

Zechariah 4:2,10 (Eric James) 210376

Walla Walla Conference: 1996, Zechariah 4:10, 2 Timothy 2:15, 19-22

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Hymn #24 in the back of the book. Nothing but Christ is on. We tread the gift unpriced, God's living bread, with stamp in hand and feet well shot. Nothing but Christ, the Christ of God and #24 in the back of the book. Everything. Was for him. Where we go? Everybody. What is it? Whatever. Rain. Like to look at part of a verse in Zechariah? Zechariah chapter 4. In verse 10. For who hath despised the day of small things? Then over in second Timothy. Second Timothy, chapter 2 and verse 15. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Verse 19 Nevertheless the foundation of God stand assure having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts. But follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them. That call on the Lord out of a pure heart. I'd like to speak for a few moments this afternoon about that verse we opened with Who Hath Despised the Day of Small Things. We're living in a day of small things, aren't we? And I think we feel it all. We all feel it to a greater or lesser extent. And to the greater extent that we feel, we feel it. It enters into our heart and it'll have a real impact on us. In verse 15 of Second Timothy 2 it tells us rightly dividing the word of truth. That's important, isn't it?

It's important to rightly divide the word of truth. You know the Bible is taken up. In so many different ways. You can talk to people of every different religious stripe and they all claim to follow the Bible, but they don't divide it very well, many of them, do they? And so it's important that we follow the apostles instructions and we rightly divide the word of truth. You know, I struck yesterday when our brother Chuck was speaking about Promise Keepers, and I don't want to dwell on negative ministry, that certainly has a place, but I was struck when he did mention that. Because, you know, that's a typical case of not rightly dividing the word of truth. When I read the word of God, I find that the proper place for the Christian in our day. Is this part of a remnant? It says here in verse 20, But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver. But also of wood and earth, and some to honor and some to dishonor. What does that mean? I believe it means simply this. When we read in First Timothy, we find that the House of God was in order. Things were as they should be, and perhaps we'll come back to that a little bit later, that order is important to God. But nonetheless, the time came and it didn't take very long for it to happen that the House of God, the outward profession of Christianity. Decline, and in short order the House of God was no longer in order. There were those that were unbelievers. That's what it means when it says here in verse 20. Vessels of wood and of earth. There were those who were unbelievers that were professing the name of Christ. There were those that were believers that were not vessels to dishonor, not vessels to honor, they were vessels to dishonor. And so the outward testimony of the House of God was in ruin and disorder. And I think we need to be careful how we put this because as we rightly divide the Word of God, one thing we find is that the House of God is presented in the New Testament in two different ways. On the one hand, it's presented as a temple that grows up. That God himself is building. That's what it refers to in Matthew 16 verse 18. When the Lord Jesus says on this rock, I will build my church. It's that that house could never fall into disorder. Thank God for that. It'll never fall into ruin. But when we speak about the testimony, when we speak about the House of God being in ruin, we're speaking of the aspect of the House of God in which it's been committed to man's responsibility. You can turn, for instance, to 1st Corinthians 3 and find out about that. Paul speaks of himself as a wise master builder. He's laid the foundation, and there could be no other foundation but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. But now man has the responsibility to build on that. And in that respect man has built, and in that respect, the outward testimony now is in ruin. What God has built, what God is building, is never going to fall into ruin. Thank God for that. But what man is building has fallen into ruin, and that's what we're talking about here. What was once in order in the early chapters of Acts has now become like a great house. The Spirit of God is still there, but it's become like a great house. It's fallen into disorder. And now what are the instructions of the word of God to us? I think this is very important. I think this is critical, that we rightly divide the truth, the rightly divide the word of truth in this matter. The tendency is that we want to see all believers get along together, don't we? The tendency is that we would like to be able to say that everybody who professes the name of Christ that we can, we can lock hands with them and lock arms with them. But you know that's not rightly dividing the word of truth, because since the outward testimony is in ruin. It's no longer possible to do that. And so, as our brother was speaking yesterday about Promise Keepers. I was reminded that that's one of three great ecumenical movements that's taken place in our day. The first great ecumenical movement. Was that of mass evangelization? Perhaps it sounds strange to you, but I believe that Billy Graham was part of that movement. Billy Graham is a dear man, certainly a brother and a Lord, and he teaches the preaches the gospel faithfully. But you'll notice if you read about who one of his crusades that'll have a number of ministers on the platform with them, and some of them have no use for the gospel that he preaches.

