



Zechariah 3:8

My Servant, the Branch and the Stone

Zechariah chapter three is a vision of Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD. He is standing because he is conducting his priestly duties representing the nation Israel (Deut. 10:8; 2 Chron. 29:11). This not Joshua, the son of Nunn, whom we encounter in the book of Joshua. This Joshua is a type of the high priest of Israel who is to come because he and his priestly companions are said to be often symbolic of things to come (v. 8).

Satan is seen standing at the right hand of Joshua accusing him before the Angel of the LORD. The presence of Satan changes the scene from a priestly one to judicial. Because of God's gracious love and choice of Israel the Angel of the LORD acquits Joshua. The basis of the rebuke is God's choice of Israel. Walvoord and Zuck note that in the figure before us just as the high priest represented the entire nation on the Day of atonement, so here Joshua the high priest was accused and acquitted on behalf of the nation Israel. The acquittal took the form of removing the filthy garments (vv. 3-5) and clothing Joshua with a clean garment.

Hengstenberg notes the Messiah could be represented as the antitype of the priesthood, only so far as he was to effect in the most perfect manner that *mediation and expiation* which had been but partially effected by the later. ”

The Angel of the LORD

The Angel of the LORD is to be identified as the preincarnate Christ. He speaks as LORD and yet distinguishes Himself from the LORD when He addresses Satan. Moreover, He virtually forgives sins. The LORD said to Satan . . . The LORD rebuke you, Satan! (v. 2). In verse four the Angel of the LORD says, See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes. ”

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. 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 (vv. 8-10).

Joshua and his companions prefigured the future cleansing of the nation. Of course, this future cleansing is linked to the one who comes in the future with three messianic titles. He is revealed here as My Servant, the Branch and the Stone.

My Servant

As the Servant of Yahweh, we know from the prophet Isaiah that Jesus Christ came to do the Father's will (Isa. 42:1; 49:3-4; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11; Ezek. 34:23-24). Zechariah probably has in mind Isaiah 52-53 because he says in verse nine the Messiah will remove the iniquity of the land. He is the Lord's Servant because of His willing, patient and perfect obedience to His Father (Ps. 40:6-8; Isa. 42:1ff; 49:1-5; 52:13ff; 53:1f). In John 5:30 Jesus said, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

The Branch

Jesus Christ is the humble descendent of king David who will bring the kingdom out of its fallen state and reign in power and glory (Isa. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 6:12-13).

"I am going to bring My Servant the Branch, *Zemach*, or literally the Sprout. Zechariah uses the word simply as a proper name for the Messiah. My servant Branch is exactly the same as Ezekiel's 'My Servant David'" (Ezek. 34:23-24; 27:24). The idea comes from Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15, where the promise is given that a righteous Sprout or a Sprout of righteousness shall be raised up to Jacob. Jeremiah used the figure of the descendent of David who would create righteousness upon the earth and the Branch of Yahweh (cf. Isa. 11:1-2). The Messiah is to spring up as a rod out of the stem of Jesse that has been hewn down, or as a root-shoot out of dry ground. The Branch denotes the Messiah in His origin from the family of David that has fallen into humiliation. The sprout will grow up from its original state of humiliation to exaltation and glory. In Zechariah the deeply humiliated priesthood is exalted by the grace of God into a type of the Messiah. The removal of iniquity is the exclusive work of the Messiah. The early Jews admitted that the servant of the Lord, *Zemach* meant the Messiah.

Calvin said, "He compares Christ to a sprout, because he appeared to spring, as it were, from nothing—because his origin was contemptible."

The Stone

The rabbis said the stone occupied the empty place on the Ark of the Covenant in the most holy place of the second temple. Early expositors were almost unanimous in referring the stone to the Messiah. However, most scholars see the stone representing something already in existence. Hengstenberg says, "The unhewn stone, which is to be polished and carved by the Lord, is a figurative representation of the nation and kingdom of God, descriptive of its present lowly condition, and the glory, which it is afterwards to receive from the Lord. Keil notes, "The stone is the symbol of the kingdom of God. The stone represents the kingdom of the Messiah King.

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We know from Daniel the Lord Jesus Christ is the crushing stone that rolls over the Gentiles bringing God's judgment at the end of the age (Daniel 2:44-45). He is also a stone of stumbling for unbelieving Israel (Rom. 9:31-33). Cf. Psalm 118:22; Matt. 21:42; 1 Peter 2:5-6.

The statement of one stone are seven eyes (v. 9) may be taken either upon one stone are seven eyes, or seven eyes are directed upon one stone (Keil). In Revelation 5:6 the seven eyes of the Lamb are the seven Spirits of God, and with the sevenfold eyes of Yahweh, they are the sevenfold radiations of the Spirit of Yahweh (Isa. 11:2) (Keil). The seven eyes on one stone is probably the wisdom and intelligence of the Messiah or the Holy Spirit upon Him (Isa. 11:2; Rev. 5:6). The seven eyes indicate perfect insight and perfect knowledge and powers of the all-knowing omniscient King.

The Sin-Remover

The mediatorial priest in Zechariah points to the mediatorial office and atoning work of the Messiah. Ultimately Jesus Christ is one who cleanses Israel and removes the iniquity of this land in a single day (v. 9). The deliverance from the exile shows that Joshua and his friends were smoking sticks plucked by the omnipotence of grace from the fire of merited judgment. But this miracle points beyond itself to an incomparably greater and better act of the sin-absolving grace of God, which is still in the future. It is fulfilled in the coming of the Branch. I will remove the iniquity of the land in one day was accomplished at Calvary when Jesus Christ died once and for all to take away sin (Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10; 9:12; 10:14; 9:26; Ps. 103:12; Rev. 5:6; Acts 10:43). The wiping away of sin will be effected by the Messiah and will not have to be continually repeated, but will be finished all at once. The day of completion was at Calvary.

Keil and Delitzsch note the train of thought: Jehovah will cause His servant *Zemach* to come, because he will prepare His kingdom gloriously, and exterminate all the sins of His people and land at once. By the wiping away of all guilt and iniquity, not only of that which rests upon the land, but also of that of the inhabitants of the land, i.e. of the whole nation. ”

This could refer to the first coming of Christ when He died as the sinner's substitute on the cross paying our sin debt. Moreover, Walvoord says, it is more likely a reference to the day of His Second Advent when at the end of the future Tribulation period the merits of His death will be applied to believing Israel (Zech. 13:1). ”

The Branch will usher in a time of security and peace. The chapter closes with a picture of millennial blessing that follows the return of Christ. God's people are seen sitting under his vine and under his fig tree (v. 10) indicating security, peace and prosperity through the reign of the Branch of David. That day seems to refer to the whole time of blessing which follows the coming of Christ. The Branch is the Prince of peace who brings perfect peace to those who call upon His name (Rom. 5:1).

Because of this great Day of Atonement we have the privilege as believers of coming to the very throne of God with boldness by means of the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:19) and have no need of any human priest or mediator (John 16:23-27). Every believer is now a member of the royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). Let's exercise our priesthood! He has washed us and made our garments clean with His blood.

It is my prayer that you will let Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, the Messiah become the desire of your heart. He will give you His perfect peace right now if you will believe on Him. If you need help in knowing Him in an intimate personal relationship here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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