

Zechariah 1-3 – Visions from God

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All right. I hope you have your Bibles open to Zechariah, second to the last book of the Old Testament. Let's open up in prayer and we'll get into it tonight. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the incredible richness of your love and also, Lord, the richness of your word. No less here with the Book of Zechariah.

What a wonderful, wonderful prophetic book this is. And Lord, how you have given us such incredible insight related to the last days, the day of the Lord, the coming of Jesus, and how you're going to be dealing with Israel in those days as well. So, we pray Lord, throughout this study, that you would guide and direct our hearts, that we would be open to hear from you and that you would speak to each heart. We look to you Father, to accomplish the purpose of your will in our lives. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Amen.

As we've been going through these what we call minor prophets, and I've told you many times, they're not minor for importance. They're minor simply because of their shorter size. We're, we've been going rapidly because some of these books as the minor prophets are only two or three chapters, but this is kind of a departure.

As we get into Zechariah, we're dealing with a book that's 14 chapters long, so we're going to slow down a bit. We're not going to take as much of a break neck pace related to this, but there's two reasons for that. One, of course, is that it's longer, but secondly, the prophecies that are contained within this book are particularly amazing in that they cover such an incredible broad range of the day of the Lord.

And again, when we refer to the day of the Lord, we're not talking about a single day, but a protracted period of time really surrounding last days events. And of course, the second coming of Jesus Christ, which of course includes the tribulation period. But how all of that applies to Israel is so important.

Remember something very, very vital here people, the church, the body of Christ, of whom we are members. He's not in view here from the standpoint of specifically what Zechariah is saying or frankly any of the other Old Testament prophets. In the past we've shared with you that God hid the church from the Old Testament prophets, and that's why he refers, Paul refers to the church as a

mystery and that means something that was previously hidden but has now been revealed.

And that is the church. We are a mystery in the Old Testament. Now, the reason I share that with you and the reason that's very important for you to lay hold of is that, is because there's been a great deal of, well, I'll just say it, bad teaching, related to the role of Israel, particularly post the inauguration of the church.

Because the body of Christ, the church, the bride of Christ, was essentially inaugurated. When the Spirit fell upon the assembled believers as we read in the second chapter of Acts. And the church was born in a very real sense and began from that period.

But the Old Testament prophets didn't see that, that was out of their view. They could see many things related to the first coming of Jesus, and many things related to the second coming of Jesus. But couched between those major events in human history is the church which was hidden from the prophets.

And the bad teaching that I alluded to a moment ago, which began cropping up a number of years into the existence of the church, is that the church took over for Israel, that the church is now the chosen people of God. That the church now is subject to all of the blessings that were previously given to Israel.

This is a very common, a very common belief. And I had a gal write to me here just this last week, who's been listening to my teachings for some time, and she knows how I've been teaching related to that position. And yet she went to a bible study at a particular fellowship and she was asking the question, she happened to be in a Lutheran church and she was asking the question to the bible study leader if Martin Luther believed that the church took over for Israel.

And personally, I don't believe that he did, but, the person who was leading the bible study kind of looked at her with this quizzical sort of expression and said, well, I don't know, but the church did take over for Israel. And so, this is, and so she wrote me to say, okay, I'm confused.

Well, I said, don't be confused. There are all of these prophetic messages that are given to us concerning the last days. And we're going to be going through them here in Zechariah. We've dealt with them in Haggai, we've dealt with them in Habakkuk, we've dealt with them in Isaiah, Jeremiah, the other prophets that make it very clear to us that God has a specific plan for Israel right now that doesn't minimize who we are as the body of Christ. It doesn't minimize the promises that we have received as the body of Christ, it's just different. It's just

God's different dealings with different, these different people. It doesn't mean that the Israel's not going to be saved just like we are saved.

It's just different. It's simply God's different workings among different people. So, I just want to make that point. Now, there are several aspects as we go through the book of Zechariah that I want to highlight with you. So, we're going to do a bit of an introduction here. So, for those of you taking notes there might be some things that you want to jot down. I'll run through these fairly rapidly.

But the first thing is that Zechariah's name has an interesting meaning. It means the Lord remembers, and that is specifically interesting in light of what we're going to go through in this study.

