

Revival in the Book of Ezra - Part 3

by Roy Hession

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing God's house and obeying God's commands in order to experience spiritual revival and growth.

Duration: 56:13

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by expressing his interest in a particular passage of the Bible that is often overlooked. He mentions the importance of reading and understanding this story, and proceeds to read from Zechariah chapter 4. The passage describes a vision of a golden candlestick with seven lamps and two olive trees, symbolizing the provision of oil for the lamps. The speaker then transitions to discussing the book of Ezra, specifically the return of captive people from Babylon to rebuild the temple of the Lord. He highlights the challenges they faced and the progress they made with the help of prophets Haggai and Zechariah. The sermon concludes with a reference to the last verse of chapter 4, which states that the work on the house of God in Jerusalem ceased.

Transcript

And then we'll go further. Jesus died for us. In my risen power, He abhors us.

We are continuing with our study of the book of Ezra. An exciting story, as it unfolds itself stage by stage. And one which we can so readily identify with.

We have seen that captive people returning from Babylon, those 50,000 deportees, and they were returning to rebuild the temple of the Lord that lay waste. And they returned to Zion with everlasting joy on their heads, perhaps. That's what Isaiah said they would.

But when they saw what they were faced with, they weren't quite so enthusiastic. Just piles of rubble. But they began, you remember, the first thing was to repair the altar of the Lord and institute once again the daily burnt offerings.

Then they proceeded to dig the foundations and lay them of the house of the Lord. And that was a wonderful beginning. And the people had a great time of praise and music and they gave a great shout saying, Praise the Lord for he is good.

His mercy endureth forever toward Israel. And we go on from there. And the passage we've got in front of us is to me one of absorbing interest which can be applied to our own lives and situations at so many points.

Now this part of the Word of God is not much read. I don't know whether you've heard the scriptures talked about that relate to this time of Israel's history. Are you familiar with the story? Well, I'm inclined to judge other people by myself.

And I would say, apart from the special studies I've been giving it, I don't dwell very much in this part of the scripture. And because the story is of such importance and it's such good reading, it's certainly that, we're going to read it. Now this is a Bible reading and though we're all the time having to economize on time, we've simply got to read this story.

We're going to read from chapter four and inasmuch it's going to be rather a long reading, I want to suggest that if you have a version other than the authorised, it might be helpful to you if you didn't try and follow it in that other version. You can bear so much of sort of having two versions, one in your ear and one on your lap. But when it's extensive it really is rather trying and you miss so much.

So if you haven't got an authorised version, just listen. And you won't find yourself comparing one translation for another. Just for the sake of this particular reading.

Well now, the last we've heard is that great shout mingled with some weeping when the foundations were laid. Chapter four. Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel, then they came to Zerubbabel and to the chief of the fathers and said unto them, let us build with you, for we seek your God as ye do.

These were the people who, they were the Samaritans. You remember the northern kingdom was taken captive earlier, before Judah. And they were brought into the vacant area, the northern kingdom, various heathen tribes.

And they didn't get on very well. They said, you know, we don't know the ways of the God of this land. And so they somehow found a Levite or two who gave them some idea of the God of Israel.

And they developed a mixed worship. They weren't true Israelites at all. Theirs was a very mixed up religion but it had something of it.

And so these were the people. Of course, when they saw Judah go, that gave them more living room. And they come.

And they don't like Israel there. And their first approach is really rather subtle. Let us build with you, for we seek your God as ye do.

And we do seek sacrifice unto him since the days of Eserhaddon, king of Eser, which brought us up hither. But Zerubbabel and Joshua and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel said unto them, ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God. But we ourselves together will build unto Jehovah the God of Israel as king Cyrus, the king of Persia, hath commanded us.

Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah and troubled them in building and hired counsellors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus, king of Persia, even unto

the reign of Darius, king of Persia. And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithridath, Tabeel and the rest of their companions unto Artaxerxes, king of Persia.

And the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue and interpreted in the Syrian tongue. Rehom the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes, the king in this sort. Then wrote Rehom the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe and the rest of their companions, we won't attempt to pronounce them, and the rest, verse 10, of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapah brought over and set in the city of Samaria.

