

Signed, Sealed, Delivered

Our name is important. It is closely related to our reputation. **Our family name has the power to bless or burden.** There is nothing more encouraging than hearing the words, “Oh, you’re William’s daughter! He was one of the kindest and most helpful men that I have ever known.” On the flip side, it is troublesome to be reminded of our family's failures and foolishness. “Yes, I remember your brother. He always seemed to be in trouble. Whatever happened to him?” Good or bad, our name follows us no matter where we go.

So it was with the Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel’s grandfather was a king of Judah. Referred to by several names - Jehoiachin, Coniah, and Jeconiah - there was one name his grandfather could not shake: “cast off and cursed”. The Bible tells us that Jehoiachin “did what was evil in the sight of the LORD” (2 Kings 24:9) and that God removed the king as one would remove a signet ring, a symbol of power and authority. Furthermore, God decreed that none of Jehoiachin’s descendants would ever sit on the throne of David. The prophet Jeremiah described it like this:

“As surely as I live,” declares the Lord, “even if you, Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still pull you off. I will deliver you into the hands of those who want to kill you, those you fear—Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the Babylonians.” ... This is what the Lord says: “Record this man as if childless, a man who will not prosper in his lifetime, for none of his offspring will prosper, none will sit on the throne of David or rule anymore in Judah.” (Jer 22:24-25, 30)

Yet, our God, who rules with might, also restores.

In Haggai’s final oracle (2:20-23), God shares a personal message with Zerubbabel. In it, God reverses the curse on Jehoiachin and his descendants. The signet ring that had been cast off is returned. The grandson of a discarded, disgraced, and deported king is chosen and made to be like a signet ring.

What great assurance this must have given Zerubbabel! Moreover, what great hope it must have given God’s people, because rising above the personal message given to the son of Shealtiel is a message of even greater significance. It is a messianic message that points the reader beyond the “then and there” of Zerubbabel’s day to the coming of the Messiah and the future establishment of His kingdom. It is a message of restoration available to all people. All of God’s faithful promises to Eve,

Abraham, David, and so on are fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus (2 Cor 1:20) and are guaranteed through the presence of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14).

The Holy Spirit “seals” us permanently and authoritatively to our glorious inheritance in Christ (1 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 4:30). Like an engagement ring, He is the indwelling reminder for all believers that the Bridegroom loves His bride, is preparing a place for her, and that wedding feast will certainly take place! And, like a signet ring, He is a reminder of the permanence of our relational status. This is not your doing or my doing, but solely God’s doing.

Praise God and thank Him for His marvelous restorative work! Your name is “Christian” - what a blessing!

Ecclesiastes 7:1 (ESV) - *“A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth.”*