

# Hope has a Name: Zechariah 3

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Date: 19 April 2026

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning. I'm grateful that you have come to worship the Lord today. If you're a guest with us today, we are going to be finding ourselves in the book of Zechariah. To find that book of the Bible, you can turn to the first book of the New Testament, which is Matthew, and turn left.

Two books into the Old Testament, and you'll find yourself at Zechariah. Zechariah is this Old Testament prophet. He is a man who has returned from Babylonian captivity.

And he is encouraging the people of Israel to do a few things. Return to the Lord. He is encouraging the people of Israel to, he's trying to invigorate them to rebuild the temple of God that Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed approximately 90 years prior.

So here is Zechariah in time. I'm going to use these pillars as a potential timeline. If you were here last week, this will make sense. But Zechariah is looking at, and he is foretelling the future of Israel, encouraging them that there is this Messiah that will come.

And he's going to describe the Messiah, but sometimes the things that Zechariah looks into the future and sees this messianic figure, he's going to do a few things.

[ 1 : 23 ] We have the advantage as the church standing between these two advents of the Lord, his first coming and his second coming. We can see, oh, yes, Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, did condescend to earth, took on human form, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died a death for sin on the cross, rose three days later, overcoming sin and death, and now is seated at the right hand of God.

We see his first coming and what he did. We in the church and all who place their faith in Christ and his person, his work, sin is forgiven, and we have the assurance that our sin is forgiven and we can spend eternity with the Lord.

Hallelujah. Zechariah also, though, when he looks into the future of the work of the Messiah, he doesn't necessarily see that he's going to come twice.

He sees one person that's going to do this work. Again, we have the advantage going, oh, some of the things that are written of Christ are concerning his first advent.

Second return of Christ, I am sorry for the white horse. It does not do justice to the return of the Lord when he comes on his white horse. But for our illustration purposes, this number is going to have to work for us.

[ 2 : 51 ] But we also know that one day the Lord will return. He will ride, come down, condescend on a white horse with others, and he will judge the nations, and he will usher in a thousand-year reign of Christ, and then after the thousand-year reign of Christ, then there's a new heaven and a new earth, and if you will, a glorious future.

So I stand back here in terms of timeline. This is where Zechariah is.

He is writing prior to the advent, the first come of Christ, and he is writing into the future. Again, he's writing to Israel. Let's frame a little bit where Zechariah is in timeline.

He has, he's among the returnees from Babylonian captivity. He has returned with them, and he is writing to the people of Israel to encourage them to remain faithful to the Lord.

One night, Zechariah has eight visions, and in these eight visions, a few things are happening. The Lord is communicating to Zechariah a plan to restore Jerusalem, a plan to purify the nation of Israel, and to usher in the Messiah.

[ 4 : 12 ] Those are the three kind of concepts that these visions that Zechariah has. Today, we have the opportunity to look at the fourth vision, and so today we're going to see the fourth vision that Zechariah has, and there is a big idea that is in this passage that we're going to look at, and that is this.

The big idea of today's text is this. The Lord cleanses us as sinners to serve as priests, introducing others to the great high priest. That is going to be the theme that we're going to see today. The first part of the vision we're going to read now, we're going to catch a glimpse of what Zechariah saw in this fourth vision, and in my mind, this has a lot of essences of a courtroom scene. In a minute, we're going to read. You're going to see Joshua, the high priest. He is going to be the defendant, if you will. You have an angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Christ, the second person of the Godhead, who is going to be both a defense attorney and judge in what we're about to read. I'm just kind of laying the groundwork before we read it, and then you see Satan, this accuser, who is kind of the prosecuting attorney against Joshua, the high priest.

[ 5 : 34 ] You're going to see some attending angels, and you'll see the prophet Zechariah. He is mostly the prophet Zechariah. He's seeing this vision. In other visions, he participates in conversation a bit.

