

2-2-2020 Message
The Young Men Shouted For Joy While The Ancient Men Wept

Ezra 3:10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel.

Ezra 3:11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

Ezra 3:12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

Ezra 3:13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

The Young Men Shouted For Joy While The Ancient Men Wept.

Intro: The temple that Solomon built was magnificent. There was nothing like it in all the world. Imagine, the children of Israel abandoned worshipping the Lord, went after other gods, and because of their apostasy God chastened them, had Nebuchadnezzar burn the temple and Jerusalem. They were taken into captivity for 70 years as prophesied by Jeremiah, and after 70 years, God ordained and called Cyrus to make a decree to rebuild the temple and the city.

The 70 years of captivity started in the days of King Jehoiachin.

The history of the final days of Israel was this:

Josiah died.

Jehoahaz was taken captive to Egypt.

Jehoiakim became King for 11 years he rebelled against Babylon.

Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon.

Zedekiah was the last King of Judah.

Jehoiachin, king of Judah, was captured by King Nebuchadnezzar and taken to Babylon, along with some 10,000 of Jerusalem's principal citizens (see 2 Kgs. 24:12-16). After they arrived in Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah wrote them a letter telling them to build houses and plant gardens. He prophesied, "For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jer. 29:10).

The captivity is calculated from the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. to the laying of the foundation of the Second Temple in 536 B.C. That was exactly 70 years.

Isaiah prophesied of this

Isaiah 44:28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

Isaiah 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

Isaiah 45:2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

Isaiah 45:3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

Isaiah 45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

The Lord called Cyrus by name about 200 years before he was born to show his infinite wisdom and power. Is anything too hard for God?

When Cyrus decreed to rebuild the temple, there were still some men alive who remember seeing the Solomon's temple. These may have been taken captive even when Nebuchadnezzar came in the days of Zedekiah and burnt the temple. They were called ancient men because they had to be 70 - 80 years old or more. Because the temple was destroyed some 52 years previous to this if you consider the start of the 70 year captivity to be when Nebuchadnezzar took the first captives in the days of Jehoiachin. When these ancient men saw the foundation of the new temple, they wept. Why did they weep? They wept because the new temple was nothing in comparison to the old. But the younger generation, they shouted for joy. They were all excited. In fact I guarantee you they had no idea why these old men were weeping. So they could not tell the difference between the wailing and weeping and the shouting and rejoicing.

Matthew Henry:

*But those who remembered the glory of the first temple, and considered how far inferior this was likely to be, wept with a loud voice. There was reason for it, and if they bewailed the sin that was the cause of this melancholy change, they did well. Yet it was wrong to cast a damp upon the common joys. They despised the day of small things, and were unthankful for the good they enjoyed. **Let not the remembrance of former afflictions drown the sense of present mercies.***

Later in the book of Nehemiah when they were having a celebration, Nehemiah had to tell the people to weep not:

Nehemiah 8:9 And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day

*is holy unto the LORD your God; **mourn not, nor weep.** For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.*

Now here is a lesson that we need to learn as we enter the end times.

The truth is that we think we are progressing in the day that we live. Are we not in the computer age. Look at the advances in technology. Yet when it comes to spiritual things I believe we are in a decline. Those who are older saints often want to weep while the younger generation thinks that some of the new ways of doing the work of the Lord is great.

So we have the younger generation shouting while the older generation is weeping.

Lessons we need to learn from this text:

I. DON'T LET THE MEMORIES OF THE GLORY DAYS OF THE PAST SQUELCH YOUR SERVICE FOR GOD IN THE PRESENT.

There could be a tendency on the older generation to get sour grapes about what is going on with the present generation because of memories of the past.

The old generation wept and the new generation rejoiced. They have no point of reference for the way things were.

1. THE GLORY OF THE OLD COULD DAMPEN YOUR DESIRE TO SERVE IN THE PRESENT.

That old generation wept and maybe they even discouraged the younger generation.

As one generation passes on, we wonder if the next generation take up the mantle. In some ways yes, in other ways they never can or will.

There was only one Solomon, and there was no other and there would be no other.

There were a lot of great old timers that have come and gone through our church. If you try to compare the new generation with these older saints you may weep. We should not do that. We need to keep serving God. It will just be different.

We are not only seeing this in the church but in society in general.

Are workers of today like the workers of yesterday? Are they working as hard? Are they as conscientious? Things seem to digress, not progress, in the area of character and virtue.

