

# Mid South Conference 1978-10 Zechariah's Visions

by Bob Clark

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*God's power to cleanse and restore His people is demonstrated through Zechariah's vision, emphasizing the importance of access to God through a holy priesthood.*

**Duration:** 29:56

**Scripture:** Zechariah 3

**Topics:** "Zechariah"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses a vision from the book of Zechariah. The vision is divided into three sections: the problem faced by Zechariah and the Lord, the purging that God undertakes and accomplishes, and the prediction of the prophecy. The speaker emphasizes that the application for the audience is to understand God's powerful control and purposeful call. The fourth vision focuses on God's priesthood being cleansed, with Joshua the High Priest standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan resisting him. The speaker highlights the difficulties faced by Joshua, such as inadequate animals and a lack of priests, as well as the political unrest and accusations from the Gentile nations.

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## Transcript

Zechariah chapter 3 The first vision given to Zechariah was each of the visions to overrule all the Gentile powers and the ultimate opposition and the world dissension against the nation of Israel God's powerful control to accomplish His will and His purpose. Then in the third vision it had suggested that there was God's purposeful call. God had an effective call to achieve His end that He is going to draw His people from various areas particularly from out of the world in Babylon and bring them back into the city of Jerusalem and they will be planted there as His people and the city will be a thriving metropolis.

The practical applications we've been making as we go. Now we see God's priesthood cleanse. The fourth vision.

Chapter 3 of Zechariah And He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan standing at His right hand to resist Him. And the Lord said unto Satan The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel and he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying Take away the filthy garments from him.

And unto him he said Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head and clothed him with garments and the angel of the Lord stood by.

And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying Thus saith the Lord of hosts If thou wilt walk in my ways and if thou wilt keep my charge then thou shalt also judge my house and shalt also keep my court. I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest thou and thy fellows that sit before thee for they are men wondered at for behold, I will bring forth my servants for behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua upon one stone shall be seven eyes.

Behold, I will engrave the engraving thereof saith the Lord of hosts and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree. The vision divides itself into three sections.

Firstly, the problem that is faced by the Zechariah and the Lord in verses 1-3 and then verses 4-7 give us the purging. The problem is presented a difficulty and God undertakes and accomplishes the purging. And then from verses 8 to the end is the prediction that the prophecy has and the main thrust of the vision.

Firstly, in the first three verses we have in this vision a picture where Zechariah has been taken from out of the deep rich, green, verdant, blanketed ravine in vision number 1 seeing the enemies negated and destroyed and scattered. Drawn to his attention to the great prosperity of the coming city of Jerusalem and now a unique perspective. There is a change we have to do with an individual and the moment individuals come into God's spectrum or program there is human responsibility.

There will always be the token of human responsibility when God deals with people. Up to this time, God has enforced his statement and said, I will. Now God says, I will if Joshua responds.

And here God wants to cleanse the priesthood. The high priest is not merely an individual. He is a representative of the people.

So as far as interpreting the vision is concerned we have to see that God is giving us what he is going to do for the nation of Israel. God must cleanse the priesthood. The importance of access to God is drawn to your attention and mine in this particular vision.

If you have the privilege of access to God if God has at some time in your life wrought the divine work of grace and cleansed you, quickened you by spiritual life and made you knowledgeable of it and you have come to the place where you have confessed Christ as your Savior you are then an holy priesthood set aside by God, appointed to have access to him and to come into his presence. There must be cleanliness in the priesthood. So God has to clean this priest and prepare him for his services.

The cleansing of the priesthood is suggestive of the restoration of the nation of Israel as a priestly nation. That is the true meaning of the vision. The primary meaning of the vision, the interpretation of the vision is that God is going to voluntarily cleanse Israel and they will become a nation of priests.

In entirety they will all come to the presence of God. In one climactic day there shall be a spiritual birth the details of which are given in Ezekiel how the nation shall be born of God all Israel shall be believers spiritual birth, a wonderful work order in their heart and they shall be worshippers of God. That's the promise that's given here.

But there is an application and it is this, for time's sake, that we want to draw to our attention. Remember the primary interpretation is the cleansing of the nation of Israel the making of them as a nation of priests to worship God. Now for you and me the application is as we go along through the story.

He showed me Joshua. Now there's a change. The vision is different.

He doesn't say I lifted up my eyes and the angel said or I looked and beheld. Why? Because we want to be linked to what has preceded. There is a paragraph and a chapter division that is not existing in the language or in the flow of thought.

