

THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS LESSONS FOR BELIEVERS TODAY

Class 2:
“Consider Your
Ways”

CLASSES

1. A Call to Return Home
2. **Consider Your Ways and the Day of Small Things**
3. Let Us Rise Up and Build
4. Living Now in the Day of Small Things (SS)

THE EXILES BEGIN TO RETURN



GOD'S HAND IN A STALLED ECCLESIA

The work of the rebuilding of Jerusalem is merely a backdrop to God's concern for the spiritual health of the ecclesia.

This story is about how ecclesial vision can fade and be replaced by selfish pursuits.

When work stalls, God's hand moves within the community to goad them to action.

He sends prophets exhort them to consider their ways.

In the end, the ecclesia is given a new vision that looks to a greater day.

The work, delayed for 12 years, is now completed rapidly.

OBSERVANCES CORRECTLY ADMINISTERED

“They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required; And afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD. From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. **But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid.**”

Ezra 3:4-6

They got themselves right in worship with God before starting the work.

EZRA 3:7

“They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.”

Important note: these materials were gathered/bought by the people themselves. They were not gifts, such as Hiram gave for Solomon’s Temple. This was not missed by the Jews as the “wealth of the nations” was not part of this Temple.



APPOINTMENT OF LEVITES, WORKMEN

“Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; **and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward**, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, **to set forward the workmen in the house of God**: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites.”

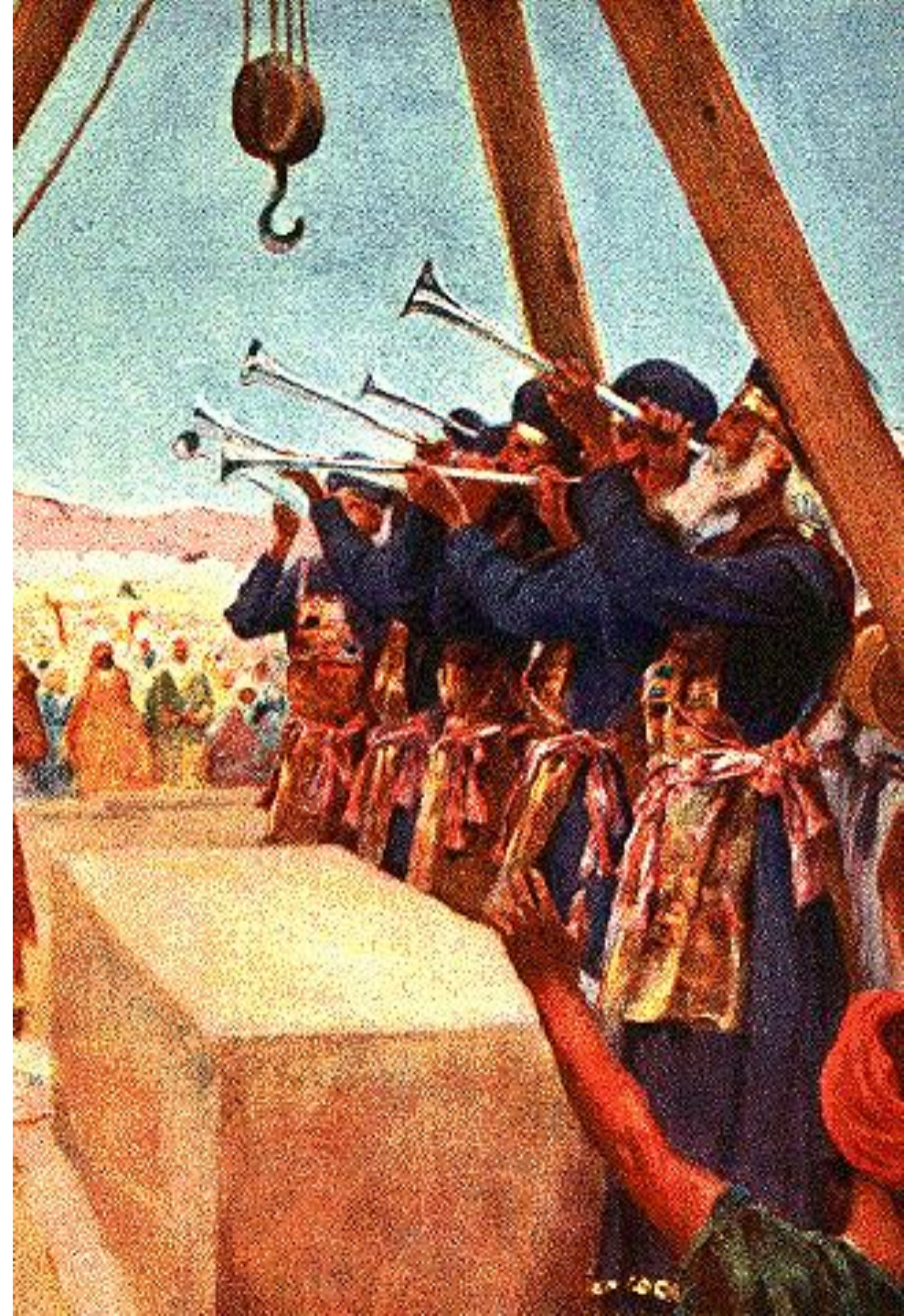
Ezra 3:8-9

Note – this planning was done before the completion of the Temple – in prospect.

