

# SPIRITUAL REALITY – THE BRANCH

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The God of Israel spoke through the Prophet Zechariah:

‘I now mean to raise My Servant Branch, and I intend to put aside the iniquity of this Land in a single day.’

‘And say this to him, “The LORD God Almighty says this: Here is a Man whose Name is Branch; where He is, there will be a branching out and He will build the Temple of the LORD.”’ (Zech. 3:8-9; 6:12)

Who is the Branch? We know what He will do. He will build God’s Temple. God is using a natural object (branch) to communicate something about someone (the Messiah). There are many passages like these in the Tanach (the Hebrew Bible) that have God speaking of a branch, in more than natural terms.

To understand why God is speaking like this we must go back to the most significant time where the word *branch* is used. In Numbers 16 we find the infamous rebellion of Korah. His pride controlled him. He thought he had been overlooked. Korah said that the only reason why Aaron was High Priest was because Moses was his brother!

Moses was shocked. He tells Korah that God will reveal whom He has chosen for the High Priesthood (Num. 16:5, 7). The next day as Korah approached, the ground opened up and swallowed him (v. 31). But this wasn’t enough evidence for Israel. Korah had portrayed himself as a champion of the people, with Moses being the dictator, and when he and all his men died, Israel complained against Moses and Aaron. (Num. 17:6) They said that Korah wasn’t such a bad fellow; what did you do to him Moses?!

That was all that the LORD needed to hear. He said that He wanted to ‘annihilate them in an instant’ (Num. 17:10). Moses and Aaron began to intercede on behalf of Israel but the wrath of God broke out in the camp and it was only stopped when Aaron, the High Priest of Israel, stood between the living and the dead and made atonement for them (Num. 17:11-15).

God now commands all the heads of each tribe to give Moses their staff or branch (the word in Hebrew is the same), of their authority. Somehow God would reveal through these branches, whom He had chosen to be the High Priest.

The branches were all marked with the name of their respective tribe and laid before the Ark of the Covenant. The next day when Moses brought them out to the people, all the branches remained the same except for one. Aaron’s had ‘put forth buds and bloomed blossoms and bore ripe almonds’ (Num. 17:23b). Aaron’s dead branch had come to life!

It was by this miraculous sign that God revealed to all the House of Israel whom He had chosen to be Israel’s High Priest. Out of the turbulence of rebellion, the LORD brought a dead branch back to life to reveal His Chosen One.

## *The Righteous Branch*

The Prophets, inspired by the Holy Spirit would speak about a 'Righteous Branch' (or 'Shoot') who would *sprout* forth from God to lead His people Israel. As we saw in Zechariah and Num. 16-17, this Branch would be the High Priest. He would also be King Messiah:

'Behold! The days are coming, says the LORD, that I will raise unto David a Righteous Branch, and *He shall reign as King* and prosper, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the Land. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His Name whereby He shall be called, the LORD is our righteousness.' (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

Yeshua, born of the Seed of David, is the High Priest-King. He was crucified but this dead Messiah, this dead Branch of David, came back to life, raised up by the God of Israel, never to die again. He was seen alive by hundreds of Jewish people in His day (1st Corinthians 15:1-8). By the resurrection from the dead the whole House of Israel can know that God has made Him our High Priest and King Messiah.

Zechariah the priest, who lived a generation before Yeshua, was of the House of Aaron. A son was born to him who proclaimed that Yeshua was the Promised One! At the child's circumcision, Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit spoke and said,

'Blessed be Adonai the God of Israel because He has visited and made a ransom to liberate His people by raising up for us a mighty Deliverer who is a descendant of His servant David. It is just as He has spoken through the mouth of the prophets from the very beginning, that we should be delivered from our enemies and from the power of all who hate us. This has happened so that He might show the mercy promised to our Fathers, that He would remember His Holy Covenant, the oath He swore before Abraham our Father, to grant us that we, freed from our enemies, would serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.'

'You child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God; you will go before the LORD to prepare His Way by spreading the knowledge among His people that deliverance comes by having sins forgiven through our God's tender mercy, which causes the Branch to visit us from Heaven, to shine upon those in darkness, living in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the paths of peace.' (Luke 1:68-79)

There are two Messianic images in the word that is translated Dayspring (dawn) or Sun (see Malachi 3:20 for Sun of Righteousness), or Branch and all are correct. The word means 'to rise or sprout.' When used in the context of a heavenly body, i.e. the sun or moon, it means to rise. When used in the context of the earth, i.e. a tree, branch or shoot, it means to sprout. Now we can better understand what God is saying through Isaiah when He says:

'In that day the Branch (Sprout) of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the Fruit of the Land, excellent and comely' (Is. 4:2).