Remember in the last vision, verse 13 all flesh is urged to be silent in reverential awe before Jehovah for he is rousing himself he is waking himself he is in the present continuous tense beginning the great machinery of work on behalf of the nation of Israel he is merging out of his habitation and the importance of the vision is and he showed me not the angel but Jehovah who is rousing himself now in condescension opens up the mind's eye of this man Zechariah and he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him Here's the problem Satanic opposition the adversary that's what the word Satan literally means that may be in your Bible or in your margin standing next to him is the adversary and he is there not merely

to resist him but literally to adversary-ize his purpose is to be there to attack to assault God's chosen priest I am sure that if Joshua had his options and he was declared what do you think is the problem today here in Zechariah's day what's the difficulty of this situation after a long 14 year layoff what's really the problem Joshua well we don't have adequate animals the people are bringing in bad animals Joshua might have said well there's not enough priests to effectively carry on the work of God Joshua would cast his eye around and say well it's a terrible threatening to the Gentile nations it's the Tobias and the Ammonites and Sam Ballard over here and these men with all the political unrest and their accusations everything's in such a turmoil now that's not the situation the real

problem is Satan Satan attacking God's people the word adversary is used also in the New Testament and the Greek word for adversary is Diabolio from which we get our Diabolos or Diabolos, devil and Diabolio means to throw through to throw across or to throw through and the idea is that Satan is in heaven taking charges against you because of the impurity of your priestly life the inequity between our walk and our talk has just been drawn to our attention our inability to really live Christ in this world and Satan is there and he's the problem and he's putting our blessed Lord on the defensive and the accusations are being thrown across the heavens as to what we are and our weakness and failure he is there to Satanize and to attack us and the Lord says to Satan the Lord rebukes thee, O

Satan if nothing else is gleaned from that statement I would like to suggest to you that you look at it carefully and reflect who is speaking and the manner of the address that's given and then hold in great suspect the persons in this world who through carnival-like antics claim to be able to extricate the power of Satan in the lives of others exorcists, spiritists, wonder-workers miracle performers whenever you find an individual addressing Satan in scripture and there is any thought of conflict or attack there is great respect shown to this tremendous person and all the authority and power for after all he is the prince of this world he is the god of this age he is a mighty angelic spirit being with tremendous force and power and when Michael encountered him and argued and debated and

was an encounter over the body of Moses what did Michael say?

Jehovah rebuke thee! he would not even call upon his own resources here it is the Lord himself speaking to Satan and he does not speak out of his own reservoir but he calls upon his own deity and his own divine prerogatives and says the Lord rebuke thee, Satan and there is a lesson to be learned in this the discretion and the reverential respect if you were ever one to deal in the realm of spirit things and do it effectively with or for God the Lord rebuke thee, Satan even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee you see, now this is where we get the idea and understand that Joshua is not in the actual vision an individual but he is representative of the whole he is the one that's going into the presence of God on behalf of the people and represents the people and so he doesn't say I chose Joshua that is effectually true but he says I am the one that is chosen Jerusalem and they are representative of my people and by the grace of the God and by his sovereign elective power Israel is mine and don't you dare challenge them aren't you thankful that you have an advocate and that the holy record is and when you sin we have an advocate with the father and when he throws his challenges we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the righteous one who was the propitiation the meeting place the absolute secure work on our behalf we don't keep ourselves safe we have an advocate and I plucked him as a brand out of the burning says God but the Lord must acknowledge now Jehovah was clothed with filthy garments for 14 years they've been carrying on the offerings it was a mere formality lacked reality in the presence of God no real heart like some of our religious activities no sincerity no self-sacrifice no real insight no dedication to God and here in the middle of his priestly function he is battered with excrement that's literally what filthy means that which goes out of the body it is garments clothed with excrement these battered garments surely to picture to us not to be absorbed in the detail of how maybe from the sacrifices maybe from other forms but the significance is the stench the offensiveness the rankness the inappropriateness that the high priest should be standing before God in excrement battered garments filthy garments there was a right charge to be laid against him that God says I chose Jerusalem and Israel and once again God retreats into his sovereign rights and authority as to the reason why he can protect us his people he did it on the mountain the nation had broken the law Moses came down and shattered the law he's crushed and heartbroken and what did God say?

