

Ezra #4: Reasons for an Incomplete Temple, Part 2

by Ed Miller

God's desire is for His people to live again, and He provides a solution to every obstacle that hinders the completion of the temple.

Duration: 1:07:10

Scripture: Ezra 3:11, Ezra 4:24, Ezra 9:8, Zechariah 3, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Temple"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the importance of not giving up and quitting in the face of challenges. He emphasizes that God's answer to difficulties is not through human strength or power, but through His Spirit. The sermon references Zechariah chapter 4, verse 6, which states that it is by God's Spirit that things are accomplished. The preacher also highlights the significance of the plumb line in the hand of the rubble, symbolizing God's life and spirit working through His people. The sermon concludes by addressing the situation in Ezra, where the people had stopped building for 15 years, and emphasizes the need to continue in God's work and not be discouraged.

Transcript

Another day to experience the infinite possibilities of our union with Him. Another day closer. Who knows? As we come to look at God's Word under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I remind my own heart, I remind you again, of that principle of Bible study that is absolutely indispensable.

Total reliance upon the Holy Spirit. Helpless dependence. Child-likeness.

There is no substitute for coming before the Lord empty, hungry, and just crying out, Lord now, dawn the Savior upon us. He delights to do that. He wants to do that far more than we desire it.

I want to read before we pray together the verse we began with at the beginning of our gathering. Ezra chapter 9 and verse 8, Now for a brief moment grace has been shown from the Lord our God to leave us an escaped remnant and to give us a peg in His holy place that our God may enlighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage. Quite apart from anything we think that might mean.

Our prayer is that God will fulfill everything He's inspired it to mean. And so I'm going to ask you to bow with me again. We'll commit our time to Him and we'll look in His precious Word.

Our Heavenly Father, again this morning we pause deliberately. We bow before Thee and we praise Thee that You have given us the Holy Spirit, Your life in our hearts. We thank You that it is the delight of Your heart to reveal Your Son to us.

We know, Lord, there's no possibility apart from Your mercy and grace, apart from Your light that we would ever behold in a living way, a transforming way, the Lord Jesus. But now we come and You've promised to meet us and feed us and find us where we are and take us where You desire to have us. We wait now and ask You to minister the Lord Jesus to our hearts.

Grant Thy life, we pray, to every brother. We pray that You would tie together all loose ends, accomplish Your full heart for us this morning. We ask in Jesus' precious name.

Amen. Well, we come to our final look, not the end of the revelation, of course, but our little look at this wonderful book of Ezra and God's revelation of Himself in this wonderful book of Ezra. It's the Lord's desire in this book to cause His people to live again.

That's the word revival. That's what it means. To live again.

And when we left off, our attention was on, as we've been looking all weekend, at the second revival. The book of Ezra relates three revivals that took place in the last century. The second revival is in chapters 3 to 6. And we've been looking at those, the principles of that revival.

The figure under which God describes this revival is the rebuilding of the temple. Revival 1 is how to be free. His illustration is the decree of Cyrus, getting out of captivity.

Revival 2 is how to go forward, how to build a temple, how to advance, how to grow, how to mature, how to give God His complete temple. And the final revival is how to bear fruit from chapter 7 of Ezra all the way through chapter 10 of Nehemiah under the figure of the wall. God's desire to have a people right with Him and surrounded with the knowledge of God.

With that burden, He closes the Old Testament. We've been looking at this second revival. At this point, in our little look, God's remnant, His escaped remnant, have been set free.

They have returned to the city of peace from the city of confusion. They have stood at the altar twice a day, every day, as death-deserving sinners. They have laid the foundation.

But then something happened. And for 15 years, there was no building going on. And it's that that God addresses.

So that His people can live again. It's a terrible shame to taste of liberty and freedom. To stand at the altar and have entered into the finished work.

To have a foundation. To have doctrine. And to stop along the way.

And that's exactly what happened. Chapter 4, verse 24. I think this, as I suggested, is one of the saddest verses in the whole book of Ezra.

Then, actually, there's a sadder verse later on. When they make the vows in the effort of the flesh. That's a sad one.

Anyway, verse 24. Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. And it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia.

They had such a good start. Then the work stopped. And it stopped for those 15 years.

Something happened that caused the work to stop. And that's what we've been looking at. What causes an incomplete temple? And what is God's perfect cure for everything that causes an incomplete temple? Let me just get these verses before your heart again.

And then we'll pick up where we left off. Ezra chapter 5, verses 1 and 2. Now the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem. In the name of the God of Israel, prophesied they to them.

Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Joshua the son of Jazadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem. And with them were the prophets of God helping them. And as I suggested, and you see it right here, chapter 5, verses 1 and 2. Something happened.

