

Trust God's Promises

Key Verse: *“The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.”*
—Haggai 2:9

Selected Scripture:
Haggai 1:12; 2:1-9

Failure to appreciate and trust God's providences was the reason Israel kept breaking their covenant with God, a promise that all the people had made when they were delivered from Egyptian bondage.—Exod. 19:8

Throughout their history we see the merciful nature of God towards his chosen people. When they were finally permitted to be taken into Babylonian captivity, God encouraged them with reminders of his love for them. He told them that he would not leave them nor forsake them, just as he had promised Moses and Joshua. (Josh. 1:5) He further assured them that their captivity would not be permanent, but would end after seventy years.—Jer. 29:10

After being chastised by Haggai's words for not obeying God, the people were moved to obey the instructions of God and once again revere and praise him. (Hag. 1:12)

AS NOTED IN OUR PREVIOUS lesson, Israel followed a pattern throughout their history of obeying and praising God when receiving blessings, then disobeying when left to their own imaginations. God's provision of manna in the wilderness is but one example in which their thankfulness was soon replaced with complaints for something better. Such is the nature of fallen humanity.

God then reassured them once more by declaring, “I am with you.” This stirred the people to action: “They came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God.”—vss. 13,14

The further message of the prophet, recorded in Haggai 2:6-9, was doubtless puzzling to the Israelites who heard it. To the best of their understanding, the shaking of the past might have been referring to the quaking of the earth at the giving of the Law Covenant at Mount Sinai. They could only guess what the future shaking might be, as they had no special aid in looking toward future events. The same could be said about their inability to understand the meaning of the statement, “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former,” mentioned in our Key Verse.

With the aid of the Holy Spirit, we are able to understand what Israel could not recognize. We realize that the things that happened to natural Israel were types of greater things that apply to the church in this present Gospel Age. (I Cor. 10:11) Through spirit begetting, we are able to see that the “latter house” Haggai referred to is the body of Christ. “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (II Cor. 6:16) We understand also that this latter house does not negate the importance of the former house. God has promised to never forget Israel nor his role for them to be an earthly blessing in the coming kingdom.

The Apostle Paul reminds his audience of the importance of Israel in God’s plans: “I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.” (Rom. 11:1,2) We are blessed to have an understanding that the desire of all nations will soon come in God’s kingdom, just as he promised through Haggai. Let us learn from Israel’s experiences to trust God’s promises implicitly. ■