

SS Lesson #9 “A Brand Plucked from the Fire”.

Some questions to consider for this weeks lesson.

What are the following symbolic of?: 1. The Accuser / Accused. 2. The Angel of the Lord. 3. The filthy rags. 4. The Fine Garments. 5. The Fire. 6. Joshua. 7. The removal of sin in one day.

## **Sunday**

The two passages below give us some insight in to God’s anger and his “fire”.

### **Zech 1:12-15**

**12 Then the angel of the LORD said, “LORD Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you have been angry with these seventy years?” 13 So the LORD spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. 14 Then the angel who was speaking to me said, “Proclaim this word: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, 15 and I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they went too far with the punishment.’**

### **Zech 2:1-5.**

**1 Then I looked up, and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2 I asked, “Where are you going?” He answered me, “To measure Jerusalem, to find out how wide and how long it is.” 3 While the angel who was speaking to me was leaving, another angel came to meet him 4 and said to him: “Run, tell that young man, ‘Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and animals in it. 5 And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will be its glory within.’**

## **Monday – The Accuser and the Accused**

### **Zechariah 3**

#### **Clean Garments for the High Priest**

**1 Then he showed me Joshua[a] the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. 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?”**

**3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. 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 fine garments on you.”**

**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.**

**6** The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: **7** “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘If you will walk in obedience to me 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.

**8** “Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. **9** See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes[c] 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.

**10** “In that day each of you will invite your neighbor to sit under your vine and fig tree,’ declares the LORD Almighty.”

*In the prophecy of Zechariah is brought to view Satan’s accusing work, and the work of Christ in resisting the adversary of His people. The prophet says, “He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.” Zechariah 3:1-3. {COL 166.3}*

*The people of God are here represented as a criminal on trial. Joshua, as high priest, is seeking for a blessing for his people, who are in great affliction. While he is pleading before God, Satan is standing at his right hand as his adversary. He is accusing the children of God, and making their case appear as desperate as possible. He presents before the Lord their evil doings and their defects. He shows their faults and failures, hoping they will appear of such a character in the eyes of Christ that He will render them no help in their great need. Joshua, as the representative of God’s people, stands under condemnation, clothed with filthy garments. Aware of the sins of his people, he is weighed down with discouragement. Satan is pressing upon his soul a sense of guiltiness that makes him feel almost hopeless. Yet there he stands as a suppliant, with Satan arrayed against him. {COL 166.4}*

***The work of Satan as an accuser began in heaven.** This has been his work on earth ever since man’s fall, and it will be his work in a special sense as we approach nearer to the close of this world’s history. As he sees that his time is short, he will work with greater earnestness to deceive and destroy. **He is angry when he sees a people on the earth who, even in their weakness and sinfulness, have respect to the law of Jehovah.** He is determined that they shall not obey God. He delights in their unworthiness, and has devices prepared for every soul, that all may be ensnared and separated from God. He seeks to accuse and condemn God and all who strive to carry out His purposes in this world in mercy and love, in compassion and forgiveness. {COL 167.1}*

## **Tuesday – The Angel of the Lord**

There are 50 references to “The Angel of the Lord” found in Scripture [NIV], and all of them in the Old Testament. Why none in the New Testament?

**Ex. 3:2-14.**

There the **angel of the LORD** appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. **3** So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

**4** When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!”

And Moses said, “Here I am.”

**5** “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” **6** Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the

God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

7 The LORD said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

12 And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

13 Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

14 God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

**Numbers 22:31**

Then the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.

**Judges 6:22**

When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, “Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!”

**1 Kings 19:6-8**

6 He [Elijah] looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

7 The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

**Isaiah 37:36**

Then the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!

Then the **Angel, who is Christ Himself, the Saviour of sinners**, puts to silence the accuser of His people, declaring, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Verse 2. **Long had Israel remained in the furnace of affliction. Because of their sins they had been well-nigh consumed in the flame kindled by Satan and his agents for their destruction, but God had now set His hand to bring them forth.** {PK 584.1}

## Wednesday – Change of Clothes

1. Filthy Rags: ?? Why this imagery. ?? Any connection to the scenes of people in repentance putting on sack cloth and ashes.

Every manifestation of God's power for His people arouses the enmity of Satan. Every time God works in their behalf, Satan with his angels works with renewed vigor to compass their ruin. He is jealous of all who make Christ their strength. His object is to instigate evil, and when he has succeeded, throw all the blame upon the tempted ones. **He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters.** He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which have dishonored their Redeemer. All this he urges as an argument proving his right to work his will in their destruction. He endeavors to affright their souls with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement can never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield fully to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God. {COL 168.1}

Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, he lifts his wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying, "I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of my hands. 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.'" [Psalm 51:17.] And to the accuser of his people he declares, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" [Zechariah 3:2.] Christ will clothe his faithful ones with his own righteousness, that he may present them to his Father "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." [Ephesians 5:27.] Their names stand enrolled in the book of life, and concerning them it is written, "They shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." [Revelation 3:4.] {GC88 484.2}

2. Change of Raiment / Clean clothing: **Zech 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 fine garments on you."** \*\*\* How does Christ "take away our sin"? \*\*\*