They stopped building. Fifteen years went by. And then God initiated.

And He opened the heavens. And He talked to His servants, the old prophet Haggai, the young prophet Zechariah. And He gave them a word.

And they shared that word. And when they shared that word, though nothing had changed in their lives externally. Whatever it was that they saw.

Whatever word God gave them caused the people to resume the building. We need to hear that word. What is it that gets us going again? And then look at chapter 6, verse 14.

And the elders of the Jews builded and prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They built it and finished it according to the commandment of the God of Israel. According to the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, the king of Persia.

Under these two men, under these two servants of the Lord, Haggai and Zechariah, the work was not only resumed. But chapter 6, verse 14, the work was completed. The work was finished.

I was in the process of giving you at least four causes and God's wonderful, complete, and perfect cures for those causes. If you read Ezra, you get the outside view. They had their reasons for stopping.

There are no legitimate reasons for having an incomplete temple. There are only rationalizations. Only excuses.

There are no reasons. God has made provision in our Lord Jesus to go forward in the heart knowledge of God in the Lord Jesus. Last night we looked at the first real cause.

See, what happened was in Ezra, if you read the history, Ezra gives us the outside view. He gives us the story. And this is, if you were to ask them, if you went to, in the book of Ezra, say, why did you quit? You started off so well.

You're free. You've been to the altar. You have a foundation.

Why did you quit? They would have said, for this reason, and this reason, and this reason, and this reason. But God told His prophets, they don't even know why they quit. And so God told His prophets, that's the real reason they quit.

You go tell them, here's the solution. And when they heard the real reasons, they quit. See, their reasons sounded so spiritual.

We've got to submit to government. That honors God. We've got to take a rugged stand.

It's not our fault they didn't like it. That they opposed us. That they came with force of our... It sounded so right.

But God said, here's why you quit. And when they looked at that, they said, oh yeah. And here's my answer to that.

And as they embraced that, they went right back to building again. That's what we're in the process of looking at. Now last night, we looked at the first cause illustrated by the command in Haggai 1A.

The command in Haggai 1A is, Go up to the mountains. Get wood. Rebuild the temple.

That I may be pleased with it. And glorified, says the Lord of Hosts. The first cause of an incomplete temple is the absolute impossibility of living the Christian life.

Nothing was more impossible than that command. Go up to the mountain. Get wood.

Build the temple. Right. 185,000 men working 20 years to build Solomon's Temple.

And here are these, this little remnant that comes back unequipped. They saw their own inadequacy. And once you see that you can't do it, and that God won't do it, unless God gives you His answer, you'll throw in the towel.

You'll quit like they quit. And of course, what was God's glorious answer? It was Zechariah 4, verse 6. Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord. There's God's salvation.

Himself. His life. His Spirit.

I can't do it. He won't do it. But together.

The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. The finger of God. My hand, His finger.

His life through me. His life in you, through you. Oh, how His eyes rejoiced.

The Bible says the seven eyes of God rejoiced when He saw the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. When they learned it was by the Spirit of God. And you find any Christian who discovers that the Holy Spirit is living in them to live the Christian life.

I tell you, they'll live again. They'll live again. Without that knowledge, they're going to quit.

Without that knowledge, the temple will not be built. But that knowledge brings life. And brings liberty.

Alright, that's the first thing. Now, as I suggested last night, I left myself a big assignment, so let's begin. We're looking at the four causes of an incomplete temple.

The four real causes. Not what it looks like on the outside. Not what it looks like to these eyes.

But what God sees. And what God addresses. And what God exposes.

And what God reveals. And that first one, God showed that it was an impossibility to obey God. And His Spirit, His indwelling Spirit, was the answer to that.

Now, let me give you the next cause for an incomplete temple. I called attention in our discussion in one of the messages yesterday to the verbs that are used in Ezra chapter 4, verses 4 and 5. The word discouragement. The word fear.

The word frustration. The things that came into the lives of the remnant caused them to get discouraged. That's why they quit.

Caused them to get frustrated. That's why they quit. Caused them to be afraid.

That's why they quit. As you know, there's a thousand and one things in life that can get a person discouraged. A thousand and one things in life that can make a person afraid.

A thousand and one things in life that can make a person get frustrated. Now, in Ezra, the details are a little different than they might be in your life. You probably never met a Samaritan.

In their case, the Samaritans came in and opposed them. In Ezra chapter 4, verse 5, we see that they actually hired professionals to daily frustrate the plans of the Jews. And not just for a couple of weeks or months, but for years.

People were paid to ruin your life. You probably never had that. Somebody probably never.

Maybe some of you do. That was their frustration. Opposition.

You read the record. Opposition. Intimidation.