He's been defiled by his association. It was a great mass movement. And it's bringing all believers together, whether they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ or not. And that's an ecumenical movement. It's not rightly dividing the word of truth. The second great ecumenical movement in my lifetime has been the charismatic movement. It's bringing professors of every ilk together, and they're all claiming to be Christians and they're all claiming to walk under the same banner. But some are believers. Some are not believers, as we have here. Some are vessels of gold and silver. That means they're real. Some are vessels of wood and earth. That means they're not real believers. And even some of those that are believers or vessels that dishonor because they're not clean. And now the third great ecumenical movement is Promise Keepers. It draws together Mormons, It draws together Catholics, It draws together those that know the Lord Jesus as their savior, and they're all pushed together into the same bundle. That's not rightly dividing the word of truth, that's despising the day of small things and that's what we want to talk about this afternoon for a few minutes. What is the instruction then in verse 21? Let's look at it again. If a man therefore purge himself from these, that's what the word of God says. It doesn't say to lock arms with these people. Why? Why is it important that we not lock arms

with these people? You know why? If we turn over to Romans chapter 2 and verse 24, I believe it is, it says this speaking about the Jews, how they were the depository of the Word of God and the testimony of God and the Old Testament and what happened. They despised the Word of God, they were unfaithful and what was the result? The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles for your sake. The name of God has blasphemed among the Gentiles for your sake. And you know, that's what happens with these ecumenical movements. The name of God is blasphemed because of all the uncleanness that's connected with the name of Christ. And so when we rightly divide the word of truth, we understand that in our day, rather than being part of an ecumenical movement, the Word of God clearly instructs us to be part of a remnant. Mr. Darby understood that. One of the first pamphlets he wrote about church truth had this title. Separation from evil. God's principle of unity because he read these verses. And it's touched his conscience and he realized that that system. That national system, of which he was a clergyman in England, contained all kinds of vessels, vessels to honor, vessels that dishonor believers, unbelievers, and that he was defiled by that association. Furthermore, that that body did not represent its head in heaven, and the only way to properly represent the head in heaven is to be separate, to become a remnant. What do we mean by a remnant? A remnant is of the whole. But it is not the whole it means that we do separate from those that are unbelievers. It also means, as it says very plainly here, and this is where so many people don't rightly divide the word of God. But it says plainly here that we separate from vessels that dishonor, whether they be unbelievers or whether they be believers. We separate from vessels to dishonor. Verse 21. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. We also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. You know, we can't go outside of this great house. It's still the House of God, but we can't go outside of it. We have to go to a little corner of it. We couldn't go outside of it because to go outside of this house would be to leave to give up the profession of Christianity. And we certainly don't want to do that, but we do have to separate to a part of it. Where we're with those that call in the Lord out of a pure heart. With them, isn't that encouraging word? Sometimes we say, you know, that's got quite a cost connected with it. We're going to have to separate from people that I know that I've known for years, that I've associated with from years. But that's what the word of God says, doesn't it? And that separation has been painful for some. I know some here that have found that separation to be painful.

