

Zechariah 2:13-3:10  
A Holy God Silences the Accuser and Sets the Guilty Free to Serve

Read text

Let's Pray

Warm Up: My name is Ken Yew and I serve as one of the elders at LEFC.

Opening Illustration:

On June 23, 2018 twelve boys from the Wild Boars soccer team and their coach entered Tham Luang cave in Thailand's northmost province. Within hours, water from early monsoon rains caused flooding within the cave trapping all 13 inside it. Despite efforts of the Thai government, police, Thai Navy SEALs and volunteers from around the world, ongoing rain, cramped cave passages, and rapid currents within the flooded cave hampered rescue efforts. Finally, eight days after they were trapped, two elite cave rescue divers found all 13 – Alive, 4 km into the cave. Alive yes, but how could they survive a 3+ hour 4 km dive so dangerous that it had already claimed the life of a Thai SEAL? Some of the boys were non-swimmers and all were non-divers. This is dramatized in an excellent movie called "Thirteen Lives". So as not to be a complete spoiler, they are rescued by being rendered completely inert, and carried to the mouth of the cave saved alive from certain death.

The story of trapped boys rescued from certain death by passive deliverance to a new life underscores many of the truths we'll see in our text today. God's Word from Zechariah declares that

**MP: A holy God silences the accuser and pardons guilty sinners to live lives of obedience, stewardship and communion.**

INTRO:

- I. Before we get into our text - a few introductory comments.
  - a. Last week Eric taught
    - i. The resettlers to Judah had become occupied things not evil in themselves – a nice home, a good job, clothing and food and drink;
      - 1. all created things that cannot provide solace.
      - 2. Substituted life of self-preservation for a life of obedience
      - 3. talked themselves into a lifestyle of "just not right now".
    - ii. God
      - 1. kindly caused all their efforts come to little
      - 2. even more lovingly sent the prophet Haggai what was happening to them and why.
      - 3. Haggai made clear only solace could satisfy them can satisfy us: God's stirring, sanctifying and strengthening presence in the midst of His people.
  - b. About two months after Haggai's initial prophesy, Zechariah began prophetic ministry calling the exiles to repentance as recorded Zechariah 1:1-6. Then 5

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months to the day after the returned exiles resumed temple restoration, Zechariah received eight visions in a single night.

- c. These are vivid images dripping with allusions to Scripture
    - i. with relatively few words, a scene comes alive in our minds as illuminated by the Holy Spirit.
    - ii. These visions style known Apocalyptic prophesy. God often spoke to His people in this way to give them strong encouragement when they were particularly downtrodden.
    - iii. Examples
      - 1. Prophecies from Ezekiel and Daniel to discouraged exiles in Babylon as Jerusalem fell and the temple was destroyed.
      - 2. Apostle John's Apocalyptic Revelation to believers in Asia Minor persecuted to near extinction.
      - 3. And to the beleaguered exiles - no longer under their own king, harassed by surrounding nations, God sends
  - d. Zechariah
    - i. Jewish man of the priestly line
    - ii. means "Yahweh remembers."
    - iii. call to ministry in his early 30's Fall of 520 BC
    - iv. Ezra records Haggai and Zechariah supported and prospered temple restoration through their prophetic work.
  - e. Since focus only on one of Zechariah's visions, outline of the entire book context. [slide for outline]
  - f. Fourth vision text for today drawn.
    - i. Common to the apocalyptic genre, night visions God provided to Zechariah have rich and deeply encouraging message but can be hard to understand especially for modern readers.
    - ii. Perhaps why one commentator has said: "Zechariah is the longest and most obscure of any of the Minor Prophets, and the most difficult of any Old Testament book to interpret. One should approach it with prayer and humility, acknowledging one's own limitations."
    - iii. At the same time, many have observed Zechariah to be amongst the most Christ-focused book in the OT. With that in mind, let's turn back to the text.
- II. BODY: We'll consider our text in three sections. First, Zech 2:13-3:3 Here we see: **A Holy God Silences the Accuser of the Guilty**
- a. 2:13 commands all flesh to be silent before the LORD, for He has roused Himself. Something like creatures in CS Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, say of his character, the great lion representing Christ – "Aslan is on the move."
    - i. But there is more here. In fact, noticing who's acting and who's not acting in these verses, sheds much light this vision, and God's salvation.
    - ii. A vision that has much to teach us about
      - 1. God's rescue from the Accuser's and our condemning thoughts,
      - 2. God's forgiveness