Accusation. Misrepresentation. Threats.

Physical force. All of these things came against the remnant as insurmountable obstacles in their life. As I said, the details differ.

Your Samaritan may not be my Samaritan, but I promise you, you have Samaritans. You may never actually, literally, have an edict written against you that came straight out of the Oval Office. They did.

That's the thing they faced. You may never have someone hire somebody to mess up your life. And that's their full-time job, just to ruin you.

That's what happened there. Soldiers may never actually threaten to decapitate you. However, I have fears in the direction our country's going that might come.

But the principles are ever the same. There are things that discourage the people of God. There are things that cause the people of God to get afraid.

There are things that frustrate the people of God. Neighbors, kids, family, co-workers, bosses, elders, Christian friends, teammates, unreasonable employers. All kinds of things.

Discouragement, fear, frustration, intimidation, misrepresentation, high pressure, force. Like the poor, these things are always with you. These things are always with me.

We're going to call the second thing that causes an incomplete temple. You can name it whatever you want. I'm just trying to get some handle on it.

Just insurmountable obstacle. Is there a cure for all these things that so discourage and frustrate us? I want you to turn to Zechariah 4, please. This is the same vision of the golden lampstand.

That great vision that the flame was supplied with that wonderful supply of golden oil flowing through the servants of the Lord, the olive trees and so on. For my inadequacy, I have the Holy Spirit. No need to stop building.

The impossible is possible now. Look at Zechariah 4, verse 7. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. He shall bring forth the topstone with shoutings of grace.

Grace unto it. In Zechariah's vision, God gave him a word to describe all of the stuff. That was coming against the remnant, the escaped remnant in the book of Ezra.

And the word was mountain. You read that verse again and you'll see that that word mountain is picturing that insurmountable obstacle that stands in the way. That circumstance that kept them from completing the temple.

Like a mountain in front of them. That mountain makes many quit. And if you look at verse 7, it's not only a mountain, but it's called a great mountain.

Great mountain. A great mountain in your way that can frighten you. That can discourage you.

That can frustrate you. That thing gets in the way and it looks so unscalable. So impassable.

And once again, we all have our great mountains. And your great mountain may not be my great mountain. The great mountain is the thing, whatever it is, doesn't matter, that's incidental.

It's that thing that gets me discouraged. Gets me frustrated. And makes me want to quit.

That's what the great mountain is. You say, Satan's a great mountain. Yeah, he sure is.

Indwelling sin. It's a great mountain. Certainly it is.

Small resources. Personal weakness. Relentless, chronic, unchanging circumstances.

The enemies of the gospel. Great mountain. Legalism.

The terrors and the allurements of this present evil world. So many great mountains. I love to relate chapter 4, verse 7. Oh, great mountain.

To chapter 4.10. The day of small things. Don't despise the day of small things. Say, what a contrast.

I'm so little and in front of me is this great mountain. As a child, we used to sing a chorus. I don't really remember all the words of it, but there was part of it.

So high, can't get over it. So wide, can't get around it. So low, can't get under it.

Something like that. I forgot the song. But I'll tell you, that's what the great mountain is.

It's something that comes up in your life and you can't get over it. Something that comes up in your life and you say, I just can't get through it. Something that comes up in your life, you say, I can't get around it.

There's another song. It wasn't spiritual. It wasn't religious.

It's one of those songs that goes on and on and on and on. Like, row, row, row your boat and a thousand cartons of milk on the wall. We're Christians.

We sing it the other way. The bear went over the mountain. You ever hear that song? The bear went over the mountain.

And what do you think he saw? Saw another mountain, saw another mountain, saw. And what do you think he did? Climb the other mountain, climb the other mountain. And what do you think he saw? Saw another mountain, and so on and so on.

You see, that's fun when you're a little kid singing that. But when you're living a Christian life and there's a mountain, great mountain, it gets you discouraged and it gets you afraid, gets you frustrated. It just seems like you get over it and you see another mountain.

So you go up that, and after a while, there's another mountain and another one. And I'll tell you, the bear gets tired. And the bear gets discouraged.

And sometime, he lays it all down. He says, that great mountain, I can't deal with that. It's too much.

That's the experience, brothers, of thousands of Christians, one mountain after another. And after a while, they just cry, Uncle. God saw that.

See, they didn't pray, Lord, show us the real hindrance of a complete temple. No, God was patient. He waited 15 years, and then He says, they need to see this.

I'm going to talk to My servants. I'm going to talk to My old servant. I'm going to talk to My young servant.

And they're going to go back and share it. And so they came back and they shared it. Verse 7 again, Who art thou, O great mountain? Before's a rubble, thou shalt become a plain.

