

**COME
TO THE
MARRIAGE**

*Standing without a substitute is pictured
as being clothed in filthy garments. It is
at the blotting out of sins that the
command is given "Take away the filthy
garments from him. And unto him he
said, "Behold I have caused thine iniquity
to pass from thee,..."*

Chapter 11

THE BLOTING OUT OF SIN

As Presented by ZECHARIAH

"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by." Zechariah 3:1-5

Those who gather around the sanctuary do so by understanding the work of our High Priest. This vision of Joshua and the Angel gives us this understanding.

"A most forcible and impressive illustration of the work of Satan and the work of Christ, and the power of our Mediator to vanquish the accuser of His people, is given in the prophecy of Zechariah." 5T 467, 468

This vision of the work of our High Priest applies to any point in history but it is especially applicable to the judgment of the living.

"Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing up of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects, he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. All will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law. Those who will be true to God and to duty will be menaced, denounced, and proscribed. They will "be betrayed both by parents and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends." 5T 472, 473

Notice that the above states that it applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing up of the great day of atonement. We can tell from the context that they are in the time when the image of the beast is being urged on them.

"Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. As Joshua was pleading before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and earnest faith, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see their weakness and unworthiness, and as they look upon themselves they are ready to despair. The tempter stands by to accuse them, as he stood by to resist Joshua. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer. He endeavors to affright the soul with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stains of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes to so destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations, turn from their allegiance to God, and receive the mark of the beast." 5T 473

In the above statement the filthy garments are their defective characters. This filthy garment has stains on it. Therefore their characters are defective because they have stains on them. Satan is trying to terrify them that the stains will never be washed away. Webster defines "Blot: 1) A spot or stain, . . ." This tells us that the character has blots on it. Satan is trying to terrify them that the blots (stains) will never be blotted out (washed away).

"Now he (Satan in the investigative judgment) points to the record of their lives, to the defects of character. . ." GC 484

"But suffer not a blot to tarnish your Christian character. Never, never for the sake of gain stamp your life record in heaven, which is viewed by all the angelic host, and by your self-denying Redeemer, with avarice, penuriousness, selfishness, or false dealing." 2T 72

The sins of God's people blot their record and their character. This makes us have a defective character. Satan is trying to terrify them that their sins won't be blotted out. God's people are pleading for purity of heart.

"As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart,..." 4T 475

If Satan is trying to terrify them that the stains or blots will never be blotted out, then the pleading for purity of heart would be pleading that their sins be blotted out. That is their great concern. If Satan is trying to terrify them that the stains will never be removed, then it is obvious that God's people already believe in the blotting out of sin from their characters, or Satan would not have to try to terrify them that they will never be washed away.

Character is made up of thought and feeling. When Adam sinned, he received a knowledge of evil which was a bent to sin. This made his character defective, and corrupt. A mediator is needed because man's character is imperfect. Man must reach perfection of character in order to live without a mediator.

"The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from *true believers* as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. *They ascend not in spotless purity*, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God." 1 SM 344 (Emphasis supplied)

Notice the wording of the above. True believers are called corrupt channels. This corruption defiles their works so that they do not ascend in spotless purity. In the vision of Joshua and the Angel we find this expression: "stain of their defilement will never be washed away." This tells us that these stains or blots or spots on their character is what defiles them. They need a mediator because of this defilement or corruption.

When God's people sin, their sins stand on record until the final atonement. (see PP 357) The blots or defilement will remain until the final atonement. They need an intercessor because they are defiled by the blots on their character. So the final intercessory work of Christ will remove the blots that defile them. When the defilement is removed they will be prepared to live without an intercessor. The very term, "final intercessory work," suggests that it is the last work of intercession and since it is the blots, or record of sin in them, that makes them a corrupt channel then we can see that the blotting out of sin would remove these blots and thus perfect their character. The vision of Joshua and the Angel helps us to see that the stains on their garment or on their character are removed at the final atonement.

"As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments from them,' and the encouraging words are spoken, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices...While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God." 5T 475

Here we see the filthy garments being taken away. "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee." Then it states that their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life. The sanctuary service teaches that when a person's sins are blotted out after their case is investigated their name is retained in the book of life. This vision clearly shows that the filthy garments, the iniquity that is taken away from them, has to be the same as the blotting out of sin. It clearly states that it was removed from God's children, not just a record book in heaven.

This judgment scene shows that after the individual cases are investigated their sins are blotted out of their minds. This is clear because they are praying for purity of heart. Their defective characters, because of the record of past sinfulness, are pictured as filthy garments. Christ commands to take away the filthy garments. "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment." God's people came to the judgment with the substitutionary robe of Christ's righteousness. They still need an intercessor because they are a corrupt channel. This judgment scene shows them receiving the robe of the righteousness of Christ as their own. The final intercessory work of Christ prepares them to live without an intercessor and so the corruption must be removed. As a result of this final atonement they are no longer a corrupt channel. Christ's righteousness is completely imparted to them by the Holy Spirit and they are perfect. Notice the following Ellen G. White quotation in a book by N. F. Pease, *By Faith Alone* page 241:

"Jesus loves His children, even if they err. They belong to Jesus, and we are to treat them as the purchase of the blood of Jesus Christ...He keeps His eye upon them, and when they do their best, calling upon God for His help, be assured the service will be accepted although imperfect. Jesus is perfect. Christ's righteousness is imputed unto them, and He will pray, 'Take away the filthy garments from him and clothe him with change of raiment.' Jesus makes up for our unavoidable deficiencies."

Review the previous quotations to see that at the judgment Christ gives the command *"Take away the filthy garments."* (5T 475)

This vision of Joshua and the Angel is important to our understanding of merit. The Catholic doctrine of merit teaches that when the Holy Spirit works through a person it produces a perfect work. The merit or value that results from this perfect work is not claimed by the individual but is credited to be Christ's merits. In the vision of Joshua and the Angel it is clear that a person comes to judgment clothed in filthy garments. They are defiled or stained because of the record of sin on their character.

"The fact that the acknowledged people of God are represented as standing before the Lord in filthy garments should lead to humility and deep searching of heart on the part of all who profess His name... But while we should realize our sinful condition, we are to rely upon Christ as our righteousness...We cannot answer the charges of Satan against

us."

"Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own." 5T 471, 472

"When the enemy comes in like a flood, and seeks to overwhelm you with the thought of your sin, tell him: 'I know I am a sinner. If I were not, I could not go to the Saviour; for He says, 'I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance' (Mark 2:17). And because I am a sinner I am entitled to come to Christ. I am sinful and polluted, but He suffered humiliation and death, and exhausted the curse that belongs to me. I come. I believe. I claim His sure promise, 'Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John 3:16)."

"Will such a plea made in contrition of soul be turned away? -No, never." 1SM 325

What God wants is a humble and contrite heart. We need to come to the judgment repentant. We need to realize our sinfulness but with the spirit that we would rather die than knowingly commit a wrong act. When Satan tries to overcome us with a sense of our sinfulness we should meet it in the above manner. The vision of Joshua and the Angel shows that those who come to judgment knowing they are sinful because of their record of sin, yet truly repentant for their sins will have Christ's righteousness completely imparted to them at that time. This robe represents the righteousness of Christ imparted to them by the latter rain. This is the final atonement. Come to the wedding.