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Vision #4: The Radical Grace of God

Zechariah 3:1-10

The heart of this passage revolves around one key question: What is God's disposition toward you when you sin? I'm NOT interested in the answer you might give in a theology class. RATHER, I want you to consider the answer one might give if they looked at your life!

Now in Scripture, we have a couple of examples of God's disposition when it came to His sinning children. Speaking of the time David sought to move the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 6:6-7, "But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God."

The glorious day came when Aaron's two sons were ordained to the priestly office, but then tragedy struck.

Leviticus 10:1-2, "Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord."

After the incident of the Golden Calf, God told Moses:

Exodus 32:10, "Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them, and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation."

Without their Redemptive context, passages like this genuinely are disturbing. They can be used to fund our preconception that God is an angry Being just waiting for you and me to mess up!

Yet "messing up" is one of the things we are quite good at. Accordingly, most in the church today walk around with a sense of guilt. This guilt is partly funded by our default disposition by which we endeavor to relate to God on the basis of our conduct, and partly funded by our continual struggle when it comes to holiness in which "...the good that [we] wish, [we] do not do; but [we] practice the very evil that [we] do not wish" (Romans 7:19).

The result is a Christianity laden with guilt, doubt, emptiness, and fear!

That is NOT how God would have us to live (cf. Nehemiah 8:10). Accordingly, throughout the Bible He gives us powerful statements of His love, mercy, and grace... and our text is one of them. As we'll see, just like Nadab, Abihu, and Uzzah Joshua was a priest and Joshua was a sinner. BUT unlike with Nadab, Abihu, and Uzzah, Joshua was NOT rejected; RATHER God cleansed him!

This morning with this fourth vision, we are talking about the radical grace of God — a passage which reveals the heart of God when it comes to His sinning children.^{1,2} We pick it up with the first part of the vision picturing the Cleansing Grace of the Lord

Cleansing Grace

Zechariah 2:1, “Then he showed me³ Joshua the high priest⁴ standing before the angel of the Lord⁵, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.”

The first three visions were from afar... looking at Jerusalem and the Temple as future realities. Yet with this vision (and the next), the picture is more intimate as we now are IN the temple, beholding a scene revolving around “Joshua the high priest.”⁶ Who is this man?

“Joshua” was the son of Jehozadak⁷, who was the son of Seraiah, the chief priest in 586 BC.⁸ We also know that his father, Jehozadak, served as a priest in the exile (1 Chronicles. 6:14ff; Haggai 1:1). Now because you couldn’t serve as a priest until you were 30, most believe that Jehozadak fathered and raised Joshua in Babylon... which meant that Joshua would have been an old man at the time of this vision.

And yet the emphasis here is on the fact that Joshua, like his grandfather, was “the high priest.” The significance of this title is that Joshua — whether in this vision or real life— would have been understood to be a representative of the people of God.⁹ As the prophet spoke to man as God’s representative, the priest spoke to God as man’s representative! So, it was NOT just Joshua who is “standing before the angel of the Lord” but the people of God collectively!¹⁰ That is what makes this vision so powerful! This is you and me!

That brings us to “the Angel of the Lord” referenced here. A couple of weeks back I mentioned that this “Angel” was in fact the preincarnate Christ.¹¹ And here we see further evidence of that. Notice in vv. 2, 6 that this “Angel of the Lord” is identified as “the Lord” who rebuked Satan. Furthermore, as the setting of this vision is that of a court room, “the Angel of the Lord” clearly is the Judge!¹² That makes this “Angel” much more than a created being, BUT the Lord God almighty!

And yet, it would NOT be a court scene without a prosecutor, who here is identified as “Satan.”¹³ The title itself means “adversary” or “accuser” which pretty well sums up one of the major passions in his pathetic life. He lives to accuse us before God (cf. Revelation 12:10; Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7)! Now this does NOT mean he says, “I think you are sinful!” RATHER the connotation with “accuse” is the threatening charge, “*You are under the wrath of Almighty God for you stand condemned before Him!*”

And so, this fourth vision concerns itself with a court room in which God’s people in Joshua are “in the dock” standing before the Lord, the Judge with Satan leveling accusations against God’s people on account of the way they lived NOT ONLY as exiles in Babylon (cf. Psalm 85:4-7), BUT ALSO as those who returned and then shrunk back in their faith when the going got tough!