And the rest that are on this side the river and at such a time. And apparently Ezra, who compiled this book, had access to the files and he found a copy, carbon copy of the letter. This is the copy of the letter that they sent unto him even unto Artaxerxes, the king, thy servants the men on this side the river and at such a time.

That's the sort of heading, the date. Be it known unto the king that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem building the rebellious and the bad city and to set up the walls thereof and join the foundations. Actually they hadn't gone as far as that but that didn't matter.

A little exaggeration only helped the point. Be it known now unto the king that if this city be built and the walls set up again then will they not pay toll, tribute and custom and so thou shalt in damage the revenue of the kings. But because we have maintenance from the king's palace and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonor therefore have we sent and certified the king that search be made in the book of the records of thy fathers so shalt thou find in the book of the records and know that this city is a rebellious city and hurtful unto kings and provinces and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time for which cause was this city destroyed.

And we certify the king that if this city be built again and the walls thereof set up by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river. Then the king sent an answer unto Rehom the chancellor and to Shimshai the scribe and to rest of their companions that dwell in Samaria and unto the rest beyond the river peace and at such a time. The letter which he sent unto us hath been plainly read before me and I commanded and search has been made and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein.

It was indeed a fact. The last two kings Jehoiachim and Zedekiah had become tributary to Nebuchadnezzar and had sworn by God that they would be tributary and they would pay toll and custom. But both those kings rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar and it was for that reason that Nebuchadnezzar came and not only took so many of them captive but burnt and destroyed the whole thing and there it was in the record plain and it was all true.

There have been mighty kings verse 21 also over Jerusalem which have ruled over all countries beyond the river and toll, tribute and custom was paid unto them. Give thee now commandment to call these men to cease and this city be not be builded until another commandment shall be given from me. Take heed now that you fail not to do this.

Why should damage grow to the hurt of the king? That was just the answer that they wanted. They were delighted. Now they got official sanction for the action they always wanted to take.

Now when the copy of the king Artaxerxes letter was read before Rehom and Shimshiah the scribe and their companions they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews and made them to cease by force and power. Not only did they have an edict from Babylon but they had the military forces to enforce that which of course poor little Israel hadn't. Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem.

So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. Do you know how long that was? Thirteen years. They began.

Got their foundations and the revival stopped. And revival sometimes stops like that. Sometimes for longer than thirteen years.

But that's not the end of the story. Then the prophets blessed their hearts hallelujah for the prophets. Then the prophets Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Edu prophesied unto the Jews that we're in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel even unto them.

And as a result of their prophesy and the mighty encouragement they got from Haggai and Zechariah then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Joshua the son of Josedach and began to build the house of God. They defied whatever opposition there was. They obeyed God rather than men.

And with them were the prophets of God helping them. At the same time came to them Tatanei the governor of this side of the river and Ceasar Bosnei and their companions and said thus unto them who hath commanded you to build this house and to make up this wall? Then said we unto them after this manner what are the names of the men that make this building? But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews that they could not cause them to cease till the matter came to Darius. And then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter.

And apparently Ezra had a copy of that letter too. And he gives it to us. And I believe I'm right in saying it's in a different language to the rest.

It's not in Hebrew it's in whatever this was the language. Aramaic yes. So it's most interesting these ancient documents.

The copy of the letter that Tatanei governor on this side of the river and Ceasar Bosnei and their companions which were on that side of the river sent unto Darius the king. They sent a letter unto him wherein was written thus Unto Darius the king all peace. Be it known unto the king that we went into the province of Judea to the house of the great God which is builded with great stones and timber is laid in the walls and this work goeth fast on and prospereth in their hands.

Then asked we those elders and said unto them thus Who hath commanded you to build this house and to make up these walls? We asked their names also to certify thee that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them and thus they returned answer to us. And this is most interesting how they answered. They quote the Israelites answer We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth and build the house that was builded these many years ago which a great king of Israel builded and set up.

But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon the Chaldean who destroyed this house and carried the people away into Babylon but oh in the grace of God in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. And the vessels also of gold and silver which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple in Jerusalem and brought into the temple of Babylon those did Cyrus the king take

out of the temple of Babylon and they were delivered unto one whose name was Shehzbazar whom he had made governor and said unto him take these vessels go carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem and let the house of God be builded in his place. Then came the same Shehzbazar and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem and since that time even unto now hath it been building and yet it is not finished.

