

Righteousness & Restoration

Zechariah 3:1-10

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Introduction: Today we come to Zechariah 3 where we find the 4th of Zechariah's visions. But before we study this chapter, consider briefly the vision of chapter 2, a man with a measuring line. This vision was to assure Zechariah & the people of Israel that Jerusalem will be restored & expanded as well as the nation being the recipient of God's blessing in the future (looking even ahead to the Millennium). I call your attention particularly to 2:8 & the phrase, "...for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye." The word "*apple*" is literally "pupil" (or "little man of the eye" – in reference to what is reflected there). Just as we know how sensitive the eye is to touch, so too, "to touch a child of God in hostility is tantamount to poking God in the eye" (RSB). In regard to Israel, this is another reminder of Genesis 12:3, "*And I will bless them that bless thee, & curse him that curseth...*" Phillips points out, "The Jewish people are precious to God, & woe betide any nation that harms them."

But we now consider this vision which describes the cleansing of the priest & the coming of the Prince. Before restoration there must be righteousness. Note how this vision develops this thought.

I. The **cleansing** of the **priest** (Joshua) > 3:1-7

A. The Devil's **accusations** (:1, "...to resist him.")

1. Joshua's filthiness in sin ("*filthy garments*" in verses 3 & 4).

a. "*Filthy*" – defined: "detestable & disgusting foulness of excrement or vomit" (RSB).

b. "*Filthy*" – described: a vivid picture of sin (cf. Isaiah 64:6).

2. Joshua's unfitness for service.

a. Joshua stands in official & representative capacity for the nation.

b. Joshua stands in representation of men before God, men filthy & defenseless.

Summary: "Employing the most loathsome, vile term for filth, the phrase pictures the habitual condition of defilement of the priesthood & the people which became the basis of Satan's accusation that the nation is morally impure & unworthy of God's protection & blessing" (MacArthur).

B. The Lord's **advocacy** [the Lord is Joshua's Advocate – cf. I John 2:1] (:2-4)

1. The **rebuke** of Satan (:1-2) > "*rebuke*" - "to chide, so as to silence those who are reproved" (Feinberg).

2. The **recognition** of Joshua (:3) > "*a brand plucked out of the fire*" (cf. Amos 4:11).

a. Identified: a log or branch put in the fire but pulled out before consumed.

b. Illustrated: the story of John Wesley (rescued from a house fire when he was 5).

3. The **removal** of sin (:3-4, & cf. :9)

a. Joshua's condition > helpless to cleanse or purify himself (cf. Romans 3:9-12; 23).

b. Joshua's cleansing > the work of God's grace – for Joshua's forgiveness & acceptance.

c. Joshua's clothing > "*change of raiment.*"

C. The priest's **assurance** (:5-7)

1. **Restoration** (:5a) >

a. "*Fair mitre upon his head*" – a clean turban; part of high priest wardrobe – inscribed with "*holiness to the LORD*" (see Exodus 28:36-37).

b. Zechariah is speaking in verse 5, asking for the complete cleansing & clothing of the priesthood.

2. **Righteousness** (:5b) >
 - a. “*Clothed with garments*” > cf. Isaiah 61:10.
 - b. Speaks of the imputation of righteousness > II Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9.
3. **Requirements** (:6-7) >
 - a. “*Protested*” – solemn words of warning.
 - b. The high priest, Joshua, & all those serving in the Temple, are to be obedient & faithful to the Lord.

Summary: Joshua is given the promise of security in the presence of the Lord.

II. The **coming** of the **Prince** (Christ) > 3:8-10

- A. He is “*My Servant*” –
 1. Speaks of His humanity; see Isaiah 42:1 & 52:13.
 2. Speaks of His humility; see Philippians 2:5-9.
- B. He is “*the BRANCH*” –
 1. Speaks of a shoot or sprout; see Isaiah 11:1.
 2. Speaks of His “insignificant” beginnings; see Isaiah 53:2.
- C. He is the “*Stone*” –
 1. 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.*”
 2. Psalm 118:22, “*The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*”
 Note: The details of “*seven eyes*” [“the fullness of knowledge or omniscience of the stone” (Feinberg)] & “*engrave the graving thereof*” [“the engraving of the Stone alludes to Messiah’s beauty, gifts, graces, & preciousness, as polished stones” (Feinberg)] are given in connection to the Stone.

Conclusion: The work of Christ is referred to in verse 9 by “...and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.” That “*one day*” speaks of Christ’s death on the cross & His shed blood making atonement for sin. The Book of Hebrews makes that “*one day*” clear when we read, “*By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*” (verse 10, & cf. 12 & 14). “The phrase looks to the future day when there will be cleansing & forgiveness for the nation as a whole (12:10 – 13:1; Rom. 11:25-27), made possible through Christ’s redemptive provision at Calvary” (MacArthur). In that future day for Israel there will be peace & prosperity, signified by the expression “...shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine & under the fig tree” (:10 & cf. Micah 4:4).

Joshua gives us a clear picture of justification. We all need cleansing from our “*filthy rags*” of self-righteousness (Isaiah 64:4) & stand in need of being clothed with the righteousness of Christ (Isaiah 61:10, “...*garments of salvation...robe of righteousness*”). Is that your testimony this morning? If not, why not make it your testimony today? If so, note again Zechariah 3:8 & the phrase “...*they are men wondered at...*” It refers to those men who were a sign or symbol – pointing to another (Christ, “*My servant the BRANCH*”). What was spoken of concerning the priests of Zechariah’s day is true of all who are “believer-priests” today (those who are redeemed). It is our responsibility to point others to Christ, by our lives (to be Christ-like; Acts 4:13; 11:26; & Rom. 8:29), & by our lips to proclaim with John the Baptist, “*Behold, the Lamb of God...*” (John 1:29) & with Paul, “...*we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God*” (II Cor. 5:20). What kind of “sign” or witness for Christ are you today?