From this I want you to see that the focus here is NOT the salvation proper of God’s people (their justification), BUT (1) what they did subsequent to their salvation- how

they lived, whom they served, how much they sinned- and (2) God's response! On account of our daily sin, Satan would have us believe that though we are in Christ we nevertheless stand condemned before God!

So, what is our standing before God when we sin? What is God's disposition?

Zechariah 3:2, "And the Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke¹⁴ you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?'"

The first thing that stands out in this verse is that Satan wasn't given much time to accuse God's people before the Lord responded. The language is rushed!¹⁵ From this you must see that God doesn't suffer-long when His people are being accused — whether by the world, Satan, or even themselves (cf. (Psalm 9:5; Isaiah 17:13)!

Secondly the word for "rebuke" (גָּעַר [gaar]) is incredibly strong. In Psalm 106:9 the Lord is said to "rebuke the waters of the Red Sea." Remind me, on what type of ground did the people of God walk when they passed through the Red Sea? Dry Ground!

In other words, absolutely no water left in it! When God rebukes, there is no equivocation or hesitancy. There is no ability to argue. The issue is decided! Joshua here NOT only is not guilty, BUT he is judicially declared immune from prosecution! That is God's response when any of His blood-bought children stand before Him and accusations begin flying on account of their sin! Ian Duguid put it this way:

The Lord does not merely examine the Accuser's case and find it wanting. Rather, he rules that any possible evidence that might be brought is inadmissible. No charge whatever can be brought before the court against Joshua... (Duguid, 2010, p. 98)

Thirdly, this is NOT to say that Satan did NOT have the grounds to accuse God's people; he did.¹⁶ God Himself calls Joshua here "a brand plucked from the fire!"¹⁷ If you've ever tended a campfire — whether camping or in a fire pit in your backyard — you know how incredibly filthy "firebrands" are (those charred pieces of wood in a fire). You barely touch one and your hands are black. Then you try to wipe off the soot and, in the process, it gets on your clothes and everything you touch.

That is how our sin is pictured by God. There is NO such thing as an insignificant sin. All of it is filthy, dirty, and leads to further filth! That was and is God's people today! And it is notable that the Lord does NOT hide this NOR deny it- so, *why do we?* BUT what He does do- when it comes to His children- is to rebuke any thought or notion that such filthiness could jeopardize our standing before Him! Again, if you have been saved in Christ you are immune from any and all prosecution!

Lastly, that brings us to the basis for this strong reaction on the part of God! Notice that

it has nothing to do with you or me. RATHER, it has everything to do with the Lord — look at v. 2b.

Zechariah 3:2b, “...Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!”

God is quick to dismiss any and all accusation against us because of the doctrine of election¹⁸! And what is this? The doctrine of election simply is that God before the world began chose to deliver us from our sin and so make us His children. Speaking of Rebekah, Paul explains this great doctrine.

Romans 9:10b-13, “...when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac; for though *the twins* were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God’s purpose according to *His* choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ Just as it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’”

In a nutshell, that is the doctrine of election. Would you notice, the basis of this doctrine is God’s pre-determined love, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” In this regard, listen further:

Romans 8:29, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.”

This text gives us the foundation when it comes to God’s choice of us. We are children of God because of the predetermined will of the Father based upon His “foreknowledge”! You say, “*I thought it was on account of His love?*” I’m getting to that; be patient!

Notice the word “foreknowledge.” In the Greek it is προγινώσκω (*proginōskō*) which is the compound of πρό (*pro*) which means “beforehand” and γινώσκω (*ginōskō*) which speaks of a deep, abiding, and progressive love relationship as in, “Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain...” (Genesis 4:1a).¹⁹ Accordingly, προγινώσκω (*proginōskō*) speaks NOT of foresight or foreknowledge BUT loving someone or something beforehand! In other words, in eternity past, God set His love upon you and me which is why He sent His Son to die on the cross for the forgiveness of our sin! That is the foundation and basis of the doctrine of election. So, why did God rebuke Satan so quickly and forcefully? Because before the world began — before we “had done anything good or bad” — God set His love upon us! That what it means to be the “beloved of God”! You say, “*But what about our daily sin? Doesn’t this move God to wrath- like it did Uzzah or Nadab and Abihu?*” No!...