But taking that step in faith, they found that there was others that had the same exercise with them that call in the Lord out of a pure heart. What is a pure heart? Well, let's turn over to 2nd Corinthians Chapter 11. Two Corinthians, Chapter 11. Verse 2. This is the apostle Paul speaking. And he says, for I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. For I have espoused you to one husband. That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ, but I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. That's a pure heart. That's a pure heart, a chaste virgin to Christ. The simplicity that is in Christ, that's a pure heart, to have no motive but Christ. That's a pure heart. Let's turn over then for some more help on this thought of the Remnant Testimony, the Remnant character, perhaps we should say over to Revelation Chapter 3. I don't want to read much here, but I do just want to point out the general character of the remnant. I think it's well described in the last two churches mentioned in Revelation Chapter 3. We well know that these in chapters 2 and three of Revelation, we have the seven churches of Asia presented. They give a historical outline of the church prophetically told, and they also give different conditions of assemblies. And these last two have often been mentioned. I'd like to suggest that we have a contrast in these last two, and it's fairly easy to pick up in this contrast. And in the, and in the first of these two, the Church of Philadelphia, we have a remnant testimony. We have the remnant character, which is what I'd like to speak about this afternoon. Now, one way we can identify this character is by looking at the pronouns. I think that's helpful. We can look at the pronouns and see what they're really talking about in these in these churches. Look at the Church of Philadelphia, it says. Look at verse 8. The middle of the verse. Well, yeah, middle of the verse, for thou hast a little strength. This is the Lord Jesus speaking, and has kept my word and has not denied my name. And then skip down to verse. Verse 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out. And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, And I will write upon him my new name. I think the pronoun is pretty plain there, isn't it? It's mine. It's the Lord Jesus speaking. The true remnant character, brethren, is Christ centered. Isn't that important? It's Christ centered. Now let's look at the contrast in the last church. What's the what's the the pronoun there you so much. Over in verse. Verse 17 Because thou sayest I am rich. And increased with goods, and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked. Who's the central part of that church? What's the central theme there? Itself isn't it? I am rich and increased with goods and of need of nothing. I am rich. That's the central theme. And what a difference there is. The true remnant testimony has Christ for the object. That's what we were singing about, wasn't it? Nothing but Christ is on. We tread the gift of Christ, God's living bread, with staff in hand and feet well shod. Nothing but Christ, the Christ of God. Well, those are great sounding words, I know, but it needs to touch our hearts, doesn't it? Nothing but Christ, the Christ of God. Let's turn now for a few minutes and look at this remnant character, if you will, with me back to the book of Ruth.

The Book of Ruth. I'd like to begin with verse. 7. Speaking about Naomi, wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her, and they went on the way to return under the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law. Go return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant that she may find rest, each of you, in the House of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we were returned with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters, why will ye go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way. For I am too old to have a husband, if I should say I have hope, if I should have an husband also tonight, and should also bear sons which he tarry for them till they were grown, would ye stay for them from having husbands? Nay, my daughters, for grievance be much for your sakes, that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice and wept again. An Orpha kissed her mother-in-law, But Ruth, Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law has gone back unto her people, and under her gods, return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, And treat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go. And where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people. And thy God, my God, where thou die, ask will I die? And there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also if aught but death part thee and me. When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go, minded to go with her, then she left speaking under her. Well, this is a remnant characteristic, isn't it? Our brother Bruce spoke to us Friday about this. Its wholeheartedness for Christ. That's a remnant characteristic wholeheartedness for Christ. That's what we have in a day of small things, and the Lord values that. We want to speak about that a little bit more today. You know, I'm sure we've all felt that there's been a good deal of discouragement in recent years, hasn't there? And I know speaking to some that. That come they've expressed the thought that. The things are are discouraging and some have even expressed the thought that, you know, it seems like these truths that we've learned and that we speak about in meeting one person mentioned to me, you know, he said. It seems almost like it's a millstone around my neck. It seems to be a burden. You know, I thought about

that and I have to confess. That in the innermost parts of my heart I've had some of the same feelings sometimes. And so I looked at the Word of God. What encouragement does God have for us? Is it not important that we go on with these things that we've learned about, that we've spoken about together being over God's word? Is it important or is it not? Is it just pride or pretense that we go on with these things, or is it that which is according to the mind of God, does it really mean anything? Well, that's what I want to look at a little bit more in the time we have remaining, the first prerequisite I believe. That we have for a proper remnant testimony is this wholeheartedness. Our brother Bruce spoke about that on Friday, didn't he? Counting the cost. You know, I heard somebody speaking the other day and they said, and I believe was they're quite correct in what they said. They said that most of the problems that people have, most of the difficulties that Christians have is because we're not wholehearted. I think there's probably a lot of truth to that. Why is it that we have so many conflicts in our lives? I don't say the Lord doesn't allow things, of course He does. But I'm saying that many of the things that we perceive as problems. In his trials are because we're not wholehearted enough.