This time, Zechariah is just going to make one observation, and that's all we're going to see from Zechariah in this vision. So now let us read this fourth vision that Zechariah has together. Zechariah chapter 3, verses 1 through 5. Then he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the Lord said to Satan, The Lord rebuke you, O Satan. The Lord has chosen Jerusalem. Rebuke you. Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?

Now Joshua was standing before the angel and clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, Remove the filthy garments from him.

[ 6 : 38 ] And to him he said, Behold, I have taken away your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments. And I said, and this is the one time Zechariah participates in the vision, 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. There's an image that I tried to do my best to create, and you can kind of see in the dark shadows, and bear with me, this is the best I could do.

This is perhaps something that maybe Zechariah saw in the vision that gives you the essence of it. You have Joshua, the high priest, being accused, the finger being pointed at him.

You have Christ and some accompanying angels, and then you see the clean robe and the turban sitting on that he's going to be clothed with. This is kind of the essence of what I see, perhaps my closest idea of what perhaps, the essence of what the vision may have looked like to Zechariah. So let's kind of walk through this, and again, these visions are a challenge. Jay continues to be non-sympathetic and reminds me that it's my choosing to preach this book.

[ 8 : 08 ] Let's first understand who the characters are in this vision. It says Joshua, the high priest, was standing before the Lord.

It helps us to know who Joshua is. It mentions that he is the high priest. He is a well-known figure to Zechariah. Those are contemporary people. They lived at the same time period.

They would have known each other. Joshua is indeed serving as the high priest when Zechariah is prophesying to the nation of Israel. Joshua, the high priest, he's in the book of Ezra.

He's in the book of Nehemiah. His name means Yahweh saves. Joshua is the son of Jehozadek, and he has a grandfather whose name is Saraiah, and Saraiah, the grandfather who also served as a high priest, he was taken off into captivity to Babylon.

Saraiah was killed in Babylon, and so he was killed and martyred there. His father, Joshua, the high priest's father, so his grandfather was killed, taken into captivity, leaving his father as the high priest.

[ 9 : 23 ] His high priest fathered him while in captivity in Babylon. So for 70 years there in Babylon, somewhere in this time frame, Joshua is born, the high priest.

And so he spent the bulk of his childhood and his adult life living in Babylon captivity. So by the time they returned to Jerusalem, by the edict of Cyrus to return to Jerusalem, he returns there with Zerubbabel, the governor of Israel.

And so he returns now as the high priest. He's very influential. He appears to be a godly man. People speak of him in Scripture as a very godly high priest.

He's accompanying with Zerubbabel. And so by the time Zechariah shows up, now we're about 20 years after the return from Babylon, I imagine Joshua the high priest to be a very old man at this point.

70 years old or older likely is where Joshua is. He's this older godly high priest to the nation of Israel.

[10:35] That's who Joshua is. And that's his function. He's functioning as the high priest even in that day to the nation of Israel. Israel. And there is a problem with him.

The court scene continues. Joshua is on trial. And he is standing before the angel of the Lord, who is the pre-incarnate Christ, the second person of the Godhead.

And the prosecuting attorney, Satan, has a problem with him. And the problem is, and he's accusing him, and there's a reason.

But before we get to the reason for the accusation, let's first understand it says, the Lord said to Satan, Lord, rebuke you. So the Lord then acquits Joshua.

He absolves Joshua. He declares Joshua innocent. And Satan's rebuke, though, there's a reason for it, that Joshua is wearing filthy garments.

[11:43] He is wearing filthy garments. He is, the word for filthy garment there is, that's a very tame word for the Hebrew word that lies beneath it.

It's a very vile, and it's one of the, it's the most vile and loathsome word that the Hebrew language has for something that is filthy, that actually means refuse, garbage, or excrement.

So Joshua, the high priest, is standing there in a garment with excrement before a holy God. And so the Satan is accusing him, and that filthy garment is indicative of Israel's guilt.

And so, if you will, you have Satan, if we don't know the nature of the accusation, but he's standing there with this garment that is filthy, a very tame word.

