

Case Closed

Zechariah 3:1–7

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I. Open Case v.1

- a. Joshua High Priest
 - i. Joshua - It is probable that the high priest here represents the survivors from the overthrow of Judah, and that the question put into the mouth of the angel of Yahweh, like the declaration of 1:15
 - ii. Standing
 - 1. However, it is more likely that it is not Joshua himself but rather his office that is being observed, as it is now prominent because of the exigencies of administering the temple restoration, which is under review
- b. Angel of the Lord
- c. Satan
 - i. Satan
 - ii. Standing at Right Hand
 - 1. *standing*. Once again the verb *'md* ("stand") appears as technical language associated with the Divine Council.
 - 2. In the book of Job the corresponding figure has acquired a title, "the Adversary," and a sceptical and censorious character. Moreover, he acts on his own initiative (Jb. 1:7; 2:2). Still there are limits to his activity, for Yahweh does not allow him to do serious or irretrievable harm to those who are temporarily placed in his power
 - iii. Accuse- showed me satan standing at his right hand to accuse him; —c. to oppose, set oneself against
 - 1. The Accuser's case on both issues would have been quite strong, for there is much in the Primary History and in the preexilic prophets upon which he could have developed his argument that Yahweh had permanently terminated Jerusalem, the temple, and the priesthood. The Accuser's case is thrown out, however, because Yahweh has changed his mind. He has decided that the period of disgrace and banishment and ruin has gone on long enough.
 - 2. There are a number of similarities between this passage and the heavenly council scenes in Job 1 and 2: (1) satan appears before

the Lord as an accuser in both passages (v 1); (2) Yahweh speaks to satan (v 2); (3) the presence of other “angels” in the group

II. Verdict vs. 2-5

a. Lord Rebuke satan

i. The Lord

1. So the charges can be dismissed, and the Accuser is now in the wrong while the Angel as advocate takes over. Yahweh has indeed chosen Jerusalem. He has not rejected it and never intended to do so (cf. 1:17 and 2:16), and the statement of God’s choosing Jerusalem has become thematic in Zechariah.

ii. Rebuke - **speak insultingly**

1. In any case, the angel of Yahweh silences the Adversary with an indignant objurgation, *Yahweh rebuke thee*
2. The combination of verb, preposition, and object appears twice, emphasizing the finality with which the Accuser is put in his place. God’s outburst in the court scene is tantamount to his rejection of the Accuser’s charges (see NOTE to “the Accuser” in v 1). The prosecutor, in his accustomed role, was about to bring evidence against Joshua’s position and against Jerusalem as a favored city. God’s rebuke is not directed toward the function of the Accuser per se, but rather to the way in which he is carrying out his responsibilities. He is using irrelevant and dated evidence; he has not rebelled against Yahweh’s authority.
3. but the justice of Yahweh as contrasted with his mercy. The reproof of the Adversary by the angel of Yahweh signifies the triumph of the milder attribute, that is, that Yahweh has determined to save his people, because they are his people and their sufferings appeal to his sympathy, by an act of grace in spite of their unworthiness. Ho. 11:9; Mi. 7:8 f; Is. 43:25 It is from this standpoint that the vision becomes, on the one hand, a rebuke to the sceptics of Zechariah’s day, and, on the other, a solace for those who, much as they had suffered and were suffering, as they felt, under the divine displeasure, had retained their faith in Yahweh and still cherished an ardent hope that he would speedily forgive their iniquities and rescue them from destruction.

iii. **Chosen Jerusalem –**

1. By selecting Jerusalem, God makes Jerusalem and its territory “holy,” a concept clearly expressed in the “chooses Jerusalem” passage of 2:16 (RSV 2:12). Therefore, Joshua’s return to Jerusalem in and of itself represents a move to a place of great sanctity from a place, outside the “Holy Land,” of great impurity. Even further, his role as high priest will bring him in greatest

proximity to God's holiness and thus necessitate his symbolic purification.

2. Yahweh's choosing of Jerusalem appears above in the oracles of 1:17 and 2:16 (2:12; see NOTES). The emphasis on Jerusalem as the favored city of God and the place for the holy temple seems obvious. Yet for the restoration community, the certainty that Jerusalem would resume its historic role was slow to come. After all, God had rejected Jerusalem nearly seventy years before, just as he had rejected Shiloh (cf. Ps 78:59–61, 67–68; Jer 26:6). Yahweh never chose Shiloh again. How could the people be sure that Jerusalem would once more emerge as a special place? The Accuser must have argued that Jerusalem was to share that fate of Shiloh; and Yahweh must set him straight (cf. NOTE to "the Accuser," 3:1).

iv. Brand Plucked From Fire - Amos 4:11; Jude 23

1. The saying has particular relevance to Joshua because his grandfather, Seraiah, was among those who were slaughtered by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 25:18–21; Lam 2:6, 20; and 1 Chron 5:40–41 [6:14–15]). The fact that Joshua survived in exile to return to Jerusalem in the capacity of high priest is hardly accidental, according to the prophet.

2.

b. Joshua

i. Clothed

1. Filthy garments

- a. The filthy garments signify, not grief, but iniquity,
- b. The exile itself was a punishment for sins and guilt, and living in a foreign land further contributed to the atmosphere of uncleanness. All this iniquity needed to be purged and removed in connection with the actual restoration, as well as with the symbolic restoration of the temple as a holy place. Joshua's role in expiating past sins and present contamination of himself and of the people would have been enormous—too enormous, some might have thought. Nothing less than the removal of iniquity in God's Heavenly Court can establish Joshua's success in achieving the purity required for him to be instated in his office.
- c. *filthy*. The Hebrew *šô'îm* here and in verse 4 designates an extreme condition of dirtiness. That word can be used to designate excrement, as in the law of Deut 23:14–23:13; cf. 2 Kgs 18:27 His utter filthiness, to be contrasted with the state of purity reflected in the new vestments in which he is garbed later, need not signify moral or ethical

transgressions on the part of Joshua. Rather, the change from foul to pure clothing symbolizes the shift in the priest's status from the mundane world to the sanctified or holy realm of the house of Yahweh

- d. as has been shown, he here represents the Jewish people, or at least the Judean community, the garments he wears must be interpreted as setting forth the character and condition of those represented. It is therefore safe to conclude that the prophet in this vision intended to represent Judah as still, in spite of the penalties endured, guilty before God, and so evidently guilty that, as the high priest's silence would suggest, an express accusation was unnecessary and a successful defence impossible

c. Remove the Garments

- i. Take Iniquity - Because he is the leading priestly official, he is representative of all priests as well as of the people. Their collective impurity is also involved. In normal times, the offenses of the people, as individuals and as a group, threaten to diminish the purity of the temple.

- 1. and commands them to *remove* from Joshua *the filthy garments*, the sign and symbol of the people's unworthiness, and *clothe him in robes of state* befitting his office as the religious head and representative of a chosen people

- ii. Clothe with Festal Robes

- 1. and commands them to *remove* from Joshua *the filthy garments*, the sign and symbol of the people's unworthiness, and *clothe him in robes of state* befitting his office as the religious head and representative of a chosen people

- 2. Hence the chances are that, as most modern exegetes agree, in this case it is the privilege of direct and immediate communion with Yahweh with which he is dealing. This is a privilege not granted all men (Je. 30:21), but it may fitly be accorded to a faithful high priest. It is also one that has great significance for the community

- iii. Clean Turban

III. Direction vs. 6-7

a. Lord Admonished

- i. Walk in My Ways

- 1. Walk - one 's conduc
 - 2. Ways - While this can be a general term for following God's commandments, it can have specific reference to the wide range of legal matters with which the priesthood at this point would have had to deal. A pivotal text is Exod 18:20, which describes a

premonarchic system of civil justice. Moses instructs men to represent him, or to take on some of his responsibilities in arbitrating disputes, by teaching them the laws and how to use them—that is, “the way in which they must walk.” Likewise, during the period of the judges those “saviors” of Israel performed some unspecified (judicial) tasks to which the people gave no heed in that they turned aside “from the way in which their father had walked.” The language of walking in God’s ways involves the administration of justice.

ii. Perform my Service

1. Perform - This phrase refers to the duties involved in carrying out the cultic functions associated with the temple itself.
2. Service - **obligation**, with what is owed to me
 - a.

iii. Govern My House

1. Govern - to **plead one’s cause**
2. My House *render judgment in my House*. This is a difficult phrase (*tādîn ’et-bêtî*). The verb *dyn* is elsewhere used in legal matters to denote the exercise of judgment or justice. Its predominant meaning is to specify, in the context of a lawsuit, the rendering of an authoritative and binding decision

iv. Charge my Courts

1. Charge Courts - This directive clearly pertains to the priestly administration of temple affairs, which included not only maintenance of the sacrificial system but responsibility for collection of revenues as well. The term *ḥāṣṣēr*, although it can refer to a specific inner precinct of the priests only

b. Access Granted

- i. Access
- ii. These

Word Studies

Accuse - showed me satan standing at his right hand to accuse him; —c. to oppose, set oneself against¹

Rebuke- to **rebuke, speak insultingly**²

Brand plucked from Fire- Amos 4:11; Jude 23

Way - one 's conduct

Service - **obligation**, with what is owed to me³

Govern - to **plead one's cause**

¹ Ludwig Koehler et al., [*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 1316.

² Ludwig Koehler et al., [*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 200.

³ Ludwig Koehler et al., [*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 650.

Commentary Studies

1.a. השטן “the satan” or “adversary” always has the article in the OT except in 1 Chron 21:1. The verb שטן means “to oppose or accuse” (3:1). The LX⁴X translates השטן, διάβολος “the false accuser.”

3.a. צואים “filthy” only occurs in this form in vv 3 and 4. It means to be fouled with human excrement (BD⁵B, 844; CHALO⁶T 302).

4.a. העברתי “I will put away,” lit⁷. “I will cause to pass over.”

4.b. הלבש in⁸f used as impf⁹. “I will clothe (you).”

5.a. ואמר “and I said” is unexpected. We would expect “and he said” referring to the angel. If the 1st per¹⁰s is retained it must refer to the prophet interrupting the vision to call for the turban to be put on the head of the high priest.

5.b. The last clause is awkward and is omitted in the LX¹¹X.

6.a. 3 מויעד¹²s hip¹³h impf¹⁴. עוד “to witness,” “warn,” “charge.”

7.a. V. 7 is a conditional sentence without a sharp demarcation line between the protasis and apodosis. Are there four parts to the protasis: “If you walk in my ways, keep my charge, rule my house, and keep my courts,” or are there only two (the first 2)? The waw conjunction can be translated “and” or “then.” Most scholars opt for two parts to the protasis leaving three parts for the apodosis.

7.b. מהלכים “access” may be an Aramaic aphael (ph.) ptc¹⁵p meaning “passageways.”

⁴LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

⁵BDB F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs (eds.), *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford/New York: Clarendon/OUP, 1907; reprints with corrections, 1955; corrected ed., 1962)

⁶CHALOT W. L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.

⁷lit. literally

⁸inf infinitive

⁹impf. imperfect

¹⁰pers person

¹¹LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

¹²ms manuscript(s)

¹³hiph Hiphil

¹⁴impf. imperfect

¹⁵ptcp participle

9.a. עינים “eyes” can mean “facets.” Here it probably means “fountains” since it is related to the removal of iniquity.

9.b. מפתח “opening” a p¹⁶i ptc¹⁷p usually translated with the secondary meaning of “engraving.” Here it probably has the primary meaning of “opening.”

9.c. פְּתִיחָה is pointed to mean “its engraving” or “inscription,” but with different vowels it can mean “its opening” (cf. Lipinski 25–29).

Form/Structure/Setting

The form is that of a vision report (3:1–7) plus an accompanying oracle (3:8–10). The structure of this vision report is very different from the other seven in that there is no interpreting angel, and no questions from the prophet. The prophet seems to interrupt the proceedings in v 5. Zechariah sees Joshua the high priest standing clothed in filthy garments before the angel of Yahweh and the satan is standing at his right side accusing him. Yahweh rebukes the Satan. The angel commands that Joshua’s filthy garments be removed and clean, white garments be put on him because his iniquity has been taken away. Then the prophet says, “let them put a clean turban on his head,” and it was done. Vv 6–7 seem to be a part of the vision. The angel of Yahweh promises Joshua that he will have complete charge over the temple and have access to the heavenly council if he walks in his ways and guards his service.

The oracle in 3:8–10 is addressed to Joshua and the priests. They are to be signs of the coming of Yahweh’s servant, the Branch, and of the stone with seven (eyes) fountains through which the iniquity of the land will be removed on one day.

When the Branch comes and the seven fountains of atonement are opened then every man will dwell in peace, security and plenty. The setting for the vision and oracle is in the heavenly council.

Comment

Many European scholars (T. Chary 73; H. Gese 26; K. Elliger 103; F. Horst 210; Jeremias 201–25) do not consider this fourth vision a part of the original cycle of visions because of its differences in form from that of the other visions. There is no ms evidence to show that this fourth vision ever stood in any place in the text other than its present location. However, the NE¹⁸B reverses the order of visions 4 and 5 and rearranges the text to restore its “original” order. The order of the material in the NE¹⁹B after chap. 2 is: 4:1–3 the vision of the lampstand and the two olive trees; 4:11–14 the explanation of the vision in 4:1–3; 3:1–8, 9c–10 the vision of the cleansing of Joshua the high priest and the following oracle; 3:9ab; 4:4–10 an address to Zerubbabel that does not relate directly to either vision 4 or 5. This is rather drastic surgery in order to rearrange the text without any supportive external evidence.

The first three visions were designed to comfort Zion and to assure the people that God was about to act to fulfill the promises he had made through Ezekiel (40–48) and the prophet in Isa

¹⁶pi piel

¹⁷ptcp participle

¹⁸NEB The New English Bible

¹⁹NEB The New English Bible

40–55. Visions 4 and 5 concentrate on the spiritual and political leaders of the community for the new age. Joshua is referred to as the הכהן הגדול “the high or great priest” (cf. Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4; Zech 3:1, 8; 6:11) a term that is used mainly in the postexilic period. It probably reflects the increased power and authority of the office of chief priest in Israel after the fall of the monarchy.

The thrust of the fourth vision is the cleansing of the priests (v 4) and the land (v 9) of עון “iniquity or guilt.” Even though the people had returned from Babylon and had started to rebuild the temple, there was still the contamination of iniquity that had not been purged. Was the iniquity only that of Joshua personally (cf. J. Smart, *History and Theology in Second Isaiah* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965] 285)? Or did Joshua’s filthy garments (3:3, 4) represent the contamination of all the people? The latter seems to be the proper meaning. Just as Aaron and his sons were cleansed and clothed properly at the institution of the priesthood (Lev 8:5–7) so Joshua was to be cleansed in order to be acceptable before God in his role as priest.

The role of satan becomes clear if we understand the setting of the vision to be that of the meeting of the heavenly council. Satan was a member of the heavenly council in Job 1 and 2. There are a number of similarities between this passage and the heavenly council scenes in Job 1 and 2: (1) satan appears before the Lord as an accuser in both passages (v 1); (2) Yahweh speaks to satan (v 2); (3) the presence of other “angels” in the group (vv 4, 6). N. L. A. Tidwell (347) sees the seven eyes of Yahweh ranging through the whole earth (4:10b) as corresponding to the function of satan in Job 1 and 2. There can be no doubt that the scene is that of the heavenly council. The expression “and I said” in verse 5 is also an indication that Zechariah was standing in the council and interrupted the proceedings by saying, “Put a clean turban on his head.” For other references to prophets and the heavenly council see 1 Kgs 22:19–22; Isa 6:1–13; Jer 23:18, 22; Amos 3:8.

The term “the satan” is used here as a title of an accuser before Yahweh rather than as a personal name. “The fuller development of the doctrine of a personal and devilish opponent of God is a feature of the New Testament” (Baldwin 113).

