

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## ZECHARIAH 1-3

When the Mongols, China's northern neighbors, began amassing an invading army, the Chinese built a wall to keep them out. The Chinese made it *too high to climb over, too thick to break down, and too long to go around*. The Great Wall of China still stands to this day.

Yet in its first 100 years China was invaded three times. The problem was not the wall, but the men who guarded it. All three invasions occurred when the enemy bribed the gatekeeper to leave open the gate.

China's fatal flaw was building a wall without building the character of the men who monitored its access.

And God didn't want to make the same mistake with Israel. He commissioned Governor Zerubbabel to take the Jews back to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple.

But He knew construction of the Temple would be to no avail without working on the character of the people. So he sent two prophets to encourage the nation.

When the Jews got distracted from their work, the Prophet Haggai came to encourage them to finish.

And God also raised up a second prophet. His name was Zechariah. He challenged the people to be holy, to walk in God's Spirit, and to trust God with their future.

Zechariah and Haggai were contemporaries.

Haggai began his ministry in August, 520 BC. Zechariah began his ministry just two months later.

But like Felix and Oscar in the old television show, Zechariah and Haggai were the odd couple. They were roommates chronologically and circumstantially, but they were worlds apart in approach and personality.

**Haggai was a doer.** He was a blue-collar guy who brought with him hammer and nails. He demanded that the Jews get back to the business of Temple building.

On the other hand, **Zechariah was a dreamer.** He spoke to the nation through eight God-given visions.

*Haggai was practical. Zechariah was more spiritual.* Both cared about rebuilding the Temple and the glory of God, but their approach was different. Haggai wore a tool belt. Zechariah wore a prayer shawl. Haggai cut stone with a saw. Zechariah saw dreams when he prayed. Haggai was all action - Zechariah all vision.

Earlier I called them the odd couple, but actually both of these perspectives are needed. In church work we need to *work and wait, pound and pray, do and dream.*

Verse 1, **In the eighth month of the second year of Darius...** Or November 520 BC. But notice the method of the dating. Zechariah arrives at the date based on the reign of the Persian King Darius. *This is different!*

Prior to the fall of Jerusalem and the exile in Babylon dates were based on the Hebrew kings. But now there is no King in Judah. The **"times of the Gentiles"** spoken of by Daniel and Ezekiel and Jesus and Paul are in full swing. With only a short reprieve Israel has remained under Gentile control for the last 2500 years.

And this is what excites us about today. For the first time since the days of Zechariah Israel enjoys self-rule.

The “times of the Gentiles” are coming to a close, and this is when the Bible says God will turn His attention back to Israel - Messiah will return and fulfill His promises to the Jews. We’re living in exciting days.

So in the second year of Darius, “the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying...” And here names are strategic. “Zechariah” means “Yahweh remembers.”

This is why we named our firstborn, Zach. His mom and dad prayed for God to help them have a baby. The Lord remembered us, and we named him, “Zachary.”

“Berechiah” means “Jehovah blesses.” “Iddo” means “In His Time.” Now put it all together and here is what you get “God remembers and blesses in His time.”

And this was a reminder to the Jews. They spent seventy years in bondage, living in exile in Babylon.

Now they’re back in their land. The city is in ruins, the Temple has been reduced to rubble, all seems lost, the situation hopeless. *Would God remember them?*

The prophet’s very name brought them hope!

*But hope starts, when we deal with our sin...*

In verse 2 the prophecy begins with a bang, “The Lord has been very angry with your fathers.” Notice, God gets angry! He has emotions and passion. You can delight His heart, or grieve Him by your rebellion.

Their fathers were the Jews who God put on the shelf for seventy years when He sent them into exile for their idolatry. Over and over the prophets warned them that they were breaking God's heart, but they turned a deaf ear. Finally, to get their attention God brought disaster on the people and their nation.

