

## Z'kharyah ~ Part 5

**Z'kharyah** is now told to place a crown on the head of **Joshua the High Priest**, an enactment symbolic of the Messiah, who will be both Priest and King over his people (this **Joshua** is not the **Joshua** who helped **Moshe** lead the people in their march to the **Promised Land**). This change will prove to be significant when Yeshua comes to establish His own Kingdom centuries later.

### A Crown for Joshua

This passage concludes the first section of **Z'kharyah**, presenting three prerequisites for rebuilding the temple. (1) There will need to be harmony between the civil and priestly leadership. (2) **Isra'elites** who have not returned from captivity should lend their support. (3) Everyone will need to be obedient to God's law.

*<sup>9</sup> This message from Adonai came to me: <sup>10</sup> "Take [gifts] from the exiles of Heldai, Toviyah, and Y'da'yah, who have arrived from Bavel; then you, go to the house of Yoshiyah the son of Tz'fanyah. <sup>11</sup> Take silver and gold; make crowns; put one on the head of Y'hoshua the son of Y'hotzadak, the cohen hagadol;*

The name of specific individuals suggests that these are envoys representing the **Israelites** still in exile in **Babylon**. Dedicating a memorial to them (v. 14) functioned as encouragement to those who had not returned. It was important to remain loyal to the homeland and to see themselves as part of **God's Chosen People**.

*<sup>12</sup> and tell him, 'Adonai-Tzva'ot says: "There is coming a man whose name is Tzemach [Sprout]. He will sprout up from his place and rebuild the temple of Adonai. <sup>13</sup> Yes, he will rebuild the temple of Adonai; and he will take up royal splendor, sitting and ruling from his throne. There will be a cohen before his throne; and they will accept each other's advice in complete harmony.*

**Joshua** the high priest and *Tzemach* were previously identified as the key leaders in the building of the temple.

*<sup>14</sup> The other crowns will be for Helem, Toviyah, Y'da'yah, and Hen, the son of Tz'fanyah; then [they are to be kept] as a memorial in the temple of Adonai. <sup>15</sup> Those who are now far away will come and help rebuild the temple of Adonai." Then you will know that it is Adonai-Tzva'ot who sent me to you. And it will all come about, provided you heed carefully what Adonai your God says.'* "

*Those who are now far away* are exiles who have not returned but should have done so. Strengthening the call to return, **God's** authority will be validated if they come back. *Provided you heed carefully what Adonai your God* is, nearly an exact quote from Deuteronomy 28:1, which emphasizes contingency in the covenant. It also recalls **Z'kharyah's** introduction.

As **Hagai's** mission was to construct the **Temple of God** in **Yerushalayim**, **Z'kharyah's** mission is to establish the spiritual house of **Isra'el**. The opportunity comes two years after **Z'kharyah's** eight visions, when the people of **Bethel** ask **Z'kharyah** about observing certain religious days.

### Inquiry from Bethel

This second section of **Z'kharyah** begins similarly to the first, looking back on the disobedient ancestors, their stubbornness, and the display of **God's** anger (1:4–6). The question still begged for an answer: Had the

returnees learned the lesson of exile? Another issue under consideration was whether the temple in **Yerushalayim** had regained its religious authority.

*7<sup>1</sup> In the fourth year of King Daryavesh, on the fourth day of the ninth month, Kislev, a message from Adonai came to Z'kharyah.*

The second section of *Z'kharyah* is marked by a date two years later. Prophecies were commonly delivered first orally and later written down, sometimes many years later (Jeremiah 36:2). In contrast to the first section of the book, which consists primarily of visions, this section is a sermon that develops themes introduced in the visions.

*2 He sent Sar'etzer and Regem-Melekh with his men to Beit-El in order to ask Adonai's favor, 3 as they inquired of the cohanim of the house of Adonai-Tzva'ot and the prophets, "Should we go into mourning and abstain from pleasure during the fifth month, as we have been doing for all these years?"*

*Beit-El* had been a center of worship for the northern 10 tribes (1 Ki 12:29). Some **Israelites** who remained in the land during the exile worshiped there, but they were willing to defer to the authority of the religious leaders in **Yerushalayim** if they found evidence that God's blessing had been restored.

### Motive for Fasting

*4 It was then that this message came to me from Adonai-Tzva'ot: 5 "Speak to all the people of the land and to the cohanim. Tell them, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months throughout these seventy years, were you really fasting for me? Was it for me? 6 Rather, when you eat and drink, it's just to please yourselves, isn't it? 7 Isn't this just what Adonai proclaimed through the earlier prophets, when Yerushalayim was inhabited and prosperous, as were the cities around her; and the Negev and the Sh'felah were inhabited?' "1*

The answer to the question posed in verse 3 involved a series of convicting questions from the **Lord of Hosts** (v. 8, which we will explore in the next post), designed to accomplish three purposes: (1) to validate **Z'kharyah** as a true prophet of the **Lord**, for **God** was speaking through him as He did through the *earlier prophets*; (2) to demonstrate - by taking up the same concerns as the prophets of the past (Jeremiah 14:12; Amos 5:21-23) - that **God** was endowing the returned community with the same authority it had before the exile; and to underscore what **God** required in order to have His blessing.

In our next post, we will pick up where we left off by exploring **Z'kharyah** in the previous post.

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<sup>1</sup> Z'kharyah 7:1-7.