Before I give God's great solution, let me just make a couple of observations about that. You say, there's this great mountain that makes me discouraged and makes me afraid, makes me frustrated. And it's right in front of me, and it hinders the building of the temple.

God promises it will become a plain. It will become leveled. Does that mean that the Lord promises every circumstance that towers in front of me as a mountain is going to be flattened? Is going to be leveled? If my great mountain is a physical sickness, is God saying that I'm going to be healed? It's what it looks like, the mountain will become a plain.

If that mountain is a financial problem, is God promising that I'm going to hit the lottery? That would be a miracle, I don't buy tickets. Is that what God's promising? Is He guaranteeing you're not going to go bankrupt? That mountain will become a plain. If your mountain is some unsaved loved one, or some person that's nagging in your life, or some unreasonable person that's causing you grief, God says the

mountain will become a plain.

God will level that. You see, you must always see the principle in terms of the context. The context of Zechariah is the incomplete temple.

Is God promising to level every mountain? No, what He's promising to do is to level every mountain that hinders the completion of the temple. That's not quite the same thing. Any mountain that stands in the way, any circumstance, any obstacle that challenges your progress in the Lord will be leveled.

There is no circumstance, brother, nothing that can come into your life, if we see God's solution, that can hinder your progress in the Lord. Let me state the principle in terms of the context. I think what He's saying is this.

That mountain, that block, that obstacle, that seemingly insurmountable thing that stands in the way is no longer an obstacle. I think that's His point. It may still be a mountain.

But it's no longer an obstacle. It's now a plain, level ground. In other words, it's as easy to get past that mountain as it is to walk down the street.

It's level ground. By God's miracle, there is nothing that can hinder, no circumstance, that can hinder my progress in the Lord. He will bring forth, verse 7, the topstone.

What is that? I have one commentary who absolutely missed God's heart on this. He said the temple doesn't have a topstone. An ark has a topstone.

A pyramid has a topstone. Temple has a cornerstone, but doesn't have a topstone. That brother not only missed the boat, he missed the ocean.

Absolutely missed God's heart on this. The topstone is a metaphor for the final stone. The finished stone.

God says you're going to bring forth the topstone. It's going to be completed. It's going to be a finished work.

No mountain is going to hinder that. Look at God's cure for that seemingly insurmountable obstacle. Here's a mountain in the way.

I'm discouraged. Here's a mountain. I'm afraid.

Here's a mountain. It causes me to be frustrated. The word frustrate in the dictionary is when it seems like there's no hope.

When that thing keeps coming, it's so frustrated, it just seems like there's no hope. Look at the end of that verse. What art thou? Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.

He shall bring forth the topstone with shoutings of grace, grace to it. There it is. For my inadequacy, I have his spirit.

For everything that stands in the way, I have his grace. What an answer. I tell you, when you lay hold of that, in reality, you're going to live again.

When you lay hold of that grace of God, it's sufficient. It's enough. It's adequate.

You're going to go back and say, there is hope. I don't have to be frustrated. I don't have to be discouraged.

And the way he words it, the Hebrew, in order to get a point across, would repeat it. Grace, grace. What follows grace? Grace.

You see, as you go through the Bible, you're going to see expressions like strength to strength and faith to faith and glory to glory. That's their way of saying ad infinitum, forever. Faith to faith.

Trust the Lord. Faith. Say, what follows faith? Faith follows faith.

And then what follows that? Faith. Faith to faith to faith. And you're going from glory to glory.

What follows glory? Glory. And what follows that? More glory. And what follows that? Glory.

And you're moving from strength to strength. And what follows strength? Strength. And after that, what? Strength.

More strength. You know that verse in Isaiah, thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee. The Hebrew doesn't say perfect peace.

That's an English translation. It doesn't say that. It says peace, peace.

Thou wilt keep him in peace. Peace. Whose mind is stayed on thee.

What follows peace? Peace. And what follows that? You trust the Lord. It's just peace.

Peace. And glory. Glory.

And grace. Grace. And faith.

Faith. And strength. Strength.

And that's what He says. I have a solution. You say, oh, I'm getting so discouraged with this mountain.

Before Zerubbabel, who are you, oh great mountain? Before Zerubbabel, you'll become a plain. Brothers, there's nothing deep here. This whole weekend, what are we talking about? The Holy Spirit lives in your life.

It's the grace of God. You've heard that. When that insurmountable thing comes into your life and it will, when you get discouraged and don't think you won't, you will.

And when you get afraid and don't think that's not coming to you because you have a relationship with Jesus, you're going to become afraid. You are. And don't think you're not going to be frustrated and think there's no hope.

You will. And at that time, may God bring it to your mind again. That thing will not get in the way of my going forward with the Lord.

