

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH
THE COMPLETE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL
ZECHARIAH 3:1-10

Introduction

Here we see that God promised to restore His people and make them His very own. They were to be a royal, priestly and holy people!

*Exodus 19:5-6—"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine, And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (compare this to **Isaiah 1:26-27**).*

That is exactly what was said to Joshua the high priest, as the representative of his people here in **verses 6-7**). According to **verses 1 and 2**, Joshua was compared to Jerusalem. We know that Israel is prophesied to be the royal people in the coming Messianic kingdom. The third chapter of Zechariah describes how this new reinstatement will come about.

I. ISRAEL'S ENEMY REVEALED. (3:1-2)

We've already mentioned that Satan is God's greatest enemy in spiritual history. He would like nothing more than to prevent Israel's reinstatement and the coming Messianic kingdom.

God wants to heal and save; Satan wants to injure and destroy. Satan is the one who continually accuses and persecutes Israel, as well as the Church of Jesus Christ.

Scripture refers to Satan as the "...god of this world" who works in the "children of unbelief." He brings the nations under his control to oppose God's work in Israel and the Church.

His goal is to destroy Israel. When the Lord said that Israel was like a brand plucked out of the fire, we see a glimpse of the long periods of suffering God's people have experienced. Even in ancient Egypt, the Lord saved His people like a brand out of the fire.

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In the same way, He also saved them out of the four world Empires. Later, after their dispersion in 70 A.D., God saved them from innumerable organized attempts to annihilate them, not least out of the fires of the Holocaust in World War II.

Psalms 66:12 refers to such times of their suffering and their salvation through the Lord: "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."

Isaiah 43:2 adds: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

At the end of time, another mighty confrontation will take place between the Lord and the dragon (Satan), and will result in Satan's being cast to the earth.

Immediately he will begin to persecute Israel (**Revelation 12:7-17**), but the Lord will intervene at just the right moment and will pluck Israel like a brand out of the fire of destruction.

Finally, He will bring His people of the covenant to salvation, peace and rest. In this battle, which is prophetically foreshadowed in the book of Zechariah, salvation does come!

Revelation 12:10—"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night"

The media and politicians continually accuse Israel because Satan uses the world as a weapon against God's people.

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How many United Nations resolutions have been directed against Israel and have led to her condemnation? Arab nations are among the Jews' most ardent accusers.

The Jews were blamed and condemned for all sorts of things during the Nazi Reich. The Jews were libeled and condemned as guilty of ritual murder and well-poisoning during the Middle Ages. These nations that opposed Israel didn't realize that they were being used as tools in Satan's hands. But it does not make them any less guilty!

Satan is also an enemy of the Church of Jesus Christ. Christians are continually accused of hypocrisy; they are humiliated, reviled, and in many parts of the world, they are even persecuted and killed.

Often we hear the accusers' voices, even within our own hearts: "*Christians are no better than the others.*" That may be true, but we certainly do possess something better!

And, Romans 8:33-34 still says "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us,"

We don't stand before God clothed in our own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

How can we confront and dispel the enemy's accusations against us? We cannot overcome his accusations through ignorance or desperation. However, it is written in *Revelation 12:11*— "*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*"

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We overcome every type of accusation the enemy tries to use against us in the following ways:

1. Through the blood of Christ for forgiveness
2. Through the Word of God, and His promises
3. By consciously placing our lives in Jesus' hands

We must learn to allow the Lord to speak for us. When the enemy accuses, we must admit our failure while clinging to God's promises:

Yes, we have sinned, we have failed, but we have humbled ourselves and have received forgiveness through the blood of the Lord Jesus. He is our High Priest!

ISRAEL'S ENEMY REVEALED...

II. ISRAEL'S UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

Apparently, Satan had good reason to accuse Joshua and Jerusalem, because the high priest was indeed clothed in filthy garments. This unrighteousness is Israel's own righteousness.

The Bible says in *Isaiah 64:6*: "*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness-es are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*"

Israel will remain accused by the world for as long as she decides not to clothe herself with the righteousness of Christ.

Joshua remained the high priest despite his filthy garments. Why? Because God's gifts and calling are without repentance (*Romans 11:29*).

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III. ISRAEL'S RESTORATION GUARANTEED! (3:4-5)

The guarantee of Israel's restoration lies in the work of Christ. Joshua wasn't pardoned by the Lord because the accusations against him weren't justified, but because of God's mercy and love.

There are three components that make up Israel's future salvation, and serve as assurance for us as believers under the New Covenant. These three things speak louder than any accusation every could:

A. Israel's Election! (Vs 2)

God's sovereign election is much stronger than all of Satan's accusations. God's selection of a person takes place independently of any natural advantages or human efforts.

In *Deuteronomy 7:7*, Israel is called the "smallest" nation and in *Deuteronomy 9:6-7* is described as both "stiffnecked" and "rebellious," and yet the Lord chose her!

This sovereign election by God is seen in *Deuteronomy 14:2*. *"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth."*

The Jews aren't holy on account of their own righteousness, but because of God's election. As a sign of this, Joshua was given a change of raiment had a "fair mitre," set upon his head (*verses 3-5*).

Romans 11:28-29 explains just how far this election goes!

In this passage, Israel is called an "enemy" of the Gospel, yet, even that doesn't deter God from holding on to His chosen people.

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All of Satan's attacks against Israel will ultimately fail on account of her divine election.

This also applies to the true Church of Jesus Christ, which is made up exclusively of born-again believers. Let me re-read *Romans 8:33* to you: *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."*

But there is also a passage in *1 Peter 2:9* which reminds us of Joshua the priest: *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."*

Election is based solely upon a divine decision, and is absolutely independent of all human effort. When Satan attacks your election, he is really fighting against God's holy will, and for that reason he will never win!

However, in order that we not rest upon our election, we are called to work on it and make it sure: *2 Peter 1:10-11*—*"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

Israel's Election!

B. Israel Is A Brand Plucked Out Of The Fire! (3:2)

Fire is a picture of judgment (*Matthew 3:11-12*).

All that has been plucked out of a fire has been saved from judgment! Where and how will Israel — and every other person — be plucked from out of the fire of judgment?

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At Calvary's Cross, where Jesus died a substitutional death for us!

The fire of divine judgment was executed on the Cross of Calvary, on Him Who hung on it so that we could be plucked from this judgment.

This has already taken place for the Church of Jesus Christ, and will be fulfilled for Israel in the future!

Jesus' substitutionary death plucked us out like a brand out of the fire of divine judgment: Those who believe will not be judged, but those who do not believe are already judged (*John 3:18*). Those who believe on Him have passed from death to life (*John 5:24*). But, God's wrath remains on those who do not believe: God is a consuming fire (*Deuteronomy 4:24*).

The blood of Christ, shed for our salvation, speaks louder than all accusations. Just as the blood of Abel cried accusingly to heaven (*Genesis 4:10*), the blood of Jesus Christ speaks much louder:

Hebrews 12:24—"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

The accuser has to shout, but Jesus only needs to speak! Israel will also experience this forgiveness: (*Zechariah 3:4b*).

(Zechariah 3:9)

C. The LORD Stands By Joshua! (Vs 5)

Jesus (the angel of the LORD) is the guarantee for the righteousness and holiness of Israel and the Church!

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The high priest's mitre signifies **holiness** ("*holiness to the Lord*") and the clean garments signify **righteousness**. Both can only be attained through Jesus Christ!

In Luke 15:22, when the prodigal son returned home, the father commanded: "*...Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him*" .

The day will come when *Isaiah 61:10* will be fulfilled: "*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*"

We also can find peace in the One who ascended to the right hand of God and represents us before the Father! No accusation can ever take us away from God when Jesus is our personal Advocate!

The guarantee of Israel's future lies in the person of Jesus Christ: (*Verse 8-9*)

The Jews are marvelous people because they have a marvelous God. God alone can perform miracles, and we all know that Israel's history is filled with them! (*Verse 6*)

You and I are also "marvelous" as the children of God, and the Church is a "marvelous" Church.

Our God does wonders in every respect. And we, His people, can only stand and gaze in amazement! The wonder of Israel lies in the Servant, the Branch, and the Stone with seven eyes.

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Jesus is the Servant of God who did the will of the Father. He humbled Himself and became a servant and even bore His Cross Himself.

Look at how Isaiah described Him in *Isaiah 42:1-4*.

Jesus is *the Branch of the Lord*. The *Branch* from the house of David will set up the kingdom again (Isaiah 11:1).

Israel will bear fruit in and through Him: *Isaiah 4:2-3—"In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem."*

Jesus is also *the Stone that the builders rejected* ! This Stone has become the cornerstone (Psalm 118:22). This cornerstone will also become Israel's ultimate salvation.

The immovable foundation of our redemption was laid at Calvary: *Matthew 16:18—"...upon this rock I will build my church."*

1 Peter 2:6—"Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded"

Jesus is also *the Stone* recorded in *Daniel 2* which will come from heaven to earth at the end of the days. It will crush empires and become a mountain which fills the entire world.

Jesus is also the headstone of Israel's salvation: **(4:7)**

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This Stone has seven eyes: "For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes" **(verse 9)**.

These seven eyes point to the Lord's omnipotence, omniscience and divinity. Nothing is hidden from Him:

Revelation 5:6—"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth"

The fullness of the Spirit of God lives in Jesus. We have already seen that He sees the whole world and how the nations behave toward Israel. (Zechariah 1:11)

But we also read in the letter to the *Hebrews 4:13—"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"*

The passage concerning Israel's restoration as the royal nation among the nations closes with the words of **verse 9 and 10**.
"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"

On the day of Jesus' return with His saints at the end of the Tribulation Period, all of these prophecies will become reality in one single day (Isaiah 66:8). Then Israel will shine as the *"vine"* and Jerusalem as the *"fig tree"* in the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ!