

Zechariah 3

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[0:00] We're in Zechariah chapter 3. As I've been studying this, I have been, I think this is a very apposite passage for us to be studying right now with everything that's going on in Israel and what our ridiculous government is doing by trying to sanction Israel because they just haven't understood how much God loves Israel.

And of course, predominantly, they don't even recognize that God, never mind Israel. So, nationally, we're in a mess and we need to pray for our government.

So, you may recall that the book of Zechariah, we said it has four separate parts to it. We've looked at part one, which was the first six verses, the part where God exhorts Israel to return to him.

Then we looked at, well, we're in the middle of going through part two. And part two is from chapter one, verse seven to the end of chapter six, which describes eight visions that the prophet had in a single night and what a night that must have been.

And today, we're looking at the fourth of those visions. The first one was of a man on a red horse who was among the myrtle trees, which we said represented Israel and that he was viewing with anger the persecution of his people Israel.

[1:31] They had an opportunity, these various people to, yes, take Israel captive, but they could have been kind to them and they weren't. And so God was moved to anger because their treatment of the Jews was so abysmal.

And so he said in that vision that he was going to judge those nations. Then we went on to the third vision, which said that it gave us a window on how God was going to do this.

And he spoke of kingdoms. They were described as horns, horns representing kingdoms. And all of those kingdoms that set themselves up against Israel, God was going to deal with.

And he was going to deal with them through the use of what the passage of scripture called craftsmen. And the craftsmen concerned were subsequent empires.

So an empire that had been horrible to the Jews would be judged by the next empire that arose and they would be militarily subdued. This makes me pause for thought for a moment, because at the moment, our nation is set itself up against Israel.

[2:44] And if God chooses to follow the same route, then we could be militarily subdued because of what our silly government has done. I just pray that God will be merciful.

But people who try to subdue the Jews are what we've read in previous chapters, if they're basically poking God in the eye, he said, the ones who touch you, Israel, are touching the apple of my eye.

So we are a nation that is currently poking God in the eye and I'm very uncomfortable with that. But that was the third vision that God would use empires that are rising to judge the previous empire that had subdued the Jews.

And we went through them, didn't we? At the time of all this, Babylon had just been superseded by Syria or Medo-Persia.

Sorry, not Syria. Yeah, Medo-Persia. Medo-Persia, when they clamped down on the Jews, they were dealt with by the Greeks. The Greeks, when they became persecuting the Jews, then they were put to bed by Rome.

[3:55] And Rome, we are still awaiting the revived Roman Empire, but the one who puts an end to Rome will be Jesus himself when he comes that second time. So that brings us up to where we are now, I think.

In the third vision, the angel of the Lord was using a measuring line to measure Jerusalem. And so what we saw in that was that God has plans for Jerusalem, not just ad hoc plans, but carefully measured plans and that God still has a plan for Jerusalem.

And we haven't yet seen some of those things come to pass. So some of what we're talking about is future prophecy. And we know it's future because the third vision described Jerusalem as a city without walls, dwelling in peace with God protecting that city by setting a ring of fire around it. And this describes, it was so, if you remember, the description was that it would be so populous that it would be absolutely overrun with both people and livestock that they couldn't dwell within the walls.

And so God was putting his own wall around them. That wasn't made with stones. Now we have not yet seen a Jerusalem like that. And so we know it has to be yet future.

[5:15] So now we come on to the next vision. And before we get into it, I want to revisit the last four verses of chapter two. And before I even do that, I want to say this. Chapters four and five of Zechariah, these two chapters are the center of these eight visions.

and everything hangs on what we discover in this vision and the next one. So the fourth and fifth vision are key to the whole passage and key to God's future plans for Israel.

And as we'll see for all of his people, which includes us. So open to chapter two. Chapter two, verse 10 says, Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I'm coming and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord.

Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become my people. And then I will dwell in your midst and you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. The Lord will possess Judah as his portion in the Holy Land and will again choose Jerusalem.

Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for he is aroused from his holy habitation. Now, there seems to be in these verses a contradiction because on the one hand he's saying, Sing for joy, be glad.

[6:35] I'm coming. I'm going to dwell in the midst. And in that time, you're going to see many nations joining themselves to you. And it just sounds like a party, doesn't it?

Where the Jews have got a lot to rejoice over and even the non-Jews who are believers have got a lot to rejoice over and they're encouraged to do so. And then it says, Be silent.

Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord. Why? Well, for he is aroused from his holy habitation. This reminds me, if you just quickly flip to Revelation 8.

Revelation 8. And what is happening in Revelation 8 is that the end time seals are being broken and we've arrived at the last seal.

The time when God is going to judge the earth. And it says in verse 1, When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

[7:30] And I saw the seven angels who stand before God and the seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel came and stood at the altar holding a golden censer and much incense was given to him so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar, which was before the throne.

And then it goes on to talk about God's outpouring of his judgment when this final seal is broken. And the reason for silence is because it was so awesome and so terrible because God has come out of his holy habitation and made his presence felt directly on the earth.

It's an awesome thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And so there is a sense of rejoicing coupled with a sense of awe when we're in Zechariah. I go back to Zechariah.

A sense of rejoicing and awe both at the same time. A friend of mine once said that he had a kind of, he didn't call it a vision, but it was like a mental impression of some kind where he said that he was on a beach and the man on the white horse was coming out of the sea and he fell on his face in absolute awe and yet whilst being in absolute awe, he also knew that the man on the horse loved him.

And it's possible to entertain these emotions in one. One can be utterly, utterly awestruck, even fearful whilst knowing that the person for whom you have this fear also loves you deeply.

[9:04] And so this is where the prophet sees Israel at this moment and this is, the silence comes before the beginning of chapter 3 and it's a new vision but it becomes apparent that he's not really had much kip between the two visions.

So, be silent all flesh before the Lord, he is aroused from his holy habitation. Then, then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.

The Lord said to Satan, the Lord rebuke you, Satan. Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?

Now, Joshua was clothed in filthy garments and standing before the angel. He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, Remove the filthy garments from him.

Again, he said to him, See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes. Then I said, Let them put a clean turban on his head.

[10:13] So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments while the angel of the Lord was standing by. The angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, If you will walk in my ways, if you will perform my service, then you will also govern my house and also have charge of my courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here.

Now listen, Joshua, the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you. Indeed, they are men who are a symbol. For behold, I am going to bring my servant the branch.

For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription upon it, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

In that day, declares the Lord of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbour to sit under his vine and under his fig tree. Simple, eh? My goodness.

So, he showed me Joshua the high priest. I just want to say something because this passage covers a few of these. He's looking at Joshua the high priest.

[11:33] Every Old Testament prophet, I think without exception, prophesied to three time frames. He either prophesied to his own time frame, or he prophesied to the first coming of Jesus, or he prophesied to the second coming of Jesus.

And sometimes, you always have to work out who's in view here, but sometimes more than one is in view. Sometimes, prophecies can cover multiple endings, so you can have a dual or even a triple fulfillment.

And you have to work out where the historic gaps are. Now, this prophecy, I believe, is prophesying for his own day, but he's also prophesying ahead to the second coming of Jesus.

And so, I think it describes a Jerusalem and an Israel that will be present in the millennial kingdom after his second coming. So, as we look at this, by the way, if you want an example of these multiple fulfillments, you can look at the prophecy of Daniel 70 weeks in Daniel 9.

And what happens in that case is that the angel says to Daniel, 70 weeks have been decreed upon my people. And you realize that he's about 68 and a half years from the end of the Babylonian captivity, and it's got about 70 weeks to run.

[12:56] But there's a second fulfillment, 70 weeks of years, like 70 times 7 years, 490 years later, there is a second fulfillment, which takes us through to the first Palm Sunday, the day when Jesus came into the city.

