

**THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS**  
**"Part XXXII: Zechariah - God's Uplift For Habitual Sinful Failure"**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Last weekend, when the men of the church were working on my home's roof, Don Ereminas asked me if I had purchased a building permit for the job! I suddenly had one of those sinking feelings, and told him, "No, I didn't know I needed one!" He shook his head, "Yes," and I felt all the more nervous! Then Dave Slate had some fun with me, announcing for everybody on the rooftop to hear, "**You didn't get a permit and you're going to preach tomorrow?!**"

We have the permit now -- I straightened it out first thing Monday morning, and the building inspector didn't seem to be upset. **But what bothered me was the FACT that I felt ANXIETY over the matter when, as a PASTOR, I have told others for years to "trust the Lord" to handle THEIR anxieties! WHY did I get so WORRIED about it against my OWN counsels as a PASTOR?!**

(2) Sometimes the report comes in that a new or struggling believer is feeling very stressed. However, they see it as a reason to avoid attending a church's fellowship rather than coming to meetings to find encouragement as is taught in Ephesians 4. **Why?! When will they learn their need for fellowship instead of suffering alone like that?!**

(3) Dr. James Dobson reports of a complaint a stressed out mother had over having to work to make ends meet with the result that she farmed out her toddlers to a day care center. Dr. Dobson then discovered that she was working to make car payments on her Lexus while her husband was hard a work to pay off the new Mercedes! He marveled that they had not considered purchasing less expensive cars, putting the welfare of their children above owning their expensive vehicles. **Dr. Dobson wondered, "When will believers learn the basics of overcoming worldliness to handle the stresses such spiritual weakness brings on family relationships?!"**

**Can we overcome the discouragement of habitual spiritual defeat?! If so, HOW?!** (We turn to the sermon's "Need" section)

***Need: "Just when I think that I have come to gain complete spiritual victory over a particular fault, I find myself plagued by my repeating it all over again! So, WHY keep TRYING anymore?!"***

- I. **After God's people failed in their world mission and were judged by captivity, they returned to Palestine only to face REPEATED discouragement for SINS and WEAKNESSES in their midst!**
  - A. Though God created the world and set man up as His deputy, sin deposed him, and Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
  - B. The Lord renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
  - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy opposing God's rule on the earth, Genesis 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Revelation 12:1-3.
  - D. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to check his sin, Gn. 12:1-3.
  - E. Yet, after many challenges en route, that nation failed to curb Nimrod's error, and God had to send it into captivity, Gn. 12:4-Daniel.
  - F. But when God restored Israel to the land, materialism inhibited the rebuilding of His temple, so God **again** put Israel under discipline by inhibiting her income to direct her to do His will (Ezra and Haggai).
  - G. **Seeing their BENT toward sin and its defeats implied MORE sorrows, a discouragement for these previously judged people!**
- II. **God raised up Zechariah to supply God's great UPLIFT of HOPE to counter a threat of DEPRESSION for HABITUAL sinful failure:**
  - A. God used Zechariah to address these **temporary** discouragements:
    1. With Haggai, Zechariah called the returned exiles to repent and rebuild the temple for **current** divine blessings, Zech. 1:1-6.
    2. As for the **Gentiles** who had inhibited the temple reconstruction (Ezra 4:1-24), God promised to **REVERSE** His dealings so that **Israel** would be **blessed** and the **Gentiles punished** for harassing Israel beyond His assigned 70 years of her judgment, Zech. 1:7-17!
    3. In fact, God promised through Zechariah to restore the external fortunes of Israel, anticipating the Messianic Kingdom, 1:18-2:13!
    4. God pledged to cleanse Israel's leaders of sin to escape Satan's accusations, and unite king & priest offices in Messiah, 3:1-10.
    5. Zerubbabel's discouragement in facing the temple work stalling due to shortages from sinful materialism and criticism of imperfect workmanship (Haggai 1:2-11; 2:1-4) was to be faced with the following **long-term** uplifting insights:
      - a. God revealed that governor Zerubbabel and priest Joshua were His **2 KEY earthly witnesses** to encourage them, Zech. 4:1-14!
      - b. The money shortages were due to Nimrodian materialism Israel acquired in Babylon, making Zerubbabel's **temple work** effort in **spite** of shortages a **key counter** to Satan's **world** plan, 5:1-11!
      - c. Since rebuilding the temple was thus invaluable from the **eternal** perspective, Zerubbabel was to be busy & finish the job, 6:1-15!
    6. Finally, Israel was to replace false contrition with the true 7:1-8:23.

