

Haggai 2

by Bob Bruton

The sermon emphasizes the importance of taking action and getting to work for God, despite any feelings of weakness or inadequacy.

Duration: 42:35

Topics: "Faithfulness", "Perseverance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the tendency of Christians to forget the difficult times and only remember the good times. He emphasizes the importance of staying strong and not giving up, even when faced with challenges. The preacher also highlights the need for contentment and not constantly seeking more and better things. He concludes by emphasizing the significance of sticking to one's faith and remaining committed to God, as it is evidence of genuine revival.

Transcript

If you have your Bibles, turn it with me, please, back to the Little Book of Haggai. Last week we looked at Chapter 1, and this week we would like to think in terms of Chapter 2 in the Little Book of Haggai. Haggai, Chapter 2, page 963, if you have a Bible like mine.

The pages kind of stick together over there in those minor prophets every so often. So if we'll just look at the bottom, we'll have it made. Now, before we read Chapter 2, we might suggest that last week we found that the people in Haggai's day, all 50,000 of them, who had left the burden in Persia, they had left the slavery in Persia, King Cyrus had given them the permission to go over back to Jerusalem, 200 miles, and to rebuild the temple.

And so they got all involved in the work of the Lord there, and went along swell for a while. But somehow or another, they had the same type of hearts that you and I have. And so 2,500 years ago, the same thing happened to them that, I'll cheat a little bit, I'll say that happens to those in California.

Now, I don't know that it happens to us here in North Carolina, but I know it happens on the West Coast. It seemed that right in the middle of the work, not before or not after they had completed the temple, but right in the middle of the work, everyone got discouraged because of the opposition around and the hardship and the difficulties of the Lord's work. I have a feeling that Chapter 2 is going to be a timely message for us tonight.

But in Chapter 1, we found that they got discouraged, and so they used the excuse of the Samaritans around them, opposition from the Samaritans, to kind of slack off and slow down in the work of the Lord, while at the same time the families were coming along and work was going good, and they became more exercised about their own material gain and their own prosperity. And so, to make a long story short, they began to spend more time building their own homes, buying more and better clothes, eating more and better food, and buying larger plots of real estate and putting more money in the bank. You say, Mom, show me that there in Chapter 1. Well, look at verse 6 of Chapter 1, and we find it very timely.

First of all, in verse 3 it says, verse 2 rather, "...the time is not come, these people say, that the Lord's house should be built." In other words, they didn't want to go to work for God, but look at verse 4, "...is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your sealed houses, and this house lie awake?" Now, we found last week that the word sealed is in reference to the better kind of plaster used in better homes, and they did not want to remain small. They wanted to get larger, and they wanted larger real estate on larger property. And in verse 6, we found another very personal problem, I'm sure to many of us.

First of all, it says, "...ye have sown much, and bring in little." That is, they put in more than their eight hours a day. They work at their job, and then added overtime to it so they could get the money to make the payments on the house that they had purchased. We'll put it that way for application to ourselves.

And then let's go on. "...ye eat, but ye have not enough. Ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink." In other words, they wanted more and better grades of food.

Instead of being content with a dollar a pound steak, they wanted four dollars a pound steak. We'll put it that way. "...ye clothed ye, but there is none worn." Now, we know that they did not freeze to death because they were still alive, and that's why he wrote to them and preached to them.

But they wanted more and better clothes, you see. And then finally in the verse it says, "...and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it in a bag with holes." Somehow or another, I get the feeling every time I read that verse that someone has been spying on my account back there in Hayward at the bank. But isn't this very personal, and isn't it up to date? We found that in many ways the people lived twenty-five hundred years ago just like you and I live today.

They raised their families. They had their homes. They were concerned about a higher standard of living.

And last week we found that we could apply this to ourselves. There's nothing wrong with a high standard of living. There's nothing wrong with providing the best things for our family that we possibly can, but the wrong often comes when after we have provided these things, we have to work double time down at work in order to make payments on these things, and consequently the work of the Lord goes undone because we can't see two places at one time.

And so we found last week as a quick review that they were sick of all of this. They were tired of being unhappy. They were tired of being out of fellowship with God, and God had blown frosty breath, we'll say, upon their labors, and the harder they worked, the further behind they got.

And finally they said, We're tired of it, Lord. Tell us what to do to get right with you. And in verse eight we might say the word there, you remember, was awareness.