FOUNDATION LAID

“And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the **foundation of the house** of the LORD was laid.”

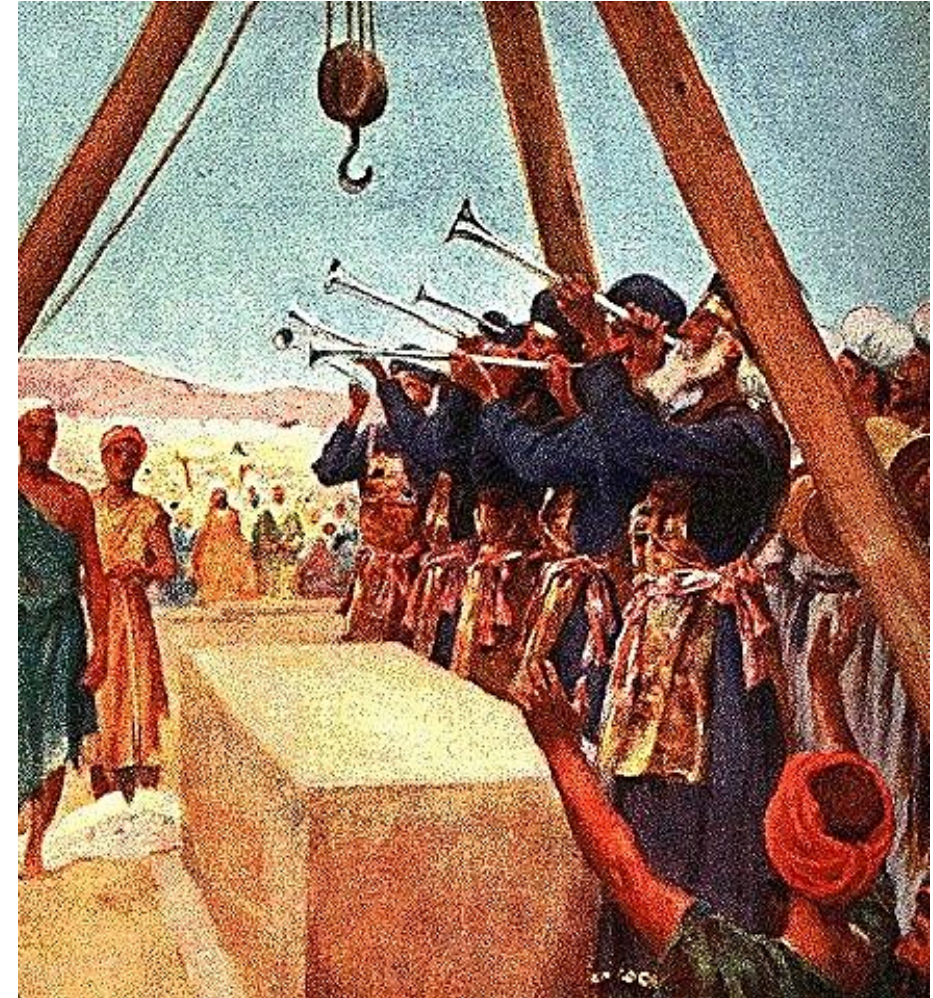
Ezra 3:10-11



COMPARING THE FOUNDATION!

“But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.”

Ezra 3:12-13





FOUNDATION

“He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.” Luke 6:48

“For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? ²⁹ Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, ³⁰ Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.” Luke 14:28-30

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. ¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”
1 Cor. 3:9-11