The garment stands for the nation of Israel's sin, because, and Satan is probably saying something like, how could you, holy God, have anything to do with Israel, for she has sinned against you so grievously.

[13:07] Look at her garments. They're just indicative of who she is, Israel. Israel. And Joshua is personifying Israel. And how do we know that Joshua is personifying or representing all of Israel?

Because it says, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. So, you have Satan. Joshua is the person standing in the vision.

And yet, when the Lord speaks, he says, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem. So now we see Joshua is representing more than just himself, the high priest.

He's representing a whole people who live now in Jerusalem, all of Israel. So the Lord has chosen Israel. Rebuke you. I don't care what you have to say.

Those are my people. And it's not that, and it's not that Satan's accusation was not correct either.

[14:15] Yes, Israel had sinned, because they, they are, look with me in verse four. In verse four we read, and to him, behold, I have taken away the iniquity from you.

So it's not that the Lord is ignorant of the filthy garment for what they represent. Yes, that filthy garment represents iniquity. So take that iniquity away from Joshua, or take that iniquity out of Israel.

So then, we come to verse four, and the angel said to those standing to him, remove the filthy garment from him, and to him, he said, behold, I have taken your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.

And in the process, they must have forgotten the turban, because then Zechariah, I find his comment very funny, let them put a turban on his head. Hey, you got, you forgot one part of his outfit. He needs a turban.

Thank you, Zechariah. So they put a clean turban on his head, and clothed them with garments, and the angel of the Lord was standing by. So they remove Joshua's filthy garments that represents Israel's sin and guilt before the, for the entire nation.

[15:30] Joshua is clothed with rich garments, festal garments, pure garments, representing Israel's now purity associated with her forgiveness.

And Joshua is being given a clean turban on his head, symbolizing Israel's now joy, perhaps, and forgiveness and restoration that is now restored to Israel.

It is now complete. So that's the first part of the vision that takes place. So we see, and as I think of this portrait that we're given for Israel, I'm going to do something that I have a little reservation about.

I believe what just took place is a portrait of the gospel for us as Gentile Christians. However, I want to be clear, this is speaking about God and Israel, not necessarily us as Christians.

However, I want us to not, I don't want us to avoid seeing the beauty of the gospel even in this story. Let me, let me share with you how is the gospel seen?

[16:48] How do we get to enjoy the very same thing that happened to Joshua with these filthy clothes? It foreshadows the forgiveness of sin of his redeemed people.

We begin with our position before God. We are guilty. We are defiled. Like Joshua, we come into this world dressed in filthy clothes, but our filth is not merely external, but internal.

We are sinful. Our sinful, we are sinful in our guilt. We are sinful in our corruption. So not only what we have done, but who we are is sinful.

We are morally corrupt, condemned by nature, enemies of God. All of humanity comes into this world that way. And Satan's accusations against us are not baseless.

They are accurate. A holy God should have nothing to do with humanity. And we are properly condemned. Additionally, the law of God condemns us.

[17:47] And the sin of Adam that was transferred to all of humanity condemns us. But then we see God's initiative. Joshua says nothing. Joshua does nothing.

Humanity cannot say or do anything to earn God's favor. Humanity can do nothing to save itself. Mankind can do nothing to remove our guilt before a holy God.

God silences the accuser, not because humanity deserves it, because of his choosing. God's grace. He chose humanity and saved mankind.

God is motivated by his love. For God so loved the world that he gave his son. And by his grace, we are saved. His unmerited, unearned favor.

God offers salvation to all and many and chooses to rescue many. Then what do we see? We see that sin is removed and righteousness is given.

[18:49] Then comes this decisive act in what we saw with Joshua. Our filthy garments are removed. Our iniquity, our sin, our rebellion against God is taken away through faith in Jesus Christ for his person and work on the cross.

Not just taken away, but God puts our sin on his son, who bears our sin in our place. Our guilt is not ignored. It is removed through substitution.