Of course, that was the fathers. *This new generation, would they learn from their fathers... and repent?*

Zechariah begins his prophecy with four appeals for the returning people to repent. In verse 3 they need to **look up and repent**. In verse 4 they should **look back and repent**. In verse 5, **look forward and repent**. And in verse 6 they need to **look down and repent**.

Verse 3, **“Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Return to Me,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the Lord of hosts.’ ‘Repent’ means ‘return.’** These Jews were returning to the land, but more importantly would they return to their Lord?

One dark night I was headed home up Interstate 75. It was late and I stopped in Forsyth for a cup of coffee.

When I got back on the freeway I drove for nearly 20 minutes, when suddenly I realized I was on the outskirts of Macon. It's horrible to realize you've driven nearly half-an-hour in the wrong direction. Immediately, I did an about-face, a 180 degree U-turn to Atlanta.

**I repented.** And this is what I did when I gave my life to Jesus. It finally dawned on me I was headed the wrong direction. I looked up and returned to the Lord.

Sadly, the word “repent” is missing from today's Christian vocabulary. People want God's blessing, His strength, His guidance, even His forgiveness - but they don't want to stop what they're doing and embrace the changes God has for them. They want to add God to the direction they're already headed - not disrupt it.

*God can help me get to where I want to go faster.*

We never consider He plans to change our course. Real repentance is when I stop dictating terms to God, and become open to His agenda for my life.

They needed to look up and repent, but verse 4 instructs them to look back and repent, “Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds.” But they did not hear nor heed Me,” says the Lord.” God wanted them to learn from their father's mistakes, not repeat them.

The Arabs have a saying, “The road is wiser than the man.” The road a person travels has a predetermined destination. If you're driving west on I20, and you don't want to end up in Birmingham *then turn around, man!*

And likewise, *the road of rebellion, or the road of bad influences, or the road of greed and pride* will also take you to an undesired destination. Unless you *turn...*

This is why they should look forward and repent - He writes, “Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?” They died to face God. We all give an account before God for the road we've traveled. *Don't think you can escape the same plight!*

Verse 6, “Yet surely My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? Finally, they should look down and repent. Read God’s Word! For the warnings in this Book do not fail. *Look to the book and repent!*”

“So they returned and said: ‘Just as the Lord of hosts determined to do to us, according to our ways and according to our deeds, so He has dealt with us.’ This was the Jews reaction to the prophet’s call to repent.

They’re saying, “You’re right, we’ve been down this path before. Let’s turn and travel down God’s road.”

Rumeal Robinson played basketball for the Michigan Wolverines in 1989. Early in the season in a game with Wisconsin Rumeal stepped to the free throw line late in the fourth quarter with an opportunity to win the game. He had two shots and his team trailed by one point. Rumeal missed both shots. Wisconsin won the game.

Rumeal felt awful. So for the rest of the season, after every practice, Rumeal shot 100 extra free throws.

So when he stepped to the line in the last game of the season - in overtime - with the game tied - just three seconds left - Rumeal Robinson sank both his free throws, and Michigan became national champions.

After his earlier failure, if all Rumeal had done was cry a few tears and offer a hollow apology, the next time the opportunity arose the same results would’ve followed. *But he repented.* A different outcome necessitates a change of direction. This is

repentance - it's the willingness to change and set a new course.

Verse 7, “On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet:...”

On our calendar this would be February 15, 519 BC. This was the night Zechariah would never forget.

In this one night God shows the prophet eight visions that he records in these first six chapters. These eight visions span the scope of human history, and project Israel's history long into the future. These eight visions focus on none other than Jesus, and His future reign on planet Earth. They're messianic and millennial, wild and wooly. They no doubt kept Zechariah up for many more nights to come as he pondered their meanings.

Zechariah reminds me of Ebenezer Scrooge. In one night Scrooge is swept away in a dream. He's taken by the ghosts of Christmas past, and present, and future.

It could be Dickens was inspired by Zechariah. For the prophet was escorted by an angel into the future.

