

Zechariah Lesson 29

11-5-2003

1. Last week I completed an analysis of Zechariah chapter two; when time expired we were looking at an introduction to the fourth of the eight night visions and chapter three.

2. Zechariah Chapter Three Introduction:

2.1 The fourth of our eight night visions takes place in heaven.

2.2 The vision could be entitled "The Cleansing of Joshua, The High Priest."
Zec 3:1-10.

2.3 Recall, the return to the land in B. C. 536 was led by a political leader named Zerubbabel and his High Priest was Joshua.

2.4 Although the vision deals with a cleansing of the High Priest, Joshua is but a representation of Israel the nation.

2.5 In the first three visions the purposes of God's grace in the restoration of Israel and the associated judgments of her enemies have been highlighted.

2.6 But a crucial question arises, how can an infinitely Holy God accomplish such plans with a sinful and besmirched people?

2.7 This, the fourth vision, discloses the transformation of the nation from self-righteousness to the righteousness of God "which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all who believe: for there is no difference with God." Rom 3:22-28

2.8 The vision of chapter three is a beautiful foreshadowing of the future conversion of the nation Israel at Christ's second advent.

2.9 The Jews rejection of Christ at His first coming and their persistence in self-righteousness, denying the +R of God in Christ, blinded them to the presence of the Branch in the middle of their nation in His incarnation.

2.10 As the Apostle Paul writes in Rom 10:3 "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

2.11 The transformation symbolized in this vision in the person of Joshua the High Priest, is a prophetic portrayal of Paul's declaration in Rom 10:4, "For Christ is the end of the law of righteousness to everyone who believes."

Outline of chapter three:

I. The visions of defiled and condemned Israel under the figure of Joshua the High Priest. Zec 3:1-3

Zec 3:1 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.

Zec 3:2 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?"

Zec 3:3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel.

A. Israel is accused by Satan as a criminal but Christ intervenes. Zec 3:1-2

Zec 3:1 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.

Zec 3:2 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?"

B. Israel appears as one polluted. Zec 3:3

Zec 3:3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel.

II. The vision of pardoned and repositioned Israel under the figure of Joshua the High Priest Zec 3:4-7

Zec 3:4 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."

Zec 3:5 Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.

Zec 3:6 The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua:

Zec 3:7 "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 of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.'

A. Israel is pardoned. Zec 3:4

Zec 3:4 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."

B. Israel is fully repositioned Zec 3:5

Zec 3:5 Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.

C. The covenant of the Priesthood is renewed with Joshua. Zec 3:6-7

Zec 3:6 The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua:

Zec 3:7 "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 of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.

III. The prediction of redeemed and restored Israel under the figure of the Messiah, the Branch. Zec 3:8-10

Zec 3:8 "Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.

Zec 3:9 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.

Zec 3:10 "In that day each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree,' declares the LORD Almighty."

A. The recipients of the prediction of redeemed and restored Israel. Zec 3:8a.

Zec 3:8a "Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come:"

B. The declaration of the prediction of redeemed and restored Israel under the figure of the Branch and the Stone. Zec 3:8b-10.

Zec 3:8b ... I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.

Zec 3:9 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.

Zec 3:10 "In that day each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree,' declares the LORD Almighty."

Before we exegete verse one of Zechariah chapter three, I want to review the Doctrine of The Priest Nation.

1. Definition:

1.1 Priest Nation: a national entity called Israel.

1.2 Client Nation: a gentile nation with a large number of believers, a pivot of mature believers, minimal anti-Semitism, significant freedom, significant internal evangelism and significant external evangelism, etc.

2. Priest Nation Concepts:

2.1 There has only been one Priest Nation but there have been many client nations to God.

2.2 Israel became a people when in approximately 2000 BC Abram responded positively to the Word of God and received salvation; all because he believed God; Abraham demonstrated that belief when he moved across the Euphrates river.

Gen 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

Gen 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Gen 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Gen 12:4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

2.3 Israel did not become a nation until about 1450 BC when God called them out of Egypt.

Exo 3:7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

Exo 3:8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Exo 3:9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

Exo 3:10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Exo 3:11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

Exo 3:12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

Gen 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates--

Gen 15:19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites,

Gen 15:20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites,

Gen 15:21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."

