

# THE PRIEST'S NEW CLOTHES: EXPLORING ZECHARIAH 3:1–7 AS A BACKDROP TO PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

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Paul's doctrine of baptism can be established based on his baptismal commentaries found most specifically in Rom 6:1–11, Gal 3:27, and Col 2:11–15 as well as his own personal salvific experience as recorded in Acts 9, 22, and 26.<sup>2</sup> Much ink has been spilled in other works more extensive than this essay concerning Pauline theology, the doctrine of baptism, and how these two topics intertwine. While one might jump at an evaluation of Paul's quotations of the OT scriptures within his theological treatises, often neglected are those sections of the OT that have certain allusions in Paul but are not verbatim quotations.

I suggest Zechariah 3:1–7 is one such allusion. The vision of Joshua the High Priest has unfortunately been neglected as a backdrop to the theological development of Paul's "putting on" language as found namely in Eph 4:17–24 (καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον; *kai endusasthai ton kainon anthrōpon*) and Gal 3:27 (Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε; *Christon enedusasthe*). This essay will explore Zech 3:1–7 as the backdrop of Paul's baptismal theology for "putting off the old man," "putting on the new man," and being "clothed in Christ." The emphasis of this essay will be directed at the dirty/clean clothing imagery used in Zechariah's vision of Joshua the High Priest rather than the imagery of ceremonial washing (cf. Lev 8:6; 2 Kgs 5; 1 Pet 3:21) or that of circumcision as a marker of God's people (cf. Gen 17; Lev 12:1–5; Col 2:11–12).

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<sup>2</sup> One may also note Paul's own converts recorded in Acts (e.g., the Philippian Jailer, Acts 16:25–34; those at Ephesus, Acts 19:1–7; and Lydia, Acts 16:11–15).

As a Hebrew of Hebrews (Phil 3:5) and one trained under the great Rabbi, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), Paul would have undoubtedly known the Hebrew scriptures to the point of memorization. Paul would have both known and interpreted Zechariah's prophecies much the same as any other rabbinical teacher of his day, namely with emphasis on the holiness of Israel and Israel's leaders. However, Zechariah's vision of the YHWH/Joshua encounter has been ignored in connection with Paul's baptismal theology due to an overemphasis (though not unwarranted) on Zechariah's vision of temple reconstruction, which blends Zechariah with Haggai.<sup>3</sup> Klaus Seybold and Baruch Halpern suggest "temple reconstruction provides the *idie fixe* around which the symbolic notes of these visions are ordered."<sup>4</sup> My point here is not to deny this fact. However, I think David Peterson is correct when he suggests that Zechariah's sections on temple rebuilding do not occur within the visions themselves.<sup>5</sup>

The theme of temple reconstruction is not so far from the NT idea of the church, which is not least called the temple of God twice in one of Paul's letters (i.e., 1 Cor 3:16 and 6:19). Paul's message in Eph 2:19–22 suggests the new temple is being built up on the foundation of the law, the apostles, and the prophets with Jesus as the chief cornerstone. Paul's discussion of the new temple comes directly after his statement of grace as the saving catalyst for humanity just as grace is the saving catalyst for Joshua (and subsequently of Israel) in Zech 3:1–7. Therefore, when read together as one unit, Eph 2:1–22 follows this outline:

- I. Before Christ (vv. 1–3)
  - a. Dead in trespasses and sins
  - b. Following the course of this world
  - c. Following the prince of the power of the air
    - i. Living in the passions of our flesh

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<sup>3</sup> David Peterson, "Zechariah's Visions: A Theological Perspective," *VT* 34 (1984): 195–96.

<sup>4</sup> Peterson, *Zechariah's Visions*, 196.

<sup>5</sup> Peterson, *Zechariah's Visions*, 196.

