

I.N.I.

20th Sunday after Pentecost
Oct. 10, 2010
Haggai 2:1-9

In Christ Jesus, the One Foundation, upon Whom His Church is built and will ever stand, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

I'm going to church today! I am a confirmed member of my church! Boy, what a beautiful church! Because I believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior, I am a member of the Church! In all 4 of these statements the word church was used; and it was used in a different sense in each statement.

When we say we are going to church, we usually mean the church service that is held. In this case the word church means---a worship service.

When we say we are members of a church we are talking about---a local congregation, like Peace Thru Christ Lutheran Church.

When we talk about a beautiful church we are talking about---a building, not a service or an organization.

And when we talk about **THE CHURCH**; we are speaking of---that universal, invisible Church made up of only believers. This Church has no organization, no local meeting place, no building. It is God's rule in the heart of the believer. It consists of every Christian throughout the world. We call it invisible because Christ alone knows who are in His Church.

In our text this morning the word **CHURCH** never appears yet the term is alluded to several times. Instead of the word **CHURCH**, the word God's house is used, or temple. And as in the case of the word **CHURCH** so also in the case of these words it is used in different ways. Our text this morning speaks of---

THE LATTER GLORY OF GOD'S HOUSE!

AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE BUILDERS: PAST AND PRESENT.

Last week we heard from Ezra about the return of the Israelites from Babylon. As we heard, one of the first things they did was to rebuild the altar and worship the LORD. Quite soon after that they began to rebuild the temple and shortly thereafter, within a half a year, they had the foundation laid.

Last week we also heard about the dedication service of joy and thanksgiving when the foundation was finished. However with the dying down of the festivities so also the zeal and desire of the people died down. They became spiritually lethargic and lazy. The first phase of the building project proceeded smoothly and rapidly. Everyone pitched in eagerly, willing to help. But with that first phase completed the desire and effort waned. Some of the people realized, as we heard last week, that this new temple was going to be nowhere near as beautiful, ornate, or large as the old temple of Solomon. Remember how the old men wept aloud at the dedication service because of this. That kind of attitude soon spread to others. There was not the same outward glory and grandeur to this new building. Nowhere near the same amount of gold and silver ornamentation. Soon the people became discouraged and dormant, lazy and selfish. So the Lord called Haggai to get them going again, to rekindle their zeal.

We hear the words of rebuke delivered by the LORD through Haggai in chapter 1. Over time the people allowed the LORD'S house to stand half finished, in disrepair while they made sure that they had all of the finer things in life; all of the luxuries and comforts.

These words of the LORD led them to repent of their self centered interests and stirred up the people so that they once again began the building process. About a month later the LORD spoke through Haggai words of encouragement. The LORD Himself brought up the subject of the two temples. He

made them take a closer look at the new one and compare it with the old one. He made them face the reality that the new one would not be as glorious as the old; at least not outwardly. Yet the LORD encouraged His people with these words in verse 4: **YET NOW BE STRONG ZERUBBABEL, SAYS THE LORD; AND BE STRONG JOSHUA, SON OF JEHOZADAK, THE HIGH PRIEST; AND BE STRONG, ALL YOU PEOPLE OF THE LAND, SAYS THE LORD, AND WORK; FOR I AM WITH YOU, SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS.**

What greater words of comfort and assurance could one ask for? A promise from the Almighty God **I AM WITH YOU!** With the LORD nothing is impossible.

But the LORD gave these Israelites an even greater word of encouragement. We read in vss. 6-9 **FOR THUS SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS; ONCE MORE (IT IS A LITTLE WHILE) I WILL SHAKE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA AND DRY LAND; AND I WILL SHAKE ALL NATIONS, AND THEY SHALL COME TO THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS, AND I WILL FILL THIS TEMPLE WITH GLORY, SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS. THE SILVER IS MINE, AND THE GOLD IS MINE, SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS. THE GLORY OF THIS LATTER TEMPLE SHALL BE GREATER THAN THE FORMER, SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS. AND IN THIS PLACE I WILL GIVE PEACE, SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS.**

In essence the LORD is saying, even though this building is nothing compared to Solomon's temple, even though it doesn't have anywhere near the gold and silver---yet the latter glory of this house will be far greater than the former.

Why? Because the LORD in a little while will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. He would do this by shaking the nations of the world and lead them to the **DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS.** Who is this **DESIRE** of all nations. He is none other than our **LORD and SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.**

With these words God is speaking about the Savior's coming into this world and appearing in this temple. One reason why this temple would be greater in glory than the old one would be because the **DESIRE** of all nations, the Savior of the world, Jesus, the Messiah would be found within these very walls, would walk these floors and grace this building with His presence.

But secondly the LORD is now switching from speaking of a physical building (His temple house) to the spiritual invisible **CHURCH** of all believers. His New Testament **CHURCH** of believers would be far more glorious than anything ever seen in the Old Testament temple.

When the LORD delivered Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt He spoke of it as a shaking of the heavens and the earth. Also when the LORD delivered His people from the Babylonian captivity it was described as God shaking the heavens and the earth. These 2 deliverances from slavery and captivity are the greatest in the history of the Old Testament and both are prophetic types or pictures of the New Testament deliverance of mankind from the slavery of sin and captivity of Satan, death and hell.

