SATAN STANDING BESIDE YOU

ZECHARIAH 3:1-10
Satan Standing Beside You

Commentary

By

Charles Box

Text:

1. Next I saw Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, with Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.

2. The Lord said to Satan, “May the Lord rebuke you, Satan! May the Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Isn’t this man like a burning stick snatched from the fire?”

3. Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood there before the angel.

4. The angel spoke up to those standing all around, “Remove his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “I have freely forgiven your iniquity and will dress you in fine clothing.”

5. Then I spoke up, “Let a clean turban be put on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood nearby.

6. Then the angel of the Lord exhorted Joshua solemnly:

7. “The Lord who rules over all says, ‘If you live and work according to my requirements, you will be able to preside over my temple and attend to my courtyards, and I will allow you to come and go among these others who are standing by you.

8. Listen now, Joshua the high priest, both you and your colleagues who are sitting before you, all of you are a symbol that I am about to introduce my servant, the Branch.

9. As for the stone I have set before Joshua—even the one stone there are seven eyes. I am about to engrave an inscription on it,” says the
Lord who rules over all, ‘to the effect that I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.

10. In that day,’ says the Lord who rules over all, ‘everyone will invite his friend to fellowship under his vine and under his fig tree.’” (NET)

Introduction:

I. Zechariah three contains the fourth vision that God gave to Zechariah, the prophet.

   A. This vision contains the story of the redemption and restoration of Joshua, the high priest, and of Israel, the nation.

      1. The high priest stood as representative of all the people.

      2. Joshua was cleansed from his pitiful, sinful state and restored to the position as high priest.

   B. The work of God could not be accomplished without the Temple.

      1. Joshua would have a part in the rebuilding process.

   C. This fourth vision also continues the development of prophecy concerning the Messiah.

II. At the beginning of the Bible, the Devil attempted to destroy the work of God.

   A. Here Satan is pictured as standing at the right hand of God’s high priest.

      1. Satan’s accusation is that these people are not fit to be God’s people.
2. The filthy garments of the priest are used to represent the sins of the people.

3. It is true that they were almost gone, but God plucked them as a brand from the fire.

B. Joshua is given clean clothes to represent forgiveness.

C. The prophet used the Messianic term “Branch” to offer hope to His people.

   1. Jesus will be the chief corner stone of His Temple, the Church.

Commentary:

Satan Accused Joshua the High Priest

Zechariah 3:1-2, Next I saw Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, with Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, “May the LORD rebuke you, Satan! May the LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Isn’t this man like a burning stick snatched from the fire?” (NET)

I. This fourth vision takes place with Joshua standing in the presence of the angel of the Lord.

   A. Satan was standing at his right hand to accuse him.

      1. Even though God had described the matter in very much the same way that Satan may have accused the people, it was not appropriate for the Devil to be criticizing God’s work.

         a. What was going on was none of his business.

         b. Joshua, the high priest, was there as representative of the entire Jewish people.
B. Even though Zechariah was not primarily writing about Jesus and the Devil, we can learn much about both from this section.

1. The fact that the angel is pictured as standing shows that he was ministering in his office as a servant of God.

2. The Devil was doing his thing as he accused the people of God.
   a. He is the enemy of everything that is good and decent.

3. There was a need for a time of purification.
   a. As the Jews returned from captivity, they were still facing the attacks of Satan.
   b. The scroll that Zechariah saw was large.
      i. It was 30 feet by 15 feet.
   c. This flying scroll was sent out over the land.
   d. It was open so that it could be easily read.

C. Today God’s message is written so clearly that no one can claim ignorance.

Joshua was Forgiven and Properly Clothed

Zechariah 3:3-5, Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood there before the angel. The angel spoke up to those standing all around, “Remove his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “I have freely forgiven your iniquity and will dress you in fine clothing.” Then I spoke up, “Let a clean turban be put on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood nearby. (NET)
I. Joshua was pictured as wearing very dirty clothes.

   A. These garments symbolize the evil that had been done by the priest and by the people.

      1. This poor, sinful state of the Jews must be corrected.

         a. God’s people must have clean hands and a pure heart.

         b. The practices that had been adopted from pagan religions in Babylon must now be laid aside and God’s people must be clean and unspotted.

   B. Remember, the problem is not so much the garments, but that Joshua and the people were attempting to serve God when they were spiritually filthy and ceremonially unclean.

      1. Joshua and the people were forgiven, so now it was time for him to dress and act like a priest.

      2. Captivity had cured the people of idolatry and now they should be happy to resume their worship and service to God.

   C. God was in the process of restoring Israel as a priestly nation.

      1. In Isaiah 61:6 we read, “But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.”

      2. Zechariah said that they should put a turban or mitre on Joshua’s head.

         a. In proper service to God, the chief priest was to wear a special turban.

         b. “And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre.” (Exodus 29:6)
i. This miter had a plaque on it that read, “Holiness to the Lord.” (Exodus 28:36)

ii. This had to do with the establishment of the authority of the chief priest.

iii. Like the words on the turban, Israel must be holy unto the Lord.

