

# *The Story of* **God and Us**

*The whole Bible in Eight Weeks*

## ***Chapter Five: Who is the King of Glory?***

**Introduction:** I don't know about you, but the book of Zechariah is not one which gets a lot of my personal devotional time. In fact, it's been a while since I read it through.

But tucked away in this obscure book of the minor prophets there is an amazing scene. God tells the prophet Zechariah to go and find these three guys (**exiles** returned from Babylon) and take silver and gold from them, which they had received as gifts from their former captors. Then they were to go together to the craftsman Josiah and hand this silver and gold over. Josiah takes these items and molds them into a brilliant crown, radiant and beautiful, an amazing work of art and glory. Then they walked together to a third house, to Joshua, the son of the high priest, and placed the crown on his head.

Here's what Zechariah was told to say at this moment:

“Look! The man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord and shall bear royal honor and shall sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne, and there will be harmony between the two.” (Zechariah 6:12-13).

After that, the crown was taken off of Joshua (who was just a symbol of the coming king) and placed in the temple as a memorial. This crown was reserved for the one who would be worthy of it. Year after year it sat in the temple, waiting for that priest-king who would come and take it, rebuilding the temple to its former splendor and ruling with peace and harmony. Every time they would see that crown, the people would wonder, “when will that priest-king come?” Rulers would come and go, but none was worthy of that crown; **none could claim that temple-building, peace giving, mediating role that Messiah would.** The Romans came in like a fire from the West and their heavy yoke made the people cry to the Lord for this Messiah to come, the Branch, the off-shoot of Jesse, the one-like-Moses, the offspring of Abraham, the Seed of the Woman who would trample the serpent's head underfoot.

Today we are going to be diving into that story. We left our characters last week at a severe low point: Israel has been taken into exile, as a consequence for their covenant unfaithfulness, just as God promised back in Deuteronomy. Now they find themselves

wondering what **restoration** and **redemption** would look like for them. And in this season of despair, God reveals something brilliant and new: that **restoration and redemption will come from an anointed one, a prophet-priest-king who will truly bring shalom back to God’s people and the world.**

### *The Promise Takes Form*

*Q: What does the word “broken” mean to you?*

As we’ve read our story so far, it has become abundantly clear that human beings, on their own, are incapable of maintaining right relationship with God. In other words, humanity is deeply **broken**. Adam and Eve’s sin can’t be shaken; it replays itself over and over again in people’s hearts and actions. After Eden, not one person can really act in a way pleasing to God, and at some point, everyone acts in rebellion against him. **Shalom** was shattered.

But, another thing has become clear: **God has promised to heal our brokenness and bring back Shalom.** From Genesis all throughout the history of Israel, we find God’s promise of an “offspring” being reaffirmed:

*Eve*—“the Seed of Woman”—Genesis 3:15

*Noah*—“the God of Shem”—Genesis 9:25-27

*Abraham*—“your offspring”—Genesis 12:1-3

*Judah*—“the scepter shall not depart”—Genesis 49:8-12

*David*—“your offspring”—2 Samuel 7:12-17

With each successive promise the expectation and reality of the coming One becomes clearer. And by the time of the prophets, it has become abundantly clear that it is not any of the kings of Israel or Judah, whose sinfulness was obvious. They also know it wasn’t any of the judges before, nor Joshua or Moses before them, or the patriarchs, or Noah, or Seth. To all these people God had **revealed his plan**, but they all died, **believing the promise but not receiving it.** In other words, they all **had faith in God’s promise of a coming offspring.**

*Q: Thinking about the faith of Old Testament saints, how is it similar or different to our faith now?*

At then, at the lowest point in Israel’s history, God says these words to Isaiah:

