

My Favorite Thing About ZECHARIAH

Zechariah 3:1-2

September 18, 2021

Two months after Haggai presented his 4-part sermon series, Zechariah "[Yahweh remembers](#)" began his prophetic ministry.

Zechariah's Messianic Prophecies are among the greatest and most comprehensive of all the minor prophets. With the exception of Isaiah, Zechariah gives us more prophecy regarding the Coming of Christ than any other of the Old Testament writers.

My Favorite Thing About ZECHARIAH – Vision #4 - The burning stick snatched from the fire.

- **Zechariah 3:1-5** - Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.

The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?" ³ Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel.

The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you." ⁵ Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.

We find ourselves in a courtroom. The key players are:

- Joshua, the high priest - representing the nation of Israel
- God the Judge.
- Satan the accuser.

The text does not provide us with any specific accusations, but we don't have to go very far to discover what they are – **See Exodus-Haggai.**

Idolatry, unfaithfulness, unbelief, rebellion, greed, lust, injustice, theft, murder, pride, presumption, arrogance, bigotry, etc., etc., etc.

The sad truth is.... Satan was not lying and he probably didn't really have to exaggerate his point. God's "**Chosen**" were guilty and he had reams of evidence to back up his accusations.

Definitely a stick firmly in the fire.

But then something strange happened. Instead of the Judge taking the reams of evidence, sitting back, perusing them and then nodding His head, "***I see what you mean, prosecutor. They are guilty of all your charges against them***", the Judge **REBUKED** the Accuser. Not because the accusations were not true, but because the Judge had a plan – a daring rescue mission to snatch the stick from the fire.

The rescue mission in Zechariah's vision had to do with wardrobe. Apparently, Joshua was wearing a pretty disgusting outfit. It wasn't just dirty. It was covered with blood and feces and puss and all sorts of nastiness. It was a pretty shameful sight and no doubt Joshua hung his head as the smell filled the room. To add insult to injury, that was the **BEST** outfit in Joshua's closet - His closet was **ONLY** filled with hand-made disgusting nastiness, which he had no ability to make clean again.

- **Genesis 3:7** - Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.
- **Psalms 14:1-3** - The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. ² The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. ³ All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.
- **Ecclesiastes 7:20** - There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.
- **Isaiah 64:6** - All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.
- **Jeremiah 8:6-7** - I have listened attentively, but they do not say what is right. No one repents of his wickedness, saying, "What have I done?" Each pursues his own course like a horse charging into battle. ⁷ Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons, and the dove, the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration. But my people do not know the requirements of the LORD.

- **Zephaniah 3:1-2** - Woe to the city of oppressors, rebellious and defiled! ² She obeys no one, she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the LORD; she does not draw near to her God.

A sad and sorry state Israel finds herself in. The flames were working their way up the stick. It will be consumed if no one steps in. But don't forget the Rescue Mission:

The Judge turned to the bailiff, **"Take off his filthy clothes."** Then the Judge looked directly at Joshua, **"See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you."** The Judge stood by as the bailiff exchanged Joshua's filthy hand-made clothes for a clean new suit that covered him from head to toe.

There is so much richness in this story.

The Judge does all the work to remove the nastiness Joshua finds himself wrapped in. It's the great exchange ---- from nasty to clean / from unholy to holy / from sinfulness to righteousness.

- **Isaiah 1:18** - Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.
- **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** - Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Joshua was passive in this scene. He took no part in the great exchange other than to allow it to happen – which is actually very important to the story because he could have declined the new clothes.....

If Joshua wanted to continue to wear his new clothes, however, there **WAS** something for him to do:

- **Zechariah 3:7** - If you will walk in My ways and keep My requirements, then you will govern My house and have charge of My courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.

As the great exchange came to its conclusion, the Judge reached down and plucked that burning stick from the fire. Safe at last ---- purely because of what the Judge has done.

Like Israel, we too find ourselves in a sad and sorry state.....

- **Romans 3:10-18** - As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." ¹³ "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." ¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." ¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ ruin and misery mark their ways, ¹⁷ and the way of peace they do not know." ¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."
- **1 John 1:8** - If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

You and I stand accused before God – and rightly so. We are sinners. We are rebellious and self-centered. Everything that was true of Israel is true of us. And yet, on our behalf, God tells Satan to shut-up. God has taken our dirty filthy hand-made clothes and replaced them with His Clothes of Righteousness. At the cross **"the great exchange"** happened and we have been plucked from the fire. Praise God!!

- **Romans 3:22-24** - This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** - God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- **Galatians 2:20** - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Yes, we have been plucked from the fire, but that is not the end of the Christian experience. Obedience must follow. We retain our newly gifted **"Clothes of Righteousness"** only through our continued **faithful** and **obedient transformational relationship** with Jesus.

Choose today to stay hidden within the folds of Christ's Righteousness.

Choose transformation.

Choose life.

Choose to remain a stick snatched from the fire.