

Rebuilding The Temple



Solomon Building the Temple: The Jewish Temple Was Built with Help from King Hiram of Tyre

Great Controversy, p. 143, we read:

"The work of God in the earth presents, from age to age, a striking similarity in every great reformation or religious movement. The principles of God's dealing with men are ever the same. The important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past, and the experience of the church in former ages has lessons of great value for our own time."

In Great Controversy, p. 143, we read:

"The work of God in the earth presents, from age to age, a striking similarity in every great reformation or religious movement. The principles of God's dealing with men are ever the same. The important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past, and the experience of the church in former ages has lessons of great value for our own time."

All the experiences of God's people in past ages have significance for His people today. However, there are some relationships of God with His people in the past in which are striking illustrations of how He is leading His people today. There are two events recorded in Biblical history which are of particular interest as types of the Advent Movement.

The first is the exodus from Egypt. Although Israel was just a few days' journey from the promised land when they crossed the Red Sea, it took forty years' wandering in the wilderness before they learned the lesson of absolute trust in the Lord and entered that land. So in 1844 we as a people crossed the Red Sea spiritually, and have been wandering in the wilderness of sin ever since.

The second striking parallel to the Advent Movement is the call of God's people out of Babylon after its overthrow in 538 B.C. And this is the one about which we shall study at this time. Through Jeremiah the Lord foretold that the children of Israel would go down into Babylon for seventy years (606 B.C. to 536 B.C.). It is clear from both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy that the end of this seventy-year period was a type of the end of the 2300-year period, or 1844. In *Prophets and Kings*, p. 554, these two events are linked together. Commenting here on Daniel 8 and 9, the servant of the Lord tells us:

"Daniel heard 'one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision?' The answer that

was given, 'Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,' filled him with perplexity. Earnestly he sought for the meaning of the vision. He could not understand the relation sustained by the seventy years' captivity, as foretold through Jeremiah, to the twenty-three hundred years that in vision he heard the heavenly visitant declare should elapse before the cleansing of God's sanctuary."

When Daniel went into captivity, he understood that after seventy years the sanctuary would be restored to its rightful state. But when the vision of the 2300 days was given, he was told that it would be a long time in the future before the sanctuary would be cleansed and restored to its rightful state. As a result, he fainted. He did not understand the relationship between the two periods of time, as is evident from Daniel 9, because the angel returned to explain the significance of the two events. Isaiah wrote much about the exile and restoration of Zion. In chapter II, verse II, we read :

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea ."

We are told further:" . . . The Lord showed me that He had stretched out His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people, and that efforts must be redoubled in this gathering time."—*Early Writings*, p. 74.

Sr. White is here describing events surrounding 1844 in her application of Isaiah's prophecy. Thus the relationship of the two periods of time become clear: during the seventy years God's people were scattered in Babylon and Assyria, some even going down to Egypt.

After the seventy years were accomplished, God set His hand to recover His people. But in Isaiah II the Lord goes beyond that and states that He will set His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people. And in *Early Writings*

the Lord declares through the prophet that this event was fulfilled in 1844 as the antitype of what happened at the end of the seventy years.

Laying the Foundation of the Temple.

Let us discover what happened to God's people when they came out of Babylon in 536 B.C. so that we may see ourselves clearly in the antitype. In 538 B.C. Babylon fell. Two years after the fall of Babylon:

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, and that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth ; and He hath charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah."--Ezra 1:1, 2.

This decree was effected in 536 B.C. Just before this the message came to the children of Israel that Babylon had fallen, and then came the decree that released them from captivity and announced that the time had come for them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.

We find in Ezra 2 that fifty thousand Jews responded to the call and went back to Canaan. In Ezra 3 we read that the second year after leaving Babylon they laid the foundation of the temple, which would be 534 B.C. There is an interesting sidelight to this event:

"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 3:11. But there was another element among the people, for we read in Ezra 3:12, 13:

"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: 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."

While some were praising the Lord for His great deliverance, others were murmuring and manifesting their unbelief by weeping. Shortly after the Jews began rebuilding the temple, we find in Ezra 4 that the Samaritans offered to help them. Zerubbabel and the other elders perceived that this was not a sincere desire on the part of the Samaritans, and refused to allow them to have any part in it. The Samaritans quickly revealed their true spirit by setting about to hinder the work.

Because of the many obstacles hindering the work, Daniel, in the 9th chapter of his book, earnestly seeks God's help. At this time he was a leading figure in the government of Persia. He understood what was going on in the land of Israel, and he fasted, prayed, and afflicted his soul before the Lord three weeks until Gabriel appeared to him.

Gabriel told him that during this period he had been contending with the prince of Persia and so fierce was the conflict that Michael, Jesus Christ Himself, came down and fought with the Persian prince, driving back the forces of Satan so that the work of God might go forward.

