

Salvation is by grace, through faith in Christ alone.

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Preacher: Pastor Todd James

[0 : 00] Amen.

We're actually looking at chapters 3 and 4 today of Zechariah, so go ahead and find that in your Bible. We're going to read both of those chapters today just to see what they are.

If you'll remember right, we've been in Zechariah now, and Zechariah is relating to us a series of visions. And we had the first vision paired with the last vision, the second with the second to last. We're down to, we're almost at it. Next week we're going to have the final vision, but we're getting down there. And as we go through that next week, we're going to be taking a look at chapter 6, verse 9 through 15.

As we're doing this today, let's go ahead and just, I'll read through this and then we'll just, we'll dive right in after that. But just two short chapters here in the book of Zechariah.

[1 : 29] Chapter 3, beginning in verse 1. Now Joshua was standing before the angel clothed in filthy garments.

And the angel said to those who were standing before him, Remove the filthy garments from him. And he said to him, Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.

And I said, Let them put a clean turban on his head. So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, and the angel of the Lord was standing by. And the angel of the Lord solemnly assured Joshua, Thus says the Lord of hosts, If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts.

And I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here. Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are assigned. Behold, I will bring the branch. For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts.

[3 : 04] And I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day. 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.

That's chapter 3, and that's the first vision. Then chapter 4, And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me like a man who was wakened out of his sleep.

And he said to me, What do you see? I see, and behold, a lampstand, olive gold, with a bowl on the top of it and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.

And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left. And I said to the angel who talked with me, What are these, my Lord?

Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, Do you not know what these are? I said, No, my Lord. Then he said to me, This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel.

[4 : 13] Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain, and he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of grace, grace to it.

Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. His hands shall also complete it.

Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.

These seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth. Then I said to him, What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?

And a second time I answered and said to him, What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes, from which the golden oil is poured out?

[5 : 19] He said, Do you not know what these are? I said, No, my Lord. Then he said, These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth. Now I'm going to remind you again, that prophecy in and of itself can be a bit challenging to understand.

Visions on their own can be difficult to understand. You take prophecy and visions, you mix them all together, and it's not always clear what's going on.

Okay? We're just going to throw that out there. By the time we're done, there's going to be some real hard and heavy truths that we can hang how we live our lives.

We can lean into because of their truth. I'm going to give you some words of great encouragement from this passage today. But before I do that, I want to tell you this.

Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone. By grace through faith in Christ alone. That's what salvation is. I thought about saying, challenging you walk by faith, you can trust God, because that also applies here.

[6 : 40] But I think it's really important for us today, and I want us to really lean into the fact that salvation is a gracious act of God.

It's not of works, as Ephesians says, that we should boast, but it is a gift of God. Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Okay. Having said that, let me just help you out real quick. There is a lot of different people in these visions. First of all, Zachariah.

All right. The guy who wrote the book, the one who's having the dreams. All right. He's the prophet of the Lord. Okay. Secondly, there's the Lord. He is the creator and curator.

I thought I had to look that one up to make certain I spelled it right. Don't look at me like that, Diane. I got it. That's how it's supposed to be spelled, right? Creator means that God spoke and all things came into being.

[7 : 43] Curator, like the curator of the museum, he is watching over all of the events of human history. He is at work every day, every moment of every day, watching over all things that transpire.

So we've got Zachariah. We've got the Lord. Oh, we've got Joshua. Joshua, not the same one that fought the battle of Jericho. He's dead a long time by the time this is written. But Joshua, who is at that time acting as the high priest in Israel.

We've got Zerubbabel, who is the governor of Israel. He would be the king, except remember they've been under Babylonian rule for so long, and he is being brought back so that he can govern the province of Judea.

And then there's the angel, who is Zachariah's guide through all of this. Okay. So those are the people that are involved. Let's break down the two visions.

The first vision today, which is the fourth in the series, Zachariah sees Joshua standing before the Lord.

[8 : 50] And if we take a look in chapter 3, verse 1, he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord. It reminds me of Hebrews 9, verse 27, which says, For it is appointed unto man once to die, and then to face the judgment of the Lord.

Joshua the high priest is standing before the Lord. And what do we know about Joshua? Joshua is that he is covered in dirty garments.

Now, dirty garments is another way of referring to the sin, the sin burden that each of us carry.

For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. He's filthy. He's standing before the Lord.

And who's right next to him? Good old Satan.

Yay! The accuser. Remember in Job, Satan has gone around the world looking for things, and he's before the throne of God, and he's throwing accusations against Job.

[9 : 53] It's the same role that he plays in Revelations. He is the accuser of the brethren. So you've got this throne room. The high priest Joshua is standing there just filthy in his rags.

You've got standing next to him Satan who's pointing out he's too dirty to be here. You've got the Lord. Okay? Second vision.

Zachariah wakes up to see a lamp lit by the oil of two trees. Remember, it's a vision. It doesn't have to make sense. But apparently there's these two trees, these two olive trees.

