

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were some of the dangers involved in accepting help from the people of the land?
2. How can it be dangerous for Christians today to accept help from non-believers?
3. Why do we tend to become discouraged by opposition to our work?
4. What encouraged the people to go on with the building?
5. What did the opposition stand to lose if the Jews rebuilt the temple?
6. What evidence is there that this was God's work and not man's work?

### SUMMARY:

Not long after the foundation of the temple was laid, and the people had rejoiced so much in the progress they had made, opposition was encountered. The people of the land pretended to be interested in the God of Israel and offered to help with the building. The leaders of the returned Jews evidently sensed an ulterior motive in the offer and rejected it, rather than become involved in an alliance which could lead to harmful consequences.

The people of the land soon proved their true character and began using every method at their disposal to hinder and finally stop the building. After being encouraged by God, through the prophets they again began to proceed with the building. In spite of much opposition, the eternal truth of God's Word as spoken to Ezekiel "*I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass,*" (Ezekiel 12:25a) was again being fulfilled.

### NOTES:

## APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Bible Lesson #3

July 16, 2006

Third Quarter

### GOD'S WORK OPPOSED

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**LESSON TEXT:** *Ezra 4:1-24; 5:1-5*

**LESSON SETTING:** Rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem

**TIME:** Approximately 535 B.C.

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**I. GOD'S PEOPLE TESTED.** *Ezra 4:1-5*

- A. Resisted Involvement (vs. 3) Exodus 34:12; 2 Corinthians 6:14
- B. Faced Opposition (vs. 4, 5) Acts 13:8; 2 Timothy 4:14, 15

**II. GOD'S PEOPLE ACCUSED.** *Ezra 4:6-16*

- A. Accusers. Job 1:9-11, Acts 6:11-13

**III. GOD'S PEOPLE SUPPRESSED.** *Ezra 4:17-24*

- A. Accusations Believed (vs. 21) Genesis 39:14-20
- B. God's Work Stopped (vs. 23-24) Acts 12:1-4; 16:23

**IV. GOD'S PEOPLE ENCOURAGED.** *Ezra 5:1-5*

- A. Encouraged by Prophets (vs. 1) Haggai 1:1-8; Zechariah 1:16, 17
- B. Began Anew to Build (vs. 2) Acts 4:18-20
- C. God's Protection (vs. 5) 2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 34:7

**GOLDEN TEXT:** *IF GOD BE FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?*

Romans 8:31

**NEXT SUNDAY'S LESSON:** Haggai 1:1-15; 2:1-23

**SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES:** 1 Chronicles 22:1-19  
1 Corinthians 3:9-23  
Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:1-8

**QUARTERLY THEME:** God's People Restored

**TOPIC: MOTIVATED TO BUILD**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The hindrances to the building of the temple became so great that God's people stopped building. Their land was not blessed and the harvests were small. God did not permit the rain to fall, because of their neglect in finishing the temple. Then God sent Haggai to encourage the people to continue in the work. He promised to help them so that the work could be finished.

God said He would shake all nations and fill the house with glory. In fact, He said: *"the glory of the latter house should be greater than of the former."* (Haggai 2:9a) How could this be when Solomon's temple was much more glorious than the one they were building?

This was the temple spoken of in the New Testament, that Christ entering His Glory, full of grace and truth, the very Son of God, was so much greater than the beauty of the first temple in its material wealth, that no comparison could be made.

In like manner, should our temples (hearts) be filled with this precious glory when we house the Son of God within us. The light of it should shine from our faces.

**CENTRAL TRUTH:** Only by devoting our lives to building Christ's kingdom can we be assured that our work will be of eternal importance.

**GOLDEN TEXT: *BE STRONG, ALL YE PEOPLE OF THE LAND, SAITH THE LORD, AND WORK: FOR I AM WITH YOU, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS.*** Haggai 2:4

When the returned captives neglected the building of the Lord's House, turning to their own work, seeking their own profit, God did not bless their labors. Their crops failed and their possessions decreased in quantity and quality. It also seemed hopeless to them to build another glory. However, God promised that if His work came first, He would bless all their efforts both for Him and for themselves. *"Be strong, and work, for I am with you."*

Again we would compare the striving and failures, the hopes and fears of God's early people in seeking the promised land, with our own walk of faith, as we seek not for earthly treasures, but heavenly. As we try to *"render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."* (Matthew 22:21) Jesus, our teacher, also has a word for us, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* Matthew 6:33

Know ye the Land? On earth ye need not seek -  
Of which the heart in anxious hours doth speak!  
Where for the blest all tears are wiped away!  
Where joy and gladness hold eternal sway!  
Know ye this Land? O may it be  
Our only goal continually! Z.H. 300:1

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF July 17 - 23**

M. \*A Call to Consider. Haggai 1:1-11  
T. \*A Call to Commence. Haggai 1:12-15  
W. \*A Call to Compare. Haggai 2:1-9  
T. \*A Call to Consecrate. Haggai 2:10-23  
F. A Call to Cooperate. Romans 12:1-5  
S. A Call to Constant Communion. Ephesians 2:13-22  
S. A Call to Consummate Victory. Revelation 3:7-13