

**Message #6****Zechariah 3:1-10**

Have you ever seen yourself as a dirty, vile, corrupt sinner as a believer? Have you ever thought about God and thought about yourself to the point where you hate yourself and hate what you look like? Have you ever been looking into the Scriptures and been convicted that you are filthy and pathetic?

I'll bet most people who go to church today haven't and probably one reason for that is because they hear slop at church. Most churches portray God as a God of total toleration and downplay the fact that He is Holy and Righteous. Most churches portray God as a God that loves you just the way you are. He is happy with you and you are His buddy. In fact, there is a Christian psychology that is taught to people that says, "esteem yourself" and "love yourself," don't ever loathe yourself. James said, "Draw near to God...Be miserable and mourn" (James 4:8-9).

Israel has never seen herself honestly before God. When John and Jesus preached repentance to national Israel, they said repent of what. We are Abraham's offspring. We are good to go. We have our religion and we have our works. God says what you need is My righteousness and you don't have that. Mine is a righteousness that only I can give you. That point is clearly seen in this fourth vision of Zechariah:

**ZECHARIAH SEES A VISION OF SATANIC ACCUSING, GRACE CLEANSING AND PRIESTLY SERVING.**

**Verse 1** begins by saying, "The LORD showed me." This is a vision clearly seen by Zechariah. It is clear from this that he specifically is able to identify the participants. There are five participants in this vision and obviously Zechariah sees every one of them:

- 1) There is Joshua, the high priest. He is a representative of the people.
- 2) There is "the angel of the LORD" - a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ.
- 3) There is Satan - he is always the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10).
- 4) There are attending angels.
- 5) There is Zechariah, he is there to witness this.

Now we may make the following observations about this vision:

**OBSERVATION #1 – Joshua is the high priest. 3:1a**

Zechariah knew who this guy was. Haggai the prophet, who lived at the same time as Zechariah, said that when the 50,000 Jews migrated from Babylon to Jerusalem, Zerubbabel was the governor and Joshua was the high priest, who was faithfully serving God (Haggai 2:1-4). Both Ezra and Nehemiah spell his name "Jeshua" (Ezra 2:2; Neh. 7:7), but it is the same person whose name means "Jehovah saves."

Do not overlook this point. Joshua was a good man. Joshua was a believer. He was in ministry for goodness sakes. He was a high-ranking minister. Joshua is not an atheist or an agnostic. He is not some heathen God-mocker. This is the high priest who was dedicated to serving God.

**OBSERVATION #2** – Joshua, the high priest, is standing before the angel of the LORD. **3:1b**

Joshua is standing before the most powerful judge of all—the LORD Himself. The angel of the LORD is none other than Jesus Christ, the second member of the Trinity.

Now this phrase “standing before” God is one that is used of a high priest standing before the Lord to minister (Deut. 10:8; Judges 20:28; II Chron. 29:11; Ez. 44:15). So what we have here is a picture of a religious leader who does things for God, standing before God, in a ministry capacity.

**OBSERVATION #3** – Satan is standing at the right hand to accuse Joshua.  
**3:1c**

The name “Satan” is only found in Zechariah 3:1-2 in the prophets. The Hebrew word is used 27 times in the O.T.. The word means adversary. Satan is a very high-ranking angel and he is the leader of a demonic angelic army.

The fact that Satan is standing refers to the fact that he is standing in the place where an accuser would stand in a court setting. As Stephen Miller said, “Satan may be compared to a prosecuting attorney” (*Zechariah*, p. 161).

According to Psalm 109:6, this was the place where the accuser stood. He is accusing. Satan is standing before Jesus Christ making accusations against Joshua, Israel, Jerusalem, the Promised Land and, frankly, we know from Revelation that he does the same thing against us (Rev. 3:10).

Satan is an accuser. We may remember that he accused Job of serving God out of selfish motives (Job 1:6-11). Satan to this day is still in the accusing business (Rev. 12:9-10), but God will one day put an end to that. Now by what we gather, Satan is making legal accusations against the people of God.

Notice carefully that whatever the accusations were, Joshua doesn’t try to deny them. He stands there quietly. Joshua is one of the most spiritually-minded men on earth and Satan is on an accusing diatribe pointing out his sins.

This is one time Satan tells the truth. I love what one commentator said, Satan doesn’t need to do a lot of homework to prepare his case. Frankly, it is air tight against every one of us. Satan and his demons can point out all kinds of sins we have actually committed even as a believer and Joshua quietly stands before God, knowing he is hearing truth.

