

**“The Righteous Branch” Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 33; Zechariah 6 Craig Crawshaw**

**Jeremiah 33:15** *In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth.*

We are in a sermon series we have entitled, “Jesus B. C.” where we are finding that Jesus our Lord is all over the pages of our Old Testament in images, pre-incarnations and events that foreshadow His person and ministry. Our Bible – Old and New Testament – is truly all about Him. It is His story – History!

One of the great values of our precious Holy Scripture is that it lifts us beyond the life in which we now live, and spiritually teleports us into the future when Jesus will reign as king on the earth – when the troubles, politics and wickedness of this present life will be reined in and managed by the perfect beneficent King of kings. Today I want us to see Jesus in the image of “The Righteous Branch” which predicts this future reign. We find three of the prophetic voices using this image – Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zechariah. And as we examine each in turn we will discover a beautiful depiction of our righteous King Jesus.

**THE WORDS OF THE IMAGE**

Let us at the outset think on the meaning of the two words of the image: “righteous” and “branch.”

**RIGHTEOUS** “Righteous” in present dictionary usage refers to being morally virtuous and upstanding in character. But in Biblical terms it has the deeper connotation of excellence, literally “right” in everything – especially in God’s eyes. Therefore, it carries the meaning of “perfection” and is associated with perfect justice being carried out. For simplicity I like to think of “righteous” as being “right in God’s eyes.” When we are “made righteous” by the blood of Jesus, we are made right in His eyes, and He sees Jesus’ perfection in us. The book of Romans is the book of righteousness – the book of how to be made right in God’s eyes.

**BRANCH** “Branch” gives the connotation of something growing out of something else that is alive. It implies a continuation of that which has been already begun – something healthy and vibrant. There is also the implication of the branch possibly being one of many others.

**RIGHTEOUS BRANCH** But when we put the two words together we get the implication of this branch being the perfect one that best carries on the life that has already begun.

**THE DAVIDIC COVENANT**

In 2 Samuel chapter 7, we find what is called the “Davidic Covenant,” that is, the promise God gave to King David of a reign that would last beyond himself. And this is the “root,” if you will, of the “Righteous Branch.” The covenant does not specifically mention “Righteous Branch,” but in it we find the origin of its meaning. These words of God are said to King David by Nathan the prophet.

**2 Samuel 7:12-16** *When your days are complete, and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness*

*shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.*

It is not hard to see that God is speaking of Solomon as the descendant who will be king after David and will build the temple (“a house for My name”). Solomon will be as God’s son and God will correct his iniquities, but not remove him as king, as He did Saul. But we see more than Solomon in this prophesy. We hear that God will “establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (v.13). And “your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever.” (v. 16i). History reveals that the kingdom of David will divide into two kingdoms after Solomon and ultimately be cut off and end not many years later when the Israelites are overcome by the Assyrians to the north and the Babylonians to the east, taken in to captivity.

The “Righteous Branch” is not mentioned here specifically, but there is prophesy that the life of the throne of David will continue beyond its being cut off historically.

And then we find the prophecies of the “Righteous Branch” in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zechariah.

## THE ISAIAH PROPHECIES

***Isaiah 4:2*** *In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel.*

Here we see only “Branch” introduced – its first chronological mention in the Scripture – but it speaks of “that day” when Israel is restored. The Branch is introduced as that which is adorned by “fruit of the earth” and the pride of Israel’s survivors. We will come to see these as the righteous people of God.

***Isaiah 11:1*** *Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. (ff) (Isaiah 53:2)*

“Jesse” was the earthly father of King David. So, we see this prophecy connected to the Davidic Covenant.

Jesse is the “stem” and the “roots” from which he came is the nation of Israel. And a “branch” is prophesied to come forth bearing “fruit” – a person, for the Spirit of the Lord will rest on “Him.” And this person, this branch will be wise, strong and fear the Lord. As we read on in Isaiah 11 we find a beautiful description of a perfectly just monarch. (“with righteousness He will judge” – v. 4) And we hear language that takes us to the time of what we call the Millennium – the 1000-year reign of the Messiah on the earth (“*the wolf will dwell with the lamb*” – v.6ff).

Let me now take you to one other verse in Isaiah that clearly connects the “branch” to Jesus.

***Isaiah 53:2*** *For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground.*

This begins Isaiah’s description of the “Suffering Servant” who was “pierced through for our transgressions” and was “like a lamb that is led to slaughter” – clearly referring the Jesus on the

cross of Calvary. But notice that the opening description of this Servant Messiah is that “He grew up before Him [the Lord God] as a “tender shoot.” This is the same word as the “shoot” that will spring forth from the stem of Jesse. This then is the “Righteous Branch” that will be described in far more detail in the prophecies of Jeremiah and Zechariah. It is Jesus, to be sure!

