



February 20, 2005

Spiritual Fatigue

“And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” (Jer 25.11). These words were recorded by the prophet as he pronounced God’s judgment against God’s people who had given themselves to error and corruption. Later we see that these things came about as the Lord had said. While this was terrible for the people of God to have to face, they were not without warning. In this midst of these things, however, God also extended hope of restoration. Jeremiah later wrote, ***“For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.” (Jer 29.10).*** This also came about as we can read in the book of Daniel and other prophets. In spite of the things that they had experienced, it was not long before the people drifted back into the pattern of negligence that had caused these things to come upon them in the first place. Malachi denounced these things in his writings to make the people aware of the state that they were reverting to. They were neglecting to sacrifice the best of the flocks and to render other sacrifices, giving God the things that were of not value and use to them. Malachi states, ***“Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.” (Mal 1.13).*** Their selfishness and neglectful attitude toward God was an expression of ingratitude. They had been blessed with the restoration of a remnant, which eventually would fulfill God’s purpose of bringing Christ into the world. Malachi indicates that one of the things that plagued God’s people was simply laziness in attending to the things that they should be doing. God had been good to them throughout their history. He had established them as a nation and given them the land that had been promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He had tolerated their indifference and idolatry until such a time as God saw that they would no longer listen to the messengers sent to warn them. **(2 Chron 36.16).** In our day and time we sometimes drift into the same state. We may begin to think of the things that God would want us to do as an imposition on our time and resources. The cares of the world bring pressures to bear upon us that may lead us to wonder if God cares. Many times we have only our selves to blame for the mishaps that befall us while at other times the problems that arise are simply those that everyone, believers and unbelievers alike, have to face as part of life in the world. This is where our faith is tested. We must ask ourselves if we truly believe that there is a reward for those who not only diligently seek after the Lord, but who do those things that are required to identify us as faithful in God’s sight. These same issues trouble those who are not Christians as well. Some have been misled into thinking that serving God will be the answer to every difficulty and believing in God alone will make all of these things go away. Studying the scriptures we are reminded of the toils and tribulations that those in the early church had to face. They were persecuted, driven from their homes and some were killed for their belief and service to God. In our day and time we have the seemingly endless monotony of daily life that creates a subtle influence that may weaken us if we lose sight of why we are doing the things that we do. We are also reminded of those of our number that we have known over the years who become stronger in their faith as they age and their service to God does not diminish. Perhaps we are not always able to what we once did as time takes its toll on our health and the health of our loved ones. Our resolve however needs to be strengthened daily by reminding ourselves of that home that we seek. We need to create a sense within ourselves that this is not our home and the world will one day perish with its pleasures and toils. God did not spare his own son from the hate and indifference of those who would eventually win an apparent victory over the Son of God only to find that they had unwittingly done exactly what the Lord had planned all along. Paul spoke of the spiritual renewal that comes about through serving God as he told of the trials that he and others faced. ***“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” (2 Cor 4.16).*** We must strive to grow, learn, teach and serve God looking for that eternal home that has been promised to all who do so.

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