**OBSERVATION #4** – The LORD rebukes Satan. **3:2**

Now Satan was in the process of accusing Joshua for his sinfulness and unworthiness and the Lord had heard enough. **The one who comes to Joshua’s defense is not Joshua; it is the LORD.**

**Rebuke #1** - The LORD rebukes Satan.

What is interesting about the rebukes is that they are not based on false allegations being made by Satan. God does not say Satan, your allegations and accusations are all a bunch of lies. In fact, God does not deny the fact that Joshua was sinful and had done sinful things. The truth is Satan did have ammunition to make the accusations. **The rebuke is not based on Satan’s accusations; it is based on the election of God. This rebuke is not based on any good works Joshua had performed; it is based on the Sovereign election of God.**

**Rebuke #2** - The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebukes Satan.

Jerusalem is a dirty city, spiritually speaking, but it is God’s choice of His city. This is interesting because Joshua is obviously representative of Israel as her high priest. In fact, not only will sin be removed from Joshua, but from the land. So Joshua stands before the LORD as a representative of people, Israel, Jerusalem, the Temple and the Land.

**Rebuke #3** - The LORD who chose to pluck the brand from the fire rebukes Satan.

God says I have decided by sovereign election to choose Joshua, Israel, Jerusalem and Palestine as My people and place and I have decided to save them from the fire. They deserve to be burned in the fire, but I am electing them out of that status.

See, this is what most people don’t understand. We are not saved by our works or merit. **We are saved by the fire brand plucking election of God.** We all deserve hell and the only reason we aren’t going to hell is because God has plucked us out of that condition and has put us on a path of blessing.

Carefully observe the words of this chapter:

“The LORD rebuke you”

“The LORD has chosen Jerusalem”

The LORD commands “Remove the filthy garments”

The LORD “Clothes you with festal robes”

The LORD will “send forth My servant the Branch”

The LORD “will remove the iniquity of the land in one day”

Who is responsible for all of this redemptive work? Who is responsible for the salvation? It is God and God alone. He does the choosing and He does the saving.

Now people ask the question, how can God bless people who have been filthy? How can God have a relationship with people who have miserably failed Him? How can God possibly bless people about whom Satan can bring real accusations? The answer is because of His election. **The election of God is a doctrine of the pure grace of God.**

**OBSERVATION #5** – Joshua was standing before the LORD in filthy garments. **3:3**

The word “filthy” refers to garments that have come “from the bottom of an outhouse.” These clothes are not only dirty, they are smelly and vile and offensive. Now one question we would ask is why didn’t Joshua put on better clothes? If you are going to minister for the Lord, you don’t put on clothes covered with manure. Why didn’t he put on clean clothes? The answer is “he did.” He was dressed his best before men. He looked good as a minister before other humans, but not before God.

What is this picturing? This is picturing Joshua before God, Israel before God and us before God. We all need to realize this. No matter how good we think our works are, they are filthy and they stink before God. We have nothing we can offer God that measures up to His righteousness. Our works, even our best works are as filthy rags.

Satan’s accusations were all true. Joshua had done some filthy things in his lifetime. I want you to remember this. Joshua is a high priest, so we could say he is the best of the best and he still stands filthy before God.

People do not realize how sinful they actually are, but when they get before God, one day they will fully know it. This is why it is so important for us to see ourselves honestly before God.

If someone came into your house in filth and manure, would you want to fellowship with them? Would you sit down and have a meal with someone who just crawled out of the bottom of an outhouse? Obviously no. We would not want to be in the same room with the person. So it is with God. He cannot fellowship with filth and filthy people.

Just recently, I read an article written by a Jewish Rabbi, Dr. Reuvin Hammer. The article was entitled, “The Jewish View of Sin.” It was interesting to see that Judaism doesn’t believe that human beings are sinful. People are not born sinful and they do not have a sin nature. Now of course in part, this is a reason they do not turn to Jesus Christ. Israel still does not see the need to repent. Israel’s idea of sin and evil is in social terms, not individual terms. So to the Jewish mind, sin is not a problem between man and God; it is a matter of a relationship between man and man.

Well when we come to this text in Zechariah, it is quite clear that the problem of sin is a problem between individuals and God.

**OBSERVATION #6** – The LORD completely cleanses a sinner by His grace. **3:4-5**

This is a pure grace process. There are three steps in the process:

**Step #1** - The LORD authorized this and spoke this. **3:4a**

This was not instigated by Joshua. Joshua had nothing to say. The LORD initiates this salvation and cleansing.