**JUST WHEN EVERYTHING
WAS GOING WELL...**



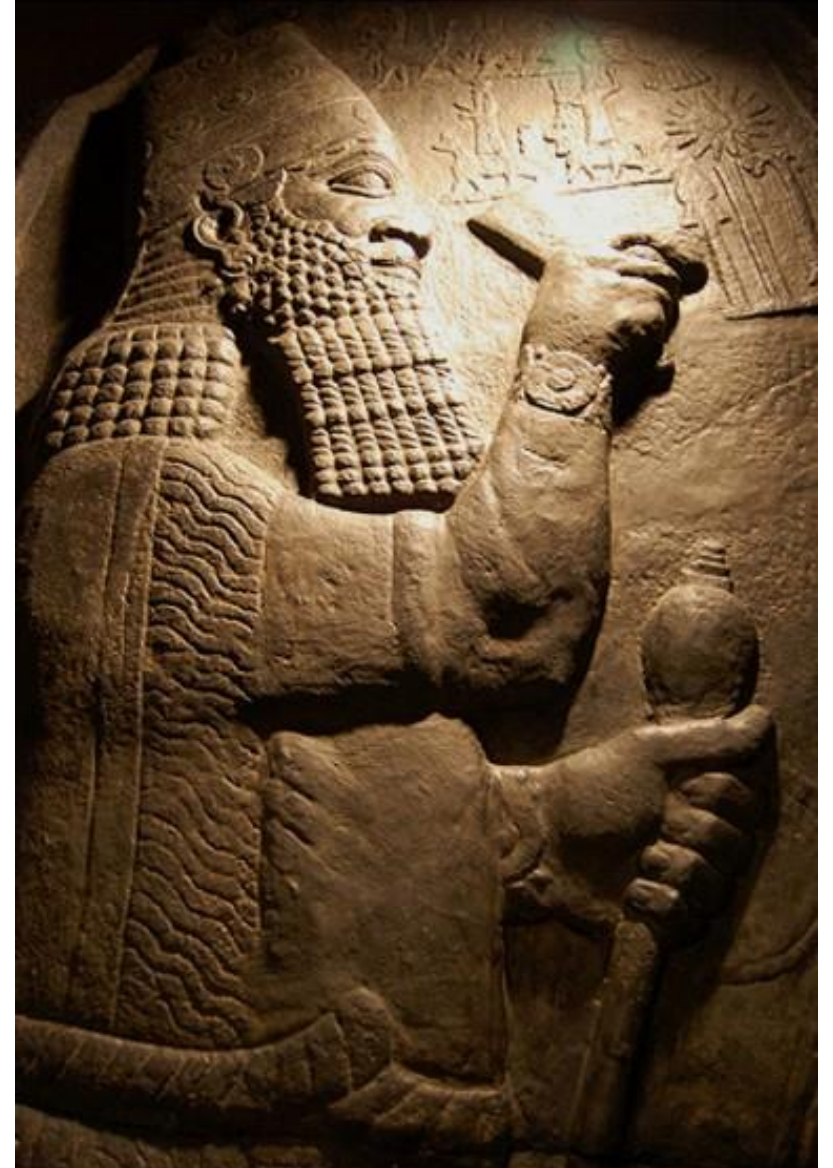
ATTEMPTED INFILTRATION

“Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel; Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, **Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.** But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.”