He says, listen, go up to the mountains and bring the wood and build the temple. In other words, wholeheartedness in the things of God. And in verse 12 we found that they did exactly that, and not only

the civic leader, Zerubbabel, and the religious leader, Joshua, but all the people of the land, 50,000 Jews, 50,000 people, we'll say the whole Jewish free world went to work, and the chapter ends with a real refreshing sight.

There they were busily serving God, all working together and pulling together for a common cause. Now let's come to chapter two. I'm very clearly aware of the fact that chapter one is a little difficult for us to take.

As we mentioned last week, the preacher seems to have two jobs. He comforts the afflicted and then afflicts the comforted. And chapter one seems to afflict those of us who are comforted and settle down in our own little ways of life, and we just have a notion that all we have to do as a Christian is go to meeting on time and do our little part and take care of the collection plate when it comes by, and all will be well.

But in chapter two we find that an additional requirement is made for those of us who wish to go all the way out for the Lord and want our life to count. Chapter one kind of shakes this up a little bit, and then chapter two is a real encouragement, at least to me. Verse one says, Haggai chapter two, In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedach, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? How do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord, and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedach, the high priest, and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.

According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you. Fear ye not, for thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of hosts, and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." In the four-and-twentieth day of the month, of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, ask now the priest concerning the law of faith. If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread or pottage or wine or oil or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priest answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these things, shall it be unclean? And the priest answered and said, It shall be unclean.

Then answered Haggai and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the Lord, and so is every work of their hands, and that which they offer there is unclean. And now I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord, since those days were when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten when one came to the press, for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press there were but twenty. I smote you with blasting and with mildew, and with hail in all the labors of your hands, yet ye turned not to me, saith the Lord.

Consider now from this day, and incidentally, the reference this day is in reference to December 24th, four months after they had originally turned back to God. This is important later on. Verse 18.

Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the vine? Yea, as yet

the vine, and the fig tree, and the palm tree, and the olive tree hath not brought forth. From this day will I bless you.

And again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai in the fourth and twentieth day of the month, saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth, and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen, and I will overthrow the chariots and those that ride in them, and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. Notice it's not the sword of the Lord there, it's the sword of his brother. And in that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet, and I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of Hosts." Now let's go back and quickly analyze chapter two, and I think we're going to find a thought here and there that may be a blessing to us tonight.

Look at verse one. It says, "...came the word of the Lord by Haggai." Now I want you to notice very carefully there that it was not Haggai's word. Whose word was it? The word of the Lord.

Haggai was merely a chattel. Look at chapter one in verse one. There again we have it.

"...came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet." It wasn't Haggai's word, it was the Lord's word. We find this about five different times throughout the Little Prophecy that it was not Haggai's word that was delivered, it was God's word, and Haggai was merely an instrument through which God spoke to the people. And I'd like to say tonight to each of us here that God has saved us and made us a chattel through which the Spirit of God can speak to other people.

There is no such thing as a Christian without a message. There is no such thing as one who does not have a job to do. From the youngest Christian in this audience tonight to the oldest, each of us should have a job.

We should know what that job is and we should continually keep the channel clear so the Spirit of God can speak to us and work through us and propagate God's message. Each of us is a chattel. Now let me say this.

Very often, and I know in my own life, and many of you know my own life, I know that earlier in my life sometimes I would get the feeling that all heaven was dependent upon my service. And I thought that I was more than a chattel. And if I didn't get out and do a certain work, God Almighty would have to stop what He's doing until I got on the ball down there on earth and went to work.

And very often, not very often, but occasionally, some of us may come to think that we are more than a chattel. But if we had time to turn to 1 Timothy 3 and verse 6 in reference to the qualifications of elders in a local church, it says that this elder cannot be a novice. Lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Now pride usually makes us think that we are better than we are, and we almost break our arm patting ourselves on the back, pushing ourselves forward. And this is sin. And it originates not only in the old nature, but it further originates with old Satan himself.

He'd like to see every one of us think that we are more important than we are so we can go out and do the work of the Lord in a callous manner and wreck the work that God has already established. But then there's another side of this. And I think this may be a very current problem for many of us.

Maybe not here, but maybe so. There's such a thing as thinking that we are more than a chattel, but there is also such a thing as thinking that we are less than a chattel. Have you ever taken inventory in your own life and said, What can I do for God? I just can't do anything.

Every time I try to serve God, it comes to naught. I can't seem to lead anybody to Christ. I can't seem to preach.

I can't seem to lead singing. I just can't do anything. And we sit down.