Charles Spurgeon in his book “[Lectures To My Students](#)” said this about good illustrations, “[They are windows that let in the light. They illuminate, interest, enliven, and capture attention.](#)” And I certainly agree.

So would Zechariah. While Haggai is working on the *Temple*, strange things go on between Zechariah's *temples*.



God gives him a series of illustrations that speak comfort and hope to the struggling Jews.

He tells us about his first vision in verse 8, “I saw by night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse, and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow; and behind him were horses: red, sorrel, and white. The color “*sorrel*” is “reddish-brown,” the color of splattered mud.

“Then I said, “My lord, what are these?” So the angel who talked with me said to me, “I will show you what they are.” And the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, “These are the ones whom the Lord has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth.” So they answered the Angel of the Lord, who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, “We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting quietly.” Notice, it’s the Angel of the Lord who stands in the myrtle trees. We’ve discovered throughout the OT the expression “*Angel of the Lord*” often refers to Jesus in his pre-incarnate state.

Here, Jesus directs four horsemen from the myrtles.

Myrtle trees - or the “*hadassah*” in Hebrew - is a smallish evergreen. It’s more a shrub than a tree. It has green leaves and flowers. When the petals are crushed they emit a fragrance. The names “*myrtle*” and “*Esther*” come from the same Hebrew word. They’re synonyms.

The myrtle tree was a symbol for Israel. Check out Isaiah 55:13. The fact that it’s **evergreen** speaks of Israel's longevity. That it’s **small** speaks of Israel's stature and significance among the Gentile nations.



And that it **emits a sweet aroma** when crushed speaks of Israel's propensity to grow from persecution.

So here in this vision the Lord's messenger appears in Israel to report on the nations. The horsemen have surveyed the world and found it resting quietly and complacently. The world is unaware of God's concerns.

It's interesting, in his first vision the Prophet Zechariah sees four horsemen who *report to God*. In his final vision, Zechariah sees four chariots pulled by horses who go out to execute *vengeance for God*.

Verse 12, "Then the Angel of the Lord answered and said, "O Lord of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?"

And the Lord answered the angel who talked to me, with good and comforting words. So the angel who spoke with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I am zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal." The Lord still loves Israel!

"I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease; for I was a little angry, and they helped - but with evil intent." When God displaced His people, Judah, and destroyed Jerusalem - as He puts it, "when He was *"a little angry"* - He employed Gentiles, the Babylonians.

God's intent was to turn His people around, yet the tool He used had *"evil intent"* - hatred and greed. In Jeremiah 27 God even referred to the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, as "My servant." Yet the Babylonians failed to honor God and give Him glory. God's desire was to lead His people to repent.

The Babylonians just had fun beating them up. And God got angry again.

“Therefore thus says the Lord: “I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it,” says the Lord of hosts, “and a surveyor’s line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.”” His city will be rebuilt!

Haggai was working on the Temple at the time.

“Again proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “My cities shall again spread out through prosperity; the Lord will again comfort Zion, and will again choose Jerusalem.”’ This is a powerful promise.

In essence, He’s saying the times of the Gentiles will come to a close. Gentile world domination will end. God will again choose Jerusalem to rule the world.

In verse 18 Zechariah sees a second vision.

“Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were four horns.” An animal’s horn is the center of his strength, thus a horn was a symbol for military and political power. In the OT horns stood for governments.

“And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these?” So he answered me, “These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.”

Zechariah doesn’t give us the identity of the four horns, but history does... **Assyria** destroyed Samaria and Israel, **Babylon** sacked Jerusalem, **Greece** tormented the Jews between the Testaments, and **Rome** eventually scatted the Jews who had returned.

“Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen.” They were actually demolition experts. “And I said, “What are these coming to do?” So he said, “These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but the craftsmen are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.” The four craftsmen destroy the four horns who scatter Judah.