Now therefore this is the letter still if it seem good to the king let there be search made see that two searches of the records very significant there was one search made and as a result the work stopped there was another search made and as a result of which the work sped on as never before now therefore if it seem good to the king let there be search made in the king's treasure house which is there in Babylon whether it be so that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house and let the king send his pleasure concerning this matter and they got an answer they didn't expect then Darius the king made a decree and search was made in the house of the rolls where the treasures were laid up in Babylon and they were found at Acmetha they had to have a good long search and at last

they found the old rolls and in the palace that is in the province of the Medes there was a roll and there in was a record written in the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem let this house be built the place where they offered sacrifices and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid and the height thereof three score cubits and the breadth thereof three score cubits and other details too verse six now therefore tet me I governor you who have written this letter and your companions which are beyond the river be ye far from thence let the work of this house of God alone let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place we've got it there in the record it's true moreover I

make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God tell you what you've got to do that of the king's goods even of the tribute beyond the river forthwith expenses be given unto these men that they be not hindered and that which they have need of both young bullocks rams, lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven wheat, salt, wine, oil according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem let it be given them day by day without fail that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savors unto the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and of his sons and then for good measure there was a PS also I've made a decree that whosoever shall alter this word let timber be pulled down from his house and being set up let him be

hanged thereon and let his house be made a dung hill for this and the God that hath called his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem I Darius have made a decree let it be done with speed ahh God had got hold of that king I believe it was dear old Daniel wasn't it Darius who was it which king was who put Daniel in the den of lions my goodness what a demonstration of Jehovah's might and he really had his heart turned toward the God of Israel then Tatnai the governor of this side of the river and Shesna Bosnai and their companions according to that which Darius the king had sent so did they speedily he really got them hopping none of them wanted their houses pulled down none of them wanted

to be hung on gallows none of them wanted their houses to be made a dung hill and though they hated to do it they did it and the elders of the Jews built it and listen they prospered these were the chaps who were really important they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Edo and they built it and finished it according to the commandment of the God of Israel and according to the commandment of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes well we had to read it but what a story the verse

that I want to underline for you to begin with is the last verse of chapter 4 then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem yes I think it is a true one he was staying with another believer that he was visiting a preacher or something like that and as before

they went to bed the host had took a glass of whiskey and the visiting preacher was a bit surprised and this man excused himself you know see I haven't been very well and my doctor says this is what I really need to do and that was the excuse and well I don't know perhaps there was some medicine or value in it I don't know but then the visiting preacher happened to say how long ago was it that your doctor told you to take this for your health and he revealed it was 40 years ago 13 years and he accepted it and left it like that and ran every man to his own house and you know I believe that temple of the Lord would never have been rebuilt but for the fact that God found a prophet Haggai and gave him a word for that people each man busy with his own house while the Lord's house lay waste and

you must look with me at the extraordinary prophecy that Haggai gave now Haggai is the third book from the end of the Old Testament and here's his prophecy to Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest Haggai chapter 1 verse 2 thus speaketh the Lord of hosts saying this people say the time has not come the time that the Lord's house should be built then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet saying is it time for you O ye to dwell in your sealed houses and this house my house lie waste now therefore consider your ways how you've been getting on all right far from it in all sorts of other areas there were problems and that you've sown much and bring in little ye eat but ye have not enough ye drink but you're not filled with drink you clothe you but there's none warm and he that earneth

wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes you're not getting on too well are you on your farmsteads the clothes you weave are not much verse 9 ye look for much and it came to little and when you did bring it home I did blow upon it why why that's a good thing why why has the heaven above you been stayed from you and the fruit and the earth from fruit why why when you think well the weather's so erratic these days no that's not the reason because of mine house that is waste and ye run every man to his own house therefore that's the reason the heaven over you is stayed from you and the earth from her fruit and I called for a drought upon the land and upon the mountains and the corn and the new wine and oil and upon that which the ground bringeth forth and upon all the labour of

