up to the new Jerusalem, and likewise contains seven words of God: 7:4-7; 7:8-14; 8:1-17; 8:18-23; 9:1—10:12; 11:1-17; 12:1—14:21.

The two night visions have the following content:

1. The riders among the myrtles, 1:8-17. They find the world still quiet, but they are to take a hand in the shaking of the nations announced by Zechariah's contemporary, Haggai, 2:7-10.

2. The four horns and the four smiths, 1:18-21: God's judgment over the heathen nations.

3. The man with the measuring line, 2:1-13: The glorious structure of the spiritual Jerusalem.

4. The High Priest Joshua before the angel of Jehovah, 3:1-10: The justification and reconciliation of God's congregation.

5. The golden candlestick and the two olive trees, 4:1-14: The Church, filled with the Spirit of God.

6. The flying scroll, 5:1-4.

7. The woman with the epha, 5:5-11: The blotting out of

* *Theologische Zeitschrift*, III, p. 48.

sin and of the sinners, inasmuch as both of these visions belong together.

8. The four chariots, 6:1-8: The bearers of the spirit of vengeance into all the world. As an appendix to these night visions follows a symbolic action, the crowning of the high priest, 6:9-15, a prophecy of Christ the Priest-King. We are not offering here a detailed interpretation, particularly of the Messianic prophecy. To do justice to it, a special treatise would be required.

The second part of the book embraces the utterances found in chapters 7 and 8, the date of which is December, 518, 7:1. The content of chapter 7 is hortatory and speaks of fasting and of works of mercy. Chapter 8 contains promises and prophesies the future of the Messiah and of His kingdom.

The third part of the book consists of chapters 9-14. It offers a prophetic description of the future of the people of God. This part is clearly separated into two "burdens," i. e., utterances of a threatening nature, 9:1 and 12:1. The first of these, chapters 9-11, describes the Good Shepherd, King Messiah, who judges His enemies and protects His people, unifying them and leading them to their goal. The second "burden," chapters 12-14, describes the glory of the New Testament Jerusalem, whose enemies have been judged and in whose midst Jehovah dwells.

Naturally, the diversified content of the book in its three parts is reflected by the varying mode of presentation. Simple prose and lofty prophetic description, bold imagery and rare comparisons, alternate. Compare, for example, 9:15-16; 10:3-5; 11:7, 10, 14; 12:3, 4, 6; 14:4, 5, 20, 21. We shall present a brief interpretation of a remarkable symbolical action in the first part of the book and then also emphasize the especially glorious and comforting Messianic prophecies in the third part. These sections are particularly suited for sermon texts in the Advent and the Lenten season.

II

THE PRIEST-KING

Zech. 6:9-15

In the above section we dealt in a general way with the person and the book of the Prophet Zechariah. The section on which we shall now focus our attention forms the con-

clusion of the first part of the book and concludes the description of the night visions with an account of a beautiful and meaningful symbolical action. The theme of this section is, "The Crowning of the High Priest," and it presents a marvelous prophecy of Christ, the Priest-King of the New Testament, the core and center of the Old Testament, and especially also of the Book of the Prophet Zechariah. This conclusion is most intimately connected with the content of the preceding visions. In these the New Testament salvation was repeatedly announced, and also the Mediator of salvation, especially in 3:8-9, but only briefly. Now He is pictured, and, in fact, He appears here as the crowned High Priest, or as the priestly King. As such He will build the Kingdom of God and raise it to the position of a victorious power over all the kingdoms of the world. These facts were to be a great comfort and source of strength for the Church of Judah in the difficult days between the return from the Exile and the fulfillment in the New Testament era.

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying," v. 9. These words indicate that the visions have now come to an end. Another manner of revelation begins, namely, that of the simple word of God to the Prophet. Zechariah now is in the usual state in which Prophets receive their revelations, namely, through direct inner communication. The ecstatic condition in which he saw the visions is over. The angel who explained the visions to him disappeared with the last vision and does not reappear on the scene. Nevertheless, this revelation of Jehovah attaches itself closely to the preceding visions. For this reason it probably belongs also to the same night in which the Prophet saw the visions and forms an addendum, 1:7-8. The introduction designates the now following action which has symbolical meaning. The Prophet is to carry it out on the following day.

