

Connect the Jots

Excrement

Part 3 – February 9, 2014



We ended as Jesus was beginning to preach **the Gospel, not advice but Good News**. This crucified heel reminded us that after His baptism and temptation and first public sign, turning water into wine, **Jesus began a 3-year march toward fulfilling Genesis 3:15, crushing the serpent's head as it pierced His heel**.

But, to *really* understand what's ahead, we have to look back at His baptism, temptation, and first miracle. They all tie together if we connect the jots, and the jots are ... *excrement!*



Jesus said that *every* jot in the Law and the Prophets would find its fulfillment in Him. (Mat 5:17-18) Really? *Every one of 'em?!* Our first jot takes us to a reconstructed Roman latrine. These were high-tech toilets in Jesus' day! Know what that hole in the front is for? A sponge on a stick that you dip in water. Roman soldiers, and *anyone* who could afford to, carried their own. But, back when Israel was in the wilderness, *this* was the Law:



Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement. – Deuteronomy 23:12-13 NIV

Roman Latrines at Carnuntum

Dig a hole and bury your *excrement* finds its fulfillment in Jesus? Yes! Yes it does. God was in their camp, and *this* Law taught them that **our filth and God's holiness don't mix**. (Deut 23:14)



There are **two types**, two temptations, when it comes to the filth of our sin: **those overcome with the shame of their own stink**, and **those who refuse to admit that theirs does!** **The Good News came to refute the later and redeem the former – to convict the comfortable, and comfort the convicted.** You see, **my heart has to be convicted before it can be cleansed**. So did Israel's. 549 years before Jesus began to preach, the prophet Zechariah gets a shocking vision from God; and, we get another jot to connect.

Zechariah sees the High Priest standing in the Holy of Holies in the Temple, completely covered in ... our *second* jot. That's just mud, but you get the point.

'Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,' declares the Lord. [So, Jesus is God] 'Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. [It gets a bit confusing when God is going to be both Sender and Sent, Father and Son] The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.' [So far so good] Then he showed me Joshua [Yeshua; the Hebrew way of pronouncing Jesus] the high priest [we'll call him Lil' Jesus] standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. [Like when Big Jesus was tempted] The Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! [And Big Jesus did] Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?' [What? How? Why?] Now Joshua [Lil' Jesus] was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel.'" – Zechariah 2:10-3:3 NIV

The word for *excrement* in Deuteronomy is translated as *filthy* when used as an adjective, because it has to convey soiled *and* indecent *and* disgusting. He's *filthy* with human excrement. How does *that explain* the burning stick snatched from the fire?

The Holy of Holies was a hazardous, terrifying place.

The Lord said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, [the glittering gold Mercy Seat on the shining gold chest that held the Word, the Law, of God] or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud [the Shekinah Glory of God's presence] over the atonement cover." – Leviticus 16:2 NIV

The High Priest wore a blue garment to represent man's separation from God; God's in heaven, we're on earth, the sky's blue. And he only entered the Holy of Holies on the annual Day of Atonement.

The High Priest was publically bathed and dressed in white linen to offer a sacrifice for his sin; he bathed again to sacrifice for the priests; and then he bathed once more, and the crowd would cheer and shout: **"Scrub him good! Get behind his ears! He's representing us!"** And then he would don the meticulously examined, flawless, spotless, bright blue garment. And silence would fall. **Then, he entered the Temple to offer the blood to atone for the sins of his people.** And when he went behind the veil, they held their breath with fear and dread and anticipation.

And *this* is when Zechariah is allowed to see what God saw behind the veil in the Holy of Holies from His Shekinah Glory: the cleanest, holiest, religious'est among 'em, sprayed with feces! **God can't help but see our hearts, and they're full of filth.** Jesus made a shocking, scandalous connection between what comes out of our bottoms and what comes out of our heart!

... [Jesus] asked. **"Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body."** ... He went on: **"What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"** – Mark 7:18-23 NIV

This is why our heart of stone must be replaced.

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. – Ezekiel 36:25-26 NIV



What kind of *stone* do you think the heart without Christ is? I think it's brimstone. **Do you know what brimstone is? Sulfur.** And, when it burns it smells like rotten filth. **Maybe the Lake of Fire burns with brimstone because it's fueled by all those who've prepared their hearts to feed it.**

We know what the Lake of Fire *smells like*, want to know what it *looks like*? This is the brimstone burning off of an Ijen volcano! The blue flame is only visible in the dark.



