

Joshua and the Angel

#0705

Study given by W.D. Frazee—May 8, 1964

I would like to begin tonight with the first chapter of Zechariah. Zechariah, you remember, was one of the prophets that encouraged the people of God at the time of the return from the captivity in Babylon. As they were there in Jerusalem wrestling with the problems of restoration, God sent Haggai and also Zechariah to encourage them. Our text this evening is Zechariah, the first chapter, beginning with the 12th verse:

“Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which Thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words. So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: My house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem” Zechariah 1:12-17.

Let’s notice a few of the interesting expressions in these verses; first, the question in that 12th verse. We find it echoed down in the Revelation. You remember, “How long? How long?” There it is:

“...How long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem...?”
Zechariah 1:12.

The prayer of the church of God in all ages has been that God may intervene in human affairs and bring *His* truth to triumph. And every time of discouragement, every time of opposition, is a time for the people of God to unite in this prayer: “How long?”

Now, you notice that God’s answer in the 13th verse is “with good words and with comfortable words.” Isn’t that a nice expression—“comfortable words”? God encourages His people with the clear statement in the 14th verse:

“...I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy” Zechariah 1:14.

“Nothing in the world is so dear to God as His church”
Selected Messages, Book 1, page 57.

God is jealous over Zion. He has a *peculiar* care over His people.

“...He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye”
Zechariah 2:8.

“...I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy” *Ibid.*

Now in the next verse, He says:

“And I am very sore displeased with the heathen...”
Zechariah 1:15.

Why? Well, He says:

“...I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction” *Ibid.*

You know, as I was reading this text and thinking of the history that Zechariah is recounting here, I thought of this illustration: suppose here's a parent; he has to punish his child. But suppose as he punishes the child, all the neighbors come in, and *they* want to help punish the child, too. [Laughter.] Probably the child wouldn't appreciate that and neither would the parent.

Now, God had had some disciplinary work to do with His people back then, but as He had allowed to come upon them the sure result of their sins, Moab and Edom and Ammon and all the rest wanted to pitch in and just add injury to injury. They would have been glad to wipe out the people of God completely. And God says, “I'm sore displeased with the heathen.”

Now, we need to learn a lesson from that, friends, and let God do the disciplining of His people. God says (if you will allow me to use this very common expression), “I don't need any help from *you*.” That's what God says: “I don't need any help from *you*. I'll take care of My church, My people. They need disciplining, it's true, but I'll handle that. And I'm sore displeased with those that get in and try to help Me and add injury to the discipline that I'm giving to the church. I'm displeased with that,” He says.

So now He wants to bring mercies and comfort, “prosperity” the 17th verse says. And that word “comfortable” of the 13th verse is echoed in the expression of the 17th verse:

“...The Lord shall yet comfort Zion and shall yet choose Jerusalem” Ibid., verse 17.

Now, with this introduction in the first chapter of Zechariah, we pass to the third chapter. The third chapter of Zechariah:

“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke 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 spake 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 fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre 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, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by. 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” Zechariah 3:1-8.

Let us notice some of the expressions in this very interesting passage. Do you understand it?

“Yes,” says one, “I understand it. I understand it. I know what this means.”

Well, let’s listen tonight and see if any of us gather some additional thoughts. And I will say this to you, friends: there’s more than one lesson and more than one blessing in this chapter, and the things that we bring tonight are from a “thus saith the Lord.” And if we bring anything tonight that you question, if you will check with us, we will be glad to give you additional support from the inspired writings. We’ll give you quite a number of references as we proceed from point to point.

This is a very important chapter. Let me say that this chapter has at least three applications as magnified in the wonderful magnifying glass that the Lord has given His people. First of all, there is the historical setting of this chapter. The incident that Zechariah is describing actually took place. There *was* a man named Joshua. He *was* a high priest. He *did* stand before the Lord representing His people. And Satan, of course, accused him, as is represented here, and God encouraged him as we shall

study. This is an actual picture of the condition of Israel at the time that Zechariah wrote this book.

However, there is also the application to *every* soul who comes to Christ. I'll read that here in the book *Prophets and Kings*, page 585. (If you'd like to read this interesting chapter in *Prophets and Kings* on "Joshua and the Angel," it begins on page 582 and gives us the setting of the history of the time and the condition of Israel at the time and how Joshua pled for his people.) But on page 585 it says:

"As Satan accused Joshua and his people, so in all ages he accuses those who seek the mercy and favor of God...Over every soul that is rescued from the power of evil, and whose name is registered in the Lamb's book of life, the controversy is repeated" *Prophets and Kings*, page 585.

So if you're a child of God, you and Jesus and Satan have been through the battle of this third chapter, and you *still* are having it, so it is of *individual* interest to every soul here tonight. You can see that because it says "over every soul."

But about one other application, on page 587 it says:

"Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing scenes of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will then be brought into great trial and distress" *Ibid.*, page 587.

So the application is, first, to Israel back then in the days of Zechariah; second, to every soul down through the ages that turns to Christ; and third, to the remnant church in the closing scenes of the great Day of Atonement. Now, we're interested *historically* in what happened back then. We're interested *individually* in what happens to each of us personally. We're interested *vitaly* in the experience of the remnant church in this closing up of the great Day of Atonement.

The three parties, particularly, that are brought to view here are: Joshua; at one side, the Angel of the Lord, who is Christ, is there standing for him; and at the other side, who's standing? [Audience responds: Satan.] Satan. What's *he* doing? Resisting Him. If you look at your margin there in Zechariah 3:1 where it says "and Satan," the margin says, "an adversary." That's the meaning of the word that's translated "Satan." And that's what 'Satan' means. Satan *is* an adversary—adversary to the people of God. And then if you look at the margin where it says "to resist him," it says to "be his adversary." In other words, here's Jesus standing *for* him, but here's the adversary standing on the other side to be His adversary.

Now, how does he *do* that? Well, in the book of Revelation, the 12th chapter, and the 10th verse, we get the key to how he does this. Here it speaks of Satan, the old

serpent called the Devil (Revelation 12:7-9), but in the 10th verse it says, speaking of him:

“...The accuser of our brethren...which accused them before our God day and night” Revelation 12:10.

Think of it, friends: all day long, all night long; all day long, all night long, he’s doing something. What is it? Accusing. Who? The people of God. Accusing the people of God. Did he ever accuse *you*? Yes, he doubtless has.

Satan has two objectives in this. You might say, “Well, he ought to know better than that.” But you must remember that Satan is not a reasonable being, and therefore you cannot expect him to *reason* reasonably. And you’ll say, “How foolish!” when I point out that he is trying to persuade God that the thing to do is to leave God’s people to the Devil. He is trying to argue that, “Here are these people—they’re no good; they’re bad; they’re wicked; they’re everything that’s wrong—and I’ve got the evidence to prove it. Now, Lord, there’s just one thing to do: leave them to me. Leave them to me.”

You say, “Well, that’s a foolish line of argument.” But it says he keeps it up “day and night.” Day and night. Now, I think you know that there are sometimes disordered processes of the mind in which an individual will repeat something over and over and over again, and there’s no way, apparently, of silencing it. That’s the fix that Satan is in, my friends. That’s right. He’s in that fix. And there’s no use to reason with him.

And you will notice that God doesn’t *try* to reason with him. He just says, “The Lord rebuke thee.” That’s the way Jesus met him on the mount there when He came down to resurrect Moses. Jude tells us about it. When Satan disputed with Michael about raising Moses, Jesus didn’t argue with him; he didn’t contend with him; he didn’t fight with him; he didn’t meet condemnation with condemnation and bad words with bad words. He just said, “The Lord rebuke thee” and turned him over to His Father.

And so, here, as Satan accuses Joshua (representing the people of God) and just *pours* it on and *pours* it on and keeps it up day and night, Jesus says:

“The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee” Zechariah 3:2.

But while Satan has never been able to get anywhere with *God* in getting God to reject His people because of their sins or getting God to turn His people over to the Devil because of the Devil’s arguments, I say while Satan has not been successful in *that*, there is another purpose that he has in view in this *incessant* bombardment of accusations. He hopes to discourage you and me and, I’m sorry to say, sometimes he’s successful in that. That’s one thing that encourages him to keep on. “It is Satan’s work to discourage the soul...” (Desire of Ages, page 249).

Now, there are *two ways* in which he works on that, friends. One way: he seeks to discourage the individual with his own sins. The other way: he seeks to discourage souls about the church by pointing out the errors and faults and mistakes of the church. In either case, his purpose is to *discourage* the soul. That's *why* he does it. And whether he's trying to paint *your* sins in the blackest hue or whether he's trying to clothe *the church* in filthy garments, in either case, remember: his purpose is to *separate* you from Christ because he knows that that is the source of your strength.

Yes, Satan's weapon is accusation. He is "the accuser of our brethren" who "accused them before our God day and night."

His great argument, friends (and don't think that he's without arguments; he *has* arguments), do you know what his great argument is? He *points* to the filthy garments. Now, I want to study that with you a little because it needs study. He *points* to the filthy garments.

In Isaiah 64:6, we're told what the filthy garments are. (Don't lose your place in Zechariah 3 which we're studying.) But you remember there in Isaiah 64:6, the prophet said:

"...We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..." Isaiah 64:6

"All our righteousnesses are as..." what? [Audience responds: Filthy rags.] Filthy rags. So we don't make a very good showing, do we, friends? No.

Now I want to ask you something as you look at your life: how does it look? How does it look? Does it look like you feel that you're all ready for heaven? I doubt that you feel that way, friends. I think you're closer to heaven than that would indicate. I trust so. I believe if anybody here tonight would look at himself and say, "Well, I'm okay. My life is just right," I think there would be need to compare the inner heart, the inner mind, the inner thinking of that individual with the law of God. Paul said:

"For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" Romans 7:9.

"...By the law is the knowledge of sin" Romans 3:20.

And John tells us in 1 John, the first chapter:

"But if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" 1 John 1:8.

Yes, we recognize that we are weak and we are sinful. Think of it as the child of God *begins* the Christian way. Then, in a very *real* sense, he comes with filthy garments and stands before the Lord. And Satan, at once, begins his battle to try to discourage

that soul. Hasn't he tried that with some of you? Think back to the time you first came to Jesus. Did some of you have the Devil on your neck just trying to hold you and trying to tell you, "No use for you to come to God. You've been such a terrible sinner. There's nothing He can do for you."

That's the picture. There you stand before God, but Satan stands at your right hand to resist you, to accuse you, and to point out your filthy garments. But when you gave yourself to Jesus, when in your weakness and unworthiness you cast yourself upon His mercy, what did He do? Why, He did just what this says:

"And he [Jesus] answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him [Joshua] he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" Zechariah 3:4.

Does that happen when the soul comes to Christ? Yes, my dear friends. In a sense, that's *exactly* what happens every time a soul is converted. You remember those beautiful words there in *Steps to Christ*:

"If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned" *Steps to Christ*, page 62.

Isn't that beautiful, friends? Well, what are we doing, then? What are we wearing? Why, we're wearing those white robes. Is that right? We're wearing those white robes.

But now I want to ask you something: will the Devil accept that? Will the Devil admit that? Will the Devil go home and lick his wounds and start out for somebody else and leave us alone now? Will he? Does he? Did he ever do *you* that way? (Well, if he did, let me know. I'd like to see some *strange* exception like that, friends.)

No, sir. When the Lord Jesus Christ says, "Take away the filthy garments from him and I will clothe him with a change of raiment," the Devil does not stop *at all*. He keeps up that accusation. What did we read in Revelation 12? "The accuser of our brethren which..." does what? "Accuses them before our God, day and night."

Let me illustrate it right out of your experience. Did you ever have some overpowering sense of your weakness and unworthiness come rolling in upon you because of something you did ten years ago or a year ago or a week ago? Did you ever? Yes! What was happening? Satan was trying to what? *Discourage* you. And he was *urging* that accusation, *urging* that accusation.

I often think of the experience Luther tells about. (Luther was very vivid in some of his descriptions.) He said that once he was at his desk, and the Devil came in to him there, and he said, “Martin Luther, do you claim to be a Christian?”

“Yes.”

And there was a piece of paper lying there. The Devil took the pen and ink and wrote a line across it, some sin that Martin Luther had committed, and held it up and said, “Did you do that?”

