

## Handling Accusation

### *The context of accusation*

One of the most notable examples of Satan accusing God's people is found in Zechariah chapter 3. We see Satan standing to accuse Joshua, the high priest, in the context of God's building, that is, where God is relating believers together in Himself. This reveals that wherever the building of God is taking place, you can be sure that Satan's attack will be there in the form of accusation against the saints. The accusation that is leveled at the saints is particularly aimed at their personal condition. This is the subtlety of Satan. His intention is to so weaken the conscience of the saints that their spirit will be affected to the point of disintegrating the building of God.

Joshua, standing there in his filthy garments, was not living for his own personal interests, but for God's building, the temple. Thus, when we see Satan standing there to accuse him, it is clear that this accusation is not just an individual matter. It is not merely on a personal level. This is accusation directed at one who had returned for the recovery of God's building. It is a unique kind of attack against the saints in order to so deflate their inner life, that their relatedness with each other in spirit would cease. Living under accusation from Satan will definitely cripple one's ability to be related in spirit for God's building.

When the enemy accuses us, he comes in to stir up an inordinate propensity to look at ourselves and our condition. Satan's goal is to accuse us in such a way that

it produces a sense of wanting to give up fellowship with the saints. So do not take this kind of accusation in a personal way. It is not merely your problem, especially when you are living for God's building. If our hearts are set on God's building, we have to expect that the subtle enemy will come to turn us in on ourselves with accusation over our condition — past, present, and future. But thank God for Zechariah 3. It exposes this kind of attack and shows us how to handle accusation from Satan.

### *Our position under accusation*

Zechariah 3:1 says, "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord." It will help us if we can visualize this scene. In the picture on page 2 we can see Joshua standing there with his eyes fixed upon the Angel of the Lord. Notice, Joshua is standing *before* the Angel of the Lord. He is looking in one direction. He is faced off, beholding solely the Angel of the Lord. This is his position.

The picture also shows us that Satan is standing at Joshua's right hand to oppose him. This means Satan is there to accuse him, to bring an accusation against him. So we have Joshua with his eyes gazing in one direction, while Satan is at his right hand accusing him. Satan's accusation is related to Joshua's filthy garments. In other words, Satan's accusation is not without some basis. Had Joshua been standing there without filthy garments, Satan would have had no ground to accuse

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him. But the fact that Joshua was clothed with filthy garments did give the enemy a basis to accuse him. Satan was attempting to divert Joshua's eyes from the Lord to his filthy garments. This is always Satan's way to accuse. He lays some specific charge against us about a specific sin that we have committed, and then he points his finger and pounds our conscience — all with the intent to turn us away from looking at the Lord.



In verse 3 Joshua's condition is described as "filthy garments" — garments splattered with filth. The Hebrew word translated "filthy" here is the same word used for "refuse" or human waste in other places in Scripture (Deut. 23:13; Prov. 30:12-13). This reveals the nature of the filth that was splattered on the garments. Nevertheless, Joshua is described as standing *before* the Angel of the Lord. This picture shows us the way to handle accusation. Despite our condition, our eyes should be on the Lord. Our condition has not changed. Our garments are spotted with real filth. But our eyes are not turned down to gaze at the filth on the garments. Our eyes are on the Lord Himself. This is the proper position to handle accusation.

We keep our gaze fixed upon the Lord regardless of thoughts in our mind that are seeking to persuade us to turn away. These thoughts are what Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 2:11 as "his [Satan's] thoughts." They are thoughts that agree with *Satan's way* of looking at our condition. While Satan is talking and accusing, trying to get into our mind to turn our eyes upon our condition, we are tempted to look down on the filthy garments. But we need to remain in one position — just keep standing *before* the Lord with our eyes fixed on Him. Keeping our gaze fixed upon the Lord releases the Lord Himself to deal with Satan, the accusing one. Handling accusation in this way is related to God's building. If we do not keep our gaze upon the Lord, we will look at our filthy garments and come under Satan's accusation. This accusation will in turn be transmitted into our relationships with the saints. We will start looking at their filthy garments, and become little satans to one another, accusing the saints in our minds. This destroys God's building. But hallelujah! Our eyes are upon the Lord. He is the One appointed to deal with Satan — "And the Lord said to Satan, The Lord rebuke you, Satan!"