**This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags."** Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.** {COL 311.4}

Notwithstanding the defects of the people of God, **Christ** does not turn away from the objects of His care. **He has the power to change their raiment.** He removes the filthy garments, He places upon the repenting, believing ones His own robe of righteousness, and writes pardon against their names on the records of heaven. He confesses them as His before the heavenly universe. Satan their adversary is shown to be an accuser and deceiver. God will do justice for His own elect. {COL 169.3}

## Thursday – An Effectual Plea

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9. **God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10. And again he says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12.** {Pr 298.1}

**Zechariah’s description of Joshua, the high priest, is a striking representation of the sinner for whom Christ is mediating that he may be brought to repentance. Satan is standing at the right hand of the Advocate, resisting the work of Christ,** and pleading against him that man is his property since he has chosen him as his ruler. But the defender of man, the restorer, mightier than the mightiest, hears the demands and claims of Satan, and answers him: “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.” [Zechariah 3:2-5.] {CE 159.2}

The work of investigative judgment and blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. In the typical service the high priest came forth and blessed the congregation. So Christ, at the close of His work as mediator, will appear “without sin unto salvation.” Hebrews 9:28. {HF 299.4} The priest, in removing the sins from the sanctuary, confessed them upon the head of the scapegoat. Christ will place all these sins upon Satan, the instigator of sin. The scapegoat was sent away “unto a land not inhabited.” Leviticus 16:22. Satan, bearing the guilt of sins he has caused God’s people to commit, will for a thousand years be confined to the desolate earth and will at last suffer the penalty of fire that shall destroy the wicked. Thus the plan of redemption will reach its accomplishment in the final eradication of sin. {HF 299.5}

### Additional Reading:

**As Satan accused Joshua and his people, so in all ages he accuses those who are seeking the mercy and favor of God.** In the Revelation he is declared to be the “accuser of our brethren,” “which accused them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10. The controversy is repeated over every soul that is rescued from the power of evil and whose name is registered in the Lamb’s book of life. Never is one received from the family of **Satan** into the family of God without exciting the determined resistance of the wicked one. Satan’s accusations against those who seek the Lord are not prompted by displeasure at their sins. **He exults in their defective characters. Only through their transgression of God’s law can he obtain**

**power over them. His accusations arise solely from his enmity to Christ. Through the plan of salvation, Jesus is breaking Satan's hold upon the human family and rescuing souls from his power. All the hatred and malignity of the archrebel is stirred as he beholds the evidence of Christ's supremacy, and with fiendish power and cunning he works to wrest from Him the remnant of the children of men who have accepted His salvation.** {CCh 350.4}

We read in the prophecy of Zechariah that when Satan with all his synagogue stood up to resist the prayers of Joshua the high priest, and to resist Christ, who was about to show decided favor to Joshua, "The Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Zechariah 3:2. {CW 59.2} **The course of Christ in dealing even with the adversary of souls, should be an example to us in all our intercourse with others, never to bring a railing accusation against any; much less should we employ harshness or severity toward those who may be as anxious to know the right way as we are ourselves.** {CW 59.3}

"In a vision in 1880 I asked, 'Where is the security for the people of God in these days of peril?' The answer was, '**Jesus maketh intercession for His people, though Satan standeth at His right hand to resist Him.**' 'And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' As man's Intercessor and Advocate, Jesus will lead all who are willing to be led, saying, 'Follow Me upward, step by step, where the clear light of the Sun of Righteousness shines.' {LS 324.1} "But not all are following the light. Some are moving away from the safe path, which at every step is a path of humility. God has committed to His servants a message for this time; but this message does not in every particular coincide with the ideas of all the leading men, and some criticize the message and the messengers. They dare even to reject the words of reproof sent to them from God through His Holy Spirit. {LS 324.2}

**Satan seeks to bring us into temptation, that the evil of our characters may be revealed before men and angels, that he may claim us as his own. In the symbolic prophecy of Zechariah, Satan is seen standing at the right hand of the Angel of the Lord,** accusing Joshua, the high priest, who is clothed in filthy garments, and resisting the work that the Angel desires to do for him. This represents the attitude of Satan toward every soul whom Christ is seeking to draw unto Himself. The enemy leads us into sin, and then he accuses us before the heavenly universe as unworthy of the love of God. But "the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" And unto Joshua He said, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zechariah 3:1-4. {Pr 300.2}

God in His great love is seeking to develop in us the precious graces of His Spirit. He permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives. **Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience and advances us in the work of character building. The soul that through divine power resists temptation reveals to the world and to the heavenly universe the efficiency of the grace of Christ.** {Pr 300.3}

**In his own strength, man cannot meet the charges of the enemy. In sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God.** But Jesus, our Advocate, presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause, and by the mighty arguments of Calvary, vanquishes their accuser. His perfect obedience to God's law has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims from His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. To the accuser of His people He declares: 587 "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning." And to those who rely on Him in faith, He gives the assurance, "**Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.**" Zechariah 3:4. {PK 586.2}

Does the above illustration demonstrate a stronger case for a "penal substitution" model of salvation or a "healing substitution" model??