

Two High Priests

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[0:00] If you could turn in your Bibles to Zechariah chapter 3, the best way to get there is to start at Matthew. Go back two books. You'll be there in Zechariah chapter 3.

See Malachi and Zechariah. Zechariah was one of God's prophets after the exile. The people have returned to the land, but they aren't doing very well.

There's great discouragement. There's heaviness on everyone's heart. There's a sense of sin and guilt. God wants them to rebuild the temple, and yet there's this community-wide discouragement. It's only half built, and no one seems to have the heart to finish it. And things are spiraling downward. Down, down, down. Deeper into despair.

And generally when we're in despair, we're not at our most holy state. And so they're falling deeper into sin. And we've been there, all of us, at one time or the other.

[1:14] Maybe you're there right now. There's a sense of sin, a sense of guilt over your life. You want to fight sin. You know you should be fighting sin. You want to be growing in holiness, obedience.

And yet your past failures are weighing on your mind. Your present sins weigh heavily on you. And it just seems to be pointless to try anymore.

That's where Israel was. People were saying with a heavy heart, what is the point? What's the point? And so it's into that situation that the Lord speaks.

And His words are so gracious. The Lord is a wonderful, compassionate Father. And His word is so full of promise and hope for His people when they are despairing and feeling guilty.

He knows what we need. He knew what they needed. They needed a fresh look at His grace and His mercy and His promises. And that's what He gives us in Zechariah chapter 3. So we're going to read the entire chapter.

[2:21] It's not very long. In verse 1. Then He showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.

The Lord said to Satan, The Lord rebuke you, Satan. The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?

Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, Take off his filthy clothes.

Then he said to Joshua, See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you. Then I said, Put a clean turban on his head.

And so they put a clean turban on his head, and they clothed him while the angel of the Lord stood by. The angel of the Lord gave this charge to Joshua. This is what the Lord Almighty says.

[3:20] If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here. Listen, O high priest Joshua, and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come.

I'm going to bring my servant, the branch. See the stone I have set in front of Joshua? There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it, says the Lord Almighty.

And I will remove the sin of this land in a single day. And that day, each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree, declares the Lord Almighty.

Now this passage has three movements. Accusation, salvation, and then transformation. And the first movement is accusation. So as this vision begins, Zachariah is ushered into the heavenly courtroom, and he sees Joshua, the high priest, standing there.

And we need to make this, I need to make this clear at the very beginning, that this is Joshua, the high priest, who was high priest at the time when Zachariah is ministering. This is not Joshua, that the book Joshua is named after, who brought Israel into the promised land.

[4:42] So Zachariah sees Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, who is sort of an Old Testament codename, so to speak, for Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity. It's a visible manifestation of that second person of the Trinity. And so Joshua is the high priest. He represents all of Israel. So what we see here is not only Joshua's condition, but it's Israel's condition.

And right beside him is Satan. Now, do you know what Satan means? It's a Hebrew word. It means accuser.

And what is Satan doing? He's accusing. So the accuser is accusing. The opponent, the opposer is opposing. The resistor is resisting.

In other words, Satan is being Satan. He's playing his part in this whole ordeal. Now, we don't know what Satan is saying exactly. It doesn't tell us.

[5:51] Zachariah doesn't say. But it's probably something like this. Look at this man. He is filthy. He has no right to be here. He's the high priest, and he is a filthy person.

And his people are filthy. He has no right to stand before you. Look at him. And we look. And Satan isn't lying.

Joshua is filthy. His clothes are covered not so much in dirt. The word is more like it carries the idea of excrement. He is defiled. He's unclean.

Because the people are unclean. Satan is pointing out all their sins to God. As a reason for God to be done with them.

To get rid of them. To kick them out of his presence. God, aren't you holy? How can you let this? How can you be for these people? How can you bless these people? How can you love these people?

[6:50] Look at them. They are defiled. They're wretched. And isn't that a perfect picture of us? In our sin.

Isaiah says our best deeds. Our filthy rags. And so this is Joshua. This is Israel. Not with their worst things on.

