

Zechariah 3:6-7

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The angel of the LORD admonishes Joshua to follow the LORD wholeheartedly in order to have the reward of ruling over the temple, and ultimately in God's presence.

In the previous section, the prophet Zechariah saw an adversary (Satan) desiring to accuse Joshua the high priest before the LORD. However, the angel of the LORD rebuked the adversary, removed Joshua's guilt, and cleansed him, allowing him to continue to perform his priestly duties (vv. 1–5). Having removed Joshua's filthy garments, then dressing him in new clothes, the *angel of the LORD admonished* him (vs 6).

The title *angel of the LORD* refers to a special divine messenger. That messenger speaks as God, identifies Himself with God, and performs the duties of God (Genesis 16:7–12; Exodus 3:2; Judges 2:1–4). This indicates this messenger is likely the preincarnate Christ. The verb *admonish* means “to warn someone” or “give a solemn commission” (Exodus 19:23; Nehemiah 9:29). What the angel of the LORD tells Joshua is that his continuing as high priest would be dependent upon his obedience to the admonition.

As the *angel of the LORD* proceeded to give the admonition, he began with the prophetic formula, *Thus says the LORD of hosts*, to confirm the source of his message. The Hebrew term translated as *LORD* is Yahweh, the self-existent and everlasting God who revealed Himself to Moses out of the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). The term translated as *host* is “sabaoth” in the Hebrew language. It means “armies” and often refers to the angelic armies of heaven (1 Samuel 1:3). In sum, the phrase *the LORD of hosts* describes God's power as a warrior leading His angelic army to defeat His foes (Amos 5:16; 9:5; Habakkuk 2:17).

Here in Zechariah, the phrase *LORD of hosts* demonstrates God's power as the supreme warrior who has complete control over all human affairs (Daniel 4:34).

After the prophetic formula that confirmed the divine source of the message, *the angel of the LORD* laid before *Joshua* a twofold charge and a twofold privilege as the admonishment. The first charge states, *If you will walk in My ways* (vs 7). The term translated as “ways” (“derek,” in Hebrew) denotes a “road,” or a “pathway.” However, the Bible frequently uses it to refer to the way the covenant people of God were to live; that is, according to the laws of God (Deuteronomy 10:12).

Thus, to walk in God's ways implies a positive response to the covenantal laws of God, manifested by a sense of dynamic, mutual engagement with God, trusting that His way is for our best. This is consistent with the [Suzerain-vassal style covenant/treaty](#) God entered with His chosen people, Israel. Just as God made Joshua righteous by grace, so He chose Israel by grace (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). But in order for His people to experience blessing, they were required to walk in His ways. Much of this was to honor the cause/effect God built into the moral universe. In Joshua's case, he was to lead the people as a good example, showing them the way that leads

to life (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). God, as a loving mentor, only desired good for His people (Deuteronomy 10:13). He would not reward self-destructive behavior.

The second charge given to *Joshua* states, *And if you will perform My service* (vs 7). That means that Joshua was to carry out his priestly duties faithfully in order to gain God's approval. The book of Numbers summarizes the priests' responsibilities to Aaron and the nation Israel: "They shall perform the duties for him and for the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle" (Numbers 3:7). They were also to teach the people God's law (Deuteronomy 33:10).

Joshua was to live an obedient life before the LORD and display a genuine character before the people of God through the performance of his priestly duties. Such obedience would grant him two privileges, as the rest of the verse makes clear. The first one reads, *You will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts* (vs 7).

The word translated *courts* is used in singular to refer to the enclosed outer perimeter of the tabernacle, where the priests were to minister (Exodus 27:9). Here it is singular, perhaps because there were multiple courts in the temple, originally constructed by Solomon (2 Kings 21:5).

When *Joshua* and the *priests* obeyed God, He would give them the reward of ruling over His people with justice. He would keep His *courts* as they offered acceptable sacrifices to Him. This is consistent with the reward God gives those who are faithful, He restores them to their design of being crowned to reign over His creation, in service and harmony with Him, and with others (Psalm 8; Matthew 25:21; Revelation 3:21).

The term *house* refers to the temple in Jerusalem (Haggai 1:2). The Babylonians destroyed it in 586 BC. But the LORD commanded the returning exiles to rebuild the temple through the ministry of Haggai and Zechariah. The priests were to conduct their worship services in the *house* of God in Jerusalem because that was "the place in which the LORD" chose "for His name to dwell" (Deuteronomy 12:11).

The term *court* refers to the courtyards of the temple. Before the post-exilic period, the king had authority over the temple. That is why King Solomon was able to dismiss "Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD, which He had spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh" (1 Kings 2:27). But from the time of *Joshua* onward, the high priest would have sole authority over the temple and its *court*.

The second privilege would grant *Joshua* a direct approach to the presence of the LORD: *I will grant you free access among these who are standing here* (vs 7). The statement *these who are standing here* refers to the heavenly attendants, as mentioned in verse 4. That means that *Joshua* would enjoy a special relationship with the LORD. He would have the right to approach God just like the angels do.

According to Jewish tradition, this verse indicates that the angel is telling Joshua that when the dead will be resurrected, "I will resurrect you; and I will give you walkers who walk among these angels." Since "Joshua" is the Hebrew pronunciation of "Jesus" this could be a prophetic

picture of Jesus's resurrection, attended by angels (Matthew 28:2-5). It could also be a prediction of Joshua reigning in the presence of angels (1 Corinthians 6:3). We are told in verse 8 that Joshua is a prophetic symbol.

Biblical Text

⁶ And the angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, ⁷ “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing *here*.