

Episode: Servant of God Series No. 6

Narrator: Joshua the Priest

Primary Scriptures: Ezra 3:1-4:4; Zechariah 3:1-10

Story Summary: Servants of God get accused for obeying God

Location: Israel

Time: 538-490 BC

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Zechariah 3:6

In about 536-538 BC, the Lord moved the heart of King Cyrus of Persia to aid the Jews in making the first return to Judah from exile in Babylon/Persia. The exiles were led by Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, Joshua the Priest and others.

Upon arrival in Judah, the former exiles settled in Jerusalem and in towns throughout Judah. Soon after that, the people gathered in Jerusalem to rebuild the altar of God under the leadership of Joshua and Zerubbabel. Despite the dangers posed by the people around them, the Jews finished building the altar, made sacrifices on it, and celebrated the Festival of Tabernacles.

Following those celebrations, the people began to gather the resources needed to rebuild the Temple. According to Ezra 3:8-9 the leaders and all the people, including all of the Levites, began the work. It is easy to imagine that everyone, regardless of their position or clothing, was sweaty and dirty. Everyone was intent on following the desire of God to rebuild the Temple.

Zechariah was a contemporary with Joshua the Priest. Zechariah 3:1-10 tells of a vision that Zechariah had. Although it is not perfectly certain, it appears Satan was before the Lord accusing Joshua of having filthy clothes, when, as a priest, he should have had clean clothes. The Lord rebukes Satan for falsely accusing Joshua. Certainly, Joshua had dirty clothes but he was dirty because he was following the Lord's instructions to rebuild the Temple, even at great personal danger. The Lord took the occasion to reward Joshua.

The modern world can be very challenging for God's people. Societal norms and laws can be contrary to the values of God's people. Circumstances can place Christians in situations that seem to have no obvious responses that will glorify God. No matter what choice is made, accusations are going to be made.

It is comforting to know God will not condemn you if you attempting to please him in all you do. Perhaps King David was thinking of Joshua the Priest when he wrote Psalm 24:3-4, "Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god."