But their best clothes on. It's how we look. With our best deeds. When we were blind to our sin. We were blind to. How ugly. Our righteousness was. We thought we were accomplishing something. We thought we were doing something great.

And fantastic. We thought that somehow. What we were doing. Could commend us to God. And yet. When our eyes were opened. We saw ourselves.

[7:46] For what we are. We're filthy. Wretches. Poor. Filthy. Wretches. And that's how Israel feels.

Satan doesn't have to tell that to them. Right? At this point. They already know. But Satan doesn't help. I think God is helping Israel. To see. Now who is the real enemy?

And all the things that you are facing. There is an enemy. And. It's Satan. He is a real opposer. He is a meddler. And that's the part he is playing in this. He likes to pick over.

The rotten carcasses. Of our sinful lives. And he says. Now look at this. And look at this. God will have. Satan will have us look at anything. As long as we are not looking to Christ.

And so. Satan's role is. Is two-sided. He tempts to sin. And then he taunts us for sinning. He makes God look small. And then. When we go to repent. We find that God seems so distant.

[8:45] That is part of. What Satan likes to do. He likes to. Make God look small. And then hide. And pretend like. God isn't gracious. He accuses us before God. And he accuses God.

Before us. God will never forgive that sin. God will never forgive that. And so he likes to play both sides. To. Our ruin.

And to our misery. And so here we are. Condemned. Filthy. Accused. And yet God is not showing. Israel. And God is not showing us. Our condition to. Leave us there. To leave us discouraged. He does it because he wants us to understand. That he fully. Recognizes.

The problem. He fully understands. The depth. Of our need. Don't you hate it. When people. Give you glib answers.

[9:41] For real problems. That you have. They don't take the time. To fully recognize. How deep. The brokenness. Goes in your life. And. God loves us too much.

To say. Oh you have to look on the bright side. Or it's not that big of a deal. It's not that big of a problem. God. Is showing Israel. He is showing us. What we are. Because he wants us.

To understand. That he. He has a comprehensive knowledge. Of our problem. God loves us too much. To not tell us the truth. Israel feels like sinful failures. And God says. You're right. But he doesn't leave them there. You're accused. You're filthy. But God doesn't leave them there. And God doesn't leave us there. And that brings us to the second movement.

To salvation. We've seen accusation. Now we see God's salvation. So Satan is accusing. He's taking. Israel's conscience side. He's taking our side against us. Before God.

[10 : 37] And then brothers and sisters. Look. Who comes. To our defense. Who comes to our defense. It's the angel. Of the Lord. It's.

Jesus Christ. Comes in. And he speaks. On behalf. Of sinful Joshua. There is one. Who speaks. On our behalf. Before our father. So look at verse two.

The Lord said to Satan. The Lord rebuke you. Satan. The Lord who has chosen. It. Jerusalem. Rebuke you. So isn't that wonderful. Isn't that wonderful.

Who speaks for God. Against. Satan. Who speaks for God's people. Against Satan. Against. Even our own conscience. Sometimes. It's Jesus Christ. The righteous. We have an advocate.

And he says to Satan. In this vision. The Lord rebuke you. Why? Because. The Lord has chosen. Jerusalem. Is this. Not a man. Is this not. Is this man.

[11 : 34] Not a burning stick. Snatched from the fire. God has chosen them. They had been thrown. Into the fire. Of judgment. And exile. And he had pulled them out.

We saw that. This morning. That. He brought back. And these were people. That he brought back. Out of the fire. Out of exile. The Lord reached in. And plucked them out. And he has loved them.

This tiny remnant. He loves them. He's chosen them. They're chosen by grace. And so. Be quiet. Satan. These are mine. These are the Lord's people.

Speaks for us. But the Lord Jesus. Does more than that. He strips. Joshua. Of his filthy clothes. And he dresses them. And him. In rich garments. And this is the grace of God. Brothers and sisters. The things that we. All of our cleansing.

[12 : 30] All of our efforts. To make ourselves right. With God. Were to no avail. And yet. When the Lord Jesus. Comes in. He strips us. Of our sins. The things that we.