Through this message that the Lord was working mightily for them, the children of Israel could have received much encouragement. In spite of great difficulties they were assured that they could go forward and finish the work. But they did not do this. Instead, the record declares that they lost heart because of recounting their difficulties and because of murmuring and complaining. Losing faith, the Israelites slackened and finally ceased doing the Lord's work of rebuilding the temple, and every man turned to his own interests. They excused themselves on the basis that they should first become prosperous by building up their farms and businesses, thus providing more means to finish the work of God.

The Message of Haggai.

Very little progress was made in the rebuilding of the temple until the reign of Darius, about 519 B.C. Then the Lord raised up two messengers: Haggai and Zechariah. Let us consider the purpose for their messages.

"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 1:2. Here in the year 519 B.C. they were saying, "The time has not come," but when was the time to rebuild the temple? Back in 538 B.C. Because of prevailing circumstances they were still saying "The time has not come." But notice what Haggai says:

"Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. 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. Thus saith the Lord of hosts;

Consider your ways. 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.

"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.

Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that, which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands."--Haggai 1:3-11.

Aroused by this message, the people rallied and

set their hands to finish the work. As a result, the Lord blessed them. "I am with you, saith the Lord."--Haggai 1:13.

The Visions of Zechariah.

After a couple of months Haggai was joined by Zechariah. "Zechariah" means "Jehovah remembers." When we read that God "remembers," it suggests that He is about to act, such as when He remembered the groaning of the children of Israel down in Egypt. When God remembered Babylon,

He sent plagues on that city. Now God wanted to remember Jerusalem with loving kindness, but His favour depended upon the obedience of the people to His will. Zechariah was given a series of eight visions concerning the restoration of the temple and the prosperity of Israel, that they might have every encouragement to respond to the call of Haggai to arise and build. The temple was finished in 516 B.C. We find a record of this in 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."

The Advent Movement of 1844.

This account of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem is a graphic illustration of the whole history of the Advent people from 1844 to the finishing of the work to which they have been called. We read of the captivity of God's people prior to 1844:

"For many centuries God's people suffered a restriction of their liberties. The preaching of the gospel in its purity was prohibited, and the severest of penalties were visited upon those who dared disobey the mandates of men. As-a consequence, the Lord's great moral vineyard was almost wholly unoccupied. The people were deprived of the light of God's word. The darkness of error and superstition threatened to blot out a knowledge of true religion. God's church on earth was as verily in captivity during this long period of relentless persecution, as were the children of Israel held captive in Babylon during the period of the exile."--Prophets and Kings, p. 714.

As previously indicated, the year 536 B.C. (the end of the seventy years) corresponds to 1844 (the end of the 2300 years). On October 22, 1844, Jesus entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.

What happened just before this date? Spiritual Babylon fell. The message went forth, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." In harmony with this message, God's people were again called out to be a separate and peculiar people. We read:

"But, thank God, His church is no longer in bondage. To spiritual Israel have been restored the privileges accorded the people of God at the time of their deliverance from Babylon No longer have the hosts of evil power to keep the church captive; for 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city,' which hath 'made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication'"--Ibid, pp. 714, 715.

Just as only a remnant of God's people chose to return from physical Babylon in 536 B.C., so only a remnant of His people in 1844 chose to leave spiritual Babylon. When Israel came out of Babylon, they laid the foundation of the temple. So God's people who were delivered from bondage in 1844 began again to lay the foundation of God's temple. That foundation was first laid about 1846, when an article on the sanctuary was written by Crosier, which was approved by the servant of the Lord. This foundation was solid, and the gates of hell could not prevail against it. Prophecy foretold what was to happen in 1844: ". . . . then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" or as the Revised Standard Version renders it, ". . . . then shall the sanctuary be restored to its rightful state."--Daniel 8:14.

"The passing of the time in 1844 was a period of great events, opening to our astonished eyes the cleansing of the sanctuary transpiring in heaven, and having decided relation to God's people upon the earth"--Counsels to Writers and Editors, p. 30.

In 1844 God said to His church, "Build a temple, after the divine pattern that I will show thee in the mount." Specifications have been given

and a Pattern supplied for building the soul temple and the temple of God's church. As in the mount Moses was shown a pattern for the ancient tabernacle, so we are to come to Mt. Zion, through faith, prayer, and study of the Word, to see the Pattern that God has given His people today. Just as the glory of the Lord filled the earthly tabernacle when it was built according to the pattern, so the temple of the soul, as well as that of the church, will be filled once again with God's glory when built according to the Pattern given to us. At the beginning of our movement, the servant of the Lord wrote as follows:

"God has shown me that He gave His people a bitter cup to drink, to purify and cleanse them. It is a bitter draught, and they can make it still more bitter by murmuring, complaining and repining. But those who receive it thus must have another draught, for the first does not have its designed effect upon the heart. And if the second does not effect the work, then they must have another, and another, until it does have its designed effect, or they will be left filthy, impure in heart. I saw that this bitter cup can be sweetened by patience, endurance, and prayer, and that it will have its designed effect upon the hearts of those who thus receive it, and God will be honored and glorified."--Early Writings, p. 47.

