

“And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right Jerusalem rebuke hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, “The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen 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 spoke 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 clean turban upon his head. So they set a clean turban upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, this is what the LORD of hosts says; If you will walk in my ways, and if you will keep my charge, then you shall also judge my house, and shall also keep my courts, and I will give you places to walk among these that stand by. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you, and your fellows that sit before you: for they *are* men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forward my servant the BRANCH. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, says the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, says the LORD of hosts, you shall call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.” ZECHARIAH 3: 1-10

We have seen in our previous classes that the prophecy of Zechariah was written at the time when the captivity of the Jews in Babylon was brought to an end by the decree of Cyrus in 536 BC to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah, that said of Cyrus, “He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, You shalt be built; and to the temple, your foundation shall be laid”. (Isa 44:28)

That decree released the Jews from their captivity and under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua the son of Jozadak the Jewish exiles returned to their homeland. The first thing to receive the attention of the exiles were the ruins of the Temple built by Solomon but destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. In the courtyard of temple now full of debris the leaders of the Jews decided first to rebuild the altar of burnt offering. This work was undertaken by Joshua and his brothers Zerubbabel and his brothers, who once this was done set too cleaning away the debris and laying the foundation of a new Temple. These endeavors were encouraged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah and the activities and enthusiasm of the Jews to restore the Temple were encouraged by visions given

by Yahweh, which went far beyond the then present distress to the time when the Messiah would restore all things, providing for generations yet to come, even to our own time, the certainty of the establishment of the kingdom of God.

However Zechariah receives a fourth vision focusing on Joshua the High Priest who is standing before the angel (malak) of Yahweh while an adversary described as Satan in the English translation, stands at Joshua's right hand. The majority of churches today, from Catholics to Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses, believe that Satan is a supernatural being who is responsible for the temptation of mankind and all the evils that are committed in the world. THE BIBLE TEACHES NO SUCH THING. The Hebrew word שָׂטָן (satan in English) actually means an adversary. So who was the adversary to this Joshua Zechariah is writing about? Ezra (4:1-40) tells us, "Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity were building the temple for the LORD God of Israel; Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye *do*; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither. But Zerubbabel, and Joshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, "You have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us. **Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.**"

The letter of Jude also refers to this incident in verse 9 "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil (opponent) he disputed about the body of Moses," (that is all the congregation of Israel which were baptized into Moses in the sea and in the cloud (See 1Cor. 10:1&2) "dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." (Jud 1:9) (Ezr 4:1-5), There we have Joshua (the Joshua of Zechariah) the high priest and Zerubbabel in conflict with the Samaritan adversaries of Judah and Benjamin. These Assyrian colonists of the depopulated country of the ten tribes, wanted to join themselves to the body politic of Moses, and so to unite with them in the rebuilding of the temple. This proposal for fellowship was declined by Zerubbabel and Joshua, who said to them, "ye have nothing to do with us to build a house for our God." These adversaries were the same as the Sanballat and his colleagues of Nehemiah (2:4:5:6.) Sanballat was what Jude calls a "dignity" of the Persian power (Neh. 4:1, 2), so being an adversary in authority, it was not

proper to speak evil of him. The “angel of the Yahweh was presiding over a tribunal, and before him stood, side by side, Joshua and the adversary. Jude informs us that it was Michael who was presiding (verse 9) and who spoke for God: “Yahweh rebuke you, O Satan; even the Yahweh that has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” (Zechariah 3:2). Even though an angel, Michael did not take to himself the authority to rebuke the opposing adversary which is the whole point of the quotation in Jude. It was God who would ultimately pass judgement on those who had crept in to the early ecclesias and tried to bring in Judaising ideas among the early Christians.

In the vision it is noted that Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, which was not surprising seeing he and his brethren had been hard at work in laying a foundation for the rebuilding of the temple. However the priests had been unable to perform their duties during the exile, particularly in relation to the sacrifices and offerings made during the Temple services. One particular aspect in relation to the sin offering was the flesh of the lamb or goats offered on the behalf of the ordinary members of the congregation. The flesh of these offerings was eaten by the priests as food “most holy.” In this way the sins of the people could (figuratively) be collected in the bodies of the priests and then cleansed away on the Day of Atonement. So the apostle Peter states concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (1Pe 2:24)

While Zechariah was experiencing this vision, he noticed that the garments of Joshua, the High Priest, were to be changed; the angel spoke to those in front of him saying, “Take away the filthy garments from him” and to Joshua he said “Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with change of raiment.” (Zech. 3:3-4) This action represented the putting away of iniquity which the priest is regarded as bearing. However by the light of New Testament shows that the *change of nature*, or body, in relation to the Christ, “who,” says Paul, “From now on we know no more after the flesh.” He was crucified in “flesh of sin;” and in him sin was “condemned in the flesh.” But when he was raised from the dead became *spirit-body*, described by Paul as the spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4). He is now Yahweh’s High Priest, no longer suffering our filthy nature, but “clothed in a garment white as snow” (Dan. 7:9) So the words addressed to Joshua applied to the Lord Jesus “If you will walk in my ways, and if you wilt keep my charge, then you shall also judge my house (rule

my kingdom), and shall also keep my courts (be High Priest of Israel), and I will give you places to walk among those that stand by,” (the Angel Princes, or Elohim, we read of in Daniel) and further as we read in Psalm **45:6** Thy throne, O God,(Elohim) is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre”.

In Zechariah 3: 8 two men were prominent in connection with this captivity; the high priest, Joshua, and a governor called Zerubbabel. This verse reads : “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you, and your fellows that sit before thee : for they are men wondered at” —or, as the margin has it, **men of wonder or sign**; that is, they were representative men, and the things said in connection with them, and the things done, were representative of events that would to be achieved in connection with the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Joshua as the high priest of the restoration, was a type of the Lord Jesus, and represents Christ the high priest of Israel’s restoration in its fullest sense. So God says: “Behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch.” Turning on to Zech. 6: 12, the prophecy explains further:- “Speak unto him saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is **The Branch**; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord : even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne : and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” This information to Joshua was given to encourage him in his work in building the temple of God at that time; because God, was showing to him that his work was a representative work; in due course there will be manifested **The Branch**, “and he shall build the temple of the Lord.” The first time the word **Branch** is used to represent the Messiah is in Isaiah 11:1 where we find the prophecy, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a **Branch** shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Yahweh shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.” (Isa 11:1-5 KJV)

“Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous **Branch**, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and

justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days come, says the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD lives, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD lives, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land”. (Jer. 23:5-8)

“In those days, and at that time, will I cause the **Branch** of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness. For thus says the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually”. (Jer. 33:15-18)

The word for Branch in the quotation from Isaiah is נֹצֵר pronounced netser, it is remarkably similar to Nazereth and Orthodox Jews today refer to Jesus as ‘Yeshua-ha-Nozri’, the Nazarene, or from Nazareth— it is easy to see how this developed, but in reality it is a confirmation that Jesus of Nazareth is the branch that sprung up from the root of Jesse, the father of King David, and therefore the heir that is to sit upon the throne of David. An interesting point is that in the Greek Translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint, the equivalent for branch is “anatole” which is translated ‘dayspring’ which is the term used by the father of John the Baptist, Zacharias when he says, “whereby the dayspring from on high has visited us” A marginal reference renders it, the ‘sunrising’ and also ‘the east’ in Revelation 16:12. The term is also used by Malachi concerning the arising of the Sun of righteousness who is to arise with healing in his beams.

DHH