

Order of Worship for August 6, 2023

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “God Himself Is Present” – Hymn #907

Confession:

The Third Commandment and Explanation

P: Do we want to be here, now, Lord, in worship?

C: Are we focused on what is going here and now, or do other thoughts come into our minds? Are we distracted by all the other things running through our minds?

P: But do we just honor Your Word here in worship when everyone is looking?

C: Do we honor Your Word the rest of our week? Do You matter to us?

P: Do we come now realizing that we are in the presence of the Almighty God and that we will be approaching Your Holy Altar in Holy Communion?

C: Are willing to be the place where You dwell as we leave this place?

ALL: O Lord, forgive us!

P: The Holy, Almighty God has sent His Son Christ Jesus to our world to be the sacrifice for our sins. Because of His sacrifice and by His command I forgive you your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Entrance Psalm: Psalm 122

P: I was glad when they said unto me,

C: Let us go into the house of the LORD.

P: Our feet shall stand within your gates, O Jerusalem.

C: Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together:

P: To there the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD,

C: unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.

P: For there are set thrones of judgment,

C: the thrones of the house of David.

P: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

C: they shall prosper that love You.

P: Peace be within your walls,

C: and prosperity within your palaces.

P: For my brethren and companions' sakes,

C: I will now say, Peace be within You.

P: Because of the house of the LORD our God

C: I will seek your good.

ALL: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever, Amen.

Sermon Hymn: *“Since Our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus”* - **Hymn #529**

Haggai 1:1-11

R*: In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest: This is what the LORD Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come to rebuild the LORD’s house.’” Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”

Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.”

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build My house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the LORD. “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?” declares the LORD Almighty. “Because of My house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house. Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the olive oil and everything else the ground produces, on people and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.”

P: Unlike many of the minor prophets Haggai gives us a definite time for when he lived. He speaks of “the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month.” Darius was emperor of Persia, a known historical figure, so this is September, 520 B.C. The first nine minor prophets spoke before Babylon destroyed the temple in 586 B.C. Haggai, along with Zechariah and Malachi speaks to the people after their exile in Babylon, when the Persian emperor, Cyrus, in 538 B.C. allowed them to return to their homeland.

We also should not that unlike most of the minor prophets who wrote in poetry, Haggai is prose. It is a specific message given by God to Haggai to give the Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest. In 536 B.C. work started on rebuilding the temple to god in Jerusalem. It stopped two years later.

Why did the people halt their work? They felt they had other things to tend to. There were high hopes when Cyrus allowed them to return from exile. But when they got to their homeland they found that it was no bed of roses. As Haggai put it, “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little.” Everything had to be started again from scratch and the land was inhabited by people who did not worship the true God. It was like how African Americans were freed from slavery in the 1860’s but had to wait until 100 years later for civil rights to assure them equality under the law.

Haggai tells them because of their neglect of the temple:

You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.

Haggai 1:12-15

R*: Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD. Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, gave this message of the LORD to the people: "I am with you," declares the LORD. So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the LORD Almighty, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.

P: With Haggai's encouragement, the people resume their work on building the temple. The people that same year of 520 B.C. continued the rebuilding which according to Ezra 6:15 was finished in 516 B.C.

But what does that have to do with us? Listen to these lessons from the New Testament.

The Lessons

Hebrews 9:11-15

R: But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, He went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

R: This the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

John 2:13-22

R: When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So He made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To

those who sold doves He said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning My Father’s house into a market!” His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

The Jews then responded to Him, “What sign can You show us to prove Your authority to do all this?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and You are going to raise it in three days?” But the temple He had spoken of was His body. After He was raised from the dead, His disciples recalled what He had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

R: This the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: The temple rebuilt with Haggai’s encouragement was a faint shadow of the first one built by Solomon. But in B.C. Herod the Great, the same king who wanted to kill baby Jesus, began a rebuilding of it into one of the marvels of the ancient world. But in 70 A.D. it was leveled by the Romans, who were masters at doing that.

