

# The Messianic Priest-King

Jer 23:5-6; Zech 6:9-15; John 19:1-5  
SS Lesson for 04/13/2014

**Devotional Scripture:** Heb 7:11-19

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# Introduction

## Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson teaches about how Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of **The Messianic Priest-King**. The **study's aim** is to demonstrate that God disapproves of those who keep others from coming to Him. The **study's application** is to show that God wants to give believing Christians access to Himself.

### Key Verse: *John 19:2-3*

*2 And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. 3 Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.*

### Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Pilate's question, What is truth? has echoed down through the centuries. How his question was intended is problematic. Was it a wistful desire to know what no one could tell him? Was it philosophical cynicism concerning the problem of epistemology? Was it indifference to anything so impractical as abstract thought? Or was it irritation at Jesus' response? These are all possible interpretations of his words. But the significant thing is that he suddenly turned away from the One who is "the Truth" (14:6) without waiting for an answer. Pilate's declaration of Jesus' innocence is important. He would die like a Passover lamb, a male in its prime without blemish (Ex. 12:5). Having displayed a lack of interest in truth, Pilate then revealed a lack of commitment to justice. He lacked the courage of his convictions. If Jesus was innocent of all charges, then Pilate should have set Him free. Instead, Pilate began a series of compromising moves to avoid dealing with an inconvenient truth in a difficult circumstance. First, when Pilate found out Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Him to Herod (Luke 23:6-7). Second, Pilate tried to appeal to the crowd (John 18:38), hoping to bypass the desire of the chief priests and elders. Knowing Jesus was popular, he thought the crowd would prefer Jesus to Barabbas. But the leaders proved to be persuasive (cf. Matt. 27:20). The offer to release... Barabbas who was guilty of murder and insurrection showed poor judgment for a person responsible for Rome's interests. Third, Pilate... had him flogged. Pilate's action, according to Luke (23:16), was another attempt at compromise. He hoped the crowd would be satisfied with a little blood. Roman flogging was done with a leather whip with bits of metal at the ends. Such flogging often killed a person. The flogging, the mocking crown of thorns and purple robe, the ridiculing in hailing Him King of the Jews, and the physical blows on His face—these were all part of Jesus' deep humiliation as He was identified with human sin as the Servant of the Lord (cf. Isa. 50:6; 52:14-53:6). (Matthew and Mark added that the soldiers spit on Jesus [Matt. 27:30; Mark 15:19].) The thorns on His head are mindful of the curse of thorns caused by human sin (Gen. 3:18). Again Pilate's attempt to free Jesus by an appeal to the crowd missed the mark. Their taste for His blood was beyond recall. Pilate's words, Here is the Man! (KJV, "Behold the Man!" Latin, Ecce homo) have become famous. It is strange that several of Pilate's statements have become immortal. Jesus by that time must have appeared as a pathetic figure, bloody and wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.

### Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The outline of the lesson came from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator and from the points revealed by the study of the Scriptural text.

Verse	Phrase	Commentary
Jer 23:5	Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness	The Righteous Branch-King
Zech 6:11	Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown,	The Majestic Branch-King

Verse	Phrase	Commentary
	and set it on the head of Joshua	
John 19:2	And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe.	The Humiliated Branch-King

## ***Lesson Introduction and Background***

### **From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

The Old Testament portions of our lesson come from Jeremiah and Zechariah. The ministry contexts of those two prophets were discussed in lessons 6 and 5, respectively, so that information need not be repeated here. Instead, we will take a brief look at the Old Testament's puzzling way of referring to the promised Messiah as the Branch. For some, the word branch creates a mental image of a tree limb that has fallen in the yard during a windstorm, a fallen branch. Others may envision a suburban bank, a branch office. Still others may think of a subfield of a major field of study, such as microbiology as a branch of biology. None of these ideas really captures the biblical concept of the Messiah as the Branch. The concept is more along the lines of new growth—a fresh, green manifestation of life. It is an idea of "the new coming out of the old." A vivid example is found in Isaiah 6. Many of us are familiar with verses 1-8 of that chapter, which describe the prophet's dramatic call. But the verses that follow may not be as familiar: Isaiah's ministry was to be met with hard hearts, and devastation would result. But then comes a glimmer of hope. Though fallen Israel would be like the mere stump of a once-great tree, within this seemingly dead stump was "the holy seed" (v. 13) This was the latent branch, the sprout, the hope for Israel's renewal and restoration: the Messiah. The apostle John was an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus, and John was very familiar with Old Testament prophecies about Jesus (example: John 19:37). John probably wrote his Gospel after the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in AD 70 by the Romans, creating some interesting parallels between John's perspectives and those of the prophets who worked centuries before him.