Zechariah 3:3, “Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments²⁰ and standing before the angel.”

Again, this just wasn't Joshua! As he was the high priest, this was/is ALL God's people! Their daily sin DOES make them "filthy" — which is a really gross word!! It is the word for refuse or human waste! That is what all "iniquity" is before God. Yet if Joshua or Satan were to level and accusation, God would rule it out of order! This is what is called radical grace! And yet there is more here. For God NOT only rules any accusation against us out of order, BUT He also acts to cleanse us from any and all remaining defilement.

Zechariah 3:4, "And he spoke and said to those who were standing before him saying, 'Remove the filthy garments from him.'²¹ Again he said to him, 'See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.'"

First off notice that the "filthy garments" of v. 3 are described here as "iniquity" (אָוֹן [avon]) which is one of the more distinctive words for sin in the Old Testament. Its root speaks of twisting, bending, distorting, or deviating from perfection. This is sin at its worst!²² And yet it is that which God "takes away" in the cleansing process of His people (cf. 1 John 1:9). And so, you must see that the emphasis here is NOT on our justification, BUT our sanctification. The language here speaks NOT of a result, BUT a process consummated in the future!

The word for "festal robes" is a rare word in the Old Testament used only here and in Isaiah 3:22. But that does NOT mean we don't know its definition. The Hebrew word speaks of a fabric which was especially fine and incredibly white! In this context, it was the garment necessary for Joshua to stand in the presence of God! And that is the aim of God's sanctifying work! Instead of being moved to wrath, God goes about the work of removing the refuse of our daily sin unto our ultimate clothing in Christ!...

In Revelation 4:4 we read of the twenty-four elders who also are representative of the people of God collectively (both Old Testament and New Testament saints), "And around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones *I saw* twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads." This someday is what we shall be before the Lord. Perfect NOT ONLY in our position, BUT ALSO our practice!

1 John 3:2b, "...We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is."

Yet until that time, we are in *the process* of being cleansed and remade into the image of Christ. And so, to the struggling church in Sardis, Christ gave this promise:

Revelation 3:5a, "He who overcomes [we are talking here at the end of their life] shall thus be clothed in white garments..."

This is the ultimate destination of any and all movement that is made when it comes to

our growth in grace!! And yet, we have NOT arrived at the crowning moment — literally and figuratively:

Zechariah 3:5, “Then I said, ‘Let them put a clean turban^{23,24} on his head.’ So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the Lord was standing by.²⁵”



Notice that the high priest in the Old Testament would have been dressed... notice he wore a turban.²⁶ Zechariah’s obvious excitement over the contents and implications of this vision led to him blurting out here, “*Complete the dress! Place a clean turban on his head!*” In other words, he couldn’t wait!

This was a very important part of the dress of the high priest. For the “turban’s” placement on the head spoke of the consecration of one’s mind- their thoughts, goals, reasoning, aspirations, and the like- to the Lord. In fact, on the turban of the High Priest was a gold plate which bore the inscription, “Holy to the Lord”! (Exodus 28:36; 39:30)

The result in all of this is far from allowing Satan, an enemy, or even ourselves to accuse us, the Lord, on account of His great love for us, NOT ONLY does He throw out any and all accusation that might legitimately be leveled against us, BUT attends to the work of reclothing us in Christ (cf. Philippians 1:6)!

This is what God is doing in your life this very moment! Don’t miss it, if you are in Christ, then before the Lord you are without sin and so beautiful in His eyes.

Psalm 103:12, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

Isaiah 38:17b, “It is Thou who hast kept my soul from the pit of nothingness, for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.”

Psalm 94:18-19, “If I should say, ‘My foot has slipped,’ Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, will hold me up. When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Thy consolations [the compassion of God which issues forth into words of comfort] delight my soul.”

Yet what about our daily sin? What will it do to God’s disposition toward us? Listen to the word of God.²⁷ There was a time in Solomon’s marriage when he and his bride conflicted. On this particular occasion, it was the bride’s fault. Upon realizing what she had done, she sought after Solomon whom she had rebuffed. When she found him, this is what He said:

Song of Solomon 6:4, “You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling, as lovely as Jerusalem...”