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INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH

- Zechariah's name means "The Lord remembers"
- Prophesied alongside Haggai after the exile
- Was murdered in the Temple according to Matthew 23
- Quoted more than 40 times in the New Testament (NT)
- "Lord of Hosts" is used 53 times
- Jerusalem (or Zion) mentioned 55 times
- 8 (or 10) different visions mentioned in first 6 chapters
- Speaks more about the coming of Messiah than other minor prophets

Now, if we were able to get through all 14 chapters tonight, which believe me, we won't, you would come away saying, wow, God named this man perfectly. Because what you're going to see through the course of this study is that God remembers, and particularly, remembers his people related to the promises that he gave to their forefathers. And the promises that he made concerning Israel and how he would bring Israel to a place of worldwide blessing in the last days.

Secondly, it's interesting to know that Zechariah was right there alongside Haggai. He was around when the nation of Israel had been released from their slavery in the Persian kingdom and were allowed to come back to Jerusalem in order to initially rebuild the temple and then later on rebuild the walls of the city.

In fact, Ezra makes reference to Zechariah being there and his prophecies to the people during that time. The next point is a rather sad one, and it's something

that Jesus tells us as recorded in Matthew 23, and that is that Zechariah was actually killed. He was murdered, in the temple no less.

And you'll remember that in Matthew 23, Jesus spoke to the unbelieving leaders of Israel saying that all of the blood of the righteous prophets and all those who had been killed unrighteously before that, were going to be laid upon the heads of those who had rejected Christ. And you can again read about that in the 23rd chapter of Matthew.

Interesting too, that Zechariah is quoted more than 40 times in the New Testament. Isn't that interesting? 40 times, the prophecies of Zechariah arrive in the New Testament. He also makes heavy use of the term "Lord of hosts". You're going to hear it 53 times. Yeah, over the course of this entire study, he will mention Jerusalem, either by name, or by Zion, or simply by the city. A total of some 55 times.

And then depending on how you count them, in the first six chapters of this book, you are going to read about either 8 or 10 different visions that Zechariah had. And the reason I waffled on that number is that some Bible students see that there are, believe that there are 8 and some believe that there are 10.

And so, it just depends on whether you break up some of the different visions according to how they are given to us in the scripture. And then, finally we are going to find out the Zechariah talks more about the coming of Messiah, both his first and second coming, more than any of the other minor prophets combined.

So, this book has a lot to say about the coming of Messiah, the ministry of Messiah, the work of Messiah. So, chapter 1, because there's no king in the land of Israel any longer, they dated the prophecies by the kings of the Persian kingdom. And so, it begins by saying: Zechariah 1 *"¹In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, ²"The Lord was very angry with your fathers. ³Therefore say to them, Thus declares the Lord of hosts: Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts"* (ESV)

Now, this is a quick warning to the pilgrims who had now come back into the land. And it's a reminder to them that God had allowed them to come back into the land even after their fathers had been captured by the Babylonian army, taken into exile for 70 years in Babylon.

But God is reminding them it was because of their stubbornness and their disobedience that their fathers were taken into captivity in the first place. And so, this is a warning to just remember, it's a good thing to remember what's happened in the past. I think you've probably heard there, if there's one thing about history that we know it's that we have this great tendency to forget it.

And because we forget our history, we have a tendency then to repeat it. And that's what God is warning the nation of Israel about now, don't forget your fathers were taken away and don't forget why you were allowed to come back. They were taken because of their disobedience, you were brought back because of God's mercy, don't forget those things.

So, He says, *“return to me, says the Lord of hosts and I will return to you”*. It kind of reminds me of that statement in James, that if we will draw near to the Lord, he will draw near to us. He says in verse four: *“⁴ Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.’ But they did not hear or pay attention to me, declares the Lord.”*

So, he says, don't be like your fathers. And then he asks a couple of questions in verse five, he says: *“⁵ Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?”* These two questions that Zechariah is posing, are warnings about delaying a response to the word of the Lord.

He begins by saying, your fathers, where are they? And this is just simply a reminder or He's calling to their remembrance the fact that their fathers had died. They had either died from the sword, they'd either died from famine, they'd either died from pestilence or they died of natural causes. But even those who died of natural causes did so away from their homeland.

They didn't die in their homeland of Israel, they died in the Persian kingdom. Why? Because they were disobedient and God is calling that to their remembrance. And He's saying it's because they ignored the word of God, right? So, He says, your fathers, where are they? And then He says, and the prophets, do they live together.

And this is a way of communicating that the opportunity to respond to the word of God is not without its limits. In other words, the prophets themselves and the message they gave didn't last forever. And so, the opportunity to repent is also limited. That's what God is saying here.