And one day, we'll do the calculations on it, but it's perfect to the day. That on the day prophesied in Daniel, not only was there an end to the Babylonian captivity after 70 weeks of days, but Jesus came and put an end to our captivity to sin after 70 times 7 years, 490 years, from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem.

There's a dual fulfillment, and we need to look out for those. So this is, the prophet has seen Joshua the high priest, and this is the high priest of his own time.

So it's definitely a prophecy for his own time, but there's more to it than this. Joshua the high priest is seen standing before the angel of the Lord, the angel of Yahweh, and we've said that the angel of Yahweh represents Christ, so he's standing before Christ.

And Satan is also present to accuse him. Now, the name Joshua is another form of the name Yeshua. And so, typologically speaking, or symbolically speaking, what you're seeing is a type of Jesus standing before Satan.

[14:27] Now this, he's present in the vision, Satan is present in this vision, and when Satan accuses Joshua, as indeed he accuses all of us from time to time, when Satan accuses Joshua, Yahweh says to Yahweh, the Lord rebuke you.

So you've got at least two members of the Trinity present here, because otherwise you can feel the language struggling to cope with the concept of three persons in one.

And whenever I'm asked to explain the Trinity, I have similar struggles. I can find loose analogies to it, but it's bigger than anything I can do with the English language.

And so, Yahweh says the Lord, Yahweh, rebuke you, and the only way to understand that statement is if you consider that there are multiple personalities in the Godhead. You have Yahweh telling Yahweh to issue a rebuke. But we also know from the Shema, which is, and correct me if I get this wrong, Shema Israel, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad.

[15 : 41] Hero Israel, the Lord our God is one. And yet we've just found two personalities and yet the Lord our God is one. It is a mystery that we don't fully understand.

Do we need to understand it? Probably not. But it does express that the personalities in the Godhead work as one. And the best way to understand it is that he is one in essence.

The word Echad doesn't just mean one, but it means oneness. We are separate, but we have oneness. If you turn to John 17, and we've looked at this before, John chapter 17, which is when Jesus is praying for all those he's going to leave behind and for all of us who are going to come later.

And in verses 20 and 21, he says this, and he's pleading for the people and says, I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those who also believe in me through their words, that they may all be one.

Now, if that was written in Hebrew, it would say that they may all be Echad, even as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us so that the world may believe that you sent me.

[16 : 55] When the world looks upon us, the oneness that they see between us and God will convince them that the Father sent Jesus. I think that's remarkable.

But this idea of the plural becoming one is sewn into the fabric of scripture and it's something of which we are destined to be a part. This is not the same as the doctrine that's often thrown around, which is, oh, well, actually what we are is we're little gods.

No, we're not. But we have a destiny to be one with God in the same way that Jesus is one with the Father and I find that remarkable and wonderful. Back to Zechariah.

Making you jump around a bit and I'm not even sorry. So Joshua is standing as a type of Jesus in front of Satan. Remember that Satan was tempted by Satan.

Satan couldn't, Satan can accuse Joshua, he's a mere man. He couldn't, he couldn't accuse Jesus because Jesus never sinned. But he accused Joshua because he knows Joshua has sinned.

[17 : 59] And the response of God to the sin of Joshua is, the Lord rebuke you Satan. And then it goes on in verse 3, now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel.

He spoke and said to those who were standing before him saying, remove the filthy garment from him. Again he said to him, see I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.

Now the job of the priest was to represent the people and in order to represent the people he had to put on these, what's described here as festal robes. There are other words that some other versions use, but ceremonial robes.

The priest had to put on ceremonial robes, but before he put on the ceremonial robes he had to be ritually cleansed. Symbolically he was having his own iniquities removed from him.

Then having had his sins removed from him he could represent the people. And we think of, we get this picture of Joshua having his filthy robes removed and the Lord gives us an analogy in this passage and says he's having his filthy garments removed, he's having his iniquities removed.