And furthermore, we don't have confidence in ourselves that we have the capability of doing what we know God wants us to do. Well, just for the understanding of it, write this down somewhere in your Bible. In 2 Timothy 2, verses 19 through 21, we find that usually if a channel is not clear by which the Holy Spirit may work, it's because of sin.

It's because of sin. And oh, how easy it is to let some little sin, love of faith, love of family, love for business, love for some little something in our life, and this sin clogs up the channel, and it seems whatever we do for God comes to naught, and we're failures. Now, I do not say this is always true in 100% of the cases.

But usually if we think we're more than a channel, it's because of self-esteem. But if we think we're less than a channel, it's because of sin. Now, you think this over and apply this to each area.

Apply each thought to your own life. Each of us should have a job to do, and we should be doing this job. I have a notion that in the months to come, when the time comes in which the building across town has been prepared, and this assembly may have to divide 50-50, or so, and some go there and some remain here, Christians, I happen to know from experience, you're going to face the most difficult days of your Christian life as an assembly and as a unit of Christians.

And I'm praying for you every day of my life in California, because I'm in an area where it's a constant thing where one assembly is leading off of the other in fellowship and expanding the work of God. And you've not been tested yet, like you're going to be tested. And I suggest that each one of you lay low before God, and you find your area of service, and you get into that channel, and don't you be jealous of the other person who's ahead of you, and don't feel that you're better than the other person behind you.

You do your job, and let Him do His job, and love one another as you do it. But now let's go on. Verse 2. And this is a wonderful little verse.

Verse 2, when you meditate upon it, speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedat, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? Now, interestingly enough, when the temple was destroyed, it was destroyed right down to the ground. And the house that this returning remnant had built did not stand earlier. It was Solomon's temple.

This is the rebuilt temple. But if you look at Mrs. Scofield's footnote, you'll find that the term this house is in reference to the house of God throughout the Old Testament and also in the days that the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, and also it's in reference to the future temple and the millennial reign of Christ. This house is in reference to any house of that time and of that dispensation where God dealt with His people.

Now, I'm sure that all of us here are aware that the church building today is not the house of God. This is just a tabernacle. It's just a building where the church gathers.

You and I are the church, and the church, the people, who are saved in Christ, represent the house of God on earth. There is no such thing as a house of God made of brick and stone and nails and so forth and so on. But he says, listen, those of you that were some present who had lived in Solomon's day, who had seen the original temple in all of its glory and all of its splendor, and they had been carried away captive down into Babylon, who later fell to the Medes and Persians, and then they were given the opportunity to come back and start from nothing and rebuild the temple.

And look what he says in verse 4. Verse 3. Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory, and how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? In other words, their little work in comparison to Solomon's great, grand, and glorious and splendid work there seemed like a little old nothing compared to what had been done in past. And isn't that just like some of us in the church today? We look back and we think of the great, great and glorious years that we have lived in in the past. And then we take inventory and we see, well, our little cause is just about like nothing.

Incidentally, this is the trick of Satan to keep a Christian living in the past. The Christian should live from day to day. Let the past take care of itself and let the future take care of itself, but let us take care of the day.

Let's not compare today by last year or ten years. Certainly it was better. It was over.

It's over now. And we have a tendency to forget the difficult things and remember the good things. I've heard so many Christians say, oh, if it was only like it was ten years ago.

And they lived ten years ago. And consequently, the contrast in comparison makes today's Christian life a failure. And so there were some who were going around saying, well, our little old temple here, it's no good at all.

It's just like nothing compared to that from in this temple. But let's go on. Look at verses 4 and 5. We have four things here that I'd like to bring before you.

And I can't think of anything more applicable in the Word of God for us right here in this tabernacle tonight. God comes back and through the channel Haggai, He says four things. First of all, verse 4, yet now be strong.

That's it. I don't care how big the temple seemed to be 58 years ago. And you have a little old puny temple here that's just not anything in comparison to it.

Be strong. And I think the word there should be emphasized, the word that should be emphasized is now. Yet now be strong.

Now the contrast of strength is weak and laziness. God did not say, yet now be weak and lazy. Yet now let's adopt a do nothing attitude and everyone sit down and see where the kids are going to fall.

He says be strong. Get up and go to work for God and carry your weight in the local assembly. I think that's the thought there.

Yet now be strong. And then secondly, He goes on to say, for I am with you. And again, I think the word that should be emphasized there is the word am.

Yet I am with you, He says. Have you ever been involved in the work of the Lord and met with a gross failure while you were involved in it? I have. Many a time.