And so, the message that he's giving here in verse five is very simple. And it's, you can't ignore God forever without paying a cost. You can't ignore God forever. So He is saying, don't do that. Remember your fathers, where are your fathers now? Well, they're dead. What about the prophets? Are they still around giving the same message they did? No, they're gone. Well, so is the opportunity that they shared.

So don't ignore the word of God. He says in verse six: *“⁶ But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers?”* That's a way of saying, did my word not eventually come to pass? Did it not come true? Right?

And so again, getting them to think through these things, he says as we continue on in verse six. *“So they repented and said, ‘As the Lord of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us.’”* And this is a reminder to them that their forefathers came to a place during the exile of coming to terms with why they were there, and there was repentance on the part of the people.

They finally had to be taken away from their homeland. They had to be literally put into a position of subjection under a pagan government. And they finally came to a place of saying, you know what? God told us how he was going to deal with us, and that's how he dealt with us. And so, they began to come to terms with the Lord's discipline, that God disciplined us and we deserved his discipline.

Now, as we get on to verse seven, here comes the first vision that Zechariah is given. And I'm going to tell you ahead of time that, as we get into these visions, you're going to feel a little bit, maybe like this is the, like Ezekiel, kind of the book of Revelation of the Old Testament as it relates to some of these visions.

“⁷ On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, ⁸ “I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses.”

Now let me stop there just for a second to interject that the exact identification and the meaning, frankly, of this man on the Red Horse is uncertain. However, there are many Bible students who believe that this is a Christophany and the word Christophany means an appearance of Christ prior to his incarnation.

Because of course we know that when Jesus was born of Mary, that wasn't his beginning. John gave us that very clearly in the beginning of his gospel. In the beginning was the Word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. And then later the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. So, the word of God has always existed, and yet we see appearances that that seem to be the Lord himself in the Old Testament.

So, he sees this rider on a red horse with some other horses, and it says in verse nine. *“⁹ Then I said, ‘What are these, my lord?’ The angel who talked with me said to me, ‘I will show you what they are.’ ¹⁰ So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, ‘These are they whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth.’ ¹¹ And they answered the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, ‘We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.’”*

Now, that might sound good to you, but the significance of the earth being at rest is that the nations that had previously invaded Judah and made life miserable for them were seeming to be existing in ease and prosperity. And to the Jewish mind, this was a grave thing. In fact, some of the prophets would cry out to the Lord and say, why have you not judged the nations for what they did to us? Well, this is what these patrolling angels, if you will, come back and say that the nations of the earth are at rest.

In other words, judgment has not come upon them. And we'll see how that all plays out here. As we read on, in verse 12, it says, *“¹² Then the angel of the Lord said, ‘O Lord of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these seventy years?’”*

And it tells us in response that *“¹³ And the Lord answered gracious and comforting words to the angel who talked with me”*. Now, we're not told what these comforting and gracious words were, but they must have been some kind of, not only an assurance of blessing related to Judah and Jerusalem, but also a word of justice toward the enemies of Israel. And the reason we say that is because as you keep reading, you see that justice becomes primary.

Verse 14. *“¹⁴ So the angel who talked with me said to me, ‘Cry out,’”*. And this is the message for Zechariah. He's being told to intercede on behalf of Israel and Judah so that justice might be visited upon their enemies, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. ¹⁵ And I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease;”*

Okay, there it is, right there. All right, so you can see what the Lord now is saying here. The Lord is saying that I'm jealous for my own people, the people of Zion, and I'm angry with the nations who are at rest or at ease because they're thinking that, hey, whatever they did to my people, they've gotten off scot-free.

And he says here, *“for while I was angry but a little, they furthered the disaster.”* What that means is they, in terms of their cruelty, they went beyond what the Lord intended. They, the spanking spoon of the Lord did more than just a paddling as it were to use kind of that sort of an idea. They went beyond; their cruelty exceeded what the Lord had determined for his people as a disciplinary action.

And so, the Lord says that he's going to judge them. *“Therefore, thus says the Lord,”* Verse 16 *“¹⁶I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy; my house shall be built in it, declares the Lord of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.”*

Now, the measuring line, which is also called the surveyor's line in the New King James Bible (NKJB), is used to speak of the tool of the carpenter who is measuring the area for a rebuilding project. And what the Lord is saying by this, by bringing the measuring line stretched out over Jerusalem, is that He's going to bless and prosper the city in such a way that it's going to have to spread out.