Martin Luther said, “Yes.”

(By the way, does the Devil know what sins we’ve committed? Who would know *better* than he? Who *planned* to lead us into sin? Who tripped us up and got us into temptation? Who did it? [Audience responds: Satan.] Satan. And I want to tell you something: he never forgets one of them.)

So he wrote this out for Martin Luther. Then he wrote another one and another one and another one, and he kept asking Martin Luther if he’d done those things. And Martin Luther had to admit, of course, that he’d done them. And when he got all done there, he said, “You mean that you claim to be a Christian and you admit you’ve done all these things?”

Martin Luther said, “Give me that!” And he took the piece of paper and the pen, and he wrote across the whole thing, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” “Now,” he said, “you can have that if you want it.”

Is that the way to deal with the Devil, my friends? Why, of course! Let *Jesus* handle it. Because I want to tell you something: while Satan has a great argument in our filthy garments, Jesus has a greater argument.

Notice how it’s put here in *Christ’s Object Lessons*. I love this:

“...With the mighty argument of the cross, Christ silences the bold accuser” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 168.

Isn’t that nice?

“...With the mighty argument of the cross, Christ silences the bold accuser” *Ibid.*

That’s what Martin Luther did. He just put the promise across there: “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”

Now notice: the answer to the Devil is not to say, “Well, it’s true I did something back then, but it wasn’t so bad.” No. That isn’t it. Neither is the answer to say, “Well, I

know I did that, but that was 20 years ago. Why bring that up?” That won’t do, friends, that won’t do. That won’t satisfy God and it won’t satisfy your own conscience (unless it’s seared with a hot iron).

There’s just one argument—that’s *Christ’s* argument:

“...With the mighty argument of the cross, Christ silences the bold accuser” *Ibid.*

Now this says He “silences” him. He silences him for the time being, but he keeps coming right back. And he is, if you will let me use the word, a monomaniac, Satan is. He just harps on that one thing: your sins and the sins of the church, your sins and the sins of the church, your sins and the sins of the church. He just harps on that. That’s in his mind. That’s his argument. That’s the way he would *like* to persuade God that you and the whole church are worthy of one thing—to be thrown in the bottomless pit along with him. That’s what he would say to convince you. And he knows if he can convince you of either one, you’ll be discouraged.

But all the while, Jesus (praise God!) is standing at your right hand, and He’s pleading with God for you and lifting up those wounded hands that tell the story of Calvary. And oh, He’s hoping and praying that you’ll look to *Him* instead of looking to Satan, that you’ll *listen* to Christ instead of listening to Satan.

I’ll tell you this, friends: whichever argument you listen to, you’ll be convinced. If you listen to Satan’s arguments about how bad you are and how hopeless your case is, you’ll become so discouraged. And if you listen to Satan’s arguments about the church—about how “Laodicean” the church is and about how worldly the church is and about how this and that the church is—if you listen (oh, my brother, if you listen!), you will become convinced that it’s hopeless.

“Well,” you say, “I’ve listened quite a bit, and I’m not quite convinced yet.”

I don’t know how long it will take, but I know this, friends: Eve went up to that tree fully satisfied that she could take care of herself, but she came away from that tree believing something entirely different from what she believed when she went, correct? Yes. And if you listen (mark my words!), if you keep listening to the accusations against the remnant church, the time may come when you will be hopelessly impressed and depressed. Better not. Better not.

Which argument shall we echo, friends: Satan’s arguments or Christ’s arguments? The argument of the filthy garments or the mighty argument of the cross? Which argument shall we echo? Shall we join with Satan in *pointing* to the filthy garments or shall we join with Jesus in pointing to the *white* garments? We have our choice.

Now, this thought is taken directly from inspiration. In *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 275, we have this striking question:

“Shall the people of God...voice the words of Satan against the children of God?” *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 275.

And this is a comment on Zechariah 3, the very chapter we’re studying:

“Shall the people of God...voice the words of Satan against the children of God?” *Ibid.*

Well, what do you say, shall they? Well, they shouldn’t. Too bad they *do*.

Now, we’ve been given a special warning about a special time when these messages of accusation will come, and they’re due right now. *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 42:

“There will be messages of accusation against the people of God, similar to the work done by Satan in accusing God’s people, and these messages will be sounding at the very time when God is saying to His people, ‘Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee’” *Ibid.*, page 42.