If I were wholehearted, like Ruth was, a lot of those problems would disappear. Remember our brother Norman Berry speaking to this once at the tent when I was there some years ago? He said, you know, it's a simple thing to follow Christ. But it's not an easy thing. That's an important distinction, isn't it? It's a simple thing to follow Christ. It sounds so simple, doesn't it? But it's not an easy thing, because it involves the will and the energies. It involves the affections. And this is the secret of walking for Christ in these last remnant days. Wholeheartedness for Christ. You know what Mr. Darby is writing about that 14th chapter of Luke that our brother Bruce brought before us on Friday? He says this something to this effect, he says. I tremble to think of those who haven't counted the cost. I tremble to think of those, Mr. Darby says, who haven't counted the cost. And that's a searching point for each of us, isn't it? Have we really counted the cost? Easy to say, isn't it? Talks cheap. Whatever you really counted the cost. You know what we're talking about in this Remnant testimony. Is what I like to call normal Christianity. I didn't say average Christianity, because average Christianity is something very different from normal Christianity, isn't it? Normal Christianity is that which is according to God's mind. There may only be a few in that pathway at any given time, but it's that which is according to God's mind. It's that which brings glory to God and blessing to man in a way that can't be matched by anything else, no matter how great. It can't be matched by filling a stadium with 50,000 people. But the Lord values it. And if we want to look at that a little bit more this afternoon. That's normal Christianity. Average Christianity is filling a stadium with 50,000 people. It appeals to the first man. But normal Christianity doesn't do that. It doesn't appeal to the first man. Let's look at the beginning of this chapter a little bit before passing on one other thing I'd like to perhaps. Comes to mind as in the beginning of this chapter we find that there was a famine in this city where these people lived. They lived in Bethlehem. Which, interestingly enough, means the House of bread. That's the place where you'd expect to find food, isn't it? And yet it's remarkable that that's the very place where there was a famine was in Bethlehem. And so there was a famine in Bethlehem. This was a test for these dear people, Limalek and his wife Naomi, and their two sons. And so a trial is a test for us, isn't it? A trial is a test for us. And this was the test for these people. The test was this. They knew that the land of Israel was the place of God's appointment. That was where the priests were, that was where the Ark of God was, where the Tabernacle was, that's where the Levites were. They knew that it was the place of God's appointment. The question for them was then. Could they go on in that pathway in a time of famine? Or were they just willing to go on in that pathway when things were going well, when there was plenty of food? Were they, as sometimes we say, satisfied to go on with with the Lord as long as everything else is going OK? That was the question for these dear people, wasn't it? And you know, I don't want to throw rocks at these people because I know my own heart too well. Now the Lord is a perfect accountant. And at the judgment seat of Christ, he's going to bring out every hidden motive that I have. And that I've ever had. And so while we can easily condemn these people, we need to take heed to our own hearts. What about our own motives? How easily do we give up those things that are precious to Christ? Are we only willing to go on with them when lots of other people are? That's a test for us, aren't they? That's the test of wholeheartedness for Christ. And I do believe the Lord's coming is very near and soon. We'll see. Soon we'll stand in His presence and we'll get our report card because, you know, that's really what the judgment seat of Christ is.