The point of the prophecy is to encourage the Jews. God will scatter the enemies who scattered them.

*And who are these craftsmen?* Babylon defeated Assyria... Persia defeated Babylon... Rome conquered Greece... Ultimately the Messiah will overthrow Rome. *Jesus will defeat the revived Rome of the last days.*

The Jewish Talmud is a commentary on the OT. And it has interesting interpretation of these four craftsmen. I bring it up only to emphasize how the Jewish scholars saw Messiah. They actually believed in two Messiahs.

The Talmud interprets the four craftsmen as "[The Messiah Son of David, the Messiah Son of Joseph, Elijah, and the Angel of Righteousness.](#)" Notice the two Messiahs - the *Son of David* and the *Son of Joseph*.

This idea rose from the Jews inability to reconcile Scripture. There are OT passages that speak of the Messiah as a *suffering servant*. There are other verses that describe Him as a *conquering king*. **How can He be both?** The Jewish solution was two Messiahs. A righteous sufferer like Joseph. A conqueror like David.

Of course, in light of Jesus, we now know the conflict can be reconciled **not** with two Messiahs, but with His two comings. Messiah came initially as *the Suffering Servant*, but He comes again as a *Conquering King*.

Chapter 2 begins Zechariah's third vision. "Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. So I said, "Where are you going?" And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length." Apparently, after the exile Jerusalem's dimensions had changed.

The city is expanding and has to be remeasured.

"And there was the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him, who said to him, "Run, speak to this young man, saying: 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it.'" Note Zechariah is called a "*young man*." Haggai was the experienced prophet. Zach was the upstart.

The Hebrew "*nar*" is the word Goliath used to insult David, and Jeremiah used of himself when he started his ministry. *How young is young?* We don't know, but Zechariah may've been a teenager when he started.

"For I,' says the Lord, 'will be a wall of fire all around her..." Zechariah foresees the day when Jerusalem's population and commerce will expand. The burgeoning city will spill beyond its walls. Today, modern Jerusalem is a sprawling city. Construction cranes dot the skyline.

Of course, a city without walls was unheard of in antiquity. Ancient cities always had walls to protect against invasion and predators. Yet Zechariah sees a day when God Himself will be the city's protection.

He'll be *"a wall of fire all around her."* A *"wall of fire"* reminds me of the pillar of fire by the Red Sea that stood between the freed slaves and Pharaoh's army.

This will be the case in the Kingdom Age when Jesus reigns. The Lord will be Jerusalem's security fence.

*"And I will be the glory in her midst."* Here's an amazing prophecy. Remember Ezekiel 10, the prophet charted the Shekinah's slow, reluctant departure from the Holy of Holies to the door of the Holy Place, out to the door of the Temple, out to the top of the Mount of Olives, where the glory finally ascended into heaven.

As Ezekiel called it, *"the brightness of the LORD's glory"* departed from the Temple. Yet throughout history God's glory has come and gone along this same path.

The NT refers to Jesus as *"the brightness of (God's) glory"* *and guess how Jesus came up to the Temple?* On Palm Sunday, He reversed the path the Glory took when it departed. From the top of the Mount of Olives, He came down its slope, and through the East Gate.

When Jesus ascended to heaven again He launched from the Mount of Olives... And when Messiah comes a second time, according to Zechariah 14, He will touch down again on top of the Mount of Olives. From heaven to Olivet to the Temple Mount is *the glory road*.

Zechariah writes in verse 6, “Up, up! Flee from the land of the north,” says the Lord; “for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven,” says the Lord.

“Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.” When Zerubbabel returned to the land in 536 BC only 50,000 Jews (a paltry few) returned with him. Most Jews had gotten comfortable in Babel and weren't up to the rigors of starting over. Now Zechariah calls out for all the exiled Jews to return to their home.

