

## The Journey Through Zechariah

### Session 4 Chapter 3

#### I. Introduction:

- A. I really want you to take the time over the next few weeks, to really get in touch with what these two chapters are saying. I believe they can take us from a place of passivity to a place of being passionate about our God. About our assignment or calling that God has on our individual lives. These chapters can even change the way we approach life.
- B. We see a one sided covenant that is fueled by His amazing love. He is saying, "I know your mistakes and here **I AM** to comfort you and love you; to pray for you, to encourage you, not to give up on you."
- C. The Lord is always after relationship with us — from Genesis to Revelation. This was the purpose of the temple (the House of Prayer) to bring them to a place of His presence to relate to them, to have relationship with them — not to live in shame, blame, or condemnation, but to be loved and to be able to love Him with their whole heart.
- D. We cannot have a casual view of our assignment from God. Sometimes the body of Christ looks at their assignment as a volunteer activity. They think that they can quit when it gets to hard or when it's no longer "fun." You may not enjoy it at times, but if you know it's from God, you fulfill it no matter what the obstacles could be. The Apostle Paul was very clear about finishing the race! He said, "Let us run with determination the race that is set before us, keeping our eyes fixed on JESUS from the beginning of the race to the end!"
- E. The Lord answers in the next **two visions (Zech. 3-4)** by revealing the abundance of His grace. He solves the problem of how a holy God can dwell among a sinful people. His kingdom is not based on our merits but on His grace in us.
- F. In the **first three visions** we covered in chapter 1 and 2, the Lord promises to manifest His zeal and mercy by returning to personally live in Jerusalem, to fill the temple with His glory, to take full possession of the land of Israel, and to draw all nations to worship and obey the LORD (1:16; 2:10-12).
- G. In Zechariah 3 and 4 the Lord addresses the **two main obstacles** that hinder His people from enjoying their destiny. The first obstacle is **our sin**; therefore He provides spiritual cleansing and renewal (Zech. 3). The next obstacle is **our lack of resources**; therefore He gives supernatural provision (Zech. 4). In other words, we need His grace for continued **spiritual renewal** and **supernatural provision**. To seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all things will be added on to you. (Math: 6:33)

## II. Chapter 3: Joshua's Cleansing by the Angel of The Lord (Vision 4 of 8 Visions in one night)

**A. Zech 3:1-10** *1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. 2 And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" 3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. 4 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." 5 And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the Lord stood by. 6 Then the Angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, 7 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'If you will walk in My ways, And if you will keep My command, Then you shall also judge My house, And likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk Among these who stand here. 8 'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and your companions who sit before you, For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH. 9 For behold, the stone That I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription,' Says the Lord of hosts, 'And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. 10 In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'Everyone will invite his neighbor Under his vine and under his fig tree.' "*

### **B. Vision 4 has four parts:**

The vision has four parts: the heavenly scene (3:1-2), a symbolic act (3:3-5), an exhortation to wholeheartedness (3:6-7), and a revelation of the coming Messiah and His salvation (3:8-10). In this heavenly scene (3:1-2), Zechariah saw Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord (the pre-incarnate Christ). Satan presented a case against Joshua accusing him of not being qualified for leadership. The problem was that Joshua was in fact guilty (3:4). Joshua was fully cleansed and then called to walk in wholehearted obedience to the Lord (3:7). He and his leadership team were to be a prophetic sign of the Messiah and of His grace (3:8-9). The whole nation of Israel will eventually partake of the Messiah's extravagant grace (3:10).

### **C. The breakdown of Vision 4:**

Let's look at verses 1 and 2 and break them down.

### **D. Verse 1-2**

*1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. 2 And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"*

- a. Joshua on trial before God and Satan, v. 1.
- b. Joshua (as a representative of the entire nation of Israel *cf. Zech 3:8-9; Heb. 9:7*) stands before the Lord (**v.1**) (posture of repentance) dressed in filthy garments

(v.3) (representative of Israel's sin and rebellion against God). Satan is standing there to accuse him before God (v.1 cf. **Job 1:6-12; Rev.12:10**). He wants to convince God that, because of sin, Joshua is disqualified from fulfilling his priestly calling and should be cast from His presence.