The question of our sins is not going to be brought up. But the questions of what kind of disciple I was as our brother Bruce was speaking about the other day will be brought up. I can have a safe soul in a lost life, and that should exercise me. Why did the Lord leave me here? Why didn't He just Take Me Home the minute I was saved when I was nine years old? Because He wanted me to walk as a disciple for Him in this life. And it's true for each one of us, isn't it? So this famine came, and these dear people weren't equal to it. And so I remember. Notes of a meeting that our brother chapter Brown gave years ago and he used that little text in in Psalms that says when he writes up the people and. So he's writing us up too, isn't he? Every hidden motive in our heart is plain before him. It's far better if we're, if we keep it plain in this life, if we walk before the Lord, as it says in First John, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. That's the way to walk. Well, let's look here. I just want to look at another thing before we pass on to Nehemiah. You know, it's instructive where these people went. There's a great number of symbols in the Old Testament. And examples in the Old Testament, the nations around the land of Israel are examples for us. And so I believe that there are three nations which are particularly examples of the world. You know, the world is not just one thing. And I want to be clear about this. I just talking to a brother the other day, you know, and he says I often think of the world as just one thing. And Satan would like us to think that. But the world is not just one thing, brethren. The world is presented in Scripture in these symbols as three different nations. Now these people went to Moab. Have to excuse me, I've got allergies and antihistamines get to me and dry my mouth up. But we look at three nations that are pictures of the world. The one nation is no surprise, It's Egypt. We know that Egypt is a picture of the world. We've all read in the books of Exodus how that the Israelites were brought out of the land of Egypt. We know that Egypt is a type of the world. It's a type of the natural world. It's a type of the world and its power. It's a type of the world and its pleasures. It's a type of the world and it's politics. That's Egypt. It's power, it's architecture. Its King's world if we want to put it that way. That's the world. And that's the world we often think about, don't we? We think, well we mentioned somebody went off into the world and when we say that we normally mean the Egypt world, don't we? That place where they, they, they went for natural and worldly advantage. And that's correct so far as it goes. But there's two other nations that give us pictures of the world. Babylon is the second one. Babylon gives us the world in its religious corruption. You know, if you just keep your finger here and turn over to Matthew or to Acts 8, I think we get a little picture of that Babylon. Babylon was a thoroughly corrupt place. It had multitudes of gods. It had a wicked religious system. It's a picture of the spiritual world, the religious world, and some people are anxious. To be great in the religious world, they may not care about being great in the Egypt world, they may not care about politics, may not care about being a great musician, for instance. May not care about being a great researcher, but they're anxious to be important in the religious world. So in Acts chapter 8 we get an example of a person like that. In verse 9, But there was a certain man called Simon, Acts 8, verse 9, which before time in that same city used sorcery and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one. Jeremiah says, or it said to Jeremiah, Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not. That's true of the Egypt world, isn't it? But it's also true of the religious world. Do you seek to be somebody great in

the religious world? Do I seek to be somebody great in the meeting? That's the same thing, isn't it? That's the world. Do I seek to be somebody great?

Well, that's the religious world, that's the Babylon world. And now Moab, where these people went, is also a picture of the world. And this, I think, is striking. Moab is new to the religious corruption we spoke about in Babylon. Nor is it the natural corruption and natural greatness of man. We spoke about in Egypt, but it's this. And I think we've heard a lot about this in recent years and perhaps I think many of us here have felt this side of the world in recent years. Turn over. If you would just keep your finger here, turn over to Jeremiah 48. It speaks about Moab some. What is Moab a picture of? It's a picture of the world, but a different aspect from both Egypt and Babylon. Jeremiah, chapter 48. In verse 11. Moab has been at ease from his youth. And he hath settled on his leaves, his haunches, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel. Neither hath he gone into captivity. That's what Moab is a picture of. You know, I was talking to a brother the other day and he said. He said in the last few years in the little assembly where I go, said fifty people have left. That's hard, isn't it? Well, those people haven't all given up the Lord. But many, I believe, have been attracted to Moab. What does it mean? It means it's the world as far as the place where we don't have lots of trials and tribulations. That's Moab, and we're attracted to that often, aren't we? I know one of the relatives we have told us, she said. Well, we left the meeting where we were going because there was just too much trouble, just too much exercise, just too much difficulty. We just couldn't, we just couldn't take it anymore until we left. That's what Moab is. That's what Moab is. It's the desire for ease. It's the desire to no longer be poured from vessel to vessel. That's what the Lord does for us. Why does He do it? Because he wants to draw us closer to Himself. Because he wants us to be like David's mighty men. They weren't anybody special. Read about those who are attracted to David at The Cave of Adela. They were in debt. They were poor. But they came to David. And by being near David and being devoted to David and David's God, they became great. That's what the Lord wants for us, brethren. Maybe not great in the eyes of anybody but him, but that's OK, isn't it? That's right, isn't it? But Moab, then, is the desire to be no longer poured from vessel to vessel. No longer have the trials and tribulations that comes from being where the Lord is. Just want to mention one more thing and then I want to pass on to Nehemiah. You might turn to it. Nehemiah 8. I mentioned that what we have in Ruth, what we have in the remnant testimony is normal Christianity. And I want to emphasize that, brethren. It's normal Christianity. It's not average Christianity. That's what the world around us or the professions professors around us fall into. That's average Christianity. That's certainly not according to God's mind. But I want to say something else too. Neither is it elite Christianity. It's not elite Christianity either. It's normal Christianity. It's that which is close to the heart of Christ. It's not that which despises others, but it's that which walks close to the heart of Christ, just like the Philadelphia does. It's satisfied with Christ not speaking about ourselves, because that's what elite Christianity is. Elite Christianity is simply Laodicea, just as average Christianity is. Let's turn on then to Nehemiah Chapter 8. There's a verse that was read the other day. And I've enjoyed it for some time in verse 10. It says, Then he said unto them, Nehemiah speaking, Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them, for whom nothing is prepared. For this day is wholly unto our Lord. Neither be ye sorry. And then this last phrase is what I had in mind, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