[19 : 16] So the two are combined as having your filthy garments removed is the same as having your sin removed. So yes, you're a sinner, but Joshua Yahweh is going to take your sins off you.

And then he goes on to say, and this is a very kind of enigmatic saying really, it's a very mysterious saying, is this not a brand plucked from the fire? A brand plucked from the fire, what is a brand for? A brand or a branding iron? If you go out in the forest you'll see ponies with brand marks on them and you go to various cattle places and you'll see brands on cattle and it's to establish the ownership of the animal.

And so Joshua here and symbolically Jesus here is analogized with the branding iron and whoever is branded with that branding iron is highlighted as the property of Yahweh.

Now when, I have to try and keep things in order in my head here, when we are saved by the priest Joshua or Yeshua, we are branded and we become his and we're his, I mean when an animal is branded with your brand it's yours for life.

[20 : 33] When we are branded with God's brand, we're his for life, except not our life but his life which is eternal. So he's got these filthy robes on and his robes are removed from him and we've

read that that means that his iniquity is also removed from him is sin.

Now at the feast of atonement the high priest was always burdened with the sin of the people and had to ritually make atonement for those sins. So one could argue that although when the priest went into the holy of holies to make the, pour the blood out on the mercy seat, although he was actually in his underwear, he wasn't allowed to wear his finery in there, he wasn't allowed to wear anything that glorified man, he had to go in in humility and when he went in in humility, he was considered to be carrying the sin of the people.

So in that sense alone, he was filthy. But once atonement had been made, he was then able to come out and put his garments back on and you could read all about this in Exodus 28 and so on. But in 2nd Corinthians 5 verse 21, we read Jesus who knew no sin became sin for us or became a sin offering for us.

So what Jesus did, and this is where the parallels are so important so that you actually get the gospel from this passage, is Jesus knew no sin and yet he put on filthy robes in the presence of God when he took on our sin and took the judgment for that sin and then he was later returned to his priestly estate.

[22:16] So what's being described in Joshua is a mirror of what Jesus did. The high priest, wherever you find the high priest in the Old Testament, they are a type of Christ and yet they have to be ritually cleansed before they can act like Christ because he is removing their sin so that they can be a priest.

Then Jesus takes the sin, goes to the father, pays the price for our sin and is then relieved of that burden and returned to his priestly ministry.

But what we must also keep in mind is we are described in, see if I've got the reference here somewhere, 1 Peter 2 verse 9, worth turning there, in 1 Peter 2 and verse 9, you, this is, he's speaking to a church, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood and a holy nation, a people for God's own possession.

In fact, the King James Version uses the word peculiar people, you are a peculiar people. And it doesn't, peculiar back then meant something a bit different from what now, it kind of meant particular.

But the Greek word is peripoesis, and it means possession or personal property. So what Peter is saying here is you are the personal property of God.

[23:49] So reading that again, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a people that God has taken possession of. Now, of course, we don't deserve that.

And there was a point before we were saved where we would have been deemed to be wearing filthy garments. And he's taken from us the filthy garments that kept us away from fellowship with him and has given us a priesthood like Joshua's that doesn't depend on our ability to walk free of sin because the sin is gone because he's forgiven it and he's delivered us from it as far as the east is from the west so far has our sin been removed from us.

I don't know if it's occurred to you but if he'd said as far as the north is from the south if you keep going north you eventually start coming south again. But if you with the east and the west if you keep going east you just keep going east.

You don't ever go west again. So if it's as far as the east is from the west they never meet again. It's a total deliverance. And this is why if you turn to John 6 gospel of John chapter 6 verses 39 and 40 Jesus when he's speaking to the Jews he says this is the will of him who sent me that of all he has given me I lose nothing but I raise it up on the last day for this is the will of my father that everyone who beholds the son and believes in him will have eternal life and I myself will raise him up on the last day.

Joshua Yeshua will raise us up on the last day and we will never be lost to him. People have all sorts of arguments about what do I need to do to stay saved.