And you know when we're failing and we see our cause going down the drain as it were, and we compare our little work with other big people over here who are doing larger and more impressive work, we get that feeling, God, you're not with me anymore. How practical. The people of the day, twenty-five hundred years ago, they had a little old work going and they compared their work by the big group down here on the corner somewhere and they got the feeling that God had taken His hand of blessing off on them.

Well, look what He says there. For I am with you, says the Lord. And God's presence in our life is more important than all the crowds of Greensboro or all the crowds of Gilbert County.

Or the state of North Carolina. Someone once said, One plus God is a majority. And it's far better to have a small meeting where everyone is functioning in their work and everyone is happy and everyone is pulling this load together than to have a tremendous congregation of a thousand or two thousand people and everyone just sitting, listening to someone else do the work.

God says, I am with you, even though you may seem small, even though you may seem weak and defeated, I am with you. And then look at the third thought. He says, My spirit remaineth among you.

Are you sure we read that right? Yes, it is. There it is. Look at verse five.

So my spirit remaineth among you. Yes, in spite of the fact that they were weak, in spite of the fact that many in the group were carnal, in spite of the fact of the smallness of their cause, and oh how easy it is to get the feeling that our cause is so insignificant, in spite of the fact that they were small, in spite of the fact that they were hated by the Samaritans in the neighborhood, just like the unsaved world today hates the church, in spite of the fact that they were a visible failure in every sense of the word, God says, My spirit remaineth among you. And I have found in what little portion, in what little time I've studied God's word, that it's usually the one who has his total confidence only in God and no trust in himself whatsoever.

There's the one, and there's the group upon whom and in whom the spirit of God remains. And when we are strong, we're really weak. But when we're real, we're strong.

And then the fourth thing he says in verse five, the last line, look at it there in your Bible, Fear ye not. Now what does he mean, fear ye not? You'll notice there in chapter one, in verse twelve, the last line, it says, And the people did fear before the Lord. But over here in chapter two, he says, Fear ye not.

Well, there's two fears. One is the fear of man, and the other is the fear of God. And it doesn't mean to be shaking all over from head to toe in fear that God will strike us down for doing something wrong, but it means to give God his proper place in our lives and respect God for who he is and what he is.

But over in chapter two, at the end of verse five, the fear there is the fear of man. Don't be afraid of what the enemy will do unto you. Don't worry about what's going to happen.

Don't worry about the local politics. Don't worry about the community. Don't worry about the hardship.

Just leave that with me. And I'm sure that each Christian here at the Forest Avenue Tabernacle has been well taught not to labor, not to labor for the respect of man. Don't labor in the light of what man in this world will think of you, but labor in the light of the judgment seat of Christ, what God thinks of us.

And we can hold before us that the time is coming after this life when we'll be delivered from this earth and we stand before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven, not for salvation, that was over at Calvary's Cross, but to give an account of our lives to God. And I believe that's the thought there. Don't worry about what men are going to say unto you.

Just labor in the light of the judgment seat. Just do your work as unto the Lord and all will be well. Now, in verses 6 through 9, it seems that we have the provision for the basis for God's encouraging words in verses 4 and 5. In other words, He goes on to say, listen, don't worry.

Everything is going to work out all right. I think I told you of the two men one time who were arguing a little bit about dispensations. And one said to the other, listen, are you a post-tribulationist? No, no, I'm not a post-tribulationist, or post-millennialist, rather.

He said, are you a pre-millennialist? He said, no, I'm not a pre-millennialist. He said, well, are you a mid-millennialist? He said, no, I'm not a mid-millennialist. He said, then you must be an amillennialist.

He said, no, I'm not an amillennialist. He said, well, where do you stand in the prophetic view? He says, I'm a pan-millennialist. Pray tell me, what is a pan-millennialist? He said, well, regardless of what's going to happen in the future, I know that it's going to pan out all right.

And you know, Christians, if we could just hold this thing in front of us at this time. Regardless of what's going to happen in the future, both from the prophetic stage and from tomorrow morning at ten o'clock and six months from now and a year from now, God has promised that whatever is going to happen is going eventually to pan out all right. Look at verse six.

For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come. Now, I'm aware that the Hebrew here says desires, plural, of the nations. And for the world, the world desires things, don't they? And we know that the millennial reign of Christ, everything will be in abundant way.

And the world will have in a great deal what they really want, even though they don't know it. But who is the desire of all nations for the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? The Lord Himself. And so God, in a prophetic way, is saying, Listen, don't you worry about the future.

It's all going to work out all right. And ultimately, the one that we're looking for is coming back. The desire shall return.

