

SERMON FOR SEPTEMBER 6, 2020

TEXT: ZECHARIAH 3: 1-10

THEME: SILENCING SATAN

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. 2 And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" 3 Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. 4 And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." 5 And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord was standing by. 6 And the angel of the Lord solemnly assured Joshua, 7 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here. 8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch. 9 For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day. 10 In that day, declares the Lord of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree."

In the name of Jesus:

A number of years ago I went on a trip to Scotland with my daughter, Emily. We flew home connecting in Iceland. On the way home, the stewardess made an announcement over the intercom that due to a hurricane

off the shores of North Carolina, a number of connecting flights might have to be diverted. We were advised to go to a ticket agent for details.

When we arrived in Toronto, Canada, we made a beeline to the agent's desk. Sure enough, our flight home was cancelled, and due to the storm, a number of flights had to be changed. Emily and I tried our best to get a flight home, but to no avail. We would have to spend the night in Toronto. When we asked about the availability of having the airlines pay for a room for us, we were told, "no dice, you are stuck in Toronto for the evening.. Good luck." We were on our own, scrambling to find accommodations for the evening as well as a flight home the next day.

You know all too well the feeling, "sorry, you are stuck and out of luck.." In spite of your best efforts, all of your efforts go for naught. The title for our sermon series on Zechariah is "Your Kingdom Come." But Satan doesn't want God's Kingdom to come, he will do anything so that God's kingdom never comes in our lives. Satan does his best to say to each one of us: "Sorry, you are stuck in your sinfulness, there is no hope for you, you are outta luck." That is the story in a nutshell in Zechariah 3 for today.

Zechariah writes in verse one: Then he showed me Joshua the high priest [a different Joshua from the book of Joshua] standing before the LORD's

Messenger, and the **accuser** [Satan] standing at his right hand to **accuse** [to satanize] him.” (Zech 3:1) If Satan was a prosecuting attorney, he would be throwing the book at Joshua, accusing him of all sorts of misdeeds. This Joshua is the high priest, he was going to serve as the high priest in the rebuilt Temple. He would be the one offering the sacrifices, pleading to Yahweh for His divine grace and mercy. But Satan steps in and says: “Not so fast, buster.”

Joshua is standing before the Messenger, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (btw, whenever you see the name Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament, that is Jesus before He was born). Joshua is clothed with filthy garments. The word filthy doesn't do what Joshua was wearing justice. Filthy here means the maximum filth one can imagine. Related words would include human waste and vomit. Get the picture? What Joshua was wearing was absolutely disgusting, vile, it was as if he got dumped in a sewer of pollution. It covers Joshua. Why? Joshua was born in Babylon, a defiled and unholy land. How can an unholy priest remove the sin from an unholy people?

All is lost, there is no hope, Joshua is stuck in Toronto with no flight out, no room to stay, with nowhere to go. Satan, the accuser, chuckles and says to Joshua, “Not so fast, buddy, you are stuck. You don't stand a chance. There is no hope for you.”

That is who Satan is and this is what he does. He accuses, rubs our face in our sinfulness and filth so that we feel stuck and in utter despair. Satan points out that, just like Joshua, we have lived in a defiled and unholy land, that as sinners we are perfectly at home in the jungle of jealousy and judgement, the precinct of pride and the slums of slander. If you have ever felt as such, it was Satan speaking to you, trying to get you to wallow in misery and despair.

But Someone is there speaking for Joshua. It is Jesus. He intercedes for Joshua. It might sound strange to us to think of Jesus in the Old Testament, but Jesus is there, He has always been there and is always there for His people. He is the Angel of the Lord, Joshua the high priest was standing before *the LORD's Messenger.*" (3:1) "Joshua was standing before *the Messenger.*" (3:3) "*The Messenger* said." (3:4) "*The LORD's Messenger* was standing by." (3:5) "*The LORD'S Messenger* solemnly assured Joshua." (3:6)

Jesus stands in Joshua's court. Jesus stands in your court as well. In Zechariah 3 the Lord calls Jesus His servant. This is the same Servant that Isaiah wrote about, stricken by God and afflicted, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows with Him to the cross. By His stripes we are healed. Through faith in Him we are forgiven. Jesus is also here called the Shoot. This

comes from Jeremiah 23:5, “Days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Shoot, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.” And then Zechariah writes that Jesus is also the Stone. This comes from Psalm 118:22, “The Stone the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone. The LORD has done this and it’s marvelous in our eyes.” What happens to Satan when he’s the presence of the LORD’s Messenger—who is the Servant and the Shoot and the Stone? This!

“The Lord rebuke you, Satan, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you.” (v 2). The word rebuke in the Hebrew means defeating and driving back an enemy with anger and rage. The LORD’s Messenger says something like this to Satan: “How dare you bring charges against Joshua! You’re completely out of line here and have absolutely no authority in this court whatsoever. Leave immediately and I don’t ever want to see your sorry face again!” Satan is speechless! He falls to the ground like a popped balloon. Does he give up and go home? Pick up his marbles and move on? For a while, to be sure. But not forever.

Five hundred years later. Satan again went to court with the LORD’s Messenger. Only this time the accuser sends Judas to the garden, Peter to the courtyard, Pilate to his palace and Herod to Jerusalem; all so the crowds

would send Jesus to the cross. Jesus, The Servant is led like a Lamb to the slaughter. The living Shoot is pruned, uprooted and cut down. The Stone is pulverized, pummeled and crushed to pieces. And Jesus continues to speak on sinner's behalf, saying: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

On Good Friday it looks like Satan has won. God's Son died on the cross. But in spite of Satan's best efforts, He who sits in the heavens laughs. Because in spite of Satan's best efforts, the kingdom still comes! Christ has risen from the grave! God will build His Church.

In the book of Zechariah, we see that Solomon's temple will be rebuilt! In chapter 4, the governor of Persian Yehud, Zerubbabel, lays a foundation stone for the new temple. "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it." (Zech 4:9) It's 520 BC and Zerubbabel takes a leftover stone from Solomon's temple and uses it to build a new temple. God is at work. That which has been destroyed is being rebuilt. It is what Jesus does in His death and resurrection. He who is dead is now alive. And He is at work to build His Church.

No matter who you are or what you have done, you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Christ's Easter victory is yours! You are not stuck in Toronto with no hope. You are not destined to live a life of

hopeless despair! Christ has saved you. He has given to you new life by His name. You have the certainty of a life in Christ now and a life with Him in eternity. And no matter what you may face in your life, The Lord's Messenger, Jesus Christ Himself, still stands in your court, rebuking Satan and coming to your defense.

The prophet Zechariah reveals to us who Satan really is. He is a supernatural creature who can do us great harm. He lives to torment our souls and question our salvation. But God's Good News is that Jesus has defeated Satan by His innocent suffering, death, and glorious resurrection. You belong to Jesus, and Satan has no authority over you whatsoever.

So how can we live in confidence and courage? How can you overflow with joy and great delight? "Not by might and not by power but by my Spirit." says the Lord. To whom be the glory forever and ever! Amen.