### *God's way of looking at our condition*

Satan has a way of looking at our condition, but God has His own way of looking at our condition. In Zechariah 3:2 as Joshua keeps his attention fixed upon the Lord, He intervenes for him: "And *the Lord* said to Satan, *The Lord* rebuke you, Satan!" We may need to read this again to see if we read it right. "And the Lord said . . . The Lord rebuke you, Satan!" Satan was accusing based upon some real ground that could be found in Joshua's condition. But the Lord rebukes Satan based upon "the Lord." Satan accuses based upon our sinful condition, but the Lord rebukes based upon "the Lord." We must ask, which Lord? That is, which Lord tells which Lord to rebuke Satan?

### *The teaming up of the Triune God to deal with Satan*

Brothers and sisters, this is a most marvelous utterance from Jehovah because it reveals the economy of the Triune God. It is an utterance *from* the Lord *to* the Lord. This utterance unveils how the Lord rebukes Satan. When the Lord says to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you," this is the teaming up of the Triune God to deal with Satan. It is the teaming up of the Father and the Son to rebuke the accusing enemy. When we are standing helplessly before the Lord, with Satan at our right hand seeking to press our sins and condition against us, the Lord comes in to handle the situation. This is the Father and the Son teaming up to say, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan."

When we are under accusation, if we keep our eyes upon the Lord, we release the economy of the Father and the Son to deal with the accuser. Knowing how to handle accusation is crucial when God's building is emerging on the earth. If the enemy cannot frustrate God's building in outward ways, he will come in this subtle, hidden way to wound the boldness of our conscience and the buoyancy of our spirit so that we could not release Christ for the building up of the church. If he can put you under "something" that will deflate your conscience and cause you to turn your eyes off the Lord onto your condition, then the enemy has succeeded in that instance. So we need to see how the Triune God teams up to rebuke the accuser of the brothers.

When our eyes are upon the Lord, when we are looking at Him, the economy of the Triune God over us comes into effect. God's choice and justification over us and the Son's redemption for us become the way God relates to our filthy garments. The Father and the Son team up to rebuke the enemy over every charge and

accusation. This is exactly how Paul handled accusation in Romans 8. After he lays a solid foundation for a life lived in the Spirit in the first part of Romans 8, Paul then anticipates the accusation against that life in verses 31-35. When charges and accusations come against God's chosen ones, Paul says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" We have to know how God is for us. How is God for us? Do we know how God is for us? If we try to answer that question by considering our past history, our present condition, and our future prospects, we will surely fall prey to Satan's accusations.

### *How God is for us*

Listen to how God is for us. The truth will set our conscience free. In Romans 8:32 Paul says, "Indeed, He who did not spare His own Son." This is how God is for us. "But delivered Him up for us all." This is how God is for us. God is for us in such a deep and profound way that He did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up on the cross for us all. This has nothing to do with our condition. This has to do with the transactions of the Triune God over us. When it comes to dealing with accusation, it is a one-sided affair. Nothing is mentioned about our side — our condition. Everything that is said is related to *what God has done* and how God is for us. Satan wants to drag us into the realm of our condition, but God doesn't touch that realm. God only speaks of His choice, His justification, His redemption, His dispensing of Himself into us, and His present intercession for us. This is the realm where God is, in respect to us. "How shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" Oh, brothers and sisters, this is how God is for us.

Paul then asks in verse 33, "Who shall bring a charge against God's chosen ones?" In answering this question we need to look at both Zechariah 3:2 and Romans 8:33. In Zechariah, in the presence of accusation, the Lord says to Satan, "The Lord who has *chosen* Jerusalem rebuke you!" Then Paul, in the presence of charges, says in Romans 8, "Who shall bring a charge against God's *chosen* ones? It is God who justifies." From these two passages, we see what realm we need to be in when Satan, the accuser, lays charges against us through our own mind. God's defense of us is in the realm of His choice over us, not our condition. God is for us because He chose us.