If you've studied this book, you know that this essentially is what Solomon told her in Song of Solomon 1:15ff — on their wedding night!

Now as Song of Solomon was written to picture God's love for His bride, we learn an incredible truth here. What are we to God even when we are in rebellion? Beautiful! Paul explicitly states it in Romans.

Romans 5:8-10, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, MUCH MORE, HAVING BEEN RECONCILED, we shall be saved by His life."

We see it in the parable of the Prodigal Son who squandered his father's estate with loose living. Having come to the end of himself, the prodigal goes back to his father never believing he ever could be anything more to his father than a slave. And yet, before the son spoke a word of apology, we read this:

Luke 15:20b, "...But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him"

This perhaps is one of the most glorious depictions of the heart of God toward His sinning children in all of Scripture. Notice, while he was still a long way off: the child obviously had not journeyed very far in his return home (recall that he was in a "distant land"). The implication is that his father was seeking him and coming after him!

His father saw him, and felt compassion for him: the father's heart "went out to him"! Seeing his son's misery aroused in the heart of the father NOT anger, wrath, or vengeance, BUT love!

- And ran: in Christ's day, it was considered undignified for an elderly man to run; yet this father runs! Why? Because his boy was returning. Now was NOT the time for worldly conventions!
- And embraced him: the idea is that of a passionate embrace; he threw his arms around his son!
- Kissed him: This translation does NOT do justice to the original! The word in the Greek is a compound of intensity or affection- *καταφιλέω* (*kataphileō*) from *phile*, to kiss or love; *kata*, which serves to intensify the verb.

The father didn't give him the Near East perfunctory peck of greeting on both of his cheeks. Rather, he kissed him over and over and over again! Referencing this repeated kissing, Spurgeon put it this way:

Oh, the past, the past, my father!' he might moan, as he thought of his wasted

years; but he had no sooner said that than he received another kiss, as if his father said, 'Never mind the past; I have forgotten all about that.' ¶ But then, perhaps, the young man looked down on his foul garments and said, 'The present, my father, the present, what a dreadful state I am in!' And with another kiss would come the answer, 'Never mind the present, my boy. I am content to have thee as thou art.' ¶ 'Oh, but,' the boy might have said, 'the future, my father, the future! What would you think if I should ever go astray again?' Then would come another holy kiss, and his father would say, 'I will see to the future, my boy...' (Spurgeon, 1973, pp. Vol 37, 656)

Now I remind you that Christ told this parable to convey the heart of the Father towards His children when they sin. Such is God's disposition toward you this day! Talk about Radical Grace! In fact, the Parable parallels Zech. 3, for just as Joshua in the context of sanctification was reclothed, so was the prodigal...

Luke 15:22-23, "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly...'"

Luke 15:22, "...bring out the best robe and put it on him..."

This was a status symbol (cf. Genesis 41:42). In the eyes of the father, his son was most important, and so this rebellious boy was clothed with the "best robe."

Luke 15:22, "...and put a ring on his hand..."

This most likely was a signet ring (cf. again Genesis 41:42) which was an indication of authority- royal authority. In other words, the father is saying here, "*Not only are you my son by virtue of the robe, but to you I give authority over my house.*"²⁸

Luke 15:22, "...and [put] sandals on his feet..."

The significance in this is that in Christ's day slaves did not wear sandals. That the father puts sandals on his son's feet indicated that his son was NOT to be treated as a slave, BUT, as he really was, HIS child!

Do you see? There is no talk of second-class citizens in God's Kingdom! Regardless of the life you have lived as a believer, you always have been and remain a son!

Luke 15:23, "...and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and lest us eat and be merry."

In Christ's day, the diet of most Jews rarely contained meat; it was too expensive. As such, the slaughtering of a fattened calf occurred on rare occasions for special guests! In essence, the father here is saying to his son that there is no one more important in all the world than him!

Christian, what is God's disposition toward you when you sin? It is NOT anger, BUT love by which He rebukes all attempts at accusation and then attends to the business of reclothing us in Christ!

