

Zechariah 3:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying,

Analysis

And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying—The Hebrew *ya'ad* (יָאָד, 'solemnly testified/warned') introduces a formal charge or covenant stipulation. The Angel's cleansing grace (vv. 4-5) now transitions to covenant responsibility. Justification leads to sanctification; new robes demand new conduct. This 'protest' isn't hostile but a solemn witness, like a legal deposition establishing terms.

The Angel of the LORD's speaking establishes divine authority for what follows—this isn't mere prophetic advice but Yahweh's covenant requirements for the priesthood. The vision's structure mirrors salvation order: first cleansing (vv. 3-5), then commission (vv. 6-7), then messianic promise (vv. 8-10). Grace precedes law, but grace doesn't nullify obedience. The 'protest' prepares Joshua to hear conditional promises: 'If thou wilt walk in my ways... then thou shalt also judge my house' (v. 7). The divine testimony holds the high priest accountable to his calling—faithful to steward the restored worship that grace has made possible.

Historical Context

Post-exilic Israel faced the constant temptation to religious compromise—intermarriage with pagan neighbors, economic shortcuts violating Sabbath, and priestly negligence (see Malachi's later rebukes, Malachi 1:6-2:9). The Angel's solemn charge prepares Joshua for leadership requiring both courage and integrity. The priesthood's fidelity would determine whether God's presence remained in the Second Temple.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does divine grace create (not eliminate) responsibility for holy living?
2. What does the progression—cleansing, then commission—teach about spiritual growth's proper order?
3. In what areas of your life does God's 'solemn protest' call you to accountability despite forgiveness?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַד	מַלְאֲכֵי	יְהוָה	בִּיהוֹשֻׁעַ	לֵאמֹר:
protested	And the angel	of the LORD	unto Joshua	saying
H5749	H4397	H3068	H3091	H559

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