The joy of the Lord is your strength. I'll get back to that in just a minute, but. Let's if you would just keep your finger here and turn over to Haggai. We know of course, that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah go together and the book of Nehemiah took place a little bit later than the book of the events that took place in the book of Ezra. And over in the book of Haggai. We have some of the internal or the spiritual history of what took place in Ezra's day. What happened in Ezra's day? It was a remnant testimony. We remember that after the children of Israel, the 1st, the 10 tribes were carried away because of their, their unfaithfulness of the Lord. And then in time because of the unfaithfulness of the two tribes that were left, they too were carried away to the land of Babylon. They were carried away for 70 years outside their land. And then in time, as remember, Cyrus sent the people back, a small little remnant of the people back, just a small remnant, were sent back to the land of Israel. And they were given the vessels from the temple that were left. They were just a little remnant. We spoke about that remnant, didn't we? Just a little remnant. They weren't all Israel. They weren't even all Jude and Benjamin. They were just a small number, but they went back in obedience to the Lord. Well, in Haggai we have some of the characteristics of those people I might mention. Just one more thing before we look at a few verses here in Haggai. You know, it struck me that when those people went back in Ezra's day that they were missing some of the things they had before when they went back this time. There was number Shekinah glory, you know, in the wilderness. The Israelites had that Shekinah glory, that cloud of glory over the Tabernacle. It was the outward visible sign of the Lord's presence. And when Solomon dedicated the temple, that Shekinah glory also came on the sanctuary. It was the visible signal, visible sign of God's presence. But you know, we read in the book of Ezekiel how that Shekinah glory left. And so when these people went back, the Shekinah glory was no longer there. There was no outward sign that the Lord was there. Another thing. We read about a number of the vessels that they took back with them. But you know, one of the vessels or one of the pieces of furniture that we don't read anything about was the Ark. And it's been regularly said that the Ark. That they didn't have the ark anymore, so they didn't have the Shekinah glory, they didn't have the Ark of God where the Lord dwelt between the cherubim on the mercy seat. That was gone. And how about the priests? They didn't have the Urim and Thummim that they could inquire of the Lord's mind anymore. That was gone. All those things were gone. The Shekinah glory was gone, the Urim and Thummim. The ark was gone. What did they have? What did they have? Why did they go back? While it was a remnant testimony and this just to read in Haggai a few verses, is such an encouragement to me because I think there's some encouragement for us. Look at Haggai chapter one and verse 8. Now you might remember what happened here. These people in Ezra's day came back. And then? They began to build the temple. It was a small little temple, you might remember that. And when they laid the foundation, some of the old men began to weep. Because they have seen the temple of Solomon in its glory, and they saw this pitiful little foundation that would be Ezra's temple. And they wept. The glory was gone, wasn't it? These people were low. Am I? They're never again called the people of God. And so what a sad picture. But they're a remnant and they're given encouragement. And here's the encouragement they're given. They started to build the temple of the Lord. And then in time what happened was they were discouraged and they stopped building. And the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah were raised up to prophecy. And here's what we read from Haggai, verse 8, Haggai chapter one, and verse 8, go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house.

