

## **Christ and His People in Zechariah (Chapters 1-3)**

By Stephen Kennedy

Zechariah whose name means “the Lord remembers” was a prophet who came from the priestly line and delivered these prophetic words to the people just after their return from captivity in Babylon. He was a contemporary of Haggai. Some have said that Haggai was concerned with calling the people to rebuild the temple of the Lord while Zechariah was offering encouragements to the discouraged people of the Lord and rebuke to those who thought they could claim God’s promises without obedience to His commands. Although these are decent basic summaries of these prophets and their message to the day these men also had much more to tell us.

As we have learned the early church often saw a three fold interpretation to scripture; the historical, for example, there was really a king David who was at one time a shepherd and killed a giant, second is the Spiritual interpretation which is where we might say, “how does this apply to my life today” and the deepest interpretation is the Christological. Christ told the Jews in John 5: 39 that they “searched the scriptures thinking that in them they have life but it is they which bear witness about me and yet you do not come to me that you might have life.” We all also know that after His resurrection Christ spoke to His disciples multiple times and opened the law, the prophets, and the writings or psalms, to them and showed how they spoke about Him.

We are all familiar with these thoughts and yet as I was beginning this study I realized a major point of ignorance on my part. There was an assumption that I subconsciously had concerning the threefold interpretation of scripture which severely hindered a good understanding of the passage. I had in the back of my mind a presupposition that the historical, spiritual, and Christological interpretations had to be different from each other. That they were almost in conflict with each other. If you were going to present the historical meaning then it could not be the Christological one and if you were to ask what it means for me today it would be neither historical nor Christological. I know that this is sad and a weak understanding of the scriptures at best. I think some of this mental block was my personal battle with being told by some scholars that the “original intent of the author” is the only interpretation of a passage but often this was simply denying the Christological interpretation. I know that those who push this idea are trying to guard against anyone twisting the scriptures to their meaning but the thing that bothered me is that many of the scholars who say that we must only teach what the original writer meant, think that they understand the writers intent and can truly interpret what they meant. But if Christ is the eternal Son and the scriptures bear witness about Him, and men like Abraham rejoiced to see His day, could it not be that the Christological interpretation is the intent. Were the prophets not intentionally pointing to our Lord and knowing that the temple, the law, and the sacrifices were simply to be followed because the shadow must reflect the form casting it? Could it then be that the historical and spiritual interpretation flow from the Christological? If we look rightly at the point of the book and indeed of the whole of scripture it is to teach us about Christ, to point to Him and then transform us into His image. So these three

levels of interpretation are not in opposition with each other but rather in total agreement and feeding off of each other. It is my hope to look at Christ in this book and that by doing so we may truly see what God spoke through Zechariah the prophet and that this word will affect our lives as we are conformed to the image of Christ today.

Zechariah begins his ministry with a call to repentance and that is followed by a series of visions then by direct prophetic utterances. Many of the messianic prophecies most recognize are in the last five chapters but I believe that this strand of pointing to Christ runs through the whole book and has a theme which would be good to discuss.

Why does the Lord give this particular vision to this particular prophet in these particular days? If you remember I began by saying the name Zechariah means “the Lord remembers”. What is it that the Lord remembers in this book? There are hints along the way that will point us in one direction and that is to the face of Christ. There is another man by the same name who blesses the Lord for remembering His covenant, His oath to Abraham and promised word to the prophets and holy ones. Consider Luke 1:67-79:

<sup>67</sup>And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:  
<sup>68</sup>“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,  
<sup>69</sup>And has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
In the house of David His servant--  
<sup>70</sup>As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old--  
<sup>71</sup>Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES,  
And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US;  
<sup>72</sup>To show mercy toward our fathers,  
And to remember His holy covenant,  
<sup>73</sup>The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,  
<sup>74</sup>To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies,  
Might serve Him without fear,  
<sup>75</sup>In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.  
<sup>76</sup>“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS;  
<sup>77</sup>To give to His people the knowledge of salvation  
By the forgiveness of their sins,  
<sup>78</sup>Because of the tender mercy of our God,  
With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,  
<sup>79</sup>TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH,  
To guide our feet into the way of peace.”

