Hagai (Haggai) ~ Part 2

Temple's Future Glory

2 [1] On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, this word of Adonai came through Hagai the prophet: [2] "Speak now to Z'rubavel the son of Sh'alti'el, governor of Y'hudah, and to Y'hoshua the son of Y'hotzadak, the Cohen Hagadol, and to the rest of the people; say this to them: [3] ' "Who among you is left that saw this house in its former glory? And how does it look to you now? It seems like nothing to you, doesn't it? [4] Nevertheless, Z'rubavel, take courage now," says Adonai; "and take courage, Y'hoshua the son of Y'hotzadak, the Cohen Hagadol; and take courage, all you people of the land," says Adonai; "and get to work! For I am with you," says Adonai-Tzva'ot. [5] "This is in keeping with the word that I promised in a covenant with you when you came out of Egypt, and my Spirit remains with you, so don't be afraid!"

About a month later, *in the seventh month*, the people became discouraged with the new building when they thought of the former **Temple's** glory. The leaders were told to *take courage* because *God's Spirit remained with them*.

[6] For this is what Adonai-Tzva'ot says: "It won't be long before one more time I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land; [7] and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasures of all the nations will flow in; and I will fill this house with glory," says Adonai-Tzva'ot. [8] "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine," says Adonai-Tzva'ot. [9] "The glory of this new house will surpass that of the old," says Adonai-Tzva'ot, "and in this place I will grant shalom," says Adonai-Tzva'ot.'

God encouraged the leaders with the assurance that *the glory of* the **future Temple would be greater than that of** any of its predecessors. Their *silver* and *gold* would flow into **Yerushalayim** to beautify the temple. The two **Temples** were viewed as one house. In addition to *glory*, *shalom* is also promised for that future time.

Lessons From Forefathers

As you probably remember, I have been using the outline of The Narrated Bible in Chronological Order by F. LaGard Smith for the outlines in my post. Here, he sneaks in the following passage from **Z'kharyah** (Zechariah). **Z'kharyah** and **Hagai** began their ministries only two months apart (Hagai 1:1) in the fall of 520 BCE, 19 years after **Cyrus**, king of **Persia**, issued an edict giving the **Israeli's** permission to return from exile to their homeland. Both prophets were instrumental in the **Temple's** rebuilding, completed in 516/515 BCE (Ezra 5:1–2; 6:14).

[1] In the eighth month of the second year of Daryavesh, the following message from Adonai came to Z'kharyah the son of Berekhyah, the son of 'Iddo, the prophet: [2] "Adonai was extremely angry with your ancestors. [3] Therefore, tell them that Adonai-Tzva'ot says this: '"Return to me," says Adonai-Tzva'ot, "and I will return to you," says Adonai-Tzva'ot. [4] "Don't be like your ancestors. The earlier prophets proclaimed to them, 'Adonai-Tzva'ot says to turn back now from your evil ways and deeds'; but they didn't listen or pay attention to me," says Adonai. [5] "Your ancestors, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? [6] But my words and my laws, which I ordered my servants, the prophets, overtook your ancestors, didn't they? Then they turned and said, 'Adonai has dealt with us according to our ways and deeds, just as he intended to do.'"

They did not listen or pay attention to Me are some of the saddest words in the **Bible**. For more than 200 years, the prophets described disobedience in all its ugliness. They pictured the blessings of faithfulness in fantastic images of a perfect world, though expressed more simply in Zech 1:3 as "I will return to you" (but see the expansion in vv. 16–17; 3:8–10). But nothing worked to penetrate the cold hearts of sinners (7:11–12; 2 Ki 17:14–23; 2 Ch 36:15–16; Jer 5:11–13; Mal 3:7). By recalling earlier prophets and their roles, **Z'kharyah** placed himself on the same stage, preaching the same sermon. It was a message of enduring significance because the chosen people faced an ongoing challenge: living a life of faith. Shockingly, he asked, *Where are your ancestors now?* The futility of disobedience could hardly be clearer. The wasted effort of heroes must not be repeated.

Hypothetical Questions

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month in the second year of Daryavesh, this word of Adonai
came through Hagai the prophet: 11 "Here is what Adonai-Tzva'ot says: 'Ask the cohanim what the
Torah says about this: 12 if someone carries meat that has been set aside as holy in a fold of his
cloak; and then he lets his cloak touch bread, stew, wine, olive oil or any other food; does that food
become holy too?' " The cohanim answered, "No." 13 Then Hagai asked, "If someone who is unclean
from having had contact with a corpse touches any of these [food items], will they become
unclean?" The cohanim answered, "They become unclean." 14 Hagai then said, "That is the
condition of this people, that is the condition of this nation before me,' says Adonai, 'and that is
the condition of everything their hands produce; so that anything they offer there is unclean.

The third prophecy was given *on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month*. The people were told to *ask the cohanim* two questions: (1) *If … holy meat* carried *in the fold of a garment* should touch other foods, would those other foods *become holy*? *The cohanim correctly answered … "No."* (2) *"If someone who is unclean from having had contact with a corpse touches any of these [food items], will they become unclean?" The cohanim answered "Yes."* To put it another way, "Work and worship do not sanctify sin, but sin contaminates work and worship." This was a reminder to the people that their offerings to **God** were polluted and that they themselves were **unclean** as long as the **Temple** was in ruins.

In our next post, we will finish exploring **Hagai**.