

THE COMING REVIVAL OF THE JOSHUA PRIESTHOOD

by Carter Conlon

I want to speak to the spiritually discouraged. You are among those who have wanted to walk with God. You have set out to build, or at least to be a temple for the glory of God. But you have faced fierce opposition along the way causing you to become disillusioned. Please take your Bible and follow along with me by reading Zechariah 3:1 through 4:1.

These scriptures tell us that after years of captivity in Babylon, the children of Israel, including Joshua the high priest, returned to Jerusalem with incredible enthusiasm to rebuild the temple. This was the temple Solomon built where the glory of God had once dwelt. They were now anticipating God's presence to once again be manifested after the completion of the rebuilding. Little did they know that one day God would visit this same temple in the person of Jesus Christ.

Much restoration work was needed on the temple just as there is a lot of work to be done in our lives. You look at your life and begin to understand that only God can build it. Unfortunately, once the foundation of the temple was laid in Jerusalem, the work came to a standstill. The people had faced a tremendous amount of rubble and they had to contend with great opposition from the enemy. An enemy who came against them with a fury they had not expected. This had discouraged them in the same way many Christians become discouraged today.

It was at this point, Joshua, was found standing before the throne of God speechless, feeling completely unclean and defeated because work on the temple had ceased!

Now I'm sure the people had not stopped congregating around the scriptures, doing their religious duties and saying their prayers, but everybody was forsaking the rebuilding of the temple and going home to build their own houses. In the course of time this became viewed as evidence of the blessing and prosperity of God. In reality it was a twisted view of the Gospel. The real work of God was sadly at a standstill. I think history is repeating itself in our generation. And we, like they, have come to think that outward prosperity is the evidence of God's blessing.

■ GOD'S TEMPLE — A PLACE FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED

Joshua knew God endorsed Solomon's prayers at the dedication of the temple (2 Chronicles 6 and 7). Joshua also knew the temple was a place where the underprivileged, impoverished, and oppressed could come and find relief. In the Old Testament the temple was a physical building. In the New Testament we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, individually and collectively as the body of Christ.

Now this Old Testament temple was a place where answers to prayer were to be expected and thanksgiving returned to God. The Lord had crowned the temple built under the hand of Solomon with a promise,

Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place (2 Chronicles 7:15). God was making it known to the people that he wanted to be a God who answered their prayers supernaturally. His eyes were open and His ears attentive to them as they came into His house, seeking Him, and seeking relief for their troubled lives.

■ NO GREATER HEARTACHE

Joshua is now standing before God with a sense of failure and heartache because God's people had not been measurably strengthened through his ministry. The people he represented had turned from the work of God and became focused on themselves. I don't know if there is any greater heartache for the Christian than seeing someone you have led to Christ eventually turn away.

I have seen this happen several times through the course of my life. People come to Christ, get excited about the things of God, and then gradually turn away. One man in particular stands out in my memory. I led him to the Lord and he was supernaturally healed of an incurable disease. We had not discussed healing, yet when he gave his life to Christ, God miraculously healed him. How tragic it was then to see this man turn from the things of God. Ultimately his family and career became more important to him than living for Christ. You experience incredible sorrow for them, but there is nothing you can do. There is an

issue that gets into their heart that turns them away from God.

■ ONLY THE VOICE OF THE CONDEMNER BEING HEARD

Feeling his ministry had failed, Joshua stands before the throne of God with seemingly little to give. I have been there. I know what this is all about. You go to the throne of God and drop your bucket for living water and it hits the dust at the bottom of the well. There is so little left within you to give that you just don't care anymore.

There was a time when the compassion of God flowed so freely through you that if you saw someone sitting on a park bench crying, you would have stopped. But now you pass by saying, "That's their problem; I hope someone comes along to give them some relief." You just can't seem to even care enough to pray. Joshua knew that as high priest he was to stand before the throne of God and intercede for his generation. But we see him now with no voice, totally speechless with only the voice of the accuser being heard.