The cleansing, reinstatement, and recommissioning of Joshua is represented by a change in clothing. The filthy robes were removed and a fine white festival garment מחלצות was put on him (cf. Thomas, *JT^{20S}* [1932] 279–80). The reason given for the cleansing of the high priest and Israel is that God has chosen Israel (3:2; cf. 1:17; 2:16, Eng. 2:12). Yahweh had snatched the high priest and Israel from destruction as a piece of wood is snatched from the fire (3:2; cf. Amos 4:11).

After Joshua’s clothes were changed, apparently Zechariah noticed that the high priest had nothing on his head. Then the prophet (or the angel) said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” The word “turban” צניף comes from the root צנף “to wind around.” It is used of the turbans of rich women (Isa. 3:23) and of royal or eminent persons (Isa 62:3; Job 29:14). It is used here as the mark of the new dignity conferred on the high priest rather than the regular word מצנפת for the priest’s mitre (cf. Exod 28:4). With his head covered the priest was properly clothed to approach Yahweh. Then the angel promises Joshua that he would “rule” or “judge” בית ה' the house of God and have access to the heavenly council if he walks in the ways of Yahweh (moral injunctions) and attends his service (ceremonial functions).

Ezekiel had used the expression “my servant David” to refer to the king of the new age in 34:24 and 37:24. Now Zechariah combines the ideas of branch and servant and says, “for behold I am about to bring my servant the Branch” (Zech 3:9). Since Zerubbabel is called “my servant” in Hag 2:23 many scholars have assumed that Haggai and Zechariah identified Zerubbabel as the branch of David. But the expression “my servant” is used in many different ways in the OT. It can refer to individuals such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Deut 9:27); Moses (Num 12:7–8); David (2 Sam 3:18); Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 27:6); the nation Israel (Isa 41:8; 44:21); and a future suffering servant (Isa 53). It is possible that Zechariah or an editor combined Isaiah’s, Jeremiah’s, and Ezekiel’s concept of the Branch of the line of David with Deutero-Isaiah’s idea of the suffering servant to refer to the coming Messiah. Although H. G. Mitchell (156) argues that Zechariah identified Zerubbabel with the branch; there is no evidence in the text as it stands now that Zerubbabel was to be the expected Messiah. He was supposed to finish the temple (4:7–10a). But there is nothing to indicate that Zerubbabel would be a suffering servant or have anything to do with cleansing the land of sin. That was to be the work of the suffering servant (Isa 53:5–6).

Whatever the symbolism, the purpose of the stone is related to the removal of “guilt” or “iniquity” עון in one day (3:9). The stone will have seven “eyes,” “facets,” or “fountains.” The Hebrew word עינים can mean “eyes” (Gen 3:7) or “springs” or “fountains” (Gen 16:7; Num 33:9).

It is not at all clear how the meaning “eyes” could relate to the role of the stone as a cleansing agent. If the stone represents some precious jewel with seven facets on the turban of the high priest, the reflection of light by seven facets of the stone could conceivably refer to the seven (complete number of perfection) eyes of God which would express God’s care for the completion of the temple. But if the “eyes” of the stone were seven “fountains” through which the water of life could flow as it did when Moses struck the rock in the wilderness (Exod 17:6; Num 20:7), then the rock would be closely related to the Messiah’s role of cleansing the land.

Some scholars solve the problem of the relation of the seven “eyes” on the stone to the cleansing of the land by rearranging the text. For example NE²¹B removes the statement in 3:9bc, “Here is the stone that I set before Joshua, a stone in which there are seven eyes. I will reveal its meaning to you,” from its context in chap. 3 and places it just before 4:4a.

It seems by using the two metaphors of “branch” and “stone” to refer to the coming Messiah, Zechariah or the editor saw him as both king and priest. The idea of a priest-king may go back to the ancient concept of the priesthood of Melchizedek, king of Salem (cf. Gen 14; Ps 110). Later in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Testament of the Twelve the people looked forward to two messiahs, one from the family of Aaron who would function as a priest and one from the tribe of Judah who would be a king (cf. H. Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran*, trans. E. T. Sander [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963] 167–82).

E. Lipinski (26) has made a good case for translating עינים “springs” or “fountains.” He says that the masculine plural form is an influence of Aramaic on the language at this point. Lipinski argues that normally in Hebrew when עין refers to springs or fountains the feminine plural is used (cf. Deut 8:7; 2 Chr 32:3) but in the Aramaic Targums the masculine plural is used. He also points out that the LX²²X supports the reading “springs” or “fountains” because it translates

²¹NEB The New English Bible

²²LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

פתח here and פתח in Josh 8:29 with βόθρον “gate” or “opening” (p. 28). Therefore, Lipinski connects the seven fountains in Zech 3:9 and 4:10 with the idea of the rock which Moses struck in the wilderness and the fountain that flows from the temple in Ezek 47 and Zech 14. We need to remember that the apostle Paul interpreted the rock in the wilderness as referring to Christ (1 Cor 10:4).

When the Messiah comes the seven fountains will be opened and Yahweh will remove the iniquity of that land “in one day” (3:9; cf. 13:1). S. R. Driver (198) said that “Freedom from sin is one of the standing traits of the ideal future, as depicted by the prophets: cf. Isa 1:26, 4:3–4, 32:1–8, 33:24; Jer 31:33f; Dan 9:24.” It is clear that by NT times this passage was understood as messianic. For example Luke 1:78, probably depending on the LX²³X translation of צמח “shoot” as ἀνατολή “a rising” (Zech 3:8; 6:12), refers to the birth of Christ as an ἀνατολή, a “dayspring.”

Lipinski and D. R. Jones have opposite opinions about the relationship of the last verse (v 10) to the rest of chap. 3. Jones says that v 10 is an independent word of prophecy added by a catch-word “in one day” used as a convenient suture. But Lipinski argues that “in one day” should be translated “on the same day.” So on the day the land is cleansed of iniquity it will be watered by seven copious springs, bringing in an era of peace and prosperity. The idea of every man sitting under his own vine and fig tree hearkens back to the reign of Solomon (1 Kgs 4:25) and forward to the coming of the Messiah (Mic 4:4; John 1:48–50).

Each man will have his own property but he will live in close fellowship with his neighbor. They will “invite” 3 ורתקראו co²⁴m pl²⁵. qā²⁶ imperf, of קרא, each other from time to time (imperfect action) to sit under their own vines and fig trees. The rabbis extended the meaning of this verse “to indicate that the study of the law should be under the vine and under the fig tree” (see Ackroyd 191, n. 69²⁷

²³LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

²⁴com common

²⁵pl. plate or plural

²⁶qal the basic stem of Heb. verbs

²⁷ Ralph L. Smith, *Micah–Malachi*, vol. 32, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1984), 198–202.

(1) THE ACCUSED HIGH PRIEST (C²⁸H. 3)

In this vision the high priest Joshua, haled before the angel of Yahweh by the Adversary, is acquitted (vv²⁹. 1–5), and endowed anew with high functions and privileges (vv³⁰. 6–10),

(a) *The acquittal* (vv³¹. 1–5).—The prophet first sees the high priest, as a culprit, before the angel of Yahweh. The latter rebukes the Adversary for his complaint, and then, having released the accused, has him stripped of his soiled garments and clothed in becoming apparel.

1. The same form of expression is used in introducing this vision as in 2:3/1:20, *Then Yahweh showed me*. The place where the scene is laid is not mentioned. One is reminded of similar scenes at the court of heaven; for example, that described by Micaiah, when he was summoned by Ahab to advise him with reference to a projected expedition against Ramoth Gilead (1 K. 22:19 ff³².), in which Yahweh appears seated, “on his throne, with all the host of heaven standing by him on the right and on the left”; but especially of that portrayed in Jb. 1:6 ff³³., in which “the sons of God” come “to present themselves before Yahweh,” the Adversary among them. In both of these scenes, however, all the persons represented are celestial beings, while in this one of the principal figures is *Joshua the high priest*.^{34*} Moreover, it is not, in this instance, Yahweh before whom the other persons are assembled, but *the angel of Yahweh*, a (or the) manifestation of the Deity in human form, which might be, and, according to various passages in the Old Testament, often was, called a man. So in 1:8. Now, since the human form was assumed for the purpose of communion with men, the presence of the angel of Yahweh implies mundane surroundings. Hence, the prophet must have conceived of the scene here described as taking place on earth, and, indeed, in or near Jerusalem. Wherever it was, the angel of Yahweh was, so to speak, holding court, and Joshua was before him.^{35†} C³⁶f³⁷. v³⁸. 3. Not in the unfinished temple, as Theodoret and others have supposed, for there the high priest would have been before Yahweh, and hardly in soiled clothing. Present also was *the Adversary*, who was *standing at his* (Joshua’s) *right hand*. The rendering *Adversary* is much preferable in this connection to *satan* (EV³⁹.), although the latter is a literal transcript of the original. In fact, “satan,” in the sense in which the modern world has learned from the New Testament to use it, would be misleading; for the conception of satan as a definite personality hostile to God and the good is the result of a development which had hardly begun when Zechariah prophesied. The process can be traced. Thus, in the first of the two scenes cited the deceiver is not an angel

²⁸CH chapter.

²⁹vv. verses.

³⁰vv. verses.

³¹vv. verses.

³²ff. and following.

³³ff. and following.

^{34*} For details with reference to him and his office, see Hg. 1:1 and the comments thereon.

^{35†} On the expression *stand before*, of a defendant, see further, Nu. 35:12; Dt. 19:17; Jos. 20:6: 1 K. 3:16.

³⁶Cf *confer*, compare.

³⁷. *confer*, compare.

³⁸v. verse.

³⁹EV. English Version.

distinguished from the rest by a peculiar title or character, but the one who, when Yahweh asks, "Who shall deceive Ahab?" seems to him to have the best plan for so doing, and goes by divine direction on his mischievous errand. ^{C⁴⁰f⁴¹}. 1 K. 22:20 ff⁴².. This immediate dependence upon the will of Yahweh makes the latter responsible for all physical evil. ^{C⁴³f⁴⁴}. Am. 3:6; Is. 45:7, etc. In the book of Job the corresponding figure has acquired a title, "the Adversary," and a sceptical and censorious character. Moreover, he acts on his own initiative (Jb. 1:7; 2:2). Still there are limits to his activity, for Yahweh does not allow him to do serious or irretrievable harm to those who are temporarily placed in his power. ^{C⁴⁵f⁴⁶}. Jb. 1:12; 2:6. By the time of the Chronicler the final stage seems to have been reached; for, in 1 Ch. 21:1, the title "the Adversary" has become the proper name "satan," and the character thus designated employs his supernatural faculties to tempt man and thwart the purposes of God. ^{C⁴⁷f⁴⁸}. ^{EB⁴⁹}. (Gra⁵⁰y), art⁵¹. *satan*; Smend, *AR.*, 431 ff⁵².; Mart⁵³i, *SK*⁵⁴., 1892, 207 ff⁵⁵.; To⁵⁶y, *JBL*⁵⁷., ix, 17 ff⁵⁸.^{59*} The Adversary of this vision is certainly not the malicious power just described. He is more nearly akin to Job's tormentor, but, as will appear, he belongs to another period and performs a different function. The prophet describes him as standing on Joshua's *right hand to accuse him*. There does not seem to be any special significance in the mention of the right hand. The Hebrews frequently used *right hand* in parallelism with (Ps. 21:10/9; 89:14/13; 139:10, etc.), or as the equivalent of, unmodified *hand*.

⁴⁰*Cf confer*, compare.

⁴¹. *confer*, compare.

⁴²ff. and following.

⁴³*Cf confer*, compare.

⁴⁴. *confer*, compare.

⁴⁵*Cf confer*, compare.

⁴⁶. *confer*, compare.

⁴⁷*Cf confer*, compare.

⁴⁸. *confer*, compare.

⁴⁹*EB*. Encyclopædia Biblica (1899–1903).

⁵⁰Gray Gray, G. B.; *Hebrew Proper Names* (1896).

⁵¹art. article.

⁵²ff. and following.

⁵³Marti Marti, Karl; *Dodekapropheton* (1904).

Der Prophet Sacharja der Zeitgemosse Zerubbabels (1892).

Zwei Studien Zu Sacharja; *SK*. (1892).

⁵⁴*SK*. *Studien und Kritiken*.

⁵⁵ff. and following.

⁵⁶Toy Toy, C. H.; *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel (SBOT.)* (1899). *Evil Spirits in the Bible*, *JBL.*, IX (1890).

⁵⁷*JBL*. *Journal of Biblical Literature*.

⁵⁸ff. and following.

^{59*} An idea of the change that had taken place in the views of the Jews on the subject of evil may be obtained by comparing 1 Ch. 21:1 with the parallel passage 2 S. 24:1, where it is not satan, but Yahweh, who incites David to number Israel. Wright cites Ps. 109:6 as another instance of the use of שָׂטָן as a proper name; but the parallelism shows that it is there a synonym for רָשָׁע, *wicked*. For a still more complete doctrine concerning satan, see Jude 9; Rev. 12:7 ff., in both of which passages there is evident allusion to the scene here described.

⁶⁰*f*⁶¹. Ps. 45:5/4; 48:11/10; 60:7/5, etc. Hence it is best to interpret *at his right hand* here as only a more definite and pictorial way of saying *at his side*. It is clearly so used in Ps. 109:31, where Yahweh is represented as standing “at the right hand of the needy” to defend him.

2. The prophet does not go into unnecessary details. He notes the positions of the parties, and leads one to expect that the next thing will be the complaint; but he does not even state that the complaint was brought, much less recite the offence or offences of which the high priest was accused. Indeed, he seems to have intended to convey the idea that the Adversary was interrupted, not, as in the received text, by Yahweh, but by *the angel of Yahweh*, as he was about to present his case. This interpretation certainly harmonises with the tone and apparent intent of the vision as a whole. In any case, the angel of Yahweh silences the Adversary with an indignant objurgation, *Yahweh rebuke thee*, which furnishes another example of the care the Hebrews sometimes took to distinguish between Yahweh and the angel of his presence. ⁶²*f*⁶³. 1:10; 2:3/1:20. The ground of the indignation expressed is found in a mixture of two sentiments that have already shown themselves. The first reappears in connection with the repetition of the just quoted words, where Yahweh is described as the one *who delighteth in Jerusalem*. In other words, it is the partiality for the Judean capital asserted in 1:14. The other betrays itself in the question, *Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?* The figure is borrowed from Amos (4:11), who used it of the remnant of Israel after one of Yahweh’s destructive visitations. The Jewish exegetes find here an allusion to the miraculous escape of the high priest from a furnace into which he and the false prophets Ahab and Zedekiah had been cast by Sennacherib (sic); but there is no ground for believing that he ever had any such experience.^{64*} It is probable that the high priest here represents the survivors from the overthrow of Judah, and that the question put into the mouth of the angel of Yahweh, like the declaration of 1:15, is an expression of sympathy with them in their excessive suffering. It is as if he had said, “Hath he not already suffered beyond his desert?” ⁶⁵*f*⁶⁶. Is. 40:2.^{67†}—3. *Meanwhile Joshua, clothed in filthy garments, was standing before the angel of Yahweh*. The filthy garments signify, not grief, but iniquity, as the nature of the figure would lead one to expect and an explanatory gloss in the next verse expressly teaches. The guilt thus symbolised has been supposed to be that of the high priest himself as an individual or an official;^{68‡} but if, as has been shown, he here

⁶⁰*Cf confer*, compare.

⁶¹. *confer*, compare.

⁶²*Cf confer*, compare.

⁶³. *confer*, compare.

^{64*} For the details of the story, see Wright, 51 *f*.

⁶⁵*Cf confer*, compare.

⁶⁶. *confer*, compare.