But that is what God intended. Before Solomon’s temple was destroyed by Babylon, the prophet Ezekiel saw the presence of the LORD, in the form of a cloud leave the temple and go to the Mount of Olives. That presence of God is what led the people of Israel under Moses in the wilderness when they had a portable temple, the tent called the tabernacle. This same presence appeared in the temple after Solomon built it. It didn’t return when the people in Haggai’s time built their temple, nor when Herod rebuilt it. Instead there is the real temple, the actual place in the presence of God where the real sacrifice took place by the high priest and sacrifice combined—Jesus Christ. John 1 tells us that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” The “Word” is the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God. He became Jesus, both God and man and lived among us people. The word “dwelt” can be better translated “tented,” because He is the new tabernacle, the real temple of God as He proclaimed when He cleaned out Herod’s temple.

Haggai 2:1-19

R*: In the second year of King Darius, on the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: “Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, ‘Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? But now be strong, Zerubbabel,’ declares the LORD. ‘Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the LORD, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the LORD Almighty. ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’ “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. ⁷ I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD Almighty. ‘The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the LORD Almighty. ‘The glory of this present house

will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty."

On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Haggai: "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Ask the priests what the law says: If someone carries consecrated meat in the fold of their garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, olive oil or other food, does it become consecrated?'" The priests answered, "No." Then Haggai said, "If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?" "Yes," the priests replied, "it becomes defiled."

Then Haggai said, "'So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,' declares the LORD. 'Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled. "'Now give careful thought to this from this day on—consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the LORD's temple. When anyone came to a heap of twenty measures, there were only ten. When anyone went to a wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were only twenty. I struck all the work of your hands with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not return to Me,' declares the LORD. 'From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid. Give careful thought: Is there yet any seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit. "'From this day on I will bless you.'"

Hymn: : *"No Temple Now, No Gift of Price"* - **Hymn #530**

Haggai 2:20-23

R*: The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month: "Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother.

"'On that day,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'I will take you, My servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,' declares the LORD, 'and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,' declares the LORD Almighty."

P: These are wonderful words of promise, but they had to seem like a lot of just good talk to the people who returned from captivity in Babylon. Israel was never restored as a nation. They were under the Persians until Alexander the Great conquered Persia. Then there were dominated by either the Greek empires in Egypt or Syria. They revolted against the Greek about 100 years before Jesus, but then negotiated with the Romans to help overthrow the Greeks. This led to becoming a part of the Romans Empire. In the late 60's A.D. they revolt against Rome led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. If that wasn't enough a later rebellion in 130 A.D. led to the Romans forbidding any Jews from entering Jerusalem. By Jesus' times it is estimated that 10% of the Roman empire was Jewish, but they were never a

nation again until politics in the 1940's began a nation of Israel which is not a religious group, just a political nation.

So can it seem to us about God's promises to us. In our society we live in what is called a "post-Christian" world. Churches not only have less people in them, but so many have gray heads. Pastors used to be very respected in the community. Now they are often seen as irrelevant.

Yet, God's promise did come true in Jesus, not in restoring the nation of Israel, but bringing about something far bigger—people of Jesus, the Church which embraces people of many races, cultures, and nations from all over the world. It was far bigger than Haggai could ever imagine. And we await the day when Jesus comes again and the "multitude that no one can number" as Revelation describes it, which He will take with Him forever in heaven.

Prayers:

Offering:

Invitation to Communion:

P: The Psalmist tells us, "I was glad when they said, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'" That is exactly what we can do as we come and partake of the supper Jesus gave us on the night before He died. Each time we join in this sacrament we are as close and intimate to God as the High Priest in the inner Most Holy Place of the temple. We hear our Savior's call and answer it:

The Words of Our Lord:

The Lord's Prayer:

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Communion: *"The Infant Priest Was Holy Born"* – **Hymn #624**

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" – **Hymn #621**

Closing Prayer:

P: Lord Jesus Christ, You are the true temple which fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament. You completed once and for all the sacrifice for our sins. Bless us to go forth from here being Your temples here on earth where other people can be drawn to You.

C: Amen.

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *"Not All the Blood of Beasts"* – **Hymn #431**

Postlude: