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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1581 ~ The Temple Completed.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

During a time of drought, a man built a house fairly close to a river in a pretty suburb in a large city. When the drought finally broke, however, the rains brought floods to the region. Although the man took out all his belongings from his house before the muddy brown water seeped into his garden, the house wasn't spared. The water kept rising. When the river peaked at its highest level, only the top of the roof was showing. How disappointed he was, yet thankful too, that he hadn't lost everything as some of his neighbours had.

When the flood waters drained away, the man saw that the inside of his house had been destroyed. What should he do? There were still three more months of summer rain to come. If he started to rebuild his house, it could well be flooded again.

Like this man, the exiles returning to Judah were confused too about what they should do next. They'd made a start on rebuilding the Temple, as God has instructed them to do. They'd cleared the land and put the foundation stone in. But after some trouble from their neighbours, the new king of Persia had ordered the people to stop work on rebuilding the Temple. So many Israelites went into the surrounding villages, set up their homes and tried farming the land for food, but sadly, without much success. Why had God brought them back to their own land and given them a vision of rebuilding His Temple, only to allow such work and His blessing to be stopped?

People often ask the same basic questions: “Why do bad things happen to good people?” “Why doesn’t God stop wars and other troubles now?” The problem has always been with the freewill people have to either obey God or disobey Him. When God does step into human affairs and stops wars and troubles one day, His grace and mercy on earth will mean that God’s judgement on the world is very close.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

Today’s Bible Adventure comes from chapters 5 and 6 of the book of Ezra found in the Old Testament.

It had been sixteen years since the exiles had returned to Judah and the Temple of God was still only half-built. God raised up an old prophet called Haggai to get the work started again. Over a four-month period, Haggai gave four messages. His first message called the people to be honest and to put God’s house ahead of their own homes.

Such times for the returned exiles were now hard. The people were poor and their leaders discouraged. The restored Temple would be nothing like the temple of Solomon and the people may have wondered, “Is it really worth it all?”

They didn’t realise that the Lord of Glory Himself would minister in this temple one day. Later, at the time of Christ, King Herod the Great repaired and enlarged this same’ Temple that they had built. We must be careful not to let golden memories of the past rob us of present and future opportunities to glorify God.

Haggai spoke so vividly when he said: “You have sown much, but you have reaped little; you eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you do not have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages has earned them to put them in a bag with holes in it.”

The leaders and people listened carefully to what Haggai had to say and turned to the Lord to worship Him. Then Haggai encouraged them to be strong and work hard. Whenever God’s work is neglected, the preaching of the God’s Word gets things going again.

One writer has said it this way: “The test of a preacher is not that his congregation goes away, saying: ‘What a lovely sermon!’ but saying, ‘I will do something!’ ” When we put God first, we have the promise of His care. But when we put ourselves first, we lose His blessing and whatever we had spent on ourselves. You never lose when you put God first in your life.

During the rebuilding of the Temple, Haggai was helped by a priest called Zechariah. When Haggai urged the people to continue and finish the Temple, God gave Zechariah visions of the future and challenged the people to look ahead. They were part of God’s glorious future and this blessed hope became a great motivator for service and faithfulness.

To be part of the fulfilment of some of the prophecies in Scripture, the exiles from Judah needed to return back to the Promised Land. Otherwise the Messiah could not be born in the town of Bethlehem. Zerubbabel was a descendant of King David and is named in the list of ancestors of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew’s Gospel, Chapter 1.

Although the Bible is made up of 66 books written by 40 different authors over 1,500 years, it is also a single story – God’s story and His dealings with all His creation. The whole of the Old Testament points to the Lord Jesus.

The Gospels in the New Testament focus on Jesus and the rest of the New Testament looks back and refers to Him.

Haggai and Zechariah's books are listed in the end section of the Old Testament known as the Minor Prophets. These books, which start at Hosea, are important to study too. Some of the prophetic books are longer while others are shorter, including Haggai and Zechariah. The shorter books cover the period from the Israelites' return to Judah from Babylonian exile and also prophesy future events to the end times of the world.

We all need to persevere in the hard times we face. Is God going to keep us from troubles? No, but He will be with us each step of the way. We have to accept that life is difficult and that we must never give up.

The writer of Hebrews said in Chapter 12: "Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end. He did not give up because of the cross!" And "think of what He went through; how He put up with so much hatred from sinners! So do not let yourselves become discouraged and give up."

Another writer has said: "There is no means of escaping from troubles and sorrow, except to bear them patiently."

A 45-year old French journalist suffered a stroke. It left him unable to speak or move, although his mind was unaffected. The only part of his body he could still control was his left eyelid.

The man learnt to communicate with that eyelid. First, he learnt how to say "Yes" and "No." Then when a helper spoke or pointed to letters in the French alphabet, he would blink when she came to the letter he wanted. In that way, he formed words. Difficult though it was, he composed an entire book which sold very well when published. That man did what he could with what he had. To each of us, the Lord has given some ability and some opportunity for service.

Do you see yourself as part of God's glorious future? Is your heart set on going to heaven? Compared to the endless years of eternity, the few years spent on earth seem so small. We can easily become distracted with the busyness of living on earth and forget about the importance of being prepared for heaven. Let's fix our eyes and affections on Jesus and not put our faith on anything else!

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