In fact, that's kind of what He goes on to say, in verse 17, He says, *“¹⁷ ‘Cry out again, Thus says the Lord of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.’”* So that's the end of that first vision.

Now we come to the next one, verse 18 says, *“¹⁸And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four horns!”* Now I need to tell you, as we've reminded you many times, the reference to horns in the Old Testament is always a symbol of power or strength or might.

Alright, so here you go. He says, *“I lifted my eyes and behold four horns,”* obviously representing four powers. *“¹⁹And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these?” And he said to me, “These are the horns”* or if you will, the powers. *“that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.”* Now we know that from other passages that the Jews were scattered.

The Bible likes to say to the four winds: north, south, east, and west. And so now when the Lord speaks of the powers that scattered them, He depicts those

powers with four horns, or if you will, four powers, four nations of power that scattered the people.

It probably isn't referring to specifically four different nations, but rather the nations that scattered them to the four winds. Then it says in verse 20, *“²⁰Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen. And I said, what are these coming to do?”* Did you notice Zechariah didn't ask “Who are these”?, he says, rather, “what are they coming to do?”.

And He said, *“these are the horns that scattered Judah”* referring to the powers *“so that no one raised his head. And these”* now referring to the craftsmen, *“have come to terrify them to cast down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it”*. So, you can see that the second vision really goes very closely with the first, where God comforts his people by saying, I will bring judgment upon those were cruel to you beyond what I intended in a disciplinary act on my part. And then in this second vision, he gives Zechariah an understanding of specifically, that these nations who scattered them will themselves be scattered.

All right, chapter 2. Chapter 2 is a rather lovely prophetic view of the time of blessing and abundance that's coming to Jerusalem. And it begins with this, once again, with this idea of the measuring line with a signifying a time to come of building and growth. And he says in verse one, *“¹And I lifted my eyes and saw and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then 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. And behold, the angel who talked with me came forward and another angel came forward to meet him and said to him, run, say to that young man.”* And I'm assuming that's a reference to Zechariah. We believe, by the way, he was quite young. Some bible scholars believe he was in his late teens or maybe early twenties.

But here's the message. *“Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages. Without walls because of the multitude of people and livestock in it, and I will be to her a wall of fire all around declares the Lord and I will be the glory in her midst.”* I want you to stop there for a minute. This is a beautiful passage, but this is another example of something we talked about just this last Sunday as we made reference to a passage in Malachi that made reference to the coming of Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

You'll remember we talked about this in the Book of John, and we talked about the fact that John the Baptist was a partial fulfillment of that prophecy in Malachi chapter 4, and that there will be a further and more complete

fulfillment of that prophecy in the last days when Elijah himself will return and do his ministry or have his ministry before the coming of the Lord. We call that the law of double reference, and it's something we see many times in the Old Testament, particularly in the Old Testament.

This is another example of the law of double reference, because there is a short term fulfillment to what the Lord is saying here about the prosperity of Jerusalem and he's talking and that is centered in the rebuilding of the city and the temple under Ezra and Nehemiah.

But there is a further and more long-term fulfillment that will be fully and finally realized during the rule of Messiah, which in that period of time we call the millennial kingdom, that 1000 year period of time following the great tribulation. How do we know that this is an example of the law of double reference.

Well, simply because of what the Lord is saying here, that I'm going to be a wall around the city is going to burst out that there will be no wall. Now, in the first blessing, the more confined short-term blessing, there was a wall, right? You know that's what Nehemiah came back to do, was to build the wall.

There was a wall and they didn't outgrow the wall under that first blessing. But God is prophesying here of a time yet to come during the millennial kingdom when the Lord says that I will be in your midst and I will be, as it were, a wall of fire. In other words, the presence of the Lord will be its protection at that time during the millennial kingdom, and there will be no wall around the city of Jerusalem because the Lord himself will be their protection.

All right, so he goes on here, verse six, He says *“Up! Up! flee from the land of the north, declares the Lord, for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven,”* There's that reference to being cast to the four winds, *“declares the Lord. Up! Escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.”* God is calling home the rest of the Jews.

Do you know that many of the Jews stayed in the Persian kingdom, even after Cyrus released them to come home and to begin to rebuild the temple, and then later on to rebuild the wall under Nehemiah? Many of the Jews who had lived there for so long just stayed there. They had businesses, they had been raising families they had, whatever else they were doing.

But now the Lord is calling them. Why is he calling them home? Because judgment is going to take over some of these lands, like the land of Babylon.

And so, God is saying escape to Zion, that's where it's going to be safe. You're not safe there living among the enemy, so escape Babylon, come back to Zion, where you will be protected.

Verse eight. *“⁸ For thus said the Lord of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye:”* And here's the message. *“⁹ Behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall become plunder for those who served them. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me.”*

So, the Lord is promising judgment to come upon the nations where the Jews had once been taken captive. Now, the final words of this fairly short chapter, two are focused on the ultimate blessing of Jerusalem when Messiah is ruling during the millennial kingdom. So, these prophecies go beyond our time and go beyond the great tribulation and go into the millennial kingdom.

It says, *“¹⁰ Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord. ¹¹ And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. ¹² And the Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.”*

And then he ends by saying, *“¹³ Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.”* Well again, this is the second coming of Jesus Christ. That is what Zechariah is talking about, and he's talking about that time when Jesus himself returns.

In fact, we're going to find out at the end of this book, Zechariah is going to tell us where Jesus is going to land when he returns. He gives us the exact location, and here's a little spoiler, he's going to come back to the very same spot where he ascended and in the full view of his disciples in Acts chapter 1.

And where was that? It was on the Mount of Olives. And in the last chapter of this book, we're going to see that Jesus is going to return to the Mount of Olives and in a glorious returning on behalf of the nation of Israel. And by the way, we'll be coming back with him okay? That's a very cool part of that as well.

But I want you to see what he's saying here. Once again, he says, *“I come, I will dwell in your midst.”* And then he talks about many nations coming to join themselves to the Lord. And this is what's going to happen during the millennial

kingdom. There will be people who survive the tribulation, who survive the battle of Armageddon, and who will be left upon the earth as mortals.

Remember, that's not going to be you. You will be changed in the twinkling of an eye when Jesus returns for his church, for his bride Paul tells us in first Thessalonians. But there will be people who will still be mortal upon the earth. There will be Gentiles, which is what the nations means, and they will stream to the holy land to be part of the work of the Lord.

And he says once again, there in verse 11, “¹¹*I will dwell in your midst. You're going to know me.* ¹²*And the Lord himself will inherit Judah as his portion. Jerusalem will again be the chosen city of all the nations of the world.*” And then I find it very interesting that the Lord, the last thing the Lord says in the chapter is just “¹³*Be silent, all flesh before the Lord for his roused himself from his holy dwelling.*”

In other words, he's come back, and the word here is essentially a call to awe and reverence because, how do I say this? As mankind, we have a propensity to speak up and say very foolish things and usually at the wrong time.

There's an interesting passage that is given to us in the book of Habakkuk. Let me put this on the screen. It's from Habakkuk 2:20 and it says:

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Habakkuk 2:20 (ESV)

"But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."

As it says in Ecclesiastes, there's a time to keep silence and there's a time to speak up. But there's the time to keep your mouth shut and when the Lord rouses himself from his holy temple, it's the time to keep your mouth shut. It's a time to just in reverence and awe, worship the Lord in the splendor of his majesty. Do you know that there is such a thing as worship in silence? We like to make noise, and there's nothing wrong with making noise in worship.

David talks a lot about, shout to the Lord all the earth, make a joyful noise to the Lord. But do you know that there's also an attitude of worship that is very worshipful in silence? I am going to make an admission to you here. I find it struggle some to worship with a lot of noise. I find it much easier to worship in silence. I'm just one of those people, and that's just the way, I mean, some people worship to them is, let's make thunder. And we're going to the NFL crowd is going to have nothing on us. We're going to, we're going to hoot and

holler for the Lord. And there's nothing wrong with that from the standpoint of if it's really truly directed to the Lord.

But again, there's a time when the hushed attitude of the heart really worships in a way that, recognizes God. I mean, God says, be still and know that I am God. And I've always been kind of taken by that story of Elijah, when he had his pity party after Jezebel wrote him that poison pen letter and told him she was going to kill him. And he ran for his life, held himself up somewhere in a cave and asked to die in a kind of a fit of melancholy depression.

And the Lord called him out of that to the mouth of the cave and there were some pretty amazing things that happened. There was a windstorm and there was all these things that took that were huge and noisy and stuff. And then finally the word tells us that Elijah heard a whisper and he pulled his cloak over his face and the Lord spoke to him in a whisper.

