

D. Excursus note on the background...remember what had hindered the temple rebuilding.

1. The opposition of the foes and the Persian decrees.
2. The self-contented setting reflected in Haggai I
3. The disdain of the detractors for the "little" work
4. The reluctance of persons who did not want to do it at all.

It becomes apparent that it does not take much to stop a work being done for the Lord from the side of the human operation, that is. That is why these central chapters are so interesting. They reflect a dangerous situation that could have interrupted the temple work and show as well how it was resolved. In so doing they set a nice pattern for dealing with similar difficulties in our own ministries.

E. The Problem: 7:1- 3(see also 8:18-19)

1. Statement: Should the children of Israel continue the fasts they had been honoring in Babylon the last many years. There apparently had been several of them and we can understand them in light of Psalm 137. If you cannot see the emotional pull in this situation...I cannot manufacture it for you. But it seems that a system of fasting, probably for the fate of Jerusalem, had been adopted during the captivity. As time went on the feast became part of life and a newer generation hardly knew the full significance. Now, with the Jews in Jerusalem and with the temple going up, should the fasts be continued. It was a question filled with emotion and had the potential to disrupt the whole order in a violent inner-emotional schism.
2. Some Points of note:
 - a. The fasts were not commanded or ordered of the Mosaic law. It was not a question of doing what the law required but of continuing what had been an extra-Mosaic spiritual enrichment.
 - b. There is no evidence that the prophets of this age had any special revelation that made the fasts a necessary part of life.