Shoutings of grace. Grace. Paul's thorn did not go away, but it ceased to be an obstacle in the completing of the temple.

And you know why? Because God came to him as he came to Zechariah. And he learned, my grace is sufficient for you. I know we could go row to row and give testimony.

He said, yeah, I remember boy, I was stopped dead in my track. This thing came into my life and I got so discouraged and I was ready to throw in the towel. Then I tasted the grace of the Lord.

And I got through that impossible thing. So wide you can't get around it. I got around it.

Got through it. Grace has brought you safe thus far. And grace will take you home.

The top stone. With shoutings of grace, grace. What's man's part in all this? You just shout.

Shoutings of grace, grace. That means just receive the grace. Just be open to the grace of God.

I pray that God will remind you of this when that mountain comes. Alright, what's the third cause of an incomplete temple? Oh boy, we got to move on here. You see, God wouldn't have told us this if it weren't true.

He wouldn't have come and given this great revelation if they didn't need it. If you would have come to Ezra and you asked them, is this the thing that's bothering you? They would say, no way. That's not one of my problems.

I'm going to ask you to turn to Zechariah chapter 3, please. I wonder if some brother or maybe a couple of you would read the first ten verses. Read it nice and loud so we can all hear it.

Just the first ten verses of this chapter. Zechariah 3. He was clothed in filthy garments and standing before the angel. And he spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, Again he said to him, See, I have taken your iniquity away from you.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, If you will walk in my ways, then you will also govern my house. So grant me free abiding here. Now listen, Joshua the high priest.

You and your friends who are sitting in front of you. Indeed, they are men who are a symbol. For behold, I am going to bring in my servant, the branch.

And for behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua. On one stone are seven eyes. Behold, every one of you will invite him.

Thank you very much. Remember in our introduction lesson or one of the lessons, I tried to show you from Ezra chapter 4, that there was a hint of this spiritual reality. They wouldn't have known it back then.

But there was this hint that the enemy brought an accusation against them. And to make it stand, they had to go several hundred years into the history and dig up what they used to be. And they dug it all up and they held that forth and brought them under condemnation.

Well, now the prophet picks this up. As I said, if it wasn't a problem, if it wasn't a real issue, God wouldn't have spoken on this. This really caused a problem.

This is why they stopped building the temple. Even though they might have denied it. Brothers, you've come far enough in the Lord to have tasted this already.

I don't have to stand here and tell you that the enemy loves to condemn. Nothing would please the enemy of your soul and my soul more than that you lived under condemnation. And that you lived under a cloud.

And that you were on a guilt trip all of the time. And that you always felt unworthy and dirty and vile and unclean before God. God doesn't want His remnant to live in condemnation because of past sin.

Even though they might not have admitted it, He saw that as a problem. So He did again what He had done. We looked at yesterday with Joshua the high priest.

And in this vision, the high priest who represents the holiest of the people, who represents the Lord Himself and stands as a representative of every person in the remnant, they needed a revelation from God on how thoroughly they had been cleansed. I tell you, if you don't know, you're clean. If you haven't seen yourself as God sees you, after a while you'll quit.

You've got to see yourself thoroughly cleansed or else it hinders the building of the temple. Now this is a marvelous vision. It begins in verse 3 with their high priest dressed in filthy garments.

And it ends in verse 4 and 5 with the same priest dressed in festal garments, festal robes. It's a court scene. It's a court scene in heaven.

It's a vision of being in court. The accused was in court, standing before the bar. Joshua, the representative of the priesthood, and he was there.

He was accused. Chapter 3, verse 1, the prosecuting attorney was there. Satan, accusing.

Chapter 3, verse 7, the jury was there. Those standing by. Chapter 3, verse 1, the defense attorney was there.

The angel of the Lord. This is a marvelous picture. The judge was there on the bench.

The Lord of hosts. And the prosecuting attorney comes and he makes his charge. And he looks at Joshua, the guilty, and he's standing there in his dirty garments.

And he says, this man is filthy. And he deserves to be thrown into the fire. That was the charge.

And I'll tell you, that object lesson was so important because very often, Christians who haven't understood how thoroughly forgiven they are, how clean they are, they get discouraged and they say, I am nothing. I am so dirty. I am so vile.

I deserve to be thrown into the fire. How could God ever use anybody like me? How could God ever care about anybody like me? And so they give up. They say, why'd you quit? Man, you don't know what I've done.

God can't use me now. I messed up. Man, I've ruined his name, ruined his reputation, ruined his cause.

I got entangled in this thing and that thing. I embarrassed my family. I embarrassed the Lord.

I embarrassed the church. It's all over for me. I still love the Lord.