[25:39] You don't and can't do anything to stay saved. It's a decision of the Lord Jesus Christ that once you are saved you will never get unsaved. You can't be unborn if you're born again.

And there are some nuances that I won't go into today that people worry about. Well what if I walk away? Well firstly don't. But nuances aside you can't lose your salvation because you've been an idiot because being an idiot is what we are and he already knows that and he saved us knowing that and he nurtures us knowing that and has a plan for a different Bible study when he takes away our idiotness from us as well.

So back to Zechariah. Are you all following this? Am I not? You can see why it was a challenge to study it. So verse 5 Zechariah says then I said let them put a clean turban on his head.

So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments while the angel of the Lord was standing by. So what about this turban on the man's head?

In Exodus 28 you might as well turn there. Exodus 28 verses 36 to 38 and the Lord is giving instructions here as to what you should put on the priest and he says you shall also make a plate of pure gold and shall engrave on it like the engravings of a seal holy to the Lord.

[27:09] You shall fasten it on a blue cord and it shall be on the turban. It shall be at the front of the turban. It shall be on Aaron's forehead and Aaron shall take away the iniquity of the holy things which the sons of Israel consecrate with regard to all their holy gifts and it shall always be on his forehead that they may be accepted before the Lord.

So when he says put a fresh turban on his head the significance of the turban is that the wearer of the turban becomes holy to the Lord. Has Joshua actually changed through all this?

No. Same sinful man but because of the turban has been rendered holy and so for the purposes of his priestly ministry he is holy and he must have been gobsmacked.

What me? Holy? But the high priest who was filthy is then redressed with festal robes and a new turban that said he is now having divested himself of his dirty robes which represent iniquity.

He is now clean before the Lord and is holy to the Lord and able to carry on his ministry as he preached. So coming back to what we talked about with Jesus he became filthy for our sins voluntarily and then what we see here is a picture of ourselves as well as he then takes our sins from us and clothes us with the garments of righteousness.

[28:39] So this is if you want some technical terms which you may not but you have the doctrine of expiation and imputation going on here. Expiation is where somebody takes away your sins and you are forgiven and imputation means you receive on your account something that's imputed like if you if your bank has taken money off you that it shouldn't and it puts it back in your account that's imputation.

Well what we have is Jesus has our sin imputed to his account and we have his righteousness imputed to our account.

That's what's taking place here with this priest. So then we've got if we move on in Zechariah what we've got in the latter part of the of the chapter is says this in verse 8 now listen Joshua the high priest you and your friends who are sitting in front of you in Dave they are men who are a symbol. This is how we know we've got a right to treat Joshua as a symbol of Yeshua. The Bible itself tells us that this is a symbol. We didn't make it up it's been there all along.

For behold I'm going to bring in my servant the branch. So what we what we have here is a promise being made and it's a conditional promise sort of if X then why goes on and says if you will walk in my ways then I will etc etc.

[30:08] So he says he's going to bring in his servant the branch and that Joshua is a type of his servant the branch. Well where do we get the branch from?

What we where we get the branch from is Isaiah 11. Isaiah chapter 11. Feel free to turn there if you would like to. Now the branch the word for branch also means or usually means a shoot and in Isaiah 11 verse 1 we read then a shoot or a branch will spring from the stem of Jesse and the word stem normally means stump like a tree stump.

Now you've all probably seen a dead tree or even a tree after the man's taken his chainsaw to it and chopped it off close to the ground and for no accountable reason it will start sprouting new shoots and what you had in Zechariah's time and what we have in our day is that Israel has become nothing more than a stump of what it was intended to be.

It is pitifully all but dead and what Isaiah is what God is saying through Isaiah is a shoot will spring from the stump of Jesse and a branch from its roots will bear fruit.