- ii. Carrying out the desires of our bodies
    - iii. Children of wrath
- II. After Christ (vv. 4–10)
  - a. Made us alive together with Christ
    - i. Saved by grace
  - b. Raised us up with him
  - c. Seated us in the heavenly places
    - i. So that he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace
  - d. Created in Christ Jesus for good works
- III. Unity as the result of Christ (vv. 11–22)
  - a. Gentiles are brought near by the blood of Christ
  - b. Christ broke the dividing wall
    - i. Now are fellow citizens
    - ii. Household of God is built on the foundation of Christ, the law, the prophets, and the apostles

Even if the vision of Joshua the High Priest in Zech 3:1–7 is intended to emphasize the rebuilding of the temple, the vision would still be able to serve as a major backdrop to Paul’s baptismal theology. For Paul, baptism is the way one enters the body of Christ, which is the church (cf. Acts 2:47; Col 1:18; 1 Cor 12:12–13).

### **Exegesis of Zechariah 3**

Zechariah’s vision is simple enough to outline. The vision presents a narrative of four main characters (i.e., Satan the accuser, Joshua the defendant, YHWH the judge, and the angelic audience), one major conflict (i.e., the accusation of Joshua), one major conflict resolution (i.e., the change of Joshua’s cleanliness status), and one singular message (i.e., the spiritual renewal of Israel, namely its leaders).

The scene, however, does not open in the way one might expect. Whereas one might expect YHWH to serve as the accuser fulfilling his role as the ultimate divine judge, it is Satan (יָצֵן; the adversary) who serves as the prosecutor in the divine courtroom accusing Joshua, the

defendant on trial. Though it is unclear whether the transliterated term שָׂטָן (*satan*; adversary) is to be used as a proper name for this supernatural adversary here, it stands to reason that the setting of the divine courtroom, the presence of a personal deity, and the presence of angelic beings would imply this “*Satan*” as also being a literal, singular individual within the dramatic scene.<sup>6</sup>

Why then is Satan accusing Joshua? What has Joshua done to be on trial? The answer lies in Joshua’s physical description. Joshua stands before YHWH clothed in dirty (שָׁדָד; *šōd*) garments. While one would expect the high priest to be clothed in his priestly regalia as specified in Exod 28 not least to enter into the presence of God, Joshua’s clothes are instead stained with filth. The Hebrew term שָׁדָד (*šōd*; filthy) is vastly underplayed in modern translations. This term does not denote only a little dirt rubbed on the garment as that of a child’s grass stain after playtime but instead refers to extreme filth—even that of fecal excrement.<sup>7</sup> This adds a great deal of depth to the scene not only in visual significance but also in the sense of smell. This type of “filthiness” is better understood in light of Deut 23:10–14. Here, one notes that one who has risen in the night to relieve oneself in a military camp was to be considered unclean until he could bathe in water because the military camp was to be a holy place to God. In other words, fecal excrement made one unclean in a place deemed holy for God. Seeing (and perhaps smelling) the high priest covered in fecal excrement (be it covering his priestly garments or otherwise) adds to the imagery of physical uncleanness and shame before the Holy One of Israel.

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<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that the only other time the term שָׂטָן is used as a proper name is in 1 Chr 21:1. Further, the only time the word is used to describe a superhuman adversary is in Job 1–2. All other instances of the word describe a human, either personal or national.

<sup>7</sup> William Holladay, Walter Baumgartner, and Ludwig Köhler, “שָׁדָד,” *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 299–300.

The LXX translates Zech 3:3 as “Καὶ Ἰησοῦς ἦν ἐνδεδυμένος ἱμάτια ῥυπαρὰ...” (*kai Iēsous ēn endedumenos himatia hrupara*). The use of ῥυπαρὰ (*hrupara*; filthy) in place of צִוְיָם (*šô ’îym*) as the attributive adjective of בְּגָדֵימָא (*běgādîym*)/ἱμάτια (*himatia*) is a suitable Greek gloss; however, the image of “uncleanness” based on the Greek gloss emphasizes a moral uncleanness rather than one of a purely physical nature (cf. Rev 22:11).<sup>8</sup> The translators of the LXX may have understood צִוְיָם to encompass a spiritual/moral failing rather than physical filth. It seems reasonable to interpret the imagery of clothing tainted by filth/fecal excrement to denote the moral failings of the subject as well as what he represents.