But it's all over for me. I blew it. Or if you knew the coldness of my heart, if you knew the thoughts that come through my mind, I'm just a hypocrite.

I sing with the people of God. I gather with the people of God. But I got lost.

I got foul thoughts. Dirty things come into my head. I'm so dirty.

You don't understand. I'm just a big hypocrite. I know He loved me.

I know He died for me. But I'm a mess. That attitude.

That picture of yourself. When a Christian is living under condemnation, I'll tell you, he doesn't need a pep talk. And he doesn't need someone giving him self-esteem and trying to build him up.

He doesn't need a psychologist at that point. He certainly doesn't need some kind of pill to balance his chemicals. I'll tell you what he needs.

He needs the revelation that God gave to His servant Zechariah to go give to the people of God. I've actually met Christians who think it's spiritual to go around feeling guilty. They actually think that's a spiritual thing.

I'll tell you, it is not humility to live in condemnation. It's unbelief to live in condemnation. It's not humility.

What is God's cure? I'll tell you, for my inadequacy, the cure is the Holy Spirit, His life. I can't. He won't.

But together we can. God's cure for every problem that comes into my life, His grace. His grace.

What is His cure for my defilement, for my guilt, for my sin? I'll tell you, I need the finished work and I need to see myself as God sees me. I want to show you this vision again from God's viewpoint because it ends up with the seven eyes. The whole idea has to do with God's viewpoint.

Don't read verse 3, la, la, la. He's clothed in dirty garments. You know, the Hebrew is very much stronger than the English.

Some of these words we're almost afraid to translate. Like in Isaiah 64 and 6, your righteousness is filthy rags. You know the Hebrew there, don't you? Your righteousness is like menstrual garments.

That's the Hebrew there. Strong. In the Hebrew in verse 3, Unger translates it, excrement-covered garments.

That's how He was clothed. In the Hebrew, you just say, well, that's a terrible thing to look at. That's not the Hebrew nuance in that word.

Is it a terrible thing to look at a man clothed in excrement-covered garments? Sure, that's a terrible thing to look at. But it's a terrible thing to smell. That is the Hebrew idea here.

That he is clothed in those garments. If I stood before you dressed the way Joshua appeared in that vision, if I looked as he looked and smelled as he smelled, I'd clear this room. You wouldn't stay here.

If I smelled like Joshua smelled in that vision, if I looked like Joshua looked in that vision, and Satan loves to call attention to that, and in the sensitive mind and the heart of someone who is sensitive to the Lord, when Satan accuses and you look at your heart and you look at your life and you look in the mirror, and Satan says, you stink! Your heart says, I know I do. I know I do. I do stink.

Look at you, the way you're dressed. You are so vile and so foul. And then we start believing that stuff.

Because it's true. We look that way and we smell that way. But we need to see our advocate rise up as the angel of the Lord rose up.

Verse 4, I've taken your iniquity away. I will clothe you with festal garments. So they put a clean turban on his head, clothed him with garments, while the angel of the Lord stood by.

What a vision this! He didn't wash the old garments. He dumped them. Put on this new festal robe, royal robes, silk and satin and rich linen.

In this vision, the high priest has a part. What's his part? He just stands there. He didn't offer a defense.

He didn't resist the accusation. He didn't deny it. He didn't try to argue his case.

He didn't beg for mercy. He didn't even undress himself. He was undressed.

They undressed him, and then they dressed him again. He did nothing. It's all done for him in a moment.

Satan says, this man deserves... He stinks. He's filthy. He deserves to be thrown into the fire.

And the angel of the Lord said, I know, but I've plucked him out of the fire. A bran plucked out of the fire. You know, we just read this, and that hindered the temple.

Seeing themselves so dirty, that stopped the temple. God says, do you believe it? Brothers, answer in your heart, not out loud. Do you believe that you are this clean? I don't care what Satan says.

I don't care how you smell in your own nostril. I don't care what you look like when you look with these eyes. God says, your garments have been changed, and you've been clothed, and you are righteous, and you are in festal garments.

We need to see ourselves as God sees us. And then in verse 6, it talks about those standing here. You'll have the same access as those standing here.

Who are those standing here? Don't forget, this is a court scene that takes place in Heaven. These are the angels that never sinned. Do you believe, brother, that you are so thoroughly cleansed, that you are now in festal garments before God? Perfect robe of righteousness.

Do you believe you have the same access to God's holy presence as the angels who have never sinned? That's what He says. That's how clean you are. You've got to believe that.

Because if you start believing it, you will live again. You will live again. That's revival.

Once I start seeing how clean I am, I live again. And then it comes to a climax in verse 9, on one stone or seven eyes. You remember the seven eyes in Zechariah.