The promise is that He would visit and redeem His people, that He would deliver them, that He would give Himself to them, that He would raise up the horn of salvation in the house of David. The promise is Christ and the deliverance through Him, that the God-Man would come and crush our enemies and allow us to serve Him without fear. Remember throughout the book and this study that the Lord remembers His covenant and His oath, Christ Himself coming, defeating and possessing the gates of His enemies and blessing all the nations of the earth through Him. There are many promises and actions that the Lord takes in remembering words spoken in this book but all of these point to, and remind us that the Lord has not, nor will He forget the covenant, Christ coming and redeeming for Himself a people.

So I guess we should actually get into the text now. (read 1:1-6):

<sup>1</sup>In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo saying,

<sup>2</sup>"The LORD was very angry with your fathers.

<sup>3</sup>"Therefore say to them, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Return to Me," declares the LORD of hosts, "that I may return to you," says the LORD of hosts.

<sup>4</sup>"Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets proclaimed, saying, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds "" But they did not listen or give heed to Me," declares the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>"Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?

<sup>6</sup>"But did not My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, overtake your fathers? Then they repented and said, 'As the LORD of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.'""

The book begins with the Lord telling Zechariah to warn the people not to do as their fathers did and fail to listen to the word of the Lord because He is faithful to bring about what He promises. On one level we can see this as a parent telling one of his children not to do something which the child does and then gets punished for it. The second child, if he is wise, will see that his father is not one who makes empty promises of discipline but if he disobeys he will have to pay the consequences. On the other hand there is more here than just the Lord saying "don't make me spank you because you know that I will". The Lord says that the fathers, after seeing the Lord act according to His word, repented and said that He acted according to His words and according to their actions. Jesus told the Pharisees and the Jews that did not believe in him that they were failing to heed the words of the prophets because if they believed the prophets they would have faith in Christ. There were many who received the word that Christ was coming and

yet they twisted these prophetic words to mean what ever they wanted to tickle their ears at the time. Some used these words to say that their nation would be delivered from the oppression of one government or another and that they would be set up as the great nation that they believed God promised them to be. Some took these words to mean that they would have prosperity, and others religious power. Christ however was lowly and rejected by men, nothing that would attract men to Him and yet He was the fulfillment in every way. The prophets warned that men would not see Him for who He was, Isaiah said that He would be despised and afflicted. Should not the Jews have seen Christ and believed because of His suffering as a servant? They should have but they did not. Remember though that it is not because they were dumb or because they were just stiff necked idiots and we are much smarter than they. No these things had to be so that we could come in. Paul said, and even wept over the fact that the Jews, as a nation, had to reject their messiah and that because of this He would bring many people from all the nations to Himself. It had to be this way. But you, do not miss the word of the Lord. Listen and do not harden your hearts. As the Lord tells of His first coming in this book He also tells of His second, and as the Lord warns through the angel in revelation, blessed is he who heeds these warnings and believes the Lord because He is faithful to do what He has promised. The Lord remembers.

### **Zechariah 1:7-17**

<sup>7</sup>On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows:

<sup>8</sup>I saw at night, and behold, a man was riding on a red horse, and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine, with red, sorrel and white horses behind him.

<sup>9</sup>Then I said, "My lord, what are these?" And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "I will show you what these are."

<sup>10</sup>And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These are those whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth."

<sup>11</sup>So they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, "We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is peaceful and quiet."

<sup>12</sup>Then the angel of the LORD said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years?"

<sup>13</sup>The LORD answered the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words.

<sup>14</sup>So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion.

<sup>15</sup>"But I am very angry with the nations who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster."