- B. God also used Zechariah to encourage Israel **long-term**, predicting her **ULTIMATE** deliverance from **vile distant future** sins! (9:1-14:21)
1. He predicted the **coming** survival of Israel under Alexander the Great, **contrasting** his **ferocity** with the coming Messiah's **grace**, 9. Yet, in spite of this welcome contrast, Zechariah foretold Israel's **rejecting** Messiah under Judaism with God's resulting **judgment** in giving Israel over to the savage **antichrist's** rule, Zech. 10:1-11:17!
  2. Zechariah predicted that when Messiah **returned** to Israel in His Second Coming, Israel would **repent** and be **forgiven**, 12:1-13:9.
  3. Zechariah also saw that the **process** of getting a **rejecting** Israel to **accept** Messiah would be the **awful** Great Tribulation, 14:1-21!
- III. **The "thread of redemption" in Zechariah is the news that in her MESSIAH will Israel be victorious over her incessant sin failures:**
- A. Messiah would come out of the cut down (judged) stump of the sinful priesthood in Israel as an effective, sinless priest unto to God, 3:8.
  - B. **Though** peacefully presenting Himself on a donkey as King, 9:9 (Mt. 21:4-5), and **though** rejected by Israel's leaders and betrayed to death for 30 pieces of silver, a **slave's** ransom (11:8-14), **yet** at His Second Coming, Messiah would show Israel His "rejection" scars (from His crucifixion) as the **gracious MEANS** of **leading** her in deep contrition to **REPENTANCE** and **CLEANSING**, Zechariah 12:10; 13:1,6!
  - C. His Second Coming to the Mount of Olives (with the Church) to **deliver** Israel and fulfill Acts 1:11 is given in Zechariah 14:3-5!

**Application:** *To deal with habitual sin, (1) believe on Christ as Savior from sin (Jn. 3:16) and expect total deliverance from the sin nature in the rapture, 1 Cor. 15:51-58. (2) Handle the ongoing battle with sin by (a) confession (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) dependence on the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-23) for (c) obedience to Scripture, (1 Jn. 2:1-6). (3) Meanwhile, stick to what may seem to be our meager roles or works for God, for the ETERNAL perspective makes our roles and works INVALUABLE!*

**Lesson:** *Total victory over sin comes ONLY in God's future triumph FOR us; yet, we are to be ENCOURAGED to keep at His work NOW by focusing on the great eternal WEIGHT of our earthly roles and works!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . . )

In 1865, a church choir member in Baltimore, Maryland sat listening to her pastor, Rev. George Schrick preach on Christ's salvation. Moved, Elvina Hall wrote out her sentiments in a poem.

When she finished, Elvina felt badly that she had spent her time writing and not listening to the sermon. She gave the poem to her pastor after the service, apologizing for not hearing him preach.

Reverend Schrick suddenly acquired a strange look on his face. He quickly located a paper on which the church's organist, Thomas Grape had written a tune for a poem by the famous William Bradbury, but which tune had proved to be a poor match for Bradbury's poem. (Thomas had the Church's small cabinet organ in his home due to remodeling work in the Church, so he had the time to practice and write a tune.) Thomas' tune, "**All To Christ I Owe**," perfectly **matched** Elvina's poem, so their pastor joined Elvina's poem to Thomas' tune and published the work. We know the hymn as follows (Hymns Of Faith And Inspiration (Ideals), p. 72-74):

"I hear the Savior say, 'Thy strength indeed is small,  
Child of weakness, watch and pray, Find in me thine all in all.'  
Lord, now indeed I find Thy pow'r, and thine alone,  
Can change the leper's spots And melt the heart of stone.  
For nothing good have I Whereby thy grace to claim;  
I'll wash my garments white In the blood of Calv'ry's Lamb.  
And when, before the throne, I stand in him complete,  
'Jesus died my soul to save,' My lips shall still repeat."  
(Chorus) Jesus paid it all, **All to him I owe**;  
Sin had left a crimson stain, He wash'd it white as snow.

Thankfully, Elvina Hall did not shy away from telling her pastor of her poem just because she wrote it during his sermon. And thankfully Rev. Schrick did not get upset at Elvina for writing the poem during his sermon or discard Thomas Grape's "imperfect" tune! And thankfully Thomas Grape at least **tried** to write a good tune for Mr. Bradbury's poem! And thankfully somebody undertook the church remodeling effort so Thomas Grape could have the time to tinker on the Church's cabinet organ! In **spite** of **shortcomings** or **weaknesses**, by God's grace, **all** efforts **together** became **invaluable** for the Church! So, let **US** keep plugging away for God no matter what our calling!