

# THE YOUNG MEN SHOUTED THE ANCIENT MEN WEPT EZRA 3:10-13

Text: Ezra 3:12

## **Ezra 3:12**

<sup>12</sup> 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:

Introduction:

Because of Israel's refusal to abandon their idols and worship the one true God, they were chastened by the Lord and were taken away into captivity by the Babylonians. This captivity was to last 70 years.

This 70 year period began in 605 B.C., when the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar invaded Israel.

Later, in 586 B.C., after Israel rebelled against him, Nebuchadnezzar completely destroyed Jerusalem, the temple and all the temple furniture. He also carried off all the treasures of the temple at that time. For the next 70 years Israel lived in captivity without a temple and without the feasts, sacrifices and rituals prescribed by the Law.

Cyrus the Persian overthrew the Babylonians in 539 B.C. and in 538 B.C gave permission for the Jews to return to their homeland. Almost 50,000 Jews left Babylon and returned to Palestine. Three years later, in 535 B.C, they laid the foundation for a new Temple, thus ending the 70 years of their captivity.

Our text records for us the laying of the foundation for this new temple. For many of the Jews present that day, it was a time of great joy.

But, others who were there that day could not shout about what they were seeing. Instead, the Bible says, they “wept with a loud voice,” v. 12.

Why is it that one group is so excited and is praising the Lord, while the other group is sad and weeping? I believe the Bible holds the answer to that question. I also believe that by answering that question, we will also uncover some very valuable truths for our church today.

Notice:

# 1. THE GHOSTS OF THE PAST

## **Ezra 3:12**

<sup>12</sup> 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:

### A. What They Remembered

A group of older men remembered the first temple.

- They remembered the Grandeur, the Gold and the Glory.
- They remembered the old days when the temple of the Lord was one of the wonders of the ancient world.
- They remembered a temple that, if built today, would cost multiple billions of dollars to build.
- They remembered a temple that housed the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat.
- They remembered that within that Ark were tablets containing the Law of God handed down to Moses.

## B. What They Realized

They understood that this new temple would never be the same, Haggai. 2:3.

### **Haggai 2:3**

<sup>3</sup> 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?

- They could see that it would be smaller.
- They knew that they did not have the resources to rebuild it like it had been all those years ago.
- They realized that all the things that made the first temple precious, the Ark and its contents, the mercy seat, the glory cloud, etc., were forever gone.
- This realization broke their hearts and they wept bitterly.

There are many with us today who remember the glory days of the church.

They remember a time when the Word of God and the House of God were held in high regard by all.

They remember a time when the fear of God was on the community and even the lost respected the things of God.

They remember a day when pulpit and pew were both filled with the Spirit of God.

They remember a time when God's presence and His power were manifested in the Lord's house as souls were saved the saints shouted the victory and the church enjoyed God's great power.

Those who remember those "good old days" look at the modern church with a broken heart, as they long for the things that have passed. There are many who are haunted by the ghosts of the past.

## **2. THE GIFTS OF THE PRESENT**

### **Ezra 3:11**

<sup>11</sup> 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.

### **A. What They Remembered**

In that number were even more people who did not remember the first temple.

They had no idea of what it had looked like or of the glory that had been in it.

All they remember was a life of captivity and bondage in a foreign land.

No doubt many of these people had been born during the time of Israel's captivity and all they could remember was their slavery.

But, they also remembered how God in His power had delivered them from that bondage.

They could not remember that first temple, but they were thankful for what they had!

### B. What They Realized

These young people could not remember the old days, but they could see that a new day of opportunity had dawned for them and they embraced it wholeheartedly!

These young people had no frame of reference concerning the old days, but they were excited about what God was doing in their day.

Note:

It is easy to err on either side of this thing. Some people are so caught up in the past that they cannot get excited about what God is doing in the present! Still, there are others who are so willing to embrace the newest trends and methods that they forget about what God did and how He worked yesterday.

The bottom line is this: The past is gone forever and we live in the present. We need to look back and glean what we can from days gone by, but we have to live in the here and now!

Does that mean we have to change to fit in with the times? Does that mean that we need a new Bible? Does that mean that we need to scrap our hymnals in favor of praise choruses? Does that mean that we need to replace preaching with “worship dramas?” Does that mean that we must lower our standards to accommodate the world? Does that mean that we need to be more “seeker friendly” so we can attract the big crowds? The answer to all those questions is “NO!”

What it does mean is that we need to look at how and where God is working today and be thankful for the opportunities He is giving us in these days. You see, we can become trapped in the past and totally miss what God is doing today. Or, we can get so caught up in all

the modern trends and methods that we fail to realize that God does not change!

### 3. THE GLORY OF THE PROMISE

#### **Haggai 2:1-9**

<sup>1</sup>In the seventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying, <sup>2</sup>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, <sup>3</sup>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? <sup>4</sup>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: <sup>5</sup>*According to* the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. <sup>6</sup>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*; <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup>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.

This was a difficult time for both the old people and for the young people. Remember the old people were sad because things were not like they used to be. The young people were being discouraged by the attitude of the old people. In the midst of this turmoil, God used the message of Haggai to bring hope and encouragement to all the people of Israel.



After 15 years, the work on the temple still had not been completed. God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to preach to the people. God used these men to stir up the people of Israel to get busy and to get the work done.

### **Ezra 5:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> 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 6:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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.

His message still gives hope to us in this day as well. We live in a day when many are discouraged and wonder about the relevance of the church in this modern world. Others wonder what the future holds for the house of God. I think Haggai has some words of comfort for all our hearts.

## A. The Promise of His Presence

### **Haggai 2:4**

<sup>4</sup> 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:

God says, “This temple may not be as great as the first one, but I am still here with you.” Friends, we have the same promise this evening. Things may not be like they used to be, but the same God Who moved then is still with His people.

### **Hebrews 13:5**

<sup>5</sup> *Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be content* with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

### **Matthew 28:20**

<sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

### **Matthew 18:20**

<sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

## B. The Promise of His Peace

### **Haggai 2:5**

<sup>5</sup> *According to* the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

God encourages them to “*fear not.*” He is still with them and His peace will keep them as they serve Him. Thank God, in the midst of our trials and afflictions; in the midst of our labors and activities; in the midst of our feeble attempts to serve the Lord of glory, we have His presence and His peace to sustain us.

**John 14:27**

<sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

**Philippians 4:7**

<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

C. The Promise of His Power

**Haggai 2:6**

<sup>6</sup> 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*;

God reminds them that He is still in control, regardless of how things may look.

That is still true today! It looks like evil in this world is out of control.

It looks like that Satan and his will are having their day.

But, I would just remind you that we serve a God Who is still on the throne!

## D. The Promise of His Provisions

### **Haggai 2:8**

<sup>8</sup> The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

Some were concerned about the expense of the project. Others were concerned that the new temple lacked the gold and the glitz of the first temple. God just reminds them that He has all they need!

He still does.

### **Philippians 4:19**

<sup>19</sup> But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Close:

We you can live our lives without looking back. You can live your life longing for what you think others have. Or you can seize the opportunities God is giving you in these days, do a work for Him and watch Him move in power.

In that day, the young men shouted while the old men wept. In our day, may we all recognize the fact that God is looking for a people who will seize the day for His glory! I can't go back to yesterday. I can't embrace everything that is being done in the name of religion.

But, I can seize the opportunities I have been given today.