When Paul boldly presents the challenge to the enemy, "Who will bring an accusation against God's elect?" the answer brings in the Father with His chosen ones, God's justification, and Christ with His redemp-

tive economy of death, resurrection, and intercession: "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (v. 34). Paul's answer to accusation reveals the double-team work of the Triune God. "Double-team" is a term used in sports when two defensive players team up against one offensive player to stop him. Two team up against one. This is how God is for us. God is for us based upon the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Who can challenge that?

"Satan, are you going to accuse Joshua about his filthy garments? The Lord rebuke you, O Satan. The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!" Here the Lord Himself handles Satan's accusation in the realm of His choice over us. The Lord does not defend or justify Joshua's filthy garments; neither does He explain why Joshua's condition is such. He does not request that Joshua come up with any righteousness of his own to off-set his filthiness. He only says that Joshua is a brand plucked from the fire. He is part of a "chosen Jerusalem." The Lord has Joshua's filthy garments removed, and He tells him that He will clothe him with rich robes (Zech. 3:2-4). This is the way God handles the accusations of Satan. So we need never come down to the level of our condition in the presence of Satan.

### *Don't come down to the level of your condition*

When we are accused over our condition, we may come down to Satan's accusing level and be tricked into negotiating with him. The moment we look at our filthy garments, we have already come down to his level. Remember 1 John 2:1: "If anyone sins, we *have* [present tense] an Advocate *with* [πρός / face to face with] the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Notice that this verse *doesn't* say, "If anyone looks at his sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." And it doesn't say, "If anyone makes an inward resolve to change his condition, we have an Advocate with the Father." No, it says, "If anyone sins, we instantly and continuously have an Advocate with the Father." This means that when sin affects our condition, and our garments get filthy, our position should be as absolute as the position of Jesus Christ with the Father — face to face. Keep your eyes on Jesus at all times, especially when your condition wants you to look someplace else!

When the Triune God comes on the scene, They are looking at those who have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. They see us glorified, all the way into the Holy City. This is just like how God

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# Our Desires

*The following message was given at a high school retreat.*

**W**e have been talking about making connections between our daily walk and our high calling. This morning I want to fellowship a little bit about making the connection in the area of our desires. The word in Greek for desires is “epithumea.” This word is translated in the New Testament as “desire,” “lust,” and “covet.” Often it has a negative connotation, as in the phrase “lust of the flesh.” But the word is not negative, in and of itself. Sometimes it is used in a positive sense. For example, Paul uses this word when he said that he had “the desire to depart and be with Christ” (Phil. 1:23). This means that God gave us the capacity to desire. Desire is not inherently evil. Desire is something that comes out of our emotion, which is part of our soul. God created us this way. God gave us the ability to desire things with our heart.

Our desire is a very potent part of our soul. In fact, we could even say that it is more powerful than our thoughts. Why? Because desire is what so often sets the direction of our soul. Our thoughts are always with us. But what really directs our life is our desires. Our actions are controlled more by what we want than by what we think. Our goals, our dreams, and our ambitions are fueled by our desires. Also, our desires shape and mold our soul. This is why Peter says, “Do not be conformed to your former desires” (1 Pet. 1:14). Our desires have a way of molding us, shaping us, directing us.

Now let me ask you, why did God give us the capacity to have desire? God gave us this capacity in order that we could desire Him. The greatest commandment is simply to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength (Mark 12:30). It is as if God is saying, “I gave you the capacity to desire so that you could direct your desire toward Me. I want to be the grand object of your heart so that you could love Me with all your heart.”

## *Only God Can Deeply Satisfy Our Desires*

God knows that He alone can truly satisfy our heart. Only God can genuinely fulfill our desire. I’m speaking to your deepest part right now. I know what will really satisfy your heart. I know deep down what will really make you happy. I know because I’m made just like you. It’s God. Only God can do it.