And you guys know how to make maple syrup? You tap a tree. You kind of cut in it. You stick a little spout in it, and it drips out. Basically, that's his vision. Only instead of maple syrup coming out, it's olive oil, or some sort of oil, and it's keeping the flame alive.

All right? He wakes up, and that's what he sees. And the angel tells Zachariah of Zerubbabel, who began and will finish the building of the temple.

[11:05] So in a nutshell, that's the two visions. Number one, he's got a vision of one of the current public leaders of the nation of Israel, Joshua, standing before the throne of God, being ready to be judged.

Right? And over here, he's got this vision of Zerubbabel, who is going to finish building the temple. And there's a bunch of other weird things that are going on. But there's a couple of things that we need to know.

Some things that, as we study them, are going to speak directly to us. Look in Zechariah 3. And we're going to take a look at verse 2 really quick. As with all prophetic messages, there is more to know. But in these particular visions, here's some truth that you can hang your hat on. Number one, God chose Israel. Zechariah 3, verse 2. The Lord said to Satan, The Lord rebuke you, O Satan.

[12:15] The Lord has chosen Jerusalem. The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. You guys remember? Abraham was living in Ur of the Chaldees.

And the Lord came to him and said, Abram, get up and go to the land I'm going to show you. I will make you a people. Genesis chapter 12.

You guys remember that? Abraham didn't go looking for God. God came and picked Abram. God chose Abram. And that's what he's talking about here. Israel, the children of Abraham, were chosen by God.

Second thing you need to know, our would-be accuser gets rebuked. Remember, Joshua, what was he dressed in?

Filthy garments, right? And right next to him is Satan getting ready to accuse him. And twice in verse 2, what does the Lord say to Satan? I rebuke you.

[13:19] Basically, he's telling him, Be quiet. You don't have any authority or any power to speak here. Yeah, I get you. You're the accuser, but not before me.

And God provided Joshua with clean clothes. That's a picture of God removing the filthy sin stain and cleansing him so that he would be without guilt.

And the lampstand, which provides light. I think, I can't prove, but I think that lampstand is a picture of God's Word.

It provides light into how we are to live our lives. And finally, the mountain becomes a plane.

Not an aeroplane. Okay, I want to make that clear, all right? But what happens is a mountain is gone and you have a flat level surface.

[14:33] Now, how difficult is it to remove a mountain? I mean, can we do that today?

Small mountains? Yeah. A small amount of faith? No, you're right. But I'm talking about, can you and I go out and remove Mount Kashmir and turn it into a flat level surface?

That's kind of beyond, I mean, we could drill, we could blast, we could, you know, spend years hauling gravel. Could we do it? Could one person do it?

Come on, that ain't gonna happen. These are all images found within, and quite honestly, they reveal three things that we can cling to.

Three truths that you and I need to deeply grasp and hold on to. Truth number one.

[15:43] God chooses. John 3.16, For God so loved the world, He did what? That whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have.

We're really, really good at this verse, right? For God who loved the world, sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Whoever turns to faith, turn to Ephesians chapter 1.

I want to point this out to you because this is important for you to know and to understand.

And like a flash, she's gone! Ephesians chapter 1, beginning in verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose who?

Chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us for adoption as sons through Christ Jesus, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

[17:18] Who made the choice? This is an important truth that I want you to understand.

God chose us. Interestingly enough, those people that He chose are the saved, right?

More than that, God chose all humanity to be able to receive His grace. How many people did Christ die for? He died to pay the sins for everybody. Salvation is open to all because God chose us. Could we achieve salvation on our own? Absolutely not.

It was God who chose us. More than that, it is God who redeems us.

[18:33] Here in Ephesians 1, verse 7 and 8, In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight.

He made salvation possible. In Romans 5, verse 19, it puts it this way, For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

God chose us and God redeems us. Both of these are acts of God. Just as He chose Joshua and says, Look, Satan, be quiet.

Joshua is the high priest of my chosen people. And He said to the angels around Him, Put clean clothes on Joshua. Remove his sin guilt from him and give him clean clothes.

Wash him free from guilt. These are acts of God. These aren't things that we can accomplish on our own. And then finally, it is God who empowers us.

[19:57] It is God who gives us the strength to live for Him. There's no way Zerubbabel could remove a mountain and make it a plain. Not on his own strength.

There's no way that Zerubbabel could have started and finished the building of the temple all by himself. And just like you and I can't live for the Lord in our own strength.

We can't do it. It doesn't work that way. How often have you tried to go a day without sin? How well did that work out for you?

The harder I try to make certain I'm doing it, the harder the struggle is. Not by our power, but by the power of God in us.

It is God who chose. It is God who cleanses. It is God who gives us strength. When I read those two visions, those were the three things that I took out of it.

[20:58] God chose. God redeems. God empowers. Now, I want you to turn to Romans chapter 8 real quick. I'm taking a detour.

I want to do this. It's kind of appropriate. It's kind of a side trip, but we'll get back to the regular sermon. But turn to Romans chapter 8 and we're going to pick it up in verse 31.