<sup>16</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD, "I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it," declares the LORD of hosts, "and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem."

<sup>17</sup>"Again, proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.'"

It has been two months since the prophetic word written above and Zechariah begins having a series of visions. In these visions the prophet is almost led around by an angel which he refers to as the interpreting angel. This angel acts kind of like the guide that Ebenezer Scrooge received on his night of visitation, or a better picture might be like John in Revelation as he is often given an angel of whom to ask questions and to interpret the scenes unfolding before him. There is also another character that is in almost all of these visions, the angel of the Lord. Some authors have said that these are the angels Michael and Gabriel like in the book of Daniel where there is an angel of the Lord and then an interpreting angel and they are named as such. The problem is that if the angel of the Lord is Michael then we run into some major problems in chapters two and three as the angel is then referred to as the Lord Himself and has the ability to forgive sins. The angel of the Lord later says the He will come to the people and they will have the Lord dwelling in their midst. This issue of the angel of the Lord started messing with my brain and I talked with Ben about it and he gave a great bit of advise, "take the wings off and think about what the word angel means, isn't it just messenger" So if we remove what the word angel has become to mean for us and thought of this one as the messenger of the Lord, the one bringing the word of the Lord, then we might can get a bit further.

The vision begins with the prophet seeing a man, a rider of a red horse, standing in the midst of a valley with myrtle trees. This man is called the angel of the Lord. It is interesting to note some of the characteristics of this man. He sends out the other riders and receives report back from them concerning the status of the earth in verse 11. in verse 12 He intercedes for the people of God, and His prayer is effectual and brings back comforting words to the people. My first question was who was this man, this angel of the Lord, I did not want to see him as simply an angel and yet I had some difficulty in seeing him Christ for some reason. I was forced to wrestle with the passage in order to make sure that I was seeing Christ where He is but not

putting Him where I wanted Him. However Athanasus, Augustan, Theodoret, Justin Martyr, Robert Letham, Hengstemburg and many others encouraged me to see this in light of many other passages in which the angel of the Lord is a preincarnational appearances of Christ and this does not mean at all that He is a created being. Athanasius said the Arians twisted this passage we are discussing to say that Christ is an angel and therefore a created being, and therefore not God from before all time, eternally present with the Father. He said that they can pull such false doctrines from these passages because they have not wrestled with them, they have not toiled to understand the mystery. Only after we have wrestled can we accept the mystery. Brian taught on Sunday about the Orthodox Church and how they are more willing to embrace the mystery but when we hear these words we often think of some mindless, emotional, flighty acceptance of something we do not want to do the work of understanding. This is not at all what the early church fathers meant when they said that we must embrace the mystery. When Maximus the confessor said that we want to reach the point of unity with Christ that we move from the beating of His heart and will the things that He wills because of our nearness to Him, it is not out of ignorance it is out of depth that we embrace the mystery. As Brian said the liturgy of the Orthodox church that they do every service is deep. It has been developed over the past two thousand years and Maximus himself said that to get to the heart of Christ we must start at the doctrines, or truths concerning Him. So we will see the mystery of the angel of the Lord here as the preincarnate Christ, not leading us to say that He is created but rather confessing what has been revealed concerning Himself in all of the scriptures.