your hands that's the reason and if we've quit if you're not seeing things to be seen you used to if you're not going to Jesus for the cleansing power if you're not filled with his dear Holy Spirit as the blood cleanses you there's a reason it's not going to work out well there's not going to be fruit upon your testimony and the dear brother who who gave that testimony things were like that in his parish but not after he got back to building again the habitation of God by the Spirit in his midst and in the midst of others now I know what this is there have been more than one occasion when that work of rebuilding the ruined habitation of God by the Spirit in me has ceased and I found that one time although I'd begun and I'd suffered somewhat reproach for it all I began to lose my vision I

got caught up in big things I got invited here and there Billy Graham had just come telephone relays were starting all over the country not many people had experience of evangelism and I was sort of in a sense called out of obscurity but that's where I thought I'd been and was required and needed and here and there I said you know I'm coming out of my Arabia I'm getting recognised we're going to do big things and then I went to a conference of brethren about twenty they were my dearest friends and somehow I saw all we were doing was gathering around Jesus in the centre, sharing putting things right experiencing grace for failures in a new way and I despised it I said what are we doing?

This is a very big thing and I spoke along that line, I only succeeded in disturbing my brethren and do you know what happened?

The heaven above me was overstayed from you and the earth from fruit I sowed much but brought in little and I lost the old time liberty the new liberty that I'd been enjoying and the new power of his spirit that I'd been experiencing and my work became striving and hard work and because that wasn't enough to make me sit up and take notice God touched my pocket and he sent a famine into my pocket and I remember my first wife Revel saying to me, Roy I'm not worried about the money I'm worried about you I said you're right things have gone dead and at that time I had a week without any meetings at home and I went round our flat saying yes Lord yes Lord, first to one thing then to another, by the end of the week I think I'd got it all out in the light I'd seen where I'd gone astray how pride

had come in and by the end of the week the blood had really reached me not that it takes a week but it'd take me a week to see all the things that had gone wrong and I went away for meetings and there was the old time power the old time deep penetrating of the Holy Spirit in people's lives and incidentally he relieved the famine in my pocket and I said wherefore wherefore because of the Lord's house it's been lying waste and we've been busy with our own selfish concerns and so it was Haggai said be strong ye people of the land and work go to the mountains, get the wood and I'll be with you and I'll say to the opposition dare to defy it go right ahead and it'll be my concern and it wasn't only Haggai who gave this wonderful message and to whom they owed so much but it was Zechariah too,

they were a fine couple, Haggai and Zechariah if we return to Zechariah chapter 4 the next book of the Bible and the angel he was a man given to visions which he interpreted to the people and the angel that talked with me came again and waked me as a man that is wakened out of his sleep and said unto me what seest thou and I said I have looked and behold a candlestick all of gold with a bowl upon the top of it and his seven lamps thereon and seven pipes to the seven lamps which are upon the top thereof and two olive trees buy it, one on the right side one on the left and they're feeding their oil into this lampstand so I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me saying what are these my lord? then the angel that talked with me answered and said knowest thou not what these be?

and I said no my lord then he answered and spake unto me this is the word of the lord unto Zerubbabel not by might nor by power but by my spirit saith the lord who art thou oh great mountain before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings grace, grace unto it the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house his hands also shall finish it and thou shalt know that the lord of hosts has sent me unto you you see they've been stopped by force and power and because they couldn't match force and power with equivalent force and power they felt there was nothing to do but to stop and here, Zechariah likens this opposition to a great mountain in the way and Zechariah I said you go ahead you go back to that old way and build

that house again in spite of the embargo in spite of that great mountain that seems to stand in the way because I'm telling you who art thou oh great mountain before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain and that not by might nor by power but by another way altogether by my spirit the fact that you haven't got might and power isn't going to make any difference and by the way not by the might of many in the Hebrew or the power of one and we're all the time looking for either big numbers or some great leader, God says I'm going to work another way altogether, especially with regard to that mountain of opposition it is going to become a plain and that before Zerubbabel and the fact you haven't got power or might isn't going to matter, it's going to be by another way by my spirit what an