Though Joshua is physically unclean denoting the sins of the priesthood and the nation of Israel in the presence of the Lord, YHWH surprisingly does not rebuke the one on trial but instead rebukes *Satan*—the one who is justified in his accusations. YHWH then commands Joshua’s garments be removed by the angelic audience.<sup>9</sup> Joshua is re-clothed by the angels with a clean turban and clean garments echoing the garments of Exod 28. The term *clean* (טָהוֹר; *tāhōr*), occurring 21 times in Leviticus, is a term that signifies purity before YHWH. In fact, טָהוֹר always indicates a pure standing before YHWH in the book of Leviticus and so I think also in Zech 3:5.

As I previously argued, the cleanliness of Joshua is not merely physical. Zechariah 3:4 adds, “Behold, I have taken your *iniquity* away from you” (emphasis added). The construct of מְעֵלְיָא מִן ( *mē ’āleykā ’ăōnekā*) utilizes the partitive מִן (*min*; from, away from) as well as the possessive 2MS pronominal suffix (i.e., *your*). The removal of iniquity (אֲוֹן; *’ăōn*) denotes the forgiveness of sins. It is, as Peter would say in 1 Pet 3:21, “an appeal to God for a good conscience.”

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<sup>8</sup> BDAG, s.v. “ῥυπαρὰ.”

<sup>9</sup> The angel of the LORD and the LORD seem to be referring to the same individual. In Zech 1:11, 12, this is not so. Here, it could also be that there are two individuals (i.e., the angel of the LORD and the LORD himself), however this does not seem to fit the context of the vision.

The final piece to this passage comes in vv. 6–7.

And the angel of the LORD solemnly assured Joshua, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here.”

The promise of ruling and judging comes only as the result of keeping the first-class conditional clause in its entirety. It must be noted that the commission to “walk in my ways and keep my charge” comes *after* the changing of clothes and the designation of cleanliness before YHWH. Therefore, the charge of obedience is directly related to the newfound cleanliness that has been bestowed on the high priest.

### **Zechariah 3:1–7 as Paul’s Baptismal Backdrop**

NT baptism was a significant sacrament from the earliest moments of the NT church.<sup>10</sup> In his discussion of Paul’s view of baptism, Everett Ferguson observes, “His own experience and the evidence of his letters show baptism to have been practiced from the earliest days of the church.”<sup>11</sup> Volumes could be (and have been) produced discussing the use and purpose of baptism in the NT and early church. My goal here, however, is not to add to the wealth of evidence that acknowledges the validity of baptism in the early church nor is it to debate the purpose or significance of the act. Rather, my goal is to evaluate Paul’s understanding of baptism from his own perspective as a Pharisaic Jew using Zech 3:1–7 as an influential parallel within his theological framework. To do so, one must note four primary observations of Paul’s baptismal doctrine: (1) Paul understands baptism as a passive act performed to the candidate and not

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<sup>10</sup> See Acts 8:36; 9:17–19a; 22:16; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:3; Rom 6; 1 Cor 1:13–17; 12:17; Gal 3:27; Col 2:12 cf. Eph 2:1–10.

<sup>11</sup> Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 146.

something the candidate does to himself, (2) Paul understands baptism as being performed by willing, repentant, and believing people, (3) Paul understands baptism to be accomplished via immersion into water, and (4) Paul understands baptism as the means by which sins are forgiven.

Therefore, to evaluate Zech 3:1–7 as a backdrop (or framework) for Paul’s doctrine of baptism, the passage must be compared to Pauline doctrine in three categories: (1) the removal of filth, (2) being re-clothed in clean garments, (3) the need for continual godly living.

### The Removal of Filth

I admit this notion is more pronounced in 1 Pet 3:21 where baptism is not a “removal of filth from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience.” Paul on the other hand does not make such a distinction in his letters. Therefore, it does seem like the unclean vs. clean imagery in Zech 3:1–7 is left wanting in Paul’s scope of understanding. The bathing imagery of baptism is not overtly found in the Pauline corpus. However, the very use of the term βαπτισμός (*baptismos*) demands an understanding of, at the least, ceremonial washing for ritualistic purity. I agree with David Dockery who suggests it is the intensive form of the word that is used most often in the NT in relation to spiritual matters (e.g., Mark 1:4, 7:4; John 3:22, 26).<sup>12</sup>

For Paul, it is not a physical stain that covers the human body but a spiritual blemish that taints the whole human condition. Romans 3:23 states that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” Romans 6:23 presents the result of this universal blemish stating “the wages of sin is death.” In Zech 3:1–7, the scene begins with the accusation of Joshua the High Priest. He is unclean in the presence of YHWH. Satan is accusing Joshua. The depiction of Joshua’s physical state implies that Satan is validated in his accusations. Justice demands Joshua be condemned and punished. The same principle is true for Paul in Romans 3–6. There is a deep,

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<sup>12</sup> David Dockery, “Baptism in the New Testament,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 43 (2001): 4–5.

vast barrier between the human and God. Note Paul’s description of sinful people: “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1).

