

4. Content of the Message (Hag. 1:2-11).

- a. The Lord rebuked His people for their indifference towards the work He wanted them to do, namely, the rebuilding of the temple. (Hag. 1:2-4).

(1) Evidence of the indifference of the Lord's people.

- (a) The excuse they gave for not doing the work the Lord wanted them to do (Hag. 1:2). They said that the time had not come to build the temple, They said this because of the circumstances of the times and the oppression under which they suffered.
- (b) The pursuit of their own personal interests at the expense of the work the Lord wanted them to do. (Hag. 1:4).

They built for themselves wainscoted houses, i.e., houses with the inside walls covered or inlaid with costly woodwork and neglected the rebuilding of the temple.

Note: Wainscoted houses were the houses in which the rich and more distinguished men lived. (Jer. 22:14). Therefore, living in such houses was a sign of luxury and comfort.

(2) Rebuke for the indifference of the Lord's people (Hag. 1:3,4)

The Lord rebuked His people for their indifference towards the work He wanted them to do by asking them if it was time for them to live in wainscoted houses while the temple was in ruins. By asking them this question, the Lord appealed to their CONSCIENCE TO GET THEM TO DO THE WORK He wanted them to do and He cut off their excuse that the circumstances of the times and the oppression under which they suffered did not permit them to rebuild the temple, for if they could build for themselves wainscoted houses, the circumstances of the times and the oppression under which they suffered couldn't have been so bad that they could not have rebuilt the temple! And even though Pseudo-Smerdes, King of Persia, issued an edict by which he prohibited the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 4:21-24), since he only reigned as king for a few months, they could have gone to his successor, Darius I, and asked him to revoke the edict of Pseudo-Smerdes and to renew the command issued by Cyrus to rebuild the temple if they really wanted to rebuild it. But they didn't do it because of their indifference toward the work the Lord wanted them to do, namely, the rebuilding of the temple.

Note: It is interesting to compare David's attitude towards building a house for God with the attitude of the Lord's people toward rebuilding the Lord's house. David wanted to build a house for God (2 Sam..7:1,2). The Lord's people were indifferent towards rebuilding the Lord's house (Hag. 1:2-4)-