

INTRODUCTION

1. Zerubbabel has now returned to Jerusalem with about 50,000 (49,897) Jews fresh from out of the Babylonian captivity.
2. Before they thought of homes for themselves, their first thought was for the house of God when Jeshua stood up with certain of Israel and "built the alter of the God of Israel. Ezra 3:2
3. In the second month (May) of the second year they "laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord. Ezra 3:8-10
4. With mingled feelings and mixed emotions the people gathered at the site and looked upon the newly completed foundation for the temple and the alter of God standing in the open.
 1. Here we have almost touching and pathetic picture of the people as they stood before the alter and foundation. Ezra 3:10-13. NOTE:
 - (1) Here feeling touched its deepest and rose to its highest note:
 - A. There were those who sang and shouted for joy in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord. The foundation is laid and we shall soon have the house of God completed.
 2. With those pleasures of hope however, there were also sorrows of memory. About fifty years before there had been another house on that very spot: Solomon's Temple.
 - (1) Among them there were ancient men who had seen that house in all its glory. They could see it still in their minds.
 - (2) These ancients now saw an insignificant temple when compared with the memory they had of Solomon's Temple, and a mere handful of people when compared with the power of their Israel of other days.
 - (3) No doubt the weeping of these old men (ancient Men) was the first check on the enthusiasm of the builders of the temple.
 - (4) Joined with all this weeping and wailing of the ancient men, adversaries combined their complaints until a letter from Artaxerxes brought the work to a grinding halt extending over a period of 15 years.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THESE YEARS?

1. They had been idle in the work of the Lord and exceedingly busy in establishing themselves in good houses. Haggai 1:4
2. Their early zeal for the Lord had faded away and they had become indolent and selfish to the extent that they were not in the least bothered that, "this house lie in waste," the unfinished temple of the Lord.

TWO PREACHERS APPEAR ON THE SCENE

1. September 1, B. C. 520, Haggai came by the word of the Lord and preached to the remnant.
 1. Haggai's theme was: THE UNFINISHED TEMPLE, and his mission was to admonish and to encourage the people.
2. The first of November, B. C. 520, Zechariah came to preach. His mission was to tell them the Lord was not at all pleased with them and to encourage the despondent. Zech. 1:1-6
 1. Confucious, the great Chinese philosopher, flourished in China at this time. The messages of these two men of God were not based upon the philosophy of Confucious but upon what the Lord had said.

WE CONSIDER HAGGAI'S SERMON Haggai 1:1-15; 2:1-23 Haggai's charge to them:

1. You say, "the time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." 1:2
2. You dwell in your cield houses, and this house (the temple) lies waste. Haggai 1:4
3. "Consider your ways." Haggai 1:5
4. You earn wages "to put ittinto a bag with holes." Haggai 1:6
5. Their "bag with holes" meant simply that:
 1. God was not pleased with them and would not bless their present efforts.
 2. That what they put into the bag went right on through as indicated in Haggai 1:6:
 - (1) Ye have sown much, and bring in little; Ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm

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LET US CONSIDER THEIR CLAIM.. "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." Three evils appear here:

1. COWARDICE

1. They did not say, "We will not build the temple, we will leave to remain in ruins." They were afraid to say that. They had admitted their duty and obligation to do the work when they said, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built."

2. Men never say, "We will never attend to it, we will never study the Scriptures, we will never worship God." They ease themselves out from any acknowledged duty by saying, "THE TIME IS NOT COME."

2. SELFISHNESS

1. They set to work for their own private interest. They would attend to their own business and after that is all done we will see to the temple. Matt. 6:33

3. PRESUMPTION

1. How did they know that the time had not come? Such presumption is always guilty and perilous. James 4:13-15: Go to now ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: (14) Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. (15) For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will we shall live, and do this or that.

THE LESSON IN ALL THIS FOR US

1. We are charged to build a house for the Lord (1 Tim. 3:15). How we build this house:

1. By preaching the gospel of Christ to every creature.
2. By helping the needy.
3. By restoring the wayward.
4. By strengthening the saved. God has charged us to do this.

2. We admit "the time has come," but we say, "We are not able."

1. There is no place in the Lord's work for weakness and fear for not one inch of ground is ever gained without a battle. 1 Cor. 15:58; 16:13; Gal. 6:9

3. We, as they, will have a "bag with holes" if:

1. We are easily discouraged, give up the work that we admit and know should be done.
2. We say that it is not the right time.

(1) If a thing is right and needs to be done, it is the time to get it done.

3. We are more concerned about our own affairs than about the affairs of the Lord.

(1) The word must be preached "in season, and out of season." 2 Tim. 2:4

(2) "Now is the day of salvation." Now is the right time. 2 Cor. 6:2; "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