You say, "What about Uzziah, Nadab and Abihu (or that time when God told Moses to get out of the way so that He could punish the people²⁹)?" To answer this, let us once again be mindful of the conditions that were placed upon God's people when He organized them into a nation.

Deuteronomy 28:15, 20, "But it shall come about, if you will not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you... [after an initial set of curses, Moses summarized in v. 20...] The Lord will send upon you curses, confusion, and rebuke, in all you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me."

We've discussed this enough that you understand by now that while the individual child of God could never be disowned by God (on account of the unconditional promise of grace), nevertheless the Theocracy's longevity was based upon the people of God's corporate faithfulness to the Lord. If God's corporate people rebelled, God would be just to wipe them off the face of the earth! And that is exactly what happened in 722 BC and 586 BC. I dare say by now, few if any here have a problem with this!

Ought we then to have a problem if God demonstrated this truth when it came to an individual representative of the theocracy? Like when King Saul rebelled against the Lord and the Lord cut his life short (cf. 1 Chronicles. 10:13-14)? Understanding the conditional nature of the Theocracy, it makes sense why God was just in killing Saul: he rebelled as the national head of the theocracy!

In light of this, ought we to have a problem if this occurred in the life of a religious head of the theocracy? That is what you have with Nadab, Abihu, and Uzzah. Priests were covenant heads established at the time God established the nation- don't ever forget that! As such, while they were much more than this, at minimum at this time a priest was a religious head of the theocracy! Accordingly in their sin, the nation sinned!

Now we don't have a problem with Saul's life being cut short nor do we apply the text personally... and neither should we when it comes to Uzzah, Nadab, and Abihu! All of these men served as religious heads of the theocracy!

That being said, we see the importance of this fourth vision in Zechariah. The nation is gone! All that is left are those who by faith were the sons and daughters of Abraham! Now when *they* sinned, what was God's disposition? The text couldn't be clearer: God's disposition was that of love, compassion, and cleansing! And so it is with you and me

today!

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End Note(s)

¹ “Their defiled state before God represented the basic problem that Joshua and his people faced. Put differently, how can a righteous God countenance, let alone bless, Joshua (and Judah whom the priest represents) when human efforts to attain ‘righteousness’ caused divine revulsion? This fundamental question permeating the Bible asks how the righteous Lord can have a relationship with sinful people. The final biblical answer resides in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, ‘who takes away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29).” (Klein, 2007, pp. 138-139)

² “The question posed by this vision is whether we are clothed in Christ’s righteousness and are therefore found fit to appear before God or whether we are still clothed in the filthy robes of our own righteousness, which makes us unfit and will eventually condemn us.” (Boice, 2006, p. 503)

³ “The new way of introducing the vision is probably no more than the writer’s attempt to avoid constant repetition of the same formula.” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 120)

⁴ “Zechariah, along with Haggai, calls Joshua the “high priest” (*hakkōhēn haggādōl*). In preexilic biblical texts, the title was “chief priest” (*hakkōhēn hārō š*). Likely the high priest designation marks more than a new title. It appears that high priest here points to an expanded administrative role for this priestly office.¹⁸⁷ These broadened duties probably focused on fiscal matters such as fundraising for the temple restoration and the oversight of expenditures for this mammoth construction project.” (Klein, 2007, p. 134)

⁵ “The defendant, ‘Joshua, the high priest’, is ‘standing before’ the judge, language which fits both a legal and royal setting, as does the English word ‘court’.” (Duguid, 2010, p. 96)

⁶ “The first three visions brought the prophet from a valley outside the city to a vantage-point from which the dimensions of the original Jerusalem could be seen. In the fourth and fifth visions he is in the temple courts, where the high priest officiated and had access to God’s presence.” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 120)

⁷ Cf. 2 Kings 25:18; 1 Chronicles. 6:40–41; Jeremiah 52:24.

⁸ Recall that this was when Babylon took Judah into captivity at which time the Babylonians

executed Seraiah.