In other words, the final chapter in the book of life records an eternal victory for the Lord Jesus Christ and for those of us who are following Him. The past has been blotted out. The future is nothing but glorious.

And today we're in just a little clouded area and we know that soon the cloud is going to pass over. But in doing it all, God is well able to take care of us. Look at verse 8 there.

I love this verse. Who does the silver belong to? God. Who does all the gold in this world belong to? God.

Now, you can go down here to the bank and talk to the banker a little bit and he'll make you think that all the money in the world belongs to their bank. And you can go over here and try to buy a home and you have to pass all types of qualifications to buy a home in order to get seven or eight little thousand dollars to buy a house with. But behind it all, who owns the silver and the gold? God Almighty.

And this tells us that He not only has taken care of the past and not only has taken care of the future in advance, but God will take care of us. He will supply us with what takes money to live in this world. I've found that.

But who really owns the money? Not the employer. He may have a little bit over there. But behind it all, God is directing the finances of this world.

He owns the gold and He owns the silver. And Christians, I feel somehow or another, if this verse could sink deep enough into our hearts and we could become aware of it, we'd have a whole new outlook on life. And this thing called money, the God of this age, would no longer be our God in any sense of the word.

But let's go on. Verses 10 through 19. We see something very interestingly, very interesting.

In the fourth and twentieth day, and we know that this is December 24th in the same year, of the ninth month and the second year of Geriath came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ask now the priests. Now you'll notice that God is saying, Ask your own people. Ask the religious leaders, ask the priests of the day concerning the law.

Now, if you wish to be a Bible student, I suggest that you underline those three words because it's misunderstanding if we don't realize that we're asking the law concerning two matters. Look at verse 13. Here's one question.

If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garments, and with his skirt do touch bread or pottage or wine or oil or any meat, shall it be holy? And who answered? And the priest answered and said, No. In other words, one who is holy cannot pass holiness on to another. You see, holiness is not infectious.

But the next verse tells us that unholiness and sin is. If we're a sinner, we can pass sin on to someone else. But if we're a Christian, we cannot pass Christianity on to someone else.

Look at verse 13. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priest answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the Lord.

And so is every work of their hands, and that which they offer there is unclean. In other words, he's saying the same thing we find in Psalm 39 in verse 5. Every man, even the believer, every man in his best state is altogether vanity when it comes to doing our work and our capabilities. There's only one source of power for those of us who seek to serve God, and that's from God Himself.

It's not living like Christ. And I found that for many years in my own life, I sought to live like Christ. I sought to be a Christian that's like Christ.

And I found a few years ago that it's not being like Christ that God is concerned about. It's letting Christ live His life in us. Not a synthetic Christian life, but the very life of God Almighty and the person of the Spirit living out Christ in us.

Then it's easy. It's like a light bulb saying, I think I'm going to shine. But if you cut the electricity off, the bulb can't do it.

It's one thing for the bulb to try everything it can to shine without the power that's necessary. But it's another thing to have this power flowing through those little old things in the light bulb there. And the light bulb just lights up with an external source or by an external source.

Are we trying to live like Christ, or have we laid down all of our efforts and said, Lord, in the power of the Spirit, You live Your life out in me day by day. But let's go on. Verse 15, And now I pray you, consider from this day and upward from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord.

In other words, from the beginning of your work, from the time that you came back to rebuild the temple, from this day forward, since those days were when one came to an heap of twenty measures, that is, they had a poor harvest, and there were but ten, when one came to the press vat, and the word press vat there in our translation is wine vat, that is, that's where they kept the wine, and they came to the vat to draw out fifty vessels of the press. There were but twenty. In other words, they had a poor harvest there too.

It says, I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labors of your hands, yet ye turned not to me, saith the Lord. This is retroactive. We know that in chapter one, they had left God out of their plans, and they were running their own life, and they were trying to live their life by self-management instead of looking to God, and God didn't bless it.

And the harder they worked, the further behind they got. Well, let's look at verse eighteen. Consider now from this day.

Remember now, this day is four months later than the date they turned to the Lord, December 24th in the same year, 520 B.C. From this day and upward from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it, is the seed yet in the barn, yea, as yet the vine and the fig tree and the plum granite and the olive tree have not brought forth from this day. Will I bless you? Well, Bob, what are you trying to say? I'm trying to say simply this. Stick-to-itiveness is a key and evidence of genuine revival.

Did you get that? Oh, how easy it is to put on a good face and act like a spiritual Christian around other Christians, but during the week live like the devil. And when it comes to a spiritual test, fail in every sense of the word. But on Thursday night, Sunday morning, the Lord's supper, Sunday night, oh, we can really look right.

