



*8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. 9 For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. (Zech 3:8-9)*

*12 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, **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)*

The Branch of the Lord has sprung forth as prophesied by the ancient Watchers and Holy Ones of God. Even the cowardly Roman Curator, Pontius Pilate, was forced to decree Jesus as innocent; and not only that, but the very words of the prophecy of Zechariah Zech 6:12 were put into the lips of Pilate: *And Pilate saith unto them, **Behold the man!*** (John 19:5) The High Priest of Israel of Jesus' time, with malediction, spoke deeper words of prophetic meaning than he could ever have understood, being evil in his heart: *49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. (John 11:49-52)*

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Branch prophesied to come and to rule over all nations. He is not a Branch that is capable of withering, but strong and whole for He is the Stone Pillar of the Temple mentioned in the leading text from Zechariah 3:9 above. It is worth noting that, though the name 'Joshua' here refers directly to the High Priest of Israel, it is also the very Hebrew name of our Lord Jesus Christ! It represents Him alone in His role as Foundation Stone of the Temple and High Priest of the people of God. His root is sourced in the Triune God, and His heritage is everlasting. The Root is the Divine Source of all Authority in Christ. The Branch issues forth from God the Father. Christ is of the same nature and substance of the Father and is uniquely a Son being the ONLY BEGOTTEN (NOT one and only, i.e. NIV) Son of God. We, on the other hand, are sons and daughters by adoption.

Being the physical Branch of the Invisible God, Jesus came to reveal to our eyes

the nature and Person of God. We are able to know God because we have known the Son. As the Branch, He is the Vine from which we derive our spiritual sustenance. And being the Chief Cornerstone of the Temple, He has become the Temple itself having been destroyed, and rebuilt (or resurrected) in three days. *19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body.* John 2:19-21 (KJV) See also: *17. What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? 18. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.* (Luke 20:17-18)

The branch of every tree has a root and stock from which it proceeds. The root and stock of the Branch of the Lord derives: *3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.* (Romans 1:2-4) *3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.* (Mark 6:3) Jesus is descended from the root and branch of Abraham, Jesse, and David through the human descent of His mother, Mary.

It is interesting to note the fallacy of the Immaculate Conception Theory of the Roman papacy here, and in numerous other places, unmasked in the family relations of Jesus through His half-brothers and half-sisters mentioned in Mark 6:3? I refer to them as half brothers and sisters due to the fact that the Father of Jesus was God, and the father of His brothers and sisters was Joseph. The new versions try to breach that false doctrine by referring to Joseph as 'His father.' In no place does the King James or any other Received Text Bible refer to Joseph as the father of Jesus as indicated here: . . . *and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.* (Luke 2:43) This reference occurs many times in the Gospels, but also as the following: *23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli.* (Luke 3:23) Note how New Living Translation sullies the distinction: *Jesus was known as the son of Joseph.* (Luke 3:23 New Living Translation).

Our Lord has His origin in Heaven, but also shares in our humanity through His birth to Mary. As the Branch, He bears the dual nature of both human and divine. He is called the seed of the woman at Genesis 3:15; and the Seed of Abraham at Genesis 22:18. We have further confirmation of that dual nature of Christ in Hebrews 2:14: *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.* We naturally partake of the blood of Adam, tainted with sin and death; but in Christ we have His life-giving blood and therefore we have life eternal. Jesus partook of that human nature by His incarnation in humanity, but His spiritual nature was all of Divinity – pure and without blemish of sin.

What is our own family tree? If of God, the branches thereof are the glory of the tree. The branches of the tree derive nutrients from the soil via the root system; but the nutrition of the root system is turned to fullness of life through the photosynthesis of the green leaves of the branches. These green branches clean the air of dioxides and replenish it with oxygen.

As fruit of the Vine and Branch, we draw our sustenance from that Vine. If we fail to produce fruit, we are gathered up and burned in the fire. *1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.* (John 15:1-2) *5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is*

*withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.* (John 15:5-8) Please note our Father is glorified by our bearing of much fruit. Important subject of introspect: How much have each of us glorified God by our much FRUIT? Our silly little charismatic songs do not glorify God, but our bearing of much fruit does glorify God our serious and biblical hymns-singing will also glorify Him in worship.

Christ, being the root and offspring of David according to the flesh, is the glory of all of David's race whose race you are if you are Children of the Promise made to Abraham in Christ. The Bride – the Church – cannot be too much proud and gratified in her Bridegroom who is perfection personified.

Christ, on the night of His betrayal in the Garden at Gethsemane, prayed that we would be One with Him as He was One with the Father. If so, we have the same privilege to become One with the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. What a high honor and glory to be One with our Maker and King! Being One with our Lord, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, offers a higher privilege than any human crown can afford.

Being Sons of the Most High King, we each are in the royal line of David and are Princes and Princesses. We do not need to belabor the embarrassment and shame that the sons and daughters of the Royal Line of Great Britain have caused the beloved Queen Elizabeth and her lineage. A Prince or Princess should reflect the character of the Crown. When our lives are filled with licentious living, what disgrace is brought upon our Father, the King! Should we not deport ourselves as worthy heirs of the Throne when that Throne belongs to God our Father? Should our careless living bring shame and blemish on the escutcheon of Heaven?

If we are truly fruit of the Branch, we shall live our lives in such a manner as to reflect the nature of the Branch from which we draw our sustenance. If, like Peter, we are stones, or chips, off the Great Rock of Christ, should our properties not reflect the nature of the Rock from which we are hewn?

Allow me to ask this question of each reader of this little devotion, and I hope you will examine your soul honestly: Are you, my friend, a Stone or a marshmallow?