Perhaps some of you sisters believe that a nice marriage will satisfy your deepest desire. This was the case with my own wife. When we were first married, I discovered that she loved me more than she loved God. Of course, she loved the Lord. But her desire was more riveted to me than to Him. But do you know what she found out? After several months of marriage, she found out that a husband doesn’t satisfy. She found out that being married and having her own little home that she could fix up and decorate doesn’t satisfy. Getting new furniture, putting pictures on the wall, and having people over for dinner doesn’t satisfy. That is,

it doesn’t satisfy your deepest part. Only God can deeply satisfy. Other things can superficially satisfy. You’ll find that marriage, friendships, careers, education, achievements, sports, sex, entertainment, will make you happy on a shallow level. But deep, deep down inside you’ll be dissatisfied, even miserable. Why? Because only God can truly satisfy our depths.

What about the brothers? One of the brothers came up last night and said, “When I was a young person, I dreamed of being in the Olympics and of being a professional football player.” And right then brother Kani, who played professional football, walked up, sat down, and shared his testimony. Kani, would you just share, in a capsule form, what you shared with us last night?

*Kani: You know, we are talking about our desires, and the capacity we have to desire a certain thing. Well, it’s true for all of us. For me, what I wanted was to be a professional athlete. I spent my life doing it. Well, the day finally came when the coach told me that I had made the pro football team. I just sat there. I expected to feel very happy and satisfied. But I didn’t. And my lack of joy didn’t make sense to me — in my thought I should be happier. It wasn’t until I received the Lord that that desire was completely filled and satisfied.*

Be it professional sports or whatever long-range dream we may cherish, it will not satisfy the deepest part. Only God satisfies the deepest part of our being.

## *Satan’s Strategy with Our Desires*

Satan knows all this. In fact, he knows it better than we know it. He knows how our desires work. He knows how powerful our desires are. So Satan has a strategy to get at our desires. He has created a world system with a diverse array of things to pull at our desires. His goal is simple: to keep your desires consumed with things other than God. That’s his goal. And he will do whatever it takes to win our desires. What it is matters little to the devil. He has no scruples. He does not care. As long as our desires are not directed toward God, he’s happy. He has accomplished his evil goal. Thus, Satan has set up an entire world system to draw, pull, and tug at our desires. And the most remarkable thing is this: Satan has devised something for everyone. For every kind of soul, for every kind of flesh, for every kind of heart — he has something that matches. He has something that has the power to pull at your heart. Are you an intellectual kind of person? He has something for you. Are you a moody, melancholy person? He has something for you. Are you a carefree, fun-loving person? He has something for you. He has something for you in the music world, in the sports world, in the educational world, in the scientific world, in the fashion world, in the business world. Why does Satan go to all this trouble? Because he knows that if he can capture your desire, then he’s got the direction of your heart. And if he’s got the direction of your heart, he’s got you.

Now, when our desires get riveted to something in the world, that something becomes an idol. Anything that we set our heart toward in an inordinate way becomes an idol. And once it becomes an idol to us, then we begin to be conformed to it.

This is why Peter tells us not to be conformed to our former lusts, or desires (1 Pet. 1:14). Giving in to a desire for something may seem rather innocent in the beginning. It seems like you are getting into it and you're in control. But eventually what happens is that it begins to control you. It starts to take hold of you. There comes a point in time when instead of you reaching out to grab it, it reaches out to grab you. It's very slow, quiet, and imperceptible. But it is real and powerful. Eventually, you come under its power and you are conformed to it. You have to have it. You cannot get along without it. And whatever the object is, it has become an idol to you.

I think it would be helpful if we make a list of those things that tug at us, that pull on us. What items in the world pull on your desires? Let's not speak from the standpoint of theory, but from your personal experience. As high schoolers, what items in your lives compete with the Lord?

*Money.* We know that this is a great danger for adults, but what about teenagers? Is the love of money a snare for young people as well? Of course it is. The love of money, setting your desire on being rich and wealthy, is dangerous to any believer.

