

By My Spirit

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Zechariah 4:6–7 (NKJV) “So he answered and said to me: ‘This *is* the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the LORD of hosts. “Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel *you shall become* a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”””

The book of Zechariah is a book about restoration. The people of Judah had sinned against God, their temple and city destroyed, and were taken away captive into Babylon. Then God began to deliver them and bring them home. Zerubbabel was assigned by God the task to rebuild the temple. But the work was not without difficulties and opposition.

God is a God who both judges and restores. God will not bless our works done in our way with our strength for our glory. He will only bless His work done in His way by His Spirit for His glory. Thus God judges our works and then He restores His work. When God restores, He does it according to His purpose and plan. What He does is sealed with His glory and blessing.

God is doing the same thing in the church today. 1 Peter 4:17 (NKJV) declares, *“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”* God will judge His people. God’s purpose for judging His people is redemptive in nature. When God judges, He shakes everything that can be shaken. He burns up the chaff so that only what is of His kingdom may remain (Hebrews 12:25–29). When God judges, He cleanses the church from impure elements that hinder its spiritual progress. When Christ sits as Lord in His house, He is sure to purify, order, and establish it, bringing it under the rule of His kingdom (Isaiah 9:6–7; Malachi 3:2-3). A good example of this is when Jesus entered the temple in Jerusalem, turned over the money tables and drove out the corrupt elements and re-established His Father’s house as a house of prayer (Matthew 21:12-16). When Jesus cleanses His church, He reveals hearts, challenges motives, tests relationships, purifies the prophetic, exposes counterfeits, overthrows human methods, and casts out corruption. This process is always less painful if we will humble ourselves, submit to the correction, and repent of our sin.

The ultimate goal of Christ in judging His house is to restore. During times of restoration Christ restores the authority of Scripture, sanctifies believers, strengthens love, establishes kingdom order, brings peace, rebuilds fellowship, establishes leadership, releases life, empowers ministry, restores worship, renews vision, and releases hope.

Once we submit to the cleansing work of Christ in our lives, we can expect His work of restoration to begin. The work of restoration begins with the merciful comfort and assurance of His love: *“‘Comfort, yes, comfort My people!’ says your God. ‘Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.’”* (Isaiah 40:1-2 NKJV) God comforts His people with the assurance that He is for them and not against them: *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”* (Jeremiah 29:11-13 NKJV)

After comforting His people, God's begins the healing process: *"Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up."* (Hosea 6:1 NKJV) In judgment God disciplines His people but in restoration He heals the pain of His discipline. We must allow the same Lord that judges us to comfort and heal us.

God comforts and heals us so that we can put the past behind us and embrace once again the work before us. While we have all failed in some measure, we must not allow the past to dictate our future. Isaiah 43:18 (NKJV) *"Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old."* Why are we told to forget the past? Because God will do a new thing: Isaiah 43:19 (NKJV), *"Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."* (Isaiah 43:19 NKJV) Once we have submitted to God's discipline and healing, we must resolve to put the past behind us so that we can embrace the new work of restoration God is doing in our life. (Philippians 3:13-14)

The work of restoration is a work of God's Spirit, a work of His grace. We must not miss this. Zerubbabel was sent to rebuild the temple but the obstacles and opposition that he faced were bigger than he was. They were like mountains before him. In fact, at one point the work stopped. God raised up two prophets of restoration, Haggai and Zechariah to exhort Zerubbabel and the people that what God had started He would finish. The mountain of obstacles and opposition could not stand before him. However, God reminded Zerubbabel that the work would not be accomplished by his own power and might, but by the power of His Spirit: *"So he answered and said to me: 'This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.'"* (Zechariah 4:6 NKJV) God assured Zerubbabel that He would release His grace to overcome every obstacle: *"Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'"* (Zechariah 4:7 NKJV) The building of God's house will begin and end with grace. Grace is the virtue of redemption and restoration. What is grace? Although many define grace as God's unmerited favor, it is more than that. Philippians 2:13 captures the essence of God's grace: *"for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."* Grace is the work of God's Spirit within us. Grace is God working within us the desire and ability to accomplish His will. God gives His grace to the humble who recognize their own weakness and depend upon God's strength (James 4:6).

When God is involved, His grace is evident. When God's grace is involved, people desire to be involved: *"Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power..."* (Psalm 110:3 NKJV) When God's grace is involved, the joy of the Lord is visible, faith is strong, and people go beyond the call of duty not because they have to but because they want to. When God's grace is involved, the mountains become a plain. When God's grace is involved, people will know it and shout, "Grace! Grace to it!"

God will judge and He will restore. He will restore us by His grace. We must not be intimidated by obstacles or be discouraged by small beginnings. We must humble ourselves, depend upon God's grace, and rebuild by His Spirit. God will do His work His way by His Spirit for His glory. So, let us forget the past, abandon human pride, and embrace the grace needed to rise up and build for His glory.

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