So, back to the passage. In verse 8 the man, the angel of the Lord is standing among the myrtle trees in a glen. Theodoret said that the Lord Jesus is standing among the myrtle trees in a valley to represent His people. He could have chosen a mighty cedar tree on the top of a mountain but He chose a little scrubby tree in the middle of a valley because in the eyes of the world we are small, foolish, and weak, but in the eyes of Christ we are lovely and He is very near to us. Theodoret also said that the reason His horse is red is because of the fury that He is storing up and soon to release on the earth. The other three riders report back that the world is at peace and this reminds us that Christ will come as a thief in the night, when no one expects Him. He will come when there is marrying and giving in marriage. He is waiting for the Father to send Him to collect His bride and to bring vengeance on the earth as we see in verses 12-17. The Lord reminds the Lord in a prayer of intercession that the people are still suffering and the time of their exile has been fulfilled. The Lord was to punish them for 70 years and He has done so. The world is at peace and the people of the Lord are still being afflicted. Recall, the Lord remembers. Christ is simply reminding the Father of His own promise and He then comforts the prophet through the interpreting angel that He has not forgotten His word but that He will come soon to deliver His own. It is important to see that the time of 70 years had been fulfilled. We often forget that Christ came at the right time to deliver the ungodly. There was an appointed time and He came not a day early or late. At the appointed time the deliverer came and in the same way there is a day appointed when Christ will come again for His bride. He will not be delayed a moment nor will He come too soon. Another way of looking at the 70 years is that 10 is a

number of testing and 7 is the number of perfection so 70 could be seen as a testing times perfection, or the perfect test. So after the appointed test, the perfect proving of His people the Lord will come to them.

Many of the church fathers compared the words of the Lord in verse 13ff with those of Isaiah 40 where the Lord says, "Comfort, comfort ye My people". The Lord speaks tenderly to His own and says that the day of their warfare has ended and her iniquity is pardoned and He is sending His messenger to prepare the way before His face. In verses 15-17 there are many preludes to the cry of the angel after the destruction of Babylon in Revelation but we will read it in chapter two as there are more parallels there.

Lets move on and look at the second vision briefly.

### **Zechariah 1:18-21**

<sup>18</sup>Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there were four horns.

<sup>19</sup>So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these?" And he answered me, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem."

<sup>20</sup>Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen.

<sup>21</sup>I said, "What are these coming to do?" And he said, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head; but these craftsmen have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it."

We know that horns are a symbol of power and they are symbolizing here the nations that have been used to deal a blow to and scatter the people of the Lord. The Lord then is going to bring His wrath against them and scatter them because they have dealt harshly with the people of the Lord. Again this points us to Revelation and the destruction of the great harlot after she has been so harsh and sought to ravage the people of God.

## Chapter 2

### **Zechariah 2:1-5**

<sup>1</sup>Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a man with a measuring line in his hand.

<sup>2</sup>So I said, "Where are you going?" And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is."

<sup>3</sup>And behold, the angel who was speaking with me was going out, and another angel was coming out to meet him,

<sup>4</sup>and said to him, "Run, speak to that young man, saying, 'Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it.

<sup>5</sup>'For I,' declares the LORD, 'will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.'"

Again we have an angel with authoritative power over the other angels and delivering directly the word of the Lord. This scene is almost identical to the one in Revelation 21. There is an angel with a measuring rod to measure the new Jerusalem in verse 15 and he gives a detailed description of the city and then we should look at verses 22ff (read) There is no need for a temple because the Lord is in her midst also there is no need for the sun or moon because the Lord is her light. The end of verse 5 says that I will be the glory in their midst. It also says in Zechariah that the Lord will be a wall of fire around His people and that the walls of a natural city will not be needed nor can they hold all of the people who will be brought in. The Lord is the protector of His own. We do not trust in kings or armies or walls for protection but the Lord Himself guards His people. Christ has brought a multitude to Himself from all over the earth and from many different ages, so many are they that will be written in the book that the cities with walls could not hold the multitude. There is also no need for fear because the Lord will be the wall around His own. The Lord being a wall of fire should bring to mind many passages such as the Lord going before His people as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Then when the army of pharaoh came against them by the sea in Exodus 14 the pillar of fire, interestingly enough called the angel of the Lord in this passage, moved behind the children of Israel and kept the Egyptian army from advancing until they had crossed the sea on dry land. Another even more Christological passage would be John 10 where the Lord says that He is the Good Shepherd and is also the door and guardian of His flock. So Christ says that He is the door and wall around His own. One encouragement for us today is that not only will the Lord be our protection on the day that He establishes His kingdom and the new Jerusalem is brought down for His own but Christ even said before His ascension the He is with us always even to the end of the age. The same one who went as a pillar of fire and cloud before the children of Israel, who defended them, who is the gate keeper of the sheepfold this one is with you guarding you today.