The new generation is more in line with being served rather than serving. Look at what is happening in government. Are the new generation of politicians like the old? Is Bob

Casey Jr. Better than Bob Casey Senior? Where are the old time democrats? They all seem to be radical socialists and progressives.

I remember a day when we used to have work days where we would cut and split wood for the church. It was a lot of work and many would come out to work together to get behind this endeavor. I am not sure how well that would go over today. We should not let these memories keep us from serving and moving forward today. Today things are just a bit different. I also remember one workday where just me and another man showed up. The man was sour about that. I said, look praise the Lord the work is getting done. Memories of the glory days of the past could make us sour about the present. Be careful this does not happen to you!

I remember Carlton Lewis sitting and talking to me about the cottage prayer meeting revivals of the past. He remembered going to these when he was just a little boy. I wasn't saved long enough to experience what he experienced. I could tell that he missed those days maybe even wept a bit about it.

2. *THOSE OLD TIMERS WHO WEPT MAY HAVE HINDERED THE WORK IN SOME WAY.*

Now we read that after they built the foundation, they let the trials and enemies discourage them and they stopped building for the Lord. The work ceased.

Look, even though the new generation is not exactly what the old generation was we still need to press on and serve the Lord together.

There are enough enemies trying to discourage us, we need not discourage each other. The older saints need to encourage the younger saints to do their best.

We have enough distractions and discouragements in the work of God, we don't need grouchy old saints discouraging others. But maybe those who remembered how things were, not only were discouraged but may have discouraged others. So we read:

Ezra 4:23 Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power.

Ezra 4:24 Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

The work ceased for 16 years until Haggai came and prophesied to them and stirred them up to get busy and build the house of God.

Ezra 5:1 Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them.

Ezra 5:2 Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.

What Haggai prophesied is found in the book of Haggai.

In Haggai, we read this rebuke to the people:

Haggai 1:1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

Haggai 1:2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.

Haggai 1:3 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

Haggai 1:4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?

Haggai 1:5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

Haggai 1:6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

Haggai 1:7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

Haggai 1:8 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.

Haggai 1:9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.

Haggai 1:10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.

So the Lord through Haggai said, get busy and put your necks to the task. Stop getting discouraged and weeping. Get busy and do the work He called you to do! It could be that memories of the past hindered the progress of the present!

Solomon said in the book of Ecclesiastes:

Ecclesiastes 7:10 Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.

This dwelling in the past hindered the leaders to press on to do what God told them to do in the present. They got so discouraged they let the enemies of God convince them to stop doing what God called them to do. They may have even reasoned that God did not want them to build. Haggai had to rebuke them over it.

I remember when I first came to the church and was young, there were some of the older members that did not want the work to progress. They opposed a lot of things I believe God wanted us to do because of lack of finances. They said it is not time to

build. This can happen because of a lack of faith, it could happen because they did not want to get involved to give or work. It may have happened because they were thinking of some memories of glory days of the past that just never were going to come back again.

II. THERE IS NO SMALL WORK FOR GOD. LET US ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER IN THIS ENDEAVOR TO SERVE GOD IN THE PRESENT!

After Haggai, preached and prophesied this to the people, the Elders took it to heart and started the work back up. Remember it was the elders that wept and got discouraged. They were the leaders. When the leadership gets discouraged everyone gets discouraged.

We need to forget about the past, we live in the present. We need to do what God calls us to do today. There will always be obstacles, and enemies, there will always be those who will discourage us. We need to gird up our loins and do the work of the Lord.

1. AFTER THIS THE ELDERS TOOK THE LEADERSHIP AND STARTED TO WORK AGAIN. THE WORK PROGRESSED.

If God be for us who can be against us?

Ezra 5:2 Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.

Ezra 5:3 At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?

Ezra 5:4 Then said we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building?

Ezra 5:5 But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter.

Ezra 5:6 The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which were on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king:

So the matter came to the attention of Darius:

Ezra 5:10 We asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them.

Ezra 5:11 And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up.

Ezra 5:12 But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon.

Ezra 5:13 But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God.

Ezra 5:14 And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one, whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor;

Ezra 5:15 And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place.

Ezra 5:16 Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished.

Ezra 5:17 Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

Here is what they found concerning the decree of Cyrus: Sheshbazzar was Zerubbabel's Babylonian name. They refer to him as Sheshbazzar because that was his court name in Babylon.

Ezra 6:1 Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon.

Ezra 6:2 And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written:

Ezra 6:3 In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits;

Ezra 6:7 Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place.

Ezra 6:8 Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered.

Ezra 6:11 Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this.

