

Zechariah 3:8-10 – Tokens of the Promise of Love

Delitzsch, TSK, HebrewLexicon, JFB, INT, 118, Geneva, Clarke, Poole, Trapp, Calvin, Barnes, Henry, Eclectic, Gill, Handfuls, Phillips, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: If you are going to sell your house, you want more than the person's word that he will buy it. You want a signed statement and a down payment.

So God, knowing human weakness to trust him as he should, gave tokens (象征, 记号) of his promise to Judah. These were tokens of love, tokens that would encourage Judah to do his service to the Lord. This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

The Token of God's Love: Leaders

The Token of God's Love: Protection

The Token of God's Love: Results

Our goals are: **That being convinced by evidence and signs of God's true love for you, that you will then work to advance his kingdom's cause.**

The Token of God's Love: Leaders

8 'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and **your companions who sit before you, For they are a wondrous sign**; For behold, **I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.**

1. Joshua's old filthy (污秽的), stained-with-sin clothes were removed. He was washed. He was given new clothes of righteousness. He was given a turban (冠冕, 头巾) to show that he was a priest to Yahweh. **These gifts came through Jesus.** But Yahweh **went one step farther and gave the Jews tokens of his love.**

2. The 1st token of love was fellow leaders-companions. Joshua was not alone. These companions served the people of God in various positions, especially as Levites and priests. God had people who would continue to serve his kingdom's cause. His sheep always had shepherds. They were signs of God's faithfulness.

Isaiah 8:18 Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! **We are for signs and wonders** in Israel From the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion.

Ezekiel 24:24 'Thus **Ezekiel is a sign to you**; according to all that he has done you shall do...

Joshua and these leaders would work to establish Jerusalem again, restore worship, and expand the kingdom.

3. But Joshua received a greater sign of a greater Leader – a Leader who was also a Servant. This Leader was called a Branch, grown from the roots of Jesse. This one was Jesus. He came **to serve his Father and to save and protect his Bride.**

Isaiah 42:1 "Behold! **My Servant** whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will **bring forth justice to the Gentiles.**

Isaiah 53:11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge **My righteous Servant** shall justify(使得称为义) many, For He shall bear their iniquities (罪孽) .

Why is Jesus like a branch? The people of the Middle East surely got the meaning, especially considering how much they **needed shade in from the desert heat.** But the Branch was also a **source of food for the small branches.**

Isaiah 4:2 In that day the **Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious**; And the fruit of the **earth shall be excellent and appealing** For those of Israel who have escaped.

Isaiah 11:1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, **And a Branch shall grow** out of his roots. (从耶西的本必发一条, 从他根生的枝子必结果实。)

Jeremiah 23:5 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to **David a Branch of righteousness**; **A King shall reign and prosper**, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

So Joshua and the 1st leaders would prepare the way for the Great Leader - the Messiah (弥赛亚, 受膏者, 救主) .

4. The sign of the first leaders and then the Great Leader would have greatly encouraged the people of God to take the step of **restart the construction** of the temple, worship God, and **advance Christ's kingdom around the world.** Even after that 2nd leader – Jesus – other leaders would continue the work of advancing God's kingdom throughout the world.

5. Lessons:

a. Your existence today is a token of God's love, for you are a Gentile people (外邦人). You are now part of the royal priesthood (君尊的祭司) . You are living under the shade of this Branch. You have that assurance (得救的确据) in your heart.

Revelation 5:10 And have **made us kings and priests to our God**; And we shall **reign on the earth.**"

You are not called to hide and apologize – but to rule. Don't be bullied into sin and compromise.

b. How far will this branch grow? All over the world! Jesus will be that tender plant that will grow and fill the earth!

Isaiah 53:2 For He shall grow up **before Him as a tender plant**, And as a root out of dry ground...

c. You are to promote the full token of God's love, the work and nature of Jesus Christ, so that the apostate (背教者) might believe and be saved.

The Token of God's Love: Protection

9 For **behold, the stone** That I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription (我要亲自雕刻这石头), ' Says the LORD of hosts, 'And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

1. The next token of God's love was a stone. God gave Joshua a unique stone. It was a stone laid (passive tense), meaning that this was God's work. Joshua is told to look at the stone. Why look?

2. The kingdom had to be built using the cornerstone (房脚石) as the starting point. If the leaders took their eyes off of the stone, the building would be crooked (被扭曲). All the Old Testament saints built on this foundation.

Ephesians 2:20 having been **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

3. Why would a stone have 7 eyes? Seven eyes symbolized God's providential care 上帝的护理. Seven is a picture of a complete work! The meaning is that nothing slips the awareness of God. This was a comfort!