"Take from the captivity, even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon," v. 10. From this verse we learn that a deputation had come to Jerusalem from the Jews who had remained behind in Babylon. These had brought gifts of silver and gold, probably to support the building of the Temple, which had now been resumed under Joshua and Zerubbabel, in response to the urgings of Haggai and Zechariah, after it had been suspended for approximately

fifteen years. The Jews in Babylon desired to take part in this God-pleasing work. In general, they desired to maintain their connection with the congregation in Jerusalem. They may also have heard of the hardships and difficulties which those who had returned from the Exile had to meet, especially when they undertook to restore the Temple. And of this silver and gold Zechariah is now to take in order to have a crown made for the High Priest Joshua. He is to take this gold and silver from the "captivity," as the text states. The Hebrew word *golah* really denotes "the going into exile," then also designates those who belong to the exile, the captives, and, in fact, sometimes those who are yet in exile. In this last meaning it is used here. Sometimes it also designates those who have returned from Babylon. Then the text mentions the three emissaries through whom the exiles in Babylonia had sent their gift. Zechariah is now to go to these emissaries on the "same day." Meant is the day following the night during which the Prophet received all these revelations. According to Jewish reckoning, the day begins with the preceding evening. By this time designation the temporal connection of the symbolical action with the night visions is clearly indicated. It is somewhat of a tautology when we read: "Come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah." Thither the emissaries from Babylon had come and found lodging. Like the three emissaries, so also Josiah is not further known. But a record of his hospitality has herewith been embodied into history.

"Then take silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it upon the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest," v. 11. Zechariah is to take of the silver and gold as much as was necessary for making a crown. This crown is to consist of both precious metals because both had been sent by the exiles in Babylon, and both were serviceable for being fabricated into a royal crown. Zechariah is to make a crown. This means, of course, that he is to have it made by a goldsmith. In the original text we find the plural "crowns." But this does not mean that he was to have several crowns made for various persons, but the plural has reference to the various silver and gold circlets which make up a gorgeous crown and are either intertwined or mounted one above the other. In the same manner it is also stated of Christ, Rev. 19:12, that

on His head there are many diadems or crowns. This crown Zechariah is to place on the head of the High Priest Joshua. However, a crown is a badge of royal, not of sacerdotal, dignity. If, therefore, the high priest is to be crowned, we have here a union of both dignities in him, prefiguring the future Messiah. And just in this fact lies the great importance of the action. In ch. 3:8, where the Messiah's name *tsemach*, or "Branch," is mentioned, the priesthood, not royalty, was designated as a type of Messiah. However, already in Psalm 110 royal and priestly dignity appear combined in the Messiah, vv. 1-3.

"And speak unto him, saying: Thus speaketh Jehovah of Hosts, saying: Behold a Man; Branch (*tsemach*) is His name; and He shall grow up from below, and He shall build the Temple of Jehovah," v. 12. In these verses, vv. 12-15, we now learn the meaning of the entire action. The Prophet is to give this explanation to the high priest on the occasion of his coronation. The word is again designated as a word of the majestic, all-powerful God: "Thus speaks Jehovah of Hosts." The entire action is symbolical. It is not intended for Joshua's person, but as a type and prefiguration. This appears, in the first place, from the fact that the high priest is crowned. Coronation was normally not a privilege of his, but only that of a king. It points, therefore, to a man who will combine royalty and priestly office in his person. Further proof, in the second place, is furnished by the significant "Behold," which here points to the future as so often in other passages. And finally, in the third place, additional proof is found in the content of the utterance, which does not fit either the past or the present, but only some future manifestation. The *tsemach* is, therefore, not Joshua himself as some modern interpreters understand it, of whom the entire chapter has nothing to say, but the Messiah, just as in 3:8. And the word *tsemach* is here directly to be understood as a proper name. The brief mode of expression presupposes that the person who is to bear this name is already known. And every reader of the Bible knows how this name repeatedly occurs in earlier writings and always becomes clearer, something which is indicated in both our English and German translations either by the name itself or by the type used in printing the name. The verb from which this name is derived is already found 2 Sam. 23:5,