*Relationships.* Especially relationships with the opposite sex. This is something that pulls on our desire and our flesh. This is what the Bible refers to as "youthful lusts" or "youthful desires." Paul tells us that we must flee these lusts and desires (2 Tim. 2:22).

What else? *Music.* We all know what an incredible impact music has on young people's lives. We know how much power the world's music has over our desires. So many young people struggle with the temptation to turn on the radio or buy some CD's and listen to secular music. Have you experienced this? However, I know of few things in the world that can wreak more havoc in the spiritual life than the music of the world. Satan surely uses it. And Satan surely knows how to use it. Remember that as Lucifer the archangel, he once led the angelic hosts in worship, singing, and praise to God. He knows a lot about music. He knows how to employ music to pull out and engage the wrong desires — the desires of the flesh.

Then related to music are other forms of entertainment such as *TV, the movies,* and so on. These things too stir up the wrong desires within us. *Clothes, fashion, our physical appearance, and sports* are still other areas that stir up various desires.

*Careers.* The desire to be successful in a career. Do you really think that achieving a career goal will deeply satisfy you? Suppose you set a high goal for yourself — some sort of career goal. And suppose that you studied very hard and got a college degree, and perhaps even a graduate degree. Then suppose that you got a great job in whatever profession you chose, and over time you climbed up the organizational ladder until one day you were promoted to the position that you dreamed about for so many years. Do you really think that upon your arrival at such a position, your deepest part will be genuinely satisfied and happy. I don't think so. What can satisfy your deepest part? God. Only God can do that. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't set human goals for our lives. But we should be careful to never let that goal grab our desire and usurp our heart.

Okay, what else? *Drugs, alcohol, parties.* Do you think the Bible talks about this? Peter says in 1 Peter 4:1-3, "Therefore, the Christian Vol. 13, No. 3

since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose." That means set up a guard over your heart. Arm yourselves. "Because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts [or, desires] of men, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles." Do you see that word "desire" again? "Having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals." Peter is referring to the village festivals that were part of the ancient world where people would go from house to house, or tavern to tavern, just drinking and partying. It was a big festival drinking bout. Drinking parties in the streets. "Drinking parties and abominable idolatries." So the Bible talks about these kinds of things. And these kinds of things pull out the wrong desires in us.

What else? *My present job.* Not just my future career, but my current job. Whatever job we may have, we must ask, is there an atmosphere there which is incompatible with the Spirit? Is there a dark or worldly atmosphere that tugs at the wrong things in you? Are you frequently tempted or invited to sin there? If so, we should quit such a job and find a different job where it is easier to stay in spirit and enjoy God. We have to be careful about the kind of job we get. I remember when I first received the Lord. I was working in a restaurant at night. Soon thereafter, the Lord spoke to me about quitting the job. There was a dark atmosphere, which I was not sensitive to as an unbeliever. But as a believer, my spirit could feel the darkness. I became uncomfortable there, and I could tell that such an atmosphere would pull at the wrong things in me. So I had to quit. And God provided other jobs for me.

### *Making the Connection with Our Desires*

So, this is a list of some of the items that pull at our desires and are potential idols to us. Certainly there are many more items. But now we must make the connection. Turn with me to Mark 4:3-9. In this passage we find the parable of the sower. In this parable the Lord talks about the sower going out to sow and how some seed fell on hard ground, some on rocky ground, some among the thorns, and some on good ground. Then in verses 14-20, He interprets the parable. He Himself is the sower, and the Word of God is the seed. The different grounds represent different kinds of hearts. We could spend a lot of time in this parable, but I would like to focus on just one of the grounds in the parable — namely, the thorny ground, which the Lord interprets in verses 18-19. He says, "And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones that have heard the Word of God, and the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things . . ." Notice this phrase, "desires for other things." What do these desires do? They "enter in" and then they "choke the Word."