It can't be by chance that every human passes flammable gas that smells like brimstone! Now, giggle if you like, but **every time you cut fire and brimstone I want you to ask yourself if that's expressing your heart!** You got'a let go of your filth *and* hold onto His cleansing.

Ijen Volcano complex, Indonesia

The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." [Who's this Angel of the Lord?] Then he said to Joshua, [Lil' Jesus] "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you." [It's Big Jesus!] Then I [Zechariah] said, "Put a clean turban on his [Lil' Jesus] head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord [Big Jesus] stood by. [Big Jesus] The angel of the Lord gave this charge to [Lil' Jesus] Joshua: "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here. Listen, O high priest Joshua [Lil' Jesus] and your associates seated before you, [those cleansing him] who are men symbolic of things to come: [ultimate cleansing] I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. – Zechariah 3:4-8 NIV



That's the burning stick that's snatched from the fire. Our third jot is the tool the Law commands to be used: a digging stick.¹ **It's a stick with a cross-bar of bone, wood, or metal that pierces the branch.** And, in Zechariah 10:4, he says that **the Servant, the Branch, is also the Tent Peg from Judah.** And, the Law in Deuteronomy, (23:13) that's fulfilled in Jesus, calls for a stake, peg, or nail, attached to a staff or branch. Young's Literal says, "**... and a nail thou hast on thy staff**".

The blackened handle of that digging stick was snatched from the fire, *fire-hardened*, a common ancient technique for strengthening.

¹ Plateau Culture Digging Stick // Catalog number: OHS Museum 4937 and 84; Era: (1754-1850

Jesus was publically bathed just once, for all people; He didn't need to sacrifice for His own sin, or any other priests. He was *it*, the One and only. **The Shekinah Glory became our Branch and Peg!**

Zechariah saw that **all the cleanliness laws didn't provide holiness, they pointed to it**, so we'd know it when it arrived to bury our filth, past, present, and future, once and for all.

[This profound prophetic vision of Zechariah ends with this] "... I will remove the sin of this land in a single day. In that day each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree," declares the Lord Almighty." – Zechariah 3:9b-10 NIV

And, **His vine was revealed with His first public sign**, filling jars "used by the Jews for ceremonial washing," (John 2:6) to turn 150 gallons of water into wine. **The time of ritual cleansing was done, and the celebration of the union of God and man had begun.** But, there were no cheers, and no reverent silence, as He alone approached the cross. In the Psalms, David utters a prophetic cry of agony that finds its fulfillment on the cross ...

My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. – Psalm 22:14b NIV



That's when He was turning our hearts of stone into flesh. Sulfur is a flammable stone that turns dazzling gold (like Jesus' face on the Mount of Transfiguration, (Mat 17:2) just before it melts like wax into ... well, even scientists say it's *astounding*. It's our final jot: **brimstone with its barely visible blue flame, glowing like gold, melting like wax, pouring out like blood, and stinking like rotten eggs.** But, that's sulfur dioxide, an important compound in winemaking. **This is a picture of His holiness consuming our filthiness.**

Some of us sense our filth and are overcome with shame. Others simply re-label it, or soften it, as something it isn't. Have you recognized, acknowledged, and confessed all your filth? Or, are you still holding onto it? Have you relieved yourself of the shame associated with it? Or, are you still holding onto it? The Good News is, either way, you can let go.

A strong case can be made that the sponge Jesus drank from, just before saying, **"It is finished,"** was a Roman soldier's toilet sponge. It's not what goes in that makes us unclean, but what comes out.

And, when the One who washed His disciples' feet died, His human body relaxed, and the filth ran down His legs ... and onto the nail that was piercing His heels fulfilling God's promise to cleanse us.

And then, **the soldier pierced His side, and living water, water mixed with His blood, came rushing out and rinsed the filth away. And the earth quaked, the rocks split ... He was digging the hole! And he descended with our sin, and was snatched from the fire.**

The fulfillment of the branch and peg, the true High Priest who buried our filth once and for all, so we can stand unashamed in the Shekinah Glory of God's presence.