

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“Cleansed for a Calling”

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Zech. 3:6-10; Deut. 30:19-20; Ex. 28:29; Is. 10:33-11:9; Is. 28:16; Jer. 23:5-6; Dan. 2:34-35, 45; Mic. 4:1-5; 1 Ki. 5:5; Rev. 5:5-6

Most of us understand the relief of being given a second chance. Something has gone terribly wrong, the evidence is impossible to hide, and we know we cannot repair the damage by ourselves. Then mercy steps in. The debt is forgiven, the stain is removed, and we are allowed to begin again. But a second chance is not merely permission to return to the same patterns. Mercy gives us a new beginning so that we can walk in a new direction.

That is the heart of Zechariah's vision. Joshua the *Cohen Gadol* (High Priest) had stood before ADONAI clothed in garments covered with filth, while the Accuser stood ready to condemn him. Yet the Accuser did not get the final word. ADONAI removed Joshua's filthy garments, clothed him in clean festival robes, and placed a pure turban upon his head. Then, having cleansed and restored him, ADONAI called Joshua to walk in His ways, revealed the coming Branch and the stone, and promised a day when guilt would be removed and people would dwell together in true shalom.

1. CLEANSING RESTORES US TO OUR CALLING

“Thus says ADONAI-Tzva’ot, ‘If you will walk in My ways and keep My charge, then you will judge My House and watch over My courts, and I will give you a place to walk among these standing here’” (Zech. 3:7). Joshua had been clothed in white. He had been restored, but his restoration also came with a responsibility. His purpose had not disappeared. It had been neglected and abandoned, but it was still intact. ADONAI had cleansed him so that he could once again become what he had always been called to be.

The word translated “keep” (*Shomer*) carries the idea of watching over, preserving, and guarding like a watchman on the wall. ADONAI was telling Joshua, “Watch over what I am watching over. Guard what I guard. Care about what I care about.” Joshua was called not only to represent the people before God, but also to represent God before the people. In the same way, we are not cleansed simply so that we can feel better about ourselves. We are cleansed so that we can walk in His ways, care about His purposes, watch over His House, and live in the privilege of His presence. As a Kingdom of Priests, we are to represent the character of the LORD to a lost world.

2. THE BRANCH AND THE STONE REVEAL GOD'S PLAN

“Listen well, Joshua kohen gadol, both you and your companions seated before you, because they are men who are a sign—behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch” (Zech. 3:8). Joshua and the priests around him were signs of something greater that ADONAI was preparing to do. The Branch, or more literally the Sprout, speaks of new growth where everything had appeared dead. When the Davidic line looked as though it had been cut

down and God's promises appeared to have failed, ADONAI declared that He had not forgotten. Zechariah's own name means "ADONAI remembers," and through this vision God was reminding His people that His promises were still alive.

Then ADONAI placed a stone before Joshua: *"For behold! The stone I have laid before Joshua is one stone with seven facets. On it I will engrave an inscription," declares ADONAI-Tzva'ot, "that I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day"* (Zech. 3:9). The stone with seven eyes or facets speaks of completeness, fullness, and perfect understanding. Engraved upon it was a promise that could not be erased: ADONAI would remove the guilt of the land in one day. The Branch and the stone point beyond Joshua to Messiah Yeshua, through whom the cleansing pictured on the Day of Atonement would be made available once and for all.

3. THOSE WHO RECEIVE SHALOM MUST INVITE OTHERS INTO IT

"In that day," declares ADONAI-Tzva'ot, "every man will invite his neighbor to sit under the vine and under the fig tree" (Zech. 3:10). Sitting beneath the vine and fig tree was a familiar picture of security, fruitfulness, prosperity, and peace. Scripture uses this picture to describe the days of Solomon, when *"Judah and Israel lived securely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree"* (1 Ki. 5:5). Zechariah looks forward to an even greater day when sin is removed, what is broken is made whole, and no one causes terror.

But notice that the picture does not end with one person enjoying the shade alone. Every person invites a neighbor to come and sit with him. Those who have experienced the cleansing and shalom of God are called to invite others into the fruitfulness of walking with Him. We demonstrate His character and then make room beneath the vine and fig tree. We say to our neighbors, our families, and those who are still burdened by guilt, fear, and accusation, "Come and see what ADONAI has done. There is forgiveness here. There is restoration here. There is true shalom here."

CONCLUSION

What an incredible picture of ADONAI removing the stench of sin, clothing His people in righteousness, and then restoring them to purpose! He does not cleanse us so that we can return to the mud. He brings us out, makes us new, and calls us to walk in His ways. He reminds us that the Branch has come, the promise has been engraved upon the stone, and His plan to restore all things has not been forgotten. We may not understand His timeline, but His purposes will be accomplished, and His promises will be fulfilled.

Perhaps you still hear the voice of the Accuser rehearsing every failure, every stain, and every reason you should be disqualified. Today, bring that accusation before the true Judge. You do not have to clean yourself before coming to Him. Stand honestly before ADONAI and allow Him to remove what you cannot remove. Receive the mercy made available through Messiah Yeshua, and then respond to His call: walk in His ways, care about what He cares about, and invite others into His shalom. The Accuser may speak, but he does not have the authority to condemn. ADONAI has the final word.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does ADONAI's charge to Joshua come after Joshua has been cleansed and clothed in new garments?
2. What does it mean to "watch over what ADONAI is watching over" in your family, congregation, or community?
3. Are there accusations from your past that you have allowed to speak more loudly than the mercy and judgment of ADONAI?
4. Is there an area of your life where you have received forgiveness but have not yet returned to the calling or responsibility God placed before you?
5. Who is one person you can intentionally invite into the peace, fruitfulness, and shalom you have experienced through Messiah?

CLOSING PRAYER

ADONAI, thank You that the Accuser does not have the authority to give the final verdict over our lives. Thank You for seeing us in our true condition and still choosing to extend mercy. Remove the filthy garments we cannot remove for ourselves, cleanse us from our guilt, and clothe us in the righteousness You provide through Messiah Yeshua.

Teach us to walk in Your ways and to care about what You care about. Help us to guard what You have entrusted to us, faithfully represent You to others, and live with an awareness of Your presence. May the shalom You have given us never remain private. Give us courage and compassion to invite our neighbors beneath the vine and fig tree, so that they too may discover forgiveness, restoration, and life in You.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.