^{67†} The likeness of the part here taken by the angel of Yahweh to that assigned to Michael in Dn. 10:13, 21; 12:1 naturally led to their early identification. *Cf*. Rev. 12:10. Of the later commentators Wright has adopted this view. There is, indeed, a relation between the two figures, but it is not one of identity; the truth being that Michael represents a later development than the angel of Yahweh, and a further differentiation and personification of the powers and attributes by which the Deity was brought into a helpful relation with man. *Cf*. *DB.*, art. *Michael*.

^{68‡} The Targum says that Joshua “had sons who took to themselves wives unfit for the priesthood.”

represents the Jewish people, or at least the Judean community, the garments he wears must be interpreted as setting forth the character and condition of those represented. It is therefore safe to conclude that the prophet in this vision intended to represent Judah as still, in spite of the penalties endured, guilty before God, and so evidently guilty that, as the high priest's silence would suggest, an express accusation was unnecessary and a successful defence impossible. What, then, are the function and significance of the Adversary? The answer to this question must be inferred from the attitude of the angel of Yahweh toward him in his relation to Joshua. Now, in v⁶⁹. 2 the angel of Yahweh is clearly depicted as the protector of the high priest against the Adversary, an attitude that can best be explained by supposing that the function of the latter, in the mind of the prophet, was not to prove so much as to recall the iniquity of the former and insist upon the infliction of the appropriate penalty. In other words, he represents, not, as Mart⁷⁰i claims, the doubt and hesitation with reference to the possibility of the restoration of Judah current among the people, but the justice of Yahweh as contrasted with his mercy. The reproof of the Adversary by the angel of Yahweh signifies the triumph of the milder attribute, that is, that Yahweh has determined to save his people, because they are his people and their sufferings appeal to his sympathy, by an act of grace in spite of their unworthiness. C⁷¹f⁷². Ho. 11:9; Mi. 7:8 f⁷³.; Is. 43:25 ff⁷⁴.. It is from this standpoint that the vision becomes, on the one hand, a rebuke to the sceptics of Zechariah's day, and, on the other, a solace for those who, much as they had suffered and were suffering, as they felt, under the divine displeasure, had retained their faith in Yahweh and still cherished an ardent hope that he would speedily forgive their iniquities and rescue them from destruction.

4. The angel of Yahweh, having silenced the Adversary, turns to *those standing before him*,—not, as Blayney explains, the followers of the high priest, but the other members of the heavenly train,—and commands them to *remove* from Joshua *the filthy garments*, the sign and symbol of the people's unworthiness, and *clothe him in robes of state* befitting his office as the religious head and representative of a chosen people. In the Massoretic text these two commands are separated by an interpretative passage, which, however, as has already been noted, is evidently a gloss. It betrays its origin by the disturbance it creates in the order of thought. The interpolated statement, *See, I have caused thy iniquity to pass from thee*, may have been intended to mean that the iniquity was personal. This is the opinion represented by the Targum, which substitutes for a translation of the Hebrew original a command to the attendants to direct Joshua to "bring forth the wives unfit for the priesthood," that is, unfit to be the wives of priests, "from his house." This interpretation seems to have been suggested by Ezr. 10:18 ff⁷⁵., but, if it is correct, since the passage thus paraphrased is a gloss, it only shows how

⁶⁹v. verse.

⁷⁰Marti Marti, Karl; *Dodekapropheton* (1904).

Der Prophet Sacharja der Zeitgemosse Zerubbabels (1892).

Zwei Studien Zu Sacharja; SK. (1892).

⁷¹Cf *confer*, compare.

⁷². *confer*, compare.

⁷³f. and following.

⁷⁴ff. and following.

⁷⁵ff. and following.

greatly Zechariah was misunderstood.—5. The angel of Yahweh finally commands his attendants to *put a clean turban on his head*. In v⁷⁶. 3, where the appearance of Joshua is described, there was no reference to a turban, but the use of the word *clean* here shows that the prophet did not intend to represent him as without a head-dress. The one named,^{77*} which is mentioned only five times in the Old Testament, was worn, not only by priests, but by other persons of rank or wealth, women as well as men. C^{78f79}. Is. 3:23; 62:3. In Exodus the head-dress of the high priest, which, since it had a related name,^{80†} must have been of a similar form, is described as made of fine linen and ornamented with an inscribed plate of gold. C^{81f82}. Ex. 39:28, 30 f⁸³.. The rest of the verse describes the fulfillment of the last two commands. In the Massoretic text the order of fulfillment is the reverse of that in which the commands were given; but in the Greek it is the same, and it is more than probable that Zechariah wrote that *they clothed him in goodly garments and put a clean turban upon his head*. The adjective *goodly* is not in the text, but it is required to distinguish the garments now put upon the priest from those that had been removed, and may therefore properly be supplied. It is to be noted that there is nothing to indicate that the garments in which Joshua has been arrayed are official robes, as Drusius and others have held. The emphasis is all on the fact that they are clean, and, as such, signify that Yahweh has for his own sake, “independently of any sacrifice or offering whatever” (Stonard), at last blotted out all the transgressions of his people. The account of the ceremony might have ended with the words last quoted; but the prophet, for the purpose of giving the scene a more vivid reality, adds that, while the attendants were reclothing Joshua, *the angel of Yahweh stood by to see that his commands were obeyed*. C^{84f85}. Gn. 18:8; Ju. 13:20.

⁸⁶(b) *The charge* (vv⁸⁷. 6–10). The angel of Yahweh, addressing Joshua, promises him personally, on condition of loyalty, an exalted position, and his people forgiveness and prosperity.

6. The symbolical ceremony completed, *the angel of Yahweh* turns to Joshua and speaks to him for the first time. The prophet says he *charged* him, that is, addressed him in the solemn manner and language befitting the occasion. C^{88f89}. Dt. 8:19, etc. This expression in itself would lead one to expect an utterance having a personal rather than a symbolical significance.—7. This expectation is fulfilled. It does not, however, at first appear that the language used has a

⁷⁶v. verse.

^{77*} צַנִּיף.

⁷⁸Cf *confer*, compare.

⁷⁹. *confer*, compare.

^{80†} מִצְנֶפֶת.

⁸¹Cf *confer*, compare.

⁸². *confer*, compare.

⁸³f. and following.

⁸⁴Cf *confer*, compare.

⁸⁵. *confer*, compare.

⁸⁶

⁸⁷vv. verses.

⁸⁸Cf *confer*, compare.

⁸⁹. *confer*, compare.

personal application. The first condition, for example, *if thou go in my ways*, is one that might be required of any Jew, and therefore of the whole people. Nor is the second, *if thou keep my charge*, really more explicit; for, although the word *charge* oftenest denotes the office or function of the priest, it is also used in the sense of a behest laid upon others by the Deity (Gn. 26:5; Nu. 9:19; 23; Lv. 18:30, etc.), and the relation between the two conditions requires that it should have the latter meaning in the present instance. There is thus far, then, no certain indication that Joshua has ceased to be a symbolical figure and resumed his personal character. The conclusion, however, removes all uncertainty, for the promise it contains is one personal to him as the high priest. If he is loyal to Yahweh, the God of his fathers, and careful to obey all the divine precepts, this is his reward: *thou shalt rule my house and keep my courts*. The house, of course, is the temple, now being rebuilt, and the courts the enclosures by which, when completed, it will be surrounded. The declaration here made, therefore, amounts to a charter granting to Joshua and his successors a sole and complete control in matters of religion never before enjoyed by the head of the hierarchy at Jerusalem. ^{C⁹⁰f⁹¹}. 1 K. 2:27; 2 K. 16:10 ff⁹².; 22:3 ff⁹³.; Benz⁹⁴. *Arch.*, 410. In fact, it is an advance upon the program of Ezekiel (45) in the direction of the priestly legislation of the Pentateuch.^{95*} It should be noted, however, that the high priest's jurisdiction is here confined to the temple and its precincts.—To this grant of authority is added another promise of great significance to the community. The passage has been variously understood. In the great versions it is rendered as if it referred to descendants of the high priest.^{96†} It has also been interpreted as a promise that Joshua himself shall be given angelic guides to direct and defend him^{97‡} or messengers to keep him in communication with heaven.^{98§} There are, however, reasons, which will appear, why all these interpretations must be rejected and the clause be translated *I will give thee access among those that stand here*. But who are the persons meant? and when shall the high priest enjoy access among them? The first question seems to be answered by v⁹⁹. 4, where, as has been shown, angels are intended. In reply to the second it has been taught that the prophet here has in mind the future life.^{*100*} Zechariah, however, nowhere else presents any such motive for faithfulness. Hence the chances are that, as most modern exegetes agree, in this case it is the privilege of direct and immediate communion with Yahweh with which he is dealing. This is a privilege not granted to all men (Je. 30:21), but it may fitly be accorded to a faithful high priest. It is also one that has great

⁹⁰Cf *confer*, compare.

⁹¹. *confer*, compare.

⁹²ff. and following.

⁹³ff. and following.

⁹⁴Benz. Benzinger, I.; *Hebräische Archäologie* (1894; 2ded., 1907).

^{95*} Cf. Ex. 28:29 f.; Nu. 27:18 ff.; Benz. *Arch.*, 318 f., 422 f.; WRS. ^{OTJC2}, 445 f.

^{96†} Thus \mathfrak{G} *I will give thee those moving among them that stand by*; which Theod. Mops. explains as meaning that Yahweh will permit Joshua to transmit the honour conferred upon him to successors. Similarly \mathfrak{B} \mathfrak{S} .

^{97‡} So Cyr., Lu., Grot., Ston., Hd., *et al.*

^{98§} Baumgarten.

⁹⁹v. verse.

^{100**} So \mathfrak{L} , Ra., Ki., Pem., Dru., Marck, Lowth, Pu., *et al.*,

significance for the community, as will appear later in the paragraph. $C^{101}f^{102}$. v^{103} . 9.—8. At this point the prophet returns to the symbolic method. Yahweh, addressing the high priest, says *Thou and thy fellows that sit before thee are men of omen*. There can be no doubt that the persons here called the *fellows*, or companions, of Joshua are his associates in the priesthood. The only question is whether Zechariah thought of them as present in his vision. It has sometimes been answered in the affirmative,^{104†} but the description given is certainly calculated to produce the impression that the high priest is a solitary and peculiarly pathetic figure. His associates are mentioned here because they are a part of the priesthood which he primarily represents. On the expression *sit before*, see 2 K. 6:1. The description of the priests as *men of omen* recalls a saying of Isaiah, “I and the children that Yahweh hath given me are signs and tokens in Israel.” Now, Isaiah in this passage doubtless referred to the names he and his children bore, and their significance. There is no means of learning the names of Joshua’s friends. Some, if not many, of them must have had names expressive of faith in God and hope for their people. That of the high priest himself, according to the current interpretation of it, *Yahweh is help*, was practically the equivalent of Isaiah; a fact which in itself was sufficient to suggest to Zechariah an imitation of his great predecessor.^{105*} In any case, the idea seems to be that these men, the priests as a class, are prophetic of good to the community they are serving. This thought was not developed as it might have been by Zechariah. A reader of a later time, feeling that it was incomplete, and not taking pains to examine the context, to see if he understood the drift of the passage, added, as a gloss, *for (or that) I will bring my servant Shoot*.^{106†} This is Mart¹⁰⁷ⁱ’s explanation of the appearance of the Shoot in this connection; and there are good reasons for accepting it. In the first place, as Mart¹⁰⁸ⁱ says, for Zechariah the Shoot is Zerubbabel. This, as will appear, was the original teaching of 6:12, which has been recast to make it a prediction of the elevation of Joshua. But Zerubbabel was already in Jerusalem; had, in fact, for two months been actively engaged in the restoration of the temple. It was therefore impossible for Zechariah to speak of him as yet to be brought thither by Yahweh. Indeed,—and this is a second point,—there is no place for him in this connection. The prophet is here dealing with the priesthood and its significance. The Shoot represents political power and glory. $C^{109}f^{110}$. 6:13.—9. The omission of the disturbing clause leaves Joshua in the

¹⁰¹ Cf *confer*, compare.

¹⁰² . *confer*, compare.

¹⁰³ v. verse.

^{104††} So Lowth, Hi., Ew., Brd., van H., *et al*,

^{105*} Cf. also Ez. 12:6, 11; 24:24, 27.

^{106†} The word צִמָּח, here translated *Shoot*, is incorrectly rendered ἀνατολή in \mathfrak{G} , and *oriens* in \mathfrak{B} ; whence the “Dayspring” of Lu. 1:78.

¹⁰⁷ Marti Marti, Karl; *Dodekapropheton* (1904).

Der Prophet Sacharja der Zeitgemosse Zerubbabels (1892).

Zwei Studien Zu Sacharja; SK. (1892).

¹⁰⁸ Marti Marti, Karl; *Dodekapropheton* (1904).

Der Prophet Sacharja der Zeitgemosse Zerubbabels (1892).

Zwei Studien Zu Sacharja; SK. (1892).

¹⁰⁹ Cf *confer*, compare.

¹¹⁰ . *confer*, compare.

centre of the scene. To him Yahweh now directs especial attention. *Lo*, he says, *the stone that I have delivered to Joshua*. The opinions with reference to this stone have been many and various. It has been interpreted as meaning material for the new temple,^{111*} the corner-stone^{112†} or the topstone^{113‡} of the edifice, the plummet of 4:10,^{114§} a precious stone for the prince,^{115*} or a number of such stones for the high priest.^{116‡} To the first four of these interpretations there is the common objection that, according to 4:7, 9 f¹¹⁷, it is Zerubbabel, not Joshua, under whose direction the temple is to be erected, and that therefore it would be inconsistent for Zechariah to represent Joshua as receiving material for the structure or a plummet by which to build it. In considering the second and the third it should also be remembered that the corner-stone had already been laid, and the topstone was not to be put into place until a long time after the date of this vision. An additional objection to the fourth is that the stone in question is to be engraved. The key to the prophet's meaning seems to be in the parenthetical clause rendered in AV¹¹⁸. *upon one stone shall be* (RV¹¹⁹. *are*) *seven eyes*. But the "eye" of a stone, according to Ez. 1:16, 22, is the gleam from it, and, since a gleam can only come from a precious stone, and seven gleams from as many facets of such a stone, the stone in question must have been *a single stone with seven facets*. This is the interpretation proposed by Wellhausen, but he sees in the stone an ornament for Zerubbabel. C¹²⁰f¹²¹. 6:10 ff¹²².. To the latter feature there are strong objections: (1) it destroys the unity of the paragraph; and (2) renders the final clause of this verse unintelligible, there being no discoverable connection between the stone, or the name of Zerubbabel, which, according to Wellhausen, was to have been engraved on it, and the promise, *I will remove the iniquity of that land*. It is much better to regard the stone as an ornament for the costume of the high priest, for the following reasons: (1) The paragraph thus acquires the desired and expected unity. (2) The next clause, *I will grave its inscription*, becomes especially significant. The word rendered grave^{123‡} is used almost exclusively of engraving on precious stones. In Ex. 28, where the costume of the high priest is described, mention is made of no fewer than fourteen engraved stones, two for the shoulders (v¹²⁴. 9), and twelve for the breastplate (v¹²⁵. 21), of the ephod. Now, while it would be unsafe to claim that this chapter describes the ornamentation of the ephod before the Exile, there seems to be reason for supposing that it is reliable so far as the character of the ornamentation of the costume of the

^{111*} So Stäh., Lowe

^{112†} So Ra., Ki., Marck, Ston., Thei., Rosenm., Hi., Pres., Hd., Wri., *et al.*

^{113‡} Lowth, Mau., Ew., Burger, Stei., Per., Marti, *et al.*

^{114§} AE., Ki. (alt.), Grot.

^{115**} We., Now.

^{116‡‡} Bredenkamp.

¹¹⁷f. and following.

¹¹⁸AV. Authorized Version.

¹¹⁹RV. Revised Version.

¹²⁰Cf *confer*, compare.