Ezra 6:12 And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed.

Ezra 6:14 And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

Ezra 6:15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

Now notice how the elders, the ancient men, had to stop living in the past and get up off their faces and start building along with the younger generation.

We need not criticize, tear each other down. Let's work together and not criticize the work of God or circumstances to the hindering of the work. They said, it is not time to build the house of God. Meaning, circumstances are not conducive to going forward. When we say and do this we hinder God's work.

III. God Has A Final Message To The Elders Who Wept.

1. THE GLORY TO COME WILL BE GREATER THAN ANYTHING IN THE PAST.

Haggai 2:2 Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,

Haggai 2:3 Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

Haggai 2:4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts:

Haggai 2:5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

Haggai 2:6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

Haggai 2:7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

Haggai 2:8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

Haggai 2:9 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.

Here is what the Lord said to the elders, to the ancient men who wept when they saw the foundation of the new temple, He said,

Haggai 2:3 Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

God admits this new temple is nothing to be compared to the old. However He has a message for the elders. That message is that God was doing the work and He will finish it and that He will ultimately get more glory in the future.

Haggai 2:9 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.

Nothing is impossible with God..

We can look at the new generation, the new church, the obstacles around us, the state of decline but take heart! I have read how it ends and the Lord said, the glory yet to come will be greater than the glory of the past.

There are better things planned.
Jesus is Lord of Lords.
He is coming soon!

As beautiful as Solomon's temple was, when Jesus came to His temple His glory surpassed the glory of the old.

Hebrews 9:11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

Everything in this life is temporal, we are waiting for the eternal, the temple was a temporary place of sacrifice until Christ Himself would come. It doesn't matter that when they rebuilt it, it was not as magnificent! Christ our magnificent Lord will fulfill all things.

We are waiting for that temple that God will give us that will be made without hands. This will be our resurrected bodies.

Our Lord's message to the Elders! Get your eyes off of the temporal things of this world and get your eyes on the real purpose behind all these things.

When you saw the foundation of the New Temple you wept.
Now that you see the finished temple again it is nothing compared to the old.

Take heart, the glory to come will surpass anything you can imagine.

We are just passing through here. BE FAITHFUL, the Lord has better things in store for those who are faithful to Him.

2. GOD PROMISES A BLESSING FOR OUR OBEDIENCE TO HIM NOT BECAUSE OF WHAT WE ACHIEVE FOR HIM.

Haggai 2:10 In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

Haggai 2:11 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,

Haggai 2:12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

Haggai 2:13 Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

Haggai 2:14 Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.

Haggai 2:15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD:

Haggai 2:16 Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty.

Haggai 2:17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD.

Haggai 2:18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider it.

Haggai 2:19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.

We are like the little child who brings a painting to the Lord. It is a child's painting. It is primitive, crude, simple, a little better than stick figures, yet it is an expression of our love, devotion and desire to honor and please Him. So is our service for the Lord. So it is with all our building projects. Can we achieve anything? What can we do for God? Nothing! What can we give God? Nothing! Everything we do for God is really unclean. Is God impressed with anything we do?

We are all unclean.

We all dwell with unclean people.

Yet this fact should not hinder us from trying to serve God. In this He is pleased!

Our blessings come as we obey God.

We who are older may look at the works of the past like Solomon's temple, as a grand, a glorious work, better than the primitive efforts of the new generation, but in God's eyes, the works of the past and the works of the present are both child's play compared to the glory of the eternal kingdom! The temple is nothing, all our buildings are nothing.

So here we have it, the young men shouted and the old men wept.

Conclusion:

Ecclesiastes 7:10 Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.

BE THANKFUL FOR THE BLESSINGS OF THE PRESENT.
MAKE USE OF THE ASSETS GOD HAS GIVEN IN THE HERE AND NOW.

DON'T LET THE BLESSINGS OF THE PAST ROB YOU OF THE DIFFERENT BLESSINGS OF THE PRESENT.

DON'T BE LIKE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THAT REMEMBERED THE LEEKS AND THE ONIONS, AND THE GARLIC OF EGYPT AND FORGOT ABOUT THE WHIPS OF THE CRUEL TASK MASTERS!

NUM 11:5 We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

Faith is to trust God in the present to be with you to do what he called you to do. Never fear to obey God. Never look at what you do not have to obey God, look at what He has given you and trust Him for what you will need in the future. This takes faith in God, faith in His ability to be with you, faith to trust Him in the adversities of the present.

If God calls you to do a work He will be with you to finish it.

I Thess. 5:24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.