

Joshua the High Priest

Scripture Reading — Zechariah 3:1-10

*“See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.”
Zechariah 3:4 —*

In the Bible, clothing is often a symbol of either sin or holiness. Joshua the high priest wears filthy clothes, a clear indication of his guilt. But when God forgives a person, the dirty garments of sin are replaced by clean robes of holiness.

This is what happens to Joshua in this vision. It’s also why the book of Revelation portrays the multitude of believers wearing white robes. They all “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14).

That Lamb, of course, is Jesus. It’s interesting that “Joshua” is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek name “Jesus.” In Zechariah’s vision, Joshua is the high priest who receives forgiveness, but in the New Testament Jesus is the high priest who gives it. In the Old Testament, high priests made atonement for sin by shedding the blood of animals. But as we read in Hebrews 9:11-12, “when Christ came as high priest ... he did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves ... he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood.”

When Jesus was crucified, he was both priest and sacrifice. He was the ultimate “Joshua” dressed in the filthy clothes of our sin. He took our guilt on himself, and his righteousness became ours. God removed our sin so that we could be “clothed ... with Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

Prayer

Lord, today we are reminded of how offensive sin is to you. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to put on Christ and to clothe ourselves in his holiness. We pray in his name. Amen.

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