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3. how God makes sinners righteous.
  - iii. Notice the first phrase – “Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD”.
  - iv. What is God’s first call to us – nothing, be silent.
  - v. I’m reminded of teaching about what to do if confronted with a breech delivery, baby is coming out bottom or feet first. riskier delivery, but pulling or trying to help the delivery too early only increases the risk for complications. So the teaching is “Don’t just do something, stand there.”
- b. And stand there is exactly what we see Joshua the High Priest doing as a scene from the divine courtroom set either in heaven or in the unfinished temple unfolds in Chp 3:1-3.
  - i. Joshua is known from Ezra (see Ezra 3; 5:1–2) and Haggai (see Hag. 1:1–11).
  - ii. lineage through his father Jehozadak to great priest Zadok and ultimately to Aaron, Moses’ brother Israel’s first high priest.
  - iii. Scriptural references to Joshua are positive and Ezekiel in (Ez 48:11) commends “the sons of Zadok, who kept my charge, who did not go astray when the people of Israel went astray, as the Levites did.”<sup>1</sup>
- c. Who does Joshua stand before in this courtroom? “the angel of the LORD” (V1)
  - i. Sometimes a manifestation of God Himself (Gen 16:11, 13; Manoah Judg 13:16-18; Gideon Judg 6:11-35)
  - ii. other times merely an angel who speaks to or is spoken to by God (see even Zech 1:12).
  - iii. this case I believe most commentators agree the pre-incarnate Christ.
- d. But there is someone else in the court - standing at Joshua’s right hand - the Accuser in Heb, translated by most English Bibles as Satan, standing “to accuse him”.
- e. Now this sets up what could be a dramatic life or death showdown between good and evil,
  - i. bringing to mind courtroom scenes movies like “A Few Good Men” with Tom Cruise grilling Jack Nicholson or “To Kill a Mockingbird”.
  - ii. as gripping as those scenes can be, that is just not what happens here.
  - iii. What actually happens complete surprise!
  - iv. We read (v2) “And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!”<sup>2</sup>
  - v. Before Accuser recorded saying single word
  - vi. rebuked by the angel of the LORD, the pre-incarnate Christ, invoking the Name of the Yahweh.
  - vii. Just like that Accuser silenced.
  - viii. All his accusations ruled out of order.
  - ix. On what basis He stop Satan from accusing Joshua? One who stood as a representative of all the faithful in Judah and all faithful believers since?

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Eze 48:11.

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Zec 3:2.

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1. (v2) “The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!”<sup>3</sup>
2. On the basis of Yahweh’s sovereign choice.
3. not Jerusalem’s, Joshua’s or our actions or merit, that Yahweh rebukes Satan.
4. He also asks assembly, “Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?”<sup>4</sup> indicating Joshua, representing all Israel is like a stick placed in the fire.
  - a. Normally sticks in fires burn up reduced dusty ash.
  - b. angel indicates Yahweh has removed this burning stick of a people from the fiery judgement of exile.
  - c. As He has chosen them out of Babylon no one can now separate them from His covenantal love.
- x. This is so essential to remember when Satan or our conscience accuses us.
  1. Satan’s accusations for anyone united to God by faith in Christ are inadmissible – meaning they aren’t even allowed to be considered as evidence.
  2. Notice what Joshua did to get such a great defense attorney.
    - a. Nothing, but stand before the pre-incarnate Christ without one plea.
    - b. And as we’ll see shortly he had no plea.
    - c. Like him as representative of all mankind neither do we, as Romans 3:23 says “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”.
  3. What is our plea, accuser our condemning thoughts attack us? old hymn we still sing sums it up beautifully. [slide: “Before the Throne of God Above”]
- f. As if atmosphere divine courtroom could get any worse for Joshua, v3 drops a bombshell: “<sup>3</sup>Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments.”<sup>5</sup>
  - i. The word translated as filthy in Heb – means being fouled with excrement or vomit, a picture of sin.
  - ii. Joshua’s robes aren’t just work-worn needing a little touch up, excrement-laden garments.
  - iii. Like us, he guilty most extreme and unacceptable ways.
    1. And yet not for some dramatic moral failing.
    2. Israel has sinned in awful ways, was exiled and as we heard from Haggai last week and even in the opening of Zechariah, is still sinful,
    3. but Joshua described as faithful.

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<sup>3</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Zec 3:2.

<sup>4</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Zec 3:2.

<sup>5</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Zec 3:3.

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4. This soiling the sinfulness of sin that Joshua and all since Adam and Eve have been guilty.
- iv. And that is where things stand:
  1. truly holy righteous judge before whom Joshua him as our representative we stand.
  2. fierce and malignant fiend standing at our right hand ready to accuse us.
  3. Joshua representing each of us clothed in filthy garments, guilty as charged.
- v. But as we've already discussed, Yahweh, all-powerful Creator, dwells in unapproachable light cannot even look upon evil (Hab 1:13) rebukes Satan rather than Joshua(!)
- vi. The manifestation of Yahweh presiding royal courtroom says "Objection!" a point of order accuser no longer heard from.
- vii. Yahweh chose Jerusalem. The basis of their acceptance is His Sovereign election. true for us as well. Jesus called chose us too, even before foundation of the world [Slide - Eph 1:3-4].
- g. How often do we need the Gospel? Is it just at conversion? Is it mainly for the salvation of unbelievers?
  - i. No, testimony of Scripture we live move have our being in God
  - ii. Gospel power of God (Rom 1:16)
  - iii. What does that mean then for our life practically?
    1. Always keep in view God's holiness, majesty, glory as revealed in His Word – our knowledge of Him will continue to increase through whole life as Christian.
    2. As you behold His goodness, the perfection of His love and righteousness you will also be more and more aware of
      - a. sinfulness of your sin,
      - b. depth of depravity dwells in your flesh,
      - c. how undeserving you are of His grace.
    3. And all too often, if you are anything like me, this is where we can stop.
      - a. Then be tempted to hide our sin from others
      - b. blame others for our sin,
      - c. isolate from others –
      - d. believing lies of the accuser,
        - i. that we are too sinful,
        - ii. too far gone –
        - iii. we're damaged goods,
        - iv. no one would love us if they really knew who we were, what we've done, how we think, especially a Holy God.
      - e. This is how I can think, very natural for me.

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4. passage today (v 1-3), we see this very thing happening. God's sovereign choice makes all Satan's accusing words and our condemning thoughts out of order. He stills the Accuser's voice.