## THE JEREMIAH PROPHECIES

**Jeremiah 23:5** *“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.*

Here we see most clearly that the “righteous Branch” (first mention of both words together) will be a just king out of the loins of David. And then in chapter 33 of Jeremiah we find the supreme prophesy of the “Righteous Branch.”

**Jeremiah 33:14-18** *‘Behold, days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: the Lord is our righteousness.’ For thus says the Lord, ‘David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to prepare sacrifices continually.’*

This will happen in days when righteousness and justice will be on the earth; days in which Judah (Israel) will be “saved” and Jerusalem will “dwell in safety.” Clearly these are days yet to come on the earth. And Jerusalem shall be given a special name: “The Lord is our righteousness” – apparently naming the city after the King of righteousness who will be on the throne – Jesus. Note also that this king will also be priest, offering sacrifices. This will be the ultimate co-mingling of “church and state” – the way God has always wanted it to be. As to the question of sacrifices – what are these to be? Certainly, we will not go back to the slaughter of animals, for that was done away with by the perfect sacrifice of the Son of God.

The scholar Plumptre helps explain the priestly sacrifices of the “Branch” in the end times:

*“The Levitical priesthood passed away (Heb 7:11), but Christ was made a Priest after the order of Melchizedek; and by virtue of their union with Him, His people become a holy priesthood (Heb. 10:19-22), offering not the burnt-offerings which were figures of the true, but the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving (1 Pet. 2:5), the sacrifices of body, soul, and spirit, which alone was acceptable to God (Rom 12:1).*

The Jeremiah prophecies of the “Righteous Branch” clearly speak of Jesus as the ultimate king in the line of David that will reign on the throne of the earth in Jerusalem at the end of the earth age. We are transported – teleported, if you will - out of the worries and struggles of this life into the glories and perfection of the earth in which we as believers will one day participate and help lead. This is God’s way of saying “whatever you are going through, don’t worry – one day all wrong will be righted and the earth will be run by a perfect, benevolent dictator where love and peace will reign supreme.” I can’t wait!

## THE ZECHARIAH PROPHECIES

***Zechariah 3:8*** Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you—indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch.

***Zechariah 6:12-13*** Then say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.”’

For Zechariah, Joshua the high priest was a symbol of the priesthood of the nation of Israel that needed to be cleansed with a new leadership and priesthood. And this servant of God, “the Branch” would be the one to cleanse and lead and administer the sacrifices of a perfect heart to God.

In 6:12 we learn that this “Branch” will “build the temple of the Lord.” Remember how in 2 Samuel 7, in the Davidic Covenant, Solomon was prophesied to be the one to build the temple, our house, of the Lord. Now we see that this prophecy had a second dimension to it – for Jesus, the Righteous Branch, will also build the ultimate temple of the Lord in Jerusalem where He will dwell and from which He will rule. This may well be a rebuilding of a physical structure, or it may refer to dwelling in the temple of God which is His people – or both.

And note the perfect peace and cooperation between the office of king and priest. Don’t we wish that could be the case today – the church and government working together in perfect harmony. Some day!

## NEW TESTAMENT CONFIRMATIONS

***Acts 2:30*** And so, because he [David] was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ ...

***Romans 15:12*** Again Isaiah says, “There shall come the root of Jesse, and He who arises to rule over the Gentiles. In Him shall the Gentiles hope.

***Revelation 22:16*** “I Jesus have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.

## REMEMBRANCES OF THE RIGHTEOUS BRANCH

- √ Beautiful and glorious (Is. 4:2)
- √ A root coming from the stem of Jesse (Is. 11:1)
- √ The Spirit of the Lord resting on Him in wisdom and power (Is. 11:1)
- √ Reigning in righteousness and peace over all nations (Is. 11:3ff)
- √ Beginning as a “tender shoot” and becoming the suffering Lamb (Is. 53:2ff)
- √ Reigning as king with justice (Jer. 23:5; 33:15)
- √ Saving Judah and Israel, called “The Lord of righteousness” (Jer. 23:6)
- √ Causing Jerusalem to dwell in safety (Jer. 33:16)
- √ Both king and priest for the people (Jer. 33:17-18; Zech 6:13)
- √ The Servant of the Lord (Zech. 3:8)

## √ Building the temple of the Lord (Zech. 6:12)

God could have chosen to burn up the earth as a “lost cause” and just move on to a heavenly reign of perfection. But prophesy tells us that God wants to show how the earth can be run and ruled perfectly when God is on the throne. This will take place for 1000 years (millennium) – what I believe will be the perfect 7<sup>th</sup> millennium of man’s existence – the millennium of “jubilee” – and then the heavenly kingdom will be begun.

Take this lesson and be transported in hope and encouragement out of the everyday struggles and woes of this life. God will make all right. God will bring ultimate earthly peace and joy. “Joy to the world, the Lord is come” will be a reality. And heaven and nature will sing together!

For now, run your race with endurance. Take up your cross and follow Him!