encouragement and there's much more I tell you they found an encouragement to Zerubbabel and Joshua that's what we need they said you leave that mountain to me you get busy building that house again and so they started and with them were the prophets of God helping them when they started the others came, hey what are you doing? and Haggai and Zechariah called them and said don't listen to them, get going what right have you? don't argue, get going don't quit and they went on and God didn't allow them to be deterred by what their enemies said and that's the way for us you may be called to return to the old way at whatever cost and it may cost you something the devil hates revival, he hates the work of God going on among the saints he knows how to get it twisted in people's minds and of

course we don't always put it right either, we're not altogether blameless and if you cease you go back oh how often we've heard that testimony years ago I came to Abigail or Clevedon or Southwell and I was so blessed I began to walk this new and living way but I've gotten away from it but you can come back and you haven't gone on well since you've gotten away from it the heaven over you has been stained from dew and the earth from fruit, it's gone and if you ask him why it's because of my house that lies waste and you know, you've got to get back there my dear and our dear brother Stanley Volk I remember, I wonder if he remembers this, what he told me I expect he does, he used to be in Sunderland and that's where the Lord met him in a wonderful new way it was a great day when Stanley

told his congregation, it was a big congregation the whole truth he'd had someone from East Africa staying with him, others in the church had been stirred and moved, they began to get right with their pastor and then the pastor came under God's searchlight and he realised wherein he'd failed to be the man God wanted him to be as pastor, and he told the people and there was a real response on the part of many or a number anyway, and they began a fellowship meeting, but there were those who hated it and they criticised this fellowship meeting that would gather once a week, for a time of sharing how they were walking with Jesus opening up to one another as well as to the Lord, and they criticised it and they called it the pastor's confession meeting and Stanley realised that it was dividing

the church and so he decided that they would stop it, and they'd just sort of have fellowship wherever they met, round street corners or in a corridor, you know and get along somehow that way but I remember him saying Roy said, I've been so hungry for fellowship again I don't care what it costs we're going back to it only so will God be able to sink the mountain to a plain, and he'd do it by some other way than argument or forcefulness, he has his way but your part is to obey and that's what happened and God blessed and has continued to bless over the years, our dear brother isn't it wonderful you can't meet force with force you haven't got what it takes, you don't need to have it you don't need to be a super leader you don't need to be very strong because what's going to happen if you go

forward with Jesus is not going to happen by strength or power might or strength but by my spirit this is the real context of this famous verse and what a wonderful thing happened they came and said well what are you and they told who they were and they gave a different sort of testimony to the people then, which we'll see in a moment and above all they said Cyrus the king he made the decree we're not here on our own on our own and they sent off that letter and asked that the records should be searched, was it really so had there been a decree made and sure enough they had and the result was just what their enemies didn't want they had every bit of backing and support that was possible from Darius and lo and behold that great mountain that seemed to impede progress was sunk into a plain

and that without any struggling without might or power but by his spirit now what is most interesting here is the fact that there are two searches of the record referred to the first is when the first group came to them

and they said this city has been a wicked city, a rebellious city, search the records and see in Ezra 4 15 and they searched and they found it exactly as they said they were a rebellious city and the command came down for the work to cease but then there was a second searching of the record the one I've just referred to they said that Cyrus made that decree and so they searched again and sure enough hidden away in some of the archives there was the ancient edict promulgated by Cyrus as a result of which they had backing and support as they never believed possible because

of what they found in the first searching of the record the work ceased because of what they found in the second searching of the record the work was gloriously completed and I want you to notice that the Jews gave two sorts of testimonies in the first place when these enemies of theirs tried to sort of get in and infiltrate them said let us build with you they said not at all you have nothing to do with us that chapter 4 verse 3 to build a house unto our God we ourselves will build it we are the true Israel you're not and we could be commanded us to do and they said alright we'll see true Israel what sort of a record have you got they sent that letter and there it was written a rebellious city that given Persia no end of trouble and there are two sorts of testimonies you can give you say

we're the Israel we are the spiritual people and we can't have unregenerate people coming in and doing the work of the Lord we ourselves have got to do that and I agree with it but it's dangerous ground to stand on for you're really standing on your own righteousness and the devil is going to pick on that and use that and he's going to have a chance to show something quite other about you and that'll be enough to stop the work and cause the difficulties but I want you to notice the second time that letter which was sent they quoted what the Hebrews the Jews said oh how different they said we're the in chapter 5 verse 11 we're the servants of the God of heaven and earth and build the house that was builded many years ago but after that our fathers provoked the God of heaven unto wrath he

gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar and carried the people away into Babylon but in the first year of Saras there was that other wonderful decree they didn't say we're the people of God and we're the only ones who got a right to have to do this thing he says we're a disciplined people we're in this state because our fathers and we ourselves have gone away from the Lord for that reason this noble house was destroyed and it's mercy that's been shown us to let us build again so they searched and saw now that was a sinners testimony that was ground and there it was in the book that proclamation of grace the first record was a record of sin the second a record of grace and if I'm standing on my righteousness I'm the one who knows things we're the people of the Lord that's your own

righteousness and the devil can point to the record of sin which is true of you in spite of being a Christian but the second time they themselves told what sinners they were they didn't wait for it to be found out they told them far more than the books could tell them how culpable they'd been, how wrong their fathers this situation was their fault but there was this record they so to speak you said you search, you ask and there sure enough was the record of grace you know it occurred to me that this applies rather a bit to our conference here that's been going for what thirty or forty years, what back in what year was it we started a long time we could very easily say and feel we've got a special message a message which isn't heard enough that we're the people and we must be very careful

to keep our message undiluted it's dangerous ground to stand on what's that record say about us who are supposed to have the message pathetic we've been as wrong, I've been as wrong as any of those of old and the devil will have every opportunity to accuse me and cause things to happen to stop me what's the other test to me what are these conferences what's it all about well I'll tell you back in 48 a bunch of

preachers and a few Christian leaders about twenty of us or as many as that got together and opened our hearts to what God had done as we'd listened to the message of revival as it came to us from East Africa and I think we were the most pathetic weak group in England we were not none of us were the John Stotts of our day or the Billy Graham's of our day I remember in one meeting a

brother getting up and said I'm the unsuccessful vicar of an unsuccessful parish that was us I was an evangelist though I had some beautiful talent to begin with somewhere along the line I lost that unction and power I'd once known when I was struggling in my own strength and there wasn't a stitch of righteousness the whole bunch of us we were a bunch of failures and the habitation of God by the Spirit in some real measure had been laid waste we were not in the good of these things that should be our testimony but we began to find there was a new and living way for failures by the grace of God and by the blood of Jesus it was revival for temples that were ruined and our testimony is still the same, that's the truth of it and all we ask is for you to come along and learn the same sort of

things with us for we're still needy people and what we do is to point to another record the record of grace that gives us our right my name in that book, you know in Revelation 20 it talks about the great white throne and it talks about the books opened that's the first record the books and my record's there, pretty poor terrible but there's another book the books and another book the Lamb's book of life and my name's there inscribed with marks of indelible grace by the blood of Jesus and yours and if I take that stand and I point to their record I tell you God will arise on my behalf in the same extraordinary way as he did for Israel of old how interesting those two records and the two testimonies I tell you we've read it from daily night this morning to this man will I look even him

that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word because thine heart was tender and thou humblest thyself before the Lord as rent thy clothes and wept before me I also have heard thee and there's that other record written by blood with marks of indelible grace I haven't got time to tell you so many other things that Zechariah and Haggai said to Joshua and Zerubbabel all I want to say is they were made to know not only were they working bigger than they knew but in God's sight they were bigger than they knew, you see apart from Christ I'm nothing, yes quite true but you're not apart from him join to Christ as it says in the book of Solomon a song of Solomon, terrible as an army with banners, man did you but know that you're bigger than you know you join to Christ just as the

branch is to the vine, I'm joined to Christ I'm not apart from him and Joshua and Zerubbabel can go forward in their church or whatever their circle is, defying every opposition, being utterly faithful to grace and giving their testament teaching God's word and we will see beautiful things, we'll see the mountain sunk into a plain and that not by might or power but by his spirit oh what a beautiful thing that is about Joshua clad in filthy rags in his vision and God said take them off him put a mitre on his head and again to give him places to walk among those that stand by, he was so discouraged I'm only a bran pluck from the burning oh no no, I see you're different from that you've got to rise to your stature in Christ and dare to take on whatever's going and you'll find he'll deal with

