

Lesson 2 – Haggai

Text: Haggai

Key Passages:

- Haggai 1:5 – God encouraged the people to look at themselves and consider their ways.
- Haggai 2:9 – God reminded the people that there was an eternal plan in place.

Background Information:

Haggai was a prophet sent to the Jews about 15 years after the work on the temple had been stopped by King Artaxerxes of the Medo-Persian empire. The Jews, for the duration of the stoppage, had not worked on the temple at all, nor had they challenged the ruling of the king (or, at least, any resistance from the Jews was not recorded). They had, instead, built up very comfortable homes for themselves (perhaps even using the materials that had been put aside for use on the temple) and sat idly by, consoling themselves by saying that the time was not yet right for the temple to be rebuilt.

Outline:

- I. Purpose: to encourage the Jews to resume the reconstruction effort on the temple.
- II. Consider Your Ways (1)
 - a. Haggai spoke to the Jews just before the temple work resumed (Haggai 1:1; Ezra 4:24)
 - b. The people were not working on the temple, and consoled themselves by saying that the time had not yet come to resume the work (Haggai 1:2)
 - c. Haggai rebuked the people for dwelling in “paneled” (comfortable, perhaps luxurious) houses while the temple lay in ruins (Haggai 1:4)
 - d. Haggai urged the people to consider their ways (assess what they were doing)
 - e. God had been disciplining the people to try to help them to understand that their focus on themselves and their own lives was not bringing them success; only God could do that
 - f. God reminded the Jews that He would be with them
 - g. When the people heard God’s commandments, they resumed the work (Haggai 1:12-15)
- III. The Latter Temple Shall Be Greater (2:1-9)
 - a. About a month later, Haggai spoke to the people again (Haggai 2:1)
 - b. It seems that some of the people were discouraged by the new temple’s appearance, especially in comparison to Solomon’s temple, yet God encouraged them (Haggai 2:2-5)
 - c. God promised to “shake heaven and earth again” and fill the temple with glory
 - i. This prophecy seems to be describing the time when the physical nation of Israel would be destroyed, giving way to the spiritual nation of Israel under Christ (church)
 - ii. The book of Hebrews references this time, explaining to the Jewish Christians that the old nation was about to pass away in favor of the new (Hebrews 8:13; 12:26-29)
 - iii. This prophecy encouraged the people to see that God had eternal plans for His people
- IV. Final Admonitions (2:10-23)
 - i. Haggai rebuked the people for their unclean attitude, explaining that their worship was unclean as well; they were not made clean by the holy temple (Haggai 2:10-19)
 - ii. God revealed that Zerubbabel was chosen by God (lineage of Christ, Matthew 1:12)

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) We need to look at ourselves and consider our ways; are we living our lives for God first?
- 2.) Only God can give us success in our own lives; we cannot ignore Him.
- 3.) Our hearts are not made clean by holy things; our hearts must be cleansed of uncleanness first.