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Be An Encourager And A Threat To The Devil

by Zac Poonen

God gave Zechariah visions and prophetic messages when he was very young (Zechariah 2:4). This is a great encouragement for all who are young. God can pick you up when you are young, anoint you with His Holy Spirit and give you a ministry. Zechariah had a blessed ministry of encouraging discouraged people. The Jews had just come back from Babylon where their fathers had been slaves, and they were poor, fearful and discouraged. They were a beaten lot. They were not cultured, refined or rich like their forefathers of 200 years earlier. Zechariah was called to encourage them.

The first vision Zechariah sees is of a man sitting on a red horse among some myrtle trees (Zechariah 1:7-17). Myrtle trees are low trees and symbolize humility. Behind the man were red, brown and white horses. "And I asked, 'What are these for?' And they said, 'We have patrolled the earth.' They reported to the angel of the Lord, 'The whole earth is at peace.'" This is a picture of God watching everything that happens on the earth. "Then the angel said to me, 'Shout this message for all to hear: "This is what the Lord Almighty says: "My love for Jerusalem and Mount Zion is passionate and strong. I have returned to show mercy to Jerusalem. My temple will be rebuilt and plans will be made for the reconstruction of Jerusalem. The Lord will comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem as His own." (Zechariah 1:12-17). 'Jerusalem' and 'Mount Zion' symbolize the church, the body of Christ on earth that will be built, despite all the opposition of Satan and his forces.

The message that comes to us from this is that even though the church is small and in a low place, she has the God Who runs the universe watching over her as she seeks to build His house. When you are in a lonely place, you can feel weak and helpless. But remember that the eyes of the Lord are always going across the earth, working on your behalf. The Lord's love for the church is "passionate and strong". That was how Zechariah encouraged the people to build God's house.

The second vision was of four animal horns and four blacksmiths (Zechariah 1:18-21). The horns represented at that time, the world powers that had ruled Judah and Israel at some time - Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Medo-Persia. In our time, they represent the forces of darkness that attack the church from all four sides - north, south, east and west. Horns in the Bible are a picture of strength. So these horns represent the gates of Hades, the forces of spiritual death. These horns had "scattered" God's people (Zechariah 1:19). The work of the devil is always to scatter and divide believers - separating them by gossip, slander, misunderstanding and false report. Satan is in this business perpetually.

"Against these four horns the Lord showed me four blacksmiths" (Zechariah 1:20). These blacksmiths would destroy the horns. Blacksmiths are strong people who hammer iron into shape. The blacksmiths had come to terrify the four horns that had scattered and humbled Judah. They would throw those enemies down and destroy them. These represented God's servants - Haggai, Zechariah, Joshua and Zerubbabel. Today God raises up prophets in the north, south, east and west, to terrify Satan. You must be one of those servants of God who terrify Satan (Zechariah 1:21).

Most believers are themselves terrified by Satan and demons! Once, when I encountered a demon possessed man, he looked so fiercely at me, that I was taken aback momentarily. I immediately asked myself one question to strengthen my faith: "Was this demon conquered on Calvary, or did this one escape?" I knew the answer immediately. Satan and every one of his demons were conquered on Calvary. None of them escaped. Faith rose in my heart immediately and I cast out that demon in the Name of their Conqueror, the Lord Jesus Christ. So we need never be afraid of Satan or of his demons. When you see Satan working intensely in your home or in your church, or when he stirs up people against you, ask yourself this question: "Was Satan defeated on the cross?" We are to terrify Satan. How was it when Jesus walked on this earth? Wherever He went, Satan was scared. The demons would scream to one another: "Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming here. Let us run away." The Bible says that, "as Jesus is, so are we in this world" (1 Jn.4:18). If you are walking with a clear conscience, in humility and have no desire on earth but to glorify God, then wherever you go the demons will say the same thing that they said about Jesus, "Hey, he is coming here. She is coming here. This person is not like the other Christians. This one is living in humility and with a clear conscience. We're in danger. Let's get out of here."

Isn't it wonderful that we can be like those blacksmiths in God's hands to hammer the devil's work and to destroy it? And

we must become stronger and stronger as we grow older – and not like many preachers nowadays who become fatter and richer and less anointed as they grow older! Fast, eat less, live more simply and give away what you don't need to those who are poorer, and seek a greater anointing, as you grow older! That is how a true servant of God must live. Don't go the way that Christendom and its leaders are going today. Go in another direction – the way Jesus and the early apostles went. They went from strength to strength as they grew older.