This text is a picture of the divine-humanity of King Messiah. The Messiah is both God and Man. 'The Branch of the LORD' represents something coming from the heavenly realm. This refers to God. 'The Fruit of the Land' from the earthly realm. This refers to His Humanity. How else could the Branch from the Seed of David be 'the LORD our Righteousness' (Jer. 23:6). Again the God-ness and the Human-ness of the Messiah are brought out in these two texts:

'A Star' (heavenly) 'shall arise out of Yakov...' (Num. 24:17) and 'A Shoot' (earthly) 'shall sprout from the stock of Jesse...' (Is. 11:1)

The Mystery hidden until the fullness of time. How our God would take on Flesh, become like us, that we

might be one with Him. Belief in what the God of Israel has done, in sending His Messiah Yeshua to die, allows God to count us righteous, just as He did Abraham. Abraham believed God when He said that his seed would be as many as the stars of Heaven, even though he could not have a child through Sarah who was barren (Gen. 15:1-6). The Blood or Life that Yeshua gave up for you is the Blood that atones for your sins. This allows God to not only forgive and cleanse you but also to transform you into a new creature, one who has the same nature as God. For God desires to be one with you.

Aaron had tremendous authority. As he stood between the living and the dead (Num. 17:41-50), he atoned for Israel and the wrath of God did not come unto the living. On the Day when God judges us, those whom Yeshua has made atonement for will enter into Eternal Life. Those who will not believe will know the wrath of God eternally. Aaron was a picture of the heavenly High Priest. Yeshua stands between Life and Death. All who would know the Life of God must believe that God has raised up this dead Branch and made Him High Priest of Israel.

## *The Living Temple*

God spoke to Moses about the Tabernacle saying:

‘And let them make Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shall you make it’ (Exodus 25:8-9).

Moses looked into Heaven and saw the heavenly Tabernacle, the Place where God dwells. From this pattern we have the earthly one. Aaron the High Priest is a picture of the heavenly High Priest Yeshua. The intercession that Aaron did shows us how Yeshua intercedes for us who believe in Him. The setting up of the Tabernacle, and later the Temple of Solomon, represent the Temple of Heaven that Moses saw. The Temple that Moses saw is made up of people, *Living Stones* whom God indwells, both Jews and Gentiles who trust in Yeshua as their High Priest.

## *Our Rock*

Yeshua is the Rock that was rejected by the builders (the Jewish leadership of His day) but proved to be the Chief Cornerstone, the one precious to God that all the other stones are lined up by. A Jew named Peter who walked with Yeshua wrote this:

‘As you come to Him, the Living Stone, rejected by people but chosen by God and precious to Him, you yourselves as living stones are being built into a spiritual House to be priests set apart for God, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Him through Yeshua the Messiah.’ (1st Peter 2:4-5)

This is why God says in Isaiah,

‘Look! I am laying in Zion a Stone, a chosen and precious Corner-Stone and whoever rests his trust on Him will certainly not be humiliated’ (Isaiah 28:16). Now to you who keep trusting, He is precious. But to those who are not trusting:

‘the very Stone that the builders rejected has become the Corner-Stone’ (Ps. 118:22),

‘a Stone that will make people stumble, a Rock over which they will trip.’ (Is. 8:14)

‘They are stumbling at the Word, disobeying it; as had been planned.’ (1st Peter 2:8)

God has planned from time immemorial to raise up for Himself a people that would be holy unto Him. The Messiah is building the Temple where God Himself will dwell among His people. We who believe that Yeshua is Adonai’s High Priest, are the Living Stones of the heavenly Temple that Moses saw.

The Name of the Branch is Yeshua. He has put aside the iniquity of us all in a single day, the day He hung upon the tree and died, giving His Blood for our sins. It was our sins that nailed Him to the tree, but what kept Him there was His Love for you and me.

God revealed His Chosen High Priest by raising Yeshua from the dead. A miracle similar to the dead branch (rod or staff) of Aaron’s that budded, blossomed and bore almonds. This is the deeper spiritual meaning that God established in designating Aaron as His High Priest by giving life to a dead branch: that all Israel would know that Yeshua is our High Priest.

# THE BRANCH

**A Poem by Dell Nowlin Griffith**

**edited by Avram Yehoshua**

Why do I not believe He is who they say? Does blindness cover my mind to this very day? And how does my heart possibly agree with what my eyes profess to see?

Elohim, Your creation was when the world was young. Adonai, upon your promises my faith has clung. Mashiach this people says you’ve already come! But the mention of that Name makes me numb.

Father of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, my God, make this clear. I must hear it from You...do You...do You hear? How can I turn away from all that my people hold dear? My God, My God, to me lend Your Ear.

What a noble cause to live to do; can even death have meaning?...but this, is this of You?!

I stumble, I stumble and fall in the dust, but how, Oh God, this Man can I trust? In that Name the atrocities there have been, yet there are many others not like them...and some are my kin.

For a moment lets just suppose I could be taken in. Forgive me Rabbi if this thought is sin. But surely the scholar of Scripture you are, you’ve pondered it...in your mind’s the same war.

