

We cannot cover up our sin by the rich apparel of good works or religious ceremonial. No. God says, ‘It has all got to be removed.’ In other words, there is nothing that we can do to gain or merit God’s salvation. We can only cast ourselves upon God’s mercy and seek his forgiveness and his salvation.

Salvation is all of grace. We are saved not by our own effort, but because God has chosen us in Christ ‘before the creation of the world’ (Ephesians 1:4). Satan’s attacks upon God’s people are dealt with by God saying, ‘I have chosen Jerusalem’ (3:2; 1:17, 2:12). He means, ‘I have set my electing love upon my people.’ Jesus said, ‘You did not choose me, but I chose you’ (John 15:16). In the removal of Joshua’s filthy clothes God was saying, **‘See, I have taken away your sin’** (3:4).

But Joshua is not left standing naked. The angel of the Lord (Jesus Christ himself) says, ‘I will put rich garments on you’ (3:4). Joshua could not save himself (and all the people he represented) but God could, and God does. He takes away their filthy clothes (sin) and reclothes them with rich garments (righteousness). These symbolize acceptance and holiness. When the prodigal son returned home in repentance and contrition he discovered that his father was already waiting for him. One of the first acts of his father was to call for the ‘best robe and put it on him’ (Luke 15:22). Paul exhorts believers to ‘clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ’ (Romans 13:14). He says of Christ, ‘God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God’ (2 Corinthians 5:21).¹

¹ Michael Bentley, [*Building for God's Glory: Haggai and Zechariah Simply Explained*](#), Welwyn Commentary Series (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 1989), 125–126.

7049. צִמְחָה *tsemach* – noun – sprout, shoot

- Gen. 19:25 and **that which grew upon** the ground
- Ps. 65:10 its **springing up** Thou blessest (Young)
- Isa. 4:2 In that day shall **the branch of** the LORD
- 61:11 the earth bringeth forth her **bud**,
- Jer. 23:5 I will raise unto David a righteous **Branch**,
- 33:15 **the Branch of** righteousness to grow up
- Ezek. 16:7 to multiply as **the bud of** the field,
- 17:9 all the leaves of her **spring**,
- 17:10 in the furrows where **it grew**
- Hos. 8:7 **the bud** shall yield no meal:
- Zech. 3:8 bring forth my servant **the BRANCH**
- 6:12 the man whose name is **The BRANCH**;

Meaning “sprout,” “growth,” “plant,” “shoot” or “branch,” *tsemach* is derived from *tsāmach* (HED² # 7048). In its most general sense, it refers to some type of vegetation which grows from the ground (literally, growth of the ground; Gen. 19:25; cf. Ps.

65:10; Ezek. 17:9). Thus, the earth brings forth its buds (shoots; Isa. 61:11).

Also, *tsemach* refers to a plant of the field (Ezek. 16:7), to the bud of a stalk of grain (Hos. 8:7) and figuratively to the growth of a plant, for example, the garden terrace where a tree grew (literally, the garden terrace of its growth; Ezek. 17:10). In all these references, *tsemach* is used of God's care of the earth (Ps. 65:10) or figuratively to refer to his relationship with Israel.

Theologically, *tsemach* is used metaphorically of the righteous messianic Branch of David (Jer. 23:5; 33:15), Who is also referred to as "the Branch of the LORD" (Isa. 4:2).

"My Servant the Branch" (Zech. 3:8), or "the Man whose name is the Branch" (Zech. 6:12) indicate that the future messianic King will be a descendant of David, and, according to the Davidic covenant, the Son of the LORD.³

3 Thoralf Gilbrant, "[צמח](#)," *The Old Testament Hebrew-English Dictionary*, The Complete Biblical Library (WORDsearch, 1998).