

An Apology from Philip Galley: A Vision of Joshua the High Priest

Dear Friends,

I would like to apologise for an important error in the delivery of my sermon from Zechariah 3 last Sunday. As often happens with mistakes such as this, I made the error several times during the message.

While it was factually accurate to refer to Zechariah's vision of Joshua the High Priest as depicting a foundation-laying ceremony from the ancient Near East, I ought not to have said that what was carried in the turban (*tsau-neef*) of Assurbanipal or other near-eastern kings was a foundation stone. Obviously, such a stone would be far too heavy and unwieldy to place on anyone's head, irrespective of how much cloth was wrapped beneath the basket! In reality, the king would carry a single brick – sometimes coupled with prayers or incantations – in his headgear, as part of the foundation-laying ceremony. Hence, we learn from the Archaeological Study Bible that Ur-Nanshe, King of Lagash (c.2600 BC) was depicted as wearing such a turban containing a basket for this kind of ceremony. I also referred to Assurbanipal completing the work of his father Esarhaddon in the restoration of the temple of the Babylonian god Marduk in Esagila, in 660BC. Below is an image of Assurbanipal as "basket-bearer", from the British Museum:



I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who pointed out to me my mistake in suggesting that it was a "foundation stone" that would have been carried in the basket on the turban (*tsau-neef*) of Joshua the High Priest, in Zechariah's vision.

None of this detracts from the main thrust of my message last Sunday, regarding what Zechariah was seeing prophetically enacted before him. *"For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day."* (Zechariah 3:9)

It is a wonderful thing that as we engage with God's Word together, there will be times for correction. I am grateful for the loving way this was done.

Your friend and brother in Christ,

Philip