

Zechariah 3:6-10

Introduction

As Christians, we need to be precise in our theology. This is particularly important when it comes to the biblical doctrines of Justification and Sanctification. It is essential that they are not confused. Whilst we must rightly and properly distinguish between justification and sanctification, we must never totally disconnect them.

Summary

In Zechariah 3:6-10, Joshua, the High Priest, fully justified by grace alone, is immediately called to the life of walking in God's ways.

1. Required Obligations vv. 6-7

Zechariah 3 is a very helpful passage to see how the doctrines of justification and sanctification are to be rightly distinguished but still properly connected.

In Zech 3:1-5, we see how a believer is justified before God. As the scene continues to unfold, however, we immediately proceed to sanctification (**Zech 3:7**).

Joshua is saved by grace, and then given commandments he must keep.

Joshua's call to sanctification is expressed in terms of two obligations: to "walk in my ways and keep my charge" (**Zech. 3:7**). The first refers to personal godliness.

The second deals with official faithfulness in ministry.

Ministers, like Joshua, must be faithful both personally and in their office to expect God's continued blessing. All believers also, are to be faithful on a personal and corporate level to the ways of God as revealed in his Word.

Two rewards are associated with obedience to these condition (**Zech 3:7**). The first one has to do with Joshua remaining in his position of authority. The second privilege is access to the heavenly courts of God.

2. Signified Advent vv. 8-9a

Joshua and his' fellow priests present a prophecy of the Savior to come (**Zech. 3:8**).

God then makes a great promise of what He is going to do in answer to Joshua's need of grace: "Behold, I will bring my servant the Branch" (**Zech. 3:8**). In (**Zech 3:9**), the Lord refers to "the stone that I have set before Joshua." These are all Old Testament descriptions of the Messiah: the Servant, the Branch, the Stone.

First, the promise to send "God's servant."

Secondly, this Servant is also called "the Branch."

What is said about the Branch clearly applies to the life and ministry of Jesus.

3. Seven Eyed Stone vs. 9b

The stone most probably relates to the rebuilding of the temple, one of the major themes in Zechariah.

Joshua and the priests are symbolic of what is to come.

Here, Joshua serves as a sign: in his priestly office pointing to the priestly character of the Messiah. Hence the idea that this stone most probably refers to the cornerstone for the rebuilt temple foretold by Isaiah (**Isa. 28:16**).

The seven eyes in Zechariah's vision speak of the Holy Spirit coming upon the Messiah, providing him divine power and insight, which is exactly what happened in the life of the Lord Jesus at the time of his baptism (**Matt. 3:16**).

The Lord also says that he will engrave an inscription on the stone (**Zech. 3:9**).

This probably indicates that God will beautify this stone the way an engraver does.

The Branch and the Stone speak of the two offices that are joined in Jesus Christ.

The Branch referred to the Davidic kingship that would be restored. The Stone was the foundation for the temple that would be rebuilt. Both of these offices, the kingly and the priestly, are united in the Servant whom God promised to send.

4. Promised Blessing vv. 9c-10

The chapter ends with two great promises.

The Lord prophesies to Joshua two wonderful blessings that result from God sending his Servant, who is the royal Branch and the priestly Stone: "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" (**Zech. 3:9-10**).

From Zechariah's perspective, these were both yet to come.

What is yet to come on a cosmic scale is already a personal reality for all who join themselves to Christ by faith. Even in a spiritually barren world, we have the privilege of inviting our neighbors to join us beneath the vine and fig tree of God's saving blessings through faith in Jesus Christ.

Understanding this relieves our anxiety over the Bible's requirement that believers live in obedience to God. Yes, there are conditions we must fulfill if we are to have our sins removed and if we are to dwell in the blessing that God offers.

We must trust Christ as Savior for justification and obey Christ as Lord for sanctification.

God's plan for salvation was not to redeem Joshua and then sit back and see what he and his fellow Israelites would do.

Instead, the vision directs us to the greater Joshua who would come, Jesus Christ.

This is the lesson of this marvelous vision: not that salvation depends on our faithfulness, but that God sent his own Son, Jesus Christ, to be the servant who would come as the royal branch and the priestly stone, through whom forgiveness and blessing come to us who believe, so that we will truly be God's people.