III. So far God alone is moving, acting, speaking. Let's see what happens next. Read v4-

#### 5. In this section **A Holy God Cleanses and Makes Righteous the Guilty**

- a. (v4) – We might imagine Joshua to be seeking. Perform priestly duties before the Lord, but due to his sinful nature and choices, he stands defiled and unclean.
- b. Like Joshua we too guilty without hope to cleanse ourselves.
- c. The angel of the LORD has the incredible authority to command those before Him to remove Joshua's excrement-laden garments.
- d. In v4 He says, ""Remove the filthy garments from him." The Hebrew gives the sense of removal of guilt with the relief of forgiveness.
- e. And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.""<sup>6</sup>
- f. Righteousness is not infused slowly into Joshua over time.
- g. placed immediately on him as garment.
- h. This pictures how God saves us.
  - i. stains of our sin completely removed
  - ii. then righteousness provided as gift at salvation.
  - iii. In theological terms, righteousness imputed to us.
  - iv. It's entirely an action of God. We're completely passive as pertains to righteousness.
  - v. What does this mean for us?
    1. Let me ask: Did Joshua do anything to have his iniquity taken away or to be given pure robes?
    2. No for Joshua no for us.
    3. I'm not I sure I buy UFO's, but I do believe in alien righteousness.
  - vi. The point Christ source identity of our righteousness.
  - vii. If any doubts about identity of angel, evaporated by now
    1. This is just such a clear indication that the saving work of Christ was only the hope for OT saints just as it is for NT saints.
    2. heard question in a sermon recently – How many sins were removed by OT sacrifices? This passage implies and Heb 10:4 explicitly answers: None. [slide: Also Heb 9:11-12]
    3. equally ask how much righteousness do we receive in Christ and how many of our sins did He take away? [slide 2 Cor 5:21; Col 2:13-14]
- i. (v5) Zechariah breaks the silence of all flesh, asking that a clean turban be placed on Joshua.
  - i. Commentators differ what Zechariah seeking.
    1. ?something like the headpiece ordained by God in the institution of the priesthood in Exodus (Ex 28:36-38)

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<sup>6</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Zec 3:4.

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- 2. ?possibly signifies kind of crown.
    - ii. important thing: notice the prophet Zechariah, the priest Joshua an aspect of kingship represented by the turban all present pointing forward to the Messiah.
  - j. Like Thai boys, who just living their lives found themselves trapped a flooded cave, we find ourselves trapped by our sin without hope apart from rescue.
    - i. Their rescue received by completely trusting their rescuers.
    - ii. Our rescue received only by completely trusting our rescuer.
    - iii. In the case of salvation trust or faith gift from God.
    - iv. God far above elite but fallible diver.
    - v. He created diver, cave, us everything else.
    - vi. He became one like us, but without sin.
    - vii. For our salvation He willingly went into the cave,
    - viii. only He didn't get rescued.
    - ix. rescuer died for the sins ones needing rescue.
    - x. but the cave could not contain Him
    - xi. 3rd day He burst from it alive.
  - k. If you have not placed complete trust in Him to save you from eternal death, would you please ask Him today to rescue you? He longs to answer your prayer.
- IV. V6-10. The last section of our text shows **A Holy God Sets Free the Guilty to Live Lives of Obedience, Stewardship and Communion**
  - a. (v6-7) Now angel of the LORD gives Joshua solemn charge to obey.
    - i. First notice the order.
      - 1. Like Abraham who believed was then counted righteous
      - 2. Israel saved from bondage in Egypt then received the law (Ex 20:2),
      - 3. Joshua as representative for his people saved from his sin and then called to walk in Yahweh's ways and to keep His charge.
      - 4. very important fix that order in our minds –
        - a. we are saved by the gift of faith to obedience,
        - b. NEVER saved due to our obedience.
        - c. Isaiah describes our righteous acts if done for the purpose of saving ourselves similarly to Joshua's filthy robes as a polluted garment [Slide: Is 64:6]
    - ii. Second, in 2:13 silence commanded all flesh, before the LORD as He moved on the earth.
      - 1. Do you get ecstatic wonder, same Yahweh through the pre-incarnate Christ now calling Joshua in him us to move and do something in His Kingdom –
        - a. to walk in His ways to keep His charge.
        - b. like being youngest boy Wild Boars soccer team we talked about at the beginning, who the coach turns to during big game to say, "You're going in."

