

The Power of Jesus Interceding for His People (Rom. 8:34; Jn. 17)

I. REVIEW: THE CLEANSING OF JOSHUA (ZECH. 3:1-7)

- A. ***Prophetic testimony:*** Deborah Hiebert had a dream in February 2001 that on *January 26* the Lord would confirm and release a “*Zechariah 3 blessing*” in our midst (the key verses are Zech. 3:1-7). Every year since then she wondered if it was the year for this release. On January 26, 2015, during our friendship group meeting, Allen Hood shared from Zechariah 3 (not knowing Deborah had a dream fourteen years earlier related to Zechariah 3 being released on a January 26). A week later on February 2, I had a dream that the power of demonic accusation was being broken in our midst.
- B. In a heavenly scene (3:1-2), Zechariah saw Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord (the preincarnate Christ). Satan accused Joshua of being disqualified for calling and destiny.
¹Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose [accuse, NIV] him. (Zech. 3:1)
- C. The Hebrew word *satan* comes from the root word for “adversary,” translated as “the accuser.”
¹⁰...the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before God day and night... (Rev. 12:10)
- D. The Lord did not receive Satan’s accusation against Joshua, but rebuked Satan twice (3:2). The Lord will not tolerate Satan’s accusation against us. He rebuked Satan, not because the accusations against Joshua were false, but because of God’s gracious love for and sovereign choice of Joshua.
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?” (Zech. 3:2)
1. ***The Lord who chose Jerusalem:*** The God who chose weak and sinful Jerusalem is the God of grace, who chooses those who do not deserve salvation and cannot save themselves.
 2. ***Brand plucked from the fire:*** The imagery describes Joshua as narrowly escaping destruction. *The Lord spoke this to Satan to silence his accusations against Joshua.*
- E. Joshua’s dirty garments were removed, and new ones were given to him (Zech. 3:3-5). The Lord exhorted Joshua to “see” that He had removed his sin and would clothe him with rich robes (3:4).
³Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and was standing before the Angel. ⁴Then He answered...saying, “Take away the filthy garments from him.” And to him He said, “See, I have removed your iniquity...and I will clothe you with rich robes.” (Zech. 3:3-4)
- F. The Lord admonished Joshua to walk in wholehearted obedience (3:6-7). The Lord gave him two exhortations—to godly character and diligent service—and three glorious promises. He promised grace to operate in leadership in God’s house and to walk among “these who stand here” (refers to angels). This promise includes experiencing nearness to God and access to the angelic realm, etc.
⁶The Angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, ⁷“...If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command [perform My service], then you shall judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here.” (Zech. 3:6-7)

II. JESUS MAKES INTERCESSION FOR HIS PEOPLE

- A. God has chosen intercession as the primary means by which He releases His power to the earth. Jesus intercedes forever for His people (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34).

²⁵*He always [forever] lives to make intercession for them. (Heb. 7:25)*

- B. Jesus' intercession for us is far stronger than Satan's accusations against us. Paul made four important statements about what Jesus did for us in securing our salvation (Rom. 8:34).

³³*Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. (Rom. 8:33–34)*

1. *Who shall bring a charge:* Who has the authority to enforce a charge in God's court against His people? Jesus is the only person with authority in God's court to evaluate God's people.
2. *Who is he who condemns:* Satan can accuse, but has no authority to release God's judgments.
3. *It is God who justifies:* Justification means that in God's sight we are cleared of every charge. In Romans 3:21-31, He made a legal declaration that He sees us through Jesus' righteousness, as if we had never sinned. God justified us in a way that fully satisfied both His holy character and every aspect of His law. God acted in terms of a covenant (which is a legal document).
4. *Christ who died:* He received the punishment for our sins. In His death He took upon Himself the guilt of our sins. He received our condemnation, so there is no condemnation in Christ.
5. *Christ who is risen:* The resurrection was God's public declaration that He was fully satisfied with Jesus' death. Seen by over 500 people, His resurrection is proof that we are justified.
6. *Christ who is at God's right hand:* He has the place of supreme authority, greater than any other (Mt. 28:18; Eph. 1:19; Phil. 2:9-11). Sitting down is a sign of finality; nothing further needs to be done about our sins, and nothing can go wrong to reverse what has been done.
7. *Christ who makes intercession:* He prays that we walk in the fullness of our destiny in God.

- C. In John 17, we read what is often referred to as "Jesus' high priestly prayer." There are three main sections of Jesus' prayer—for Himself (v. 1-5), for His first disciples (v. 6-16), and for His disciples throughout Church history (v. 20-26). Since Jesus never changes, the way He prayed for His disciples *then* gives us insight into the way He prays for them *now* seated at the right hand of God. I encourage you to put your name in each sentence in John 17 that applies to His disciples.

⁶*“...the men whom You have given Me...have kept Your word...¹⁰ and I am glorified in them...¹¹Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me¹⁵...that You should keep them from the evil one...¹⁷Sanctify them by Your truth...²⁰I do not pray for these alone, but for those who will believe in Me through their word...²³that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You...have loved them as You have loved Me.²⁴“Father, I desire that they...may be with Me where I am, that they may behold [experience] My glory...²⁶that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” (Jn. 17:6-26)*