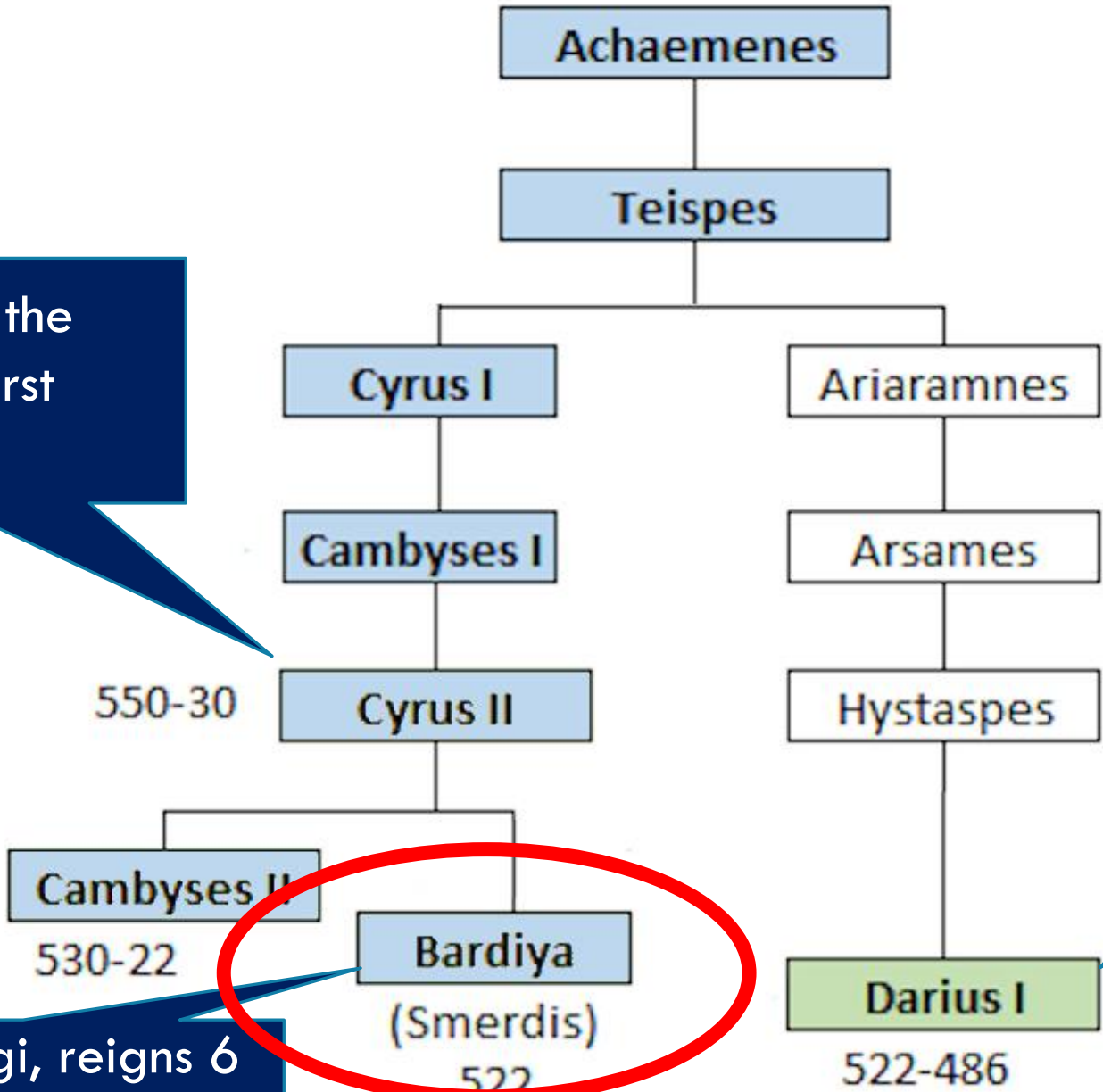
Ezra 4:1-3

WHO WERE THESE ADVERSARIES?

- Samaritans.
- Connected with the infiltration of Assyrians who populated the Land following Sennacherib's conquest.
- These were people who had come to the land with the purpose of assimilation.
- The Jews in Jerusalem posed a threat to the edict of Esarhaddon, Sennacherib's youngest son, nearly 200 years earlier.
- They could loosely feign "brotherhood" based on the allowance of religious freedom of conquered lands.



During his reign, the captives begin first return to land.



Imposter Magi, reigns 6 months. Killed by Darius I

This is Darius the Great/Artaxerxes of Ezra 6-7. Same man, different names/titles.

SAMARITAN ARGUMENT TO BARDIYA (EZRA 4:11-16)

The Jews are historically rebellious.

You will eventually lose Jewish taxes.

You will eventually lose control of this territory.

REPLY FROM BARDIYA

“The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me. And I commanded, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein. There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them.”

Ezra 4:18-22

OPPONENTS MOVE QUICKLY TO STOP THE WORK

“Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power. Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. **So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.**”

Ezra 4:23-24



DISCOURAGEMENT

“Then the people of the land weakened (ESV –discouraged) the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building (ESV – “made them afraid to build”),”