“For thus says the Lord of hosts: “He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.” I love this analogy. The “apple” of your eye is its pupil. When God designed the eye he placed a lid over it to protect your sensitive and delicate pupil. So whenever the pupil gets threatened this fleshly shield instinctively shuts.

And in the same way, it's God's instinct to protect His people - *Israel of old and the Church today*. We are as important and sensitive to Him as the apple of His eye.

God never hesitates over running to our defense.

“For surely I will shake My hand against them, and they shall become spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me.”

What an ominous thought to see God shaking His fist at you. Some folks get angry at God and shake a fist in God's face. One day the Lord will turn the tables.



Israel's oppressors will one day become her spoils. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the Lord."

And what a comfort this was for those working on the Temple, to know the Lord would dwell in the midst of His people. What an incentive to do their best. And the same motivation is ours when it comes to church work. When we gather, Jesus promises to be among us!

Verse 11, "Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. And the Lord will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!" Here's an interesting point, verse 12 is the only place in the Bible where the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria are actually called "the Holy Land."

Today, the land is far from holy. It's *a contentious land, a bloody land* - but when Jesus returns He'll again "choose Jerusalem" and make it His habitation.

In Chapters 1-2 God promises to overthrow Gentiles, return the Jews to their land, and rebuild Jerusalem.

Now in Chapters 3-4 He promises to restore the spiritual relationship between He and His people.

Chapter 3 is a message to *the religious authority* of the day, the High Priest Joshua. And Chapter 4 is a word to *the civil authority*, the Governor Zerubbabel.

It's still the night of February 15, 519 BC, when Zechariah sees a fourth vision - **the trial of Joshua**.

Chapter 3 continues, "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him."

Here we get a glimpse into heaven. And today, there's even conflict *in heaven - before God's throne*.

Sitting on the throne is the Angel of the Lord (who we've already identified as Jesus) and before Him is the High Priest Joshua and Satan, the devil himself.

The book of Job paints a similar picture. Satan appears before God to oppose His saints. Revelation 12:10 refers to Satan as "the accuser of (the) brethren, who accused them before our God day and night."

Satan is relentless in his attempts to dredge up our sins and hold them against us. Since Satan sinned and forfeited His place in God's Kingdom his goal is to prove that no one else is worthy of admission either.

Satan has each of us under surveillance, waiting for us to make a mistake so he can throw it in the Father's face and condemn us. He seems to have an airtight case. Eyewitnesses are lined up to testify. DNA links you to the crime scene. Satan has your blood sample and He's traced it all the way back to Adam. He's tied you to the original sin. You're as good as condemned.

If you went to court alone, without representation, you wouldn't stand a chance. Satan is a an alligator of a litigator. He would devour you with condemnation.

It reminds me of the accused thief who undertook his own defense. In his cross-examination he said to his alleged victim, “Now mam, did you really get a good look at my face when I took your purse?” *Whoops, a slip of the tongue.* The amateur attorney got ten years.

But this Joshua has a good attorney. What makes Him so so effective is He’s also the Judge. When the Judge is your lawyer you’ve got a strategic leg up!

Joshua’s defender was the Angel of the Lord. *He’s your attorney too.* I love 1 John 2:1, “If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” In verse 2 He comes to Joshua's defense!

“And the Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan!” Satan calls Joshua to the stand, and the Judge tells him, “*Case closed. Objection sustained. Evidence inadmissible.*” *As always the Lord levels the devil...*

“The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!” As Paul said in Romans 8:30, “Whom He predestined (or chose), these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” God chose and justified Jerusalem.

God refused to impute her sin. He ignored the many times the Jews failed Him, and treated her as if she’d never sinned. In Christ, this is the way God treats all His kids - as if we’d never sinned even when we have.

The NT calls all believers a kingdom of priests. And like Joshua God chooses us, He justifies us, and despite the mountain of evidence Satan has against us, His verdict is in

our favor. Our sin is now under the blood of Jesus, and can never be used against us!

