

Hoping in God's Mercy

This morning, I was reading in the book of Zechariah, and I came to the scene where young Zechariah was given a vision of a trial in heaven. In God's court, Satan was accusing Israel's high priest, Joshua, of failing in some way to keep the law.

Zechariah 3

1. Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.
2. And Jehovah said to Satan, "Jehovah rebuke you, O Satan, even Jehovah who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this man a brand plucked out of the fire?"
3. Now, Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and he stood before the angel.

In the Bible, clean garments represent righteousness (cf. Rev. 19:8). Joshua's filthy garments represented sin. He had been guilty of failing in some way to keep the law of Moses. Satan had an air-tight case against him, and Joshua had no escape. His only hope was mercy. And he received it! I love the scripture from David that says, "The eye of the LORD is on him that fears Him, on those who put their hope in His mercy to deliver their souls from death" (Psalm. 33:18–19a). Joshua put his hope in God's mercy, and Satan lost the case.

In God's court, faith wins, not facts.

When I read those verses, I stopped. I found myself praying that God would rebuke our accusers, just as the angel of Jehovah rebuked Satan in Zechariah's vision: "Rebuke our accusers for us, Jesus! Our garment are dirty, too, Lord, but we hope in your mercy!" In God's court, with Jesus our Advocate interceding for us, it does not matter how wrong we have been, or for how long; there is hope! With God, anything can change. Put your hope in God!

Then I continued reading, and again I was surprised at how the words felt. They seemed alive, as if the Lord was, at that moment, responding to my prayer for us:

4. And *the angel* answered and spoke to those standing before him, "Take the filthy garments away from him!" And to *Joshua* he said, "Behold, I have made your iniquity to pass from you, and I am clothing you with stately robes."
5. And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head!" So they placed a clean turban on his head, and they clothed him with garments while the angel of Jehovah stood by.

Could it really be? It was such a sweet feeling! It felt as if Jesus was answering me and that he is offering that to us all. It brings tears to my eyes as I write this.

Then I continued reading, and I felt that this, too, was also from the Lord, to me and to us:

6. Then the angel of Jehovah admonished Joshua, saying,
7. "Thus says Jehovah of Hosts: If you walk in my ways and if you perform my service, then you shall also judge my house and keep my courts, and I will give you places to walk among these who are standing here.

Those who receive the promises of God have a responsibility to respond to His mercy with obedience. Remember the words of Jesus to his disciples: "I have loved you the same way the Father has loved me; stay in my love. You will stay in my love if you keep my commandments, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and stay in His love" (Jn. 15:9–10).