Ezra 4:4

**EXHORTATIONS TO
COMPLETE THE WORK**

**THE CONCURRENT WORK OF
HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH**



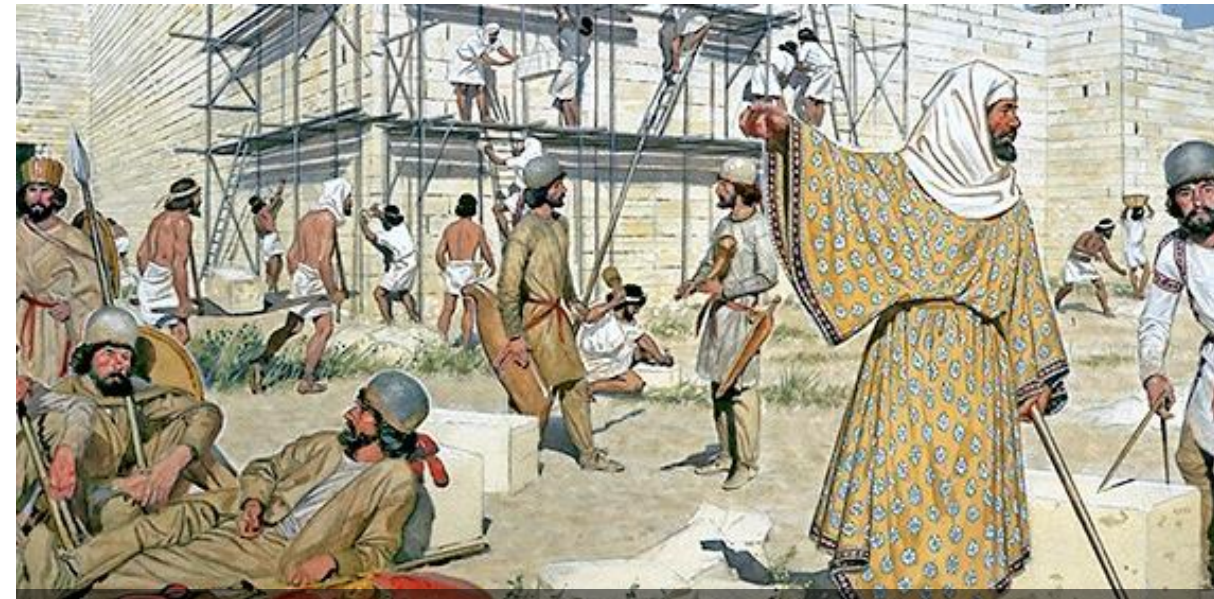
Pioneer leadership



Educational leadership



Exhortational leadership



Reformative, hands-on leadership

RATIONALIZATION

“Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, **The time is not come**, the time that the LORD's house should be built.”

Haggai 1:2-3

The faulty assumption that God would remove all obstacles from their path.

EXAMINE YOURSELVES!

“Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Consider your ways.** 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; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.”

Haggai 1:5-6





FIVE ENEMIES OF ECCLESIAL PROGRESS

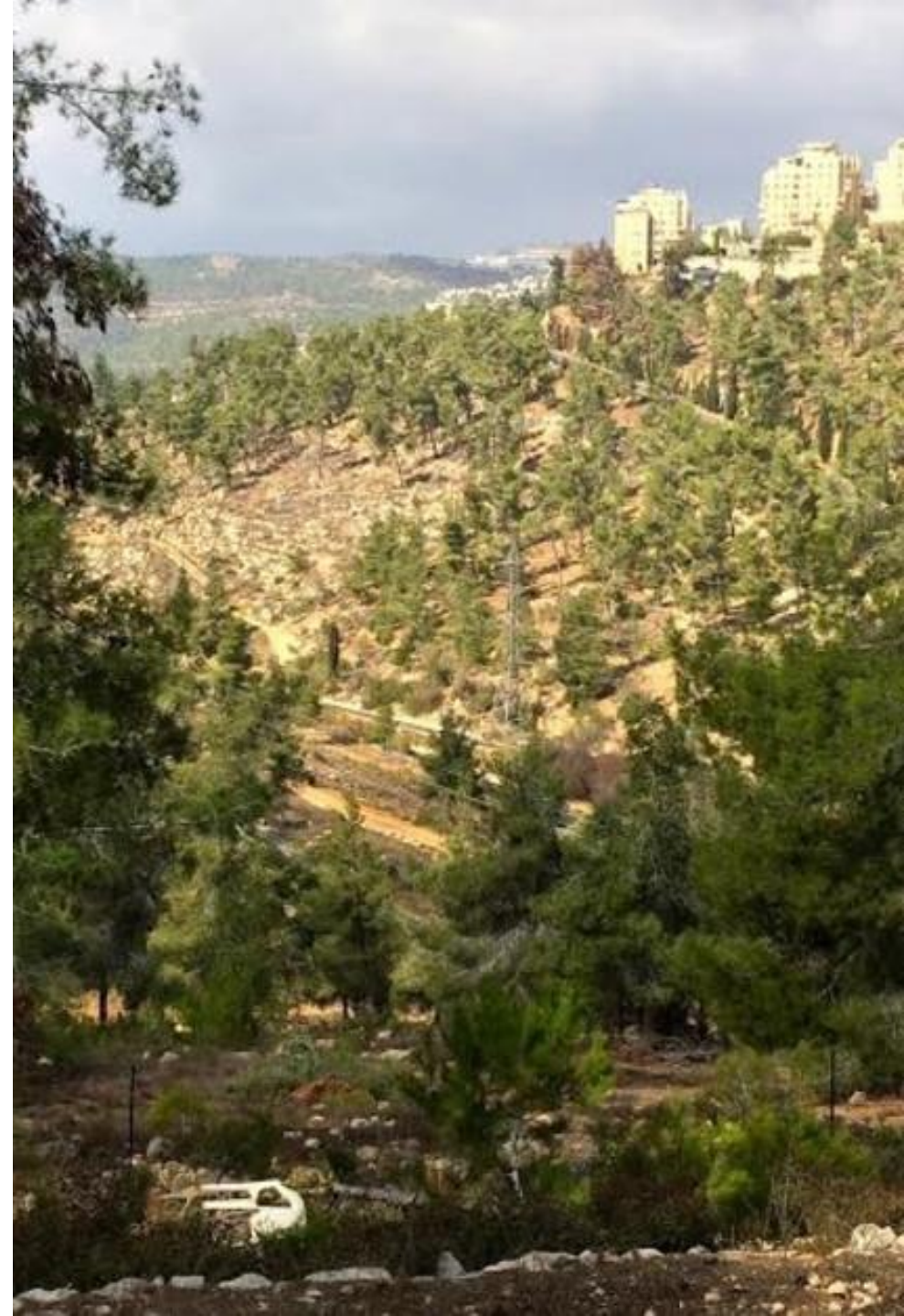
Haggai 1

1. Rationalization. (vs. 2)
2. Procrastination. (vs. 2)
3. Broken self-examination. (vs. 5-7)
4. Unable to see God's hand and His correction. (vs. 6,9-11)
5. Permitting the wasting and decay of the ecclesia. (vs. 9)

BREAKING FROM INACTION

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. **Go up to the mountain, and bring wood,** and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.”