Recently I had the privilege of reading a testimony that Sister White wrote in 1893. It was published in the *Review and Herald* of November 8, 1956. It was a manuscript that Sister White had written back in 1893. She wrote this from way over in New Zealand, Sister White did, the 12th of June, 1893.

And this was the circumstance: a couple of men over here in the United States had gotten a great burden to write on the loud cry. Well, that’s a good subject, isn’t it, the loud cry? And they had put into this tract a large number of quotations from the Bible and from the *Testimonies*, from Sister White’s writings.

“Well,” you say, “that was wonderful.”

Sister White didn’t think so. She didn’t think it was wonderful at all. And she wrote this to reprove them for it. Now, you will find similar messages on the same subject in the first 60 pages of the book *Testimonies to Ministers*. Some of these chapters were written at about the same time this manuscript was written that I’m quoting from here.

But these two men came to the General Conference in 1893 in Battle Creek, and they went away from that General Conference in Battle Creek peddling their wares of accusation against the church.

Sister White wrote this manuscript and told them that if they had placed themselves in the channel of light, they would have recognized that God was working

for His people there at that meeting in Battle Creek, and they would have gotten a blessing. She wondered why they didn't:

"Had they placed themselves in the channel of light, they would have received the most precious blessings from heaven.

..."Why did not these brethren fall into line, and place themselves in the channel of light?" *Review and Herald*, November 8, 1956.

Well, why didn't they, do you suppose? Why, they were obsessed with the idea that God had given *them* the work of bringing these accusations against the church, which they brought in their literature called *The Loud Cry* and which was filled with quotations from Sister White. But she objected to their using those references, said they had no right to use them. Now she brings in this third chapter of Zechariah:

"How could they come from that meeting where the power of God was revealed in so marked a manner, and proclaim that the loud cry was that the commandment-keeping people were Babylon. Satan was saying that same thing to Christ when Joshua stood before the angel. Satan was declaring his sins to be so great that he should not be restrained from destroying him. The words of Christ are applicable to these brethren, and to all who advance similar sentiments. 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel'" *Ibid*.

"Who clothed him with filthy garments?" Sister White asks.

Why, somebody says, "Why sure. That's just because he was so weak and wicked." Not at all in the setting that's given here, my friends. That's the Devil clothing the church with filthy garments when God pronounces it His beloved. Get that picture, friends. Remember, Satan is a monomaniac and he doesn't stop.

When God has forgiven somebody something, the Devil doesn't say, "Well, too bad we lost that one." He keeps up just pounding away and pounding away and pounding away. And oh, what a pity that he finds human hearts to receive those sentiments and human lips to echo them, my friends!

Here the servant of God says that these men who got out this message on the loud cry and quoted voluminously from Sister White's writings were really echoing the accusations of Satan against the church and calling attention to the mistakes and failures and errors of the church, and in it, she says, they were repeating the words of

Satan. In doing it, they were clothing the church with filthy garments. And she asks, “Who clothed him with filthy garments?” Why, it’s the Devil, friends, not Jesus, not Jesus. And if you wait for the Devil to acknowledge that the filthy garments are gone, you’ll wait far too long.

Perhaps I ought to prove that because that’s quite a statement to make. And I’ll do it, friends, from the book *Great Controversy*, the chapter on the time of trouble. Now, you know that this chapter begins with the close of probation on page 613. Here we have, page after page, the wonderful things that are going to happen during that awful time of trouble. But on page 618, way over in the midst of Jacob’s trouble, I read:

“As Satan accuses the people of God on account of their sins, the Lord permits him to try them to the uttermost. Their confidence in God, their faith and firmness, will be severely tested. As they review the past, their hopes sink; for in their whole lives they can see little good. They are fully conscious of their weakness and unworthiness. Satan endeavors to terrify them with the thought that their cases are hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away”
Great Controversy, page 618.

