

Contemporary Mystic Christianity **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

The Third Vision: The Temptation of Joshua

Chapter three introduces a vision of the High Priest Joshua being tempted by Satan. This is one of the earliest Old Testament references to a personal Satan. Satan as a personified power of evil is not mentioned in Hebrew literature prior to the Exile. The concept appears to be a Hebrew adaptation of the Persian Ahriman. The previous Hebrew concept of evil was somewhat different, for the elder prophets portrayed Satan as performing acts under the Will of God. For instance, in the Prologue of Job he appears among the Sons of God and is given permission to try Job. Thus, the Hebrews believed all suffering upon earth came by Satan but it served a divine purpose, whether or not man was able to recognize that purpose. After the Exile, however, the concept of a personal Satan working in enmity against God gained favor. This concept flowed into Christianity where, among the orthodox, it became materialized out of all resemblance to reality. Esotericists recognize that demoniac spirits do exist in a kind of hierarchy; but, like ancient Hebrew prophets, they see God as the One God and the One Power in the universe, so all that appears to be evil must eventually serve God.

Zechariah 3:1-2

And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

The vision then reveals Joshua "in filthy garments," the outward badge of some moral failure. The Lord (i.e. the Angel of the Lord, Michael) commands that these garments be removed, saying, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Joshua is at once clothed with new garments and a mitre is set upon his head. "And the angel of the Lord stood by." The Angel rebukes Joshua, exhorting him to obey the high vision which has been entrusted to him, and he prophesies "for behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch." He continues, 'For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof . . . and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.'" (Zechariah 3:3,10)

"My servant the Branch" refers, of course, to the Christ Archangel. Through Initiation, the day will come when men

will no longer be clothed in gross garments (of flesh) but in changed raiment (bodies of light), and wearing fair mitres upon their heads (halos of radiance). In that day true brotherhood and equality will be demonstrated: "shall ye call every man neighbor."

The stone with seven eyes symbolizes the light body of an Initiate with its seven awakened spiritual centers, poetically described as the Seven Roses or Lotus Blossoms that bloom upon this new body.

The Fourth Vision: Zerubbabel and His Initiation

Previous reference has been made to Haggai and Zechariah as prophets of the Restoration under Zerubbabel. The Book of Haggai is correlated with the sign Capricorn and shows that the final Initiation of Zerubbabel occurred at the time of the Winter Solstice, the "Secret Place" of the year. The Book of Zechariah correlates with Cancer, the sign opposite Capricorn across the zodiacal circle. Through their beautiful and varied imagery, chapters of the latter reveal, as nearly as can be given publicly, an outline of the wonder and glory of this final Initiation of Zerubbabel — for when the Midnight Sun of the Winter Solstice is in Capricorn under the earth, Cancer shines on the Midheaven that holds above the sleeping world the Manger, symbolizing birth of the new Sun.

In chapter four Zechariah relates this vision pertaining to Zerubbabel. The prophet studied the heaven-recorded archetypal plan for the Redeemer's coming to earth and, looking far beyond his own troublous time; saw the Christ Star descending in the great Palestinian Event. He also saw the ever-deepening impress of the Christ Image upon the world, and was shown the archetypal pattern of man's glorified New Age body. Then he beheld the coming of Holy Ones from North, East, South and West to the beauty and radiance of the New Jerusalem, that they might worship together and prepare for the Second Coming.

All great Initiates body forth the development that spiritual evolution will eventually accomplish in the race as a whole. They are the first fruits of the evolutionary tree, so we therefore call them prototypes. For this reason the Book of Zechariah, although concerned primarily with Zechariah's own Illumination and with the Initiation of Zerubbabel, is also descriptive of the earth and mankind in the future Capricornian Age. Man will then be Christed, or anointed with the Christ powers. The masses will experience the birth of the Christ Within while pioneers, under Cancer, will receive higher Initiations and thus be able to follow the Christ into His own home world, the high heaven of Life Spirit, or Universal Christ Consciousness.

In the work of Initiation going forward in spiritual Temples on the inner planes there is a definite correspondence with outer movements of the universe. Thus, the first seven of the nine Lesser Mysteries correlate with the seven days of the week; the eighth correlates with the Solstices and the ninth with the Equinoxes. The first Great Initiation confers Adeptship and relates to penetration into the innermost secrets of the earth. Yet all this is but a prelude to the Great Work. Adeptship having been attained in the first Great Initiation, three more Great Initiations follow wherein an Adept comes to know the All Highest, not by reflections in Nature but face to face. Finally he enters the White Light of the Supreme and "goes no more out" into embodiment, having become one with his Source.

That Zerubbabel's Initiation took place at the Winter Solstice is of utmost significance to the esotericist since it indicates that he had penetrated the inmost sanctuary of Nature and had seen hidden there the secret of life itself. Yet Zerubbabel had trod a weary way to attain this high eminence. His example is helpful to all who yet hold a like glory in potentiality, as the lotus seed enfolds a perfect image of the plant to be.

— ***Corinne Heline***