While the “removal of filth” imagery may not be found verbatim in Paul’s letters, it is certainly found in Paul’s own baptismal account. In Acts 22:16 notes Ananias as saying, “Why do you wait? Rise and be baptized *and wash away your sins*, calling on his name” (emphasis mine). The use of ἀπολούω (*apolouō*; to wash away) demands the nuance of becoming clean. Further, Paul uses the same term to describe the Corinthian brethren in their before/after state of righteousness. Paul writes, “And such were some of you, but *you were washed*, you were sanctified, and you were justified by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:11; emphasis added). Each of these passive actions refer to a singular event. For Paul, sin is the filth that covers the human condition in the presence of a holy and pure God. Thus, one must have his sins removed in order to be made right with God. Lars Hartman further notes the before/after imagery of washing as internal and communal:

The image of washing presupposes a picture in which the pre-Christian way of life is characterized as filthy and unclean. Presumably, the tradition not only refers to defiling, immoral acts, but also picks up ways of thought whereby that which falls outside the correct or true religion is unclean. The tradition of 1 Cor 6:11 uses the same imagery for the new life which the newly converted have left behind.<sup>13</sup>

### Clothed in Righteousness

Galatians 3:27 most closely echoes the imagery of Zech 3:1–7. Though Paul does not often employ the clothing imagery with regard to baptism, to suggest that Paul does not hold to this

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<sup>13</sup> Lars Hartman, *Into the Name of the Lord Jesus: Baptism in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 84.

view at all is to ignore his words of unity to the Galatian congregation. Paul writes concerning the unity of Jew and Gentile, “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Gal 3:27). Because Paul’s letter to the Galatians is written to address the ethnic divisions within the church as well as the false teachings of certain Judaizers, one must note (based on v. 28) that the baptismal imagery of v. 27 is not syntactically intended to denote purity in the eyes of God but instead expresses unity in the body of Christ.

Though there are thematic variations between Paul’s letter to the Galatians and Zechariah’s prophetic vision based on their various occasions and purposes, the imagery itself remains the same and cannot be ignored. Teresa Tsui suggests that Gal 3:27 tries to assure the Galatians of their intimate association with Christ in terms of sonship.<sup>14</sup> The “putting on of Christ” adds to the sonship mentioned in v. 26 (πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε; *pantes gar huioi theou este*). The designation made here by the term “sons” (i.e., children) does not echo Paul’s general gentile designation of “adoption” (cf. Eph 1:5). Instead, Paul follows a more Johannine designation of literal children (cf. 1 John 3:1, 10; 5:2). Further, Hans Dieter Betz views the Christological-soteriological garment in Gal 3:27 as a divine transformation, though Betz does not reference Zech 3:1–7 in his analysis.<sup>15</sup>

The vision of Zechariah clearly signifies this divine transformation as Joshua’s clothes are changed for new ones. Paul often discusses the “old man” as the former life outside of Christ. This “old man” is not only “crucified with Christ” (Rom 6:6) but is also “put off” (Col 3:9). The old clothes of Joshua in Zechariah’s vision are “removed” and replaced with new, different, better garments. The “old man” is removed in baptism (Rom 6:6; Col 3:9) and replaced with a

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<sup>14</sup> Teresa Tsui, “Baptized into His Death’ (Rom 6:3) and ‘Clothed with Christ’ (Gal 3:27): The Soteriological Meaning of Baptism in Light of Pauline Apocalyptic,” *ETL* 88 (2012): 395.

<sup>15</sup> H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979): 187.

new, different, better covering—Jesus himself (Gal 3:27) just as Joshua is clothed in clean garments (Zech 3:4).