⁹ "...both of the central visions of the sequence, Zechariah 3 and 4, concern the two individuals who are central to the life of the restored community, Joshua and Zerubbabel, and their significance as signs of God's future purposes for his people. Joshua and Zerubbabel had already become active participants in the rebuilding work on the temple initiated by Haggai (Haggai 1:14), but Zechariah shows us the broader significance of their existence as signs of the greater things yet to come." (Duguid, 2010, p. 96)

¹⁰ And just like Joshua, they too were dirty. As Haggai indicated in Haggai 2:14, clearly the people of God were defiled and remained powerless to rectify their situation!

¹¹ "The first appearance of the angel of the Lord is in Genesis 16:7, in the story of Hagar's flight from Sarah because of hard feelings between the two women. He instructs Hagar to return to Sarah, promising that she will have a child who will be named Ishmael. Then we read, 'She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me"' (v. 13). In this verse the angel of the Lord is surprisingly but clearly identified with Jehovah. ¶ The same thing is even more apparent in the next incident. In Genesis 18 Abraham is seated at the entrance to his tent near the great trees of Mamre. There "the LORD appeared" to him (v. 1). The story identifies the figures who appeared as three men. One of them has special significance and later converses at length with Abraham. He tells Sarah that she will have a son by the same time the next year (v. 10), speaking as God. Then in verse 13 we read, 'The LORD said to Abraham ...' Again, in verse 17 the text reads, 'Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?"' These references, and the fact that the angel of the Lord is consistently recognized as divine by those to whom he appeared, cause us to think of this figure as a preincarnation manifestation of the Second Person of the Trinity. ¶ Joshua provides us with another example. After the crossing of the Jordan River on the way to the conquest of the Promised Land, a figure appeared to Joshua standing with a drawn sword in his hand. He identified himself as 'commander of the army of the LORD' and was then worshiped by Joshua (Josh. 5:13-15). This person required Joshua to remove his shoes because the ground on which he was standing was holy, a clear throwback to Moses' earlier meeting with God at the burning bush (Exod. 3:5)." (Boice, 2006, pp. 494-495)

¹² "The setting in Zech 3 bears a striking resemblance to the heavenly courtroom in Job 1 where Satan accused Job before God. However, the overwhelming guilt of Joshua, contrasted with Job's innocence, highlights the most distinctive differences between Zech 3 and Job 1." (Klein, 2007, p. 133)

¹³ "Although this enemy of God's people has been active from earliest times in the Garden of Eden, his identity as 'the Accuser'-which is literally what 'Satan' means-became more prominent as history unfolded. In the Old Testament he appears under this title seeking to lead God's people astray and then making charges against them in the context of the heavenly court (Job 1-2; 1 Chronicles 21:1). This depiction may have received added weight after the exile from the well-developed spying system employed by the Mesopotamian authorities in the Neo-Babylonian period. Unseen informers reported regularly to the king on various activities of his subjects, leading to punishment for the alleged transgressions. Satan's very name indicates his activity here: he is present to 'accuse' (*śaṭan*) Joshua-that is, to present evidence before the heavenly court which he thinks should lead to Joshua's condemnation." (Duguid, 2010, p. 97)

¹⁴ "The Hebrew term for 'rebuke' (*gā'ar*) represents the Lord's particularly strong invective against his opponents. Caquot notes that the word has 'a strong anthropopathic thrust, and almost always denotes a threatening manifestation of the anger of God.'" (Klein, 2007, p. 136)

¹⁵ "The Accuser has potentially a very strong case, as is apparent from Joshua's defiled state in verse 3. However, before he is even allowed to present his evidence, it is immediately ruled out of order." (Duguid, 2010, p. 97)

¹⁶ "Leviticus 22 legislates the manner in which priests conducted their duties, and v. 3 cautions: 'If any of your descendants is ceremonially unclean and yet comes near the sacred offerings that the Israelites consecrate to the LORD, that person must be cut off from my presence. I am the LORD.' Zechariah 3:3 presents Joshua as utterly defiled, standing in the Lord's court in an official capacity, a transgressor who came before the Lord unworthily by violating Lev 22:3." (Klein, 2007, p. 138)