¹²¹. *confer*, compare.

¹²²ff. and following.

^{123‡‡} פתח.

¹²⁴v. verse.

¹²⁵v. verse.

chief priest is concerned; in other words, that the head of the priesthood then and afterward actually wore an engraved stone (or stones) on his vestments. (3) The promise already quoted becomes intelligible. On this point, also, the description of Ex. 28 is helpful. In v¹²⁶. 36 of that chapter Moses is directed to “make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it ... Holy to Yahweh.” There follows (v¹²⁷. 38) an explanation in which Yahweh says that Aaron shall wear this plate on his forehead in token that he bears “the iniquity of the holy things” offered by his people, “that they (the people) may be accepted before Yahweh.” Here, again, it would doubtless be too much to say that the law attributed to Moses reflects the practice even of the time of Zechariah;—the plate of gold seems to forbid such an assumption;—but, if this law, like others in the Pentateuch, is the outcome of the development of the Hebrew ritual, one must suppose that at that date the idea embodied in the law had found more or less adequate expression, and admit the possibility that it is the idea of Zechariah in the passage now under consideration.

Selli¹²⁸n (*Stud.*, ii, 78 f¹²⁹f¹³⁰.) cites as a parallel to this vision the record of the installation of a priest of Nebo at Borsippa. It is found in a black stone tablet, 6×8½ in. in dimensions, containing an inscription of a hundred lines. This inscription is to the effect that the goddess Nana and the god Ae have, in their good pleasure, inducted Nabu-mutakkil, son of Aplu-etir, into the sanctuary of Nebo at Borsippa, and granted him a share in the revenues of the temple of Ezida, and, “that the appointment may not be contested, have sealed the same and delivered it to him forever.” Sellin further reports that there are engraved on the tablet the figures of the gods who protect the same from violation, and, among these pictures, “in the middle of the narrow upper edge, the seven eyes, evidently a representation of the seven planets, including the moon and the sun.” He concludes that in this tablet “we ourselves have a stone with seven eyes similar to that which Zechariah in the vision saw delivered to Joshua.” The tablet is published in *Mittheilungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, Jan.–Mar., 1900. There can be little doubt that the figures described were intended to represent seven heavenly bodies, but they are not in the shape of eyes, the first being plainly a circle and the third a star inscribed in a circle. It is hardly safe, therefore, to identify them with the eyes Zechariah had in mind, especially since, as the next clause implies, the stone in question was yet to be engraved.

On the supposition that the stone delivered to Joshua was intended for the ornamentation of his official costume, there are one or two other points that should be mentioned. In the first place, the inscription on the stone would hardly be the name of either of the Jewish leaders, but the name of Yahweh, or the “Holy to Yahweh” of later times, or something similarly appropriate. Note, however, secondly, that, while the stone has been provided, it seems, when delivered, not to have been engraved; which probably means that, although Joshua is the chosen head of the religious establishment at Jerusalem, he has not entered into complete

¹²⁶v. verse.

¹²⁷v. verse.

¹²⁸Sellin Sellm, Ernest; *Serubbabel* (1898).

Studien zur Entschichle der jüd. Gemeinde nach dem bab. Exil (1901).

¹²⁹ff and following.

¹³⁰. and following.

possession of his office, for the reason that there is as yet no temple to Yahweh. Meanwhile,—and this would be a strong argument for the speedy completion of the sanctuary,—the land was still suffering for its iniquity. ^{C¹³¹f¹³²}. Hg. 1:9; 2:14. When the temple is finished the curse can, and will, be removed *in one day*.—**10**. The iniquity of the land is, of course, the iniquity of the people who inhabit it, inherited in part from their fathers and augmented by their own neglect of the obvious duty of rebuilding the temple, on account of which the land was cursed with drought and unfruitfulness. ^{C¹³³f¹³⁴}. 8:10. When the people, in response to the appeal of Haggai, laid the foundation of the new structure, he promised them the favour of Yahweh. ^{C¹³⁵f¹³⁶}. Hg. 2:19. Zechariah repeats this promise in 8:11 ^{f¹³⁷}.. He could not, however, guarantee the entire removal of their guilt until the sanctuary was completed. *On that day*, that is, from that day onward, they may expect the continuous blessing of Yahweh. The Hebrews pictured this happy condition as one in which every one would sit “under his own vine and fig tree.” ^{C¹³⁸f¹³⁹}. 1 K. 5:5; Mi. 4:4. Zechariah enlarges the figure by adding a touch which shows that, as will later become more apparent, he was as much interested in the social as in the economic condition of the community. In the good time coming he says his people will *invite every one his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree*. This idyllic condition is more fully described in ch¹⁴⁰. 8.

A good example of the method used by the older commentators is seen in Stonard’s note on this verse, in which he finds an intimation of “the strenuous endeavours of the apostles and other primitive Christians to convert the heathen world.... They are here figured, while resting in the tranquillity and plenteousness of evangelical peace and blessing, as calling to all the wayfaring men who needed such refreshment in the journey through life to partake with them in their ease and comfort in the meat and drink that endure unto everlasting life.”

7. [צבאות] ^{141A} om¹⁴².—The accentuation requires that the apodosis of the conditional sentence begin with ונתתי. This is in harmony with the Jewish interpretation of the verse, according to which the final clause is a promise for the future life. So Ki¹⁴³.; also Or¹⁴⁴., who,

¹³¹Cf confer, compare.

¹³². confer, compare.

¹³³Cf confer, compare.

¹³⁴. confer, compare.

¹³⁵Cf confer, compare.

¹³⁶. confer, compare.

¹³⁷f. and following.

¹³⁸Cf confer, compare.

¹³⁹. confer, compare.

¹⁴⁰ch. chapter.

^{141A} Alexandrian codex.

⊗ Alexandrian codex.

¹⁴²om. omit.

¹⁴³Ki. Kimchi, David (†1230); Commentary.

¹⁴⁴Or. von Orelli, C.; *Die zwölf kleinen Propheten (Kurzgefasster Kommentar)*, 3d ed. (1908); (Eng., 1893).

since he does not follow the Jewish interpretation, should, with ¹⁴⁵ and most modern exegetes, place the main pause after the first תשמר. ¹⁴⁶ divides the verse after ביתי and reads וגם as if it were וגם, thus wresting asunder two parallel clauses and making a second conditional sentence.—[מהלכים] Those who render the word concretely explain it as an Aramaised form of the prtc¹⁴⁷. Hiph¹⁴⁸. So Bö.¹⁴⁹ § 1013. b; Kö¹⁵⁰. i. 416. If, however, the prophet had wished to use the causative of הלך, he would naturally have employed the regular form here, as he does in 5:10; and if he had sought an intransitive form, he would have found the Pi¹⁵¹. or the Hithp¹⁵². ready to his hand. C¹⁵³f¹⁵⁴. Ec. 4:15, etc. Ols¹⁵⁵. § 208a derives the word from a supposed noun מְהַלֵּךְ. So, also, Ew¹⁵⁶., Köh¹⁵⁷., Wri¹⁵⁸., Low¹⁵⁹e, et al¹⁶⁰. This conjecture takes for granted the correctness of the vocalisation. If that be ignored, there is no difficulty in connecting the given form with מְהַלֵּךְ which actually occurs in the required sense. C¹⁶¹f¹⁶². Jon. 3:3 ¹⁶³f.; Ez. 42:4. The pl¹⁶⁴., however, would be מְהַלְכִים. So Sta.¹⁶⁵ § 235. 1; Ges¹⁶⁶. §167§ 53, 3, R, 5. So, also, Marc¹⁶⁸k, Houb¹⁶⁹., Hi¹⁷⁰., Klie¹⁷¹., Pres¹⁷²., Brd¹⁷³.,

¹⁴⁵☞ Syriac Peshitto Version.

☞ Vulgate Version.

¹⁴⁶☞ Received Greek Version.

¹⁴⁷prtc. participle.

¹⁴⁸Hiph. Hiphil of verb.

¹⁴⁹Bö. § Böttcher, Fried., *Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache* (1867–68).

¹⁵⁰Kö. König, F. E.; *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1893).

¹⁵¹Pi. Piel of verb.

¹⁵²Hithp. Hithpael of verb.

¹⁵³Cf confer, compare.

¹⁵⁴. confer, compare.

¹⁵⁵Ols. Olshausen, J.; *Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache* (1861).

¹⁵⁶Ew. Ewald, Hein.; *Die Propheten des Alten Bundes* (1867–68).

¹⁵⁷Köh. Köhler, Aug.; *Die nachexilischen Propheten* (1860–65).

¹⁵⁸Wri. Wright, C. H. H.; *Zechariah and his Prophecies* (1879).

¹⁵⁹Lowe Lowe, W. H.; *The Hebrew Student's Commentary on Zechariah* (1882).

¹⁶⁰et al. et aliter, and else where, and others.

¹⁶¹Cf confer, compare.

¹⁶². confer, compare.

¹⁶³f and following.

¹⁶⁴pl. plural.

¹⁶⁵Sta. § Stade, Bernh., *Lehrbuch der hebräischen Grammatik* (1879).

¹⁶⁶Ges. Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Kautzsch, (1909²⁸); trans. Collins & Cowley (1910).

¹⁶⁷§§ Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Kautzsch, (1909²⁸); trans. Collins & Cowley (1910).

¹⁶⁸Marck Marck, Joh.; *Commentarius in duodecim Prophetas Minores* (1784).

¹⁶⁹Houb. Houbigant, C. F.; *Notae criticae in universos Veteris Testamenti libros* (1777).

¹⁷⁰Hi. Hitzig, Ferd.; *Die zwölf kleinen Propheten*, ed. Steiner (1881).

¹⁷¹Klie. Kliefoth, Th.; *Der Prophet Scharjah* (1862).

¹⁷²Pres. Pressel, W.; *Commentar zu den Schriften der Propheten Haggai, Sacharia, und Maleachi* (1870).

¹⁷³Brd. Bredenkamp, C. J.; *Der Prophet Sacharja* (1879).

We¹⁷⁴., Now¹⁷⁵., Mart¹⁷⁶י, Kit¹⁷⁷., *et al*¹⁷⁸.—8. The accentuation would require that אַתָּה and רַעִיךָ be construed as vocatives, and the following כִּי seems to reinforce this requirement. So ¹⁷⁹ ¹⁸⁰ ¹⁸¹ ¹⁸². Since, however, as has been shown, there is no ground for supposing the prophet to have thought of Joshua as accompanied by other priests, כִּי is probably a dittog¹⁸³., and אַתָּה ורַעִיךָ are pendent subjects and the antecedents of חַמָּה. This pronoun should properly be in the 2d pers¹⁸⁴.,—and ¹⁸⁵ has this reading,—but the use of the third for the second is sufficiently attested to warrant its retention in this instance. C¹⁸⁶f¹⁸⁷. Mi. 1:2; 3:9, but especially Zp. 2:12; Kö¹⁸⁸. § 338 g. h; Dr¹⁸⁹.¹⁹⁰§ 198. Obs. 2.—¹כִּי—צַמַח]. On the genuineness of this clause, see the comments. It is interesting, in view of the rendering given to צַמַח in ¹⁹¹ ¹⁹² ¹⁹³ ¹⁹⁴, that the root from which it comes in Syr¹⁹⁵. means *shine*.¹⁹⁶ simply substitutes מְשִׁיחָא. On the accentuation of the word, see Ges¹⁹⁷.^{§198} 29, 4 (a) R.—9. The accentuation makes v¹⁹⁹. a compound nominal sentence, and it has oftenest been so

¹⁷⁴We. Wellhausen, J.; *Die kleinen Propheten*, ed. 3 (1898).

¹⁷⁵Now. Nowack, W.; *Die kleinen Propheten (Handkommentar)*, 2d ed. (1903).

¹⁷⁶Marti Marti, Karl; *Dodekapropheton* (1904).

Der Prophet Sacharja der Zeitgemosse Zerubbabels (1892).

Zwei Studien Zu Sacharja; SK. (1892).

¹⁷⁷Kit. Kittel, R.; *Biblia Habraica* (1905–6).

¹⁷⁸*et al. et aliter*, and else where, and others.

¹⁷⁹☩ Received Greek Version.

¹⁸⁰Ⲯ Vulgate Version.

¹⁸¹Ⲫ Syriac Peshitto Version.

¹⁸²ⲉ Targum.

¹⁸³dittog. dittography.

¹⁸⁴pers. person

¹⁸⁵Ⲫ Syriac Peshitto Version.

¹⁸⁶*Cf confer*, compare.

¹⁸⁷. *confer*, compare.

¹⁸⁸Kö. König, F. E.; *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1893).

¹⁸⁹Dr. S. R. Driver, *The Use of the Tenses in Hebrew*, ed. 6 (1898).

¹⁹⁰§ S. R. Driver, *The Use of the Tenses in Hebrew*, ed. 6 (1898).

¹⁹¹☩ Received Greek Version.

¹⁹²Ⲓ Old Latin Version.

¹⁹³Ⲯ Vulgate Version.

¹⁹⁴Ⲫ Syriac Peshitto Version.

¹⁹⁵Syr. Syriac.

¹⁹⁶ⲉ Targum.

¹⁹⁷Ges. Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Kautzsch, (1909²⁸); trans. Collins & Cowley (1910).

¹⁹⁸§§ Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Kautzsch, (1909²⁸); trans. Collins & Cowley (1910).

¹⁹⁹v. verse.

treated. So the Vrss²⁰⁰., Dru²⁰¹., de D²⁰²., Marc²⁰³k, Hd²⁰⁴., Köh²⁰⁵., Wri²⁰⁶., *et al*²⁰⁷. If, however, the seven eyes are seven facets, as above argued, the mention of them is of so little importance in comparison with the announcement that follows, that it should be thrown into a parenthesis. So New²⁰⁸., Ew²⁰⁹., Ke²¹⁰., Pres²¹¹., Or²¹²., We²¹³., Now²¹⁴., Mart²¹⁵i, *et al*²¹⁶. The absence of the connective before הַנְּיִי favours this arrangement.—[עֵינַיִם] The du. for the pl²¹⁷. C²¹⁸f²¹⁹. Ges²²⁰ §221§ 38. 2, R. On the gender, see Ges²²² §223§ 122, 3, (c). Here it seems to be masc²²⁴.; also 4:10.—[וּמַשְׁתִּי] ²²⁵, καὶ ψηλαφήσω, ²²⁶ ܐܘܨܘܟܝܘܢ, as if from מַשַּׁשׁ, *touch, examine*.—[עוֹן] ²²⁷ prefixes πᾶσαν = בְּיוֹם הַהוּא .10.—הַהוּא = ܫܐ, ²²⁸ [כל—אחד]. This expression seems to Mart²²⁹i to betray a late hand; but it was common in the literature with

²⁰⁰Vrss. Versions, ancient.

²⁰¹Dru. Drusus, Joh.; *Commentarius in Prophetas Minores XII*. (1627).

²⁰²de D. de Dieu, Lud.; *Critica Sacra* (1693).

²⁰³Marck Marck, Joh.; *Commentarius in duodecim Prophetas Minores* (1784).

²⁰⁴Hd. Henderson, E. *The Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets* (1868).

²⁰⁵Köh. Köhler, Aug.; *Die nachexilischen Propheten* (1860–65).

²⁰⁶Wri. Wright, C. H. H.; *Zechariah and his Prophecies* (1879).

²⁰⁷*et al. et aliter*, and else where, and others.

²⁰⁸New. Newcome, Wm.; *The Twelve Minor Prophets, ed. 2* (1809).

²⁰⁹Ew. Ewald, Hein.; *Die Propheten des Alten Bundes* (1867–68).

²¹⁰Ke. Keil, C. F.; *Biblischer Commentar über die zwölf kleinen Propheten* (1873).

²¹¹Pres. Pressel, W.; *Commentar zu den Schriften der Propheten Haggai, Sacharia, und Maleachi* (1870).