but the name itself, or synonyms of it, occurs in Is. 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:15, 16; and then also in Zech. 3:8. In this latter passage, however, this name is further explained by the words in the original Hebrew: "From below He will sprout." Luther and others took this statement impersonally, "Under Him it will grow up," in the sense that blessing and prosperity will follow in His steps. However, this translation offers linguistic difficulties. The King James Version renders the words better, although not altogether accurately: "He shall grow up out of His place." The only possible translation is: "From below He will grow up, and He will build." In this way Jeremiah explains the expression "Branch," namely, that Jehovah will cause to grow up a righteous Branch for David. *Tsemach* is accordingly the One who grows up, the Branch, and not He who causes something to grow up. And with this interpretation also fits very well the addition "from below," or "from under him," as the marginal reading in our English Bible has it. This means that *tsemach* will grow up from what is beneath him, i. e., from the ground. This has reference to his family and to his country, i. e., to David's family in Judea. But we have here at the same time an indication that He will grow up from the ground, namely, from an unimpressive lowliness. He is, as Isaiah says, 11:1; 53:2, a Sprout and a Root out of a dry ground. And after he has stated what the Messiah is, the Prophet follows with a statement about what He does. He will build the temple of Jehovah. This statement can not deal with the construction of the Temple, which was then going on, for this was already approaching its completion, 4:9. The statement does not apply in any sense to a temple of wood or stone, but to the spiritual temple of the Church, of which the Tabernacle and then the first and second Temple were prefigurations, compare especially Hag. 2:6-9; 1 Pet. 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"; Eph. 2:21-22. The building of this temple is the real work of the Messiah. A temple of wood and stone is not the true dwelling of Jehovah. Such a one can only symbolize His true habitation, Is. 66:1.

"Even He shall build the temple of Jehovah; and He shall bear 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," v. 13. The first words, "He will build the temple of Jehovah," are no superfluous repetition, but they emphasize that He and no other will build this temple. They combine the work of the Messiah with His unique position as the Bearer of majesty. For this reason we find twice the emphatic "He." This linking of the two parts of the sentence indicates the glory of the temple which is to be built. The sense of the sentence is this: He who will build the temple will be a bearer of glory. The word "glory" is often an expression used for designating royal majesty. This glory is regarded as something that is placed upon one and as something which one therefore carries. To this royal glory and majesty the crown, which is symbolically placed upon Joshua, points, for the crown is the well-known symbol of royal dignity and splendor. And then we read further that He will sit and rule in royal majesty on His throne. He will exercise His royal power and dignity. Kings in ancient times and later were usually represented as sitting, this for the purpose of emphasizing their splendor and majesty. The verb "rule" again emphasizes the fact that He is a king. To this, however, there immediately attaches itself the remarkable statement "And He will be a Priest upon His throne," which means, He will be Priest and King at the same time. The entire symbolical action lays emphasis on the fact that the High Priest will be crowned. And finally we read, "And the counsel of peace shall be between them both." This is evidently to be interpreted in the following manner. The statement in our verse mentions two offices and dignities. Those who held them, according to the order and institution of the Old Testament, stood side by side, the king and the priest. Compare 4:14, where Joshua, the priest, and Zerubbabel, the representative of the king, are mentioned side by side. But these two offices are joined in the "Branch," the *tsemach*, in one single personal unit. They are mounted on one and the same throne, and between both the king and the priest, and between their offices, there will be perfect peace and undisturbed harmony. But there is yet more. We read not only, "There will be peace between them," but, "Counsel of peace shall be between them both." Between both of them counseling is going on which has peace as its objective; a plan for peace, or a counsel for peace, is in the making. The sense of the statement, then,

is: By *tsemach*, the Priest-King, a plan will be adopted and realized with a view to procuring peace for His people. Through both His royal and His priestly activity He brings His people the peace of God. As High Priest He wins this peace, and as King He divides it among them. This was fulfilled when the angels at Christmas time sang, "Peace on earth," and when the Savior repeatedly said to His disciples, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you," John 14:27, and, "These things I have spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace," John 16:33. For the same reason He also greeted His disciples after His resurrection with the marvelous greeting, "Peace be unto you," John 20:19,21; Luke 24:36.