Gen 22:15 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time

Gen 22:16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,

Gen 22:17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,

Gen 22:18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

2.4 Israel was a Priest Nation from 1450 BC until 586 BC with the exception of their exile into Babylon/Persia (i. e. c. 606 BC - c. 536 BC).

2.5 These were the periods when Israel could be called a Priest Nation.

2.5.1 The Theocracy - Moses to Saul BC 1450-1080

2.5.2 The United Kingdom - Saul to Solomon BC 1080-925

2.5.3 Northern Kingdom - Jeroboam to Hosea BC 925-721

2.5.4 Southern Kingdom - Rehoboam to Zedekiah BC 925-586

2.6 There will be a future Priest Nation for a restored Israel of the Millennium.

Isa 49:5 And now the LORD says--he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength--

Isa 49:6 he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

Isa 49:7 This is what the LORD says--the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel--to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: "Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

Isa 49:8 This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances,

Isa 49:9 to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free!' "They will feed beside the roads and find pasture on every barren hill.

Isa 49:10 They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water.

Isa 49:11 I will turn all my mountains into roads, and my highways will be raised up.

Isa 49:12 See, they will come from afar-- some from the north, some from the west, some from the region of Aswan."

Isa 49:13 Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

Isa 49:14 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me."

Isa 49:15 "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!

Isa 49:16 See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.

Isa 49:17 Your sons hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you.

Isa 49:18 Lift up your eyes and look around; all your sons gather and come to you. As surely as I live," declares the LORD, "you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride.

Isa 49:19 "Though you were ruined and made desolate and your land laid waste, now you will be too small for your people, and those who devoured you will be far away.

Isa 49:20 The children born during your bereavement will yet say in your hearing, 'This place is too small for us; give us more space to live in.'

Isa 49:21 Then you will say in your heart, 'Who bore me these? I was bereaved and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who brought these up? I was left all alone, but these--where have they come from?'"

Isa 49:22 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders.

Isa 49:23 Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed."

Isa 49:24 Can plunder be taken from warriors, or captives rescued from the fierce?

Isa 49:25 But this is what the LORD says: "Yes, captives will be taken from warriors, and plunder retrieved from the fierce; I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save.

Isa 49:26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh; they will be drunk on their own blood, as with wine. Then all mankind will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

Isa 50:1 This is what the LORD says: "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? Because of your sins you were sold; because of your transgressions your mother was sent away.

Isa 50:2 When I came, why was there no one? When I called, why was there no one to answer? Was my arm too short to ransom you? Do I lack the strength to rescue you? By a mere rebuke I dry up the sea, I turn rivers into a desert; their fish rot for lack of water and die of thirst.

3. Israel the Priest Nation:

3.1 The selection of Israel as God's Priest nation is a matter solely of Divine Election. The election can be found many places in the Bible.

Exo 19:6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

Exo 19:7 So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak.

3.2 Israel and Judah were destroyed as Priest Nations because of negative volition to God's overtures.

Hos 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land.

Hos 4:2 There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

Hos 4:3 Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying.

Hos 4:4 "But let no man bring a charge, let no man accuse another, for your people are like those who bring charges against a priest.

Hos 4:5 You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother--

Hos 4:6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

Hos 4:7 The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful.

3.3 The last two verses of the Old Testament warned Israel not to be negative to the Messiah; their rejection of Christ resulted in the loss of their Priest Nation status.

Mal 4:5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.

Mal 4:6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

3.4 When God promises something however, it occurs, therefore Israel will be restored in the Millennium.

Jer 31:31 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

Jer 31:32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

Jer 31:33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Jer 31:34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Jer 31:35 This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar--the LORD Almighty is his name:

Jer 31:36 "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me."

3.5 Understanding the doctrine of The Priest Nation helps to understand a problem passage.

Exo 19:6 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.

3.5.1 The above passage alludes to all of Israel being Kohens i.e. the Hebrew word for priest. The reference in Exo 19:6 is a reference to Israel as a priest nation and not to all Israel being Kohens which of course is not the case.

3.6 In several places Jesus speaks of Israel being removed temporarily as a Priest Nation, there will be a time when God will permit several Gentile cities and nations to judge Israel.

Mat 11:21 "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."

Mat 11:22 "But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you."

Mat 11:23 "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."

Luk 11:29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, "This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet."

Luk 11:30 "For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation."

Luk 11:31 "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

3.6.1 There is also a prophecy of a dual discipline of Israel first in AD 70 and then later at the end of the Tribulation period.