### **Zechariah 2:6-13**

<sup>6</sup>"Ho there! Flee from the land of the north," declares the LORD, "for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens," declares the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>"Ho, Zion! Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon."

<sup>8</sup>For thus says the LORD of hosts, "After glory He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye.

<sup>9</sup>"For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me.

<sup>10</sup>"Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the LORD.

<sup>11</sup>"Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.

<sup>12</sup>"The LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup>"Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for He is aroused from His holy habitation."

As I said earlier this prophet uses many words that are almost identical to those used in Revelation (read Rev 18:4-5,21-19:3) The destruction of Babylon, it is often very discouraging to live in Babylon, to live in this world where the great prostitute is the one that all the kings lie with, all the merchants trade with, all the prosperity seems to be hers and we suffer. But what does the prophet say and what does the Revelation tell us to do, flee from her, flee the country of destruction. What is true religion, to visit widows and orphans in their time of need and to keep oneself unstained by the world. Do not be the king who sleeps with the prostitute of the system of this world, do not be the merchant that trades with her, or does what is evil in order to prosper in her system, or else you will be destroyed with her and you will mourn her incurring the wrath of our God. Remember as Kirby has said, the sock will be turned inside out and you who were afflicted in this horrid system, you will be the one established over cities because of your faithfulness to Christ. On the other hand, we are stuck here for now. We are living in this world and yet are not of it, we are to be salt and light in a dark and rotting place and are to at the same time keep ourselves unstained by it. So to balance this hard teaching we should remember Dr Padelford echoing the words of another prophet, pray for the peace and prosperity of Babylon, for as she is at peace and prospering so do you have peace and prosperity. So we live this strange tension, flee the things of the world and yet recognize that you are in it and it must be so until

that day when all of the saints rejoice and this system, this mountain of the kingdom of the world is cast, flaming, into the sea. Hangstenburg in his Christology of the Old Testament encourages us to remember that the great nation and super power of Babylon was destroyed. The Lord brought about her destruction as was spoken by the prophet and yet as a reminder that this was not the ultimate fulfillment of the passage Israel was not set up as the great nation and Jerusalem was not the city to which all the nations flocked and she was not a place of peace. Rather she was simply placed under the next great power, on and on it went until at the time of Christ the Romans were over her and they scattered Israel to never really be gathered again until the 1940s. The nation of Babylon was crushed to encourage us that the Lord will be faithful to His promise but the nation of Israel was not elevated because this was not the fulfillment. We look to the day when the true Babylon is crushed and the true Israel of God is elevated and the Lord truly tabernacles among us. Take hope because the Lord remembers and shows us that He does even through the events of history and the rise and fall of great kingdoms.

The second thing that I thought we should see here is the mystery of the language in the passage. First the Lord is speaking then He says that by these mighty acts of destroying the system of the world and bringing many peoples to Himself will show that the Lord has sent Him. We are seeing the beauty of the Trinity. Augustan wrote a great deal about each person in the Trinity being equal in power and authority. He wrote that just because the Son humbles Himself to be sent by the Father it does not mean that He is some how less in power, authority and glory than the Father. In the same way the Spirit although sent by the Father and the Son, is no less. So in this language we see the mystery of the Lord both being sent and yet the great Lord over all things. The interplay between the Godhead amazes me, as it should. As Philippians 2 says the existed as God humbled Himself to be sent by the Father that we might be gathered in and called the sons of God.