²¹²Or. von Orelli, C.; *Die zwölf kleinen Propheten (Kurzgefasster Kommentar)*, 3d ed. (1908); (Eng., 1893).

²¹³We. Wellhausen, J.; *Die kleinen Propheten*, ed. 3 (1898).

²¹⁴Now. Nowack, W.; *Die kleinen Propheten (Handkommentar)*, 2d ed. (1903).

²¹⁵Marti Marti, Karl; *Dodekapropheton* (1904).

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²¹⁶*et al. et aliter*, and else where, and others.

²¹⁷pl. plural.

²¹⁸Cf *confer*, compare.

²¹⁹. *confer*, compare.

²²⁰Ges. Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Kautzsch, (1909²⁸); trans. Collins & Cowley (1910).

²²¹§§ Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Kautzsch, (1909²⁸); trans. Collins & Cowley (1910).

²²²Ges. Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Kautzsch, (1909²⁸); trans. Collins & Cowley (1910).

²²³§§ Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Kautzsch, (1909²⁸); trans. Collins & Cowley (1910).

²²⁴masc. masculine.

²²⁵Ⲅ Received Greek Version.

²²⁶Ⲅ Syriac Peshitto Version.

²²⁷Ⲅ Received Greek Version.

²²⁸Ⲅ Syriac Peshitto Version.

²²⁹Marti Marti, Karl; *Dodekapropheton* (1904).

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Zwei Studien Zu Sacharja; SK. (1892).

which Zechariah was familiar. ^{C²³⁰f²³¹}. Is. 4:1; Je. 4:9; Ez. 24:27. Moreover, it introduces a description of the good time foreseen entirely in accord with ideas of Zechariah. ^{C²³²f²³³}. 8:12.²³⁴

²³⁵3:1. *he showed me*. The opening to this passage is problematic for several reasons: 1) the subject of the verbal action is not specified; 2) the Hiphil of the verb *r'h* ("to cause to see, to show") opens the narrative, in contrast to the introductions to the first three and the last three visions, which use a Qal form with the prophet as subject; 3) the verbal idea is not supplemented by the adverbial emphasis of *hinnēh* ("behold," "I") as it is in the other visions (though not exactly the same way in each of the others). In addition, the form of the ensuing vision lacks the four-part literary scheme that characterizes the first three and last three visions (see Introduction). Further, the investiture that is portrayed, like the Fourth Vision, deals with real personnel and objects and not with elaborate imaginary characters, situations, or items as in visions 1–3 and 5–7. Finally the introduction to the vestment ceremony vividly portrays a Heavenly Court scene, which is seen only dimly if at all in other Zecharianic materials.

Despite these formal differences, which have led us to exclude chapter 3 from the sequential numbering of the visions, this prophetic vision is nonetheless very much a part of the visionary sequence. The opening of 3:1, "he showed me," continues a structure observed in Zech 2:1 and 3 (RS²³⁶V 1:18, 20), where "I raised my eyes, and I looked, and behold" (2:1 [RS²³⁷V 1:18]) has its counterpart in "and he showed me" (2:3 [RS²³⁸V 1:20]). Then in 2:5 (RS²³⁹V 2:1) "I raised my eyes, and I looked and behold" appears again; and the next "and he showed me" does not occur until here in 3:1.

2:1 (RS²⁴⁰V 1:18) w'š' t—'yny w'r'2:3 (RS²⁴¹V 1:20) wyr'ny
whnh

²³⁰Cf *confer*, compare.

²³¹. *confer*, compare.

²³²Cf *confer*, compare.

²³³. *confer*, compare.

²³⁴ Hinckley Gilbert Thomas Mitchell, [*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Jonah*](#), International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1912), 147–161.

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²³⁶RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²³⁷RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²³⁸RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²³⁹RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁴⁰RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁴¹RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

2:5 (RS²⁴²V 2:1)

w'š' 'yny w'r'3:1
whnh

wyr'ny

The beginning of the prophetic vision is in this way connected with the preceding (Third) Vision, thus integrating Joshua's investiture into the entire visionary cycle. Yet, the differences noted above between chapter 3 and the other visions, and also those discussed below, especially the first-person shift in verse 5 (see NOTE to "I said"), contribute to the uniqueness of this prophetic vision and secure a special place for it apart from the sequence of seven visions.

Who is the speaker in this vision? Some (e.g., Peshitta) suppose that an angel addresses the prophet, insofar as this vision is understood to resume the vision sequence interrupted by the insertion of the oracles of 2:10–17 (RS²⁴³V 2:6–13); at the end of 2:9 (RS²⁴⁴V 2:5) an angel was speaking. However, our analysis of the placement of those oracles would not admit of such a suggestion. Another suggestion has the Interpreting Angel resuming his role (Baldwin 1972:113). Yet the Angel of Yahweh as distinct from the Interpreting Angel appears as an independent character farther on in the opening statement; and the Interpreting Angel has no legitimate role in this vision, since the question and explanation pattern in which he plays a crucial role in the Seven Visions is absent here. The only other serious possibility is that it is Yahweh who is speaking to the prophet, a view reflected in the LX²⁴⁵X and Vulgate. Yahweh's direct appearance to the prophet, as also implied in 2:12 (RS²⁴⁶V 2:8), is most appropriate in view of the prophet's direct participation in the scene described. In his involvement in the proceedings, Zechariah continues the tradition of preexilic prophecy in which prophets, without intermediaries, become intensely aware of God's plan and go on to join in its realization (Tidwell 1975). Note that in Amos 7–8, Yahweh is four times the subject of this same verb in the Hiphil. The Amos example supports the identification of the speaker in this verse as Yahweh. The Hiphil form helps provide the intensity with which the prophet experiences a divine commission (cf. Lindblom 1962:145), a situation which differs from that of the Seven Visions. Our designation "prophetic vision" serves to identify the special character, distinct from the "visions," of what follows. That is, the prophet is an actor in, and not simply a witness to, a visionary scene.

Joshua. Cf. NOTE to Hag 1:1.

high priest. The Hebrew *hakkōhēn hagādōl* is literally "great priest" but usually is rendered "high priest." It designates Joshua here and seven other times in Haggai and Zechariah (Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4; Zech 3:8; 6:11). Although it becomes a common designation in rabbinic and later times, its biblical attestations are relatively rare. In the Pentateuch, Aaron and his successors, Eleazar and then Phineas, are never called by any name other than simply "the priest," except in Lev 21:10 (*hkhn hgdwl*). The Leviticus usage, however, is not a title but rather is only a designation (de Vaux 1961:397). Indeed, even in Ezra 7:5, where Ezra's priestly lineage is reviewed, his forebear Aaron is called "chief," or "first," priest (*hakkōhēn hārō'š*), the title

²⁴²RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁴³RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁴⁴RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁴⁵LXX Septuagint

²⁴⁶RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

found in the description of deportation of priestly officials in 2 Kgs 25:18 (= Jer 52:24), in conjunction with the title “deputy” or “second” priest.

Although the Chronicler, and Ezra and Nehemiah, do employ this designation, their usage is reserved largely for officials or in contexts that postdate Haggai-Zechariah. Even when they mention preexilic priests they are even then not consistent in their utilization of “high priest,” and they are more likely to use “chief priest” or “the chief” rather than “high priest.” As a matter of fact, only for Hilkiah, in the time of Josiah, does the Chronicler use the latter title (2 Chron 34:9). As for the Deuteronomic history, only in two notable cases, Hilkiah (2 Kgs 22:4, 8; 23:4) and Jehoiada (in the days of Jehoash; 2 Kgs 12:11 [RS²⁴⁷V 12:10]), does the “high priest” designation appear. However, Amsler points out (1981:80) that in neither of those cases is the more usual title “the priest” absent; he therefore suspects an editorial addition of “high” priest by a postexilic hand. Whether or not that is the case, the title “high” for the priests Jehoiada and Hilkiah points to a special function that they have, namely the administration of collected revenues for temple repairs. Otherwise “high priest” does not denote the head priest, who instead was probably called “priest of” with a place name, on analogy with Amos 7, where Amaziah is “priest of Bethel.”

The innovative utilization by Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 of this term for the chief priestly officer in Jerusalem can perhaps be related to one further and final set of passages in which it appears, Num 35:25, 28 (and LX²⁴⁸X, Syriac, and Samaritan Pentateuch, cf. v 32) and Josh 20:6. Both these passages deal with the very ancient custom of blood revenge and the six cities of refuge. The Numbers text does not list the names of the cities, but the Joshua passage does. It is thus possible to establish that all six cities (three in trans-Jordan and three west of the Jordan) are Levitical towns spaced out on either side of the Jordan. For the west of the Jordan group, an ancient sacred connection of the three cities is clear (Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron), and a similar sanctity may be presumed for the trans-Jordanian sites (de Vaux 1961:163). The establishment of the Levitical cities, with the Cities of Refuge having special functions in providing safety for involuntary killers, goes back at least to early monarchic times (so Albright 1945) and probably to premonarchic times, although the full list of forty-eight cities is later—eighth century, according to Petersen (1977). The six cities served as regional centers for the Levites, and their functions were wider than merely the sacerdotal.

Within the concept of refuge cities, the protected manslayer is given refuge for an indeterminate period of time, until the death of the “high priest,” *hkhn hgdwl*. The title in this context hardly refers to a Jerusalem chief priest, particularly if a pre-Davidic context for these passages is supposed. Rather, the title designates the chief priestly figure among the Levites in those cities that are mentioned. The word “great,” taking *gādôl* literally, rather than “high” perhaps would express better the leadership achieved by virtue of skill or reputation (cf. Jer 5:5; Exod 11:3; Esth 9:4) in the case of those regional priestly officials.

Haggai and Zechariah both revive the ancient term in direct association with Joshua, the dominant priestly figure at the time of the restoration of the temple and of the establishment of a new administrative apparatus for the province of Yehud. They do so in the awareness, for which the Chronicler’s and Ezra-Nehemiah’s patterns of usage supply evidence, that “high

²⁴⁷RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁴⁸LXX Septuagint

priest” and “chief priest” are not synonymous. Their utilization of the former term, therefore, reflects an administrative nuance which existed apart from the priestly hierarchy of the Jerusalem temple, where it appears only when the chief priests are involved in the extrasacerdotal duties of collecting funds and instituting building projects—precisely the sort of activities Joshua must undertake with Zerubbabel during the restoration. The collection of funds for temple work, above and beyond the normal income accrued through offerings, is the job of a priestly administrator with fiscal responsibilities in addition to ritual ones. It is also, under Persian rule, a task that the governor (Zerubbabel) would probably not have performed, since his involvement with taxation lay in his responsibility for supplying specified revenues to the imperial government, a task evidently introduced to the satrap system by Darius ca. 522 (see Introduction; cf. Cook 1983:82 and n. 11). Haggai and Zechariah may have revived “high priest” as a general title, not just a separate title used only when the “chief priest” had extra financial tasks, because in the Persian period the chief priest took on as his regular role the fiscal responsibilities only irregularly attached to the chief priesthood during the period of the monarchy.

Over the years, a rather extended and inconclusive debate has continued as to whether or not increased priestly control of fiscal affairs is reflected in the corpus of stamped jar handles and in the Yehud coins. Avigad (1957) first proposed to identify Uriaw (*ʾwryw*) on a Jericho jar stamp (possibly dated as early as ca. 500 or as late as 450 B.C.E.²⁴⁹.) with Uriah of the priestly family of Meremoth of Ezra 8:33 but later (1976a:22) modified his proposal by saying that Uriah could be a tax collector either for the temple or for secular authorities.

Similarly, Avigad proposed that the Yehud coins of the late Persian period also reflected increased ecclesiastical authority in fiscal administration (ibid., 149). His argument regarding the coins was based upon the identification of Yehezqiyah (*yēhizqiyā*) on a coin of Beth Zur with Hezekiah the priest and contemporary of Ptolemy I (Jos. *Contra Apionem* 1.187). Since Hezekiah’s name has subsequently been found on coins from Tell Jemmeh bearing the title of “governor,” Avigad has modified his views somewhat (1976a:29). Now he suggests that Yehezqiyah might have given up one of his titles to the new Greek authorities, presumably the title of “governor” (cf. the review of this material in Stern 1982:202ff. and 226ff.). In light of our analysis of Haggai and Zechariah, perhaps it is time to reassess the credibility of Avigad’s earlier views.

To summarize, the postexilic prophets, in using an ancient priestly title, reflect the broadened administrative powers of the priesthood, which no longer functions in tandem with a monarch, in the restoration period (cf. NOTES below to v 7).

standing before. This technical language (*ʾmd lpy*; cf. v 4 below) reveals the setting of the prophetic vision, the Heavenly Court over which Yahweh presides as chief judge. This setting is deeply grounded in mythology, with Yahweh’s Heavenly Court corresponding to the council of ʾEl (Robinson 1944:151–57; Cross 1953:274–77 and 1973:186ff.; Tidwell 1975:346ff.; Mullen 1980). The concept of an assembly or council of the gods was a common motif throughout the ancient Near East. The issue before the Court concerns Joshua and the office of the high priesthood. The adversary is *haśśāṭān* or the accuser; the advocate is the *mal ʾāk*, Yahweh’s messenger or herald. The appropriateness of the Heavenly Court scene derives from the gravity

²⁴⁹B.C.E. Before the Common Era

of the issue being considered. A new role for priesthood and Joshua's fitness for it are at stake, and only God himself can sanction the shifts entailed. The prophet himself is involved; he participates in mediating the divine decision that will have the ultimate effect of admitting the priest, too, into the Heavenly Court. There is, however, no real case to be made against Joshua although the accuser no doubt thought there was (see COMMENT); this is not an instance of the divine lawsuit (Wright 1962). The accuser is "rebuked" in verse 2 before the proceedings even get under way; God's judgment, the main function of the Court, has already been made. Hence the main focus of this prophetic vision is the carrying out of God's decree through the act of dressing Joshua. His new clothes and headpiece symbolize his continued and expanded role as high priest. The language of Near Eastern myth has served to heighten the drama of the scene and to underscore the importance of the historical details which lie obfuscated somewhat by the remarkable visionary language.

This occurrence of *'md* is the first of six usages of the verb in the Prophetic Vision. It is the most common word in Hebrew literature for reflecting the technical procedures of participating in the Court. Just as people appear before the king and enter his court (cf. 1 Sam 16:21–22, where "David came to Saul and stood before him," and Jer 52:12), so heavenly figures are admitted to the assembly over which Yahweh presides. The verb for "stand" recurs in this verse and is found again once each in verses 3, 4, 5, and 7. It is a key word, making the audience fully aware, from first to last, of the Divine Council setting and of Yahweh's exalted presence. Twice, here and in the next verse, the verb refers to Joshua and so emphasizes that what is to be done to him is the result of God's appraisal and decision.

the Angel of Yahweh. The figure designated here as *mal'āk-Yhwh* appears to be distinct from the *angelus interpres*, or Interpreting Angel, who plays no role at all in the prophetic vision of chapter 3. However, if the Interpreting Angel is really the same as the Angel of Yahweh (cf. NOTE to "man" in 1:8), then the Interpreting Angel is present in this vision but is not called by that designation because he does not play the role of interpreting visionary objects or characters. Whether or not the two designations refer to the same angelic being cannot be resolved. All that can be said is that the Angel of Yahweh in this council scene has a different function from the Interpreting Angel in the other visions. The substitution of one angelic designation and role, Angel of Yahweh, for the usual Interpreting Angel of the Seven Visions contributes to the uniqueness of the literary form of this vision. It is one of several features that have led some commentators to question the authenticity of this vision among the Seven Visions (Tidwell 1975:346, n. 20). While its literary discreteness is clear, any consequent separation of chapter 3 from authentic Zechariah materials is probably unwarranted (see Introduction).

