

**Major Messages from the Minor Prophets**  
**The Prophecy of Zechariah 3:1-10**  
**Portrait of the Priest to Come**

**Intro:** Last week we looked at the prophecies of Haggai. In that lesson we noted that both Haggai and Zechariah arose to prophecy during a critical time in Israel's history. Through their efforts the Israelites were motivated, after their return from captivity, to rebuild the temple of the Lord and renew their covenant commitment to God.

God, through both Haggai and Zechariah, encouraged them to look forward with eagerness to the coming of a new age when God would judge the nations and establish His kingdom through the Jewish people. The prophecies of Zechariah 1-8 were given during the same period of time and had a similar goal to those of Haggai: 1. To urge the Jews to faithfulness to the task to which they had committed themselves; 2. To give assurance that their work would result in the glories of the coming Kingdom under the Messiah.

There are many lessons to consider from Zechariah; but one of the most important ones is his prophetic portraits of Jesus. Each of these prophecies gives us a remarkable picture of the nature of the Christ. Let consider one of them.

**The Consecration of Joshua (Zechariah 3:1-7)**

**It is important that we understand that the message of God in this vision was conveyed in symbolism. Get the scene in your mind.**

*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.*

*(Zechariah 3:1)*

Joshua is the high priest of Israel during the time of Haggai & Zechariah. He is standing before "the angel of the Lord" and in Hebrew "ha satan" (the adversary, here apparently Satan). And Satan is doing what his other name "the devil" suggests, i.e. "accusing". He is claiming that neither Joshua nor the people he represents have any right to the Lord's blessings because they have sinned against Him. Perhaps he feels justified in arguing that they belong to Him because of their sin. But God has an answer for Satan.

*And 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?" (Zechariah 3:2)*

God rebukes Satan for his accusations against Joshua and Israel. What Satan does not yet understand is God's lovingkindness toward the people He has chosen and toward Jerusalem, the city in which He has caused His name to dwell. Israel may have been almost destroyed; but God has graciously reached into the fire and plucked out of it a "brand", i.e. it has not been completely destroyed.

What God does next is truly an amazing act of grace to Joshua and to Israel.

*Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. And 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." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the Lord was standing by. (Zechariah 3:3-5)*

Symbolically God is saying to Joshua and the people for whom He stands as high priest. I'm cleaning you up! I'm restoring you to your priestly service. Here was an amazing act of God's grace. Though Israel had practiced idolatry and had been sent into exile, God rescued a burning brand from the fires of judgment to make use of for His redemptive purposes. Thus, having cleansed Joshua, he charges him and those who are before Him (his fellow-priests) to remain faithful. *And the angel of the Lord admonished Joshua saying, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'If you will walk in My ways, and 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. (Zechariah 3:6-7)*

God promises Joshua that if he will be faithful to his duties as priest (to walk in God's ways and perform God's service) that he would be given authority over the courts of God's house and more importantly, have free access to the Lord as Israel's high priest.

**In the symbolism of this vision, God is declaring His amazing grace toward His chosen people. He will restore them to their original calling.**

*'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.'* (Exodus 19:4-6)

**But this lesson about God's amazing grace is only the beginning of the story. For when God looks upon Joshua he sees another "Joshua and His fellow-priests".**

### **The Coming of "another" Joshua (Zechariah 3:8-10)**

*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 in My servant the Branch. (Zechariah 3:8)*

**This vision about Joshua contains an intriguing prophecy concerning someone to come—"My servant, the Branch". But who is this? Both of these terms had been already used by Isaiah and other prophets to speak of the king to come.**

*Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. (Isaiah 11:1)*

*Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; my chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. (Isaiah 42:1)*

So here Zechariah uses these familiar images to speak about the Christ to come. But what new information does he reveal?

**Just as Joshua had been high priest superintending the building of this physical temple, so the Christ to come would also be a high priest who built the new covenant temple of God. God invites Joshua to see three things about this new temple.**

*For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on 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 neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree. (Zechariah 3:9-10)*

It is precious to God & marked with the ownership of His name.

I confess the difficulty of understanding the meaning of this obscure expression. Perhaps we should understand it in the light of an ancient custom. In the ancient world the foundation stones of a temple were often quite elaborate. One custom was to inlay jewels cut in the shape of “eyes”. If the referent is this practice, then the stress is upon the preciousness or value of this temple.

In keeping with the previous image, the inlaid jewels were sometimes inscribed with the names of the donors (OT Background commentary).

Here for example is a foundation stone from a temple in Babylon that has inscribed in it the name of Nebuchadnezzar who paid for its construction from the Babylonian treasury.

It comes about as the result of an amazing act of divine forgiveness.

*I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.*

It brings about a new era of peace and prosperity.

*In that day, declares the Lord of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.*

This is a common OT figure for a kingdom at peace and unafraid of external threats.

**But what is the fulfillment of these things?**

**Jesus is the great high priest of which Zechariah speaks.**

Did you know that “Jesus” is our anglicized and shortened form of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua” or as we say it “Joshua”? And that was the name of the OT priest God spoke to by Zechariah? Is it coincidence that God should promise a man named “Joshua” that another “Joshua” would come after him who would build His temple?

*“And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)*

Is it coincidental that the priest who typified God’s new covenant high priest would have a name that means “Jehovah is Savior”?

**Jesus uniquely serves as both priest and king simultaneously!**

There is also an intriguing insight given us concerning the Christ in Zechariah’s prophecy. Notice that the Branch to come is from David’s house, yet serves as priest. How could that be? How could He be from the house of David (who was of the tribe of Judah) and be a priest at the same time (since they came from the house of Levi)?

We’ll let the Hebrew writer explain that:

*Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. (Hebrews 7:11-14)*

Jesus could not be a priest under the Law because it stipulated a physical requirement that Jesus could not meet. He was from the wrong tribe to be a priest. However, the Hebrew writer explains that Jesus is not a priest based on the Levitical requirement of descent from Levi, but upon the basis of another principle. He is a priest because he, like Melchizedek, has neither predecessors nor successors. He holds His priesthood perpetually because of His resurrection from the dead!

*And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of Him, “Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 7:15-17)*

What we infer from Zechariah 3 is clearly spoken in Zechariah 6.

*Then say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.”’ (Zechariah 6:12-13).*

**We are the temple of God built by Jesus and upon Him as the foundation stone.**

Paid for by God (precious to God and marked with the ownership of His name)

*This temple is inscribed with the name of the creator of all things.*

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)*

The result of an amazing act of forgiveness

*It is easy to see how Jesus could be a great high priest! But what about us? How could we be put in such a position, since we are all sinners in need of intercession ourselves? Our qualification comes through His grace and forgiveness.*

*To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood, and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:5-6)*

Bringing about a new era of peace and prosperity

*Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Romans 5:1)*

**Conclusion: Is it coincidence that God should announce to Joshua who through God's cleansing was made sufficient to build and govern His house that another Joshua to come would serve as both priest and king at once and that He would build a temple in which God would dwell and be glorified forever and that we would become His priests by the cleansing of Jesus' sacrifice for us.**