Couldn't cover. Adam and Eve. Were sewing. Garments together. To cover themselves. And they didn't work. And so the Lord. God had to provide. Coverings for them.

And this is what he does here. He's taken our sins. Far away. And it's all of grace. Does Joshua say anything. In his own defense. Does Joshua say anything.

About. Why he should be commended. Joshua doesn't do anything. To clean himself up. God does it all. For him. And brothers and sisters. This is the doctrine.

Of justification. All our sin. Is taken away. And the garments. Of Christ's righteousness. Are put on us. And so his righteousness. Is our glorious.

[13 : 26] Dress. And so we're able. To stand now. Before God's throne. And the accuser. Is silenced. And now. We are useful. We were once useless.

But now. We are useful. And that's the point. Of verse five. Zachariah. Chimes in. And he says. I said. Put a clean turban. On his head. And so they put a clean turban. On his head.

And clothed them. The turban was the hat. That the high priest wore. To serve. The Lord. And on that hat. Was written. In fabric. And thread. Holiness. To the Lord.

So. Joshua's standing. Has been totally transformed. He used to not be able. To come into God's presence. Because he was filthy. He was vile. And now. He is clothed. In rich. Festive.

Beautiful. Garments. And he is holiness. Over the Lord. And so what is God saying to Israel? He is saying. Israel. Don't. Be.

[14 : 21] Discouraged. Yes. You are sinful. Yes. You are defiled. But I am going to deal. With your sin. I have forgiven you. I have clothed you.

In glorious garments. And so you aren't useless anymore. You can't say. Oh. What's the point? I am too sinful. To do anything. God is saying. I have taken care of. Your sin.

He says that to each. One of you. Brothers and sisters. If you have believed. In the Lord. Jesus Christ. God has taken care. Of your sins. You can no longer say. What is the point? He is taking you.

From useless. To useful. And so now he says. Obey me. Obey me. Serve me. And if you do. You will have fellowship. With me. That is verse 7.

This is what the Lord Almighty. Says. If you will walk. In my ways. And keep my requirements. Then you will govern. My house. And have charge. In my courts. And I will give you. A place. Among these.

[15:16] Standing here. I have forgiven you. Now obey me. There is this great. Promise. Of reward. You will rule with me. You will reign with me.

You will judge with me. You will have a home. With me. See Israel. Came out of exile. And they came into their homeland. And then they found out something. That they really hadn't made it home yet.

You are never home. We are never home. Until God. Brings us. To himself. And so he is saying. This is a promise. This is motivation to obey.

If you obey. If you keep my commands. The thing that your heart yearns for. Home. You will have here. With me. There is heaven to gain. Brothers and sisters. Don't we need to be reminded of that. If we are careful to obey. Our work will not be in vain. We will make it home. And it is so easy. To get discouraged. To let our sin overwhelm us.

[16:15] To say. What is the point? There is no use to obey. And when we feel like that. We need to hear God's word again to us.

And what does he say? He says. Come. Let me tell you about what I have done for you. You need to hear it again. I have forgiven you. I have given you Christ's righteousness. I have promised you a home.

And a kingdom. Don't be discouraged. Don't be saying. What is the point? Right? There. In keeping God's law. There is a great reward. But the question is.

How can this all be? Can God just willy-nilly. Forgive sin? Can God just willy-nilly say. Okay. We are taking that sin off.

And we are going to put righteousness on you. Can God just simply absorb. The insult. Of all of our sin. And say.

[17:10] Oh. It is no big deal. Without justice being served. And you know. Satan has a point. Joshua. Is. Filthy. He does not have the right.

In and of himself. To serve. And neither do we. Brothers and sisters. Israel doesn't have the right.

To be God's people. On their own standing. And so. How can God. Simply. Take away their sin.

And say. Now you are useful. Now you can obey me. Here is all my promises. And the answer is in verse 8. Listen. Oh. High priest. Joshua. And your associates.

That is the other priest. Seated before you. Who are men. Symbolic. Signs. Types. Of things. To come. I am going to bring my servant.

The branch. Now we know who that is. Don't we? Because we have been hearing about him. On Sunday morning. It is a name for the Messiah.