the mountain not by might, nor by power, but by his dear spirit, let us pray they really it seemed had no option their enemies had sanctioned from Babylon and they had the necessary force and power to implement that sanction the Israelites had no opportunity to match force with force and so they quit building the house of God and instead of that they got busy building their own houses and they made themselves very good houses in those 13 years they really built some nice houses Haggai says you've got sealed houses they weren't log cabins they had real nice ceilings very nice suburban dwellings and they

were so busy doing that and all that time the Lord's house lay waste and did so for 13 years and revival stopped, now this is so true to experience then ceases the work on the rebuilding of

the habitation of God by the spirit years ago when my first wife Revel was with us I picked up her bible and in the fly leaf I saw there a sheet on which there were a list of sins rather subtle ones sins that you might not always think were sins tenseness worry bossiness and a number of other such sins and I said to her what's this list here well she said Roy those are the things that God over the last year or two has shown me are sins tenseness, worry bossiness and other things and I just keep that list there to check as to whether I'm still seeing them as sin wasn't whether I've got complete victory over them, no I'm just concerned am I still when they occur in any degree at all, am I still calling them sin or have I got used to them and learnt to live with them because if she was still

calling them sin, revival was still going on the habitation of God by the spirit was still growing but you know some of us began to call certain things sin here's one thing you began to call sin did you? reserve and shyness and what a deliverance do you still see it as sin? you never realised you were bossy until the Lord showed it to you bossiness are you still seeing bossiness as sin? it was a great day when God showed the trouble with you is worry and you've got to tore worry as sin and take it to the fountain filled with blood that you might be cleansed from it are you still seeing it as sin? and sometimes we're not and the work of rebuilding the ruined temple ceases and there's many a person who begins on the revival way and then they later quit it there are reasons there's sometimes

opposition everybody else lives behind a mask you see I can't always be taking off my mask they wouldn't understand everybody else likes to give a successful testimony I really can't in that situation give a sinner's testimony and people tell me it's so introspective and some of us have met opposition I've known a pastor, he's in heaven now he had to leave his church because they couldn't tolerate the message of grace for sinners they graduated beyond sinners, surely but their pastor would insist on remaining at the cross and they couldn't tolerate it and others of us have had our share of trouble and opposition and there are reasons and yet I want to tell you he holds you responsible nonetheless if you quit the old new and living way even the way of the blood what blessedness you knew

but for various reasons you've quit there was a dear brother he's not here this week, he will be here later this month who was brought up in Rwanda in the atmosphere of revival and participated deeply himself though he was only a boy at that time came back to England and in our early conferences he was my right hand man he was the one I really leaned on, he was such a brother, such a help and then he went forward for the ministry and in his theological college he found it difficult to walk this way and share this sort of testimony indeed he was warned against it you be careful of Southwold I have an emphasis there that will make you miserable he found it the very reverse that was the thing that was told him and you know he quit he started wearing with a mask again and he wasn't going on

calling things sin and not knowing the constant cleansing of the blood of Jesus he became a vicar of a fine parish and their people began coming here and they got such blessing and they said why doesn't our vicar come and they tried to persuade him to come he knew all about it he said that way wasn't for him but he got hungry he longed for what he once knew and he began to come again and from this platform in this hall he gave a testimony and he told us how the work of the habitation of God growing in him had ceased and he'd been put off he didn't want to be different and at the back of the hall there was a row of his people this was the thing for which they'd been praying the trouble was they only had one handkerchief between them all and they passed their handkerchief down the row ah

but it was yours, yours then ceased the work on the house of God now as I said it seemed that Israel really had no option they couldn't meet force with force and yet as we shall see though there was that reason God held them responsible for running every man to his own house while his house lay waste and for that reason everything was going wrong in Israel and although there may be reasons why you've quit and gone back to the old struggling way and the old way of hiding and putting on a good front, doing your best God holds you responsible nonetheless opposition has not got the final word with God and if you bow to it he's going to hold you responsible that you run every man to his own house and his house they had such great promise lies waste it lasted for no longer than 30 years, 13

years it's rather like, I don't know whether it's a true story or not but a Christian yes I think it is a true one please turn the cassette over now do not fast wind it in either direction

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