Like Israel of old, we have met with great difficulties in prosecuting the work. There has been a delay in the completion of the temple. Time has dragged on, and the church of God has fallen into the Laodicean condition. If the history of God's people follows both types-- the exodus movement from Egypt and the return from exile in Babylon-- it is plain that God is going to lead His people through to victory, and this time there will no longer be any delay. This He has promised to do.

The hearts of ancient Israel still lusted for the things of Egypt, although they never physically returned to Egypt, yet God led them on to Canaan. In spite of difficulties and discouragements after God's people came out of Babylon, they did not return to Babylon but finally completed the rebuilding of the temple. Therefore it is certain that God will lead His people today

through to victory even though we have fallen into the Laodicean condition, and the temple has not yet been rebuilt. As Israel dallied on various pretences, so we have followed in their steps. Human nature has not changed. As with them, so with us.

Our main problem is that God has not been first, last, and best in all things. For the most part we as Adventists recognize that God expects perfection of character in us. We know that only those will pass through the time of trouble who have perfected holiness in the fear of the Lord. This is the temple God has asked us to build. The foundation has been laid, but we have become discouraged in the work of building this spiritual edifice. The time has come for the work to be finished. It is now that God's people must fully reflect the image of Jesus. God asks us through Haggai: "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" And through Ellen G. White He makes the plea even more urgent:

"Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; 'Consider your ways.' Why have you done so little? Why do you feel concern for your own buildings, and unconcern for the Lord's building? Where is the zeal you once felt for the restoration of the Lord's house? What have you gained by serving self?

The desire to escape poverty has led you to neglect the temple, but this neglect has brought upon you that which you feared. 'Ye have sown much, and bring in little; . . . Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.'"--Prophets and Kings, p. 574.

The door to the most holy place is open, and Jesus entreats us to enter in and receive the blessing. The Holy Spirit urges: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter."--Hebrews 10:19.

God's people must work in harmony with their High Priest. We have been standing before that open door since 1844. We must not say the time has not yet come that the Lord's house should be built. Before us are tremendous difficulties, apparently insurmountable obstacles, but the Lord says:

"Consider your ways. From the time God's people rally to finish the work and to build His temple, I will bless you." It is now time for us to move into line, to rebuild the sanctuary, that the Lord may come and bless us, as He has promised to do.

Let us not look at the obstacles--the weakness and defectiveness of our lives or those of others--but let us respond wholeheartedly to the call of Haggai. Let us heed the messages of encouragement given through Zechariah:

"I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: for I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." --Zechariah 2:1-5.

As God's people move forward in the finishing of the work, they will meet perplexing problems and apparent hindrances, the greatest and most obvious of which will be the consciousness of their own failures, a consciousness that they have disappointed the Lord, that they have put their own selfish interests first. Satan will seek to overwhelm them with discouragement because of the imperfections of their lives.

But the vision of Zechariah, given in chapter 3, reminds and encourages us that Jesus stands for His people, and says: "Take away the filthy garments from them ." The divine favours will be

restored to His people. The Spirit of the Lord will move and finish the work, for He promises: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."--Zechariah 4:6. "For who hath despised the day of small things?"--Zechariah 4:10. "Who art thou, O great mountain?

Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." --Zechariah 4:7.

Testimonies to Ministers, p. 506, says the latter rain brings the seed to perfection. It completes the work of perfecting the moral image of God in the worshipper. Through the power of the Holy Ghost the sins of God's people are blotted out, no more to be remembered nor come into mind. The Holy Spirit fills them.

"And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, My great army which I sent among you."--Joel 2:25. Through the latter rain the Lord will make up for the years that sin has eaten out of the life, and will restore all the spiritual powers of the soul. He will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh prepared to receive it. The glory of the cross of Jesus will be reflected in the lives of His people, and the whole earth will be lightened with His glory.

Thus the work will be finished, not only in the world but also in the hearts of God's people. The Lord will comfort Zion. He will be a wall of fire round about her. Let us respond to the call of Haggai.

Let us move forward and finish rebuilding the temple in the assurance that the promises of Zechariah will be fulfilled in our day. The time has come that the Lord's work must be finished. Let us enter by faith with Jesus into the most holy place and finish the work. He will take away the filthy garments. He will give the latter rain to His people. The work will be finished in a very short time. "

Get ready, get ready, get ready!" Drop everything, O people of God, and hasten on with the rebuilding of God's temple in your own soul, thus doing your part in finishing the work in the temple of Christ's church on this earth.

"In every age there is given to men their day of light and privilege, a probational time in which they may become reconciled to God. But there is a Limit to this grace. Mercy may plead for years and be slighted and rejected; but there comes a time when mercy makes her last plea. The heart becomes so hardened that it ceases to respond to the Spirit of God. Then the sweet, winning voice entreats the sinner no longer, and reproofs and warnings cease. --Desire of Ages, p. 587.