## **Major Theme Analysis**

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### ***The Righteous Branch-King (Jer 23:5-6)***

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.

6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

### **Heir of David (5)**

*An heir of David through the lineage of Jesse (Isa 11:1-5)*

1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord — 3 and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; 4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

*An heir of David that brought us peace through His death (Isa 53:2-11)*

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. 9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. 11 After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

*An heir of David that will rule as a King and Priest (Zech 6:12-13)*

12 Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord. 13 It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.'

*An heir of David Moses wrote about in the Law (John 1:45)*

45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

## **Savior of Israel (6)**

*A Savior as seen and spoken of by Simeon (Luke 2:25-32)*

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the sight of all people, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

*A Savior prophesied by Isaiah (Isa 52:8-10)*

8 Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. 9 Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. 10 The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

*A Savior's birth celebrated by the Angels and shepherds (Luke 2:10-11)*

10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

*A Savior who was crucified (Acts 4:10-12)*

10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11 He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone." 12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

### ***The Majestic Branch-King (Zech 6:9-15)***

9 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

10 "Receive the gift from the captives--from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon--and go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah.

11 Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.

12 Then speak to him, saying, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the Lord;

13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both." ' "

14 "Now the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the Lord for Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah.

15 Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the Lord. Then you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God."

### **Majestically Crowned (9-11)**

*Crowned by God (Heb 2:9)*

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

*Crowned with many crowns (Rev 19:11-13)*

11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.

*Crowned as foretold by Zechariah (from Barnes Notes)*

But the Messiah, it was foretold, was to be both priest and king; "a priest after the order of Melchizedec" (Ps 110:4), and a king, set by the Lord "upon His holy hill of Zion" (Ps 2:6). The act of placing the crown on the head of Joshua the high priest, pictured not only the union of the offices of priest and king in the person of Christ, but that He should be King, being first our High Priest. Joshua was already high priest; being such, the kingly crown was added to him. It says in act, what Paul says, that "Christ Jesus, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him" (Phil 2:8-9).

*Crowned like a priest in the order of Melchizedek (Psalms 110:4)*

4 The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

*Crowned because God exalted Him to the highest place (Philippians 2:8-9)*

8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

### **Temple of Glory and Peace (12-15)**

*A temple that is an eternal house in heaven (2 Cor 5:1)*

5 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

*A temple that is being prepared for believers (John 14:1-4)*

14 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."

*A temple whose architect and builder is God (Heb 11:10)*

10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

*A temple that is greater and more perfect (Heb 9:11)*

11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

### **The Humiliated Branch-King (John 19:1-5)**

1 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.  
2 And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe.  
3 Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.  
4 Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."  
5 Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!"

### **Brutalized (1-3)**

*Jesus was brutalized because it was written in Scriptures (Mark 9:12)*

12 Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected?"

*Jesus was brutalized even unto death for everyone (Heb 2:9)*

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

*Jesus was brutalized to be a sympathetic help (Heb 2:18)*

18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

*Jesus was brutalized to be an example of obedience (Heb 5:8)*

8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered

*Jesus was brutalized to leave us an example (1 Peter 2:21)*

21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

## **Ridiculed (4-5)**

*Ridiculed by nations (Isa 49:7)*

7 This is what the Lord says — the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel — to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: "Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down, because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

*Ridiculed by men (Isa 53:3)*

3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

*Ridiculed by Herod (Luke 23:11)*

11 Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate.

*Ridiculed by soldiers (Matt 27:29-31)*

29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

*Ridiculed by the elders and chief priests (Luke 22:63-67)*

63 The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. 64 They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophesy! Who hit you?" 65 And they said many other insulting things to him. 66 At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. 67 "If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me,

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### **Concluding Thoughts From Bob Deffinbaugh**

*From the series: That You Might Believe: A Study of the Gospel of John*

*Pilate Under Pressure (19:1-7)*

Have you ever heard a child say something like this: "When I grow up, I'm going to be the President of the United States, and then I can do whatever I want!" What a tempting thought—to be a person so powerful you can have your way. The fact is, it isn't true. Pilate is proof of this. In the introduction to this lesson, I quoted from the words of Rabbi Telushkin, who contends that John deliberately distorted the facts about Pilate. According to Telushkin, John painted a picture of Pilate as a kind and compassionate man, who really cared about Jesus, and who wanted to keep Him out of harm's way, but was forced by the Jews to crucify Him.

That is not the picture we find in any of the Gospels, including John! We know that Pilate was a cruel and harsh governor. He did not care for the Jews; indeed, he seems to have despised them. It was not out of the kindness of his heart that he sought to spare the life of Jesus. It was out of self-interest, pure and simple, that he sought to release Jesus. It is not a tender-hearted man that we see here, which makes the point even more

dramatic. Pilate is a cruel despot, who seems to take pleasure in offending the Jews. He has no concern for Jesus. He does not wish to make yet another politically incorrect blunder, for which he must give account to Caesar. And he does not wish to be pushed around by these troublesome Jews. He believes that he has no other choice but to give in to their demands, try as he had to persuade them otherwise.

I've watched men run their businesses like tyrants, only to go home and cower before their wives, and even their children. It does not make them any less tyrannical; it only accentuates the "power" of those who are able to push them around. Telushkin tries very hard to get the Jews off the hook, and to make Rome and Pilate the real villains in the story of Jesus' condemnation and execution. It just isn't true. These Jews (especially the leaders) have taken a very hard-line stance with Pilate. Even though they are a subject people, they would rather risk the wrath of Pilate and of Rome than to allow Jesus to remain alive and free. For them, it is "all or nothing." They brought Jesus to Pilate to be condemned and to be put to death, and they will settle for nothing less. They "pull all the stops" in their effort to force Pilate to act as they wish. They do not intend to allow Pilate to release Jesus, and they virtually demand the release of the notorious Barabbas.

Pilate has Jesus severely beaten, and orders Him to be brought out for the crowd to look upon Him, wearing the clothing of a king. Is Pilate trying to inspire pity for Jesus on the part of the Jews?<sup>166</sup> Or is he attempting to convince them that their fears of such a "king" are groundless? Does this beaten and bloody fellow really look like a king? Can such a fellow really pose a threat to these Jewish leaders? Pilate has Jesus brought out before them with the words, "**Behold the man**" (verse 5). Unwittingly, perhaps, Pilate has said more than he knows. The study notes on verse 5 in the NET Bible inform us,

Pilate may have meant no more than something like 'Here is the accused!' or in a contemptuous way, 'Here is your king!' Others have taken Pilate's statement as intended to evoke pity from Jesus' accusers: 'Look at this poor fellow!' (Jesus would certainly not have looked very impressive after the scourging). For the evangelist, however, Pilate's words constituted an unconscious allusion to Zech 6:12, '*Look here is the man* whose name is the Branch.' In this case Pilate (unknowingly and ironically) presented Jesus to the nation under a messianic title!

Like a teacher trying to gain control of an unruly class, Pilate is attempting to gain control over this situation, which has by now gotten quite out of hand (see Matthew 27:24). As he brought Jesus out for the Jews to behold this bloody and beaten king, Pilate informed them once again that he found no basis for condemning Him. The Jews cried out, demanding that Pilate crucify Jesus: "**Crucify him! Crucify him!**" Pilate saw that there was no way he could change their minds. And at this point, when his position and power were on thin ice with Rome, he sensed that he did not dare to anger these Jews once again. And so he responded, "**You take him and crucify him! For I find no reason for an accusation against him!**" (verse 6). The Jews quickly responded, "**We have a law, and according to our law he ought to die, because he claimed to be the Son of God!**"

## Conclusion

The great question which is still hotly debated today is, "Who was guilty for the death of Jesus Christ?" We can see from our text that Judas was certainly guilty. We know as well that Pilate was guilty. He was not a kind-hearted man, eager to release Jesus. He was a cruel and calculating tyrant, who sought to release Jesus for his own self-serving reasons, and not out of justice or compassion. He wanted to release Jesus because the Jews wanted to kill Him. This governor, though one of the meanest, most powerful men in history, was powerless to save Jesus from death, even though he sought to do so.

Pilate was guilty for condemning Jesus to death, but he does not bear the guilt alone. The Jews were guilty as well. They were the ones who sought to execute Jesus, even though they could not even legally condemn Him for wrong-doing. They were the ones who pressured and threatened Pilate, so that he finally gave in to their demands and handed Jesus over for crucifixion. As hard as some may work to excuse the Jews for what they did, they too were guilty for the death of our Lord.