The Angel of Yahweh is indeed a familiar biblical figure who stands at the head of the entourage of the Divine Council (Wright 1950:34–41; Cooke 1964; Kingsbury 1964). The phrase *mal'āk-Yhwh* is the most frequently used designation of an angelic figure in all of Hebrew literature and Zechariah employs it already in the First Vision (1:11, 12). The frequent use of angels as mediators becomes characteristic of exilic and postexilic prophecy. Perhaps as Yahweh becomes more transcendent, the members of his council take on more active and specific roles. Ezekiel is the first to employ such a figure to mediate his visions (40:3ff.), and Haggai is called *mal'āk-Yhwh* in 1:13 (see NOTE to that verse). The prophet Malachi seems to retain the basic meaning of the word in his very name, "messenger," or someone sent with a divine commission. The further development of the idea of messengers with specific duties and commissions

becomes an integral part of Jewish apocalyptic. Angelology is a central feature of much apocalyptic, with the Book of Daniel being the most developed example of this phenomenon in canonical scripture.

the Accuser. One of three cases in the Hebrew Bible in which this term occurs in reference to a figure in Yahweh's court, the other two cases being the prologue to Job (cc 1–2) and 1 Chron 21:1. Although many translators have felt justified in calling this figure "satan," the less personified translation "Accuser" seems more suitable here for conveying the meaning of the Hebrew *haśśāṭān* (cf. for example, NE²⁵⁰B with NJP²⁵¹S). Only in 1 Chron 21:1 does it appear without the definite article as a proper noun. Here and in Job it is still a common noun, with the definite article making it a title, "the Accuser," as "the Prosecuting Attorney." The occurrences of the noun as well as of its cognate verbs (*śṭn* and *śṭm*) reveal a set of meanings that are derived from the hostility of one who is an opponent. The earliest usage of the noun is in Num 22:22, 32, in the context of the Balaam oracles. Other relevant passages include 1 Sam 29:4; 2 Sam 19:23 (RS²⁵²V 19:22); 1 Kgs 11:14, 25; and 1 Kgs 5:18 (RS²⁵³V 5:4).

The best analogy to usage in a legal context is Ps 109:6, where *śāṭān* is parallel to wicked: "Appoint a wicked man against him; let an accuser bring him to trial" (RS²⁵⁴V; cf. v 29, where the accusers are clothed in dishonor). Weiser (1962:690) has understood the accused to be the psalmist himself. In Ps 38:21 (RS²⁵⁵V 38:20) and 71:13, the verb *śṭn* is used to designate personal adversaries. The same range of meanings is conveyed by the verb *śṭm*, as in Gen 27:41; 49:23; 50:15; Ps 55:4 (RS²⁵⁶V 55:3); Job 16:9; 30:21.

In assessing the meaning of the noun *śāṭān* in Job, Zechariah, and 1 Chronicles, a measure of increasing independence leading finally to a personification in the later literature is usually assumed (but see Rudolph 1976:94–95 and Gaster 1962:224–28). The absence of the definite article in 1 Chron 21:1 has led Gaster (1962:224) to reject this occurrence as a proper noun. Yet the figure in this context is surely hostile to Yahweh's chosen one; and from a linguistic viewpoint, the lack of the definite article does not weaken the distinct image in Chronicles of a *śāṭān* figure (Hurvitz 1974:19). Because of the appearance of the figure in Job, the existence of *haśśāṭān* as a figure in popular folklore, as well as in the Divine Council literature can be assumed. Neither in Job nor in Zechariah is the Accuser an independent entity with real power, except that which Yahweh consents to give him. The figure thus originates with the Divine Council and *śāṭān* represents one of the "sons of God" who is given increasing power as in the Prologue of Job, where Yahweh has given him control over a variety of negative and hostile forces in the world. While a growing delineation of the forces of evil or hostility is to be discerned in Zech 3, the Prologue to Job constitutes the premier example in the Hebrew Bible of

²⁵⁰NEB *New English Bible*. Oxford and Cambridge, 1970

²⁵¹NJPS The New Jewish Publication Society of America Translations of the Holy Scriptures: *The Torah*, 2nd ed., Philadelphia, 1967; *The Prophets: Nevi'im*, Philadelphia, 1978; *The Writings: Kethubim*, Philadelphia, 1978

²⁵²RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁵³RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁵⁴RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁵⁵RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁵⁶RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

such power being vested in a negative personality. The emerging personification of the figures in the Divine Council, both positive and negative, is a major feature of exilic and postexilic biblical writing, and the Book of Zechariah bears unmistakable testimony to this process.

The development of a demonic figure in Hebrew literature of the sixth century and later can be related to the actual figure of an “accuser” in Mesopotamian bureaucracies (Oppenheim 1968:176–79). Such figures do not seem to have existed, at least in institutionalized form, before the neo-Babylonian period. At that time, they began to appear in documents as functionaries who observed the inhabitants of a realm. The observing seems to have taken place in secrecy, so that those being observed were unaware of it and thus the connotation of spying accompanies this institution. While theoretically the process was an ambivalent one—both good deeds and improper acts could be reported to the king—in practice it was normally the alleged misdeeds that were noted and thus the demonic implications were strengthened. Unseen informers told the king about individuals who were then subjected to some sort of punitive action. This negative dimension clearly applies to the process of satanic delineation and individualization in Hebraic literature. However, the general concept of official knowledge of events in a political realm, of which the accuser figure in Yahweh’s court is a part, can also, in its portrayal of divine omniscience, include both the positive and negative implications of God’s awareness of all that takes place in the arena of human activity. The notion of divine and cosmic omniscience, with the attendant feature of the speed and secrecy with which information was conveyed by the institutionalized informers or accusers of the Mesopotamian imperial system, appears in Zechariah’s visions in the figures of the horses and chariots in the first and last visions (see NOTES *ad loc.*) and in the “eyes of the Lord” of the Fourth Vision (see NOTES to 4:10b; cf. 3:9).

For this verse, several commentators address the possibility that the Accuser can be identified with a specific hostile individual or individuals—that is, opponents of Joshua (Jepsen 1945:106; Kaupel 1930:104ff.; see also Hanson 1975:253–61). The biblical metaphor is very difficult to penetrate at this point, making it impossible to draw conclusions with any certitude as to the identity of any opposition to Joshua. Indeed, it is not clear whether it is Joshua himself or the office of high priest that is being scrutinized. If Joshua himself is being examined, then the Accuser may be implicating the Persians themselves, who appear to have had to sanction the appointees to important provincial offices (Cook 1983:41, 71). However, it is more likely that it is not Joshua himself but rather his office that is being observed, as it is now prominent because of the exigencies of administering the temple restoration, which is under review. One could imagine concern over an enlarged priestly office from any number of quarters, from traditionalist or disaffected priests, from landowning citizenry, even from royalists who would see in such priestly powers the curtailment or preclusion of hope for a monarchic regime. However, the Accuser need not stand for any special interest group; rather, it would represent the powers of the court itself, Yahweh’s sovereignty. The Accuser in the biblical passages in which he appears acts as the Public Prosecutor, an agent of the highest executive authority. From time immemorial, in the ancient world until the present, a figure equivalent to a Public Prosecutor has been the first officer of any court. It is hard to imagine any developed society in which such a person did not play a role. The Accuser is clearly the leading figure in this case, despite his dismissal. Yahweh himself and not the Angel of Yahweh rebukes him; for the Angel of Yahweh is the Public Defender or advocate—the second, not the first, officer in any court.

The role of the Accuser as prosecutor raises the question of what might have happened before the action begins. Why is Joshua there at all, and what kind of case might the Accuser, on behalf of Yahweh, have against him? The text never tells us what the Accuser's case is, so it can be reconstructed only on the basis of the rebuttal that it receives. The Angel of Yahweh apparently calls upon Yahweh to rebuke the Accuser for bringing charges on two issues, which are interrelated: first, the Accuser must have argued that Jerusalem has been rejected permanently by Yahweh and so cannot and should not be restored. Such a doctrine, which would be in keeping with preexilic prophecy and perhaps Lamentations too, would apply to the temple and to the priesthood as well. Just as Shiloh was destroyed, never to be rebuilt, so Jerusalem and its temple have been repudiated by God. Any efforts to restore either would be contrary to God's will; temple restoration would be nothing short of blasphemy. The rebuke includes the assurance of Yahweh's choosing Jerusalem, which would be an answer to the hypothetical charge that Jerusalem and the temple should remain in ruins. Second, and more easily discernible, would be an accusation about the restoration of the priesthood and/or Joshua's fitness for the office of high priest. Viewed in a narrow way, the Accuser might have argued that Joshua had been in exile and was permanently contaminated by the experience, so he could not ever be qualified to assume the office for which he was next in line. There was ample precedent in the rejection of Eli and his line (1 Sam 2:27–33) for the permanent dismissal of Joshua and his line. On broader grounds, the Accuser could have said that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple was also a judgment against the priesthood that functioned there. The monarchy had also been repudiated, and so had the priesthood. God is not now restoring the monarchy, so how could the priesthood be restored? Either way, the emphasis on Joshua's purity suggests that the Accuser objected to the priesthood's role.

The Accuser's case on both issues would have been quite strong, for there is much in the Primary History and in the preexilic prophets upon which he could have developed his argument that Yahweh had permanently terminated Jerusalem, the temple, and the priesthood. The Accuser's case is thrown out, however, because Yahweh has changed his mind. He has decided that the period of disgrace and banishment and ruin has gone on long enough. So the charges can be dismissed, and the Accuser is now in the wrong while the Angel as advocate takes over. Yahweh has indeed chosen Jerusalem. He has not rejected it and never intended to do so (cf. 1:17 and 2:16 [RS²⁵⁷V 2:12]), and the statement of God's choosing Jerusalem has become thematic in Zechariah. The Accuser appears in a bad light in this passage because he is unaware of the change in policy. The mood of rejection has finally passed, and the idea of Jerusalem's election has been revived. The older order is no longer dominant; that the new age has arrived is proclaimed in the vivid imagery of the investiture passage. The rebuke of the Accuser is so quick to come, before any case is actually put forth, that Yahweh's resounding approval of the priestly role, and of the temple, is established. Joshua's subsequent donning of priestly accoutrements is couched in the traditional language of the Divine Council, and this also lends legitimacy to his office. In addition, Zechariah's prophetic role within the Council in chapter 3 contributes toward authenticating the high priest. See NOTES to the succeeding verses.

standing. Once again the verb *'md* ("stand") appears as technical language associated with the Divine Council. Here the verb is accompanied by the preposition *'l*, as in 4:14.

²⁵⁷RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

on his right. “Right” signifies hand or side (e.g., Ps 21:9 [RS²⁵⁸V 21:8]; 89:13–14 [RS²⁵⁹V 89:12–13], etc.). Ps 109:6, which provides the best context for understanding *šṭn* in a legal sense, has *šāṭān* standing at the right also. Although the Western reader might expect a hostile power to be on the left side, such is not the case. The positioning of the Accuser on the right derives from the fact that he is the first officer of the court (cf. above, NOTE to “the Accuser”), whereas the defender (Angel of Yahweh) is the second officer.

2. *rebuke you.* The verb *gʿr* is rendered in the jussive although it could also be indicative. The preposition *b* before the objective pronoun for “you” denotes the object of Yahweh’s rebuke. The combination of verb, preposition, and object appears twice, emphasizing the finality with which the Accuser is put in his place. God’s outburst in the court scene is tantamount to his rejection of the Accuser’s charges (see NOTE to “the Accuser” in v 1). The prosecutor, in his accustomed role, was about to bring evidence against Joshua’s position and against Jerusalem as a favored city. God’s rebuke is not directed toward the function of the Accuser per se, but rather to the way in which he is carrying out his responsibilities. He is using irrelevant and dated evidence; he has not rebelled against Yahweh’s authority.

In prophecy, *gʿr* (“to scream, cry out”) nearly always is an anthropopathic term which denotes divine invective against those who stand in the way of Yahweh’s plan. God’s very cry against someone constitutes a rebuke, a word strong enough to cause whatever has aroused God’s cry to cease. Other instances of such sharp outcry include Jer 29:27, where a priest rebukes a prophet, and two instances in Malachi (2:3 and 3:11), where divine rebuke is directed against priestly abuses. While *gʿr* itself does not imply cursing, it evidently contains the seeds of such usage. The divine pronouncement of 3:2 becomes an incantation in later Jewish literature and is found in the Aramaic magic bowls from Nippur (Caquot 1978:52; cf. T.B.²⁶⁰. Berakhot 51a and 1 Q²⁶¹M 14:10).

who chooses Jerusalem. Yahweh’s choosing of Jerusalem appears above in the oracles of 1:17 and 2:16 (RS²⁶²V 2:12; see NOTES). The emphasis on Jerusalem as the favored city of God and the place for the holy temple seems obvious. Yet for the restoration community, the certainty that Jerusalem would resume its historic role was slow to come. After all, God had rejected Jerusalem nearly seventy years before, just as he had rejected Shiloh (cf. Ps 78:59–61, 67–68; Jer 26:6). Yahweh never chose Shiloh again. How could the people be sure that Jerusalem would once more emerge as a special place? The Accuser must have argued that Jerusalem was to share that fate of Shiloh; and Yahweh must set him straight (cf. NOTE to “the Accuser,” 3:1).

a brand plucked from the fire. This statement would seem to be a variant form of the proverbial saying in Amos 4:11, “and you were as a brand plucked out of the burning.” Only the word for fire is different: here *ʿeš*, in Amos, *šērēpâ*. The saying has particular relevance to Joshua because his grandfather, Seraiah, was among those who were slaughtered by

²⁵⁸RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁵⁹RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁶⁰T.B. Babylonian Talmud

²⁶¹1 QM The “War Scroll” from Qumran

²⁶²RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 25:18–21; Lam 2:6, 20; and 1 Chron 5:40–41 [RS²⁶³V 6:14–15]). The fact that Joshua survived in exile to return to Jerusalem in the capacity of high priest is hardly accidental, according to the prophet.

The related verse in Amos describes the rescue of some Judeans in a situation comparable to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, which was a destruction characterized by the spectacular use of fire and brimstone falling from the heavens on the doomed city. The image of “brand plucked from the fire” is a vivid one and suggests that Joshua’s availability to serve as high priest did not come about easily. The sources provide no direct information and one cannot do much more than speculate. Because his grandfather had been executed, his family may have been regarded with suspicion by the authorities. The imagery suggests a narrow escape from a dangerous situation. Perhaps it reflects the transition from Babylonian to Persian rule, a transition in which Zechariah has more than passing interest (cf. 2:4, 10–11 [RS²⁶⁴V 1:21; 2:6–7]). If Joshua and his family had been in a precarious position under Babylonian rule, Persian ascendancy may have served him. Miraculously, it would then seem to at least some of his contemporaries, including Zechariah, that a direct descendant of the last chief priest in Jerusalem was ready to serve again in the restored temple. Whatever misgivings accompanied Joshua’s role, the point is that the high priesthood becomes a sign of divine favor in Jerusalem, the place Yahweh has chosen.

3. *filthy*. The Hebrew *šô’îm* here and in verse 4 designates an extreme condition of dirtiness. That word can be used to designate excrement, as in the law of Deut 23:14 (RS²⁶⁵V 23:13); cf. 2 Kgs 18:27, qere. His utter filthiness, to be contrasted with the state of purity reflected in the new vestments in which he is garbed later, need not signify moral or ethical transgressions on the part of Joshua. Rather, the change from foul to pure clothing symbolizes the shift in the priest’s status from the mundane world to the sanctified or holy realm of the house of Yahweh. See NOTE below to “pure vestments,” verse 4. This shift is comparable to the notion of prophetic uncleanness in the Heavenly Court scene of Isa 6:5–7, where Isaiah’s sense of being unfit (*ṭāmē’*) is removed by the purification of his person: the burning coal touches his lips, which represent his speech and thus his thoughts. Likewise, in Isa 4:4 the daughters of Zion (and not their clothing) are filthy and are cleansed, to be made fit (holy) to live in Jerusalem by God’s judgment. Compare too the cleansing of the heart and spirit of those to be brought back from exile by the sprinkling of water, in Ezek 36:24–27; Kaufmann (1977:282) suggests that the application of water to the persons themselves and not to their garments denotes the removal of their personal guilt.

