

Old Testament Sermon Outline No: 5

Subject: The guilty reprieved

Textual context: Zechariah 3

Introduction

The picture Zechariah paints is where the high priest of Israel, Joshua, is standing before the Lord in filthy rags with the prosecution (Satan) standing at Joshua's right hand to accuse him. The filthy rags indicate the corruption of Jerusalem. Joshua was the high priest as shown in Hag 1:1 we read, 'In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest

In this vision, Joshua was representing both the children of God and Jerusalem. They have sinned and become unrighteous and in consequence under judgement. Satan, as always was ready to accuse Joshua but the Lord intervened and reclothed him in new priestly garments.

Sermon Outline

1. Present interpretation

Joshua represents the sinner standing before God in judgement. The filthy rags he wears are his own righteousness as seen by God. Isa 64:6 says 'But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness's are like filthy rags;'

The sinner stands condemned because there is nothing he can do to exchange his garments. The prosecution have an overwhelming case against the sinner. Satan leading for the prosecution has all the advantage he needs so the results of the case are clear. The prisoner is guilty. There is something strange about this court. There is no help for the defence of the prisoner. He must try and defend himself.

2. Satan as prosecutor.

In the Hebrew, Satan means 'adversary'. He is the accuser of God's people. In Job he appears among the angelic beings and accuses God of protecting Job from his advances (Job 1-2).

In the New Testament this is known as the Devil. It was him who carried out the temptation of Jesus (Mt 4:1-11). Satan rules the world powers as seen in Mt 12:25. However, his power is limited to God's overall authority. The Devil is a spirit, confirmed by Paul in Eph 2:2 "the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience."

Satan can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). He is therefore serious adversary to the Christian. 1 Peter 5:8-10

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. However, if we resist him and remain steadfast in the faith, he cannot harm us.

3. The Trial

For the Christian, there is no contest as our adversary stands to his feet the judge intervenes and says he can find no case against the prisoner. The reason is the prisoner is dead and an indictment cannot be brought against a dead person See Rom 6:2.

In Rom 6:11 we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. The penalty for our sin has been born by Jesus Christ and the judge sees the prisoner through Christ and declares him innocent.

4. New clothes

We are clothed upon in Christ. We are now a kingdom of priests and kings unto God. We can minister from within the holy of holies by the blood of Christ. We are indeed free from the bondage of sin.

Final point. Notice that the Judge is also our advocate so Satan cannot influence in our lives unless we allow him to have access.

First submit yourselves to God and, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' Jas 4:7