Jesus dies in our place on the cross, bearing our sin, but that substitute doesn't just stop there. In our story in Zechariah, Joshua is given a new, fresh, clean garment.

In exchange for our sin, Jesus gives us his righteousness or imputes his righteousness. Christ's righteousness is then credited to us. And when God looks down upon those who are saved, he sees Christ's righteousness.

That is true for all who place their faith in the person and the work of Jesus, his work on the cross.

So we read in 2 Corinthians 5:21, we read this, but for our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[20:08] So for those who have believed in Christ and the forgiveness of sin, we now stand accepted before God, not because of our own works or our own doing, but because we are clothed with another's righteousness, Christ's righteousness.

So to summarize, we are guilty and defiled. God acts by his sovereign grace. Our sin is removed, we stand acquitted, and Christ's righteousness is now clothed to us.

And the accuser is defeated and he is silenced. So while this is Joshua, this is Israel, this is that, I think it's a beautiful picture, a foreshadow of what Christ did on the cross for all of mankind, for us who believe.

So, the first part of the vision, I see it as God cleansing Israel from her sin, and now we're going to get to a part of the vision that is the restoration of Israel.

And so if you would read with me verses 6 through 10, we'll complete the vision this way. This is how the vision concludes in our text. 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 to accuse, I'm sorry, I will give you the right to access among those who are standing here.

[21:48] Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for there are men who are assigned. Behold, I will bring my servant, the branch, for behold, on the stone, I will have set before Joshua on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts.

I will remove the iniquity from this land in a single day, and in that day, declares the Lord, everyone will invite his neighbor to come under the vine and under his fig tree.

And this is speaking of the restoration of Israel. So Israel is cleansed. Now what's the restoration of Israel look like? Again, I want to go back to the high priest or the big idea.

I think it's on your outline card. The outline card says something like this. The Lord cleanses sinners to serve as high priest to introduce others to the great high priest.

So let's look at how this restoration of Israel occurs. There, I believe, verse seven is probably the hinge verse in this vision.

[ 23 : 01 ] It is probably the most important verse, verse seven. There are two conditions with three blessings. The two conditions in the verse are as such.

If you walk in my ways and you keep God's requirement. So if the pattern of one's life is pleasing to the Lord and you are faithful to perform your priestly duties, Joshua, then you will have three blessings.

And what are the three blessings? Notice there in verse seven, it says, then you shall, and it says, rule my house, have charge over my courts, and I will give you the right to have access among those who are standing here.

To summarize, you could say it this way. You will have the privilege to govern God's house. God's house being the physical temple. You will have the privilege to govern God's house.

Again, these are promises to Israel. The privilege to govern God's house. Have charge of his courts. So what did the, what will Israel have the privilege to do?

[ 24 : 05 ] To guard the temple from idolatry and other religious defilement, to protect it from any religious defilement whatsoever. And then thirdly, to receive a place among those standing here.

And what is that? Those standing there were angels. And what do angels have is they have access to God. So you'll have the privilege to govern God's house, Israel. You'll have charge over his courts.

And you'll have the free privilege to have access to the Lord. That's the promise. That's the blessing that you'll have. And I want you to see in principle form here that obedience always is accompanied by blessing.

That, that is for us. That is for Israel. That's for all of us. That obedience is always accompanied by blessing. Notice here, these are conditional. Here's two conditions, but here's three blessings.

Here's two conditions. Here's three blessings. So if you will, God is saying to Israel, hey, if you obey me, you'll have, that obedience will be accompanied by blessings.

[ 25 : 09 ] Now why is that hard for us to embrace? Because often we want to see blessings in this lifetime.

Number one, and we see blessings, we want to see blessings in the physical realm. So we want to see money. We want to see, we see blessings in the physical realm.

If it's related to money, we want to see resources. We want to see relationships restored. And, and we want to have good health. And so, what's hard is to see that blessings also can be in the spiritual realm, not just physical realm.

Secondly, we want to, what's hard for us to see obedience being rewarded with blessings, and it always is, but oftentimes we want to see it done in this lifetime.

Perhaps some of the blessings that we'll receive are in a lifetime to come, and you may never see the blessing in this world for your obedience unto the Lord.

[ 26 : 13 ] Because, and why do I mention, make mention of that? Because sometimes your obedience will cost you. You lose your job because you took a stand for Christ.

It may cost you a relationship. It may, it may cost you financially to honor and follow the Lord and live a life of generosity.

You may not see the rewards of the physical world in this physical realm, and you may not see it in this lifetime. But obedience is always accompanied with blessing.

This week, I had an opportunity to share a time, a cup of coffee with, a lunch rather, with a young man who has sinned grievously.

And by the way, I want to make mention, I love this man dearly. He and his wife, they are dear friends. His sin has been made public, and his sin even has cost his wife much.

[ 27 : 26 ] And yet, they have an amazing relationship with each other. They've been able to talk about the sin. They've been able to talk about the cost of the sin, the nature of it.

Their communication is most married couples would long to have. In talking, he and his wife this last week had an argument.

And his wife spoke a hopeful word, a hopeful word, to him and wanted his best for the future.

But because of his area of sin, it struck at a sensitive area, and so he spoke against his wife in very harsh terms.

And he even said to his wife, don't ever bring that up again. To the best of their ability, they reconciled that night, but his response to his wife ate at him all day long the next day.

[ 28 : 38 ] And he wanted to, he couldn't wait to get home after work to be fully reconciled to his wife. And he shared with her, I retorted back to you in my anger.

I retorted back to you, it surfaced my insecurities. I responded out of my shame. and please know you can bring that topic back up anytime you want to, and I am so sorry.

Would you forgive me for my response? He spoke at a heart level, he had tears in his eyes, and I shared with him. I said, sir, most spouses would die to have the kind of relationship you have with your wife, but yet few enjoy.

Meaning, they talk at a heart level that few marriages I know ever do or will. I shouldn't say will, do, and I pray will.

For you, it would be this way, will, future. So, but what am I saying? Why did I illishare that? I was thinking about that conversation with him, thinking about this principle that obedience is always accompanied by blessing.

[ 30 : 01 ] He, he, he obeyed the Lord and confessing his sin and being reconciled to his wife. He should not have responded the way he did, and yet, the way he reconciled and the way his wife received him, it's a very beautiful thing.

But not all acts of obedience will be rewarded in this lifetime or physically. They may be spiritual blessings or relational. Okay, getting back to our text, we're left with a, yeah, we'll call it a problem. My question is, when have these events happened for Israel? If this is the cleansing of Israel and the restoration of Israel, when, in verses 6 through 10, can we say those things have happened? When will they be the guardians of the temple? When will they be, have access to the Lord? When will Israel do that? Number, number two, in verse nine, notice, when, it says, when will he remove the iniquity from them in a single day?

And when, in that day, verse 10, will they have the opportunity to invite one's neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree? If you go to Israel today, and you ask, and by the way, there are seven names for the Lord, the servant, branch, and stone, and so when will they embrace Jesus as the Messiah?

[ 31 : 40 ] If you go to Israel today, and you are, you're to ask an average Jewish person, who is Jesus Christ? You will not see all of them embracing Jesus as the Messiah.

They do not see him as having come the first time. They will, they, so some, let me say it this way, some say for the nation of Israel, and there's a theological category for this, some churches and some theologians would say, well, sin was forgiven in a day, and Israel had access to the Lord when Christ, in his person, in his work on the cross.

I accept that. My understanding though of this is when will this be, when is Israel, is there a temple, are they in the courts having access to the Lord, and are they serving in the temple today?

I don't think so. So when I think about how does this passage relate to Christ, I'm back here with Zechariah, he's looking into the future, he sees the work of a Messiah that's going to do this work, and the restoration of Israel, and so in my understanding, I would say it this way, are we talking about the first advent of Christ, or are we talking about the events surrounding the second advent of Christ, when does this, the things of this vision, when will they occur for Israel?