### Continual Living in Godliness

“The LORD of Heaven’s Armies says, *‘If you follow my ways and keep my requirements, you will be able to preside over my temple and attend to my courtyards, and I will allow you to come and go among these others who are standing by you’* (Zech 3:7; emphasis mine). Notice that Joshua’s clothes have already been changed when YHWH speaks these words. It is not Joshua’s cleanliness that concludes the scene. The conclusion comes when YHWH both gives the condition and the new commission of Joshua’s role as high priest. The two first-class conditional statements marked by ׀ ( *im*) provide YHWH’s new expectation as the result on the prior event—that is, Joshua’s changing of clothes.

This observation is not intended to dive into the controversial topic of the Calvinistic perseverance of the saints versus Arminian ideologies.<sup>16</sup> I think both schools of thought would at least agree that it is necessary for the Christian to uphold the standards of righteousness post-conversion (cf. 1 John 1:7). In Rom 6:1–2, Paul asks and answers, “What shall we say then? Are we to remain in sin so that grace may increase? Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?” This is post-conversion action. Paul continues this idea in Eph 5:1–4:

Therefore, be imitators of God as dearly loved children and live in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God. But among you there must not be either sexual immorality, impurity of any kind, or greed, as these are not fitting for the saints. Neither should there be vulgar speech, foolish talk, or coarse jesting—all of which are out of character—but rather thanksgiving.

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Peterson, “The Perseverance of the Saints: A Theological Exegesis of Four Key Passages,” *Presbyterion* 17 (1991): 95.

The standard is set. However, it is only the ones who have undergone the change of putting off the old and putting on the new that are submissive to this standard. For Paul, sinful humans are unclean, unholy, and under accusation (Rom 6:23). However, because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, Paul views those who are saved as ceremonially clean to enter the presence of God. For Paul, the subject remains clean if one follows the ways and commandments of Christ—just as Joshua is commissioned to follow the ways and commands of YHWH. Paul expands this idea in Col 1:21–23.

And you were at one time strangers and enemies in your minds as expressed through your evil deeds, **but now he has reconciled you** by his physical body through death **to present you holy, without blemish, and blameless before him**—*if indeed you remain in the faith, established and firm, without shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard.* This gospel has also been preached in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have become its servant (bold and italicized emphasis mine).

### Objections to This Theory

I admit this hypothesis is not without its limits. Thus far, I have attempted to evaluate evidence, namely from Paul's own writings, that Zechariah's vision of Joshua the High Priest serves as a backdrop for Paul's doctrine of baptism. A hypothesis of this nature revolving around Pauline theology and the doctrine of baptism is undoubtedly an easy target for objections. Perhaps prematurely, two notable objections will be addressed here.<sup>17</sup>

The first objection is that Paul never mentions the Joshua vision in his letters or sermons. The only allusion to anything that resembles a quote of Zechariah in the Pauline corpus is found in 2 Cor 6:16 (cf. Zech 8:8) and Eph 4:25 (cf. Zech 8:16). Therefore, because Paul does not quote the vision directly, the proposed hypothesis is either an argument from silence or an allegorical interpretation.

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<sup>17</sup> I must give my thanks to professors and colleagues who read and offered critique of this paper. The two objections mentioned here are the two most common from their comments.

As I have attempted to demonstrate, Paul was a learned Pharisaic Jew who would have been intimately familiar with the prophecies of Zechariah. Paul's allusion to Zech 8:8, 16 also shed light on Paul's familiarity with the book. Further, I have demonstrated that Paul's language of "putting off the old man," "being washed" to resemble spiritual purity, and "being clothed" in Christ all echo Zechariah's heavenly courtroom scene. This is not an argument from silence but an argument from the voice of the whole OT. It is the whole OT that ultimately shaped Paul's theology. For example, Paul demonstrates his ability to take OT scriptures and rework them for his theological purpose when he reworks the monotheistic *Shema* to encompass Jesus in 1 Cor 8:6.

To suggest the hypothesis is an allegorical interpretation (i.e., the vision scene is that of baptism directly) is to miss the point of the hypothesis. The goal here is not to interpret the vision as originally referring to or even foreshadowing the sacrament of baptism. My goal has been to evaluate the vision as it parallels Paul's doctrine of baptism, which I have attempted through exegesis and linguistic analysis.

