

A Call for Unity

Key Verse: *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*
—I Corinthians 1:10

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians 1:1-10

ple and a chosen people and its literal Temple. Considering the reliance Israel should have had in God's dealings with them through their covenant and its ultimate purpose, the Apostle Paul said, “Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Gal. 3:23,24) Israel should have been unified in their worship of God as his chosen people. They should have rejoiced in knowing

AMONG THE LESSONS

from the prophecy of Haggai which we have considered this month was a call for unity among his chosen people. God had called Israel to work and rebuild the Temple. He had reminded them of their promise to live up to the covenant he had made with them and which they agreed to obey, saying, “Work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.”—Hag. 2:4,5

In all of this, we have seen that God was speaking of a temple greater than the nation of Israel and its literal Temple. Considering the reliance Israel should have had in God's dealings with them through their covenant and its ultimate purpose, the Apostle Paul said, “Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Gal. 3:23,24) Israel should have been unified in their worship of God as his chosen people. They should have rejoiced in knowing

he was dealing with them above all the nations of the earth, and thereby had faith in him. “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” (Acts 3:25,26) However, because of a lack of faith, they forsook their opportunity to be the greater temple: “He [Jesus] came unto his own, and his own received him not.”—John 1:11

Because Israel failed to live up to their covenant, and then rejected the very one sent to deliver them from its bondage, God turned to the Gentiles for construction of the greater temple which Haggai had prophesied would come. “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.”—Acts 13:46,47

Paul told the early Christian Jews that the promises pertaining to the spiritual seed of Abraham were offered first to natural Israel. However, through a lack of faith they, as a nation, rejected their promised Messiah, Jesus, who was sent to redeem them “from the curse of the law.” (Gal. 3:13-16) This call would now be open to individuals who would comprise the seed irrespective of their nationality and regardless of any lack of former standing before God. Paul emphasizes this arrangement by saying, “Ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:28,29) Let us learn from Israel’s experiences and be unified in our service to God, humbled by esteeming others better than ourselves and putting on the mind of Christ.—Phil. 2:3-5 ■