Haggai 1:7-10





**GET BACK TO
WORK — I AM
WITH YOU!**

“Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, **I am with you, saith the LORD.** And the **LORD stirred up the spirit** of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; **and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts,** their God, In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.”

Haggai 1:13-15

MAKES ONE THINK ABOUT LIFE IN TRUTH

Disappointing set-backs to ecclesial work.

Lack of positive response to preaching.

When reaching out to unresponsive lost sheep.

When trying to resolve ecclesial conflict.

Trying to fight apathy and build the ecclesia.



Don't retreat! Go up to the mountain and bring wood. DO WHAT YOU CAN!



***“She hath done what she could:
she is come aforehand to anoint
my body to the burying.”***

Mark 14:8

LESSONS

This paralysis had lasted 12 years!

At times, we can see Divine signals exhorting us to repentance and/or action – if our self-examination is working properly.

Opposition to the work of the ecclesia may seem staggering at times.

We can sometimes rationalize inaction amongst ourselves.

There is a natural tendency to retreat to fleshly pursuits and move away from the challenging work before us.

In times of tumult, chop wood – do the tasks before you. God will accept your service.

We keep running lectures and no one comes. Our conclusion is that no one is interested in the gospel in this community.



After a 30-year run, people don't seem to be interested in coming out to our public seminars. Some conclude that the "window has closed." People aren't interested anymore!



BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE — JUST UNDER 3 ¼ YEARS

Started:

Second Year of Darius

- 6th month
- 24th day

Finished:

Sixth Year of Darius

- 9th month (Adar)
- 3rd day



Talked for 15 years. Work only took 3.25 years. Sound familiar?

GETTING WORSHIP RIGHT

Finished the construction of the Temple.

Dedicated it to the worship of God.

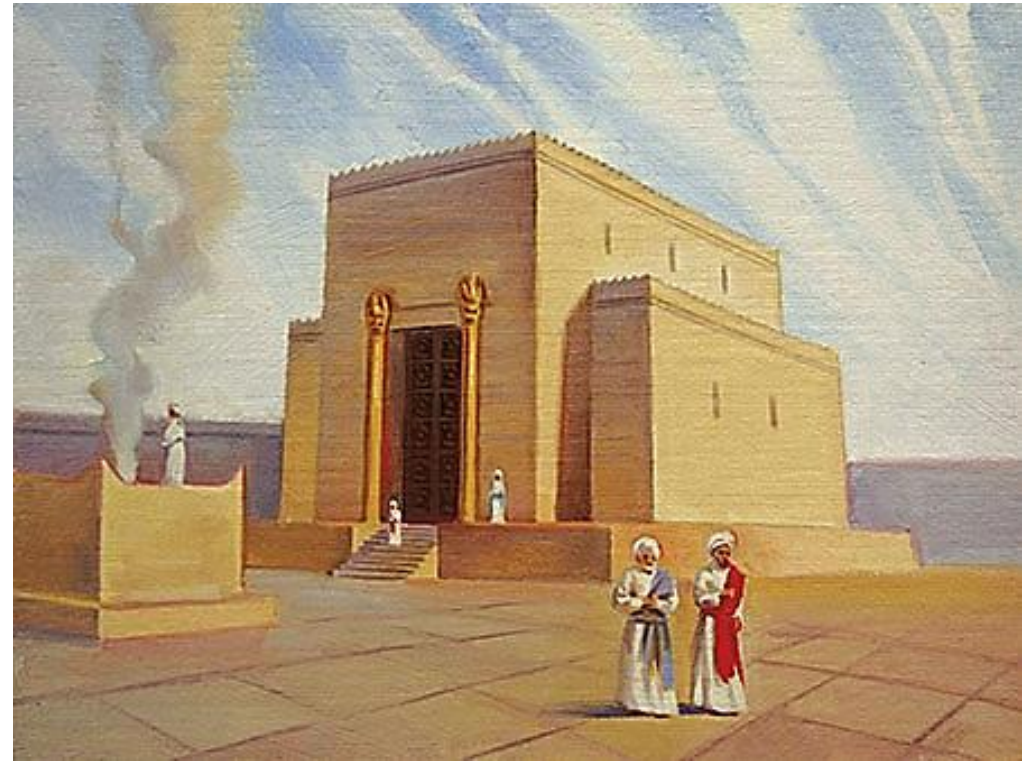
Re-established the courses of the priests.