I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and our mighty God went ahead and forgave the nation anyway even though every one of them had broken the law why? because he's a mighty sovereign loving God and that's why your soul and mine is saved because of that same grace and love because he could apply the efficacy of the work of Christ now his priest is filthy and what does God say? verse 4 then he answered and spake unto those that stood before him saying take away the filthy garments from him that's what he's going to do for the nation in a word he'll sweep them clean Ezekiel promises he uses a figure of water and washing but it's the same principle take away the filthy garments and he said behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee and I will clothe thee with change of rain

a lovely picture here is suggested notice the process the first statement is to take away the filthy garments the next is to cause iniquity to be removed and then the third is to clothe with that which is good profitable take away the garments the cleansing of grace after God chooses he cleanses by grace he said now you're a priest of mine and I'm going to make you a priest of mine and I'm going to take away those filthy things everything that's left of the old life don't let your past life interfere with your priestly service don't be constantly clinging to those things in the past and allow them to interfere with the privileges and joys that you have as a child of God the evil one would be glad to take them up and taunt them and hold them before you but if you have honestly dealt with

them as you have just been urged from the word of God to confess them and name them for what they are he has been faithful and just to cleanse us because the blood is constantly cleansing us and its efficacy is adequate for you and me and now you and I can enter into the value of this cleansing work not with pride recognize what we are filthy indeed but recognize the grace and the goodness of God he wants the priesthood to cleanse wants people to come into his presence with a free spirit joy in our heart and our hands filled with sacrifices of praise acceptable to God by Jesus Christ you can be a royal priest and declare publicly to those around the great delivering power of God because you are what you are no, because the grace of God is wrought in such a tender, blessed, rich way that

he has moved us into his presence and given us that quiet, tender, sensitive confidence to openly address our God blessing, praising, worshipping take away the filthy garments your iniquities have been passed and I will clothe thee with change of raiment as the Jarvee accurately translates verse 4 that last phrase, I will clothe thee with festival robes designed to bring back to our mind that which was originally given to Aaron by the Lord robes of glory and youth robes of the token splendor and loveliness and there's going to be a restoration to the nation of Israel and they'll be brought into the presence of God and be acceptable and the priests will wear festival robes sometimes you kneel and pray at your bedside and you've got your pajamas on sometimes you've got your working clothes

and you've worked with a group of men in the local church you're down on your knees 50 year old bungarees on stop thinking of yourself as being in pajamas or bed clothing or casual dress or meeting clothes start thinking of yourself dressed in the festival robes of a high priest the privileges of being well attired in splendid garments provided by the Lord and it adds such dignity to the role of your praise and prayer you enter his presence clothed by Jesus Christ and fit to offer praise and worship to him what a splendid privilege is ours and the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua and says now, thus saith the Lord of hosts if you will walk in my ways ah, here it is the conditions of spiritual blessing you see, God has done his part he has chosen he has forgiven he has cleansed he

has clothed that's God's part now he says, if that's your part and when we deal with human beings we always have human responsibilities and we always keep all of our doctrines and pictures perfectly in balance if you will walk in my ways and if you will keep my charge then, two specific conditions for your spiritual priesthood and your blessing God has done all the preparatory work now it's incumbent upon you and me firstly, to walk in my ways and to keep my charge how should the child of God walk? there's a long spectrum, isn't there? many statements many exercises of heart many individual sentences sprinkled throughout Pauline epistles through the Jewish epistles many pastoral concerns and directives given how should the priest walk? how should his life be? what should our speech be? if

you will walk in my ways now we're coming to the things that make it difficult and incumbent and why we are sometimes hesitant if you will walk in my ways and preserve keep protect my charges do you realize that you have the weight of priesthood upon you?

I'm not saying if you know you're a child of God or a believer I'm not talking about whether you have a gift or not there are two separate things altogether we're talking about priesthood your privilege and responsibility to enter the presence of God with sacrifices of praise and worship and adoration and it requires a walk and it requires the keeping of the charges given to you a sense of obligation, of appointment in festival robes going to God in worship and praise and adoration and it keeps the whole spectrum of our spiritual life in balance not salvation not gifts not fears of service priesthood preaching exercising of gifts oftentimes is manward priesthood is heavenward teaching and speaking the word of