And I'm going to argue for the second advent, and I'll do it this way. Verse seven, again, I said is probably the most critical verse in our passage.

[ 33 : 23 ] It talks about, they shall rule in my house. Israel will be given charge in the temple of God. First of all, there's no temple of God on the surface of the earth today.

Second, they will have charge of my courts. Israel will have be in charge to make sure there's no defilement in the temple in some day. And thirdly, they will have free access to the Lord.

When will this occur for the nation of Israel? Again, this is talking about the restoration of Israel.

After Israel is cleansed, she's then going to be restored. When will this happen for Israel? I want to go to the events surrounding the tribulation.

One of the main causes for the tribulation or the purposes of the tribulation is to purify Israel. Israel has rebelled against her God. And so one of the purposes of Israel is to judge Israel for her rejection of Christ as the Messiah as a nation.

The events of the tribulation start as such that there's a signing of a peace treaty with Israel by the Antichrist to start the tribulation. Three and a half years into the tribulation, the Antichrist will break that peace treaty with Israel.

[ 34 : 39 ] In that event, we read in the book of Matthew, the gospel of Matthew, we read this, Matthew chapter 24, 15. And this is three and a half years into the tribulation, we read, and when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, let me share with you what the abomination of desolation is, the Antichrist will set up an image in the temple of God as himself to be worshipped instead of the Lord of heaven, instead of Christ.

So this abomination of desolation, this image of the Antichrist is put up in the temple, and it says, standing in the holy place to be worshipped as God, and then verse 16 we read, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let the ones who are on the housetop not go down and take what is in the house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back and get his cloak, and alas, for the woman who are pregnant, and for those who are nursing infants in those days, pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath, for then there will be a great tribulation, for such has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, never be, and if those days had not been cut short, no human would be saved, but for your sake, the elect, those days will be cut short.

I hope you read in those verses a sense of urgency. When you see that image get in the temple, the abomination of desolation, when you see the image of the Antichrist put up there, and to be worshipped as God, you flee to the mountains.

Do not go back to your home, don't get your cloak, and pray, oh, for you who are pregnant, and nursing babes, that that day of fleeing is not on the Sabbath or in the winter. And you say, well, what's the big deal?

And if you go to Israel today, and they happen to be on the Sabbath, all bus lines are closed, shut down, it's the Sabbath. You can't flee on the Sabbath.

[ 36 : 32 ] It's really difficult, and especially if you're pregnant. I have seen a few pregnant women move, and they're just encumbered, we'll just say. And it says if those days had not been cut short to three and a half years, no man would survive.

And when you read the book of Revelation, in one of the judgments, a quarter of the earth dies. In another judgment, 33% of the world dies. By the end of the tribulation, at least half of the world's population is dead.

Then, at the end of the tribulation, the Lord descends on a white horse, and he judges the nation, he makes right.

And we read about Israel's future in Jeremiah 31 verses 31 through 34. We read this. Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I'll make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

Notice the target audience. Who is he going to do this for? The house of Israel and the house of Judah. Israel. Israel. And I will make them a covenant that I made with their forefathers on the day when I took them in the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

[ 37 : 59 ] My covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant that I make with them, with the house of Israel. Again, who is the covenant that he's making to?

The house of Israel. After those days, declares the Lord, I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor or each his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they all will know me. From the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord, and I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

When Israel finally recognizes Christ is their Messiah, it will be abundantly obvious by the way he rides his horse, none will compare to him. They will embrace them as their God, and they will be his people, and in that day, when all Israel will be saved, in that day, right here, in the timeline, sorry, I'm referring to a timeline of events, in that day to begin the millennial reign, you won't have people in Israel saying, oh, know the Lord, Lord, you don't have to teach anyone, know the Lord, it says, for they all will know me, all of them, all Israel will know, you will not find a Jewish person who doesn't know the Lord, amazing, and in that day, the temple will be built, and then Israel, who gets to be in

the court, who is the one that gets to guard the court, who, now those events that are written in Zechariah that we just read, they will now take place for Israel, and they will have access to their God, for he is sitting in