**Step #2** - The LORD commands angels to remove filthy garments. **3:4b**

God is the one who changes the garments. This represents the removal of filthy, sinful, moral defilement. This is a judicial declaration of justification. He declares Joshua righteous. His iniquity is taken from him. The fact that He has the authority to remove iniquity shows the deity of the Lord.

**Step #3** - The LORD clothes him with royal clothing. **3:5**

Now Zechariah interrupts this and says don't forget to put the turban on his head. The LORD took away the filth and made him clean, but he needed the turban. The turban was that which was worn by a high priest and on it were the words "Holy to the LORD" (Ex. 28:36; 39:30). God took this filthy sinner and clothed him and made him a glorious and beautiful priest.

None of this is what Joshua deserved. He deserved to be burned in the fire. But in pure grace God elects him and God cleanses him. This is what he did for Joshua, this is what He will do for Israel and Jerusalem and this is what He has done for us.

**OBSERVATION #7** – Joshua has responsibilities in view of this cleansing. **3:6-7**

In view of the fact that Joshua had been cleansed, the LORD gave Joshua two responsibilities:

**Responsibility #1** - Walk in God's ways. **3:7a**

Now this first responsibility is one of knowing God's Word and walking in God's ways. It is one of personal responsibility.

**Responsibility #2** - Perform God's service. **3:7b**

This second responsibility has to do with how he functions as high priest.

Now if Joshua would take that seriously and do that, there would be three results:

**(Result #1)** - He would have a governing responsibility in the house of God. **3:7**

He would hold high position of government in the house of God. He would have continual service in the Temple.

**(Result #2)** - He would be put in charge of God's courts. **3:7d**

He would actually make decisions in regard to various matters. He would guard the sacred places to make sure nothing ever defiled it.

**(Result #3)** - He would be given free access into God's presence. **3:7e**

He would have special access to God. This is a special sacred privilege. He would actually have the privilege of going into the presence of God where these angels are.

**OBSERVATION #8** – Joshua and others need to know that this is a symbol of the cleansing that Jesus Christ will one day bring to Israel's land. **3:8-10**

The cleansing of Joshua prefigures the cleansing of all sinners and the cleansing of Israel that would come through Jesus Christ.

**Jesus Christ is God's servant. 3:8a** - Christ would first appear in servant form to die before King form to reign.

**Jesus Christ is God's branch. 3:8b** - That noun "the branch" is an O.T. Messianic title (Is. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). It has to do with the fact that the Messiah would come through the line of David.

**Jesus Christ is God's stone. 3:9a** - Many passages of Scripture refer to Christ as the stone or rock that brings salvation (Gen. 49:24; Ps. 118:22; Is. 28:16; Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:19-20; I Pet. 2:6-8). He is the One who will bring judgment on the nations

**The stone had seven eyes. 3:9b** - This refers to the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God. He sees everything, including every filthy sin committed by every single person. He has total and complete knowledge of everything and is able to judge all.

**The stone will have an engraving on it. 3:9c** - We are not sure what the engraving is. Many believe this is a reference to the fact that He will have marks on Him - cross scars, thorn scars and spear scars.

**Notice what He will do, He will remove all iniquity in one day.** In one moment of time, Jesus Christ will declare Israel clean and the land will be clean. According to **verse 10**, in that day everyone in Israel will be blessed and will invite others to share the blessings.

S. Lewis Johnson told a famous story from the life of Martin Luther. The story is the reason for probably the most famous ink spot in this world which is located on the wall of Wartburg Castle in Germany. Luther fell asleep and dreamed that Satan appeared with a long scroll and started reading the list of Luther's sins. As he read, Luther jumped up and cried it is all true Satan and many more sins I have committed in my life which are known to God only; but write at the bottom of your list "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin." Then Luther grabbed the inkwell and threw it at the Devil and where it hit the wall is now a famous ink spot.

Satan is our accuser, but Christ is our advocate. We are filthy sinners, but by God's election we have a righteousness that He has pronounced on us that cleanses us from all of our filth. Since we have been redeemed, we need to pursue an obedient and active faithfulness to the Lord for this will bring rewards and an honorable position in eternity.

Have you ever seen yourself honestly before God? Why not admit the truth right now?

In one moment of time, He can declare you righteous. Believe on Him and you will be plucked from the fire.