

“Consider Your Ways”

“Haggai 1:1-11”

God uses the prophet Haggai to deliver a word to the remnant of people that have returned from Babylonian captivity. After being in bondage for 70 years about 50,000 Jews have been allowed to return to Jerusalem. In their return to Jerusalem the city is in ruins and everything that was once there has been utterly destroyed. Through the leadership of Ezra the scribe and Nehemiah the city walls and the foundation to the temple. Two years after returning back to Jerusalem they began construction on the temple. However, the work stopped when the people began to focus more on building and “remodeling” their homes rather than working on God’s. God here challenges the people to consider their ways!

Verse 1-2: God has become frustrated with the people’s bad priorities. They have begun to focus more on building and remodeling their own homes rather than focusing on building God’s. The people were successful in building the foundation to the temple in which they began working on two years after their return to the exile. However, after two years the work ceased with only the foundation and the remodeling of the altar being completed. When God challenges the people on their lack of commitment and faithfulness to Him they respond saying “the time is not come that the Lord’s house should be built.”

- 1) When is the right time to do the Lord’s work?
- 2) Why do we make excuses when it’s time to do the Lord’s work?
- 3) What have we made more important than doing the Lord’s work?

The people had several excuses as to why they couldn’t build God’s house:

- The land was desolate after 70 years of neglect
- The work was hard
- They didn’t have a lot of money or manpower
- They suffered crop failure and drought
- Hostile enemies resisted the work (Ezra 4:1-5)
- They remembered easier times in Babylon

Verse 3-4: After the people respond by saying that the time is not right to build God’s house God responds by asking the question “is it time for you to dwell in your ceiled houses? Here Judah was living in completely renovated and remodeled houses, yet God’s house lied in complete ruins.

- 1) They’ve been back in Jerusalem for 18 years but the work of the temple has laid idle for 14 years. What should have been a 6 year project took over 20 years to complete.

Verse 5-7: God challenges the people to consider their ways. God informs them of everything that they've lost out on because of bad priorities. Although they were doing the right thing, because they placed God last nothing in their lives prospered. They were eating but were never hungry, drinking but continuously thirsty, putting clothes on but still cold, and the condition of their finances was like they were putting their money in bags with holes in them.

- 1) Could it be that the direction that our lives are going in is our own fault?
- 2) When we lack to make God a priority in our lives everything we touch will ultimately fail.

Verse 8-11: God informs them that if they desire for their present circumstances to change then what they need to do is go up into the mountains and get supplies to finish the work on His house. Although this sounds like a dangerous and drastic feat it was not because this is the exact thing they were already doing to get supplies to build their own houses. We should be willing to make great sacrifices for God considering the sacrifices that he makes for us. God then reminds/informs them that the reason that they have not been prospering is because although they were doing the right things, because he did not breathe on it everything failed.