

CONSIDER YOUR WAYS (PART 2)

Haggai 2

Haggai preached in the 6th century BC after the Persians defeated the Babylonians. Haggai 1:1 gives us the precise date of 520 BC. The Babylonians destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and carried Judah off to exile. After Cyrus permitted Judah to return to Israel in 538 BC, they began rebuilding the Temple, but soon lost motivation.

Haggai preached against Judah's spiritual indifference, and the people responded with obedience. That said, they remained fixated on their current material circumstances, missing what God was doing in the big picture.

A passage like Haggai 2 shows us how to read Scripture as one story.

The Kingdom of God = God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing (G. Goldsworthy).

God promises Abraham (The Abrahamic Covenant) his seed will become a blessed people in a particular place (Genesis 12:1-3).

The Great Eschatological banquet shows God's people in a place of blessing under His rule (Revelation 21).

God promises a future Temple (place)

The Temple represented God's dwelling among the people. The first Temple was constructed under Solomon and was destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonians. The Second Temple was completed in 516 BC, was edified by Herod the Great in 20-10 BC, and was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.

The people obeyed God and began rebuilding the Temple. They quickly realized that their efforts would be insufficient to make a Temple like the previous one (Cf. Ezra 3:10f.). Are the people still focused on the wrong thing?

God will shake the nations and cause their resources to flow into His Temple (Haggai 2:6-8; Cf. Hebrews 12:26).

Jesus constructs the true Temple not built with human hands (John 2:18-22). The nations and their wealth will flow into the heavenly Temple (Revelation 21:22f.).

Gods promises grace to the undeserving (blessing)

God charges the people to “consider from this day onward” their past neglect (Haggai 2.15, 18). Current obedience does not erase past disobedience. We can’t make ourselves clean (Haggai 2.14).

The prophet addresses our self-deception.

God shows grace to an undeserving people (Haggai 2.19). The passage describes the spiritual blessing of God’s peace (Haggai 2.9 & the charge not to be afraid in 2.5).

God promises a future, everlasting leader (rule)

God promises the preservation of the Davidic Monarchy (Cf. 2 Samuel 7.12-14).

Yes, God will raise up Zerubbabel, but this promise points to a greater reckoning. God will destroy “the kingdoms of the nations” and raise up the king of Judah (Haggai 2.21-23).

A signet ring confers status and authority. A person would have been inseparable from his signet ring. While God overthrows the nations, He will keep Zerubbabel close and never cast him aside. Jesus is a descendent of Zerubbabel (Matthew 1.12; Luke 3.27).

Key Point: We are playing a part in God’s grand redemption story.

Small Group Application Questions:

How does Haggai redirect the discouragement of the Judeans (Haggai 2.4-9)?

What is significant about God being called “The LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2.6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 23)?

What is God teaching Judah with His questions about the interaction between clean and unclean (Haggai 2.12-14)?

At the end of history, what happens to the Godless? Why does God choose to preserve Zerubbabel?