And that's why many don't go into their prayer closet because there is only one voice they are hearing—the voice of the condemner. The enemy wants you to focus on your failures and how God has not been glorified through your life. The only reason Satan does this is because you are truly called of God and His hand is upon you. Otherwise, the accuser would go next door and work on somebody else.

■ BEWARE OF BUILDING IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH

Now it is possible that Joshua had employed, in his theology, something of his own ways in attempting to rebuild the temple. In Zechariah 3:6, *the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt*

walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

Here the Lord was telling Joshua that he needed to make a choice to obey what had been spoken to him.

At the same time God was speaking to Joshua, He was also speaking to the people of Israel through Haggai the prophet, *Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways* (Haggai 1:3-5). Their focus had moved from God to material possessions, and yet those things were not satisfying them. Similarly, our generation is on the wrong track. Everything may seem to be going well, having more food than most, better clothes, and higher salaries, but there is something about these things that does not completely satisfy. This is because the real purpose of life is to glorify Christ and not just to appear outwardly prosperous.

■ GOING BACK TO CALVARY

The prophet goes on to say in Haggai 1:8: *Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.*

This is the same call to the church in this generation, "Go back to the mountain!" While others are focused on lands, houses, jobs and cars, the Lord says to the church, "Go back to the mountain, go back to Calvary, and to the cross. There you will get wood to build the temple of your life, and God will be glorified in you." Hallelujah!

Joshua, covered in filthy garments, experienced a type of Calvary. You see this in Zechariah 3:2 and 4—*The Lord rebuke thee Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem*

rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. Firstly, the Lord rebukes Satan on Joshua's behalf. Joshua like all men was destined for hell because of sin. However, the Lord Himself reached down out of heaven and plucked Joshua out of the fire. Joshua became God's own, and God was committed to him. Brother and sister, you need to know today that God in Christ is committed to you. He is not a feeble God who turns away from you when you have had a bad day.

Secondly, Joshua is given a change of raiment. God rebuked Satan and then spoke to Joshua in the past tense, saying, *I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.*

In the same way, God came down from heaven and became a man for us; this was His plan before the world began. This is the power of the cross! Our old garments of sin are removed and we are clothed with a new robe of righteousness. All the resources of heaven are opened to us; everything that belonged to Christ now belongs to us. In fact, in Ephesians 2:6, Paul tells us that we are seated in Him in heavenly places. We are partakers of His victory.

■ THE DEVIL'S ARGUMENT HAS NO POWER AGAINST CHRIST

Satan has formed an argument against the completeness of Jesus Christ and His cross; against redemption and the fullness of our justification; and against the certainty of God's promise to change us from image to image and from glory to glory.

When you came to the cross of Jesus Christ, your sin was removed as far away from you as the east is from the

west. When Jesus said, *It is finished*, He meant the power, the penalty, the dominion of sin was broken, and you were brought into the power of an endless life through Jesus Christ. You became the temple of Almighty God. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, old things have passed away and all things have become new.

If you don't remember anything else, just remember these two things: *I have caused*, and *I will clothe*. God says, "I will change you, and I will do a work within you." In verse 8 we read, *Now behold—Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee—for they are men wondered at*. In other words, people will stand back in awe when they see the work He is doing in you. They will stand beholding something that is too wonderful for natural comprehension but as they behold this wonderful thing, they too will believe and will be changed in the same miraculous way by the power of the Spirit of God.

■ BUILDING UPON A FOUNDATION OF REST

The most amazing thing is that God knows everything there is to know about you and yet He still chooses to love you. In verse 9 it says, *Behold the stone which I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes*. Your life is going to be built upon the cornerstone, a foundation stone that has seven eyes. The mention of seven eyes clearly refers to the omniscience of God, His "all knowingness." Nothing is hidden from him. He knows your name, your address, the thoughts in your mind; He knows your strengths your failings, and even the number of hairs on your head. Despite knowing all of the sometimes ugly details of your life, He still chooses to work in you and to reveal His Glory through you. Hallelujah! This change in you results in incredible rest and provision in Christ.

