

The high priest at the time of the prophecy was Joshua, he was a mortal and a sinner and was not able to save his people from their sins. This fact was referred to in the detail of how he appeared before the angel of the LORD.

Being clothed in filthy garments illustrates the defilement of his transgressions. His clothing was defiled or filthy, Hebrew “tso” related to tsoah, outcome or excrement. That this refers to the result of surrender to the old man who dwells inside, is emphasized by the idea of outcome, excrement. It was his clothes that were so defiled. Contrast this with 1 Peter 4v21 where it is the flesh itself which is branded filthy not the garments.

This passage is cited in Jude v8,9 *“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation but said the Lord rebuke thee.”* The body of Moses here refers to the nation of Israel which in the time of Zechariah was in a perilous state. It had external enemies or adversaries (satans as the word means) who were resisting the work of the faithful and hindering God’s plans for His people.

The High Priest Joshua is not a type of Christ in this chapter. The contrast between the failure of Joshua to stand in the breach and another to come who would successfully be able to do so, is explicitly made. He is to be reclothed with a change of raiment, so this speaks of repentance of an alteration in the work produced by the High priest. It implies a continuity of the Levitical after receiving a fresh opportunity to begin again in their service to the God of Israel.

In Job 29v14 righteousness is linked with clothing and judgment is linked with a diadem. It is the same Hebrew word used here as in Zechariah 3 where it is translated mitre. As it is a fair mitre which is requested to be given to Joshua by the prophet and a fair mitre which is actually given him, it is important to realise that the word translated ‘fair’ is better translated ‘pure’ or ‘clean’. Zechariah wanted the priesthood which Joshua represented, the Aaronic not the Melchizedekian, to be pure and clean in its application of judgment, something not well evidenced to date. The angel was to ensure that this was achieved. That this did not happen in the period immediately afterwards, implies that this is a vision of future glory. A vision of the future which therefore involves the Levitical priesthood in some capacity and that a righteous one.

Those familiar with passages such as Malachi 3v3, Ezekiel 44v15, Jeremiah 33v17-21 will not be surprised to see a similar thread in the divine tapestry presented here also. God is not finished with Israel nor with Levi, and there will be a role to play in the coming Kingdom when with a pure mitre they will serve their God acceptably.

The promise is clear *"If thou wilt walk in my ways and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shall also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by."* verse 7. Keeping the courts does imply a demotion, and Joshua will not officiate as high priest at the time of this future vision. That role is reserved for another. These that stand by implies an association with another group. This is the Melchizedekian priesthood made up of immortal saints elevated to that role and empowered to assist the Christ in his active service to God as they "walk".

Does the future role and responsibility of judging God's house, the nation of Israel, depend upon the faithfulness of that class of Priests? If thou wilt walk.. if thou wilt keep..? Or will the prophecy be fulfilled despite any future waywardness? The Malachi passage referred to earlier does state that God will purify and purge the sons of Levi. He then is the great doer, and there is no cancellation of a promise on His part just a sad necessity to achieve it by other outside means. They will be purified and purged by the Eternal despite any future sins.

That the Angel of the LORD gave Joshua the fair mitre does require it to happen. So, it is not intended to be a conditional unkept opportunity which the house of Aaron failed at. If there was a possibility of future failure, then why reveal this vision of it happening in the future? Is God playing with the priesthood, teasing them with a hollow hope? No God never treats anyone like that. He is supremely fair and just. It will be a brand plucked out of the fire!

The answer is really in the following verses. *"I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day"*. The Almighty is therefore the future saviour. In one day, He will accomplish that which every mortal priest was singularly unable to do. He will cleanse His people and not just once for a limited time (until they sin again) but permanently forever. Only God can do that, and it is through the agency of Jesus Christ that this will be accomplished.

God promises to bring forth His servant the Branch. Again, God is the prime doer. His is the active role in ensuring everything is done and done efficiently and correctly.

The Branch is a title of the Christ which is used four times in scripture. A branch or a bud (see Hebrew) is a derived growth. It is capable of independence but has its origin in the main plant, or trunk. It is not the root which provides the sustenance for the rest of the plant but an outgrowth which heralds the possibility of strength and vigour out with its origins. There is no room here for any trinitarian notions.

Jeremiah 23v5 *“Behold the days come, saith 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”*.

33v15 *“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”*.

Zechariah 3v8 *“Hear now O Joshua the high priest thou and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at, for behold I will bring forth **my servant the Branch**”*.

6v12 *“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”*.

All these passages support the humanity and Israelite origins of this man the branch. He is God’s servant, not God incarnate. He owes his origins and elevation to the Almighty. It is a sad reflection upon those with a warped agenda that they refuse to see this.

This servant the Branch, in context is also a stone. This stone was laid before Joshua. Joshua is not the type of Christ in this context! God will engrave the engraving upon that stone. God will write upon him with a pen of iron. That one stone can have seven eyes is clearly an unnatural phenomenon but that is the point, unless God is involved this vision cannot become a reality. It is utterly dependent upon His integral involvement. The seven eyes indicate the complete vision that this future ruler will have. He will have a divine perception of all that is taking place around him, he cannot be surprised nor out maneuvered by his

enemies. Instead he will be able to see into all their plans and designs and will thereby oversee their demise. When God is the LORD of hosts, this will take place. The LORD of hosts = I will be armies! The armies will be Israel supported by those “that stand by”. Those that stand by are those who are enabled to stand in the resurrection at the last day, because they will have been elevated by the power of the Eternal exercised by His Son Jesus Christ.

“In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree”. Jesus was asked *“and who is my neighbour?”* He could just have referred the enquirer to this passage, but instead he laid out the parable of the good Samaritan Luke 10v29-37, which demonstrated that even those usually attributed as being the compromised enemy who maintain a different religious position to the Jews will be included in that description. False religion will not be tolerated in the Kingdom, it will be thrown out to the moles and the bats, but every man will be neighbourly in that Kingdom because the Branch will provide the verdant environment in which such behaviour will flourish to the mutual benefit of all the world.