What is choking? Choking is simply a cutting off of our life supply. For instance, if I were to begin to choke someone, he would start turning purple. If I persisted, after a short time he would become lethargic, weak, and dull. And if I kept persist-

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viewed His people in Numbers 23—24. When Balak, the king of Moab, wanted to curse the children of Israel, God would only let blessing come out of the prophet Balaam's mouth. Numbers 23:21 says, "He [God] has not observed iniquity in Jacob, nor has He seen wickedness in Israel." This was spoken at a time when the condition of Israel was deplorable (cf. Num. 25:1-3). Even at that time, God did not come down to the level of His people's condition. He only related to His people according to His choice over them and His positive purposes concerning them.

### *God's love-choice*

Brothers and sisters, we have to rejoice that we are God's chosen ones. Who can be against God's chosen ones, either personally (Zech. 3) or corporately (Num. 23—24)? When it comes to the realm of accusation, what is true concerning me individually in my relationship with the Lord — I am God's chosen one — should also pervade my relationships with others. We are all under His love-choice. He chose us simply because He loves us. Deuteronomy 7:6-8 clearly reveals the *cause* of God's choice over us: <sup>6</sup> "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup> The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples." In other words, the Lord is saying, "I did not choose you because of your number, because of your condition, because of your potential, because of some quality in you." No. "But *because* the Lord loves you" (v. 8). This is the cause, the reason, for the Lord's choice over us. The cause is found within God Himself — He just loves us. Who can dispute this love? Paul says in Romans 8:35 and 38-39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . neither death nor life . . . nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Amen! His choice is a love-choice.

### *The need for higher sight*

When it comes to God's building, you cannot afford to get subjective over your personal condition. You are not just an isolated Christian trying to ward off the devil. You are a chosen, living stone in God's building to express His Son. Such a revelation gives you a higher sight than the condition of your garment. Such a vision will catapult you out of your morbid introspection into a fresh occupation with the excellencies of Christ and

God's eternal designs over you. It is difficult to convey how deep the feeling of the Spirit is over this matter.

Let us again consider the scene in Zechariah 3 and how the Lord reacted to Satan's accusation. Filthy garments? Yes. Bad condition? Yes. Satan accusing? Yes. Now let us hear from the Lord. What does the Triune God say about this? The Father teams up with the Son, and the Son teams up with the Father, and They say, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has *chosen* Jerusalem rebuke you." The accused one is a chosen one. We are God's love-choice. Do not regard yourself lightly. God's choice is stamped upon us. Paul says, "The solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: The Lord knows those who are His" (2 Tim. 2:19).

To turn in on yourself with condemnation is to merge with Satan's thoughts. God's thoughts are different. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." Then in Zechariah 3:2 the Lord says, "Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" God's thought is that we are chosen brands plucked from the fire. Yes, we were in the fire — the fire of the world, the fire of sin, the fire of filth — but God Himself came after us and plucked us out. Hallelujah! What did we do? Nothing in ourselves. We were just plucked from the fire. Even the Hebrew tense (hophal) for the verb "plucked" is passive. This means that it was all God's mercy and grace that sought us out, found us, and stirred us up to love Him and give our lives for the building of His house. This is how the Lord evaluates us as the stones for His building. So don't let Satan drag you down to the low level of your condition.

Now what are we going to do with Satan's accusations? Nothing. While Satan stands by, we, like Joshua, are going to watch God's handling of His chosen ones. Joshua did not take his eyes off the Lord. He was just standing *before* the Angel of the Lord, which indicates that he did not move. He was transferred from the realm of cleaning up his own condition to having his eyes fixed upon the Lord. This same scene is repeated over and over again throughout the Bible. When the children of Israel were bitten by the fiery serpents, they were told to look not at their bite but at the brazen serpent on the pole, and they would live (cf. Num. 21:8-9; John 3:14-15). And when the book of Hebrews says, "We do not yet see all things subjected to Him," we are not told to double our efforts, but to "see Jesus" (Heb. 2:8-9). And in Revelation, when the accuser of the brothers comes in to accuse the saints before God day and night, the saints are directed not to examine the validity of the accusations, but to enjoy the blood of the Lamb. Our

eyes are upon the Lord. This is our fixed position.