Kept the Passover.

Obeyed the feast of unleavened bread.



Solomon's Temple



Zerubbabel's Temple

COMPARING AGAINST THE STANDARD

COMPARING TO SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

“Does anyone remember this house—this Temple—in its former splendor? How, in comparison, does it look to you now? It must seem like nothing at all!”

Haggai 2:3 (NLT)



SIZE OF THE BUILDINGS NOT THE ISSUE

Solomon's Temple

“And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.”

1 Kings 6:2

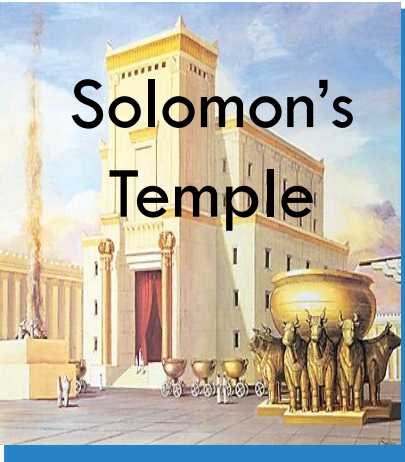
Zerubbabel's Temple

”In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits;”

Ezra 6:3

FACE OF EACH TEMPLE

30'



45'

30 cubits high X 20 cubits wide

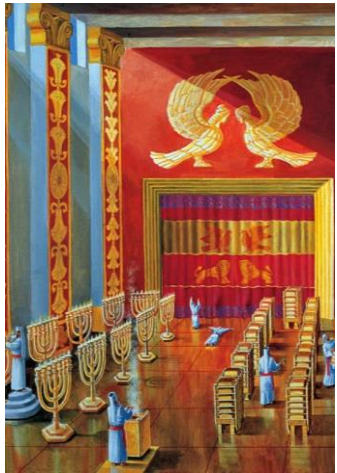
90'

Second Temple



90'

60 cubits high X 60 cubits wide. Note: not given the length.



SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

Besides the grandeur of the building, there were appointments of great treasures and wealth.

Much of the wealth had been donated by the nations that came to see King Solomon.

Some of the wealth was due to David's victories given by God over neighboring enemies.

But in this Temple, most everything was due to backbreaking work against opposition.

By contrast, Herod's Temple: "And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts..." Luke 21:5

EVEN IN GLORY OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

“And they drew out the staves of the ark, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day. ¹⁰ There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.”

2 Chronicles 5:9-10



MISSING IN SECOND TEMPLE (ACCORDING TO TALMUD)

