

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 14, 2013

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SCRIPTURE

HAGGAI 2:1-9

1 In the second year of King Darius, in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai, saying: 2 Speak now to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, and say, 3 Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Is it not in your sight as nothing? 4 Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the LORD; work, for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts, 5 according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My spirit abides among you; do not fear. 6 For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; 7 and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the LORD of hosts. 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts. 9 The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts.

DEVOTIONAL

In our Old Testament lesson, we hear that the people rebuilding the temple are discouraged because they remember the former glory of Solomon's Temple. The new temple seems like it could never compare to their memory of the past. But God promises, as He does repeatedly throughout Scripture, that everything will be ok, because He will be with them.

Advent is a season of preparation – preparation for Christmas, for the Second Coming, for a new church year. It can be a time of great joy and anticipation, as long as we don't let our memories of the past prevent us from experiencing and enjoying the present. We might think "It won't be the same this year without Mom," or "I don't know how we'll make it through after the layoff." But remember that God is always by our side. This year may be different, or more difficult, but do not fear, for the Lord your God is with you.

""And in this place I will grant peace," declares the Lord Almighty."

PRAYER

Eternal God, be with us this holiday season. Especially be with those who have suffered great loss this past year. Even when it seems nothing will ever be joyful again, remind us that hope is found in You. In the midst of the chaos of this world, Your love for us is steadfast. Amen.

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