1 – Consider Your Ways – Lessons From Haggai

Haggai 1:5

2 - **Background of Haggai**

* Judah taken into Babylonian captivity - 606 B.C.
* After 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11-12) God used Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28; Ezra 1:1-5) to allow them to return to the land & rebuild the temple.
* This work started shortly after the exiles returned from Babylon in **536 B.C.** by laying the foundation (led by Zerubbabel). (Ezra 3:8ff; Zechariah 4:9-10)
* The building activity was soon abandoned because of discouragement and oppression (Ezra 4:4-6, 21-24).

3 - **Who Was Haggai?**

* The Lord’s messenger. **(1:13)**
* The expression, ***“Thus says the Lord…”***, or similar used 35 times. **(1 Thessalonians 2:13)**
* Little else known about him. He was faithful in his mission!

4 - **Who Was His Audience?**

* **Not idolators** but **believers & worshippers of the one true God** of Israel.
* People who had **sacrificed much**, and **faced great danger** to return to a very **difficult and challenging situation**. People who **wanted to do right**! **(Ezra 1:1-5; 3:1-7)**
* **Do we see ourselves in them**?

5 - **Who Was His Audience?**

* People who became **discouraged, frightened & frustrated** by their opponents & their overall circumstances **(Haggai 1:6)**
* People who became **focused on the temporal things of life**.
* People who **became complacent** with their current situation. **(Ezra 4:4)**
* **Do we still see ourselves in them**?

6 - **What Did The People Say?**

* *“****The time has not come****, even the time* ***for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt****.”* **(1:2, 4)**
* The foundation had been laid. **(Ezra 3:8ff; Zechariah 4:9-10)**
* Granted, **there was opposition** but they then found the time to work on lavishly building their own homes.
* Service and labor in God’s kingdom must be based on **conviction and not convenience**. **(Acts 24:25; 2 Timothy 3:14)**
* **It was “*time*”** for something! **(vs. 4)**

7 - **Haggai’s Words**

* **520 B.C., after 16 years of idleness, Haggai and his fellow prophet, Zechariah, were given the responsibility to speak a message from God**. What was their message?
* ***“Consider your ways!”; Lit. “Set your heart on…”***
* (Haggai 1:5, 7; note 2:15 & 2:18; Malachi 2:2; cf., 2 Corinthians 13:5; James 1:23-24)

8 - **Consider Your Priorities - 1:1-15**

* **Is it time? It was time to focus on self. (1:2, 4)**
A **lack of time for God** is **“*displeasing*” (1:8)** & **“*irreverent*”** **(1:12)**
* **How do we use our time**? Perhaps the clearest and most honest means of reflecting our priorities. **(Matthew 6:33)**
* **Lack of sense of urgency**. **(Psalms 119:60)**
* What Is it that we “***care***” (more) about or are “***diligent***” about? **(Ezra 5:8; 6:12-13)**
* Are we concerned about “***the work of the Lord***?” **(1 Cor. 15:58)**

9 – **Consider Your Priorities - 1:1-15**

* **What had their misplaced priorities brought them? (vs. 6)** A life of emptiness and a lack of contentment & fulfillment!
* **Hunger that isn’t met** and a thirst that isn’t quenched.
* Solomon described such a life without God as the priority. **(Ecclesiastes 2:24-25; 4:19-20)**
* **God was displeased** with them and **disciplined them**.
**(vs. 9-11; cf., Hebrews 12:7-13; Ecclesiastes 7:13-14)**

10 - **Consider Your Priorities - 1:1-15**

* They needed ***“stirred up”*** (1:14) which comes from God’s message. **(2 Peter 1:12-13; 3:1)**
* Our challenge to build the Lord’s house – not physical but spiritual. (**1 Corinthians 3:6-17; Ephesians 2:19-22; 4:15-16**).
* Our responsibility is to seek & teach, to worship & to serve –not allow our personal pleasures take 1st place. (**Matt. 6:33-34**)Sinful or not! (**Luke 14:16ff; Hebrews 12:1**)

11 - **Consider Your Priorities - 1:1-15**

**What did God expect? (1:8)**

* **Put Me first and get to work!**
* **Depend on Him, look to Him and trust Him! (Zechariah 4:6; 8:6; Malachi 3:10; Psalms 37:1-6)**

**How will God respond? (1:8)**

* **He will be pleased and glorified! (2 Timothy 2:4; Colossians 1:10)**

12 - **Their Response – 1:12-14**

*“****All the remnant*** *of the people* ***obeyed the voice of the Lord*** *their God… and* ***the people showed reverence****.”*

* **Faithful obedience.**
* **Humble reverence. (Proverbs 9:10; 19:23; Hebrews 12:28)**
* **Zealous, *“stirred up”* … again. (Ezra 1:5; Zephaniah 1:12; Amos 6:1; Titus 2:14; 2 Peter 1:12-15)**

13 - **The best is yet to come –2:1-9**

Don’t dwell on: “***The temple in its’ former glory***” (2:3) …

* The **physical** **past**. (It didn’t last!)

“***The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former***…” (vs. 9)

* **The spiritual house which is the church and its’ future. (Hebrews 3:4-6; 1 Peter 2:4-5)**

**Where is our focus? (Romans 8:18-25; Ecclesiastes 7:8-10)**

14 - **From this day onward** – **2:15-18**

* **We can’t change or undo the past (and all of its’ disappointments)** but we can alter our future.
* **From this day onward, if they put God first, will see how blessed we will be! (Acts 5:40-42)**
* We can **press forward** with **resolve to keep our priorities straight and work**. **(Philippians 3:7-16; Ephesians 4:17ff; 1 Peter 4:1-4)**

15 - **God Rules & Is In Control – 2:20-23**

* God reminds us all that **He will always rule** in the realm of mankind. (So don’t worry about the threats of man. **Matthew 10:26-31; 1 Peter 3:13-15**)
* **He alone can overthrow thrones or kingdoms** render nations powerless. (**Daniel 4:17, 25, 32)**
* **We are part of the kingdom which cannot be shaken! (Hebrews 12:28)**

16 - **God Rules & Is In Control – 2:20-23**

* Does he rule in my life? Is Jesus my Lord? (**Matthew 7:21-23)**
* Am I His disciple? (**Matthew 10:24-25)**
* Have we taken the yoke of Jesus upon us? (**Matthew 11:28)**
* Have we decided to truly follow Him? (**Luke 9:57-62)**