“Why,” you say, “this is Jacob’s trouble; they ought to *know* that everything’s all settled, and the Devil ought to know it and stop that.” Oh, no, he *doesn’t* stop it. Do you see what I mean, my friends, that even *after* probation has closed, even after the people of God have been clothed in white raiment in the books of heaven, the Devil *still* keeps clothing them with what? Filthy garments. Filthy garments. And I repeat: if you and I listen to him, we’ll *never* get any courage in this world. Never. Never.

There’s only one thing to do: *turn* from those tauntings, *turn* from those temptings, *turn* from those accusations—whether they relate to us or to our brethren—and let’s turn and listen to Jesus and look to Him and behold His wonderful love. And look at the cross and learn to be sorry for sin and to believe in that covering righteousness for ourselves and for our brethren. What do you say, friends? [Audience responds: Amen.] *That’s* the answer and there’s no other. There’s no other.

Now, do you see in what I have read that there are times when Satan points to our filthy garments and he’s telling the truth? There are other times he points to our filthy garments and (to be accurate), he’s a liar. (But now, watch this point. Don’t miss this point.) When I say he’s a liar, I don’t mean that he necessarily charges us with sins we’ve never done, but he tries to skip the fact that those sins have been confessed and pardoned and covered with the blood of Christ. He tries to make us think of the present as if it were the past, or to put the thing the other way, he tries to make us think of the past as if it were still the present. Do you see what I mean?

But the whole message of the Gospel is this:

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” 1 John 1:9.

Ah, friends, by *faith* we must see ourselves in that vision. By *faith* we must see that as Satan *presses* upon us those temptations and tries to throw upon us those filthy garments that we’ve repudiated, that we, by faith, hear the words of Jesus:

“...I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment” Zechariah 3:4.

By faith we must *grasp* that. Let’s do it. What do you say?

Another statement—this from Volume 4 of the Bible Commentary, the Ellen G. White comments on Zachariah 3 on page 1178—another statement *proving* that the filthy garments here are not always *factual*. They are not always *actual* at the moment of Satan’s accusation. He may be bringing up things that are in the past, that are all gone.

“‘Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments.’ Thus sinners appear before the enemy who by his masterly, deceptive power has led them away from allegiance to God. With garments of sin and shame the enemy clothes those who have been overpowered by his temptations, and then he declares that it is unfair for Christ to be their Light, their Defender” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Volume 4, page 1178.

Think of it, friends, think of this argument of the Devil. Here’s a soul that Jesus wants to rescue, save for His kingdom (and He *has* rescued him. He’s pardoned him. He’s covered him with His righteousness), but the Devil (the audacity of it; as we would say, “the nerve of it”), stands up there and says to God, “It’s *unfair* for You to declare this soul righteous. I say he *isn’t* righteous. Look at his filthy garments. Look at this sin he did ten years ago, five years ago, last week. Look at it! Look at it! Look at it! Look at it! Look at it! Look at it!” And yet that soul may be resting in the righteousness of Christ and under the covering blood.

This same page says:

“...The Lord, who forgives all sins that are repented of, was satisfied” *Ibid*.

The Devil wasn’t satisfied, but he never *will* be. The Lord was satisfied, and the Lord will be satisfied with you, my dear brother, when you just give your heart to God and ask Him to wash you white and clean in the precious blood of Jesus, and go free, believing in that precious righteousness.

Now, I know there is a work that must be done day by day in imparting that righteousness to us. I know we must look forward to the finished, completed work that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But I want to tell you, my dear friends: we can never experience any of this until we get settled in our hearts to believe what Jesus says instead of what Satan says and to trust in God's promises instead of being bothered by Satan's accusations. And that must reach into our attitude toward the church as well as to our attitude toward our own salvation.

May I read a little more from this testimony from this *Review* that I was reading from?

"Who clothed him with filthy garments?" *Review and Herald*, November 8, 1956.

Then she goes ahead and quotes some more from Zechariah:

"The work of Satan is to cover the repentant, believing, commandment keeping people of God with defiling garments; Jesus Christ commands them to be clothed with His righteousness, garments woven in the loom of heaven" *Ibid*.

"The work of Satan..." Watch! Whose work? Satan's. Then she asks about these two brethren: what have *they* been doing?

"If they had been commissioned of God to do this work, they would not have needed to appropriate the writings of Sister White, without consulting her or saying a word to her.