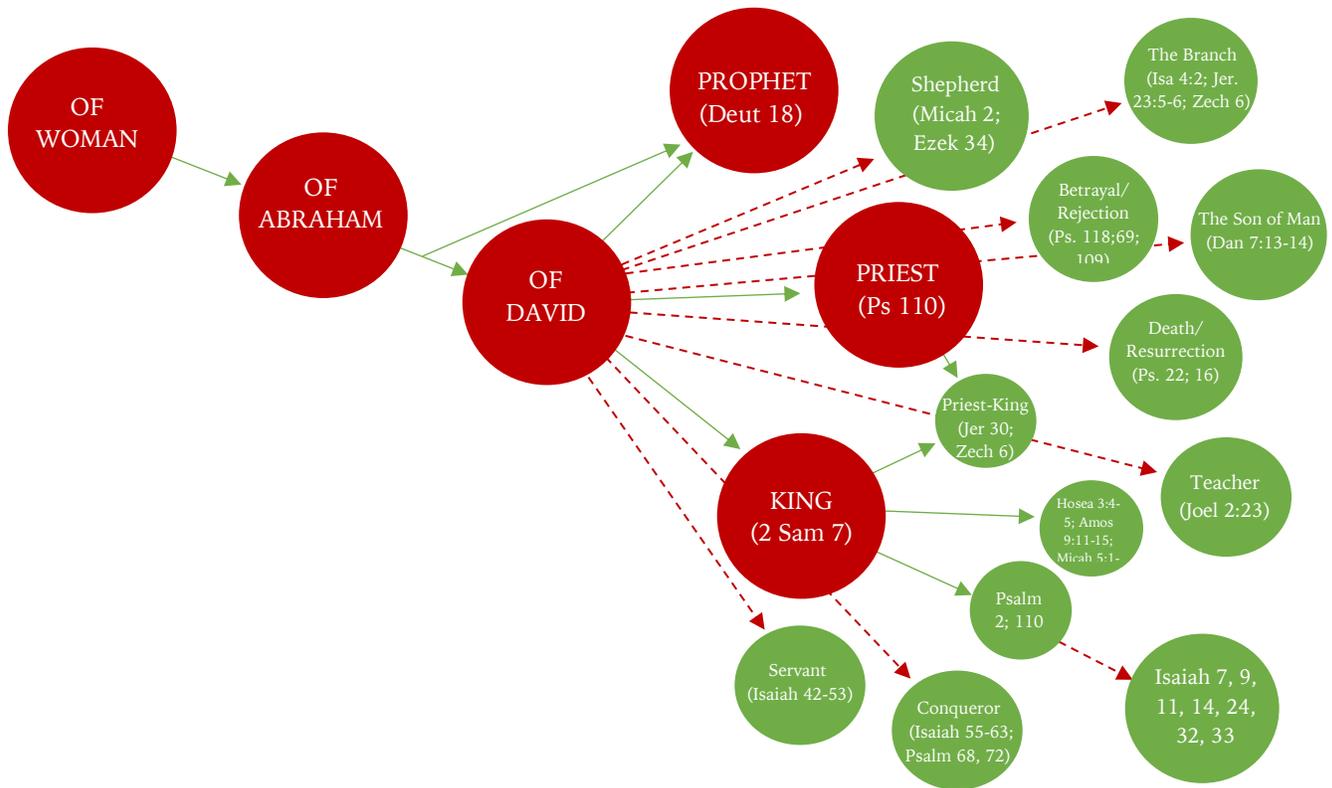
<sup>6</sup>For to us a child is born,

to us a son is given;  
 and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
 and his name shall be called  
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
 Everlasting Father, Prince of **Shalom**.  
<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and of **shalom**  
 there will be no end,  
 on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
 to establish it and to uphold it  
 with justice and with righteousness  
 from this time forth and forevermore.  
 The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

This anointed king will come to be known as **the Messiah** (from the Heb. *mā-šîḥ*, “anointed one”, Daniel 9:25).

*Q: Thinking about our story so far, what strikes you about this promise in Isaiah 9:6?*

**Hope Expanded: Prophecies of the Messiah**



This **Messiah** is described and expanded upon in each chapter of our story, and promises concerning him are like an avalanche, picking up momentum as they move down the mountain of history. The Israelite heart was loaded with the expectation of this one who would come who would be called “the anointed one.” Every time the Scriptures were read, they would hear of the one called “the Lord our Righteous Savior” (Jeremiah 23:6), and “Immanuel,” God-with-us (Isaiah 7:14).

At when Israel is exiled for their disobedience, this hope is even more acute. They read of a **priest** who, unlike Aaron, will act in faithfulness and mediate between the people and Yahweh (Psalm 110:4). They would read of a **king** who would, unlike David’s sons, rule faithfully and with justice forever (Psalm 2). And they would read of a **prophet** like Moses who, unlike the false prophets that abounded, be a true ambassador of God’s covenant and giver of God’s law (Deuteronomy 18:15-17). In these three roles the Messiah would function as the ultimate **savior** of the people, bringing them back to **shalom**.

But this work would be costly. Isaiah warned that this shalom-bringing work would cost the Messiah his very life. In order for the Messiah to bring shalom and crush the serpent’s head, he would need to **atone** for the sins of the people, to **redeem** them at the cost of his own life. He would **die for the sins of his people**, and through his sacrifice he would **reconcile them to God** (Isaiah 53:1-12).

But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
He was crushed for our iniquities;  
Upon him was the chastisement that brought us **shalom**,  
And with his wounds we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
We have turned—every one—to his own way;  
And the Lord has laid on him  
The iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:5-6).

Even though this would take place, there was **hope**, that God would not allow him, the only truly righteous one, to completely succumb to sin’s curse, and so death would not hold him (Psalm 16:9-11).

*Q: Thinking about the prophecies regarding the Messiah, how will his life differ from those whom God used before (Abraham, Jacob, David, etc.)?*

### *When will this One Come?*

As time goes on, this hope builds even more. Many signs point that Yahweh is not done with his people. He continues to be faithful to them in exile (**Daniel**). He saves them from Genocide by the work of **Esther**. And after years in exile, Yahweh **keeps his promise** and sovereignly moves to bring some of the people back from exile. A group of returned exiles, led by **Zerubbabel**, even rebuild the temple that had been destroyed when Jerusalem was sacked by the Babylonians. A scribe named **Ezra** returns and leads the people to reaffirm their commitment to worship Yahweh alone, and they **reaffirm their covenant** with him. The walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt by **Nehemiah**, and Israel seems poised to recover.

But, even in the midst of this recovery, there is a keen awareness that things are not as they should be. When the old men see the foundation for the new temple, they weep, for its glory pales in comparison to Solomon's. And as new invaders loom large, Israel is again precariously placed and teetering at the brink of destruction. As our story closes today, the people place in the new temple a crown made for this anointed king, awaiting the day when he will come and **save his people** (Zechariah 6:9-14).

But the prophets assure them,

the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.... I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of Yahweh comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction. (Malachi 4:1-3, 5).

Looking Ahead:

October 11<sup>th</sup>: Chapter Six: All strings attached (the gospels-Acts)

October 17<sup>th</sup>: Chapter Seven: From Darkness to Light (Epistles)

October 25<sup>th</sup>: Chapter Eight: Shalom Regained (Revelation)