- c. What God did for Joshua, He will do for Israel as a nation and for each believer in Jesus.
- d. Joshua had no merit of his own.
- e. Zechariah sees Joshua, the high priest (whose name means, "Yahweh saves") standing before the angel of the Lord, who is identified in 3:2 as "the Lord." As we have seen, the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is Jesus Christ in pre-incarnate form. The Hebrew expression "standing before" is used of priests standing before the Lord to minister (Deut. 10:8; Judges 20:28; 2 Chron. 29:11; Ezek. 44:15). So the picture is that Joshua is attempting to minister before the Lord in his priestly capacity. But he is clothed with filthy garments, representing his own sins and the sins of the nation. This gives Satan, whose name means accuser or adversary, grounds to attack him.
- f. You may wonder, "Why didn't he put on his finest, clean robes before he went to minister before the Lord?" Perhaps he did. But what looked clean to men on earth did not look so clean when it came into the brilliant light of God's holy presence. In God's sight, even our most righteous deeds are filthy rags.
- g. In the vision, Satan is standing at Joshua's right hand to accuse him, In Revelation 12:10, Satan is called the accuser of our brethren, "who accuses them before our God day and night." He doesn't need to do a lot of homework to prepare his case. He just points to our many sins and says, "This man does not deserve to be Your child. He does not deserve to get into Your heaven. And he most certainly does not deserve to serve Your cause. I rest my case."
- h. The Lord did not receive Satan's accusation against Joshua, but rebuked Satan twice (3:2). The Lord said two things: He rebuked Satan and described Joshua as a brand plucked from the fire.

*And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" (Zech. 3:2)*

- i. The Lord rebuked Satan, not because the accusations against Joshua were false, but because of God's gracious love for and sovereign choice of Joshua and Israel. The Lord will not tolerate Satan's accusation against us. Neither should we. We must make this same declaration of truth over our heart day by day.

- j. **This is Huge!** At the same time as Satan was accusing Joshua in the spirit realm, Tattenai, the Persian governor of Samaria, was accusing Joshua (Ezra 5:3), saying that he had no right to build the temple (Ezra 5:1-17). Tattenai governed the region beyond the River, west of the Euphrates to the Sea.
    - i. *Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah...prophesied to the Jews. So Zerubbabel...and Jeshua...rose up and began to build the house of God. At the same time Tattenai the governor of the region beyond the River... spoke thus to them: "Who has commanded you to build this temple?" They sent a letter to him [King Darius]. Let it be known to the king that...the temple of the great God, which is being built with heavy stones, and timber is being laid in the walls. Let the king send us his pleasure concerning this matter. (Ezra 5:1-17)*
  - k. And just as the Lord rebuked Satan for accusing Joshua in the spirit realm, so the Persian King Darius rebuked Tattenai for troubling Joshua, and then commanded him to give financial provision to Zerubbabel to build the temple (Ezra 6:6-12).
    - i. *Now therefore, Tattenai...Let the work of this house of God alone...Let the cost be paid at the king's expense from taxes on the region beyond the River; this is to be given immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered...I Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently. (Ezra 6:6-12)*
  - l. **The Lord who chose Jerusalem:** The God who chose weak and sinful Jerusalem is the God of grace who chooses those who do not deserve salvation and cannot save themselves. The Lord Himself answered the accusation as the God who chooses to redeem sinful and helpless people.
  - m. **Brand plucked from the fire:** The Lord describes Joshua (and Israel) to Satan as a brand plucked from the fire (3:2). Israel had just been delivered from the fire of the Babylonian captivity. She was like a burning stick that God had pulled out of a fire to save her from total destruction. God will not allow Israel to be totally destroyed in the fires of His judgment. Israel has almost been destroyed several times in history, such as in 70 AD. It will happen again in the Tribulation (13:8; Jer. 30:7; Rev. 12:13-17), but God will intervene in mercy. Having snatched Joshua, or Israel, as a brand from the fire, He has no intention of allowing them to be totally destroyed.
  - n. The message is that Israel's destiny in God's promises rests on His sovereign choice of Israel, which depends on God's character and faithfulness. As we consider Jerusalem's history of rebellion against God and **His refusal to end the relationship**, it gives us confidence in the Lord and His ways.
- E. Now, let's explore Verses 3- 5
- "Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the***

