

**God Remembered**  
**Zechariah 3**  
**Chapter 5**  
**“The Branch”**

**Fourth Vision: High Priest and Branch**

**Then he showed me the high priest Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord, with Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! May the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Isn’t this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”**

**Now Joshua was dressed with filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. So the angel of the Lord spoke to those standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes!” Then he said to him, “See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with festive robes.”**

**Then I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So a clean turban was placed on his head, and they clothed him in garments while the angel of the Lord was standing nearby.**

**Then the angel of the Lord charged Joshua, “This is what the Lord of Armies says: If you walk in my ways and keep my mandates, you will both rule my house and take care of my courts; I will also grant you access among these who are standing here.**

**“Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your colleagues sitting before you: indeed, these men are a sign that I am about to bring my servant, the Branch. Notice the stone I have set before Joshua; on that one stone are seven eyes. I will engrave an inscription on it” — this is the declaration of the Lord of Armies — “and I will take away the iniquity of this land in a single day. On that day, each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree.” This is the declaration of the Lord of Armies.** **Zechariah 3**

I personally think of the *Third Chapter Zechariah* as the book’s crowning jewel. For in this chapter, we see a vision that speaks not only of the redemption of Israel, but of our own as well. Woven within this narrative in the most wondrous and descriptive imagery imaginable is a tapestry of God’s grace, the undeserved merit to those whom He has sovereignly chosen. This particular prophetic Biblical passage is not one of which we are called upon to wonder as to its interpretation, for within the vision itself, we are told exactly what it means. God has offered us a remedy for sin, and a person through whom even the most grievous of sins can be forgiven.

The vision begins with Joshua, the High Priest, standing before The LORD (**vs.1**). The Joshua in this vision was the High Priest during the early days of Israel’s restoration. He was the son of Jehozadak, who had returned with the exiles to Jerusalem. When Zechariah sees him in this vision, he is ministering before God in the Temple as any High Priest would be required to do. However, there was at this time no temple in which to minister. It had not yet been rebuilt. Therefore, we know that this is a vision and not a recalling of any actual event.

As Joshua stood before The LORD, he is described as wearing filthy garments. There can be no confusion as to what this represents. Over and again in Scripture to be clothed in filthy raiment was to be covered in sin. And we must also bear in mind here Joshua’s priestly function. He is a representative of the people. So the sinfulness that he bears upon himself is not only his, but the sins of the people. For Israel has sinned greatly against The LORD, that is why she was exiled in the first place.

Standing next to Joshua in the vision is none other than the accuser, namely Satan himself. He is there to rail accusations against the nation of Israel, in order to condemn them before God. His hope is that God will abandon His chosen people. It is the work of the devil to try and destroy everyone whom God would choose to save. He is correct in pointing out the sin, for none in this world can ever claim sinlessness before a holy God. But God, in His mercy, has a heart to forgive the sinner, whereas Satan is heartless in his dealings.

Rather than turn His back on His chosen ones, God remembers His covenants, and therefore, He rebuked the devil to his face. He told Satan that Israel has been rescued from their fiery trials as one would snatch a stick of wood from a blazing fire. It has been said by many commentators that one would only remove a piece of wood from a fire, if he had intentions of using it for another purpose. This is perfectly true, for God has plans for Israel, and His intent was not to destroy them, but rather to give them a hope and a future (***Jeremiah 29:11***).

In the prophetic writings of Amos, we also see God using the imagery of a stick snatched from the fire (***Amos 4:11***), and there the reference is made even clearer. God punished Israel with a fiery trial for her sins. He had sent them into captivity for seventy years, but had no intention of leaving them in Babylon to be destroyed. So when the time was appropriate in accordance with His Own timetable, He took them out of that place, restoring them to their beloved homeland. For their purpose had not yet been realized.

