

CHAPTER 4

Vision #4-Zechariah 3:1-10

Joshua, the High Priest – Cleansing

¹ Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. ²And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" ³Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. ⁴Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." ⁵And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by. ⁶Then the Angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, ⁷"Thus says the LORD of hosts: "If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command, Then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here. ⁸"Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH. ⁹For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription,' Says the LORD of hosts, "And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. ¹⁰In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, "Everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree."

Prior to the introduction of “*My Servant the BRANCH*” who is seen in Joshua, the High Priest, we witness, in this same Joshua, the story of redemption, of cleansing, of purification for sin. Zechariah’s vision of the High Priest is introduced as standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him—listen to this amazing and mysterious account:

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. And the Lord said to Satan, the Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’ Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and was standing before the Angel. Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, ‘Take away the filthy garments from him.’ And to him He said,

‘See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.’ And I said, ‘Let them put a clean turban on his head.’ So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the Lord stood by”
(Zechariah 3:1-5).

Satan, that Great Mountain, which we shall speak of later in Zechariah 4:7, has been introduced as the “accuser of the brethren” (Revelation 12:10; Job 1:7-12). How can this Joshua, with the accuser opposing him and drawing attention to his “filthy garments” minister as Israel’s High Priest and present the blood for atonement on behalf of the people?

First, we see the appearance of One entitled as “***The Angel of the Lord***” who precedes “***The Adversary’s***” (the literal meaning of “Satan”) appearance. A most interesting exchange takes place from the mouth of the Angel of the Lord:

“And the Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’” (Zechariah 3:2).

Again, Joshua is first mentioned, then the Angel of the Lord. Then Satan is described as “***standing at his*** (i.e., Joshua’s) ***right hand to oppose Joshua.***” Then, we hear this: “***The Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan!’***” Who’s talking here? Is this the Angel of the Lord Who speaks, or the Lord Himself?

In context, is not this the **Angel of the Lord**, the Lord Himself? Absolutely! For it is this Angel* who alone can remove sin, as seen in the removal of the filthy garments (for “***all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags***” in His presence; Isaiah 64:6). (*Known as a “theophany” of the pre-incarnate Christ.)

“Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. Then He (i.e., the Angle of the Lord) ***answered and spoke to those who stood before Him*** (i.e., the “Lord Who spoke to Satan), ***saying, ‘See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes’”*** (Zechariah 3:4).

Only divine inspiration could have written such a vision! The use of these pronouns and the determination of their antecedents would baffle even the most literate of English professors, let alone, Biblical scholars. Determination of the speaker at any given time here is no small feat. Eventually, we are clear of one thing:

“And I said, ‘Let THEM put a clean turban on his head.’ So THEY put a clean turban on his head, and THEY put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the Lord stood by” (Zechariah 3:5).

This celestial conversation takes place among the following: (1) Joshua, the High Priest (who says nothing); (2) the Angel of the Lord (Who apparently does say something in this exchange—***“Take away the filthy garments from him . . . see, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.”***); (3) Satan (who always has lots to say in the way of opposing and accusing, in this case, Joshua, the High Priest with filthy garments); (4) the Lord (i.e., the “Self-Existent” or the “Eternal” – JEHOVAH) Who rebukes Satan by using His Own Name to rebuke Satan (i.e., ***“The LORD rebuke you, Satan!”***); (5) THEM (i.e., “they” put a clean turban on Joshua’s head and ***“they put the clothes on him”***); Zechariah (he suggested “they” put a “clean turban on his head”); and, ultimately it appears that the “companions” of Joshua ***“who sit before you”*** may have been involved for in vs. 8 the admonishments of the Angel of the Lord to Joshua include these words: ***“Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you AND your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign.”*** (my emphasis)

It is difficult to tell; however, since it is only the Lord Who can remove sin and silence the accuser of the brethren and opposition to the High Priest, that we must conclude that the “rich robes” (which bespeak of the High Priestly garments and of “righteousness”) are placed (at least, based upon the work and word of the Angel of the Lord—be it done directly or through “them” (e.g., the “companions” of Joshua)) upon Joshua the High Priest.

Certainly, when those filthy garments are removed from Joshua—the definitive statement is made: ***“See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.”*** Only the Angel of the Lord is accorded the task of the removal of iniquity, of filthy garments, and the task of clothing the High Priest with rich robes—only the Angel of the Lord can silence the accuser of the brethren. This again is confirmed in Revelation:

“Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night has been cast down. And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Revelation 12:10).

Only The Angel of the Lord can remove the filthy garments (i.e., “iniquity”) from Joshua—what a profound picture Zechariah has conveyed to us!

***“ . . . and they put the clothes on him (i.e., the “rich robes”).
And the Angel of the Lord stood by” (Zechariah 3:5b).***

This is the same “Angel-Priest” spoken of in Revelation 8:3. Here we read another astonishing account:

“Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth” (Revelation 8:3-5a).

H. A. Ironside in his commentary on Revelation explains the identity of the Angel of the Lord as follows:

“We are told that “another angel” (my quotes) came and stood to officiate at the golden altar. He is seen offering incense and therefore is an angel-priest. Who is this angel-priest? I think you will agree that he cannot be a created angel. Scripture never speaks of any created angel offering incense with the prayers of saints to make them acceptable to God. The Church of Rome does; but nowhere in the Bible do you get anything of the kind. Throughout the Old Testament the preincarnate Christ is again and again presented as the angel of Jehovah. He was the angel who appeared to Abraham; He was the angel who guided the children of Israel; He was the angel who wrestled with Jacob and put his thigh out of joint by the brook at Peniel; He was the angel who appeared to Moses when the prophet prayed that he might see God; He was the angel who appeared to Joshua to lead the people of Israel against their foes in the land of Canaan; He was the angel of Jehovah again and again revealing Himself throughout the entire dispensation. In the book of Zechariah He is the angel-advocate who stands to plead for Joshua the high priest. So we again find Him in the book of Revelation presented as an angel-priest who still has a people on earth for whom to plead.”¹

We speak here in Revelation concerning the High Priestly ministry of Christ—for no “angel” would be worthy to offer up the “prayers of the saints” as

incense before the throne of God in the midst of such Revelation tribulation, but Him of whom it is said:

“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever” (Hebrews 7:25-28).

**“YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS . . .”
seen through the
“STONE WITH SEVEN EYES”**

“Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, YOU and your COMPANIONS who sit before you, for they are (i.e., both Joshua, the High Priest and the priesthood) a wondrous sign (i.e., “men of a sign or wonder”—they represent); for behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH” (Zechariah 3:8).

In Zechariah 3:1-5 a “heavenly vision” of Joshua the High Priest is seen by Zechariah. Then, in Zechariah 3:6-10 Joshua, the High Priest, is introduced, after he has had the removal of filthy garments and the clothing of rich robes and a turban placed upon his head, as My Servant, the Branch.

It’s as if all the conversation that went before, all the preparation of Joshua, the High Priest (with the removal, clothing of rich robes, turban, etc.) has an ultimate and formal presentation—and it does. But, what takes place next staggers, verily boggles our human understanding.

The sight is so overwhelming that it takes the “theological breath” out of even the most stalwart of scribes. Here we have a most wondrous declaration—that before Joshua would be his companions, his priests, in full order and function.

But wait, though this is a marvelous feat after such accusation, captivity, confusion, destruction and frustration—it still does not fully account for these men being called: **MEN OF A SIGN** (or) **MEN OF WONDER!** Furthermore, these “wondrous fellows” are a **sign**—even a **symbol**.

They stand for something that is too wonderful—because they are inextricably related to and connected to the succeeding phrase: ***“For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.”***

They are a **wondrous sign**—***MEN OF A SIGN*** (or) ***MEN OF WONDER***, because their priestly duties and service are orchestrated, supplied, and given “Divine Connectivity”—for they are so richly supplied through One Who is ***My Servant the BRANCH, the Messiah!***

When you behold Joshua, the High Priest, and the companions (undoubtedly, the priesthood in his charge) who are with him, you somehow have to see beyond the physical, beyond what is in front of you—for there is far more here to behold than mere mortals with ecclesiastical titles and duties.

There is another spiritual dimension that demands recognition and commands observance. Sitting before Joshua, the High Priest, are certainly the companions of Joshua, but together (i.e., Joshua and his companions; the High Priest and the Priesthood) they constitute far more than immediate history, far more than that seen by the naked eye of man.

They take on immediate and cosmic attributes which symbolize something far in excess of their time and space, which they now occupy. A most unusual title is ascribed to these mortals, which transcends their perfunctory, though noble, responsibilities: ***“MEN OF A SIGN OF WONDER”*** or ***“A WONDROUS SIGN.”***

Joshua, the High Priest, and his companions who sit before Joshua, are declared to be ***“A WONDROUS SIGN.”*** For what you see is not what you get! Above and beyond all time and space—projected into eternity’s portals—we behold the fulfillment of their representations.

Alas! How could they, given the parameters of their confinement (Joshua and his companions) grasp the immensity of their significance? How could, for that matter, Zechariah, fathom the depths of what he contemplated?

Immediately after following this insightful, but mysterious association of Joshua and his companions, who have received such a wondrous title, Zechariah records a remarkable statement, as if to rivet our attention to what has just been spoken—for it will take **divine revelation** to unveil why these men are so described and how they could possibly be connected to ***My Servant the BRANCH***, to wit:



“For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes” (Zechariah 3:9). “These seven rejoice to see . . . They are the eyes of the Lord” (Zechariah 4:10). “. . . a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out unto all the earth . . . Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God” (Revelation 5:6 & 4:5).

Thus, there are two entities that sit before Joshua the High Priest:

- (1) His companions—these *“Men of a Sign or Men of Wonder”* – who are intimately connected in their wondrous manifestation to **My Servant the BRANCH.**

And . . .

- (2) The *“stone with seven eyes”*

Is there any doubt that the eyes upon this stone are the same “seven” who *“rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel”* (Zechariah 4:10)? And, furthermore, is not this stone somehow connected to the *“plummet stone”* (i.e., “plumb line”) in the hand of this same Zerubbabel? For the **builder** of the Temple, wherein this wondrous priesthood would yet serve, and wherein stones would be gathered together to be the Temple of the Lord, is also marvelous.

The point to be made here is altogether full of revelation—for *“these seven who rejoice to see” . . . “are the eyes of the Lord!”* (Zechariah 4:10). These eyes in fullness (**seven eyes**) are upon the stone—they fully see the **building**, the **Temple**, and Zerubbabel, the Governor (the Kingship) who will build the Temple; and, they see **how** it shall be accomplished and through Whom it will culminate. From Zechariah to Revelation we see that these “seven eyes” are the “eyes of the Lord” and that they are also the “seven Spirits of God” and that they are connected to the Lamb of God with “seven horns” (perfect authority) and that they are illuminated by the “seven lamps of fire” which are undoubtedly similar in their perfect illumination and play a prophetic role in unveiling the Bowl in Zechariah 4—the Son of Man, as our Prophet, Priest and King in both Zechariah 4 and Revelation 1.

These seven eyes are upon the stone—the stone, which in and of itself identifies the very purpose of God (i.e., the Temple or Building of His Habitation); it is the revelation of a “priesthood built together” or of a “builded priesthood”: – of Joshua’s companions who are a “wondrous sign” – for they are being built together as the Lord’s priesthood. The “fullness” of this priesthood would one day consummate through our Joshua, our Jesus, as High Priest and those Whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, his brothers, his companions:

“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: ‘I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You’” (Hebrews 2:11-12).

The “stone with seven eyes” sees Joshua the High Priest—and “these seven” rejoice to see the plum line in the hand of Zerubbabel, the Governor. They see the High Priest and they see the priesthood built up in life together through My Servant the Branch—this is a glorious picture of what Peter in his epistle clearly reveals:

“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ . . . a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praise of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Peter 2:4-5 & 9).

Not only in Zechariah's day was there the revelation of the High Priest and of the priesthood, but that this very priesthood constituted the stones for the building of God, the Temple.

Today, through Christ, as our High Priest, we, His companions, His brothers, are being built up together as a living priesthood to *“offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God, which is our reasonable service”* (Romans 12:1) and, through His divine life we are being built together as living stones to be the dwelling place of God.

MY SERVANT THE BRANCH

There is no confusion here. What we are witnessing requires **divine revelation**—the **eyes of the Lord**—to both see and comprehend the extent of this vision. Do you know, have you seen the title of Him who is called **My Servant**? Is He not the same *Servant* of Isaiah 53? *“My righteous Servant shall justify many. For He shall bear their iniquities”* (Isaiah 53:11). And, I hasten to add, can such a “Suffering Servant” found in Isaiah 52 and 53 be the collective of Israel, after the flesh? A thousand times NO! *“For all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”* in the presence of a holy God (Isaiah 64:6). For, He alone is the One Who *“taketh away the sin of the world?”* (John 1:29).

“For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:2-5).

This is the *“root out of dry ground”* – *My Servant the BRANCH*. Do you see it—**do you see Him**? Why, oh why, *“upon the stone are seven eyes?”* Why would there be such an engraving upon them—such an inscription, which reads, *“says the Lord of hosts: And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day?”* We need the **eyes of the Lord** to see this vision. The High Priest, the Governor—the Wondrous Priesthood, the “Builded Priesthood” - the Builder of the Temple, the Temple—the removal of iniquity—do you see this One Who alone can remove sin, Who is My Servant Who supplies all your need, **The BRANCH**? He is revealed, not as *“I am the vine, ye are the branches”* (John 15:5), but as it were a

common branch—who identifies with the branches! He comes as the “servant” – to “serve” – as He once said:

“But Jesus called them to himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many’” (Matthew 20:25-28).

There is an engraving upon the stone with seven eyes; it reads:

“And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day, In that day, ‘says the Lord of hosts, everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree’” (Zechariah 3:9b-10).

Yes, not only does this bespeak of prophetic Israel, as it says in Zechariah 12:

“It shall be in that day . . . I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo . . . in that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness” (Zechariah 12:9a-11 & 13:1).

. . . But, surely it speaks of that priesthood, called out among the Gentiles and Jews since the Church’s advent, whose High Priest, Jesus—our Messiah—has provided a perfect sacrifice once for our sin, to wit:



“But into the second part (i.e., into the Holiest of All) the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance . . . but Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:7, 11-12).

. . . so now as His priesthood:

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus; by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true

heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:19-23).

And so, revealed to us, through Zechariah’s vision, is such a panoply of “spiritual density” – that to explore its expanse we are, as prophets of old, left faint and breathless after witnessing the vision (Daniel 10:8).

“Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign (i.e., “men of a sign or wonder”); for behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH” (Zechariah 3:8).

“And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth” (Revelation 5:6).

The conclusion is too clear. The “seven eyes” ARE the “seven Spirits of God” – yea, they are the “eyes of the Lord” – for only through the Spirit of God, through His very eyes, complete and divine, can we see what God is after today upon the earth and in the heavens. And, in particular, these seven eyes are upon the seven horns of the Lamb—it is **revelation**, under the **authority** (seven horns) of the Lamb Who is worthy to judge!

Repeatedly do we hear the questioning of both Zechariah and John in their “visionary state” wherein the prophets are questioned time and again—as if this very questioning reveals only the superficial “seeing” of all humans when peering into divine revelation. In frustration we must cry out that to grasp these visions by mere human insight is folly—the final answer to the divine interrogation is a resounding: *“No, my lord”* (Zechariah 4:13b).

But the eyes of the Lord are scanning throughout the whole earth (Zechariah 4:10b). Yes, “. . . *and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth*” (Revelation 5:6b). Both Zechariah and John echo one another in God’s search throughout all the earth to find those who will see through the Spirit of God, both the High Priest and the Priesthood, both the living stones and the Temple of God; and, ultimately to **see** the authority of the Lamb Who is prepared to righteously judge, for He alone is the Universal Lampstand, brightly beaming, revealing, illuminating, disseminating the rays of His prophetic office, so

that all can clearly see the source of all divine service and authority—of how ministry in the heavens and authority upon the earth are administered.

He is taking the likes of us, removing our iniquity, through the blood of our Lord Jesus, our High Priest, and making us a Holy Priesthood, a Royal Priesthood, built up together as living stones to be His Temple.

This is simply overwhelming and beyond human comprehension that the Almighty could do such a thing—therefore, the cry shall go up and it shall be repeated again and again: ***“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord!”*** Now, let us consider, after such a glorious vision—what more can Zechariah bear, the expanse of his visions are unparalleled. How could all this happen in one evening?