***filthy garments from him.” And to him He said, “See, I have removed your iniquity...and I will clothe you with rich robes.” ...I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.”***

- a. Here we have Joshua the high priest as a mediator of the people, really representing not only himself, but the nation of Israel. It give’s me the feeling of a Heavenly court scene. If he would be rejected all of Israel would be rejected. Don’t forget in the previous verse Satan is looking on with jealous eyes. I try to imagine this vision and what it looked like and how it was played out.
- b. Joshua is guilty, a man of sin, a nation of sin. **Filthy garments** represent our sin.
- c. Verse four is so amazing to me, it represents to me that the Lord has caused all of our sin to be forgiven, all of our iniquity’s to be gone. **( Lev: 26: 44 ) Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God.** A story about Martin Luther: “The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”
- d. **Rich robes:** The rich robes are symbolic of being clothed with God’s righteousness and with priestly robes (Ex. 28:8-9; Lev. 8:7-9; Isa. 61:10; 2 Cor. 5:17, 21). The truths of the gospel of grace are set forth in this passage. In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus says that the father put the best robes on his son (Lk. 15:22)
- e. **“For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments.” (Isa. 61:10)**
- f. **See:** The Lord exhorted Joshua to “see” that He had removed his sin and clothed him with rich robes (3:4). We must “see” these truths in our own lives and understand how they apply to Israel.
- g. **Verse 5 – I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by. (Zech. 3:5)**
- h. Most scholars find the turban to represent leadership and a reinstatement as a return for Israel to a priestly nation, which I believe to be true, but I also see it as the renewing of Joshua’s mind, to be a living Holy sacrifice on to God. (Romans 12: 1-2)
- i. **Intercession:** Zechariah asked the Lord to put a turban on Joshua’s head (3:5). His intercessory declaration was accepted. Perhaps the Lord purposely left out

the turban to allow Zechariah to participate in the process through intercession. The expression “I said” in v. 5 indicates that Zechariah was standing in the heavenly council in this vision.

F. Verses 6-7

***Then the Angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command [perform My service; NAS], then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here.’”***

- a. The word *admonished* means to warn in an earnest way. Joshua was to walk with *godly character* in his personal life.
- b. He was to respond with *diligent service* by being faithful to the assignment the Lord had given him. Keeping the command meant fulfilling the *charge* that God had given him to keep the temple sanctuary and to perform the priestly duties related to it. To “keep My command” is translated as to “keep the charge” (KJV, RSV) or to “perform My service” (NAS), referring to his priestly responsibilities. This is made clear at the end of verse 7 where he was to have “charge of My courts,” i.e., responsibility in the temple.
- c. The Lord promised to bless Joshua in three ways for responding in wholeheartedness (3:7b). ***“Then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here.” (Zech. 3:7b)***
  - i. ***You shall judge My house:*** To judge or have leadership in God’s house or His kingdom purposes. Faithful service leads to more opportunities for service.
  - ii. ***You shall have charge of My courts:*** To have leadership in the Lord’s court or temple (or the house of prayer). Jesus promised to make overcomers “a pillar in His temple” (Rev. 3:12), which speaks of receiving a position of authority in the Millennium.
  - iii. ***Places to walk among these who stand here:*** “These who stand here” refers to the angels who stood in God’s presence (3:4). The NAS says, “I will give him free access to stand among those that are with you now.” This promise includes experiencing nearness to God, access to the angelic realm and the heavenly council, and eternal rewards.
  - iv. He could come into the Lord's presence like the angels who stood before Him. Joshua's commission pertained to a priestly function within the framework of a covenant **relationship**. As always, faithful, obedient service leads to further opportunities for service. To me isn't this

speaking of the hope that is coming to the whole earth, A Holy priest hood through the Grace of Jesus, the blood of Jesus.

