

FEAR, UNCERTAINTY, DOUBT, DISCOURAGEMENT

“Now when the seventh month came, and the sons of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered together as one man in Jerusalem. Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brothers the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brothers arose and built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God.” Ezra 3:1-3

“So they set up the altar on its foundation...” Ezra 3:3

“They celebrated the Feast of Booths...” Ezra 3:4

“Now in the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak and the rest of their brothers and priests and the Levites, and all who came from the captivity to Jerusalem, began the work and appointed the Levites from twenty years and older to oversee the work of the house of the LORD.” Ezra 3:8

“Now when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD...” Ezra 3:10

“They sang, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, saying, ‘For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever.’ 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 3:11

“Now when the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the people of the exile were building a temple to the LORD God of Israel...” Ezra 4:1

“Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah, and frightened them from building.” Ezra 4:4

“Then work on the house of God in Jerusalem ceased, and it was stopped until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.” Ezra 4:24

They started off strong. But discouragement and fear has a way of making people stop! It has a way of stopping things that are noble in nature. Discouragement and Fear will cause people to lose focus on their tasks, goals, and direction in life.

This year has been filled with a lot of discouragement and fear. In 2019, we spent a great deal of time talking about, “Arise and Build.” However, it can be hard to arise and build when discouragement and fear stands in the way! For the Israelites, it would take 16 years for them to get moving again rebuilding the Temple. That’s how much fear and discouragement can slow progress.

This year has been tough for a variety of reasons. But there is work to do!

In fact, when you read the book of Haggai, God had great expectations for His people. He had delivered them. He had blessed them. Yet the Temple lay in ruins. It was time for them to work!

Fear, Uncertainty, Doubt, and Discouragement is something we will all face. The Christians faced these challenges in the first century. The good news is we don't have to face them alone. God is with us! He hasn't distanced Himself from us. Let's be sure we don't distance ourselves from Him. Let's continue to draw near to Him. Let's continue to be zealous for good works. Let's continue to shine our lights so He may be glorified.

- Benjamin Lee