As far back as Abraham, God had promised to bless all the nations of earth through His chosen people. And Satan knew exactly what this meant. The Messiah, The Redeemer of the world, would come through the offspring of Abraham. So if this offspring could be annihilated, then there would be no Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. The devil has schemes, but God has plans. And no amount of slanderous accusations hurled at those whom God has chosen will altar the purposes of God.

The LORD commanded that Joshua's filthy clothing be removed from him, and that he be clothed in clean, righteous, raiment. Make no mistake, this was not by any means due to the goodness of Joshua, but rather it is in fact a product of the goodness of God. Our God is a loving God, full of grace and mercy. And He forgives whom He chooses, not based upon their own merit, but rather upon His sovereign will. The sin of the chosen people was to be removed, much to the dismay of the accuser.

In addition to his new priestly garments, Joshua was given a clean "*mitre*" (*tsaniyph* in the Hebrew), which refers to the type of crown or headdress of authority worn by the High Priests of God. Upon this priestly crown was a gold plate with the inscription, "Holiness unto The LORD", to establish that God had set this person apart for priestly ministry. So in the vision, Zechariah saw the wretched sin of Israel removed and her high priest now clothed in righteousness.

After commanding that Joshua be clothed in clean raiment, The Angel of The LORD (namely Christ) then spoke to Israel's High Priest to charge him with keeping the commandments of God. Promising that if he would do so, then he would be given full access to the throne of God. This is what is implied by the statement "*I will grant you access among these who standing here*", referring to the angels that are present. So, just as the angels have access to God's throne continually, those who follow the LORD in obedience are also granted similar status. Those who are His may call upon Him at any time.

Now for the interpretation of the vision. God Himself began to speak. He declared that what was just witnessed is a "sign" of a wondrous event that is going to take place. God would be sending someone to Israel. That someone is described as "*My Servant*", "*The Branch*", and "*The Stone*". Make no mistake. This is none other than the Messiah, The LORD Jesus Christ Himself. And all that Zechariah had just witnessed was not only a picture of what Christ intended to do for the nation of Israel, but for the Church as well.

First of all, Christ is The Servant of God. This is how Paul described Him in his letter to the Philippians:

***Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus. Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when He had come as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death — even to death on a cross.***  
***Philippians 2:5-8***

Christ is the ultimate servant of God, Who set aside all the splendor of heaven in order to become flesh and tabernacle among us (***John 1:14***). He was with God, He was God (***John 1:1***), and yet He chose to become one of us, so that He could die in our stead. What a servant is the God/man Christ Jesus!

Not only is Christ a servant, but He is The Branch (*tsemach* in The Hebrew), meaning a *sprout* or an *offshoot*. For God had also promised King David, that a descendant of his would sit upon the throne of Israel forever. Jesus is the promised offspring or “*branch*” from David, and He shall reign forever upon David’s throne. For our God remembers His promises! God had said to King David:

**The LORD declares to you: The LORD Himself will make a house for you. When your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of His Kingdom forever. I will be His Father, and He will be My Son.** **2 Samuel 7:11b-14a**

So Christ is not only The Servant, He is also The Branch, or *offshoot* from the tree of David.

Not only is Jesus The Servant and The Branch, but He is also The Stone. He is the very foundation stone of the temple of The Living God, and He is also the stone that caused the nation of Israel to stumble. As it was written of Him in the Psalms:

**The Stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This came from The LORD; and it is wondrous in our sight.** **Psalms 118:22-23**

It is worth mentioning here, that *Psalms 118* is the final song in what is known as “*The Egyptian Hallel*”, which are the designated songs that are sung during the Feast of Passover. The stone that the builders rejected is in reference to the nation of Israel’s rejection of The Messiah when He came to them. They, rather than accepting Him, saw Him as an offense, and as such had Him crucified. Little did they know that by doing this they were fulfilling God’s plan for Him, as He was to become the ultimate Passover Lamb, Who would take away the sins of the world!