- v. Jesus promised that some of His servants would experience an open heaven (Jn. 1:51). ***"You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending."***

**G. Verses 8-10 — The Prophetic Declaration of the Messiah!**

***"Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign; for behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH. For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua... (Zech. 3:8-9a)***

- a. **Hear:** They were to be careful to "hear" that as a prophetic picture, or model, they would give insight into what God is like and inspire others to imitate their faith. In other words, they were to "hear" that what they were doing mattered to God, and that it would affect their destiny and **relationship** with God, as well as many others who would imitate them.
- b. **Wondrous sign:** They were to be a wondrous, or important, type, or picture, pointing to the Messiah as the "Branch" and the "Stone," and of how to function in priestly ministry."
- c. **As Branch,** the Messiah is represented in the OT in four different aspects of his character (King, Servant, Man, and God). These aspects are developed in the NT in the four Gospels: (1) in Matthew as the **Branch** of David, i.e., as the Davidic messianic King (Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5; 33:15); (2) in Mark as the Lord's Servant, the **Branch** (Isa 42:1; 49:6; 50:10; 52:13; Ezek 34:23-24; Zech 3:8); (3) in Luke as the Man whose name is the **Branch** (Zech 6:12); and (4) in John as the **Branch** of the Lord (Isa 4:2).
- d. Zechariah also saw in the vision a "stone . . . set" in front of Joshua. Presently He is the foundation stone, the chief cornerstone of the church (Eph. 2:19- 22). And in the future He will be the great stone that smites the nations (Dan. 2:35, 45). The stone that Zechariah saw had "seven eyes" not real clear but many believe it represents all knowledge and the wisdom of an all knowing God. The writing might be a declaration to the removal of Israel's sin in a day.
- e. **I will remove the iniquity:** In one day, the sin of the land of Israel will be removed (3:9). In one day, Jesus accomplished the redemption of Israel on the cross. And the day of His return will be the day of Israel's national salvation (3:9; 12:10-13:2; Rom. 11:26). The way Joshua and his team received God's grace in one day was both a sign and the assurance that in one day Israel would be saved and qualified for her priestly role.

**f. In that Day: *In that day...everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree. (Zech. 3:10)***

- i. In that day, the Lord promised, the Israelites will all "invite" their (Gentile) neighbors to join them in enjoying their peace and prosperity. Israel would enjoy peace and security as never before.
- ii. There will be agricultural prosperity—as well as spiritual prosperity.
- iii. To sit under “his” vine and fig tree indicates that each one will personally be prosperous. This scene pictures the gladness of each Israelite as they invite friends to partake of hospitality under their vine and fig tree in the Millennium. Zechariah develops this idea (8:4-5).

### III. Summary

- A. In summary, Vision Four describes a day of redemption in which Joshua the high priest, representative of Israel as a priestly people, will be cleansed of his impurities and reinstated in his capacity as high priest.
- B. The “grace message” in Zechariah 3 emphasizes God’s extravagant grace that leads us to wholehearted obedience to Jesus in our personal lifestyle, personal **relationship**, and our ministry assignment. The grace of God in the gift of righteousness is freely available to all (3:4), but we differ in the measure of our experience of His grace, according to how we respond to it (3:7). The Lord gave Joshua the free gift of righteousness, but left it to him to choose to walk in wholeheartedness. By choosing to obey, Joshua could affect some of the quality of his spiritual experience and that of those under his leadership. God’s grace offers us God’s love and the power to love Him in return. This chapter brings great hope to me and should to you.
- C. My closing thoughts on Chapter Three are these:
  - a. My God is a God that will never leave me or forsake me.
  - b. My God rebukes and repeals satan ... even when he is breathing down my neck.
  - c. My God has plucked me from the fire
  - d. My God has given me a robe of righteousness.
  - e. My God has renewed my thoughts.
  - f. My God has surrounded me with his caring Angels.
  - g. My God shall expand my boundaries.
  - h. My God has set me free from myself.
  - i. My God holds the future and holds me.
  - j. My God wants to have a personal relationship with me.
  - k. My God’s love never fails!

That’s what this chapter says to me. What is this chapter saying to you? There is one more thing: **IT’S ALL ABOUT JESUS!**