These are the eyes of the Lord. Remember chapter 4.10? They go to and fro through the earth. What is God saying? Seven eyes.

Seven. Perfect number. Omniscience.

God sees everything. God doesn't miss a trick. He's got good eyesight.

He sees it all. And what He's saying in this vision is, you need to know how thoroughly clean you are. You are not in filthy garments.

You are in festal garments. You have the access to God the angels have that never sinned. You say, man, I see an awful lot of uncrucified filth here.

Maybe you do. But the seven eyes of God can't find a stain. How clean are you if the seven eyes of God can't see your dirt, can't smell your smell? When Zechariah gave that vision to the people, the Bible says they picked up their tools and they started to build again.

Those are the things that hinder the temple. By inadequacy, I can't do it. He said, I've given you my spirit.

You can do it. These problems, I can't face them. I've given you my grace.

You can face them. My sin, I'm so dirty. I've made you clean.

And even my eyes can't see a stain. Brothers, may God give us eyes to see ourselves as God sees us. And I'll tell you, then we'll go back to building the temple.

There's one more and with this we'll close. Didn't leave a lot of time for it, but the next cause, I'll trust the Lord to communicate it to your heart. This was given to the prophet Haggai.

It had reference to Ezra 3. I'm going to read from verse 11 in Ezra 3. They sang one to another, praising, giving thanks to Jehovah, saying He is good. His loving kindness endures forever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout.

They praised Jehovah because of the foundation of the house was laid. But many of the priests and the Levites, the heads of the fathers' houses, the old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of the house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice. Many shouted for joy, so the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people.

People shouted with a loud shout. The noise was heard afar off. Now there's many comments on why the elders were weeping, but I think it's clear as you read the record, and Haggai calls attention to this, that one of the reasons was that the present temple was inglorious compared to the old temple which in their minds was glorious.

Solomon's temple was glorious and they looked at their own temple as inglorious. I think on the level of earth you can understand their thinking when you contrast the rubbale temple with all the gold and the silver and the brass and the olive wood and all of the adornment of Solomon's temple. Solomon's temple stood for 400 years as an attraction to the whole world.

And now they looked at their little foundation and so on. I was interested in the rabbis' take on all of this. You know, they have commentaries too.

And the Jews made comments about this, and they have a whole section on why did the old men weep. And they described the differences between Zerubbabel's inglorious temple and Solomon's glorious temple. And here's their suggestions.

They said some cried because the old quarried stones, you know, the original temple, went up as noiselessly as the growth of a tree. The stones were quarried at a distance and then each one was

brought and placed there. Not a sound of a hammer was heard in the whole rearing of Solomon's temple.

Amazing! Well, that was gone. And so they said some of the old men when they saw the foundation and they didn't see those beautifully quarried stones, they just touched their heart and they started to weep. They said, oh, the glory is not here.

The glory is not here. Where are those quarried stones? And then the rabbi said, some cried because the Ark of the Covenant was now gone. When Nebuchadnezzar went in and took the temple, the Ark is gone.

And so the Ten Commandments that were in the Ark is gone. And Aaron's rod that budded is gone. And the golden pot of manna is gone.

And that was the glory, the Ark. That was the glory of the temple and what was in the Ark. That's why they cried.

The glory is not there. And some cried because the literal Shekinah glory cloud after Solomon's temple, that was gone. That didn't appear in Zerubbabel's temple.

That visible presence of the Lord, that cloud that filled the temple. They said the glory is gone. And some cried, they said, because the breastplate of the priest that contained the urine and fulmin, that never appeared again.

That was gone. And they said that's why they cried. Because the breastplate was gone.

And some said, no, they cried because God changed His way and it used to be the supernatural fire would come down from heaven and light the altar. But now in this temple, that never happened. And so that's why they were weeping because of all of those differences.

Everybody was crying because this is the glory and that glory is gone. No, no, that wasn't the glory. This is the glory and that glory is gone.

No, that wasn't the glory. This is the glory. And that glory is not there anymore.

And the ark is gone. And the commandments are gone. And the man is gone.

And that's why they were weeping. God said, let Me tell you something. Haggai 2.6 Thus says the Lord of Jehovah's hosts, Yet once, it's a little while, I'll shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land.

I'll shake all the nations and all the precious things of the nations shall come. I'll fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. Silver is Mine.

Gold is Mine, says Jehovah's hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. In this place, I will give peace, says the Lord of hosts.

Now clearly, the American Standard Version and the New American Standard translates verse 7 to mean this. The temple on the outside lacks adornment. It's not as externally as rich as Solomon's temple was because of the poverty-stricken condition, the financial ability of that escaped remnant.