### *Positioned to let God speak*

From this fixed position, God begins to speak and deal with the negative situation. In Zechariah 3:4 the answer comes: “Take away the filthy garments from [Joshua]. And to him He said, See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.” Sometimes when you fellowship with a saint you just want to say, “See . . . See. Look at what Christ has done for you. He has removed your iniquity.” The sense of the Hebrew word translated “iniquity” refers not just to the sinful deeds themselves, but also to the guilt that comes with them. Iniquity includes the resultant condition of guilt that brings in a state of feeling wrong and accused. On the negative side, the Lord takes away the filthy garments; and on the positive side, He clothes us with rich robes. These robes are Christ Himself as our righteousness (Isa. 61:10; 1 Cor. 1:30). Hallelujah!

So we can see that the way to handle our sinful, guilty condition is to stay positioned — looking at the Lord. For example, we may come to a meeting of the church with our garments splattered with filth from the day. “Filthy garments” refers not merely to Joshua’s personal failure. It also refers to the contamination and the filth that was splattered on him because of his contact with Babylon. In the same way today, this generation is becoming more filthy and more contaminated so that you cannot even go to the grocery store without getting splattered with some filth at the checkout stand. But our experience at the grocery store is not just a personal struggle going on in an individual way, where we are trying to overcome this contamination. No, we must come out of that realm!

We must realize that Satan’s design is to disintegrate the building of the church. We are chosen ones for God’s building! The Lord has removed our iniquity in one day at the cross! Just stay positioned with an open mouth and say, “Jesus, I love You! Thank You for Your blood. Thank You, Lord Jesus! You have removed it all. You have done it.” While we are beholding Him, the Father and the Son team up together to rebuke Satan. The enemy is defeated. Hallelujah! God’s speaking spreads a table before us in the presence of our enemy. So in the presence of an accusing Satan, we are eating and drinking Jesus.

### *The issue of handling accusation God’s way*

When we handle accusation in God’s way, there is an issue — we enjoy His rebuking of Satan, His removal of our filthy garments, and His robing us in rich robes.

When God does a work over us in this way, then we hear His further speaking in Zechariah 3:6-7: <sup>6</sup> “Then 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 keep My command, then you shall also judge My house.” The word “judge” here is not just the typical Hebrew word for judge. It is a word that has the thought of contending. It means “You will contend for My house. You will govern My house.”

Look at the issue of God’s dealing with the enemy according to the divine revelation of the finished work of Christ, the efficacy of the blood, and our being fixed only upon Him and what He has done for us. Look at the issue of that — the filthy garments are removed, and the accusation of the devil over our condition is silenced. The result is that we will judge and contend for God’s house. We will govern His house. When we enjoy the Lord in this way, there is something that spontaneously rises up in us to contend for the church life. There is a jealousy in us for the protection of God’s house. We want to deny ourselves so that no member would be cheated of life because of us. You and I do not want to be a cause of life leaking out of God’s building. This is the issue of handling accusation in God’s way.

So how we handle the slightest accusing thought in our life becomes a major opportunity to keep ourselves fixed on the Lord, and to let Him rebuke Satan. We are not negotiating with Satan’s accusation. The way you can detect the enemy’s accusation is that it just eats away at you. It whittles you down until everything in your world revolves around *yourself* — “me, myself, and I” and “poor me.” Such a person in this condition has no concern for God’s house. But, like Joshua, when we know we are forgiven and robed with righteousness, we contend for God’s house and have charge of His courts. We watch and guard the courts of fellowship in God’s house.

Finally, in Zechariah 3:10 the atmosphere of such a church life is, “In that day, says the Lord of hosts, everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree.” Consider the atmosphere. You are not waiting to be invited by others. You are not saying to yourself, “I wonder if someone is going to pay attention to me. I wonder if I am going to be invited to sit under someone’s tree. No one said hi to me this morning.” No, the spontaneous reaction of life in the Spirit is, “*Everyone* will invite his neighbor.” This means that when Christ as the Branch grows (v. 8), and when He as the Stone has built us up together (v. 9), there is an absence of self-centeredness in our relationships. We are not easily offended. You find that you are

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automatically inviting your neighbor under your vine and under your fig tree.