Zechariah 4:10...For these seven rejoice to see The plumb line 线砵, 铅垂线 in the hand of Zerubbabel (所罗巴伯). **They are the eyes of the LORD**, Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth."

Revelation was also a book of comfort to God's suffering people. And **similar to Zechariah's time, Christians were called to return to faithful worship (Revelation 1-3) and then conquer the nations for Christ.** And in being called to do so, they too were **given the blessing of God's providential eyes.**

Revelation 5:6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and **seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.**

God saw every situation that the Jews were in and he was able to help them!

4. God will engrave an inscription on the stone. (Engraving on stones was a popular custom.) This was a picture of permanence-an assurance that God would do what he promised. It is possible this inscription on the stone was a picture of the marking on Christ's body – furrows on his back - when he was tortured and killed for the sins of the world.

5. What did God engrave on the stone? Look at what comes after: "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." Logical!

Hebrews 10:12 But this Man, after He had **offered one sacrifice for sins forever**, sat down at the right hand of God,

And look at the similarity of the language – language which pointed to the same work!

2 Timothy 2:19 Nevertheless **the solid foundation of God stands**, having **this seal**: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ **depart from iniquity.**"

6. Lessons:

a. Jesus was this stone. You can rest on him. You can build on him. He is strong.

Daniel 2:45 "Inasmuch as you saw that the **stone was cut out of the mountain without hands**, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold — the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its **interpretation is sure.**"

1 Corinthians 3:11 For **no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

1 Peter 2:6..."Behold, I lay in Zion **A chief cornerstone**, elect, precious, And he **who believes on Him** will by no means be put to shame."

This stone reminds you that your sins are forgiven and that it is the basis of God's kingdom being built.

b. Jesus protects you with his providence. He sees every situation you are in so he can send you help at the right time.

The Token of God's Love: Results

10 In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, '**Everyone will invite his neighbor Under his vine** and under his fig tree.'"

1. If the Jews returned and rebuilt the temple and served God in it, they could expect that God would bless them with much peace and prosperity during their lifetime. But was not the ultimate end. There was something much bigger. Consider the promise.

Isaiah 2:2 ...in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; **And all nations shall flow** to it.

The kingdom of Christ had to spread to the ends of the earth. Consider Christ's command to those that trust in him.

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations**...

2. So the Jews could expect that that peace with God that they enjoyed would also cause their neighbors to unite with them. The neighbors would be able enjoy the Lord's shade and eat with them. "Sitting under his vine" was a picture of prosperity and pleasure...like in Solomon's days.

1 Kings 4:24 For he had dominion over all the region on this side of the River from Tiphshah even to Gaza, namely over all the kings on this side of the River; and he had peace on every side all around him.

25 And Judah and **Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree**, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

They could do this because they had peace with God and man.

3. Lessons:

a. You now have peace with God and can sit down at his table to have a fellowship meal with him and each other. You have no reason for anxiety or fear. ISIS can't destroy the church. The pro-homosexual lobby (支持同性恋的游说议员) can't destroy the church. You have no reason to fear those who teach evolution (进化论).

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Instead of fearing the dangers all around, love worship and enjoy this feast and invite others in. **Bring your neighbor under his vine so he can be nourished by Christ.**

b. This is the future hope as the kingdom spreads: That many will want to be with God's people.

Micah 4:4 But everyone **shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid**; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

Zechariah 8:23 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In **those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man**, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

Conclusion:

God graciously gave Judah 3 tokens of encouragement so they would rebuild the temple, worship him, and work to advance his cause around the world. He gave them **leaders as tokens** of his promise and pointed to the ultimate leader -the Servant Savior. He **gave them protection**, under the rulership of this Servant Savior. If Judah grabbed hold of these tokens, then he would be able to **expand and bring blessings to the world.**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. You know Jesus, the Servant Savior Leader, who came and died for you and now sits at the right hand of God the Father ruling! **The promise became the reality.**

2. You too experienced the blessing of Jesus, being under his wings...his shade...because you believe in his work on the cross for sinners. You now rest in his shelter.

3. But it is now your duty to invite others under the vine...under his shade...the only place where they can be safe from the wiles (诡诈, 欺骗) of the Devil. Love the lost enough to give them this message and bring honor to him.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, you are a slave of the Devil with no protection from the fires of hell. You will ultimately be crushed when God's kingdom is completed. If hell suits you, you can choose it. But I know it won't. So cry out to God and ask him to make you his child on account of your sins being counted as Jesus'.