Zechariah says of Joshua, “Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?” A blacksmith lays the brand in the fire until it’s red hot. If he forgets it, the brand will melt. But when he’s ready, he yanks it out of the coals, presses it to the cattle’s hide, and tattoos his mark.

And our salvation requires a similar intervention.

Joshua, and every other believer who has ever lived, is like a brand plucked from the fire. If God left us on the hot coals we’d melt in judgment. But in His mercy He has yanked us from the fire in time to save our soul.

We’re all like brands plucked from the burning.

It reminds me of Walter Wyatt, a pilot, who usually flew from Nassau to Miami in 65 minutes. But on December 5, 1986 it took him nearly 24 hours.

Unbeknownst to Walter just before takeoff thieves broke into his Beechcraft and stole his navigational equipment. Flying into a storm, with nothing but a compass, he got lost. Wyatt eventually ditched his plane in the sea. For the next 12 hours he was encircled by sharks. Each time one of them swam toward him Wyatt would kick them away with his feet.

One shark was closing in for the kill when a rescue plane came out of nowhere, and lifted Wyatt to safety.

Just as Walter Wyatt would’ve never saved himself, you and I would’ve also ended up shark bait, if God in Christ hadn’t let down His hand to save. We’ve been plucked from the sharks - as well as the fire!

Verse 3, “Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, “Take away the filthy garments from him.”

And to him He said, “See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.”

Since Satan can't win in God's court, he brings his case to us. He reminds us what a scumbag we were.

We're not worthy to be God's child. Satan points out the dandruff on your collar, your dirty mind, the shirt stain... If he can keep us in a cell of condemnation and shame he can rob us of the joys of Jesus... *This is what he did to the famous reformer, Martin Luther...*

Once I officiated a wedding, and when I signed the marriage certificate I didn't put the cap back on my pen. By the time I got home I had this big ink stain on my shirt. It became a nightmare to try and remove.

I'm sure you've had your own ink spots. But the most famous ink spot of all is in Germany's Wartburg Castle.

And it wasn't just a nightmare, it was caused by one.

For days Martin Luther was tortured with guilt over his former sins. One night he had a dream where he saw Satan reading aloud from a long scroll a list of all Martin's sins. The condemnation grew and grew as Satan reminded Luther of every evil he'd ever done.

Finally, Luther leaped from his bed, looked his Accuser in the eye, and screamed, "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.'*" He then grabbed the inkwell sitting on his desk and threw it at the devil. From that moment on Martin Luther was free from the devil's condemnation.

I've actually been to the German castle, and there on the wall, people still look for Luther's famous ink spot.

But what Satan did to Luther he did to Joshua in Zechariah's day - and tries to do today to us. He wants to bury us under a mound of guilt and condemnation.

There comes a point, where you have to rise up and throw an inkwell - say, *"enough is enough."* Put your foot down on the righteousness that's ours in Christ.

You've got to repeat, *"The LORD rebuke you Satan."*

It's been said, *"When Satan reminds you of your past; remind him of his future."* That's a good strategy!

We need to understand that like Joshua we no longer wear *"filthy garments."* And the language of our text is graphic! The Hebrew word *"filthy"* literally means *"excrement covered"* or *"dung splattered."* Implied is a bad case of diarrhea. This is us apart from Christ.

But now in Him those stained garments are replaced with *"rich robes."* Spiritually, in Christ, we're adorned in designer clothes - the righteousness earned by Jesus.

And yes, these clothes are expensive - they're *"rich robes."* Ultimately, they were paid for by the precious blood of God's only Son. Never take His righteousness for granted. Put on



His robes with a grateful heart, and let the righteousness of Jesus color all that you do.

Verse 5, “And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” Rich robes and a clean turban. “So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the Lord stood by.”

The OT priest wore a turban on his head that read, “holiness to the LORD.” This was his motto, and it should be ours... Every thought, every action, every attitude should be a reflection of our devotion to Christ, and deserving of the label, “holiness to the LORD.”