There was a notable absence of precious metals. And that verse in those translations appears to mean that in the future, that's going to be compensated because God is as easily able to shake the nations.

Silver is His.

He can shake the nations in wealth. Our children, as they were growing up, used to love to take my pants. And they'd take it by the legs and shake it.

And a change would fall out. I was always keeping change. And they would love to take turns shaking the pants.

So the change would fall out. God said, I can shake the world. If I want money, I can get it out of their pockets.

I can shake it. In this case, I'm going to stick with King James in verse 7. This is a Messianic passage. Jewish tradition without exception takes it as a Messianic passage.

Christian tradition takes it as a Messianic passage. You change that to the wealth of nations, I think you lose something. The desire of nations shall come.

I think the desire of nations is Jesus. I think that's Messianic. That's Him.

I think what He's saying is this. All of you guys are crying. The old men are crying because the glory is gone.

This glory is gone. And this glory is gone. And this glory is gone.

He said, let me tell you where the glory is. The desire of nations will come. That's the glory of the temple.

And the glory of the latter temple is going to be greater than the glory of the former temple. Why do people quit? It's because they don't know what the glory of the temple is. That's why they drop out.

They look at the quarried stones and they say, where are the quarried stones? Where are all these theological statements of faith that have been hammered out through the years? They say, I can't. I've got to quit. I can't go there anymore.

They don't have the quarried stones. And someone else says, oh no, you know what's missing? Holiness. Holiness.

The law. That's gone. The law is no longer here, and so I'm going to drop out.

And someone says, no, no, it's ministry that's missing. And someone says, no, it's Aaron's rod that budded. There's not enough signs and wonders and miracles in this place.

I want to see something bud. I want to see something happen. And so they're dropping out all over the place because they say this is the glory, and this is the glory, and this is the glory.

And they're looking for this, that, and the other thing. Where's the Shekinah glory? Where's the awe? Where's the reverence? It's all gone. Where's the breastplate? That's what it is.

The breastplate. The Urim and Thummim has to do with the will of God. Where's the instruction? They're not teaching in this fellowship.

I'm not going here. And people are dropping out all over the place. You know why? Because they don't know what the glory is.

It's a person. It's Christ. The desire of nations will come.

That's the fire that comes from heaven. The glory, the wealth, the treasure is Christ. And I'll tell you, when God dawns that on you, when God dawns that on me, we'll live again.

Brothers, you know, we come year after year. We look at the Word of God. We're always in the same place.

I look to the Lord. What have we looked at this weekend? You need the Holy Spirit. You need the grace of God.

You are clean in His eyes. Christ is the glory of the temple. Have I told you anything you haven't heard? That's all it is.

But if God lets you see it again, you will live again. The Word came to Haggai saying, tell the people, from this day on, I will bless them. From what day on? From the day you stop trusting yourself and you start trusting the Holy Spirit.

From that day on, you're blessed. From what day on? From that day on, when you start facing your great mountains with the grace of God, with shoutings of grace, grace, His grace is enough. From that day on, you'll be blessed.

From what day on? From that day on, when you see that Christ is the glory of the temple, from that day on, you'll be blessed. From the day you begin seeing yourself as God sees you. Don't play with it, brothers.

You young guys, you older guys, don't play with it. Do you believe that you have the same access to God's presence as the angels that never sin, that God cannot see a stain in you? For your inadequacy, He gives His life, His Spirit. For all of the things you'll ever face in life, He has given His grace.

For the accusations the enemy brings against you, He's given the finished work and the thorough cleansing that we have in Christ Jesus. And for the glory, He's given His Son. He's the glory of the temple.

I tell you, you'll stop weeping and start rejoicing when you see Christ as the glory. Well, there's a lot more. I just trust God will make this so real in your life.

He wants you, brothers, to live again. Say, it's getting old, it's getting stale, I'm getting tired, I'm getting weary. May He breathe life again.

May He breathe life again. That's not old stuff. That's not old hat.

That His Spirit is in you. That you're one with Him. Oh, we need to see that again.

Say, I've got this great mountain in front of me right now. You don't know. It will become a plain with shoutings of grace, grace.

Believe it! Believe it! You're clean. I don't care how ugly, repulsive your life has been up to this moment. You're clean.

Festal God. And the glory is the glory of the temple. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for these wonderful cures for an incomplete temple. We don't want to dishonor You with an incomplete temple. Thank You that so many years ago this very message not out of my mouth, but out of the mouth of Your servants Haggai and Zechariah, that message stirred up Your people to go again to building and to complete the work.

I pray that that same message would stir us up again that You might have Your temple. We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11392.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ed-miller/ezra-4-reasons-for-an-incomplete-temple-part-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net