Now here is a remnant character. And I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified. Saith the Lord. No Ark, no Shekinah, glory no Urim and Thummim. But the Lord's approval. Isn't that a wonderful thing? Look at verse 12. Here's another Remnant character. Then Zerubbabel the son of Shaltiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest with all the remnant of the people. Notice it says remnant there obey the voice of the Lord their God. There's another characteristic of the remnant is they obey the Lord their God. Look at verse 13. Remember the Shekinah glory is gone, so is the ark. But read verse 13. Then spake Haggai, the Lord's messenger, and the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the Lord. Isn't that a wonderful thing? There was no outward sign of the Lord's presence there. The ark was gone, but the Lord was with him in an abiding way. And you know about 170 years and now, now ago now, the same truth is recovered, wasn't it?

Thank God for it. Some brothers knew that the outward testimony was in ruin that could never be recovered. But they read that first. Matthew 1820. Says For where two or three are gathered together under my name, there am I in the midst of them. Isn't that a wonderful truth? You know, we know some Russian brethren in our area. I know you have some Russian brethren here. I don't see him right now, but I saw him earlier today and we got a hold of Ron Junior, gave us a copy of just one little pamphlet we've been able to give to these Russian brethren. They've asked us to meet with him and asked us to tell him more about the the truth, what they call the Bible way. We've only been able to give him one pamphlet in their own language so far. And I can't read the pamphlet. The only thing I know about the pamphlet is this by Mr. Darby. And the only thing I could read was Matthew 1820 on it. And that was given to these Russians of Brother Dave Took's here, you know, when he gave it to him, I think about a year ago. And about four months ago, Dave said, you know, I really like that pamphlet back. And they said, brother, we we need that pamphlet. We can't give it to you. We need it. Well, they treasured that, and so these brethren about 170 years ago treasured it. And I submit that that's another remnant characteristic. They have the Lord's presence. I am with you, saith the Lord. And then in the second chapter. We look at verse four, it says, yet now be strong those rubble, saith the Lord, and be be strong, O Joshua, son of Jaws, the deck, the high priest, and be strong all ye people, the Lamb, saith the Lord and work here we have these characteristics again, for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts. Verse five According to the word that I covenanted with you when he came out of Egypt, that's obedience to the word of God. So my spirit remaineth among you. Fear ye not. Those are wonderful remnant characteristics, aren't they? The Lord in their midst. Obedience to the Word of God. God's Spirit dwelling among them. Let's turn back to Nehemiah Times getting on quickly. So that's the book of Ezra, the book of Nehemiah then remembered the temple was built in Ezra's day. And now in the book of Nehemiah, the the wall is built. You know, that city of Jerusalem was a was a rubble. It had been destroyed. There was not much left there. And it had been destroyed. Now this verse, the end of verse 10 for the joy. Of the Lord is your strength. You know, I've enjoyed that verse lately. What is left in a day of small things? It's not. It's not. I don't read in scripture to go fill a stadium with cheering people. I don't read that in scripture.