We're saved by grace to walk in holiness!

“Then the Angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command, then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here.’” Like our salvation Joshua’s pardon and position had nothing to do with his own efforts.

It was God’s gift. But His service *is* dependent on how He walks in God’s ways and keeps His commands. And if he does, his reward is three-fold...

First, He’ll judge in God’s house. Imagine, occupying a position of authority and leadership in heaven.

Second, He’ll have charge over God’s courts, He’ll be able to lead the heavenly host in the things of God.

Third, God will *“give him places to walk among those who stand there.”* This is more difficult to grasp, but the Jewish Targum offers an interpretation. It reads, *“In the resurrection of the dead, I will revive you and give you feet walking among the seraphim.”* Seraphim are angels. Apparently, if we obey God now, in heaven we’ll be allowed to do stuff only angels get to do today.

*Imagine, being allowed to serve among the angels!*

Verse 8, *‘Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign; for behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.’* Joshua is a sign, a wondrous sign. The word *“Joshua”* in Greek is *“Jesus.”* The High Priest, Joshua, was a sign of our High Priest, Jesus.

Jesus too is a priest - not after the OT order of mortal priests - but Jesus is an eternal type of priest. We’re told He ever lives to make intercession for you and me.

And in comparing Joshua to Jesus, Zechariah uses two idioms that speak of Messiah - *“My Servant”* and *“the BRANCH.”* Jesus is Yahweh’s servant. He’s also a shoot, a limb, *“the branch”* from David’s family tree.

*“The Branch”* is depicted four ways in the OT...

In Jeremiah 23:5 Messiah is called a royal branch, *a king*. In Zechariah 3:8 the Branch is *the Servant of God*. In Zechariah 6:12, He's called the *“the man whose name is the Branch.”* His *humanity* is emphasized. And in Isaiah 4:2, He's called the *“the branch of the Lord.”* Or literally, the offspring of God

Himself, God's Son. Put all four together and Messiah, or the Branch, is a **king**, a **servant**, a **man**, and **God**.

And this is the four-fold representation of Jesus we see in the NT. The Gospels depicted Jesus in this manner... Matthew describes Him as **the King**, heir to David's throne... Mark shows Him as a man of action. **God's unstoppable servant...** Luke highlights Jesus' humanity. He was **a man** like us... And John portrays Jesus as **the Son of God**. He emphasizes Jesus' deity.

Verse 9, **"For behold, the stone..."** This is another metaphor for the Messiah. In Isaiah 28:16 Jesus is called **"the cornerstone, the tried stone."** In Psalm 118 He is **"the stone the builders' rejected."** In Daniel 9 He is **"the stone cut out of the mountain without hands."**

In OT and in the NT **the stone** is a name for Messiah.

**"For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: upon the stone are seven eyes."** A stone with seven eyes is a strange thought, but it may correspond with the seven manifestations of the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 11.

Isaiah says, **"There shall come forth a Rod (or shoot) from the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of His roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD."** Jesus had *the Spirit of the Lord, of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of might, of knowledge, and of the fear of the LORD* upon Him.

“Behold, I will engrave its inscription,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.” In a spiritual sense this was fulfilled by Jesus at Calvary. On the cross, the Lord uttered the words, “It is finished,” or literally, “paid in full.” All that needed to be done for us to be forgiven was done on one day.

Yet in a historical sense this phrase refers to the day yet future when the Jews, as a nation, repent of their sins and look on Him whom they have pierced.

Zechariah 12:10 describes that single day and we'll wait until we get there to discuss all its implications!

Finally verse 10, “In that day,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree.’” It will be the Jews’ embrace of Jesus as their Messiah that will usher in a new day for planet earth - a Messianic era of peace and harmony.

Everyone will be neighborly to each other.

In every corner of the globe, folks on every continent, will live together - and break bread together - in unity.