

It's Time...

This chapter begins with the people gathering in Jerusalem. We remember when they returned, they each went to their own cities (2:1). The priests build the altar and resume the offering of sacrifices to God.



The Altar

- Noah built an altar when he left the ark (Gen 8:20)
- Abraham built an altar (Gen 13:18)
- Abraham offered Isaac upon an altar (Gen 22:9)
- The altar was to be made of uncut stones (Ex 20:23-25)
- The altar was positioned before the temple building.

The Source Material
Law of Moses (2)
Law written down (2)

"So they set up the altar on its foundation, for they were terrified because of the peoples in the land" (3:2)

- (4:1) refers to these as "enemies of Judah and Benjamin"
- These were likely leftovers from Assyria and Babylon that remained in the area

Set up the altar...for they were terrified
(1) In spite of the enemy presence they built the altar
(2) Because of the enemy, they sought God

A. The Sacrifices Begin Immediately

1. Feast of Booths (3:4)
2. Daily burnt offerings (3:4)
3. New moons (3:5)
4. Freewill offerings (3:5)

B. In the second year of the return, they began work on the temple (3:8)

1. There seemed to be a delay in building the temple (3:6; Haggai 1:3-4)
2. In the second month, the same month Solomon began the temple, the work begins (3:8)
 - materials are gathered (3:7)
 - workers are hired (3:7)
3. The work was accompanied by praise to God (3:10-11)
4. This temple was smaller than Solomon's (Haggai 2:1-9)
 - The work was met with mixed emotions: some cheered and others cried (3:12-13)
 - Not only was the building smaller, it was lacking the ark of the covenant

How a Foundation is Laid Properly

1. Unity
2. Liberty
3. Priorities
4. Faithfulness
5. Involvement



Lessons

1. It is easy to start a work but to fail to complete it. Half a year went by before they started the temple.
2. It is easy to wait until everything is completed before worship is restored. They built the altar first.
3. Enemies scare us, but they can't keep us from doing what we should.
4. Wiersbe writes, "Every local church is but one generation short of extinction." Do you agree with that? What can be done about that?