The ark

The Holy of Holies was empty and a
stone set in its place

The sacred fire

The lampstand

The altar of incense

Urim and Thummin

The visible presence of God

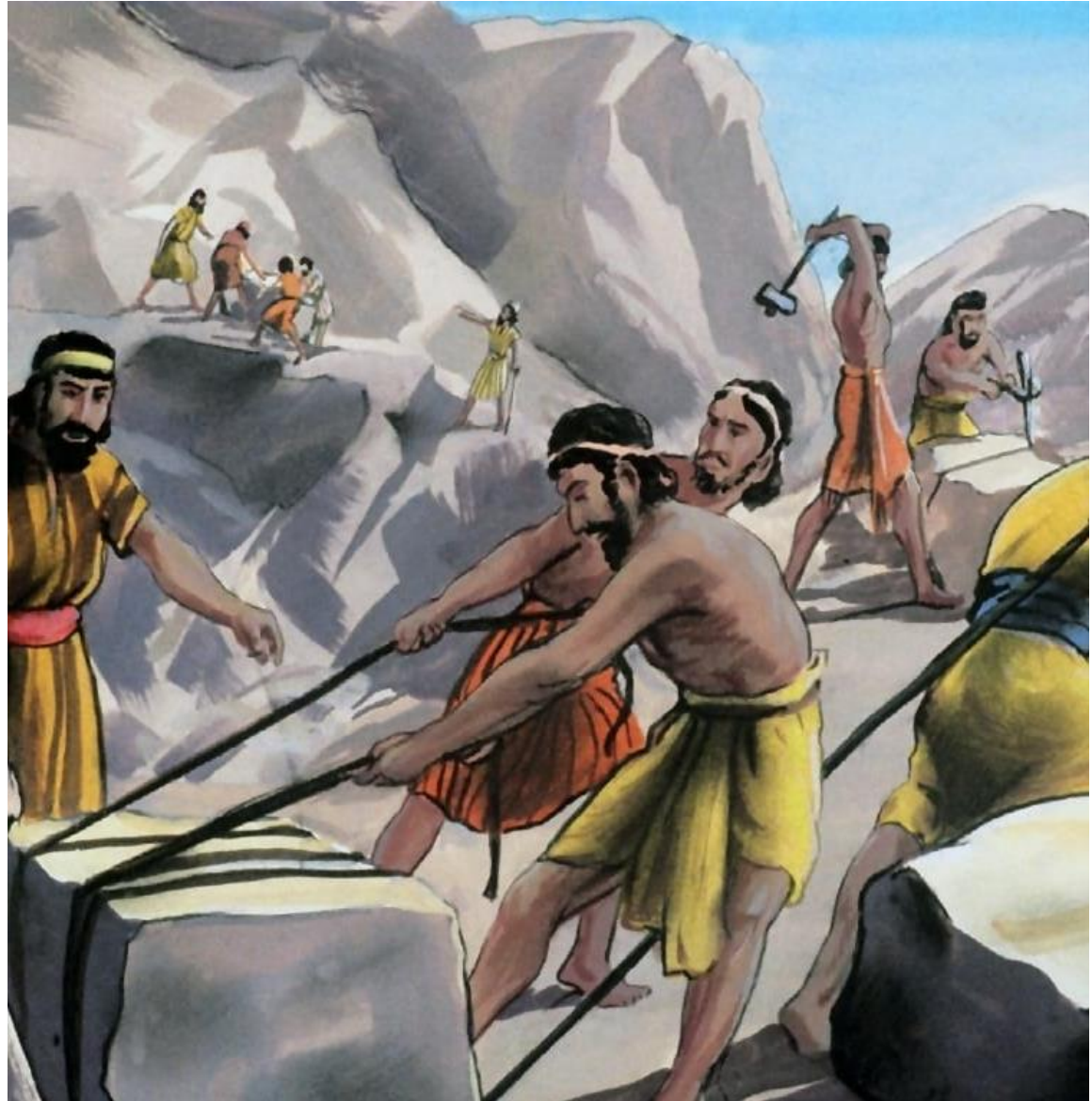
The adorning of costly stones and
gifts



EVEN THE WORKMANSHIP DIFFERED

“And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.”

1 Kings 6:7



DIFFERENCES IN THIS TEMPLE

Limited resources for appointments of Temple. Noticeable absence of gold, silver, gems.

Missing major holy instruments (ark, lampstand, etc.)

Whole city surrounding it was in ruins and uninhabitable.

The neighboring peoples were adversarial.

Israel was under the rule of a Kingdom of Man.

Israel as far from role of being exalted among the nations.

PROCLAMATION AT FEAST OF TABERNACLES

“For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; **And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come:** and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. **The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former,** saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Haggai 2:6-9



TO ZERUBBABEL THE GOVERNOR

“Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone (ESV – topstone) thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

⁸ Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, ⁹ The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. ¹⁰ ***For who hath despised the day of small things?*** for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet (ESV – plumb line) in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.”

Zechariah 4:7-10



ECHO OF HAGGAI IN HEBREWS

“At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”²⁷ This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.²⁸ Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.”

Hebrews 12:26-29 (ESV)

WEALTH OF THE GENTILES

“And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, **the forces** (margin: wealth) **of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.** The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: **they shall bring gold and incense;** and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.”

Isaiah 60:3-6

SALVATION OF THE NATIONS

“Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, ***their silver and their gold with them***, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, ***the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary***; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee; The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.”

Isaiah 60:9,13-14

RICHES OF THE GENTILES

“But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.”

Isaiah 61:6

WEALTH TO BE BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM

“The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.”

Psalm 72:10

“And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.”

Psalm 45:12

“And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.”

Zechariah 14:14

RICHES OF THE NATIONS

To Israel, this was a unifying prophecy and vision.

This Temple would be an acceptable place for worship, because God was with them!

It reminded them of their future exaltation as spiritual leaders on the earth and being the most revered people across all lands.

Yes, this Temple fell far short. But it was to serve as a reminder of what lay ahead.

MESSAGE FOR US TODAY?









THE ECCLESIA TODAY

We understand the standards for service and ecclesial life.

But today we aren't fully reflective of these high standards and progress against goals can often be very difficult.

A message from the Second Temple period is not to dwell on the inadequacies of our current dispensation, but on the reassurance that God has set a time where He will “shake the nations.”

Keep focused on what God WILL bring about in all of us.

LESSON OF DIVINE PERSPECTIVE

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; ¹⁸ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

2 Corinthians 4:16-18



WHY THIS MESSAGE?

Many were disheartened by the “day of small things.”

Instead of sternly admonishing them to get the work done and stop their petty pursuits, God provides them a compelling vision of the future.

A future involves the wealth of the nations coming to Jerusalem, not by compulsion, but because of a desire to worship God.

A time when instead of a mortal High Priest and a provisional human ruler, the worship of God would be replaced by our Lord, and immortal Saints, Jews and Gentiles – kings and priests!





PAST

PRESENT

FUTURE

NEXT CLASS

**Let Us Rise Up and Build:
The Work of Nehemiah**