



“The Branch”

Zechariah 3:1-10

I am 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.

“In that day each of you will invite your neighbor to sit under your vine and fig tree,’ declares the Lord Almighty.” Zechariah 3:8b-10.

Getting on the Same Page

Today we begin our Advent series, “It’s A Wonderful Life.” Advent is all about looking back on God’s first arrival and anticipating his second. It is celebrating and reflecting on how God does for us what we can’t do for ourselves.

With that in mind we come to Zechariah 3. The Israelites are back in their land, and they have a lot of work to do. They are excited at first, but then get really discouraged.

One major problem is that they are guilty of sin, and they know it. Zechariah has a powerful vision of Joshua, the High Priest at the time, standing before God, representing the people. And he is dirty; guilty of sin and without hope. To add insult to injury, Satan is there, accusing Joshua. And his accusations aren’t completely wrong.

The angel of the Lord is there also, and he rebukes Satan for his accusations. He then orders Joshua’s filthy clothes to be taken off. Then he has fine garments put on him. After this, he gives Joshua the charge to walk in obedience to God.

Finally, God promises to bring the Messiah, who Zechariah calls “The Branch.” This servant of God will one day enact real, lasting change. As the text says, “He will remove the sin of the land

in a single day.” And because of his presence and work, the entire world will be at peace. Zechariah didn’t know this at the time, but his prophecies were ultimately referring to Jesus.

Do you see what God does here? We are guilty of sin, and God forgives and removes our sin. It has nothing to do with us. Then he asks us to walk in obedience. This is the beautiful order of the Gospel: We are saved from sin, for glorious service to our king.

Ultimately, God would send Jesus, who would pay the penalty for our sins. Jesus came the first time to die for us in our place. He’s coming again to reign and bring holistic peace. We live between these two advents. And God wants us to live every day, proclaiming this good news to the world.

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

- Read Zechariah 3:1-10. What stands out to you in this passage?
- Discuss a time in your life when you were accused of something you either didn’t do, or you did, but it was blown out of proportion. How did you respond?

Study

- Who is a greater accuser to us: Satan or our inner voice? Why do you think that?
- Respond: We are guilty of sin and we know it. Our tendency is to either minimize it or to shame ourselves.
- Respond: Satan’s best tactic is to get us to focus on ourselves instead of God; to get us to justify ourselves instead of accepting God’s provision for us.
- Discuss why the following is a false Gospel: God cleanses us, then tells us to keep ourselves clean.
- Respond: There is a beautiful order to the Gospel. God first removes our sin, then he asks us to walk in obedience. We don’t obey God in order to be forgiven, but because we have already been forgiven.
- Respond: Only the Messiah can bring ultimate peace to our hearts and our world.

Apply

- Discuss how you can practically speak the truth of Zechariah 3 to your heart and other believers.