"And the crown shall be for Helem, and for Tobijah, and for Jedaiah, and for the favor of the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the Temple of Jehovah," v. 14. After the symbolical action has been explained, a second item is added. The crown was placed upon Joshua only for the reason that he prefigured the *tsemach* and therefore the crown does not remain his abiding property, but it is to be preserved in the Temple after its use in the symbolical action. The gold and the silver which the exiles had sent from Babylon were destined for the Temple, and there in the Temple the crown is to be a memorial for the men who had brought the gift and for the men who had received them hospitably. These men are now once more mentioned by name, as in v. 10, but at the same time there are minor differences which we can not discuss here. Either these differences are simply scribal errors or minor variations in spelling, parallels for which occur also elsewhere. But one point must be mentioned. Luther and the Authorized Version understood one of the words, *chen*, as a name. However, this word is here not a proper name, but it is an appellative in the usual meaning of the word, namely, "favor," or "grace." This word refers to the benignness or friendliness of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah, which he displayed towards the messengers from Babylon by his hospitality. We, therefore, render the passage by: "for the grace, or favor, of the son of Zephaniah for a memorial." This hospitable reception, indeed, is deserving of a lasting memory. However, also the preservation of the crown in the Temple

has its meaning, a symbolical or prophetical meaning, and that is indicated in v. 15.

"And distant ones will come and build on the temple of Jehovah, and ye shall know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent Me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently hearken to the voice of Jehovah, your God," v. 15. The emissaries of the exiles came from a great distance with costly gifts. That is a significant type of that which is to take place in the future on an even grander scale at the time of the *tsemach*. The "distant" are remote people, heathen, who do not yet belong to the congregation of Jehovah. They will come and take part in the building of the temple which the *tsemach* has begun and make their contribution towards rearing this glorious structure. For this purpose they will bring along their goods and treasures and place them at the disposal of the building of the temple. Naturally, these distant ones will also be received into the congregation of Jehovah, just as the three emissaries, with their treasures, were received into the house of Josiah. Thus these events confirm the prophecy in Hag. 2:7, that Jehovah will fill His temple with the desire, i. e., the treasures, of all nations. The entire passage refers to the New Testament era. It prophesies the entrance of the heathen into the New Testament Church, an event of which Zechariah had already spoken in chapter 2, and of which he again spoke later on in chapters 8 and 14. The participation in the building consists in this, that the heathen nations will permit themselves to be fitted into the sacred structure of the New Testament temple as living stones, Eph. 2:22; 1 Pet. 2:5. From the fulfillment of this type Israel will recognize that Jehovah has sent him who is speaking. However, the one who is speaking is not the Prophet, but, according to the text, rather the Angel of Jehovah, the transition from the Prophet's own words to those of the Angel of Jehovah being almost unnoticeable. And thus the entire report of this symbolical action, and the entire section of the night visions of Zechariah, chapters 1—6, closes with an earnest admonition. Only then will men participate in the salvation which the Prophet foretells if they in truth hearken to the voice of Jehovah. Jehovah has made manifest His will to Israel in the Law and in the Prophets. However, he who purposely closes his eyes will not see God's salvation.

Without a doubt the Prophet actually carried out this symbolical action, though there is no further report about it. Evidence in this direction is also that the crown was to be preserved for a lasting memorial, and Jewish tradition in the Talmud expressly reports this fact and mentions the place where the crown had hung in the Temple.

The *tsemach*, the Branch, has come, and salvation in Him is near to all. Christ is High Priest and King at the same time and has been crowned as such. He is the High Priest and has won salvation; as King He dispenses in His kingdom the salvation which He has won. He builds the Temple of the Lord, the congregation which He has won by His own blood, the one holy Christian Church. And now it is His will that we lend our assistance in building this structure. For this He has called us. From afar off He has brought us who are descendants of formerly heathen nations. We participate in building this temple if we fit ourselves into it as spiritual building stones; if our Christianity is not only one of words, but of power; if we are Christians in deed and truth, i. e., people who desire to be saved alone through Christ. We build His temple when we fit others into this spiritual structure, both the near and the far, the white and the black, the Chinese and the African, the Jews and the Gentiles. We also build His temple if we place our worldly goods into its service, like the pious people who brought gold and silver from the captives to Jerusalem for the building of the Temple. Their names are entered forever in God's holy book. Thus God appreciates those gifts for His kingdom which are brought to Him out of love. They will not be forgotten by Him, even though by men they may not be noticed or soon be forgotten. They are entered in His book, and this holds good also of the smallest gift. The story of the widow who gave her whole possession, two mites, about half a cent, eternally has its own place in the Bible. However, also larger gifts are welcome to Him. He desires them, both gold and silver. And at a time when practically no one any longer reckons in mites and cents, He expects also such gifts. Blessed people are the people of the New Testament! Let us hearken to His Word. Let us be truly grateful.

(To be concluded)