And I don't know, that story has just always impressed me so much. And I guess that's kind of the way the Lord ministers to my heart more often than not, is in the whisper. I need to get quiet. Even when I'm studying, I, okay, I'm going to, I don't know why, if this is true confession night, but I guess it is.

I have these nice Bose headphones that are noise canceling. I put them on when I'm studying. Even if I'm not listening to anything, I turn on the noise canceling so I can't hear anything. I have to get alone with God even when I'm studying. I'm so distractible, if I hear something in the other room, what's that?

But I have to focus, and it's hard for me because I do get distracted so easy. So even in my study, I have to just kind of blank out the noise of the world around me. And it's that way with worship too, so these references to keeping silence, this kind of ministers to my heart.

Chapter 3, another vision. *“³Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.”* All right? Now, first of all, you need to know that Joshua was the high priest at that time, but as high priest, you need to remember the function, the functional role of a high priest.

A high priest always goes before the Lord representing others. That is why we refer to the husband as the priest of the home because he goes before the Lord on behalf of his family. Jesus is our great high priest in that he went before the Father on our behalf, paying the penalty of our sin. The role of the priest is always to represent the people to God.

So, if you want to think of it this way, a prophet represents God to the people. He has his face to the people, his back to God, as if God is speaking through him, he's speaking to the people. The priest is turned around the other way. He is representing the people speaking to God. So what Zechariah is seeing is the prophet Joshua standing before the Lord.

And so, he sees this spiritual heavenly vision, if you will, of Joshua functioning in this role as priest, standing before the Lord. However, someone else is there and that is Satan. And we're told here that Satan was standing at his right hand and he was accusing him. Now, we shouldn't be surprised at either one of these things that Satan was there before you know the Lord and that Satan was accusing, because that's what he does.

It is the most natural thing in the world for Satan to accuse. He accuses us to God. He accuses us to one another. He accuses us to ourselves, and we in fact read in the Book of Revelation that this is who he is. Let me show you this on the screen.

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Revelation 12:10 (ESV)

"And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God."

Satan is constantly making accusations. Now, he's not going to get very far with God, because God knows better, but he can make some real serious inroads when he accuses us to each other, or us to ourselves. Well, I've told you this over the last several weeks, and I'll repeat it here, that I believe one of the most dangerous things that a believer can do in their Christian walk is focus on their sin.

And I'm not saying that a believer shouldn't recognize their sin. I'm not saying a believer shouldn't repent, turn away from their sin and confess it. I'm not saying that, we should, I'm talking about focusing to the point of fixating on it.

When that happens, when we become fixated on our mistakes, Satan laughs and he rushes in to accuse. And he's very good at what he does. He's been doing it a lot longer than you've been accusing yourself and he knows how to accuse you in a very effective way. And once you entertain those accusations, the enemy

will bring discouragement to your heart and that will bring depression and a separation between you and God.

And it will actually interrupt the flow of faith. Now you say faith, faith in what? Faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, Jesus finished his work. The last thing he said before he dismissed his spirit was, it is finished. That is a word to you and me concerning our sin. It means literally in the Greek paid in full.

So, Jesus paid our sin in full. However, if you make the mistake of beginning to focus on your sin, which incidentally will eventually cause you to question your salvation, Satan has got you in a web and you need to break out of that. And the way you break out of it is take up the shield of faith and say, I choose to trust the words of my Lord more than my own feelings.

Because people so many times will talk to me or write to me and talk to me about their sin, talk to me about how now they are struggling with this issue. Now I'm wondering if I'm even, I'm wondering if I'm saved, I'm wondering if I've ever been forgiven. Well, of course you are. Doubt has now entered into your heart because you've fixated on your sin. And it just causes such great discouragement in their hearts, and they've gotten caught in the web of the enemy and his accusations, and it's a very serious matter.

And so, they'll say, what can I do? How can I know that I'm forgiven? Listen, we believe we're forgiven by faith. There's no shortcut to faith. You can't get around faith, you can't circumvent faith. We have to go back to the word of God, 1 John 1:9: *"If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Every so often, I have to go back and make sure it still says all, and I'm always encouraged, because it does. That word's still there and it stays there. Praise the Lord. So, it says He will forgive us. And then I go back to the words of Jesus on the cross, it is finished, it is paid for and then I can begin to speak to my own heart.

