

Joshua- a Stick Snatched from the Fire
(Zechariah 3:1-10)

The High-Priest Joshua shown here dressed in filthy garments is a representation of the nation of Israel's spiritual condition and in particular of Jerusalem. Satan, seen standing at his right side to accuse him, which was a place of accusation under the law, is rebuked by the Lord. He said, Satan! May the Lord rebuke you! Satan, the accuser of the soul, brought Joshua's filthy garments to the Lord expecting to hear condemnation against him. As Joshua portrays the nation of Israel- the stick snatched from the fire, we learn of YAHWEH'S future restoration of His nation, as the Lord takes action and commands that Joshua's filthy garments would be removed from him. His plans for Israel will be fulfilled in the end when He will bring them home to their land, as it is prophesied. It will be completed in the people and in the Land. The Lord will snatch Israel from the fire before she gets burned; that is confirmed from the time of Zachariah to the end of History as we read in Revelation 12:3-17. Israel's filthy garments showing the worst spiritual condition of the priesthood and of the people was described by the prophet Isaiah chapter 4:4; 64:6 in terms most disgusting and vile to picture the reality of their sinful practices, for which Satan was accusing Joshua. But YAHWEH in His mercy offered Joshua a clean garment and ordered that the filthy garment would be removed from him; He replaced the old and dirty turban with a clean one and admonished him saying, If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command, then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts (3:6-7).

In its future restoration, Israel's filthy garments will be removed and they will be justified according to the letter of Paul to the Romans 11:26-27: And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins. "The stick snatched from the fire" will be in the time of the great tribulation, when the remnant of Israel will be delivered from it and will be purified and will be justified. Some of Israel's filthy garments are shown to the world through the rejection and hate for their Messiah; they preferred a criminal instead of their Messiah in the answer to Pilate's question, Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews? But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them; they cried out again, "Crucify Him"! Is it possible that the crowd that followed Him riding on a donkey proclaiming Him to be the Messiah, the Blessed One, be the same people, who under the influence of the religious authorities, cried, "Crucify Him"? To this day this is the religious' attitude toward their Messiah, as it is of the nation, with the exception of a few who have accepted YAHSHUA as their Messiah. The disciple Judas who betrayed the Lord YAHSHUA, represents the filthiness of the garments of those who will continue to reject YAHSHUA to the end without redemption for them, even as a Jew. Even in judgment of this nation, YAHWEH was and is always consistent with His covenant with them. As we read in this chapter of Zachariah, He took the side of Jerusalem against Satan's accusation and restored Joshua's position of high-priest by taking away his guilt and iniquities through His forgiveness. This is prophetic of future time when YAHWEH will remove the iniquity of Israel in one day; in one day Israel will be a holy nation unto the Lord, taking her priestly place. With YAHWEH'S righteousness imputed on her

she will be dressed in pure white garment with the clean turban inscribed "Holy to the Lord" ready to serve the Lord YAHSHUA in the millennium time.

Another symbolic story of Israel is found in the book of Luke chapter 15:11-31. There we read the parable of a prodigal son, who left the comfort of his home, the love of his family, namely his father in exchange for what the world had to offer him. He said to his father, Father, give me the part of the property that falls [to me]. He went to a distant country, where no one knew him, and there he wasted all he had in reckless living. When he found himself in the pigs' pen eating of their food, destitute, hungry and forsaken by all, he then remembered that he had a father, who had riches and food to spare. In brokenness of heart and with repentance he returned to his father seeking his forgiveness. Before even getting to the house, there stood the father waiting for his return home. The father quickly ordered that the best robe would be brought to him and sealed him with his ring, confirming to him his right and privilege of a sonship.

This is to us another picture of the nation of Israel in her abandonment of YAHWEH'S covenant and back to Egypt, a symbol of the world. In the time of her Messiah's visitation Israel ignored the cry of YAHSHUA calling her to repentance saying, Would that you had known personally, even at least in this your day, the things that make for peace! ... For a time is coming upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank about you and surround you and shut you in on every side. .. because you did not come progressively to recognize and know and understand the time of your visitation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who continue to kill the prophets and to stone those who are sent to you! How often I have desired and yearned to gather your children together as a hen her young under her wings, but you would not! Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see Me again until the time comes when you shall say, Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! (Luke 13:34-35). As the prodigal son came to position himself low as to eating the carol pods the pigs were eating, so Israel has done it spiritually. The heavenly Father has never forsaken the covenant with them; He continues waiting for the time when Israel will repent and return to Him as the prodigal son did to his father. Zachariah prophesied a great mourning that will take place in the nation of Israel when they look upon the Messiah, Whom they have pierced with hatred and rejection; they will mourn as one who is in bitterness for his firstborn; all the families each by themselves [each with an overwhelming individual sorrow over having blindly rejected their unrecognized Messiah] (Zachariah 12:10-14). At that time one third of the nation will be saved through the fire and by refining them as silver is refined and they will be tested as gold is tested. It will be the time when Israel will finally call on YAHWEH'S name for her deliverance; He will hear them; He will say, It is My people; and they will say, The Lord is my God (Zachariah 13:9) There is no way to believe that YAHWEH is finished with Israel, since His relationship with this nation is bound by His covenant. Israel has broken the covenant with Him, but He has not done so with Israel. There is a comma in YAHWEH'S plan for Israel, but not a period. This is just a pause that will one day break the silence and the world will see YAHWEH'S salvation applied to them. Israel will at last be dressed in her holy garment and turban to serve her Messiah- YAHSHUA!

When Israel gets to the point of complete rejection from all nations, when she finds herself alone without the help of her thought to be friends, then Israel will call on the name of her YAHWEH and will be saved, just like the prodigal son was. Let's pray for the peace of Jerusalem; for the will of YAHWEH the Father to be done on earth as it is done in heaven in the restoration of Israel and the fulfillment of His promise to His Bride, the Church.