

Time to Build - cont.

Third, Haggai said that their was spiritual uncleanness among some of the Jews which kept them from working (Haggai 2:10-14). We have to be careful that we do not have the same sinful uncleanness among us today which keeps us from working (1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14ff).

Brethren, the “time” (Haggai 1:2,4) is now to be busy building the church and doing the Lord’s work (Matthew 16:18; Acts 15:16; Romans 15:20; 1 Corinthians 3:10ff; Ephesians 2:21; 4:12,16). We do this by continuing to reach the lost with the gospel and encourage the saved with the gospel.

It is easy to let other things get in the way and keep us from working. May it never be said of us, “Then ceased the work of the house of God...” Let us not allow these three hindrances to stop our building today. If Haggai were present today, he may say to us, “Consider your ways...”

If we need to reset our priorities, not rest on past successes, and remain pure, let us do so that we may continued working. Let’s make sure our “spirit” (attitude) is right in doing the Lord’s work (Haggai 1:12-14). Yes, it is time to build! - *Chris Reeves*

- Word of the Week -

“Kind” (Gr. χρηστεύομαι) is the verb found in 1 Corinthians 13:4 where Paul writes, “Love is kind”. This word is used only here in the New Testament. To be kind is “to show oneself mild”. We live in a culture where so many people today do not speak or act kindly anymore. These people think of others in a mean way, they speak harshly to others with abusive language, and they act violently toward others. In contrast, let us go out this week and think kindly of others, speak kindly to others, and act kindly toward others.

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Wednesday: 7 pm

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

It Is Time to Build

In Ezra 1-2, we read about God's people, the Jews, who returned from the Babylonian Captivity, c. 538 B.C. One thing they did after they rebuilt the altar was to first lay the foundation of the Temple, c. 536 B.C. The history of this great and joyous event is recorded this way:

And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Jehovah, after the order of David king of Israel. And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah, saying, For he is good, for his lovingkindness endures for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised Jehovah, because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid.

- Ezra 3:10-11 -

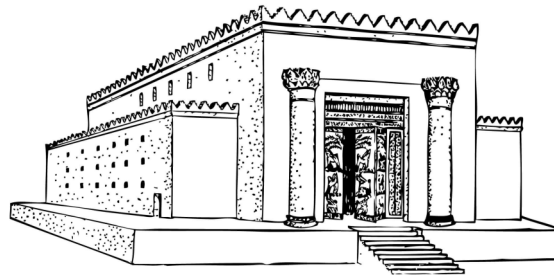
Unfortunately for the Jews, the work on the temple soon ceased. The Jews allowed outside opposition and persecution to keep them from working. They were doing the Lord's work, but then they stopped. The sad account is recorded this way:

Then ceased the work of the house of God

which is at Jerusalem; and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

- Ezra 4:24 -

The Jews ceased working on the temple for about 16 years. Then, God sent the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to stir up the people to resume their work, c. 520 B.C. (Ezra 5:1-2).



After these two prophets stirred up the people to work, the Jews finished building the temple in about four years, c. 516 B.C. The success of the building is recorded with these words:

And the elders of the Jews built and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it, according to the

commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the decree of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. ¹⁵ And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

- Ezra 6:14-15 -

So, what caused the Lord's work to stop for sixteen years? If you read the little book of Haggai, you will find out the answer to this question.

First, Haggai said that the Jews were putting personal matters, misplaced priorities, and materialism before the Lord's work (Haggai 1:2-9). We have to be careful that we do not put other, less important matters, before the Lord's work today (Matthew 6:33; 10:37-39; Luke 8:14; 9:57-62; John 4:34; 9:4; 2 Corinthians 8:5; 2 Timothy 2:4).

Second, Haggai said that the Jews were resting on their past accomplishments as well as getting discouraged over their present work (Haggai 2:1-9). We have to be careful that we do not let success or discouragement hinder our work today (1 Cor. 15:58).

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