What evidence exists to dispute their claim? The Truth, just the Truth, isn’t that our real aim? I must go with this whim, be it radical and bold. This question must be answered to be at peace with my soul.

All my life I’ve wanted to walk closer with God. I feel Him now all over me as this man talks of Jesse’s Rod. I see something in these Scriptures and that not by chance. It’s intricate and intertwined, this theme of his...this Branch.

Shall I enter in? Can I take that step? But it’s as if a Light is drawing me...about this moment I’ve wept. ‘Trust Me’ a small Voice comes to me. OK my God, I’ll try to believe that what my heart is saying can be.

But what do I tell my own? What of loyalty and tradition? Am I to think for myself and dispute my rabbi’s position? Long ago I read in a book that right or wrong a rabbi’s to be respected. How can I now

think for myself and endure from my teacher rejection?

You were despised and rejected You say. Why should I expect more kindly? My ancestors 'believed' You say, yet followed Korah blindly.

You were the means, the fulfillment I see, payment one time for all sin. Often I've wondered how Torah'd be kept with no Temple and altar within.

Now Yeshua, in the quietness of my thought, explain to me the mysteries in Torah I've never been taught. Teach me good now so to others I can proclaim, and back up with logic that Messiah is Your Name.

'My child, open your heart and receive, the meaning of the types, first how Sarah did conceive. Why is it hard to think that from a virgin I was born a Jew? Isaac was miraculous and that from a closed womb too' (Genesis 18:11-13; 21:1-7; Lk. 1:26-38; 2:1-38).

'Isaac was spared because the thicket snared the horns of the ram. But I fulfilled the sacrificial covenant once and for all as the Passover Lamb. It was the thistle that entangled the horns. Just as I did not weave for myself that crown of thorns' (Gen.. 22:13; Jn 19:1-7).

'If I had blasphemed as they say, why were stones not My death?, no the Tree was the only Way. My Blood sprinkled on the heavenly Tent was the price for Shalom and for the Temple veil to be rent' (Lev. 16; 17:11; Zech. 12:9-10; 13:1; Mt. 27:39-53).

'Not from bottom to top, but from top to bottom it was torn, so by whose hand? And why did, 'It is finished' precede that command? Righteous Blood was spilled reconciling God and man. A cry much louder than that of Abel; My perfect Sacrifice, your invitation to eat at God's Table.' (Jer. 31:33-34; Mt. 27:51; Lk. 23:44-46; Hebrews 9:11-14)

'The Matza striped and pierced you break each Great Day, wrapped in white and hidden away; returns at the third cup; for three days I was gone. Thus your Messiah for the leaven in your lives does atone.' (Ex. 12:1-27; 1st Cor. 5:6-8)

'As Abraham prepared the altar base, he prophesied My coming to die in your place. 'My son, God will provide Himself a lamb' Isaac was told. And a ram-lamb was sent that day, nor has any before Me come from God's heavenly Fold (Gen. 22:8, 14).

'I had to die an emblem of shame, for the wickedness in the hearts of all men. Without protest, a Lamb led to slaughter...My Life an offering for Isaac's sons and daughters' (Gen. 22:8,14; Is. 53:7).

'I walked the same path many times over in Scripture, so you could see and understand the completed picture. Even the crossing of Kidron Brook, I was there when David too, Jerusalem forsook' (2nd Samuel 15:23; John 18:1)

'Unleavened Bread I was crushed to be, fine flour sifted in Gethsemane. The Word in the Flesh as the Ark did represent. Can you not discern the type of Me that was meant?' (Isaiah 55:8-11; Ezk. 34:23; 2nd Cor. 9:10)

'I am the Word of God that was smashed and broken; now written on tablets inside of hearts, has not Adonai spoken?!' (Jer. 31:31-33; Ezk. 36:25-27)

'Joshua meditated on Torah night and day; was not this speaking of the spiritual Way? To be Children of Abraham you must do as he did. He kept Torah in his heart; there it was meditated and hid' (Joshua 1:5-9).

'I'm calling you now before Me, as Joseph did his brothers. Did they know him in Egypt?, did they have the same mothers? Nor was Joseph vengeful for their acts against him. Never did he

show hate; so why did he wait, before making himself known? Was it not for Benjamin's sake?'

'Pick up now the Holy Book and see Me on every page you read. Hear the song I sing to You, I impart My Holy Spirit to help you feed. Read again the Great News with this New Light you now possess. See Me there delivering you, healing you, ministering to your every distress' (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts).

'Now, to the Prophets return and discover Me anew. Finally you'll begin to see what it really means to be a Jew!

'The atrocities, the murders in My Name, I did not do. All people do I love including you. Even for those who scourged and reviled Me, be he Gentile or Jew, My own petition was voiced long ago, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.'

'Out of the issues of the heart are deaf ears made to hear. The heart of stone will never know I AM near. And blind eyes cannot be made to see, if first they don't look upon Me.'