But if we are one thing when things are comfortable and we are another under tribulation and distress and testing, God says we're not even spiritual at all. And the test to genuine revival is time. Sometimes we turn to God, oh God, I need this and I need that, and we get mad at God if he doesn't give us what we want right then.

Well, for four months, nearly four months, exactly four months, from September 24th to December 24th, God held back his blessings. They turned to God. They got right with God.

They said, God, we don't want all these houses. We don't want all these clothes. All of these things we sacrificed to you.

God didn't take them away from us, take them away from us. He just made them stewards of these things, you see. And then they went on their way, and God held back blessings in for four long months.

I dare say that I myself would begin to get a little tired. Well, God, you're not going to bless me. I'm going to go back to the old way.

The good way is no better than the old way. But God says, now, for four months I've tested you. I've really raked you over the coals.

I have withheld my hand of blessings, and now you don't know what to do, but you were faithful to me. He says, from this day, I'm going to bless you. I wonder, Christians, if it might be that God might be testing us as an assembly of God's people this very hour.

And it may be that in the weeks and in the months to come, we're going to be put to a test like we've never had before to see if we're just playing church, if we're just being religious for the fun of it because we're a member of a social organization, or do we really mean business for God? And we're going to go on by His grace in spite of all the difficulties, in spite of all the hardship, we're going to live for Him. The acid test, the genuine revival, always has been, as I can see it from Genesis to Revelation, stick-to-it-iveness. Instead of up and down, a consistent, steady life in the things of the Lord.

Now, in verses 20 through 23, and our time is up, we see a look into the millennial future, and we find that all the enemies are going to be defeated, and ultimately, the believers are going to be victorious toward Jesus Christ. One thought, however, look at the any two, everyone by the sword of his brother. How is this tribulation going to be brought to an end? How is the world going to be consummated at the very end? I don't believe it's going to be by what we might call God's wrath falling out of heaven with a bolt of fire and a flame of fire from God.

I believe it's going to be by the sword of our brother. That is, by the people of the world. They're going to be fighting one another.

It could be the atomic bomb. It could be the cobalt bomb. It could be something along that line.

And God's spirit is going to be taken off of them, and they're going to jump at one another like a couple of lions. And they're going to blow themselves all to bits. Everyone by the sword of his brother, not by the sword, which is God's wrath.

That's just a thought of my own personal thinking here. But let's go on. It says that eventually, verse 23, In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant.

Now, this is a prophetic look into the future, and I think it's in reference to Christ. For, interestingly enough, the Lord Jesus Christ himself is a descendant of Zerubbabel. O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Sheol, saith the Lord, I will make thee as a signet, for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts.

Our time is up, so we're going to stop. Let me say this. Christians, I think it's time that each of us who are members of this assembly, who are in fellowship here, and who mean business with God, as you seek to take a new venture across town here, and you seek to hold this one in the road, let's not build that one at the expense of this one.

Let's not push this one up and this one go down. We're going to have to do two things at one time. I think it's time that each of us took a long look into the future.

And by the grace of God, let the Lord plan our lives. And then it's time that someone has said that we wake up, stand up, clean up, and start up before we'll be caught up. And I think God will use us, each of us, in His great work.

Let's bow our heads and be dismissed. Our Father, we thank Thee once again for Thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we thank Thee that He is our Savior, that we have nothing in our hands to bring when we come to Him.

We need nothing, for Jesus has paid it all upon Calvary's cross, and faith in His finished work delivers us from the caverns of the damned for all eternity, and prepares us to spend eternity in heaven with Thee. And, Our Father, we thank Thee that it doesn't stop just at what we might call the plan of salvation, but we have the wonderful privilege of letting Jesus Christ be our Lord Jesus Christ day by day in our lives. We have the privilege of moment by moment communing with Him, walking with Him, committing our cares to Him, letting Him direct us day by day.

And we pray, Father, for each of us here in this room, that we shall learn this wonderful secret of letting the Lord Jesus Christ live His life in us day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment. Father, we commit ourselves to Thee for guidance in the future. Once again, we commit our dear brother McKay to Thee.

We pray, O God, in a very special way that Thou wilt guide the surgeons and that somehow or another, against all the odds, it be Thy will, our dear brother shall be fully recovered and that we shall hear him minister from behind this very pulpit for years and years to come. Father, we thank Thee in advance for what Thou art going to do. These things we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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