The second objection is to suggest that Paul is more concerned with resurrection symbolism pictured within the act of baptism rather than the symbolism of ceremonial cleanliness presented by Jewish washings for ritualistic purity. This criticism gains its footing based on Paul's baptismal commentary in Rom 6:1–11 where the believer has died to sin by dying with, being buried with, and being spiritually resurrected with Jesus Christ. Paul seems to understand two types of resurrections for believers. The first is the spiritual resurrection one undergoes when one is baptized. The second is a physical, bodily resurrection that will occur at the return of Christ (1 Cor 15; 1 Thess 4:13–18). Rob Fringer notes Paul's love of the death-

resurrection motif when he writes, “[Rom 6:1–11] provides Paul with another opportunity to stress both death and resurrection.”<sup>18</sup>

However, this objection ignores namely 1 Cor 6:11 and Titus 3:5 where the washing imagery is explicitly presented. I find myself in agreement with Hendrikus Boers who suggests that Rom 6:1–14 has long been interpreted as having either too much or too little baptismal significance.<sup>19</sup> Rarely is this passage interpreted in light of its surrounding literary context. Boers adds,

Rom 6:1–14 seems to provide the most specific information on Paul's understanding of baptism, even though, as is widely recognized, he does not present baptism as a topic of discussion in it but introduces baptism as an argument in support of his second negated rhetorical question in v. 2. Many scholars nevertheless take it that the passage reflects in significant ways some of Paul's thoughts on the topic, and they interpret it accordingly.”<sup>20</sup>

Notice Boer's comment: “the passage reflects *some* of Paul's thoughts on the topic” (emphasis mine). Romans 6:1–14 cannot be the be-all-end-all to Paul's baptismal theology. In the same way, the proposed hypothesis is not intended to be a final analysis on baptism, Pauline theology, or even Zechariah's vision. Resurrection symbolism is no doubt a significant theme for Paul's understanding of baptism; however, themes such as washing, regeneration, sanctification, and ritualistic purity are also in the mix.

## Conclusion

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<sup>18</sup> Rob Fringer, “Dying to Be the Church: 1 Corinthians 15 and Paul's Shocking Revelation about Death and Resurrection,” *ERT* 41 (2017): 182.

<sup>19</sup> Hendrikus Boers, “The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1–14,” *CBQ* 63 (2001): 665.

<sup>20</sup> Boers, “The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1–14,” 665.

Daniel O’Kennedy suggests four major themes in Zech 1–8: (1) the lordship of YHWH, (2) sin and punishment/justice, (3) turning to YHWH, and (4) YHWH’s grace, love, and forgiveness.<sup>21</sup> Though O’Kennedy is concerned with the larger pericope of chs. 1–8, each theme suggested fits well within the narrative of Zech 3:1–7. Consequently, each theme fits within Paul’s doctrine of baptism. For Paul, baptism is the means by which new creation in Christ is produced (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). This is accomplished by putting off the old man, being washed, putting on the new man, being raised with Christ, and living continually in light of this change.

I have demonstrated in this essay that Zechariah’s vision of Joshua the High Priest can (and I think does) serve as a backdrop to Paul’s baptismal theology. I have explored linguistic and thematic parallels as well as Paul’s own context as a learned Pharisaic Jew and Christian in the early church. Though penned in 1894, C. G. Montefiore correctly notes concerning Paul’s view of sin post-baptism, “There is no need why [the subject] should ever sin any longer; sin is no longer his master.”<sup>22</sup> The change has been made and must be maintained. This is YHWH’s final word to Joshua in Zech 3:7–10.

In sum, the vision of Joshua the High Priest in the divine courtroom and Paul’s baptismal theology follow three parallels: (1) the removal of filth, (2) being clothed in righteousness, and (3) continual living in righteousness and purity. The priest was given new clothes. In the same way, the royal priesthood of the NT church is clothed, not in priestly regalia, but in Jesus Christ through baptism into his body.

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<sup>21</sup> Daniel O’Kennedy, “Key Themes in Zechariah 1–8,” *OTE* 32 (2019): 217–22.

<sup>22</sup> C. G. Montefiore, “First Impressions of Paul,” *JQR* 6 (1894): 458.

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