The last verse in this chapter has many beautiful things contained in it. One is the awesome and terrible nature of the day of the Lord and how all flesh will be silent when the Lord comes to claim His bride and crush His enemies finally under His feet. When He rouses Himself from His holy dwelling it will cause men to silence their explanations and excuses but rather bow and confess the Jesus Christ is Lord and receive His judgment. For us, the elect bride, there is another view we will have of the day of the Lord's coming. Both His first and second comings cause us to be amazed and even dumbfounded that the Lord has gotten off of His throne to come to our defense, behold what manner of love the Father has given to us that we should be called the sons of God!

## **Zechariah 3**

**Joshua, the High Priest**

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

<sup>3</sup>Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel.

<sup>4</sup>He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, "Remove the filthy garments from him " Again he said to him, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes."

<sup>5</sup>Then 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, while the angel of the LORD was standing by.

<sup>6</sup>And the angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying,

<sup>7</sup>"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here.

#### **The Branch**

<sup>8</sup>Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you--indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch.

<sup>9</sup>For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

<sup>10</sup>'In that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.'"

Here we have some of the passages I talked about earlier as you can see the angel of the Lord speaks as the Lord and even removes the sin in the chapter. All of the church fathers I read were unified in seeing this chapter as being full of Christological truths.

As I read chapter three for the first time my immediate response is to see the angel of the Lord, or Christ character in the scene, removing the sins of His people and then placing on them the robe of His righteousness which Justin Martyr says is a perfectly acceptable interpretation given that Christ does do this for us but then you read on and see that Joshua is a picture or

symbol of the one to come called the Branch in verse 8 and it forces you to dig a bit deeper. The Lord speaks the word to Joshua and those who sit before him, or the high priest who have gone before him, that is revealed to us in the new testament, particularly the book of Hebrews. The priestly system was established to point to and teach us about the Great High Priest who was to come, Jesus the Christ. Gregory of Nyssa and Cyprian both connected this passage with Philippians 2 where Christ takes on Himself the form of a servant and suffers our death for us. They said that we should recall the garments of the priest. He bore on his shoulders and on his chest precious stones which represent the tribes of the children of Israel so that as he entered into the holy place he was literally bearing the sins of the people before the Lord. In the same way, Christ, our Great High Priest, bore our sins in His own body on the tree that they might be taken away from us thus the filthy garments in this vision. Christ then raises from the dead and is given the exalted place and the offering was acceptable and as it says in verse nine, the Branch, the cornerstone, removed the iniquity of His people in a single day. No longer will an earthly priest have to offer sacrifices which will only have to be repeated. The shadow is passed and the Son has come and the mouth of the accuser of the church and her Lord has been stopped because the Lord has chosen for Himself a people and bore her sins on Himself so that He could be both just and the justifier of the wicked.

The church fathers also made much of the name of the high priest of the day actually being the name of Jesus, or Joshua. Many of them actually translated the name as Jesus in their translations and then spoke of the promise given to Jesus that if He will be faithful with the charge given Him that He will be given to rule the house of the Lord. Christ was indeed faithful in His charge and He is the one who sits forever in the throne of David. (read Is 11:1-5, Jer 23:5, Ez 34:23-24) So the Branch is from the root of Jesse and is the descendant of David and is even called David. So in chapter three we see the Lord Himself giving prophetic utterances concerning Himself and how He would be the Great High Priest who would also sit on the throne as the descendant of David forever. Our Lord the Prophet, the Priest, and the King forever.

So, in closing, be encouraged the Lord Remembers His own which has been demonstrated historically in the fall of Babylon the nation and in the first advent of our Lord, therefore we can take hope that He has not forgotten our exile. We should heed the warning to not be like the fathers who did not hear or pay attention to the word of the Lord but we should flee the world, keep ourselves unstained by her and trust that He will come soon to bring judgment to the Babylon and protection within the true Jerusalem for His bride. He has taken our sin on Himself and has been exalted for giving us the robes of His righteousness. He is the fulfillment of the priestly system and sits enthroned because He kept the charge given Him. So may the peace of this great Lord we serve be with you this week.