The Brand Plucked from the Fire
Zechariah 3:1-10

The survival of Israel as a miracle of God... One of the greatest miracles of our lifetime is the survival of the Jew and the re-establishment of the nation of Israel; the Jews are blamed for every problem in the Middle East.

The security of Israel from God... They are “the apple of God’s eye” (2:8); their land is “holy” (2:12); Jerusalem is “the center of the nations” (Ezekiel 5:5); they will never be uprooted from their land (Amos 9:14-15); yet today they are as a wayward wife (Ezekiel 16; Hosea 1-3); they will be the object of His wrath (Jeremiah 30:7) and His grace in the end times (13:1).

The support of the world for a sovereign state of Palestine in Israel... The UN blames Israel for the strife in the Middle East and calls for Israel to give up to the Palestinians her “Occupied Territories” and East Jerusalem for its capital; only then will there be peace.

The stand of the Palestinians for all the land... They do not want part of Israel, they want all of it.

The surety that God has not forsaken Israel... (Romans 11:1-2; 25-29).

The study from Zechariah of Israel’s struggles... Israel is “the brand snatched from the fire” (3:1-10); this is Zechariah’s fourth night time vision.

The Divine Choice (3:1-2)
The acknowledgment of Joshua (v.1a)… In the vision Joshua is Israel's high priest but he also represents the whole nation of Israel; in verse 8 he and his fellow priests are referred to as a “sign” or a symbol of the nation of Israel; he is both a real person and the symbol for the nation.

The appearance of Joshua standing before the Angel of the LORD (v.1b)… In the vision Israel is represented by Joshua standing before Jesus who is Israel's prosecutor and the One who will save Israel from her sins (v.4; Romans 11:26-27).

The attack of Satan on Joshua (v.1c)… Joshua is before the Messiah while Satan is at Joshua’s right hand; Satan hates the Jews; that is one reason for so much anti-Semitism; in this text we come to a critical junction in Israel's history; if Joshua is vindicated and his priestly functions accepted, then Israel is accepted; if Joshua is condemned, Israel is cast off; Israel's future is being determined in this vision.

The admonition of the Lord against Satan (v.2a)… The Lord rebukes Satan; there are two LORD's mentioned in the text; in verse 1 there is “the Angel of the LORD and in verse 2 the LORD rebukes Satan; this is evidence of the Trinity; in this case you have two different individuals, or members of the Trinity who are assisting Joshua; this rebuke has a future tense too; ultimately Satan will be cast into a pit for 1000 years and then into hell (see Revelation 20).

The assurance from God that Satan cannot destroy Israel (v.2b)… After the Lord rebuked Satan He said to him concerning Israel: “Is this not a brand plucked out of the fire?” (see Isaiah 43:1-3).

The Divine Cleansing (3:3-5)

The contamination on Joshua’s garments (v.3)… “He was clothed with filthy garments;” the root word for “filthy” (tso) refers to human excrement; that is what God thinks about sin.
The changing of Joshua’s garments (vvs. 4-5)... The angel of the LORD said to angels standing nearby: “Take away the filthy garments from him... I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes...;” the turban of the high priest was a headdress with the words engraved: ‘HOLINESS TO THE LORD”(Exodus 28:36-38); Israel was to be a holy nation.

The conversion of Israel as seen in Joshua’s clean garments (vvs. 4-5)... God is not only going to forgive Israel of her sins, but make Israel a holy nation again; we are all filthy sinners and our righteousnesses is like a “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6); as believers we have been washed in His blood and are clothed with “the garments of salvation” (Isaiah 61:10; see Ephesians 5:26-27; 1 Peter 2:9).

The Divine Command (3:6-7)

There are two conditions in the divine command for receiving the divine blessing:

The actions of Joshua and Israel (vvs.6-7a)... “If you will walk in My ways... (v.7a see Romans 8:13; 1 Corinthians 11:1)

The attitude of Joshua and Israel (v.7b)... “And if you will keep My command...”(v. 7b see Zechariah 12:19)

The assurances from God (v.7c)... These three promises from God are also for the Church (2 Corinthians 1:20); there is the assurance of authority: “then you shall also judge My house...” (see Revelation 5:10); the assurance of assignment: “And likewise have charge of My courts;” the Church and Israel will guard the house of God from all iniquity during the Millennium (2 Chronicles 23:19); the assurance of angelic accompaniment: “ I will give you places to walk among those who stand here;” we will walk among angels in the eternal state of heaven.

The Divine Christ (3:8-10)

The prophecy about the coming Messiah in three descriptions (vvs.8-9):
He is “My Servant” (v.8b); this is a well known title for the Messiah; He is called the servant of glory (Isaiah 49:3); of suffering (Isaiah 52:13-14); of sorrow (Isaiah 53:11).

He is “the BRANCH” (v. 8c); another familiar title for the Messiah: He is called “the BRANCH of the LORD” (Isaiah 4:2); of David (Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5); “My Servant the BRANCH” (Zechariah 3:8); His name is the BRANCH (Zechariah 6:12-13); as the BRANCH He is God, King, Servant, Perfect Man.

He is the Stone (v.9a); this again is a well known title for the Messiah: He is “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense” (Isaiah 8:14); a stone of refuge (Isaiah 28:16); a stone cut out of a mountain that fills the whole earth (Daniel 2); the “chief cornerstone” of the Church (Ephesians 2:20); He is the Stone with seven eyes who will remove the iniquity of the land in one day (v.9b).

The peacefulness of the Messiah’s reign (v.10)... “In that day,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘Everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree;'” the expression of people sitting under the vine and fig tree was associated with the reign of King Solomon when Israel experienced its greatest period of peace (1 Kings 4: 25); when the Messiah returns to earth He comes as the Prince of Peace, a time of rest and peace for all believers; remember, all the promises of God are “Yes” and “Amen” in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20). Amen!