Joshua’s uncleanness is perhaps better related to his having lived the first part of his life in Babylon, as the preceding verse emphasizes with its proverbial saying. The implications for a priest of life in exile can be ascertained from a passage in Amos (7:17). The judgment against Amaziah, the priest of Bethel specifies, as the final blow in a series of disasters, that he will die “in an unclean land.” He will lose his wife to harlotry, his children to the sword, his land to opportunists, and himself to the impurity of exile. It must have been a particular disgrace for priests to live in a foreign land.

²⁶³RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁶⁴RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

²⁶⁵RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

By selecting Jerusalem, God makes Jerusalem and its territory “holy,” a concept clearly expressed in the “chooses Jerusalem” passage of 2:16 (RS²⁶⁶V 2:12). Therefore, Joshua’s return to Jerusalem in and of itself represents a move to a place of great sanctity from a place, outside the “Holy Land,” of great impurity. Even further, his role as high priest will bring him in greatest proximity to God’s holiness and thus necessitate his symbolic purification.

standing. See NOTE to “standing” in verse 1.

angel. Probably to be understood as “the Angel of Yahweh,” since in verse 1 Joshua is described as “standing before the Angel of Yahweh.”

4. *who spoke out.* The Hebrew does not supply a subject here though the Peshitta supplies “angel.” It can be assumed that the antecedent is the last mentioned angel at the end of verse 3. The verbal pair (literally, “he answered and he said”), translated together “spoke out,” is reminiscent of the language of the dialogue between Zechariah and the Interpreting Angel. However, since this prophetic vision, although containing dialogue, does not conform to the form of the Seven Visions, the presence of those two verbs is not sufficient to provide evidence that it is the Interpreting Angel who now speaks.

those standing. That is, the other members of the Divine Council or the other divine or angelic beings present in Yahweh’s court. Cf. NOTE to “the Angel of Yahweh” in verse 1.

filthy. See NOTE to verse 3.

to him he said. Now the angel addresses Joshua directly. In the words that follow, the angel’s claim to have removed Joshua’s iniquity by having his dirty garments taken away indicates that the angel speaks in the name of Yahweh. Indeed, throughout this vision there is a flow of divine identity from Yahweh himself to the angels of his court. The interchangeability of Yahweh and his angelic representatives is an old theme, and it is curious to see it contained in this scene along with an increased delineation of the roles played by angelic figures. Zech 3 may be a transitional piece. As in earlier biblical texts, the Angel of Yahweh performs earthly tasks for God, speaks for him, and serves as an alter ego while still remaining distinct from God. The argument between God and Moses over the way the Israelites are to enter the promised land is a good example of the nature of the angel-Yahweh relationship in earlier books of the Bible. The angel will lead the people and do all the miraculous things along the way that only God can accomplish; yet he is not the same as God himself, for God explicitly does not lead the Israelites (see Exod 32:23–33:3). In Zechariah some of this partial blurring of lives between angel and God is retained. Yet the Accuser as Prosecutor and the Angel of Yahweh as Public Defender have defined roles. Their distinctiveness anticipates the sharply differentiated positions and the hierarchical structure of the angelic hordes in later periods. By the second century, as in Daniel and the Apocrypha, the angels get names and identities and specific tasks assigned to them.

iniquity. Just as the “filthy garments” in which Joshua was clothed are symbolic of the impure state, to be contrasted with his subsequent ritual fitness to do God’s service, his “iniquity” is introduced here, not as a description of his personal sinfulness but rather as the abstract counterpart to the unclean apparel. Such an understanding of “iniquity” (*‘āwōn*) appears justified from the importance of the priestly headgear, which is introduced in the next verse as the only specified individual item of the clean wardrobe that will replace the contaminated clothing. In the description of the Aaronic vestments in Exod 28:36–38, the

²⁶⁶RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

turban is to be fitted with an inscribed gold plate. That plate, probably part of the crown which was placed over the turban (Exod 29:6; cf. 39:30), serves to remove the guilt (*‘āwōn*) that was attached to the holy sacrifices. Aaron’s inscribed headpiece is the material, visible object that symbolized the ultimate purification of holy offerings. Presumably Aaron’s holiness, represented by the crowning object of his raiment, was such that he could absorb and render as naught the “guilt.” The whole series of actions and appurtenances associated with the inmost part of the tabernacle (= temple) were permeated with carefully organized symbolic value (Haran 1961 and 1980:175–87; 205–20), and the dressing of the chief priest in traditionally specified garb was an integral part of establishing the holiness of the sanctuary and all who were connected with it. In this particular case, the additional responsibilities that Joshua was to have as “high priest” and as legitimate functionary in the eyes of the Persian Government which was permitting him to serve in that office would intensify the symbolic value of the investiture. Other aspects of this process are discussed below in our NOTES to verses 5 and 6. The association of the engraved stone, perhaps equivalent to the inscribed plate/crown of the turban in Exod 29 and to the stone set “before Joshua” below in verse 9, with “iniquity” (also *‘āwōn*) is likewise part of the symbolic realm of priestly garb.

Joshua’s guilt is a complicated and comprehensive matter. It includes the personal contamination he has suffered, especially as a priest, by living far from the earthly locus of holiness and purity, Jerusalem and the temple (cf. NOTE above to “filthy,” v 3). Because he is the leading priestly official, he is representative of all priests as well as of the people. Their collective impurity is also involved. In normal times, the offenses of the people, as individuals and as a group, threaten to diminish the purity of the temple. Impurity is an external force which must be removed (Levine 1974:76–77) lest the sanctuary be threatened with impurity. The priests had to deal with this collective guilt. In Num 18:1, 23 the Aaronides are instructed to bear the “transgression/guilt of the sanctuary” (*‘āwōn hamiqdāš*)—that is, the responsibility for any violation of purity. The impurity at issue would include what we would label moral impurity as well as ritual uncleanness. The two were not separate in biblical religion (see COMMENT to Hag 2:10–19). After the exile, the impurity of the people would have been that much more threatening. The exile itself was a punishment for sins and guilt, and living in a foreign land further contributed to the atmosphere of uncleanness. All this iniquity needed to be purged and removed in connection with the actual restoration, as well as with the symbolic restoration of the temple as a holy place. Joshua’s role in expiating past sins and present contamination of himself and of the people would have been enormous—too enormous, some might have thought. Nothing less than the removal of iniquity in God’s Heavenly Court can establish Joshua’s success in achieving the purity required for him to be instated in his office.

and I have clothed. The M²⁶⁷T is difficult but it can be supported (cf. suggestion in BH²⁶⁸S). The verb *whlbš* is the Hiphil infinitive absolute and carries the force of the verb *h‘brty* (“I have removed”) in the preceding clause. It is good biblical Hebrew.

This statement of how Joshua is clothed is followed in verse 5 by, first, a command to put on his clean headpiece. Next, the carrying out of that command is recorded. Finally, the report that “they clothed him” appears. These four statements constitute a pattern: clothed; places

²⁶⁷MT Masoretic Text

²⁶⁸BHS *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, Stuttgart, 1977

headpiece; headpiece placed; clothed. The act of clothing begins and ends the series. In literary terms this forms an envelope which accomplishes two things: 1) it emphasizes the central act, the positioning of a clean turban, with all its symbolic value, on Joshua's head; and 2) it makes the instruction to clothe Joshua a general statement about his entire new wardrobe, of which the turban is only one part, although the most important part. When Joshua is stripped of his filthy clothes in verse 4, a filthy hat would have been included in the items he removed. Acknowledging the literary structure clarifies what otherwise appears to be a confused or illogical sequence of events, with Joshua being clothed, then receiving a headpiece, then being clothed.

pure vestments. Hebrew *maḥalāṣôt* is derived from a root *ḥlṣ* and occurs only here and in Isa 3:22, where it is included in a list of finery that the ladies of Jerusalem possess. Since the root can mean “withdraw, draw off,” *BD*²⁶⁹*B* (323) has concluded that the noun *maḥalāṣôt* represents a “robe of state”—that is, something that is taken off in ordinary life. However, that explanation does not fit the opposing notions of clean and unclean which permeate this scenario. Thomas (1931–32:279–80) points out that the Arabic cognate to *ḥlṣ* with the meaning “withdraw” has a primary sense of “to become clear, pure, genuine, white” and is actually used of garments (Lane 1863:I ii 785–86) in its adjectival form. Furthermore, the ancient usage of the root to designate some pure or purified item may find support in Assyrian *ḥalāṣu*, “to purify” (*CA*²⁷⁰*D* VI:40,50–51), especially of oil (*šamnâ ḥalṣa*), the primary meaning being “to press out,” the derived meaning, “to purify.” The term *maḥalāṣôt* designates the purified garments, the “pure vestments” with which Joshua is clothed once his filthy or impure ones have been removed. Since the term does not appear in any of the detailed descriptions of priestly vestments in Exodus or Leviticus, the term clearly cannot refer to a specific type of garment but rather to the state of the apparel so denoted.

5. *Then I said.* The use of the first person at this point in the vision is unexpected and for most commentators represents the impulsive intervention of the prophet into the text. The versions have had great difficulty here, either omitting (LX²⁷¹X) or converting to the third person (Vulgate and Peshitta). The key to understanding this form is the setting of this prophetic vision in the Heavenly Court. Tidwell (1975) has suggested that Zech 3:1–7 constitutes a fully developed *Gattung* known as the “council-genre” (354). In his analysis, verse 5 is absolutely integral to the text, thereby obviating any necessity to separate out verses 6 and 7 as suggested by Ackroyd (1962:566b) and Beuken (1967:290–91). The closest parallels in prophetic texts are found in Isa 6:1–11 and 40:1–11, which also share the striking use of the first person by the prophet. Other analogous texts include 1 Kgs 22:19–22; Job 1:6–12, 2:1–7; and Zech 1:8–13 and 6:1–8. In Tidwell's argument, the prophetic outburst in the first person is the climax of the entire vision and is much more than a simple literary device to point out the significance of the turban, except that the clean turban itself *is* the central symbol of the vision. Even in other instances in Zechariah (cc 1 and 6), despite the interlocation of the Interpreting Angel, he asserts that the same genre and phenomenon can be observed.

²⁶⁹*BDB* F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford University Press, 1907, 1955

²⁷⁰*CAD Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, ed. L. Oppenheim, University of Chicago Press, 1956–

²⁷¹LXX Septuagint

Despite many higher critical misgivings about its placement, Zech 3:1–7 plays an integral role in the overall scheme of the visions. Along with the following Fourth Vision, it stands in the middle of the visionary sequence. Together, chapters 3 and 4 are a kind of centerpiece. In chapter 3 the prophet himself emerges abruptly in the unfolding drama of Joshua’s investiture. In so doing, he represents the active and direct involvement of the prophet in transmitting the will of God as it emanates from the Divine Council. Zechariah thereby stands in the line of preexilic and exilic prophecy. Thus this prophetic vision differs from the Seven Visions in providing a closer link with the modes of earlier classical prophecy.

Let them put. Literally, the beginning of verse 5 reads: “And I said, ‘They will place ...’” The M²⁷²T *yśymw*, as pointed out, is indicative and not jussive, which would be *yāśēmû*, without medial *yod*, as we read.

clean turban. That is, “pure turban.” The use of *ṭāhôr* (“clear, pure, shining”) to describe the turban is typical of priestly contexts where ritual purity and not hygienic cleanliness is involved (C. Meyers 1976:27–28): the adjective functions in much the same way that *ellu* does in Akkadian (CA²⁷³D IV:106). Another possible rendering, “shining headpiece,” can also be considered. In certain contexts *ṭāhôr* (“shining”) designates bright metals such as sapphire, as in Exod 24:10. It also depicts the brightness of lapis lazuli, as in Ugaritic *ṭhr* or the variant *zhr*, which appears in reference to the sacred *iqnim* stones (Gordon 1965: texts 51:V:81 and 77:21–22). Turban here is *ṣānîp* rather than *miṣnepet*, the normal word for turban, to which a metal plate (*ṣîṣ*) and/or crown (*nēzer*) is added according to Exod 29:6 and Lev 8:9. Perhaps *ṣānîp* for turban designates a composite headpiece, including that part of it, whether stone or metal, which shines and which is the specific, symbolic component that relates to the priest’s function, described in verse 9 below, in ridding the land of iniquity. Zechariah’s departure from the terminology of the priestly texts, however, may be intentional and significant.

The ceremonial aspect of the priestly vestments and headgear was of great importance for the role of Joshua and also for the legitimacy of the temple project for which his administrative powers were to be used. Throughout the ancient Near Eastern world, the rank or status of officials, and of their gods (Oppenheim 1949:172–93) was communicated through carefully chosen and prepared items of apparel. The garments of gods were akin to those of the royal and priestly figures, sometimes one and the same, who served them. The establishment in Israel of elaborate and ornate costumes for the chief priestly officials had ancient roots and, like other features described in the tabernacle texts of Exodus, goes back at least as far as the days of the Solomonic temple (Haran 1980:3–42, 189–94). The garments worn by the priests probably changed very little over the centuries, although some slight elaboration or modifications might have been made. Once introduced, the costumes stayed much the same, ritual garb being highly conservative by nature, until they were wiped out by the destruction. The priestly information about their appearance may depict the latest form in which they existed, but since that form did not change appreciably, the elaborate nature of the priestly garb is a condition that would have existed from earliest times. Hence there is no reason to suppose (as do de Vaux 1961:400, and others) that the ornamental garments associated with the high

²⁷²MT Masoretic Text

²⁷³CAD *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, ed. L. Oppenheim, University of Chicago Press, 1956–

priest represent a transfer of royal garb to the priesthood in the postexilic period because of the loss of the monarchy.

Limited lexical information is available to us for identifying *ṣānîp* as “turban.” It is attested in three other instances, two of them in a general way as a designation for a fine article of clothing (Isa 3:23; Job 29:14). The third use is in the qere of Isa 62:3, “You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God” (RS²⁷⁴V). The Isaiah passage has *ṣānîp* (qere; kethib has *ṣēnîp*) as a “diadem” modified by “royal”; it also has *ṣānîp* parallel to crown (*‘ăṣeret*; cf. NOTE to “crowns,” 6:11). The resulting image is that of an official headpiece with monarchic associations. Because of this, and also because Joshua is given a crown in the Crowning of chapter 6, the *ṣānîp* of this vision appears to be a conscious departure from priestly terminology. Joshua’s turban is linked with the Aaronic one in that the Hebrew root is the same, yet the word Zechariah has chosen is somewhat different. The shift ideally suits the situation. Joshua as “high priest” both continues the traditional role of “chief priest” (cf. NOTE to “high priest” in 3:1) and also incorporates into the scope of his office some responsibilities previously assumed by the Judean kings. The turban designated *ṣānîp* would therefore symbolize, as official garb is meant to, such an alteration in the priestly role.

they clothed him. Literally, “they dressed him in garments.” The sequence of outfitting Joshua would seem to be headpiece first, followed by the rest of his garb. That order would appear to contradict the instructions of Exod 29:5–7 and descriptions of Lev 8:7–9, in which the turban with crown is the last item to be placed upon Aaron. This apparent reversal of the pentateuchal order evidently was of some concern to the Greek translators who insert, before the instructions for putting the turban on Joshua’s head, an order to clothe him with a long robe. However, the term “garments” (*bēgādîm*) is a general word for clothing and does not refer to any specific item of priestly apparel according to the priestly source. Exod 29:5 initiates the instruction for garbing Aaron with the words “Take the garments” (*bēgādîm*) and then proceeds to enumerate the individual items (coat, robe, ephod, etc.), ending with the headpiece. From this we can conclude that the Zechariah passage is not meant to be a sequential listing of the clothing of Joshua. Furthermore, the structure of verses 4b–5, which begin and end with the verb “to clothe,” suggests that the sequence of acts serves literary purposes and does not reflect a literal ordering of what took place in the vision (see NOTE above to “and I have clothed” in v 4). In short, the repetition of “clothed” in this verse indicates that Joshua was properly attired in clean or purified garments (see NOTE to v 4 “pure vestments”) and draws attention to one significant item in the assortment of layers and trappings worn by the priest, namely the headpiece, because of its particular symbolic value in relationship to “iniquity” (see NOTE to “iniquity,” v 4).