..."Theirs is a spurious message...These men had no right to appropriate the Lord's goods.

..."Beware of those who arise with a great burden to denounce the church.

..."In all ages of the world there have been men who think they have a work to do for the Lord, and show no respect for those whom the Lord has been using" *Ibid*.

In a class that I was teaching not long ago, one of the students was asking, "How can we tell the messengers whom the Lord sends from those He doesn't send?" Here's one of the best answers I know: the messengers *God* sends will show respect for God's church and for those that God has put in leadership in His church, my friends. Let me read this again:

"In all ages of the world there have been men who think they have a work to do for the Lord, and show no respect for

those whom the Lord has been using...Whatever may be the claims of those who draw away from the body to proclaim theories of their own invention, they are in Satan's service to get up some new device to divert souls from the truth for this time.

"Beware of those who arise with a great burden to denounce the church" *Ibid.*

I want to read this next sentence, and I want to tell you something, friends: some of the very people who have a burden to denounce the church at the present time would lead you to think that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, at the very time that I am reading about, had rejected God's message and was therefore in a rejected condition. But now listen what the servant of the Lord says, right at that time:

"Beware of those who arise with a great burden to denounce the church. The chosen ones who are standing and breasting the storm of opposition from the world, and are uplifting the downtrodden commandments of God to exalt them as honorable and holy, are indeed *the light of the world*" *Ibid.*

Now that didn't mean that the servant of the Lord thought that everybody in the church was *perfect*. I don't know that she thought *anybody* at that time was fully perfect. But ah, my friends, come back to what we read there in that first chapter of Zechariah. When God had to discipline His people, how did He feel when the heathen chipped in and said, "Well, if *God's* going to punish them, we will get in right now and punish them too"? What did God think about that?

God said, "No. You stand off. I don't need your help at all." And when God wants to discipline His people, He can do it, friends, He can do it.

May I use another illustration? Suppose here's a family with eight, ten, twelve children, and suppose here's little Harry. He's seven years old, and Father has to punish Harry. Harry has been disobedient. Father takes Harry and he goes out to the barn. He gets a suitable implement and begins the work of discipline.

What do you think Harry would think and what do you think Father would think if several of the brothers and sisters came and said, "Let me help, Father," and so *they* began to wale away at Harry? Do you think Harry would appreciate that? Oh, no. Do you think Father would appreciate it? I think he wouldn't.

I think he'd say, "Now children, if that's what you're going to do, I will give *you* some of it yourself so you can see how it feels." Don't you think he would?

That's *exactly* what the Spirit of Prophecy was doing. God had been sending, through His appointed agencies, messages of reproof, the Laodicean message to His

church at the very time that this testimony was written, and the prophet said God's people were receiving it. Some people today say, "No, they didn't receive it. They rejected it." She said they were receiving it. You can read it here.

And so these men back then, they thought it was all rejected so they raised the cry to accuse the church and denounce the church. And then *Jesus*, the very One that was reproofing His church, turned to reprove *these* who were echoing the accusations of Satan.

Say, dear ones, I propose we let Father discipline His children, what do you say?
[Audience responds: Amen.]

"When anyone is drawing apart from the organized body of God's commandment-keeping people, when he begins to weigh the church in his human scales, and begins to pronounce judgment against them, then you may know that God is not leading him. He is on the wrong track" *Ibid*.

Notice the "organized body." Well, there's much more there, but I shouldn't read more from that.

But I would, dear friends, like to urge upon our hearts this from Zechariah tonight. Let us personally rejoice that Jesus has pardoned our sins as we've come to Him and that He's standing between us and the enemy. Let's not allow him to discourage us one minute with those filthy garments that he tries to throw upon us. They may be the accurate recording of the sins we've done in the past, but if we've given them to Jesus, let's thank God that He has covered them with His own righteousness. What do you say? [Audience responds: Amen.]

Also, let us believe that He can take care of His precious church, and that we are not to join with Satan who is accusing them before God how often? [Audience responds: Day and night.] Day and night. No, we're not to do that. Let us not listen to the arguments of Satan but listen to the mighty argument of the cross as the One who gave His life for His church carries through His glorious plan which will eventually result in presenting His church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. I want to be among them, don't you? The Lord grant it.

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