

“By My Spirit” Zechariah 4:6

The So. Kingdom of Judah was carried into captivity, and remained there for 70 Years. They were without a temple. The approximate years were 586 to 516 BC.

One of the Psalms written while in captivity was, 137:1-4 “By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?

Some of the people living then were – Cyrus, king of Persia, king Darius of Persia, Ezra – a priest in exile, Nehemiah - a cup-bearer to the king, Haggai - a prophet, Zerubbabel - an appointed Governor & headed up the re-building of the temple, Zechariah a minor prophet, Daniel - in captivity & faced the lion’s den; Jeremiah - who stayed in Jerusalem, and later died in Egypt an old man, and Ezekiel – a prophet & contemporary of Jeremiah’s.

The first Jews returned & rebuilt the altar for worship. They started to rebuild and soon ran into opposition, and also financial hardships. Things slowed. The project fell along the wayside for a few years. They shifted their attention from the temple to their own properties and built their own houses – and life became all about them. *The Asbury Bible commentary tells us, --- “In the first return in 538 B.C. an attempt had been made to rebuild, but due to the lack of economic resources, it was left unfinished. The people saw the continued economic plight as reason enough for the continued delay. Haggai had a contrasting point of view. The people thought that economics prohibited religious activity, whereas Haggai proclaimed that their economic plight was caused by their lack of religious commitment.” So we read in - - - Haggai 1:1 “The word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel - governor of Judah, 1:2 This is what the LORD Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come for the LORD’S house to be built.’” Hag 1:3 Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: 1:4 “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?” 1:5 Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. Hag 1:6 You have planted much, but have 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.” 1:8 Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the LORD.*

Are we guilty of this? Getting the fanciest of material things for our own houses and for ourselves while God’s house gets the lesser.

They had economic problems too – like we, but God said, “Think carefully about how you are living.”

The Promised Glory of the New House

Hag 2:1 On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: Hag 2:2 “Speak to Zerubbabel - and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, Hag 2:3 ‘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? Hag 2:4 But now be strong, O Zerubbabel,’ declares the LORD. - Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the LORD, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the LORD Almighty. Hag 2:5 ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you.

Zechariah 4:1 “Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from his sleep. V2 He asked me, “What do you see?” I answered, “I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights. V3 Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” V4 I asked the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” V5 He answered, “Do you not know what these are?” “No, my lord,” I replied. V6 So he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.”

This gold lampstand with a bowl and 7 lamps represents a steady supply of oil. Olive trees gave olives – when squeezed, they supplied oil for light on the lamps. This meant God’s light during the difficult building days to come.

The last verse is our key verse today, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.”

Today, in our world, it’s all by might & power.

- A- Financial power & might, The best heads in Wash DC are trying to figure out the answer to our money dilemma. Has anyone heard of the House & Senate seeking God’s direction and being filled with the Holy Spirit for solutions? To our demise, they are trying to keep God out.
- B- Education power, They say, “If we can just provide better education. We can solve these problems.
- C- Military power, more jet fighters – bombers – missiles & troops.
- D- Ecological power, Get cleaner solar & wind power – less omissions – then we can solve of global warming.
- E- Brain power, If we get a better handle on electronics – keep track of people with digital methods, then we can solve many problems.

As God’s Church, let’s not be guilty of thinking we can do His work within our power and might. God says, *“It’s not by your might and power”*.

As His Church, it’s not our money, not our wisdom, not our programs, but *“By My Spirit says the Lord.”*

Let’s commit our spirits to His Spirit – and watch Him work.