

What Are You Wearing on Judgment Day?

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study

Zechariah 3:1-5

Zechariah 2:13–3:1, *Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling. 1 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.*

God has just “*roused himself from his holy dwelling*.” Not from sleep or slumber, but from provocation. God rises in response to a condition to carry out a specific task that only He can successfully perform. This implies that God is roused by agitation, by provocation.

The chiastic relationship of the visions (1&8, 2&7; 3&6; 4&5). Four couplets: look at visions 4 & 5.

- **Visions 1&8** - Horses and then chariots patrol the whole earth (1:7-17). God rules over the nations, at the start and at the end (6:1-8).
- **Visions 2&7** - The horns that scattered Judah are thrown down (1:18–21). Wickedness is carried back to Shinar, which is Babylon, where the scattering began (5:5–11)
- **Visions 3&6** - A measuring line is stretched over Jerusalem (2:1–5). A scroll with measured dimensions flies over the land (5:1–4).
- **Visions 4&5** - Joshua the priest is cleansed (ch. 3), and Zerubbabel the governor is empowered by the Spirit (ch. 4).
 - **Vision 3 ends with a promise faced with a problem.** The Promise? See 2:11-13
 - **Vision 4 solves the problem of filthy garments.** How can a sinful people live with a holy God in their midst and survive?

I. The Vision and Its Participants (3:1)

A. **Joshua, the High Priest**; *‘the LORD saves.’*

1. Joshua was the rightful high priest (Ezra 3:2; Haggai 1:1)
2. Joshua’s heritage:
 - a) Hilkiah – his great-great-grandfather: the high priest who found the Book of the Law in the Temple during Josiah’s reign (2 Kings 22:8)
 - b) Seraiah – his grandfather: chief priest when Jerusalem fell in 586 BC. Executed on the order of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:18-21; Jeremiah 52:24-27)
 - c) Jehozadak – his father: carried into exile in Babylon (1 Chronicles 6:15)
3. Joshua’s Representation – He is not there only as a private man. He represents the nation (Israel). The LORD’s rebuke of Satan rests on “the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem” (3:2), and the result is “I will remove the iniquity of this land” (3:9). What happens to the high priest happens to the people he represents!

B. **The Angel of the LORD**

1. Who’s standing up for Joshua in the courtroom? It isn’t just any angel. It’s the Son of God, five hundred years before Bethlehem, already doing what He came to do: silencing the accuser and clothing the guilty. The Angel is the pre-incarnate Christ.
2. The Angel of the LORD is not the interpreting angel, *‘the angel who talked with me’* (1:9, 13–14; 2:3). The Angel of the LORD stands among the myrtles, receives the patrol’s report, intercedes (1:11–12), presides over Joshua’s courtroom, and removes iniquity.

C. **Satan – *hassatan* – ‘the Accuser’.**

1. He is the accuser of God’s people. In Job, Satan is allowed to speak. Now, he is silenced.
2. The imagery is a courtroom. In ancient Israel, the accuser stood at the defendant’s right hand (Psalm 109:6). The Hebrew even plays on the words: the *satan* stands there “to satan him,” that is, to accuse him. **Revelation 12:10**, *And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the 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.”*
3. The facts of the accusation are not in dispute; they are true. Joshua is in filthy garments and, in his

condition, unfit to represent himself or Israel. This is not a vision of temptation. It is a trial, and the question is not whether Joshua will sin. **The question is whether a guilty man can stand before God.**

II. The Judge and His Grace (3:2)

- A. The Lord's strong rebuke (3:2a). The accuser never speaks!
- B. The Lord's decisive action (3:2b). The rebuke to silence is based on the LORD, not Joshua.
 - 1. Divine choice: The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you!
 - 2. Divine rescue: "Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?"
- C. God does not argue that Joshua is clean. Instead, He argues that Joshua belongs to Him.

III. The Garments and Their Filth (3:3)

- A. The Hebrew word for "filth" is human excrement. It is the strongest filth-word in the Old Testament and it is on the holiest man in Israel.
 - 1. Our religious effort is no cleaner (Isaiah 64:6)
 - 2. The accuser is not bringing a false charge. The filth is real!
- B. The problem isn't Satan lying about you. The problem is that he is telling the truth!

IV. The Great Exchange and Clean Clothes (3:4-5)

- A. The command: "*Remove the filthy garments from him.*" Others strip him, and Joshua doesn't lift a hand.
- B. The interpretation: "*Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.*" God Himself explains the sign.
 - 1. Filth removed means forgiven sin.
 - 2. Festal garments put on means righteousness given.
- C. The turban: Zechariah interrupts the vision: "*Let them put a clean turban on his head.*" This is the turban that bore HOLY TO THE LORD (**Exodus 28:36**).
- D. Zechariah's first word is to Israel. God will "*remove the iniquity of this land in a single day*" (3:9), a promise still waiting for the day they look on Him whom they pierced (12:10; 13:1). But **how** God cleanses Joshua is how He cleanses every sinner who is ever made clean: He removes filth the sinner cannot remove, and He clothes him with righteousness he did not earn.
 - 1. **2 Corinthians 5:21**, *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
 - 2. **Galatians 3:27**, *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

V. The Light for Our Path

- A. The more serious threat to our living is not the enemies of this world we face; it is the wrath of God for our sin. Visions 1-3 focus on external enemies: the nations, the enemies, etc. The real threat is our own uncleanness before God.
- B. The form change: "*Then he showed me.*" Zechariah has no questions. Visions 1-3 are full of symbols Zechariah must ask about. In Vision 4, he is shown. God is not speaking in riddles, but about a person who needs something done to him. It is union and not imitation.
- C. The Believer's Standing: How will you be dressed on Judgment Day? **Romans 8:1**, *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
 - 1. There are no words needed for defense: **Romans 8:31-32**, *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*
 - 2. **Romans 8:33**, *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.*
 - 3. **Romans 8:34**, *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*
 - 4. **Romans 8:35**, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? 8:39: "nothing... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- D. Joshua walked into that courtroom covered in filth and walked out wearing HOLY TO THE LORD, and he never lifted a hand. That is the only way anyone walks out. So, when the accuser tells you the truth about your sin, don't argue with the charge. Confess it. Then look to Christ, at the right hand of God, who is interceding for you.