

## "Behold the man"

Jer. 5: 1, 2; Zech. 6: 12-15; John 5: 6-9; and John 19: 5.

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As these Scriptures came before me I was impressed with the fact that each of them stands in relation to Jerusalem, the divine centre, the centre of God's earthly people; the only city on earth that God calls a holy city. Whilst there was defilement and failure in God's people, yet Jerusalem never ceased, in the eyes of God, to be the divine centre of earthly administration in this world. We have been looking together at the thought in Nehemiah's heart, that what was due to God and to that city should be recovered. It was the beginning of the seventy weeks of Daniel's prophecy unto "Messiah the Prince"; it was God's thought that he should come to that city, and the Lord Himself said of it, "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." He came to that divine centre in its resuscitation; and can we not be assured from what we know of the Word of God, that He sought to energize Nehemiah in his day to prepare that centre for the coming of their Messiah into this world, both, as we shall see, on behalf of God and also for the blessing of man?

Where we began in Jeremiah we see that God made a very remarkable statement to the prophet, "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it." He said I will pardon the city for that one man. Jeremiah began with the poor of the city, with people who knew very little, and he had to say of them, "Surely these are poor; they are foolish; for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God," verse 4. He went to the simple folk first and then says, "I will get me unto the great men, and I will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God; but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds." He went to the poor, simple folk that were sinning because they did not know better; then he went to the great ones that were sinning and who *did* know better. Thus from the least to the highest he searched that city and not one righteous man could be found. But the divine testimony stands; if one righteous man could be found in Jerusalem the city would be pardoned on account of that one righteous man. God was seeking a man, one man, in order to solve the problem in that city; the problem that sin had brought in, sin that marked the people of God and had rendered them at that moment unfruitful in their service for God.

If we turn to the fifth chapter of John's gospel we see that righteous Man. The impotent man lying at the pool of Bethesda for thirty-eight years, a period which indicated Israel's wanderings in the wilderness after the law was given; Israel under government; under testing; incapable of ever meeting the divine claims of the covenant in love to God and to man. He represents Israel under the law, and their inability to produce fruit for God. They were impotent. This poor man, incapable of making a movement, utters the cry of distress, "Sir, I have *no man*". We may say God was needing a man, and man was needing a man, to solve this question; and here in the streets of Jerusalem that one righteous Man had appeared, the Man who was going to solve the whole question. He was here on behalf of God, and He was here on behalf of impotent men, and this incident gives public demonstration of His power as he spoke those words, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." A Man so righteous, so holy of whom we read in Romans 1: 4, "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Who but He could speak such words to that impotent man? In John 5: 20 He speaks of "Greater works than these"; one of such works was the raising of Lazarus after he had

been four days in the grave. Here at last in Jerusalem is the Man who will fully glorify God, and bring relief and blessing to mankind.

We have also read in John 19, of that well-known moment, when Pilate brings Jesus out wearing the purple robe and the crown of thorns, and says to the multitude, "Behold the Man." Little did he know the import of what he said at that moment. He used the very phrase we have read in the prophet Zechariah, "Behold the Man." In verse 5 we read, "Then *came* Jesus forth." It does not say that Pilate brought Him forth, nor did the soldiers force Him forward; "Then *came* Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe." We read in verse 17, "He bearing His cross went forth." In John's Gospel we see the Lord bearing the cross; the other Gospels show us what men did to Him. Here we see Him of His own volition moving onward to the cross, where He would accomplish the work whereby God could pardon the city, and whereby impotent men could be brought into the blessing of God. That work secures forgiveness, power, life and resurrection for those who, through sin and at a distance from God, were unfruitful in this world. This is the blessed Man who glorified God, and met the need of man.

The scarlet robe of Matthew would speak of the Son of David; the gorgeous robe of Luke (translated sometimes, white) His intrinsic purity; but here it is the Emperor character, the Son of Man, as He comes forth in that purple robe, and the crown of thorns, bearing the curse in order that God might be eternally glorified, and weak sinful man brought back for the pleasure of God.

It is of that Man we read prophetically in Zechariah. "Speak unto him, saying, Behold the Man whose name is The BRANCH." Twice in Isaiah the Lord is referred to as The Branch; twice in Jeremiah. In Isaiah, His *official* position as the King is in view; He comes out of the stem of Jesse. Jeremiah is given of God to speak of Him as the righteous Branch, hence there it is his *moral* glory. In the two references we also have in Zechariah we see His *Personal* glory, Who He is, Son of God, underlying His Manhood, and His perfection in this world. He is presented in Isaiah as the Messiah; He is presented in Jeremiah in His perfect righteousness; one righteous man says God, and here is that Man. "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," Zech. 6: 12. This prophecy was given in relation to the temple in Ezra, before the wall came to light in Nehemiah. But have we not seen that the wall *outside* was to preserve divine things *inside*? From that divine centre the glory of God will radiate to every corner of this world, in a blaze of glory in the world to come. "He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the LORD; even He shall build the temple of the LORD; and He shall bear the glory."

The One who in John 19 bears the cross, is the One who in Zechariah 6 bears the glory. No one but He could bear that cross, and no one but He could ever bear that glory. Who is more worthy to bear that glory in the world to come? It will be publicly seen that God has been glorified, and man has been recovered, in spite of all the evil that sin brought in. He shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule upon His throne. We have seen the link between the priesthood, the house of God, and the kingdom of God; and here is the One in whom all are seen together. "He shall bear the 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." We apprehend this counsel of peace to be between Jehovah and the *Man* seen in the two-fold aspect of His Priesthood, King of Righteousness and King of Peace. Here is this wonderful Melchisedec priest characterized by coming out, for the Melchisedec priest does come out. It is in the Aaronic character that He goes in, but Melchisedec comes out after the victory is won, He is the sustainer on the one hand of the remnant of Israel, and brings in also the blessing of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. He will hold the universe for God's pleasure and for man's

blessing, and the counsel of peace will be between Them — God Himself and this glorified Man. That counsel of peace has been secured by that Man going forth and bearing the cross at Calvary. That is the foundation of it, and this will be the display of it. In this typical passage regarding the crowns, we are assured the crowing day is coming. "The crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the LORD."

Lastly we read, "They that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD." We might have found a few Gentile names in Ezra in the building of the temple, and we find them here again in relation to the world to come as coming in to build the temple. Two men are named in the building of the tabernacle, Bezaleel and Aholiab; one man only is named in the building of the temple, Hiram, who was half Jew and half Gentile, and he is representative of those spoken of in verse 15, "They that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD." These are earthly features in relation to Israel; but if we do rejoice at times in the recovery of all things, and the establishment of what is heavenly, let us remember in relation to the *length and breadth* of all that is centred in Christ, that not only is recovery of things in heaven in view, but recovery of things on earth also. We are inclined to limit the counsel of God and the purpose of God to heaven, but we read, "To head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth," Eph. 1: 10 (New Trans.). Here in these Scriptures we have the heading up of the things that are on earth, when God's earthly people "Will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God." God had to speak of them as a disobedient people; Stephen rebukes them saying, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." Yet we also read "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Psalm 110: 3). Israel will obey His voice and then shall be seen that day in which this wonderful Person shall fill the heavens, and also the earth with the glory of God. Having borne the *cross*, He will bear the *glory*.