¹⁷ "The image of the smoldering log emphasizes the severe discipline of Yahweh and, in its context in Amos, links this discipline to the lack of penitential response from the people. As

noted in the opening vision report, the past seventy years were devastating for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah (1:12). At the same time, however, the revelation that this firebrand was snatched from the blaze is a sign of God's grace that something has survived the discipline and that these survivors have the opportunity to 'return to me' (Amos 4:11), especially now that Yahweh was returning to Jerusalem so that they could indeed "meet" their God (Amos 4:12)." (Boda, 2016, p. 234)

¹⁸ "The theme of Jerusalem's election continues to have prominence (1:17; 2:12) and in practical terms makes all the difference to God's relationship with her." (Baldwin, 1972, p. 121)

¹⁹ In contrast to οἶδα (*oída*) which speaks of a fulness of knowledge (as opposed to a relational, progressive knowledge housed in γινώσκω).

²⁰ "This is attire that is not simply dirty, or even disgusting, as the common translation 'filthy' would suggest, but intrinsically defiling. He is self-evidently ceremonially unclean..." (Duguid, 2010, p. 98)

²¹ "The involvement of these attendants in the scene, however, is suggestive of a key priestly setting in ancient Israel. These attendants are commissioned to clothe Joshua the great priest with priestly garments. This brings into view two priestly settings which featured dressing rituals. The first is the ceremony related to the investiture of the high priest found in Exodus 28–29 (cf. Exodus 39), which allowed him to minister in the presence of Yahweh. The second is the ceremony related to the Day of Atonement found in Leviticus 16. Both of these ceremonies involve dressing rituals for the high priest which are connected with the removal of 'guilt' (Exod. 28:38; Leviticus 16:21), a connection explicitly stated in 3:4 and which may explain the announcement in 3:9 that the iniquity of the land will be removed in one day." (Boda, 2016, p. 221)

²² "'Iniquity' (Heb. *'āwôn*) is a general term for the whole sinful disposition leading to distress and guilt. Joshua in his high-priestly role stood for the predicament of the whole people, who had incurred the divine wrath, suffered the penalty of the exile, and now knew that they needed a way back to the presence of a holy God." (Baldwin, 1972, p. 121)

²³ "The word used for turban (*šānīp*) is not the exact term used in Exodus and Leviticus for the turban of the high priest (cf. the comment on 6:11), but a cognate one used in figurative contexts (Job 29:14; Isaiah 62:3). Whether or not the garments were recognizably those prescribed for the high priest, the important thing was that they symbolized acceptance in the heavenly court (cf. Matthew 22:11–13; Revelation 19:8)." (Baldwin, 1972, p. 122)

²⁴ "The list of clothing in Isa. 3:18–23 appears to distinguish between a festal robe and a headband, and so it may be that the prophet was concerned that the priest be fully outfitted from head to toe. Although the term used here (*šānīp*) is not the same as the one used in the Torah in connection with the high priest's ceremonial dress (*mišnepet*; Exodus 29:6; 39:31; Leviticus 8:9), it is clear that the same high-priestly clothing is in view." (Boda, 2016, p. 238)

²⁵ "The filthy clothes removed from Joshua must have included a dirty hat or mitre. The priestly mitre normally worn by priests bore the inscription, 'HOLY TO THE LORD' (Exodus 28:36; 39:30). Accordingly, Zechariah instructed that the high priest receive 'a clean turban.' Thus, with Joshua's priestly clothing completely changed, he could minister before the Lord with ceremonial cleanness and righteousness. Joshua's clothing symbolized his new spiritual condition (see Matt 22:11–13)." (Klein, 2007, pp. 140-141)

²⁶ "This is literally the 'crowning' moment of the whole ceremony: Joshua is reclothed in ceremonially pure, festival garments in the presence of 'the angel of the LORD' as a sign of God's acceptance of him and, in him, of the people he represented." (Duguid, 2010, p. 99)

²⁷ Cf. also Hosea 11:9, "I will not execute My fierce anger; I will not destroy Ephraim again. For I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath."

²⁸ cf. also 1 Mac. 6:15; Jos. Ant. 12:360; Est. 3:10; 8:8.

²⁹ In the case of Moses in Exodus 32, consider the passage one more time. After the incident of the Golden Calf, God told Moses, "Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them, and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation." (Exodus 32:10) Clearly God here is not relating to His people as individuals, but corporately as a nation- which is why God offers to make Moses' line into "a great nation."