It is also worth noting that Christ would sing the words to this song before He went to the cross. **Matthew 26:30** tells us that after the Passover meal, Jesus and His disciples “sang a hymn”. We know the hymn they sang, because it was always customary to sing *Psalms 118* at the end of the Seder meal. Jesus knew full well exactly what the song meant. It was a song that foretold of His suffering and atoning death upon the cross. And I can only imagine what it sounded like as He sang the following words of that same song:

**This is the day The LORD has made; let’s rejoice and be glad in it.** **Psalms 118:24**

Jesus is The Stone, both the stumbling stone for those who do not believe, and the cornerstone for those who do. For He is the very foundation of our faith, or as Peter has declared of Him; He is our Living Hope (**1 Peter 1:3**). The Stone described in Zechariah has “seven eyes” which speaks of the very omniscience of God. Jesus is the all-knowing, everlasting, Rock of ages. And as such, He is the only way for us to find forgiveness and escape the wrath of God for our sins. This is why Jesus’ words are recorded in Mathew’s Gospel saying:

**Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: The Stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is what The LORD has done and it is wonderful in our eyes? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit. Whoever falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will shatter him.”** **Matthew 21:42-44**

So to those who will fall upon this Stone and broken in repentance there is healing and forgiveness, but for those who reject Him, there is the crushing wrath of God.

Now, let us return to the imagery of Joshua The High Priests covered in filthy rags. Jesus is not only The Servant, The Branch, and The Stone, but he is also our High Priest (**Hebrews 4:14-16**). And this High Priest does not have to repeatedly make offerings year after year on our

behalf. No, he offered up himself as a sacrifice once and for all to provide our purification, and then he sat down at the right hand of the Father (**Hebrews 1:1-4**).

It is no coincidence that the High Priest in Zechariah's vision has the same name, "Yeshua" (Joshua) as The Son of God, Who gave His life to save us. Jesus is the anglicized version of the Greek "Iesous", which is the Greek rendering of Yeshua, meaning "The LORD is salvation." So the Yeshua in Zechariah's vision is a typology, a foreshadowing if you will, of The Son of God, Who would come serve as our ultimate High Priest.

*The Bible* tells us that Yeshua (Jesus) took our sins upon Himself and bore them to Calvary where He became "sin for us".

**He made the one Who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21**

Just as Joshua the High Priest was wearing the filthy garments of his people, Jesus The Son of God, The Servant, The Branch, and The Stone, took our vileness upon Himself and shed His own blood so that we could be clothed in His righteousness! And that is the sign the God spoke of to Zechariah. Our ultimate High Priest would one day come and exchange His righteousness for ours. He is our advocate before The Father, and in Him, we are made holy unto The LORD.

And Just as Joshua was given a mitre (crown) to wear signifying His holiness and calling as High Priest, Our High Priest, Jesus, will be crowned with many crowns for He is the King of King and LORD of lords (**Revelation 19:11-16**). He is the fulfillment of all Scripture, our Prophet, Priest, and King. And all who take refuge in Him shall have everlasting peace for He has "taken away the iniquity of this land in a single day" (**Zechariah 3:9**). And that "day" my friend, is the day that He suffered, bled, and died upon Calvary's cross for you. And although Israel has not yet come to believe in Him, one day they will. Because God has declared they will one day turn to their Redeemer. And after the days of The Great Tribulation, Israel, the chosen people of God, will embrace Yeshua the Messiah.

**Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem, and they will look at Me Whom they pierced. They will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly for Him as one weeps for a firstborn. Zechariah 12:10**

It is at this time when the "great mystery of God" (**Ephesians 1:9, 3:1-13**) shall be made manifest, and The Church and Israel shall be joined together in one body, and the kingdom of God shall come to reign in everlasting glory and splendor. The LORD Jesus: Prince of Peace, The Servant, The Branch, The Stone, and our only High Priest shall come to bring peace on earth, and good will toward all men.

**On that day, each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree. This is the declaration of The LORD of Armies. Zechariah 3:10**

**He who testifies about these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen! Come LORD Jesus! Revelation 22:20**

Child of God, rest assured, The LORD remembers all that He has promised!