

## Haggai 1:7-15 – Build My House!

The remnant of the people who had returned to Judah had lost focus on why they had returned to Judah. Cyrus' decree to return to Judah and Jerusalem focused on rebuilding the temple. The people started rebuilding the temple but when opposition arose, they left the temple in ruins and turned their attention to their own houses. What a horrible message was sent by the temple lying in ruins for 15 years while all the surrounding houses had already been rebuilt. The message was that the people didn't want God living among them. In Exodus 25:8 God said "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst." Were they afraid to have God dwelling among them? The exiles had lived the wrath of God against Judah's disobedience. The people hadn't said they wouldn't rebuild the temple but that it wasn't yet time to rebuild the temple. Their timetable did not align with God's timetable. God said in no uncertain terms, "The time is now!" No more procrastinating!

### **Read Haggai 1:7-11.**

Verse 7 is a repeat of verse 5 so it must be important. What should the people consider? This is the first command in a series of four commands (1:7)

What are the three commands in verse 8? Did God specify the hills / mountain where they should get the wood? Where did they get the wood for Solomon's temple? See 1 Kings 5:6, 10; 2 Chronicles 2:16 (1:8)

Ezra 3:1-7 talks about provisions made to acquire cedar trees from Lebanon for rebuilding the temple. What happened to that cedar wood? Would local trees be as good as cedar trees from Lebanon?

What two reasons did God give the people to rebuild the temple? (1:8)

In verse 6, God told the people what the consequences were for not rebuilding? What consequence did God recount in verse 9? God reiterated the reason why the people were disappointed in the fruit of their toils. Why did God frustrate the efforts of the people?

What other consequences were there for the people's self-centered vs God-centered behavior? (1:10-11)

**Read Haggai 1:12-15.**

When God called the people to action, how did they respond? Who was involved in the response? What does it mean that they feared the LORD? (1:12)

After God's call to repentance and action, what promise did God give to the people? Was God's promise dependent on the people's response? (1:13)

In verse 14, the people came and began work on the temple. What happened before they came and worked on the temple?

When did the people begin work on the temple? How long had it been since the first message of Haggai? (1:15)

What else would have been happening during this time of year? It is helpful to look at a Jewish calendar. This time of year corresponds to our mid-September. Was this a good time to start building the temple? When do people normally start a building project?

It would be easy to be jealous of Haggai. When Haggai spoke, people listened. They listened because they believed that he was speaking the words of God. Jeremiah spoke God's word for decades and the people didn't listen to him. They preferred to listen to the many false prophets who were speaking a message of peace and prosperity. How would the world rate the success of Haggai and Jeremiah? How did God rate their success?

A number of churches and Christian organizations get caught up in the numbers game. They judge their success by the size of their buildings or the number of their programs or the number of their members or by "how many souls they have won". Is this God's measure of success? Why or why not?