What a picture of God's building! May the Lord deeply impress us with all these experiences in Zechariah, especially how to handle accusation in God's building. Why? Because handling accusation in God's economy directly affects our ability to be related to one another in spirit. Zechariah makes us aware that when we are in the building of God, Satan is there to tempt us to look at our condition, and to turn us away from gazing upon the Lord. But our position is fixed upon Him through our singing, our praying, and our meeting together. Then we just find ourselves in the homes of the saints — under the vine and under the fig tree. This is God's building today!

— Bill Freeman

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ing, he would eventually die. Choking cuts the life supply so that eventually you become dull, lethargic, insensitive, indifferent, and even dead to the things around you. Here is the connection we need to make. The Lord told us in this parable that permitting other desires to come into our heart will begin to choke the life of God in us. They choke out our fervent desire for God. This is the practical effect of opening the door of our heart and letting other desires come in. This is a spiritual law. It will happen to everyone who does it. God is no respecter of persons. He is not mocked. Other desires come in and those desires spontaneously begin to choke off God's desire within us for Himself.

### *Guarding Our Hearts*

So what do we do with these desires for other things? How do we handle them? As we have already said, our desires are so potent. They tug at our heart. They call at our heart saying, "Come over and try me. I'm so fun. You'll love it." It often seems that God is lost in the barrage of the world's cries to our heart. There are so many allurements, so many temptations, that God is often forgotten or neglected. Or at least we tend to struggle with these desires that compete with God. So what do you do?

First, the Bible tells us to guard our heart. This is an important connection — to guard our heart. Guard it like you've never guarded anything else in your life. You know how it is when you own something that is very valuable. Your natural tendency is to protect and guard it. You don't let just anybody borrow it or play with it or even touch it. You cautiously watch over it and protect it. You take good care of it. Now, *guard your heart just like that*. Set up a guardsman, a sentry, at the entrance of your heart. If anything comes along, inquire as a sentry would, "Who goes there? Identify yourself." After you have identified what it is, then decide in the spirit whether that thing should be allowed entrance into your heart. Just be careful. Be careful what you let come into your heart. Don't let anything and everything in. Don't leave your heart unguarded so that the devil can introduce just about anything he wants. Be careful. Be watchful.

Be watchful over even legitimate things. Legitimate things can also be dangerous. Even something like playing the piano. Pianos are not evil. Pianos are good. I thank God for pianos! How often we have enjoyed the Lord by singing together around a piano. But with something as good as a piano, we must be careful. Have you ever seen some of the concert pianists playing the piano? When they play the piano, you can tell that they go into another world. They are really into it. In fact, they have crossed the line where they have not just laid hold of the piano, but the piano has laid hold of them. They are not just playing the piano. The piano is playing them. Be watchful that something that is good and legitimate does not take hold of your heart to the point that it takes possession of you. Actually it's not the thing itself, like a piano, that takes possession of you. It's the enemy. You let anything into your heart too much, regardless of what it may be, and the enemy will use it to gain entrance. How do demons take possession of people? By people's desires. The heart is opened by desires. We throw open the doors of our heart and say "Come on in!" Piano comes in. But guess who's trailing right behind? The devil. Sports comes in. But guess what's right behind, holding on to the tail? "Excuse me, I'm coming in too." There are other things that come in. These are not innocent things. The devil would like to make them look innocent, but they're not innocent. And that's why if you let anything into your heart too much, it will begin to shape and conform and eventually control our heart. It will control your heart. So let us be careful about what we let into our heart. Let us keep our heart for God alone.

— To be continued

— Kirk Eland

## Internet Update

Please note the following *changes* made to our e-mail and internet addresses from the February issue of *the Christian*:

E-Mail address – MinWord12@aol.com

Web address – <http://www.thechristian.org/>

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