God is toward the body priesthood is toward the head all the difference in the

world do you worship God? do you ever offer Him sacrifices of praise? do you ever intelligently dress yourselves in the appointed role and keep His charge as a result of a care and a concern for His honor and glory? are you worshipping the Lord and offering Him intelligent sacrifices of praise and adoration spiritual sacrifices? if you will do these things then thou shalt 1. judge my house 2. keep my court 3. and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by 1. the first thing is that if you will fulfill this obligation the resulting privilege and blessing is you will judge my house that does not mean sit in censure and criticism upon all the brethren that aren't walking and acting the way you think they should be that's not the thought at all the word judge means to rule

translated manage, regulate, govern in other words your life will be such that you will be given an impact in your life by the grace of God and you will then become one who becomes a leader, a controller, a guide of others for their spiritual welfare mothers maybe this is what your daughters need fathers, is this what our sons need and our young men? is this what our assembly needs? men who have such a relationship with God that God has invested them supernaturally with the blessed privilege of leading, ruling, guiding, controlling things in the local church which is a by-product of our priestly services it's affirmed in scripture and secondly you will not only judge my house you will keep my court you will take charge of the house of God you will keep things in order there will be

discipline and order and prosperity and blessing and joy and thriving and I genuinely believe in my own soul one of the marked failures and weaknesses of us as companies of God's people is we have totally negated our priestly obligation we have put it to a second-rate effort giving out the same familiar hymns saying the same things to God at no sacrifice to myself as a result no order, no management no festival robe nothing for God sometimes a lot of filthy garment may God exercise our hearts because if we walk in his way and keep his charge then you will keep, rule, manage, regulate my house you will preserve and keep the court and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by the Darby translation I will give thee going spheres of service realms of ministration and there

will be a remarkable addition to your testimony the ladies that work near you in the office will feel the impact your own family and children will somehow be circumferenced with your ministrations although not intelligently, cognizantly doing or preaching to them they will feel the impact of your life your piety your devotion and it will be a sweet, fragrant glory to God and God's people will be blessed and prospered if we walk and if we keep our charges verse 8 to 10 is the prediction that's connected with this prophecy or this vision it says, hear now, O Joshua the high priest thou and the fellows that sit before thee for they are men wondered at it is to say now you, Joshua, and those priests that are laboring there in the city you are men that are wondered at which are a sight, a

portent, a sign something to be looked at and understand as another truth you are typical of something else Joshua, what am I typical of? my servant the branch behold the stone the word branch could be very readily translated and is, I think, in the New American Standard the sprout that new seed of life that springs out and if that is a valid translation then we have three words to begin with the letter S which is helpful to remember you are my servant the sprout the stone the servant Messiah the fulfillment of Isaiah 42 the fulfillment of Mark's Gospel our blessed Lord Himself He came as a servant the one that was going to mediate and work and implement the great plans and purposes of God the sprout the one who's come to reign that one which came out of a root out of a dry ground from

the tribe of David and Judah the one who's meant to rule and rule and reign over all things and the stone that was quarried without hands that's going to come and crush all the enemy powers crush and destroy all the Gentile forces and be the absolute priest, king, ruler over all my servant the sprout the stone and God will do it in a day saith the Lord of hosts and in that day shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree Jesus says when this comes Zachariah says to the nation of Israel our blessed King He's going to come and fulfill all things and then you can call all men the prosperity will be so great the enrichment the joys the privileges you'll all have richness and wealth and be a wonderful kingdom but for you and me in application what's the lesson?

you can be Christlike you too can be a portent and a son you too in your priestly life and activities reeling spiritual impact upon others because of a right relationship to the Lord you too can have a testimony for God and be an anticipated picture a mirrored reflection of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ that others might see Him and His life of services see Him and the power and right to rule to see Him as the one that is the one can implement rule and government and control and order in this chaotic world and this is what we collectively are to be a lighthouse a luminary to shine out to those round about the spiritual lessons are very evident and valuable if we want for God to receive glory it will require self-discipline and self-sacrifice if I genuine desire Christ to be honored and

magnified and seen in myself it will be that which will be cutting away the flesh removing the filth and confessing it getting into a right established relationship with Himself enjoying the Lord blessing Him praising Him worshiping Him serving Him but don't be discouraged because He wants to do it in you and through you and He wants to give you the absolute confidence that is divine in power and enabling for His honor and glory why did Zachariah have the vision that God's people could recognize the tremendous importance of their priestly privilege and that God first said before we can go any further in my kingdom and before Messiah can come and before the coming of the Lord we need to straighten out our personal responsibilities trusting that which is without equity and balance

straightening and cleaning this matter out keeping the charges given to us faithfully not with a thought of success but with a thought of His glory His honor His coming kingdom I trust that God will touch our hearts and that we will be those who can honestly say for me to live is Christ that I want to mirror Him and reflect Him that my mouth and my walk and my doing will be His that others might see reflected in us the beloved eternal Son of God His grace His compassion His tenderness His faithfulness His obedience we had a son not ours but Christ's we had a minister to live as Christ we had the exhortation be a priest put the impurities away enjoy Him and mirror that blessed perfect Son Christ great coming Son fulfill God's purpose

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