But what is the joy of the Lord is your strength. You know, sometimes we misread that verse. And we think it says that our joy in the Lord is our strength. But you know that's not the meaning at all. The meaning is that the strength of the remnant is that which gives the Lord joy. What is it that gives the Lord joy in our day? What is it that gives the Lord joy? I just like to look at a few verses. I'm sure that. Each of each of us here has enjoyed these verses and other verses. Let's look at Matthew chapter 3. What is the joy of the Lord in this remnant day? Matthew chapter 3. This is the Lord's baptism. Verse 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him. And he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him. And verse 17 is what I had in mind. And lo, a voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved son. And in the new translation it says In whom I have found my delight. Do you think that's the joy of the Lord? It is, isn't it? God finds his supreme delight in the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's a suitable subject for the remnant testimony, the joy of the Lord. Let's turn over quickly to Luke chapter 15. I think we'll find a similar thing you remember in Luke chapter 15. It actually. Is 3 little stories, but it's actually only called one parable if you read it carefully. Want to look just briefly at the third? Remember the story of the Prodigal son? He comes back and the father receives him. According to his own dignity, he doesn't receive him according to the position, the condition that the young man had fallen into, but he receives him according to his own dignity. And that's what God does with us, doesn't he? He receives us according to his own dignity. Look at verse 22. The sun says in verse 21, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and no more worthy to be called thy son. Verse 22 But the Father said to his servant, spring forth the best robe. This is according to his dignity. This is how we've been received. And put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hit her the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry. For this. My son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found. And they began to make merry. Well, that's certainly the joy of the Lord, isn't it? It speaks about they began to make merry. What is it that the heart of God. What is it that brings heart joy to the heart of God? It's feeding on the fatted calf. That's the person in the work of Christ. The fatted calf, that's a suitable subject for us as a remnant testimony. Let's look over. We're in Luke. Let's look over to the 17th chapter. There's more we could look at. I'm sure we've all enjoyed many, but. Verse 11 of Luke 17 speaks about 10 lepers outside the city of Jericho. They lift up their voices and ask that their leprosy might be cleansed. Verse 14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go, show yourselves unto the priest. And it came to pass that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are there are the nine, there are not found that return to give glory to God. Save this stranger. I believe that worship. Is also that which brings joy to God's heart. True worship. Simple worship. Just one out of 10 here, isn't it? That is the joy of the Lord. Let's look at another over in John chapter 4. I love that example there. You know, sometimes we hear people say, well, you know, these things aren't really very important. It's important to serve the Lord. It's important to do lots of works, but these things aren't really very important. Let's look at John 4. See what the Lord Jesus says. We don't have a better authority than that. He's speaking to the woman at the well in John 4. And in verse 23 it says this. But the hour cometh. And now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

The Father seeketh such. Worship Him. Rather than it's not worshipping the Father, when we come and listen to some man speak, it may help us, but it's not worshipping the Father and the Father seeketh such to worship him. He wants to worship of our hearts and spirit and in truth. We don't use music, we don't have beautiful buildings. That's not spirit and truth. But he wants to worship of her heart and spirit and the truth. You know, you remember the story here and I. Love to read that verse 32. The Lord Jesus, the disciples had gone to the city to get meat. And the Lord Jesus, when they got back, the Lord wasn't hungry anymore. Why not? Because he had found his joy in something, He had seen this woman turn to the Lord. And he says in verse 32. They said master eat but he wasn't hungry. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that she know not of. This is what fills his heart and thrills his heart is to see a lost Sinner saved. I have meat to eat that you know not of. Well, I see our time just about gone. I want to turn to a verse in First Peter along the same lines, First Peter chapter 2. And I'm sure you can fill in many of these. What is the joy of the Lord is your strength. It's not our joy, brethren. What is it that gives joy to the heart of God? Look at First Peter chapter 2. First Peter chapter 2 and verse 9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and holy nation. A peculiar people. And then this is what I particularly had in mind, that she should show forth the praises. Of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, do you think that brings joy to the heart of God? It does, doesn't it? You know, there's some other things that bring joy to the heart of God. If we turn to the fifth chapter of Ephesians and I know our time is almost gone, so I'll just refer to him briefly to finish the subject. We turn to the fifth chapter of Ephesians that talks about the Church as the bride of Christ. And that brings several thoughts the mind, doesn't it? One is, it speaks about being subject to Christ. That's a remnant characteristic, isn't it, Obedience to Christ. It says that the Church is subject to Christ at Ephesians chapter 5. You can look it up. The bride also brings out the thoughts of affection, doesn't it? You know, in the Song of Solomon when the bride is speaking to the bridegroom, it says, Thou hast ravished me with one of thine eyes. You know the Lord Jesus wants both our eyes. He wants our whole heart. But even one of our eyes ravishes his heart. That's the

joy of the Lord, isn't it? Thou hast ravished me with one of thine eyes. But He wants our whole heart. If we turn to Revelation chapter 2, we read about that first. Of the seven assemblies, the Ephesian assembly, we read a number of good things that they were doing there in Ephesus. But then it comes down to the verse where it says, I have. You know, it says somewhat in our translation, but that word somewhat should be there because of the Lord. This was a very serious problem. I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love. Does the Lord want our hearts? He's not satisfied with anything less than all of our hearts. My son give me thine heart, it tells us in the proverbs, and he has against them that they had left. Their first love. He doesn't want less.

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