So the LORD says, **IN A LITTLE WHILE I AGAIN WILL SHAKE THE WORLD; THE HEAVENS, THE EARTH, THE SEA AND THE DRY LAND.** But this shaking did not register on the Richter scale. It was not a violent shaking of the ground, the likes of which people in San Francisco and Peru have felt over the years. This first future shaking in fact occurred on a quiet, peaceful starry night. A hymn calls that first shaking night **SILENT NIGHT!**

Yes, the birth of God's Son to mankind shook the world! It was one of the greatest events to ever take place on this earth. **GOD BECAME MAN!** Yet, at that time hardly anyone noticed--just a handful of poor shepherds. But that is the marvel of God's actions.

No doubt the believer of the Old Testament reading these words pictured in their minds some mighty heavenly noise, or powerful rumblings with the earth quaking and shaking violently, or if they took it

figuratively they at least were thinking of some dramatic deliverance like the one that led them out of the land of Egypt with ten plagues and the miraculous parting of the Red Sea. But instead the LORD is speaking of the quiet, almost totally unnoticed birth of a baby boy---that shook the world.

God's ways are not man's ways!

The second shaking of the nations took place about 33 years later. It took place on a weekend--from Friday to Sunday. This shaking was a little more evident. On Good Friday while Jesus hung on the cross the sky grew dark and the sun stopped shining. It was black as night in the middle of the day. When the Son of God cried out **IT IS FINISHED** and died on the cross, graves were opened, the earth shook and the curtain in this very temple that the Israelites were building was torn in two from top to bottom. It was the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

By this action—Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection on Sunday morning--mankind was delivered, set free from the slavery to and captivity of sin, death, Satan and hell forever. An earthquake also announced Jesus' resurrection when the angel on Easter Sunday morning rolled the stone away to show to the whole world the empty tomb. Christ had risen! What the LORD through Haggai prophesied came to pass when the LORD shook the world with His Son's death and resurrection.

But there was a third shaking that took place. This happened 50 days later, you could call it an aftershock. On Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit with the sound of the mighty rushing wind and in the form of tongues of fire was poured out upon the disciples. They were filled with the power from on high and with spiritual boldness and heavenly wisdom they proclaimed the Glorious Good News of man's salvation thorough Jesus Christ far and wide. It began as a small gathering of 3,000 believers and spread through Samaria and Galilee to Asia Minor to Rome to the uttermost parts of the earth. The message of Christ crucified and risen again has shaken the world so that now there are believers all around the world, on every continent of the earth.

Yes, the Gospel of Jesus Christ has shaken the earth, has shaken every single nation in this world; from to ; from Thailand to Iceland, from Nepal to Nicaragua. The elect from every nation have come to the **DESIRED ONE**, Jesus Christ, to fill His Church.

This last aftershock that took place on Pentecost caused a massive, slow moving Sunami to continually move and wash over this world with the powerful Gospel message, and it will continue day after day, year after year until the world (nations, heaven, earth, sea and dry land) will be destroyed and a new heaven and earth will be created. Yes, this shaking of nations has occurred and still occurs everyday also in America. For everyday the announcement of man's forgiveness through Jesus Christ is proclaimed somewhere in our nation.

Has that shaking occurred in your life yet? Have you been shaken by the power of the Gospel to see in Jesus Christ your only hope, your only way of salvation? Has the Water of life, God's Word washed into your hearts the Good News of salvation alone through Jesus? If you have, your whole life is changed and your future life is secure in Christ. If not, we pray that the Holy Spirit work that miraculous conversion in your heart before it you die.

The LORD in our text allowed the Israelites to peek into just a tiny bit of the exciting future of His Church. This was done to excite and encourage them to work. To not only build that physical building, which was eventually totally destroyed in 70 A.D., but also to work to build God's invisible Church. In one last encouraging message the LORD reminded the Israelites and He reminds us today---

THE SILVER IS MINE AND THE GOLD IS MINE!

In other words, don't worry about the cost! The wherewithal, the riches are at My disposal, they are **MINE** and I will give them to you for you to use in building **MY CHURCH**. Building not only walls, windows, floors and ceilings but sending out missionaries and buying Bibles and paying pastors and

teachers to spread My Word to others.

Our theme spoke of an Encouragement **TO THE BUILDERS: PAST AND PRESENT!** We've seen and heard the encouragement God gave to the builders of the past, the peek into the future of His Church. Well that same encouraging peek, for us has become an historical fact and the very certainty and basis for our salvation. God has shaken the world with the gift of His Son Jesus Christ. We've seen it, we have experienced it through faith, we are proclaiming it, and we live it. We have nothing to fear, we have nothing to worry about for our future is assured in Christ. We have eternal security in our Savior who lived and died and rose again for us.

That is our encouragement too! Christ is our foundation. We are victorious alone through Him! We are more than conquerors, Paul tells us! With Christ we have **TRUE PEACE and UNITY with GOD!**

We will be discussing at our Quarterly Voters' meeting next Sunday a possible future physical building program here at Peace Thru Christ with windows and siding on the parsonage and expansion and remodeling of our church area, but that is only temporary. We are always involved in building up the **CHURCH**--bringing the message of salvation to each other for our mutual strengthening and comfort and to others for their spiritual deliverance into Christ's kingdom which brings eternal results.

May this work of ours in building Christ's Church, be part of our daily lives and commitment from this day forward. The LORD assures us;

I AM WITH YOU! MY SPIRIT REMAINS AMONG YOU! BE STRONG!

And don't worry about the cost----

THE SILVER IS MINE AND THE GOLD IS MINE.

Amen.