

Blessed Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church
Adult Sunday School
11 February 2018

Visions of Zechariah
Zechariah 3:1-10 (KJV)

¹ And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. ² 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? ³ Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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. ⁶ And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, ⁷ 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 courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by. ⁸ 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 servant the BRANCH. ⁹ For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone *shall be* seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. ¹⁰ In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.

(1) VISION 4: DUTY AND HONOUR

“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 courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.” (Zech 3:6-7)

Jesus warned Joshua to live a life of obedience, doing his sacred duty as the representative of Israel before God, as a judge and a keeper of God’s house. He will be rewarded by God when he faithfully and diligently do the duties entrusted to him.

Apostle Paul gave young Timothy good counsel of exemplary conduct when he said, *“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart”* (2 Tim 2:22).

AW Tozer made this interesting observation about Christian conduct, “Christians have fallen into the habit of accepting the noisiest and most notorious among them as the best and the greatest. They too have learned to equate popularity with excellence, and in open defiance of the Sermon on the Mount they have given their approval, not to the meek, but to the self-assertive; not to the pure in heart who see God, but to the publicity hunter who seeks headlines.”

Can we say that we become Christians by our strength? Certainly not! God first put His love upon us to honour us as cleansed vessels. Therefore, it is our duty to endeavour in the paths of holiness that we may be fit vessels for the master’s use.

Holiness is not freedom from temptation, but power to overcome temptation. Lord, help me to be holy as You are holy.

(2) VISION 4: MY SERVANT THE BRANCH

God the Father declared His plan for the salvation of mankind introducing His servant – the Branch. The “Branch” “*tsemak*” is a special Hebrew expression describing the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Isa 4:2, 11:1; Jer 23:5-7, 33:15; Zech 6:12). A branch is an offshoot, sprouting from a tree. Jesus is an extension program of the Triune God into this earth. He is the same nature representing the Father perfectly (Heb 1:3). Luke describes beautifully for us, “*Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us*” (Lk 1:78). This is God’s solution for the cleansing of Israel’s sins and our sins.

John the Baptizer proclaimed as he saw Jesus coming to him in John 1:29 “*...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*” Jesus Himself testified, “*I and my Father are one*” (John 10:30). He is the exact representation of the Father in John 14:7, “*If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.*”

The “*fellows*” sitting with Joshua are the fellow priests serving with Joshua the high priest in the Temple, witnessing these good and comforting words proclaimed. We too are witnessing the unfolding drama of God’s redemption plan. How exciting as we look back with hindsight at the first advent of Christ. He came not as a King but as a Servant to save a people that despised Him. What glorious condescension!

Dear friends, may we come to Jesus for He can understand our feelings, grieves and sorrows of life because He was made a servant, suffering humiliation and persecution to save the very ones who plotted to kill Him, “*to give His life a ransom for many.*” As many as believed in Him, O rebels, let us come with grateful acknowledgement for all He has done for you and me.

They serve God well, who serve His creatures. Give me a servant’s heart, dear Lord.

(3) VISION 4: BEHOLD, THE STONE WITH SEVEN EYES

This Branch is also called the stone and upon the stone shall be seven eyes. Revelation 5:6 interprets for us the meaning of the seven eyes, “*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.*” It speaks of the knowledge and omniscience of God beholding those that did the good and the evil. His eyes were watching over the building efforts. How is this related to removing the iniquity of that land in one day?

Dearly beloved, it is going to take the Branch and the stone and the eyes to solve this infinite problem, Israel’s sin! This will be a key theme in the later chapters of the book of Zechariah. How is the iniquity of Israel going to be dealt with? If we look ahead to Zechariah 13:1, this is the solution, “*In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.*” This is the blood of Christ shed once for all on the cross. Remember the hymn we sing when we have the Lord’s Supper: “There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel’s veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their

guilty stains.” It was the day our Saviour bled and died that the Father removed the iniquity of the land.

When I was young, I used to go with my uncle and his family to Pulau Ubin staying in a chalet by the sea. We children would go swimming. Not far from shore is this piece of solid rock that stood steadfast, defying the onslaughts of the waves and tempests. In the cleft of that rock you can take shelter; and in its calm summit you could even build your house. The solid rock broke the waves that came and, as a child, I marvelled at the strength of the rock. May we be reminded that Jesus is that Rock of Ages, sustaining and keeping us by His unfailing grace. He knows our every sorrow and is able to succour us!

Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. Let my tears not blind me that I cannot see Your mercies.

(4) VISION 4: SITTING UNDER THE VINE AND FIG TREE

Sitting under one’s vine and fig tree is a proverbial description of prosperity and contentment. Every man is at peace with his neighbour. This is a picture of the future millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. He will rule from Jerusalem for 1000 years. There shall be no more wars, peace will prevail among the nations. Why does the prophesy look so far ahead in time?

In our present world, plagued with economic turmoil, unemployment and hunger, this futuristic vision brings hope and comfort of a better tomorrow to God’s people now as it did to the builders of the temple in Zechariah’s time.

This is a blessed doctrine that our fathers of the Bible-Presbyterian movement held to since its founding in 1937. This conviction of a literal millennium, a coming 1000-year rule of Christ on earth, is most biblical. The Reformed covenantal church after the tradition of Calvin does not teach this precious truth perhaps because the nation Israel was non-existent in the 16th century. We speak from hindsight having lived in an era that witnessed the resurrection of modern Israel on 14th May 1948. I remember watching a series on the history of Israel from ancient to modern day by “Friends of Israel” at the Sunset Gospel Hour. My heart was strangely warmed with a kindred spirit with the Jews. My prayer is that Israel will one day acknowledge their Messiah – Jesus who 2000 years ago at Calvary won the victory over sin and death is indeed the Messiah that has come! May the Lord remove the blindness and grant to us spiritual sight to behold this wonderful 4th vision that God gave to Zechariah for us.

As I turn my eyes upon Jesus, the problems of this earth will truly grow strangely dim. Prepare our hearts, Lord, to be princes and princesses in our Lord’s kingdom on earth. May that day come quickly!