Luk 21:20 "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

Luk 21:21 "Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into."

Luk 21:22 "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."

Luk 21:23 "But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people."

Luk 21:24 "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Now let's see what we can learn from verse one of Zechariah three.

KJV

Zec 3:1 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.

NIV

Zec 3:1 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.

Zec 3:1

Hebrew

Va Raah - And the interpreting angel was caused to see
Eth Yehoshua - Joshua

Ha Kohen - the Priest

Ha Gadol - the great

Amad - standing

Le Panah - before the face

Malakh Yehovah - of the Angel of The Lord

Va Ha Satan - and Satan

Amad - standing

Al Yaman Vo - at his right

Le Satan Vo - his adversary or Satan

Working Translation

Zec 3:1 And I saw Joshua the High Priest standing before Jehovah and Satan also stood at his right as his adversary.

Principles:

1. At a cursory glance this vision seems to relate only to Joshua as an individual.
2. Closer scrutiny however reveals that in the person of Joshua, the High Priest, the sinful state of Israel is exhibited; Joshua is the nation's representative.

Let's review the Doctrine of The High Priest.

1. In Israel, as in many other middle eastern states of antiquity, a hierarchical system of graduated powers and responsibilities existed with a chief or high priest at the head of the various national religious organizations.

2. For more than a thousand years before Moses, Egyptologists write that each of the larger temples and religious centers in Egypt had a high priest.

2.1 The land of Ugarit also had a high priest.

3. All priests of Judaism came originally from the Tribe of Levi.

3.1 Aaron was the first High Priest who, along with his four sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar performed the duties of High Priest.

3.1.1 God executed Nadab and Abihu for "abusing the Temple ritual."

3.2 Ultimately only those from the Tribe of Eleazar prevailed as High Priest.

3.2.1 Eleazar was the third son of Aaron and Elisheba (Exo 6:23; Num 3:2).

Exo 6:23 Aaron married Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

Num 3:2 And these are the names of the sons of Aaron; Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

3.2.2 Eleazar was consecrated to the priesthood with his father and brothers at Sinai (Exo 28:1-4; Lev 8:2, 13).

The Priestly Garments

Exo 28:1 "Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve me as priests.

Exo 28:2 Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron, to give him dignity and honor.

Exo 28:3 Tell all the skilled men to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest.

Exo 28:4 These are the garments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so they may serve me as priests.

Lev 8:2 "Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast,

Lev 8:13 And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moses.

3.2.3 After God executed the older brothers when they presented unlawful fire (Lev 10:1-7), Eleazar and Ithamar and later their descendants continued to exercise priestly functions with Aaron (Num 3:1-4).

Lev 10:1 Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. Lev 10:2 So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.

Lev 10:3 Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: "Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored." Aaron remained silent.

3.2.4 We can only conjecture as to the meaning of "unauthorized fire" though subsequent passages might lead one to think the boys were "tipsy" in their service, perhaps a reason for their failure to follow the protocol plan of God.

Lev 10:9 "You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the Tent of Meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.

Lev 10:10 You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean,

Lev 10:11 and you must teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses."

3.2.5 Eleazar was placed over all the Levites (Num 3:32) and assigned the care of the sanctuary and its vessels, etc. (Num 4:16; 16:37,39; 19:3-4). There were many highly specific functions performed in support of the High Priest by various Levite tribesmen.

Num 3:32 The chief leader of the Levites was Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest. He was appointed over those who were responsible for the care of the sanctuary.

3.2.6 Eleazar succeeded as high priest when his father Aaron died at Mount Hor (Num 20:25-28; Deu 10:6).

Num 20:23 At Mount Hor, near the border of Edom, the LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

Num 20:24 "Aaron will be gathered to his people. He will not enter the land I give the Israelites, because both of you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah.

Num 20:25 Get Aaron and his son Eleazar and take them up Mount Hor.

Num 20:26 Remove Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar, for Aaron will be gathered to his people; he will die there."

Num 20:27 Moses did as the LORD commanded: They went up Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community.

Num 20:28 Moses removed Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar. And Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain,

3.2.7 Joshua was installed as Moses' successor in a ceremony conducted by Eleazar as High Priest. Eleazar was Joshua's official counselor; he would first inquire of the Lord and then advise Joshua (Num 27:18-22).

End Lesson Taught 11-5-2003