

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“The Accuser Does Not Get the Final Word”

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Zech. 3:1-5; Ps. 109:6; Amos 4:11; Ex. 28:36-38; Rev. 12:9-10; Phil. 3:7-9; Eph. 2:1-5

Most of us know what it feels like to enter a room already worried about what others might see. Maybe there is a stain on our clothing, a failure in our past, or an area of our life we have tried desperately to hide. We become painfully aware of everything that might disqualify us. Zechariah 3 brings us into a scene where nothing is hidden. Joshua the high priest stands before the Angel of ADONAI, the accuser stands at his right hand, and Joshua's true condition is exposed for everyone to see.

The vision resembles an ancient courtroom. Joshua stands before the Lord as Israel's high priest and representative, while the satan—the accuser—stands at his right hand like a prosecuting attorney. The accusation is serious because Joshua is not merely being falsely criticized. He is standing before ADONAI in garments that reveal genuine uncleanness. Yet the heart of this passage is not simply that Joshua is guilty. The heart of the passage is that ADONAI Himself steps forward to defend, cleanse, and restore the one whom the accuser wants to destroy.

1. THE ACCUSER SPEAKS, BUT ADONAI DEFENDS

In Hebrew, the word for “accuser” is **שָׂטָן**, *satan*. Zechariah writes, “*Then he showed me Joshua the kohen gadol standing before the angel of ADONAI and the satan/accuser standing at his right hand to accuse him*” (Zech. 3:1). In the ancient legal setting, the right side was the position from which an accuser brought his charges. Ps. 109:6 uses the same picture: “*Set a wicked man over him, let an accuser (שָׂטָן, Satan) stand at his right hand.*” The satan is doing what his name reveals. He is the accuser, the hostile one, the one who brings accusation against Joshua, Israel, and ultimately all who belong to God.

But before the accuser is permitted to control the scene, ADONAI speaks: “*ADONAI rebukes you, haSatan/Accuser. Indeed ADONAI, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you. Is not this man a brand plucked out of the fire?*” (Zech. 3:2). The rebuke is firm and forceful. Israel had passed through the fire of judgment and exile, but ADONAI had not abandoned His people. They were scorched, but not consumed; disciplined, but not discarded. The accuser wanted Joshua disqualified and destroyed, but ADONAI declared that His purposes were not finished. The accuser saw only what Joshua had been through. ADONAI saw the one He had rescued from the flames.

2. THE FILTHY GARMENTS ARE REMOVED

Joshua's condition is not minimized. “*Now Joshua was wearing filthy garments and standing before the angel*” (Zech. 3:3). The Hebrew language is far stronger than merely

saying his clothes were dusty or stained. These garments were covered in human excrement. The garments were revolting, defiling, and completely inappropriate for a high priest standing before ADONAI. Joshua was visibly unfit for the service he had been called to perform. As Israel's representative, his garments also pictured the iniquity, guilt, and spiritual uncleanness of the people.

The Angel of ADONAI does not pretend the filth is absent, but neither does He leave Joshua in it. He commands, *"Remove the filthy garments from him."* Then He says directly to Joshua, *"See, I have removed your iniquity from you and will dress you with fine clothing"* (Zech. 3:4). **The accuser points to the filth in order to destroy; ADONAI exposes the filth in order to remove it.** This is the difference between accusation and conviction. Satan, the accuser condemns, saying, "Look at what you are. There is no hope for you." The Holy Spirit convicts, revealing our sin **so that** we will turn from it, return to ADONAI, and receive His cleansing. God does not call the filthy garments clean. He commands that they be taken away.

3. THE CLEAN TURBAN MARKS A RESTORED CALLING

When Zechariah sees Joshua clothed in fine garments, he becomes fully engaged in the vision. He joins in, saying, *"Place a clean turban on his head."* Zechariah understood what belonged on the head of the high priest. According to Ex. 28:36–38, the priestly turban carried a gold plate engraved with the words, *"Holy to ADONAI."* This was not simply the final piece of an impressive outfit. The turban represented consecration, priestly service, and a life set apart for the purposes of God.

The vision therefore moves beyond forgiveness into restoration. *"So they put a pure turban on his head and clothed him with garments while the angel of ADONAI stood by"* (Zech. 3:5). ADONAI did not merely remove what disqualified Joshua; He restored Joshua to the calling for which he had been chosen. God was not finished with Joshua, and He was not finished with Israel. The people had been through the fire, but they were still His people. They had been stained by sin, but He was able to cleanse them. They had failed in their calling, but ADONAI was restoring them to stand before Him again as a kingdom of priests.

CONCLUSION: CLEANSED AND CALLED AGAIN

Joshua could not defend himself, clean his own garments, or restore himself to priestly service. Everything depended upon the mercy and action of ADONAI. This vision points us toward the cleansing work of Yeshua. Like Joshua, we cannot make ourselves acceptable by our achievements, heritage, religious knowledge, or good works. Even the things in which we might place confidence cannot compare with knowing Messiah. Yet because of His great love, God meets us in the stench of our sin, removes our iniquity, clothes us in what we could never provide for ourselves, and restores us to holy purpose.

Perhaps you have been listening to the accuser so long that you have begun to believe his voice is the voice of God. The accuser tells you that your failure is your identity and that

your past has ended your usefulness. But the LORD graciously calls you to repent, and His desire is that you NOT remain buried beneath shame. Today, bring the filthy garments into His presence. Stop defending them, hiding them, or trying to clean them yourself. Turn to Yeshua and allow Him to remove what has covered you. The same God who rebuked the accuser, rescued the brand from the fire, and restored the high priest is still able to cleanse, restore, and set apart those who return to Him.

Discussion Questions

1. What does the courtroom setting of Zech. 3:1–2 reveal about the role and character of the accuser?
2. Why is it significant that Joshua represents Israel rather than standing only as a private individual?
3. Where have you been tempted to believe that a past failure has permanently disqualified you from serving God?
4. How can you recognize the difference between the destructive accusation of the enemy and the restoring conviction of the Ruach ha-Kodesh?
5. Is there a “filthy garment”—a sin, attitude, habit, or source of shame—that you need to stop hiding and surrender to ADONAI today?

CLOSING PRAYER

ADONAI, thank You that the accuser does not have the final word over Your people. You see every stain, every failure, and every place where we have fallen short, yet Your heart is to bring us to repentance, cleanse us, and make us new. Through Yeshua, remove the filthy garments we cannot remove for ourselves. Silence the voice of condemnation, teach us to respond to the conviction of Your Spirit, and clothe us again for holy service. Remind us that Your purposes are not finished and that those You have rescued from the fire can still be cleansed, restored, and set apart as holy to You.

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