But what people will say to me is, but Pastor, I don't feel forgiven. And I have to very gently, and sometimes I don't do it very gently, but I try to gently say, what do your feelings have to do with anything? Your feelings don't enter into the equation. We are not saved by feelings, we're saved by faith.

Our salvation is by grace through faith, not by grace through feelings. And if you are caught in a web where you no longer feel saved or feel forgiven, that's

not because you're not saved or you're not forgiven. It's because you've given rise to these things and they've now captured you and they've captured your attention to your detriment.

And that needs to be resolved. But people, it's resolved by bathing your heart in the word of God, but there is no shortcut to faith. And so, what I tell people is I usually, I'll just give them a couple of verses to memorize. I'll just say, all right, just like the ones I just gave you 1 John 1:9, I go to that one all the time.

I give them Ephesians 2:8 and 9, which we already quoted, and I give them the reference of Jesus saying it is finished. Memorize these and whenever thoughts enter your mind that you are not forgiven, you quote those. That's the sword of the spirit, you guys, and that's an offensive weapon. The shield of faith is a defensive weapon.

The sword of the spirit is an offensive weapon. Get out there and slash it around. The enemy ultimately cannot stand against those things. That's why God gave them to you. And that's why James said, resist the devil and he will flee from you. That resistance means to put up a resistance. He says, you're not forgiven, you say, oh, yes, I am, because God said so. That's resistance.

You see, it's not cursing the devil. It's confessing and claiming the word of God, the promise of God's word. God's word says, if I confess my sins, I'm forgiven. I'm forgiven. Jesus said, it is finished, it is done, it is paid in full. And that means every sin that I've committed is paid in full.

And that's what we, that's what we declare by faith. And that's a pushback, right? That's a pushback on the enemy and we have to do that. We have to learn how to push back, and that's why we get into trouble in the first place. We begin to entertain ideas of our sin, the enemy comes along and accuses us. We embrace that accusation and we don't push back.

We just swallow it, we just accept it. Oh, you're right, you're right, I'm a scumbag, I'm the refuse of the earth, God created me for hell. And we just, and we pretty soon, we're in a tailspin. We're literally in a tailspin heading for the ground and to a fiery crash. No! we stand in the word of God. And that's why, Paul talks about in Ephesians about, and having done everything stand, take your stand against the wiles of the enemy, the devil's schemes. Take your stand in the word of God, in the strength and promises of the word of God.

I had a young man, 12 years old, write to me this last week, said, pastor Paul, how can I know for sure that I'm saved? I always love it when I get a note from someone that young, they're serious about their walk with the Lord already.

And I just wrote him back and I said, listen, I've raised four kids and there were times when I was raising those kids that I made promises to them, but I had to go back on those promises because, I wasn't in charge of my circumstances and I couldn't see the future and I didn't know what was going to happen.

And even though I made a promise, I had to go back on it and I had to go to my kids and apologize and say, I'm sorry, I have to break my promise to you because I didn't know this was going to happen. I said, but God's not like that. He's made promises, but He knows exactly what's going to happen and He knows and He is completely in charge of his circumstances.

So, God has made a promise to you in the word, and that is how you know. Your sins are forgiven and you're going to heaven because of the character of the person who made the promise. Okay? Promises are a dime a dozen among humans. They're worth all the gold in the world and more when they come from God, because none of His promises will ever hit the ground and be unkept.

Not one single promise. Verse 2, *“²And the Lord said to Satan, the Lord rebuke you, Oh Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?”* by the way, regarding spiritual warfare, this is interesting. The Lord rebuke you I think that's a good thing. There's a lot of people cursing the devil these days.

I don't know about that, I have my doubts about that, to be honest with you. We see a pattern in the scripture. The Lord rebuke you. We know that even the arch angel, Michael, according to Jude, said, the Lord rebuke you, to the enemy. So, I think this is, it's a good thing to keep in mind.

But notice the question isn't not this a brand plucked from the fire. In other words, have I not saved and restored and redeemed this one? *“³Now Joshua”* we're told, *“was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments.”* And those filthy garments are no doubt what Satan was accusing him about.

And that means Joshua, just like us was an imperfect man. But it's of course, a reminder that when we stand before God, we don't stand in our own garments. We stand robed in the righteousness of Christ, right? And, so it says, *“⁴ the angels said to those who were standing before him, “remove the filthy garments from him”.* And to him he said, *“Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from*

you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments”.” Now, this is one of the reasons we believe this is the Lord Jesus pre-incarnate or a Christophany, because you'll notice he says to him, I have taken away your iniquity and that's something only the Lord can say.

