

Zechariah 3:1-10

The Cleansing of Joshua the High Priest

Zechariah was a priest, and younger than Haggai. They both were used by God to encourage Zerubbabel and Jeshua to finish rebuilding the Temple.

Zechariah chapters 1 and 2 issue a call to repentance - as in Haggai - and assurance that Jerusalem and the cities of Judah will be rebuilt, along with the Temple. The surrounding Gentile nations have been presuming that God will not recompense their past actions against His people, but a reckoning is coming.

The third chapter introduces a stark image:

Zechariah 3:1 - "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him."

The scene is a courtroom, with Satan as the "accuser of the brethren" (**Revelation 12:10**).

Zechariah 3:2 - "And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

The Angel of the Lord - which many scholars see as the pre-incarnate Christ - calls on the Father (the Lord) to rebuke Satan.

It seems to reflect Christ at His crucifixion, having taken on the "filthy garments" i.e. the burden of the sins of all the world, having to undergo the further suffering of the accusations and condemnation from Satan. Jesus, still speaking as a human, calls on the Father to rebuke the Accuser.

The reason for the rebuke? Although the accusations are true, and the sins are real, on the cross the sins were in the process of being erased and forgiven.

No further accusations can stand.

- **Romans 8:33-34** - "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

If you have looked to the blood and righteousness of Christ for pardon and justification, then any time your thoughts accuse you or question the extent of God's grace and forgiveness, you can know they are from Satan. And you can say "The Lord rebuke you."

(See **Jude 1:9** when the Archangel Michael contended with Satan over the body of

Moses and said "the Lord rebuke you.")

"is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

Rashi says, "It is related in the Aggadah of [chapter] Helek (Sanh. 93a) that he [Joshua] was cast into the fire with Ahab son of Kolaiah and his colleague (**Jeremiah 29:22**) from which he marvelously escaped."

More likely, it means that Joshua was plucked out of Babylon, along with his companion Jews, for the particular service to God of rebuilding the Temple.

As a half-charred brand plucked from the fire, the High Priest Jeshua offers not much to work with. But it is all God's power anyway!

'I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee'

In the vision, Zechariah sees Joshua the high priest dressed in "filthy garments." These represent the sins of God's people, which God has forgiven.

To illustrate this, Joshua is given clean garments and a clean turban, and along with his fellow priests is given free access to the Temple.

Recall that the used, filthy garments of the priests were not bleached or cleaned but made into wicks for the large lamp stands in the Temple courtyard to light the darkness during the Feast of Tabernacles.

We are all in Joshua's situation, clothed with sin.

- **Isaiah 64:6** - (King James Version) "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

But our garments have been changed, and we have "put on" Christ:

- **Isaiah 61:10-62:3** - (New International Version) - "I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

- **Romans 13:14** (NIV) - "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ."

- **Revelation 19:8** - "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Christ as the Branch

Zechariah 3:8 NET - "Listen now, Joshua the high priest, both you and your colleagues who are sitting before you, all of you are a symbol that I am about to introduce - my servant, the Branch."

The Messiah, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it. Another name of the Messiah is *Menachem*, i.e. the Comforter; that name is numerically the same as "*Tzemach*", the Branch or the "shoot."

- **Isaiah 4:2** - "In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel."

Although the Branch will be glorious and beautiful, He starts from humble and unlikely origins:

- **Isaiah 53:2** - "He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no stately form or majesty to attract us, no beauty that we should desire Him."

- **Jeremiah 23:5** - "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." (see also Jeremiah 33:15)

- **Isaiah 11:1-4** - "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

"And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

"And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

"But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."

Christ as The Stone

We're introduced to a different metaphor - the Stone.

Zechariah 3:9 - "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."

The image of Messiah as a stone appears throughout the Bible.

- **Isaiah 28:16** - "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a

foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."

Confirmed as pointing to Jesus:

- **1 Peter 2:6** - "For it stands in Scripture: "See, I lay in Zion a stone, a chosen and precious cornerstone; and the one who believes in Him will never be put to shame."

Jesus quotes **Psalm 118:22-23** concerning Himself as the Stone:

- **Matthew 21:42,44** - "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?...And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

The two-fold nature of the stone;

- **Isaiah 8:14** - "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

And confirmed in Acts:

- **Acts 4:11** - "This Jesus is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.'

He is the foundation stone of the spiritual Temple:

- **Ephesians 2:20-21** - "...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. In Him the whole building is fitted together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord."

- **1 Corinthians 3:11** - "For no one can lay a foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ."

- **1 Peter 2:4-5** - "As you come to Him, the living stone, rejected by men but chosen and precious in God's sight, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ..."

The Seven Eyes

Here, Zechariah's prophecy emphasizes the stone's seven eyes. The number seven signifies perfect completeness. So seven eyes refers to Jesus' all-seeing wisdom, watchfulness, judgment and knowledge.

The rabbis also interpreted it as referring to seven men who observed the stone; the

Targum renders the words, "upon one stone, seven eyes look to it." R. Joseph Kimchi interprets these eyes to mean seven men, Joshua, Ezra, Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, and the three prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi:

In Revelation, John saw the Lamb having seven eyes:

- **Revelation 5:6** - "The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which represent the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth."

Later, Zechariah expands on this image:

- **Zechariah 4:10** -- "For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven eyes of the LORD, which scan the whole earth, will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel."

Engravings

" I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." -

This could refer to the he onyx stones, which had the names of the children of Israel engraved on them, worn on the shoulders of the high priest. The engravings can also be translated "piercings," which points to His nail prints and the wound of the spear at the crucifixion.

The "one day" in which Israel's iniquity was removed was at the crucifixion, when Jesus took all sin upon Himself and bore it away.

- **Hebrews 7:27** - "...for this he did once, when he offered up himself."

A Promise of Peace

Zechariah 3:10 - "In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree."

This was the way the people in ancient times depicted peace and tranquillity, bounty and contentment. No enemies, but all are neighbors. This is the state of all who know Christ and are partakers of His grace.

The prophet Micah expanded on this picture:

- **Micah 4:3-4** - "...Then they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will no longer take up the sword against nation, nor will they train anymore for war. And each man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, with no one to frighten him. For the mouth of the LORD of Hosts has spoken."

The point of these visions and prophecies was to encourage and exhort the people to continue with the rebuilding of the Temple.

It should encourage us even more, who are forming and building the true spiritual Temple, who have received the inheritance of the Kingdom. The scriptures call this "edifying" or to build up.

As we said before, the "rebuilding" of the spiritual Temple never ends as long as history continues.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:11** - "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."

- **Romans 14:19** - "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

- **1 Corinthians 14:26** - "Let all things be done unto edifying."