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- c. Like him, we're invited, even charged to go onto real field God's activity.
- iii. Third, word translated "solemnly assured"
  - 1. Hebrew word rich with meaning
    - a. to charge,
    - b. to call on as a witness
    - c. to sustain or help.
  - 2. LORD calling us
    - a. be a witness of what just happened in our lives
    - b. when we were rescued from certain death
    - c. promises to sustain us as we do that.
  - 3. This deep and intimate communion with God
    - a. picked up end v7 God entrusts faithful
      - i. to steward all His affairs
      - ii. have one commentator termed "unusually direct communication with the divine council"
  - 4. What LORD offers through gift of obedience
    - a. privilege to enjoy intimate fellowship with Him as a trusted steward over His House – very encouraging to this barely hanging on community and to us.
- b. (v8-10) Shows LORD adding to immediate promise blessing, eye-popping prophesy that makes possible all that has preceded in this vision.
  - i. "Look" or "behold" x3
  - ii. "declares the LORD of hosts" x2. God confirms this is BIG!
  - iii. Joshua and his friends themselves a sign – the fact that they have survived exile returned to Jerusalem as God promised is a sign that He will also bring "His servant the Branch", as also prophesied by Jeremiah [slide: Jer 29:10 and 23:5-6].
- c. meaning initial part V9 – a stone set before Joshua, with seven eyes, engraved with an inscription, hard to understand.
  - i. could refer building stone, a gemstone or a reference to God's oversight or empowering Spirit.
  - ii. main idea God the One Who will ensure they will complete temple restoration He will bring His Righteous Branch greater Temple the remission of sins in future which is how V9 concludes "I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day."
  - iii. word used remove here different one used Leviticus for removal sin animal sacrifices. This word signifies a day when guilt removed entirely, permanently, what author Hebrews says . [slide: Heb 10:11-14]

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<sup>7</sup> Iain M. Duguid, [\*A Study Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi\*](#), EP Study Commentary (Darlington, England; Carlisle, PA: Evangelical Press, 2010), 100.



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- d. Finally, V10 - <sup>10</sup> 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.” <sup>8</sup> -
  - i. like at the height of King Solomon’s empire
  - ii. coming Kingdom of God (Heb 9:28) [Slide: 1 Ki 4:25; Mic 4:1, 3-4]
  - iii. One commentator mentions Gospel bonus to peace with God and prosperity – not only experienced but shared! Wow, beautiful isn’t it?!
- e. As you consider God’s call to you as a believer –
  - i. Is it I ought to, I should or I get to?
    - 1. If it’s I ought to or should, daily return to the Gospel, that all flesh stands condemned before a Holy God without hope but for a rescue that we can only receive by faith in Christ Who alone stills the voice of the accuser, cleanses us and places on us His pure blood-washed robes.
  - ii. Is it I want to but can’t? I’m not good enough, He’s too far above me?
    - 1. Then again return to the Gospel, to know Who silences the Accuser and our own condemning thoughts – not us, Our Savior rules them out of order because He chose us, saves us and makes us righteous
  - iii. Have you forgotten that you were chosen to bear fruit?
    - 1. Remember His solemn assurance that includes a call to be a witness of your amazing rescue from certain eternal death, to give you sustenance all during the way and “unusual direct communication with the divine council.” [Slide: Jn 15:11,16].

Conclusion:

Four years after being rescued, one of the boys was asked what it’s been like. He said at first, he didn’t know how to act with all the media attention, but now he said he’d gotten used to it and now “I know how I’m supposed to behave.” Their coach now runs a soccer academy. When asked about the how the boys are since their rescue, he said that some want to be professional soccer players, to play at a higher level. Some want to study to complete their education. “Now”, he said, “they are all doing their duties.” They all recognize they’ve been rescued from certain death and understand the mere fact that they were rescued at such a cost means that they have a calling on their life.

As a believer wouldn’t you agree that you’ve been rescued from certain death?  
How great a price was paid to provide your rescue?

Today I can testify on the basis of God’s Word that the enemy’s taunts have been silenced. “There is therefore now, no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1). In fact every condemning thought and accusation by the enemy has been taken by Christ on Himself washed by His Blood and is now not only inadmissible, but every single condemning thought is an occasion for even greater praise to the glorious sufficiency of His work on the Cross.

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<sup>8</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Zec 3:10.

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On what basis does my acceptance rest? – On me or my filthy performance? Heaven forbid, no but on Christ's perfect performance. And whose charge are we to listen to and follow – not my condemning conscience, my unstable, fallen feelings or the world's siren call, but the voice of the Master, His charge – to obey His call to be a steward of all His house and to enjoy sweet communion with Him and His people always extending hospitality to our neighbor.