Another apparent divergence from the ceremonial sequence of Exod 29 and Lev 8 is the absence in this passage of any mention of anointing, a ritual which accompanied the investiture of Aaron. De Vaux suggests (1961:399) that the silence of Zech 3 in this regard means that Joshua was never anointed into his priestly office. Joshua is already called “high priest” at the outset of this chapter and also in Haggai, which comes from a slightly earlier date. He was already considered the chief priestly official, whether or not an official ceremony of investiture complete with anointing had ever taken place. If Joshua was born in 570 as Cross suggests

²⁷⁴RSV *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, New York: Nelson, 1952

(1975:17), with his father having been born near the beginning of the sixth century, it is likely that Joshua would have succeeded to his priestly position well before his return from Babylon. While he was probably recognized as high priest, or at least in line to be high priest once all the limitations of the impurity caused by his living in exile had been dealt with (see NOTE to “iniquity” in previous verse), there would be a question whether he would have been invested with authority and insignia while on foreign soil. The Persians may have officially granted him the right to occupy his inherited position, but the formal recognition of his own people may have been contingent upon his return to Jerusalem and his taking up of administrative tasks. Beyond that, a ceremonial induction may not have been possible until the temple’s renewal was made factual by the refoundation ceremony (see Hag 2:10, 15–19, NOTES and COMMENT) which took place shortly before Zechariah’s visions and to which his visions are a response. On the other hand, anointing may not have been a standard practice for priests except for Aaron, the first priest. The brief description in Num 20:26–28 of Eleazar’s succession to his father’s position does not mention anointing. Furthermore Ezekiel makes no mention of anointing, although he is careful to point out the special vestments that distinguish the priests (Ezek 44:17–19). Finally, the Talmudic sages reluctantly admitted that several important constituents of the preexilic temple—the ark, the cherubim, the Urim and Thummim, and the anointing oil—were absent in the postexilic temple. They assumed that the anointing oil was hidden away with the other sacred objects: the ark, the manna, and Aaron’s rod (T.B.²⁷⁵. Horayoth, 12a; Yoma, 52b).

The dressing of Joshua depicted in this vision may not be an installation ceremony at all. Rather it could depict an enrobing for a special temple ritual such as had not taken place since the temple structure itself was rendered unusable in 587. On the basis of Ezek 44:17–19, it can be asserted that the symbolic ceremonial garb of the priests was used only for their ministry in the sanctuary itself and not for the activities of the courtyard (at the altar). Although the altar was being used and Joshua had already been functioning in his priestly office for some time, the temple itself was in disrepair and there would have been no occasion for him to have donned the full assortment of ritual apparel for entering the inner sanctum. Nor would there have been opportunity or need, until the reality of a rebuilt temple was certain, to recognize Joshua’s fitness in a ceremony of installation. The reason now for the investiture passage must be related to the restoration of the temple itself and the recognition of Joshua’s role in the temple and in the administration of Yehud based in the temple. That refoundation ceremony linking the old temple with the present one and stressing the continuity between the two would have been the appropriate occasion for his investment (see below our discussion of verse 9 and of 4:7). Whether or not any previous or provisional installation took place cannot be ascertained.

stood by. Another instance of the vocabulary of the Heavenly Court (see NOTES to v 1). The Angel of Yahweh has been observing the procedures and is now ready to insert his—that is, God’s—charge to Joshua.

6. *charged.* The Hiphil of *ʿwd*, a denominative from *ʿēdâ*, “testimony,” has an official ring to it; often witnesses are involved. The verb anticipates the solemnity and authority of the ensuing message, an official job description, delivered to Joshua.

7. *If ... then.* This conditional sentence is not altogether clear in the Hebrew since the division between protasis and apodosis is somewhat uncertain. The versions have noted this

²⁷⁵T.B. Babylonian Talmud

difficulty in their translations. The two clauses following “if” (*’im*, which is repeated in Hebrew before the two verbs, “walk” and “keep”) could conceivably be followed by the next two clauses introduced by “then” (*gam* before both verbs, “render judgment” and “administer”), with the apodosis being constituted by the last clause in verse 7. However, the shift from *’im* to *gam* seems sufficient cause to understand that the second set of clauses denotes the scope of Joshua’s authority, so long as he obeys God’s word. His ability to carry out his specified role will be uniquely aided by the access to the Heavenly Court indicated by the final clause (cf. following NOTES). Ackroyd (1968:187) makes a further point in favor of this arrangement. He suggests that the firm statement in the second set of clauses about the priesthood would be suitable to Joshua’s postexilic status as a strong figure and that it would be unlikely to have that role itself be part of the protasis of a conditional statement.

The internal content of the four clauses introduced two each by *’im* and *gam* consists of an *ab ab* arrangement. The first clause of the first set corresponds to the first clause of the second set, and the second members of the two sets likewise correspond. This correspondence concerns the meaning of the two members of each set with respect to the range of priestly duties. The first members deal with an expanded aspect of the priests’ role in administering (civil) justice; the second part of each pair treats the cultic dimension of the priests’ function.

walk in my ways. While this can be a general term for following God’s commandments, it can have specific reference to the wide range of legal matters with which the priesthood at this point would have had to deal. A pivotal text is Exod 18:20, which describes a premonarchic system of civil justice. Moses instructs men to represent him, or to take on some of his responsibilities in arbitrating disputes, by teaching them the laws and how to use them—that is, “the way in which they must walk.” Likewise, during the period of the judges those “saviors” of Israel performed some unspecified (judicial) tasks to which the people gave no heed in that they turned aside “from the way in which their father had walked.” The language of walking in God’s ways involves the administration of justice.

The role of the Levitical priests in *instructing* the people in God’s law has been discussed above (see COMMENT to Hag 2:10ff.). During the monarchy the king appears to have taken on the ultimate responsibility for *executing* God’s law and providing justice (2 Sam 8:15; cf. Whitelam 1979). With the termination of the monarchy, the royal responsibility for internal justice and order also came to an end. Insofar as Persian policy encouraged continuity of local law systems in the provinces (cf. first NOTE to 7:1 and Cook 1983:72), and since the civil administrator or *pehâ* was mainly concerned with economic matters (taxes) and the relationship of the province to the imperial authorities, the priestly officials who were the tradents of Israelite law were likely to have taken on (or resumed?) judicial-legal powers within the community that were broader than the cultic dimension of their activities (cf. NOTE to “flying scroll,” 5:1).

keep my service. This phrase refers to the duties involved in carrying out the cultic functions associated with the temple itself. The pentateuchal texts assign the Levitical priests the tasks of maintenance associated with the tabernacle (e.g., Num 1:53 and 3:8, etc.) and the tent of meeting (Num 3:7, 8). Although the relationship between priests and Levites in carrying out the “service” in the postexilic period is not clear (see Ezek 44:14–18) the nature of that service as it includes physical maintenance and perhaps ritual acts seems to be beyond question (see Haran 1980:60).

render judgment in my House. This is a difficult phrase (*tādîn 'et-bêtî*). The verb *dyn* is elsewhere used in legal matters to denote the exercise of judgment or justice. Its predominant meaning is to specify, in the context of a lawsuit, the rendering of an authoritative and binding decision (Liedke 1971:446ff.). Thus the object of such verbal action would be the case itself, when the cognate accusative (*dîn*) appears, or else the party being judged. God himself often appears as the ultimate executor of justice (e.g., Deut 32:36; Isa 3:13), and the king too is depicted in the role of giving judgment (Jer 21:12; 22:16). Zech 3:7 is unique in having a priest as the subject and in having an institution or building as the object, although the long-standing association or Levitical priesthood with judgment can be found in Deut 17:9–10 (cf. Halpern 1981:231–32). The use of the independent personal pronoun, which is always emphatic, before the verb suggests that something unusual is being predicated on the priesthood. Our translation, which supplies “in,” should not obscure the problem of understanding what aspect of the priestly responsibility is being set forth. To make the verb a general word for “govern” (see *BD²⁷⁶B* 192) is to neglect its important juridical content. Thus the “govern, rule, administer my house” suggested by many translations and commentators is unacceptable in that it does not adequately portray the charge to the priest to execute judgment (so understood by Mason 1982:147). With the removal of the king as chief judicial officer, the likelihood (see NOTE above to “walk in my ways” in this verse; also see our Introduction) is that the priesthood filled this gap in social organization and that the temple precinct rather than the palace became the seat of justice. The chief officer of the temple (“my House” = God’s House) thus bore the final responsibility for the execution of justice and so regained a function held by the monarchy during the era of the Davidic kingdom (cf. NOTE to “twenty cubits long . . .,” 5:2). Although on local levels, at least until Josiah’s reform, appellate judgment continued the premonarchic practice of being in the hands of the local priesthood.

administer my courts. This directive clearly pertains to the priestly administration of temple affairs, which included not only maintenance of the sacrificial system but responsibility for collection of revenues as well. The term *ḥāṣṣēr*, although it can refer to a specific inner precinct of the priests only (e.g., Ezek 10:3, 5), is used here in a more generalized sense. The expression “to administer (*tišmōr* = you will keep) my courts” is unique in Scripture but nicely parallels “to keep (*tišmōr* = you will administer) my service” in verse 7a where the idiom is both warranted and well attested (e.g., Lev 8:35, 18:30; Num 18:5; Deut 11:1; Ezek 40:45; Mal 3:14; etc.). The sense of *tišmōr*, “you will administer,” is as unusual as the entire expression itself. The plain sense of the phrase could hardly be “to keep my courts” in the way that custodians maintain a facility. The totality of the specialized ecclesiastical functions is implied by the term “my service”—i.e., preparation of the sacrifice, lighting the lamps, purification, etc. Designating the public place (in “my courts”) where such activities occur may be a way of representing the range of public activities of the priests: their role in explanation or teaching of Scripture (see COMMENT to Hag 2:10–19) and their collection of revenue and offerings. Unlike the temple itself, which was off limits to the general public, the temple courtyards were the places where the people interacted with the priesthood and came closest to God’s presence. The charge to Joshua

²⁷⁶*BDB* F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford University Press, 1907, 1955

concerning the courts apparently represents his responsibility for all the business and activities in connection with the public.

Many of these duties listed for Joshua impinge upon what would have been the responsibility of the king in the preexilic period. The job description of 3:7 represents an absorption of certain royal prerogatives or responsibilities by the priestly establishment. This verse is not so much concerned with the legitimacy of either Joshua or of the priesthood; the preceding verses deal dramatically with that issue. Rather, the four clauses of 3:7 reflect the problem of the relationship between ecclesiastical office and civil office and the division of responsibility and authority in light of the status of Yehud as a subprovince of the Persian Empire. The words of Yahweh to Joshua represent an accommodation which the traditional biblical views of the relationship between monarchy and priesthood made to the political realities of the late sixth century. The civil role of the governor was hardly as broad as that of the king had been, and the priesthood took up the slack. Those (e.g., Rudolph 1976:97; Mason 1982:147) who contend that royal privileges had to be given to the priesthood to strengthen it have not properly assessed the dynamics of the shifting configuration of civil and priestly functions under Darius's rule. The resulting theocratic form of provincial government in Yehud was as much a result of Persian interests and limitations as it was of independent local attempts to elevate priestly authority. Yet the outcome was an increase in the scope and status of the legitimate priesthood despite the retention of a combined civil and ecclesiastical governance.

access. The versions (LX²⁷⁷X, Syriac, Vulgate) apparently read an intransitive Piel participle, *měhallěkîm*, on analogy with Eccles 4:15, literally, "those who wander." Rudolph (1976:93) among others has argued for the Piel participle, but the transitive meaning "to lead" makes no sense here. The d-stem Pail is twice attested in the Aramaic of Daniel (3:25 and 4:34), rendered *mahlěkîn* and pointed identically with the present instance. All these interpretations, however, require an implied or assumed comparison: "I will make you like those who." It is possible that there was an original *k* after *lk* of the word "access," but the simplest solution is suggested by *BD²⁷⁸B* (237): that the word is a plural noun meaning "goings," and hence "access." The singular form would be *mahălak*.

Beuken (1967:294) is bothered by such an interpretation because of the powers it gives to Joshua. He maintains that the underlying dynamic of all the visions is the fact that they are grounded in a real-life situation that does not suit the present scene when interpreted as we have done. Beuken concludes that the scene reflects a later theological viewpoint, and he suggests a "chronistic redactional setting" (296–97). However, so many other features of both Haggai and Zechariah point to a prominent place for the high priest that his reluctance to accept the originality of this scene seems unwarranted.

to those who are standing. That is, the members of the Heavenly Court; see our NOTE to "standing before," verse 1. This priestly access to the Divine Council is innovative. Previously only prophetic figures, including Zechariah as in verses 1 and 5, are portrayed as present in the council scene. Not even kings had access to the Divine Council. The expanded role of the priest with respect to judgment necessitates his becoming privy to God's judgment, which is often

²⁷⁷LXX Septuagint

²⁷⁸*BDB* F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford University Press, 1907, 1955

represented in biblical parlance by the Heavenly Court, an important aspect of the function of the Divine Council. Just as the prophet is God's messenger, communicating God's judgment concerning Israel to the people and especially to the king as the official ultimately responsible for the carrying out of justice, so now the priest must execute justice and thus needs to have access to divine will. In the absence of a monarch in Yehud, therefore, it is quite understandable how priests and especially the high priest came to assume more and more judicial power (see above NOTE on "clean turban").

The text raises a question about the manner of priestly access to God's court and his supreme judgment on earthly matters. On the face of it, it appears as if Joshua himself were to have the same privileges as prophets, who in the classic tradition were the only human observers of the Divine Council proceedings. No administrators of Judah, whether royal or priestly, are depicted as entering Yahweh's council. Even David and Solomon, who in some sense enjoyed a special relationship to Yahweh, are nevertheless visited by prophets with messages from Yahweh. Other kings explicitly consult prophets who perform the service of securing a decision about something. The standard procedure, even though he is the highest authority in the land, is for the king to call upon divine authority. He consults a prophet, who has direct access to God and who then reports the word of Yahweh to the king.

In light of this, it would be highly unusual for the priest to be granted identical access. Yet that may be the case for Joshua, who appears at a significant transition point in the reworking of governance patterns in Yehud. Still, if Joshua's increased responsibilities entail an absorption of certain functions previously performed by the king, then one would expect that Joshua would have the same relationship to prophetic pronouncements that the king previously had. With the transfer of some royal authority to the ecclesiastical administrators would have come the transfer of access to Yahweh via the prophets. Perhaps the text is elliptical here and intends that very situation, with prophets now addressing Joshua as they formerly spoke to kings and in that way constituting his access to the Divine Council. This explanation would ameliorate the apparently untenable awarding of direct access to a priest, but would it really reflect a change? After all, the prophet Haggai was already addressing his oracles to the high priest and also to the governor as well as to the people. Did the priest need special access? So we are left with the sense that the end of 3:7 in fact does accord Joshua an unprecedented position. If it isn't entirely consistent with classical models, it is because the exigencies of the postexilic period demanded forms, and sanctions for them, that departed from tradition. Such a departure was not complete, however; there is always the model of a premonarchic figure such as Samuel, who was priest and prophet, to consider.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁹ Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, [*Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 25B, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 179–197.