Promises Were Made to Joshua

Zechariah 3:6-7, Then the angel of the LORD exhorted Joshua solemnly: “The LORD who rules over all says, ‘If you live and work according to my requirements, you will be able to preside over my temple and attend to my courtyards, and I will allow you to come and go among these others who are standing by you. (NET)

I. The angel of the Lord gave Joshua encouragement by telling him that the All-Powerful Lord had made great promises to His people.

A. The King James Version says, “The Lord protested unto Joshua.”

1. This means that the Lord solemnly declared these matters.

a. God told Joshua that he expected him to obey His moral laws.

b. He also expected Joshua to carry out the commandments and rituals of the Law.

2. God gave promises to Joshua.

a. First, if Joshua would do what God required of him, God would allow him to rule in His Temple and in His courts.
i. God’s desire was for the chief priest to be ruler in the Temple.

ii. He was to be in charge of the things that pertain to the worship of God.

b. The second promise contingent upon Joshua’s being faithful was direct access to God.

i. If the chief priest was obedient, he would be permitted to approach God without anyone being between them.

ii. He could come into the Lord’s presence like the angels who stood before the Lord.

iii. Obedience to God always leads to even more opportunities for service.

A Prophesy of Christ, the Branch

Zechariah 3:8-10, Listen now, Joshua the high priest, both you and your colleagues who are sitting before you, all of you are a symbol that I am about to introduce my servant, the Branch. As for the stone I have set before Joshua—on the one stone there are seven eyes. I am about to engrave an inscription on it,’ says the LORD who rules over all, ‘to the effect that I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day. In that day,’ says the LORD who rules over all, ‘everyone will invite his friend to fellowship under his vine and under his fig tree.’” (NET)

I. These last three (3) verses are about what will happen in the future.

A. God brought Israel back from Babylonian captivity, showed them what to do and gave them a view of what the future would hold.
1. God was doing a wonderful work in bringing these people back and allowing them to rebuild the Temple.

II. He would do a much more wonderful work in sending the Savior to the world.

A. God promised to bring His servant, The Branch, to Jerusalem.

1. This one called “the Branch” would be the high priest.

   a. Jesus is that Branch.

      i. “For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all point tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)

      ii. Isaiah 11:1 says, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”

B. So the end of this vision looks forward to the life of Jesus.

1. Both the temple and the church are built with stones.
   a. The Temple is built with literal stones.
   b. The church is built using “lively stones” with Jesus Christ as the chief corner stone.

2. God removed the iniquity of Israel in one day and He is willing to remove your iniquity.

Conclusion:

I. Those that serve God are blessed and those that rebel are punished.

A. Is it your desire to honor God?
1. If so, it is time to become a Christian now!

B. After becoming a Christian, follow Jesus in faithfulness as he leads you home to heaven.
Questions

By

John C. Sewell

Zechariah 3:1-10

(Questions based on NIV text)

1. Describe the fourth vision that God gave Zechariah.

2. Who was Joshua? Whom did he represent? Describe Joshua when he first appeared.

3. What did Joshua’s appearance represent?

4. The ___________ _____________ also continues the _____________ of _______________ concerning the _________________.

5. Joshua’s filthy garments represent ____________________________
__________________________________________________________

Joshua’s clean clothes represent ____________________________
__________________________________________________________

6. The devil here accused God’s high priest and God’s people. This is the devil’s customary mode of operation. How did the devil accuse Job? (See Job chapters 1 & 2.) ____________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

7. When has the devil caused you trouble? ____________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

8. The ______________ that had been ______________ from ______________ in ______________ must now be laid aside and ______________’s ______________ must be ______________ and ______________.

9. Christians are to be unspotted from the world. What worldly influences tempt you? ________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
10. Describe the high priest’s head attire. What was the meaning, significance of this head attire?


11. What did God expect of Joshua and Israel? What does God expect of us?


12. What promises did God make to Joshua? Were these promises conditional or unconditional? If conditional, what were the conditions on which God’s promises were contingent?


13. God brought ____________ back from ______________ and showed them what to do and gave them a view of the future. He enabled them to ______________ the ______________.


14. Much more than this, God would send his ______________, the ______________, to ______________.
15. Why is “the branch” a fitting designation for the Savior? __________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

16. Of what kind of stones was the temple of Zechariah’s day constructed? What is God’s temple today? Of what kind of stones is it constructed? ______________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

17. Those that ____________ ______________ are ______________ and those that ________________ are ______________.

18. What was the role of the angel of the Lord in Zechariah 3? __________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

19. Who was the man called “a burning stick snatched from the fire”? __
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

20. Was this an appropriate designation? Why or why not? __________
21. What is the stone with seven eyes? What do the stone and the seven eyes represent?

22. The Lord Almighty said, “I will __________ the __________ of this __________ in a __________ __________.” When did or will this happen?

23. “’In that __________ each of you will __________ his __________ to __________ under his __________ and __________,’ declares the __________.”

24. What invitation does God extend to the people of our time?

25. What lessons have you learned from your study of Zechariah 3?