

The Engraved Stone 5-7-00

Zech 3 I've been excited about this all week and already shared with some of you part of this chapter. Thursday night we talked about how workmen of the Word, people who diligently search the Scriptures, have a treasure chest of revelation. Some are old truths and some new things. This is the latest thing the Lord has added and I want to pull it out and show you. But before we do remember it has been 5 months since we took the challenge to be consistent in opening the Word and letting Him speak to us. How are you doing?

Just as we shared Thursday about Paul and Peter reminding the saints of the same things over and over – I will as long as the Lord has me with you, remind you to be in the Word. It is Jesus. He speaks to us through it. It is our yardstick for truth. It washes us. It leads us into a deeper relationship with Jesus for it reveals Him to us. We need to feast on the Word like we need to eat food each day. You don't need to be on a spiritual diet. EAT!

Vs 1 Zechariah is prophesying during the restoration of Judah after the captivity. There are a number of prophets that are active during this time but Zechariah's prophecies are some of the most otherworldly and symbolic. He has been talking with an angel and now this angel shows him a scene. The high priest of this group of people that returned to Judah is named Joshua. Joshua is standing before the angel of the LORD, whom, as we saw in our study of Jesus in Genesis, is Jesus. Ex 3:2-4

Joshua is standing before Jesus and Satan is at his right hand to accuse him. Job 1:6, Rev 12:10. Satan's name means accuser. Though he once led worship in the heavenlies, after his fall, he took up the job of accusing men before God. I think perhaps Satan (formerly one of the most glorious beings) hates to see weak human beings bring praise or lead others in praise for this was once the assignment of honor that he himself held. Since he rebelled and was stripped of the assignment, it must irritate him to see weak man take such a glorious role. We need to consider the honor of being able to praise and glorify God and especially to encourage that in others.

Joshua is a picture of us all. We have all been made kings and priests to our God. We can stand before the LORD. The priest stood before the LORD to minister. We think of minister as being something toward fellow man but the OT thought of ministry was to Jehovah. The OT priest offered sacrifices, we offer our lives as living sacrifices. He offered up incense, as we offer up prayers. What a privilege to come before Jesus ourselves, not to have another to do it in our place. But when we come we stand before our mediator, the Lord Jesus.

Vs 2 And what does Jesus (the LORD) say to that one who is making accusations as to our condition? The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Satan comes to

drag up dirt about you and tell God what a miserable choice He has made in this vessel of praise. He says, "Look how unworthy! Look as the miserable failure." And Jesus says, Jehovah rebuke you! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you. Jerusalem is the city of peace. In Revelation we are the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. The LORD we are his people of peace. He chose us. He snatched us out of the destruction of the world. This world (man's system over which Satan reigns) is like a fire. God reached down and snatched you out of it. The brand had three meanings in Hebrew. A stick used to stir a fire, to feed a fire, or to spread a fire. We were all of the above until the Lord reached down and pulled us out. We stirred fires with our language and suggestions and thoughts. We were fuel for the fire as we participated in the things of which we are now ashamed, and we spread fire as we were slaves to our master, Satan, as we yielded our lives to what we thought was freedom.

Vs 3 When we come to God in response to his call we stand in our filthy rags. Satan has a lot to point at. We are unclean in the angel of the LORD's sight. All our righteousness is as filthy rags.

Vs 4 Col 3:5-9 tells us we are suppose to take off these old filthy rags, this old way of life, our earthly nature. The LORD sees that his divine assistants remove the old filth. How is that possible? The blood of Calvary cleanses us from all sin. It is Jesus who removes our sin and clothes us in righteousness, rich garments indeed. Doesn't this remind you of the prodigal as he met his father? The father said, "Bring the best robe and put it on him." (Lk 15:22) Put on the Lord Jesus Christ! Ro 13:14 That is the best robe, the richest robe. People see you in your clothes. There has been all kinds of talk about dress – power clothes, dressing for success, but not enough talk about dressing in Jesus – When people see us, the richest, the best dress they could possible see is Jesus. God's best dressed list is nothing like 'People' magazine's best dressed list! Those dressed in Jesus' continually display the fruits of the Spirit.

Vs 5 What goes on the head of a saint? The helmet of salvation, a clean turban! It is a symbol of the renewed mind, a new kind of thinking, a new thought life. Has the LORD given you a clean turban? There seems to be some kind of angelic assistance in this process. Once we see all the Lord has done for us we will be amazed at all the intervention in our lives.

Vs 6-7 He has been cleansed. But the LORD promises him that if he walks in his ways and keeps his requirements ... Walk in accordance with his new dress. Although Joshua has been cleansed there is a constant decision before him. He can choose to walk in God's ways or his own. He can keep God's requirements or please man. Which will it be? He must continually choose to walk in God's ways and requirements to have the call to govern God's house and have charge

of his courts. The NT has the same requirements for elders and the same promise. If he did he would be given a place among those standing before the Lord. We will find out who they are in the next verse. The NT promises the elders who do their job will earn a crown of glory. 1Peter 5:4

Vs 8 Those who were standing there now referred to as associates seated before him, are said to be symbolic of things to come. I think these are the patriarchs and types and shadows of Christ in the OT. Here in the heavenlies before Christ are the saints of the OT. They are symbolic of the things to come – colon – God's servant the Branch. Later on Joshua is called the Branch because he does become symbolic of the Branch to come. But this reference is to the reality - Jesus. Is 11:1 , Jer 33:15 The true Branch is a descendant of David – the tribe of Judah. This man, Joshua, is a priest and therefore of the tribe of Levi. These before the Angel of the Lord were symbolic of Jesus. Joshua would join this group if he walked in the ways of the Lord.

Vs 9 The stone, Jesus is referred to as the rock, the rock of offense, the cornerstone, the capstone. A rock is something solid that remains, is lasting. In Revelation chapter 1 John sees the seven spirits before the throne that represent Jesus. Here there are seven eyes upon this rock in front of Joshua. So in several ways we see Jesus in this rock. And the LORD Almighty says He will (future tense) engrave an inscription on it – and remove the sins of the land in one day. When were the sins of a nation ever removed in one day? In what day were sins removed? Good Friday! And what was the inscription on the rock? What marks on the rock have to do with our salvation? Isaiah 53 tells us, "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted." The strikes of an engraving tool on the rock. There forever on display for the spiritual world to see are the marks that are related to our redemption. They will always be there. And whenever you or anyone has a doubt where you stand with God you can look at the inscription on the stone and remember the day the sins were removed from the land.

Vs 10 The vine and the fig tree was a place where one went to be in the shade to pray. Remember when Jesus called Nathaniel in John 1? He told him, "I saw you under the fig tree." As Nathaniel was in prayer pouring his heart out, Jesus witnessed the prayer in the spirit. What is prophesied here is that one day people will invite their neighbors to enter their place of prayer with them. I know some of you who have done that very thing. We even take our place of prayer with us to them and ask to pray for them. That day is here. The rock has been engraved. The marks are there forever. Sin has been removed. And now I invite my neighbor to meet God with me.