Jerusalem, and remember from last week, if you were here, that's when the lion will lay down the lamb, the animal order will be, there's no more carnivorous activity, you can play with snakes, venomous snakes, they're no longer venomous, anyway, that's last week, go watch the sermon, apparently, so anyway, going back to Ezekiel 36, verse 28, we read something like it, let me make another further point, Ezekiel 36, 28 through 30, you shall dwell in the land that I give your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God, and I will deliver you from all your uncleanness, and I will summon the grain, and make it abundant, and lay no famine upon you, and I will make the fruit of your tree, and the increase of your field abundant, and you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations, notice how kind God is being toward Israel, he says, I will be with your father, and you shall be my people, and I will be your

[ 40 : 47 ] God, this is speaking to Israel, and he says, and I will summon the grain, and make it abundant, and so then we get to Zechariah, and we read the bottom of Zechariah, our vision that he had, what's the last thing we read about Israel, it says, every one of you will invite his neighbor under his vine, and under his fig tree, why?

Israel's living in a season of abundance and peace, you could just sit under your fig tree, and under your vine, and invite your neighbor and say, hey, have a cup of coffee, because it's ushering, when the Lord comes, and at this time, he ushers in a season of peace and prosperity, and you just invite and say, you don't have to say, know the Lord, everyone knows the Lord, if you're in Israel, and you're sitting under your vine, you're enjoying the fruit, so in my mind, when Zechariah is writing about this event, he's looking into the future, and he's trying to encourage the nation of Israel, he is first telling them how Israel will be cleansed, and then he's going to talk, he's writing to them about how they will be restored, and in my mind, I have it in this time frame, after the Lord returns. So how does this apply to us today? Let me go back to our principle, and read one verse, and we'll close.

You think, well, okay, Scott, but how does this apply to the New Testament church of our day? Great question, that was the question that I labored over all week, and again, this is why I just came up with my big idea of just saying this, the Lord cleanses sinners to serve as his priests, to introduce others to the great high peace.

Remember what Israel will be doing. Remember from last week when I said, come up to the house of the Lord. Come, come up to the house of the Lord. Israel will not be standing as gatekeepers.

[ 42 : 44 ] Nobody can come see our Messiah anymore. No, Israel wants to be in the court of the Lord, saying, come, come up to the house of the Lord, be taught by him. And so, we read our role as the New Testament church today.

First for Peter, first Peter 2, 9, but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into the marvelous light.

Notice, one of the privileged titles, if you will, that we receive, this chosen race, for those of us who know the Lord, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own possession, notice we're a royal priesthood, just like Joshua, in our story.

But the purpose, I want you to see with me in 1 Peter, you have been given this royal title for one purpose, to proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The privilege of being a part of the royal priesthood of those who have believed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin are now incorporated into this royal priesthood, but we have that title, comes with responsibilities to proclaim the excellencies of him.

[ 44 : 31 ] And so we, just like Israel in the future, today get to say, come, meet the Lord, have your sins forgiven. It's done by believing in this life, death, and resurrection for the forgiveness of sin.

I plead with you to believe these things. I urge you to, and that is our responsibility today. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this. Thank you for your word. I thank you for the truths of it.

Lord, I thank you that you have, I thank you that the future is known, that it is not, there are aspects of it that are a mystery, but there are much of what the future holds that are known because you've loved us so much you've told us.

So thank you for your word. I pray that we would be a people who are unashamed to proclaim the excellencies of you.

[ 45 : 49 ] How beautiful you are to forgive sin out of your love for humanity and how much you offered yourself up for those who believe in your life, death, and resurrection to forgive sin.

Lord, you're too good and too kind. I pray that this week we would be amazing conduits of love for your people and for people to share with them what you have done for us.

We love you and thank you and it's in your name we pray. Amen.