In verse 10, *I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree*. You have finally understood you were saved by His mercy and grace and not by any works of righteousness. This is not a favor you have earned but a finished work of the cross. You will be calling your friends and inviting them to join you in this place of rest. You will not be saying: "Do what I have done and you will have victory and success." No! You know you failed; and have stood in filthy garments of a past sinful life and were rendered utterly helpless. But God removed the power and the penalty of sin and is in the process of changing you. You will be saying: "I have found the rest of God, I have found the provision of God, and I know where life is." This is the power of the changed life and this is effective evangelism!

It is ironic but the natural man cannot comprehend this—it is foolishness to him to be called into a work of rest! How do you work and rest at the same time? Paul says it clearly in Hebrews 4:11, *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief*. In other words, if you want to work at something, work at finding the rest of Christ; it is the place where you are carried to by the Spirit of God and are delivered from the voice of the accuser.

■ FIGHTING AGAINST SPIRITUAL SLUMBER

The opposition from the enemy was so fierce, it had wearied and tired everyone in the work of rebuilding the temple. They had to fight against a spiritual slumber. You see this in Zechariah 4:1, *And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep*. One of the great mistakes of any generation is underestimating the

power of the enemy's arguments against the power of God and the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This battle in the mind is so intense that there are times when you go into the prayer closet, and you find a slumber encompassing you. You literally have to fight to stay awake, you can hardly keep your eyes open and you are not sure where this weariness is coming from. You can watch a football game or the news and be wide awake, but just try going into the prayer closet and suddenly this incredible tiredness comes upon you. Then you find out you are fighting against a real power and a real enemy.

To combat this spiritual slumber God reveals to Joshua the secret of an inexhaustible and victorious strength. Zechariah 4:2-9 says, *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 by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. 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 unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*

Without going into too much typology, just know this represents the church and the provision of God for those that are His. "Joshua, you are not going to win this battle with the might of human ingenuity. No amount of your own energy will win; it will be accomplished by the Spirit of the Lord." Today, the same victory is assured us, because the Lord has chosen to make us a temple

of His glory and His dwelling. The Lord said He was going to finish the work that He had begun. God sees and receives you as the righteousness of Christ.

I love the scripture concerning Joshua where God says, *set a fair mitre upon his head* (Zechariah 3:5). The enemy had succeeded in taking the crown of the priesthood off Joshua's head, but now God was putting it back! All of God's people are called to be kings and priests unto the Lord. It is time to allow Christ to put the victorious crown of His priesthood back on your head!

■ SHOUTING — GRACE, GRACE, GRACE

In Verse 7, the scripture says, *Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.* What were the obstacles the enemy had placed before God's people in Jerusalem, at that time? It was the opposition that had come against God being glorified in the rebuilding of the temple. God said He was not going to make this mountain just passable, but He was going to take it completely out of the way. Jesus told His disciples the same thing. He told them to have faith in God, speak to the mountain, and it would be removed and cast into the sea. It would obey and disappear.

Many are standing speechless before the throne of God because they are not aware of who they are in Christ. The enemy places a mountain in front of them, but the mountain is just a mirror; that's all it is. The mountain is just a reflection of them and their failures and they don't see Christ. People think that's the way God sees them, but this is not true!

God is saying, "Before Zerubbabel and those I have called to rebuild this temple, the mountain will become a plain." Amazing! This temple will be built upon a foundation where God knows everything. He takes away all iniquity and gives newness of life and new raiment. Zechariah 4:7 says, *and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it.* When it is all over, I hope with all my heart that Satan is forced to stand and watch the parade. The one who accused God's people most of their Christian life will have to stand by watching the parade of the hundreds and thousands of the once weak and lame walk by. Everyone walking past him will look him in the face and say, "Grace, grace, grace! God rebuked you. Grace began it and grace finished it. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

Carter Conlon
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TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade." It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Church Service	
Thursday	7:00PM	Intercessory Prayer	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

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