The spirit of the Lord will rest on him the spirit of wisdom and understanding the spirit of counsel and strength the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord and he will delight in the fear of the Lord and he will not judge by what his eyes see nor make a decision by what his ears hear but with righteousness he will judge the poor and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth and he will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

[31:50] Also the righteous will be the belt about his loins and the faithfulness and faithfulness the belt about his waist. So the branch is obviously not just a branch but it's a person and this person is going to be starting off as a tender shoot is going to grow into a massive tree of righteousness and

righteous things. And so back in Zechariah what we read is there is a stone that I have set before Joshua on one stone are seven eyes behold I will engrave an inscription upon it declares the Lord of hosts and I will remove the iniquity of the land in one day. So there's something about these seven stones when God says I'm going to engrave something upon it that again is taking ownership of something you engrave it with your own name or with something which you will recognize. And part of this is removing the iniquity from Israel from God's people. And the seven stones and seven is the number of divine completion. But also the seven stones almost certainly represent the seven spirits of God which we've just read. In fact if you get the notes you'll find that I've put them in the notes. The spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of understanding, the spirit of counsel, the spirit of might, the spirit of knowledge and the spirit of the fear of the Lord. There are seven items there that describe God. There are seven attributes of God. They're not seven separate spirits but seven spiritual attributes of one God. And Yahweh himself is going to engrave an inscription on this stone. He will own it. So who is the stone? Well it's Joshua. Well it's no it's not Joshua because he's a sinful man but it's it's

Yeshua. The Joshua that is to come. And he's already told us that Joshua is a symbol of the Yeshua to come. The branch. So all of this activity what's it supposed to achieve? According to verses 9 and 10 it is to remove iniquity from Israel in a single day. Sounds very much like Zechariah 12 10 to me which we read the previous week. They will look upon me whom they have pierced and mourn as for an only son. And that is the day that Israel itself will be saved as a nation. And the second purpose of all this is to bring about a reversal of fortunes for the Jewish people. And I think this applies both then and now. You see in the day the Jewish people nobody really had any time for them. They were persecuted. They were treated as second-class citizens. They were nobody wanted anything to do with them. But also the Jews had a very poor attitude to the Gentiles. And you may have heard me say before that you know the

Jews were so aloof that if they if they walked past a woman who was giving birth on the side of the road they'd cross on the other side rather than help her. And they used to pray thank you Lord that I'm not a woman a Gentile or a dog. In their estimation Gentiles were nothing more than dogs. But what's described at the end of here in verse 10 each one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree. We read last time in chapter 28 verse 23 ten men will grasp the garments of a Jew and say we want to come with you because we have heard that God is with you. A complete reversal of fortunes for the Jews where this is probably my final statement for today. The Jews were always supposed to be God's ministerial nation. They were the nation that ministered the gospel or should have been. They didn't do a great job of that but God has not. The gifts and callings of

God are irrevocable. They still have a calling to do that and they will fulfill that calling later on in the millennial kingdom. So this reversal of fortunes is not only essential for them but it's essential for the world. And when it says in that day he's saying it to the people of Israel. In that day you people of Israel will invite your neighbors to come and sit under your vine or your fig tree with you. They've never done that but they will. Much of the Gentile world is anti-semitic and it's worse now than it's been in a long long time. But this looks forward to a time when Jews will be honored and sought out by those who want to know more of God and a time when nationally they will welcome this. So instead of going oh nothing to do with Gentiles they will welcome the Gentiles curiosity and become God's nation of ministry to the world once again. Heavenly Father I thank you for this word. I don't pretend that it hasn't been a struggle and I hope I've managed to make good sense of it. Father we thank you for your people and for your commitment to your people and we thank you also that because we see your commitment to your people we can also know that you are committed to us. Father may we never ever descend into this wrong doctrine of God has finished with Israel and the church is now the spiritual Israel when you Lord have not finished with your people and you are still honoring the promises you made to

Jacob all those years ago and to Abraham before him. And we thank you that we can witness it and know that you won't suddenly drop them and take off with a new bride. You're not an adulterous God but you will honor your people and because of that we can know that you will also honor us and your promise to us for our salvation is one upon which we can depend. Thank you Lord in Jesus name. Amen.