

Zechariah 3:1-10

June 8, 2022

II. The Night Visions (1:7-6:15)

D. The Fourth Vision (3:1-10)

The fourth vision shown to Zechariah draws upon his current circumstances as a Jew who has returned to the land after the Exile. Under the leadership of Ezra, and with a little bit of prophetic encouragement from Haggai, the Israelites are currently working on rebuilding the Temple. It's with this historical background that we read of this fourth vision in Zechariah 3.

The Levitical priests haven't performed their duties in decades. Not only have they been exiled from Jerusalem, but neither has there been a Temple for quite some time. Now, Joshua the son of Jozadak has arisen to be the new high priest (Ezra 5:2).

In this vision, Joshua is pictured as having *filthy garments* (Zech 3:3). He is unclean and unfit for his priestly duties. In fact, in his unworthiness, Satan is on the scene trying to magnify Joshua's unsuitability for the job. Yet, Satan is rebuked (v. 2) and the LORD attends to Joshua's uncleanness.

It's worth noting the grace with which the LORD deals with Joshua. Indeed, in this vision, he is unclean. We don't read that Joshua cleans himself up or prepares himself for the service; rather, the LORD Himself fixes the situation. Note v. 4: *I have removed your iniquity... I will clothe You...*

This vision isn't about Joshua alone, or his fitness to be the new high priest (although undoubtedly it would speak volumes to any wary Israelites at the time!). Just as Joshua was unfit to be the high priest, so also was Israel as a country unfit to be the *kingdom of priests* that God had desired them to be (Exod 19:6). They were unclean and they needed their *iniquity* to be removed.

Yet, how will all of these things be? On what basis can the LORD show such grace? The answer is found in vv. 8-10, which prophesy of another High Priest who is to come, who also happens to share Joshua's name.

First, Jesus is **the Servant** (v. 8). In 2 Samuel 7, we have the account of God making a covenant with David. Even though David won't be the one to build the original Temple, nevertheless, it will be through David's lineage that men will have a right to rule over Israel. Throughout that passage, David is called God's *servant* (vv. 5, 8, 19-21, 25-29). The implication is that this coming King of David's lineage would also be God's servant (cf. Isa 42:1; 53:11).

Second, Jesus is **the Branch** (v. 8). One of Jesus' lesser known titles, He is the *Branch of righteousness* (Jer 23:5-6; 33:15-16; cf. Isa 4:2; 11:1; Zech 6:12). He is the *Rod from the stem of Jesse* (Isa 11:1), a *King who shall reign and prosper* (Jer 23:5), who *shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth* (33:15). He will be the One who *shall build the temple of the LORD* (Zech 6:12). This coming Joshua/Yeshua/Jesus will be both priest and king!

Third, Jesus is **the stone** (v. 9). The stone in Zechariah 3 is said to have *seven eyes*, a likely reference to God's complete and total omniscience (cf. 4:10). This is also a reference to Jesus as the *chief cornerstone* (cf. Isa 28:16; Matt 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:6).

This coming Messiah *will remove the iniquity of that land in one day*. It will be His work that is the basis for God's forgiveness and grace (cf. *iniquity* in v. 4). While some commentators think that the *one day* is a reference to Jesus' *once for all* sacrifice (Heb 7:27; 9:12; 10:10), it seems to me that this is looking forward beyond that, when the Messiah will return and *all Israel will be saved* (Rom 11:26). After all, it's on *that day* when the ultimate Restoration will take place (Zech 3:10)!