The point is that both Jews and Gentiles are responsible for rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, and for nailing Him to the cross. All men are guilty before God. If we had been there that day, we also would have cried out, **“Away with Him! Crucify Him!”** John’s account makes the guilt of all those present evident, both Jews and Gentiles. At the same time, as our Lord had indicated to Pilate, His death was the plan and purpose of God—His means for providing salvation for lost men:

23 When they were released, Peter and John went to their fellow believers and reported everything the high priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices to God with one mind and said, “Master of all, you who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything that is in them, 25 who said by the Holy Spirit through your servant David our forefather, ‘Why do the nations rage, And the peoples plot foolish things? 26 The kings of the earth stood together, And the rulers assembled together, Against the Lord and against his Christ,’ 27 For both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, assembled together in this city against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, 28 to do as much as your power and your plan had decided beforehand would happen (Acts 4:23-28).

For the last 2,000 years, the question has not changed; only those who must decide have changed. John’s Gospel puts before us the assertion that Jesus is indeed who He claimed to be—the Son of God, who came to this earth as the God-man, by adding perfect humanity to His undiminished deity. He came to reveal God to men, and to be rejected by His own people, the Jews, and also by the Gentiles. He was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. He shed His blood for the salvation of all who trust in Him. And so as you read the words of our text, *the decision you must make is virtually the same as that which faced Pilate: Who do you believe Jesus to be, and what will you do with Him?* The answer of the Bible is this: **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved”** (Acts 16:31).

From URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/jesus-pilate-part-ii-john-182882111916>

### **Concluding Thoughts From The Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

"At a reception honoring musician Sir Robert Mayer on his 100th birthday, elderly British socialite Lady Diana Cooper fell into conversation with a friendly woman who seemed to know her well. Lady Diana's failing eyesight prevented her from recognizing her fellow guest until she peered more closely at the magnificent diamonds and realized she was talking to Queen Elizabeth! "Overcome with embarrassment, Lady Diana curtsied and stammered, 'Ma'am, oh, ma'am, I'm sorry, ma'am. I didn't recognize you without your crown!'" (Today in the Word, November 16, 1995). A crown is a symbol of identity. In most cases, a crown identifies its wearer as a person of royal authority. In this week's lesson, the multitudes' spiritual blindness and a desire to mock Jesus motivated them to place a crown of thorns on the suffering Messiah-King. The Lord declared through Jeremiah that He would provide a future monarch from the lineage of King David who would rule with wisdom, justice, and righteousness. During His magnificent reign, God's people would experience a season of peace and security. The name of this future Monarch would be "the Lord our righteousness." Our present society is dominated by a sense of perverted justice and acts of unrighteousness. The lives of many people are destroyed and the souls of many people damaged by decisions and events that are motivated by selfish political advancement and wicked disregard for the sanctity of life. In the midst of this humanist environment, God's people are called to be salt and light (cf. Matt. 5:13-16). Followers of Jesus Christ can accomplish this goal because of the hope they have of the future Monarch who will demonstrate righteous justice. Zechariah was told to secure offerings of silver and gold from people who had returned from the Babylonian Exile, to manufacture at least two crowns, and place them on Joshua. This symbolic gesture was accompanied by Zechariah's prophetic description of a future monarch who would peacefully combine the offices of priest and king. The crowns would then be placed in the Jewish temple as reminders of a future time when non-Jews would have a relationship with God's house, of the confirmation of Zechariah's prophetic ministry, and of the promised results of conscientious obedience. It is appropriate at this time to remind God's people that they may receive future crowns that symbolize present spiritual accomplishments {cf. I Cor. 9:25; II Tim. 4:8; Jas. 1:12; I Pet. 5:4). With obedient humility, God's people will cast these crowns at the Savior's feet. The Lord Jesus deserved a crown of regal authority. Instead, Pilate tormented Him, and the soldiers

adorned Him with a crown of thorns and a purple robe, indicative of His suffering and mankind's mockery of His spiritual authority. Suffering is often viewed as an unwelcome intruder in the lives of God's people. However, the Bible teaches that suffering is not only inevitable but also incomparable (cf. II Tim. 2:12; 3:12). As a result, suffering can be a catalyst for incomparable ministry and future glory. Let us, therefore, gladly identify with the suffering of our King, Jesus Christ.

***Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator***

1. God's provision for His people through fulfilled prophecy continues today as He provides for our needs (Jer. 23:5-6)
2. A godly ruler is intent on pleasing God, not on acquiring personal power (Zech. 6:9-13)
3. Obeying God and His Word is natural when we seek to please Him (vss. 14-15)
4. Opposition to serving Christ often comes in subtle and unexpected ways (John 19:1-3)
5. Those who reject Christ's message cannot deny His perfect life {vs. 4}
6. Though He is pivotal in history, Christ is as near as a whispered prayer (vs. 5)