Verse five. *“⁵And I said,”* now here's Zechariah talking, *““Let them put a clean turbine on his head”. So they put a clean turbine on his head and clothed in with garments. And the angel of the Lord was standing by.”* I love this picture of the dressing of Joshua once again, a beautiful picture of this idea of our own robing of righteousness, that righteous clothing that we are given.

And we, it's actually talked about in the Old Testament. Let me show you.

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Isaiah 61:10 (ESV)

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”

Isn't that beautiful? The Lord has given me a robe of righteousness. It's not my righteousness, it's his righteous. And he's given it to me. Verse six. *“⁶ And the angel of the Lord solemnly assured Joshua, ⁷ “Thus says the Lord of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here.”*

Here's a challenge to Joshua that if he is faithful to the Lord, that God would extend to him some kind of right of access within the heavenly council. And we don't really understand all about this, but it's God is telling Joshua, who is the representative of the people of Israel as priest, that I am no longer going to be silent and distant from the people as I've been these past 70 years while you were in exile.

And now we come to the climax of this message. This is beautiful, check this out, verse 8. *“⁸ Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign:”* I want you to take note of that, they are a sign. What does a sign do? It points to things, doesn't it?

The Lord is telling him that his companions, he and his companions Joshua, are a sign of greater blessings to come, which he ends in that verse by saying at the

end, *“behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.”* Now I need to stop you there for just a moment, because this is, we need to pause. We have to ask the question, what does the Lord mean by saying, I'm going to bring my servant the Branch.

Is he talking about Joshua? Well, not Joshua, the high priest. This is a title that we go back to other passages in the Bible to look at because it is a title given to Messiah. The first one we look at here is in Jeremiah, up on the screen.

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Jeremiah 23:5-6 (ESV)

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’”

Did you notice that the word Lord is in all caps? That means that's the Tetragrammaton, that's the divine name. That's Yahweh. What is the name of the branch at that time going to be Yahweh.

Our righteousness. We just talked about that robe of righteousness. Where does it come from? Comes from Yahweh. Comes from Jesus Christ who earned us that righteous standing with God through. His own life and his death on the cross for us. And then we see this again in Isaiah. Look at Isaiah chapter 11.

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Isaiah 11:1-5 (ESV)

“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And 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. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.”

So once again, the branch from the roots of Jesse, we're talking about the Messiah. Now, these last two verses of the chapter are still also very significant,

and this is where we come to this interesting connection between Joshua, the high priest and this picture that God is wanting to give us of this righteous branch that is coming forth.

Because people, I need to remind you of something, the word, the name Joshua, is Yeshua. Translate that into Greek, that's Jesus, okay. Keep that in mind. Remember, he's already told us that Joshua and his companions are a picture, a symbol of what is to come. And then he starts talking about the branch who is to come.

My servant, the branch. Now look at verse 9 and 10, *“⁹ For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes,”* depicting perfect sight, another symbol of Messiah. *“I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.”*

Now that is a reference people to when Jesus returns at the end of the great tribulation and the nation of Israel recognizes their Messiah. They turn to him as a nation and as a nation their iniquity is removed in a single day. And Zechariah's going to talk more about this at the end of this letter.

Now finally, verse 10. *“¹⁰ In that day, declares the Lord of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree.”* And that's just, that final statement is just a depiction for us of the peace and contentment that is going to govern the day when Jesus returns, establishes his throne on Mount Zion and rules in Israel and the world during the millennial kingdom.

And he's simply saying, there's going to be great blessing, great prosperity, and great abundance where they will share with one another. So, the first 3 chapters of Zechariah, let me just tell you, it gets better from here. So, there you go.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you. We thank you so much for your word. We thank you Lord for the prophets, for revealing so much through the prophets. We rejoice, Lord God in what you've shown us here about what is to come, and we rejoice in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who's sacrifice on the cross was enough to cleanse us from every sin. And it is finished and Lord, I pray in Jesus' name that we would hang on to that with the shield of faith and not allow the accuser of the brethren to get into our heads or into our hearts. But we would continue just to walk by faith and trust in the Lord and the faithfulness of your

word. Thank you, Father. We say these things in Jesus' name, Amen. God bless you. Have a good rest of your evening.