

Proclaiming the Gospel

Message
of
Jesus Christ

*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1.18).*

Edifying the Body of Christ (Eph. 4.10-16)

January, 2012

The Wise Still Seek Him

Vol. IV.01

Build the Temple

Have you made resolutions for this new year? Have you ever made one that you kept? Many years ago, I tired of making resolutions which I invariably broke. In the past several weeks, as I looked forward to this year, I found a longing deep inside to be more than ever a pure and holy vessel for the indwelling of Jesus Christ. I want Him to dwell in me and I in Him.

The Scripture tells us that when we ask Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, we are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in us (1 Cor. 3.16). Also Romans 12.1-2,

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *[which is]* your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *[is]* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We are privileged to have another year to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is calling us to **arise** and **build** His temple that He might take pleasure in it and fill it with His glory. **It is time to build!** The books of Ezra (especially chapters one through six), and Haggai and Zechariah speak to us concerning the condition of many in the body of Christ and what is essential to overcome in these last days.

Judah was taken captive by Babylon; but after 70 years, in fulfillment of prophecy (Isa. 44, 45 and Jer. 29), the Persian King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.

As you read this message, read carefully Ezra, chapters one through six, and Haggai, chapter one, as I will be referring to them. In Ezra, we have the historical account of the re-building of the temple; Haggai and Zechariah were the prophets to God's people in Jerusalem at this time.

Notice that King Cyrus, named 150 years earlier by Isaiah (Isa. 44.28), recognized the call of God on his life (Ezra 1.1, 2); "... the Lord stirred up the

relationship with the Lord? This is an ongoing process day by day and moment by moment. Jesus calls us to walk on in Him continually. The prophet Zechariah spoke this Word from the Lord, "... Turn ye unto me . . . and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zec. 1.3).

Consider your ways. If you have become complacent, respond to the call of the Lord to return unto Him. Read His Word daily; spend time set aside with Him in prayer; and worship Jesus.

WHO IS THERE AMONG YOU WHO WILL BUILD THE TEMPLE OF GOD?

Mrs. Bettie L. Lowery, M.R.E., Deaconess, The Rev. Mrs. Dr. C. S. Cole, Pastor, Ret.
Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31).

spirit of Cyrus . . .” and Cyrus said, “. . . he [God] hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem . . .”

Verse three, “Who is there among you of all his people? . . . let him go up to Jerusalem . . . and build the house of the Lord God of Israel . . .” This was a call to God’s people to re-build the temple of the Lord that had been destroyed by the enemy.

Saints, the enemy is determined to destroy God’s temple – us, personally and collectively, the body of Christ. Developments in our country are escalating to annihilate the Christians and the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. We must be built up, fortified against the enemy with building material from the Word and the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The time had come for God’s people to come out of the darkness of bondage into the light of God’s presence. The temple of the Lord had to be built to house the glory of the Lord. God stirred the spirit of Cyrus (Ezra 1.1), and He raised up the spirit of his people to go to Jerusalem and build the house of the Lord (Ezra 1.5). It is time for us to respond to the stirring of the Holy Spirit in our spirits, to present ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God (Rom. 12.1). Who is there among US who will build up the temple? Who is there among us who has spent enough time in bondage and now longs for a new touch of His life?

The altar was built first even as the altar must be built first in our lives. We bow before Him and receive the Lord Jesus Christ. The necessary step for forgiveness was laid (Ezra 3.2); when the foundation of the temple was laid, the people sang and praised the Lord; they “. . . wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy . . .” (Ezra 3.12, 13).

When we have a foundation in the Lord and begin to truly praise and worship Jesus, the enemy takes notice. The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin saw that the people of the captivity had come out of bondage and were building the temple unto the Lord. True to the character of Satan, the adversaries tried to infiltrate the work of God’s people: “. . . Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do . . .” (Ezra 4.2). Jesus, help us to be discerning as were Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the chief of Israel who answered the enemy,

“ . . . **YE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH US TO BUILD AN HOUSE UNTO OUR GOD: BUT WE OURSELVES TOGETHER WILL BUILD UNTO THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL . . .**” (Ezra 4.3).

Israel refused to join forces with the enemy. They began building and had the foundation built – they had not allowed the enemy to join them – but when the enemy failed to lure them into a trap to include him, he launched an all-out effort to prevent further building of the temple. So strong did Satan oppose them that work on the temple suffered and ceased (Ezra 4.24).

Fifteen years lapsed between the end of chapter four when God’s people stopped building the temple and the beginning of chapter five when God began

to stir them and show them their negligence and complacency. It apparently was easier for them to settle down and become preoccupied with material things than to fight the enemy and build the temple.

Satan is pressuring us to join his programs to “help more people;” it is a guise to draw us into sin and idolatry. If we refuse to join forces with Satan, be sure that he will unleash all his fury, his forces against us as he did with Israel (Ezra 4.4-6).

Beloved, we have a choice to make!

First, we can choose to join forces with the enemy, in which case we will head away from God and downhill to destruction, hand in hand with Satan.

Second, even though we have not joined the enemy in programs, we can become discouraged, fearful, slack in our time with the Lord and in His Word, succumbing to Satan’s attacks. In which case, we will become complacent, not feeling the need to pray or be in God’s Word, becoming gradually materialistic. Our natural “house,” carnal interests, will become first in our thoughts and lives – gods, idols to us, substituting for the true God and our relationship with Him. The end result will be the same as in the first choice. Such was the condition into which Israel slipped.

Our third choice is to do as God’s people in chapters five and six of Ezra. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah delivered God’s Word to a complacent, self-centered people who had become worldly, had lost their first love, and had forgotten God. In response to the encouragement and Word of the Lord from these prophets, **the people began to obey God and resume the building of the temple.**

Let us look at the words of Haggai, chapter one.

This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD’S house should be built.

[Is it] time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house *[lie]* waste?

Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Consider your ways.**

Twice God told them to consider their ways (Hag. 1.5, 7). God had not blessed them. Why? Because the house of God lay waste while they built their own comfortable houses. God commanded them, “Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD” (Hag. 1.8). It was only in the mountain where the proper material could be found for building – strong material to build a strong house.

God gave encouragement and help through His prophets and promised, “I am with you, saith the Lord.” And the Lord stirred up their spirits, and they came and worked on the house of the Lord (Hag. 1.13, 14)

Do you feel the stirring of the Holy Spirit? Do you have a longing for more of Jesus? Is there a need for your house to be built up in your