[18:06] I am going to bring my servant. The branch. The Davidic king. Is going to save you. The Davidic king. Is going to bring about. This wonderful transformation.

This wonderful salvation. So look at verse 9. And I will remove the sin of this land. In a single day. What did. It discouraged. Israel. Need. To hear. They needed to hear about.

A coming Messiah. Who would take care of their sin. Once. For all. They needed to be brought. To the cross. And so this chapter.

Is really the story. Of two high priests. Joshua. The sinful high priest. And Jesus. The great high priest. Who.

[19:00] Does away with sin. Once. For all. And he did not enter into the holy of holies. By means of blood. Of goats. And bulls.

And calves. But he entered into the most holy place. With his own blood. With his own sacrifice. With his own life. Having obtained eternal.

Redemption. And so. He once for all. Cleansed. From the filth of sin. See. Joshua. Every year. Participated. In the day of atonement. And he would.

One of the goats. Would be slain. And he would take that blood. And take it into the holy place. And one of the other. The other goat. Would be driven. Far away. Away from everyone. And year.

After year. This happened. And sin was covered. But it was never taken away. It was always. A reoccurring. Problem. And yet.

[19:57] Verse 8 says. But Joshua. And all of his associates. They are signs. They are symbols. Of things to come. So when you see a stop sign. You know. A stop. Is coming.

And when you saw these priests. And you saw Joshua. You knew. Something. Greater. Was coming. And it was when Jesus came. And he offered himself. Once for all.

And in one day. Sin was totally. Removed. And so Jesus. Is the great high priest. Who is greater than Joshua. And greater than Aaron.

And greater than all the high priests. Of the Old Testament. And Jesus is also. The greater Joshua. Joshua. Joshua's name. Reminds us of. That earlier Joshua. That we talked about.

Right? That he brought. Israel. He was God's instrument. To bring Israel. Through the Red Sea. Into. Through the Jordan. Into the. Promised land. And Joshua.

[20 : 50] And Joshua. Points forward. To a greater Joshua. Who would bring. All of God's people. Like we saw this morning. From the ends of the earth. Through all. Every obstacle. And every barrier. Home.

And so. That Joshua. Points to the greater Joshua. And indeed. Jesus is just. A Greek. Translation. Of the word Joshua.

Because Joshua. Would bring. All of his people. Our Joshua. Would bring. All of his people. To a heavenly. Home. So. How did a Joshua.

How did our Joshua. Bring us to God. Well. Why can you. Have fellowship. With God. Why. Can we have communion.

Tonight. With. Our father. And with the Lord Jesus. And with the Holy Spirit. It was because you were. Reconciled. By his death. By nature. You are enemies.

[21 : 48] Of God. And you were children. Of wrath. There was enmity. On both sides. And yet. Jesus. Made peace. Through his blood.

All your filth. All your guilt. All the things. That you're ashamed of. That you wouldn't even say. To your closest friend. Were put on Christ. And Christ.

Took them outside. The city gate. He took them outside. Like that second goat. That was driven far away. He was. Taken outside the city. He was driven away.

Into the place of desolation. And punishment. And he was brought. He was driven away. So that we could be brought in. He was taken outside the city gate.

So that we could come in. To the heavenly city. He lost his place. By his father's side. So that we could find a place. In his home. And it's all because of Jesus Christ.

[22 : 46] And his work. It was his life. And it was his death. That made all this possible. So that we can come to God now. With boldness.

With faith. And confidence. And that brings us to the third movement. Transformation. That's verse 10. And that day.

Each of you. Will invite his neighbor. To sit under his vine. And fig tree. Declares the Lord Almighty. So after the removal of sin. There is an amazing transformation.

That takes place. In God's people. That God's people. Will enjoy peace. Shalom. That's what this verse is all about. They're going to enjoy peace with God. They're going to enjoy peace.

With each other. And those two things. Always. Go. Together. When we have peace with God. We are able to have peace. With one another. So imagine an agricultural society.

[23 : 42] This is what Israel is. Imagine an agricultural society. Where everyone. Are enemies. Everyone you met. Was an enemy. And that's how we are. By nature.

Hating. And being hated. It's the way we live. So what happens when your neighbor. Comes by your fig tree. Or your neighbor. Comes by your vine. You stand up.

You get ready to defend. What your land. Your vine. Your property. To defend your place. To defend your rights. But now. Through the cross. Everything has been changed.

The natural enmity. That exists in our own heart. Towards everyone else. Is changed. Instead of community. Fighting against each other. And devouring. And biting one another.

Where. In the whole fabric of society. Tearing apart. And coming apart. People are brought. Together. This is what's going to happen. This is what has happened. In part.

[24 : 38] So instead of defending. What is yours. Brothers and sisters. Now. You are free. To invite people. To enjoy what God has given you.

There's peace. And community is healed. Society that. God's society. God's kingdom. God's city. Enjoys peace.

And so we have peace with each other. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. And. That happens when Jesus takes away. All those sins. That filthy garment. So he takes us all the way from there.

To hating one another. To being filthy. Covered in excrement. To the place of being robbed. In beautiful garb. And. Living with one another in peace.

Now. That's what brings us. That brings us to what we're talking about. And doing tonight. What are we celebrating tonight. Brothers and sisters. What are we remembering.

[25 : 43] What are we. What blessings are we celebrating. Well. We're remembering our justification. We saw a picture of that. We were once sinful. We were completely.

And utterly filthy. And now. Through the work of our Lord Jesus. We have been clothed. In beautiful garments. We stood accused. And condemned.

But now. There is no condemnation. There's no condemnation. And. The branch came. The Lord. Came. We were plucked out of the fire.

Because the branch went into the fire. And we were justified. And now. All of his righteousness. The righteousness that we need. Has been imputed to us.

So we're celebrating that. We're celebrating peace with God. Since we have been justified. We have peace with God. Our father has welcomed us. Back home.

[26 : 37] And he hasn't treated us. Like our sins have deserved. He has brought us in. He's put the best robe on us. He's put the ring. The best ring on our finger.

And so. We're no longer enemies. But we have been brought in. And made sons. So we have peace with God. And so Jesus paid the price. For our adoption.

On the cross. And so it was through his death. That you were brought near. We're also celebrating. The fellowship that we have. With one another. The peace that we have.

The shalom that we have. With one another. Through his death. The Lord has created. A community. A society. A family. Where we don't have to defend.

What is ours any longer. We don't have to fight. And bite. And devour. Because he's disarmed us. And he's satisfied us. So now we have peace with each other.

[27 : 38] Jesus tore down those dividing walls. Of hostility. That existed between man and man. And now things. That seemed big before. Are no longer anything. To separate us.

All the walls have been torn down. And so. I say. Act like these things are true. Act like these things are true.

Do you want to apply this message? Then. Believe. And act like these things. Are real. If we have received such a great salvation. If we have received. Such wonderful.

And immense grace. Then let's. Live. Transformed. Lives. Let's tear down. All the vestiges. All the vestiges.

Of divisions. And cliques. And. All those things. That we would. Keep us apart. For Jesus has made us. One. One. The apostle Paul said it.

[28 : 35] Because there is one loaf. We who are many. Are one body. For we all partake of the one loaf. If you have.

Enjoyed Jesus Christ. And you have participated. And you have partaken. Of his sacrifice. Then you are one. Let's live. Like we are. What we are.

So let there be no more divisions. And let there be no more saying. What's the point? Why should I go on? Where. Where is all this getting me?

No more despair. Our high priest has come. And in one day. He dealt with our biggest problem. And he has made us. God's friend. Our Joshua has come.

And now he said. Now trust and obey. And if you trust and obey. There is a great reward. You'll live with me forever and ever. You'll serve with me. You'll have rule in my courts.

[29 : 32] I'm bringing you to a heavenly home. So obey. So as we remember Christ's death tonight. Let's embrace him. Let's thank him.

Let's praise him. And let's hope. Hope. By his grace. Our best things are ahead of us. Our best things are ahead of us.

Brothers and sisters. He who died. Shall be satisfied. And heaven and earth. Will be one. And we will be there. All by his grace.