Because remember, do you guys remember that vision with Joshua? Who was standing right next to Joshua? Satan, the accuser, right?

How often do you feel like Satan is standing right next to you whispering evil into you? You're terrible. You're not good enough. How lousy are you? Okay? It could just be me, but I hear that voice all the time.

Read with me. Pick it up in verse 31. Romans chapter 8 beginning in verse 31. What then shall we say to these things? Whispering, everything that's going on.

[22:01] If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he, not also with him, graciously give us all things?

Who can bring any charge against God's elect? See, here's the... Who can accuse us? Satan, who's trying, gets rebuked in the first vision, right?

Who can bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died, more than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, and who indeed is interceding for us.

Do you understand the picture of Joshua standing before the throne and being judged, right? But he's chosen of God. And Satan, who's trying to make accusation, is being told, be quiet.

He's being rebuked. Stay silent. You don't get to speak in this court. And in Romans, we learn that it's Christ who stands up as our advocate and says, I paid the penalty.

[23:21] I paid what is due. He is righteous. She is righteous because I paid the penalty. That's the glory of Romans 8 right here.

Who or what shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or dangers or sword? No, as it is written.

For your sake we are being killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Look, when Christ is our advocate nothing, nothing can separate us from the love of God. And so I want you to embrace that truth today that when Christ is our advocate nothing can separate us from the love of God.

[24 : 32] So, so here you go. We've got, we've got these two visions. We've got the vision of Joshua the high priest who's being judged and even though he's got filthy garments on God gives him clean garments.

we've got the vision of Zerubbabel who's doing impossible things and it turns out it's not by his own power but by the power of God that he's able to do these amazing things.

And we see, we see it's God who chooses, we see it's God who redeems, and we see it's God who empowers. but there's an important question.

Turn to Zechariah chapter 3. There is an important condition that must be met. In fact, it is the key to everything that I've said so far today.

Okay. Did God make the choice? Absolutely. Long before the foundation of the world, it says.

[25 : 58] Did God provide redemption? Did he pay the price so that we could be saved?

Absolutely. Christ died on the cross for sins that he didn't commit.

Does God hold all power and is he ready to give that to us to allow us to live for him? Yes, he does. Zechariah chapter 3.

Pick it up in verse 6. The angel of the Lord solemnly assured Joshua, thus says the Lord of hosts, if. Do you see that? If. If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge over my courts and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here now.

Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you. Did you see that?

The word if in there? Did you see that? Joshua, who fought the battle of Jericho when he was closing out his life, when his time on earth was getting close to being done, stood before the nation of Israel and he put it to him this way.

[27 : 33] Choose you this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. God has chosen.

He has provided redemption. He holds all power and stands ready to bless you with all of this. The question to Joshua, and this is important. Oh, God. I almost missed this one.

I'm glad I put it on. God came up to and presented a question to Joshua and the question was, will you believe? Will you live your life for me?

What it wasn't was, what's that stain? Is that gravy or did you kill somebody? How come that sleeve is dirty?

Were you wrestling in the mud or are you a liar? Why are your knees dirty? Are you a thief? Are you an adulterer?

[28 : 38] Are you a bigot? He didn't ask anything about the quality of Joshua's sins. Do you understand that?

The question isn't, are you good enough to get to God? It doesn't matter how black your sins are. Christ paid the penalty for all sin.

I have people that I've talked to. I'm too bad. If I came to church, the building would fall down.

I'm such a sinner. No! Not at all! I mean, if I mention Ruth, do you know who I'm talking about?

She was a Moabitess. Do you know that according to the Mosaic Law, nobody from the nation of Moab, nobody from that lineage shall ever be allowed into the temple?

[29 : 41] Do you know that? But because she, in faith, followed Naomi, because she turned from her Moabite roots and turned towards God, she not only was allowed in, she's the great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, I don't know how many, great grandmother of Jesus.

See, it's not about us and what we have done and who we are, but about God, what He has done, and whether or not we will turn to Him in faith.

I guess our nursery isn't perfectly soundproof. But here's the thing.

God wasn't asking Zerubbabel, hey man, are you certain that you can build this temple? Or hey man, do you think you're strong enough to get to work? It wasn't about that.

It was a question of faith. And that's the question that stands before us. In Romans chapter 10, verses 9 and 10, if you believe with your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, you will be saved.

[31 : 01] It doesn't say if you're, you know, the top 50% of your class and you didn't do, it doesn't say anything about that. the question is will you turn to God in faith?

You see, God chose each and every one of us before the foundation of the world to offer each and every one of us salvation. Jesus Christ died so that anybody could turn to Him.

Regardless of their background, regardless of their sin burden, He paid the full price for everyone that all of us, that any of us could be saved.

That's what I get out of Zechariah chapter 3 and chapter 4. God made the choice. God provides salvation. He gives us the strength faith to do what He wants us to do.

But the question before us, will we turn to Him in faith? God has done all this and He stands ready to bless each and every one of us if we are willing to turn to Him.

[32 : 24] Let's pray. Amen. Amen.