

It's Time For R & R **The Book of Haggai**

The last 3 minor prophets are post-exile! Their presence with, & message to God's people comes after the return from the Babylonian exile to the land.

50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem beginning in 538 B.C. – 50 yrs after the destruction of the temple!

In 536 B.C. the people began to rebuild the temple (Ezra 3:1-4:5) **but opposition & indifference caused the work to be abandoned** (Ezra 4:1-24).

16 yrs later Haggai was commissioned by the Lord to stir up the people to return to the rebuilding of the temple, & **to reorder their spiritual priorities** (Ezra 5:1-6:22). They responded well & the temple was completed.

Haggai's message to the people of God was given in 5 proclamations:

- 1) **Repent** (1:5-11) – Don't let circumstances, opposition, or self-centeredness lead you astray. **God's glory is of greater importance than our comfort!**

We don't proclaim a "health & wealth" gospel here, but Haggai gives a reverse form of a "health & wealth" proclamation here in 1:5-11!

He revealed to them that the drought and crop failures they were experiencing were caused by their misplaced spiritual priorities (1:9-11).

Repentance means to turn "from" the direction we are headed and turn "to" the way God has called us to go! *Do we need to repent today?*

- 2) **Rebuild** (1:5-8) – Don't let discouragement keep you from engaging in the work of rebuilding God's house!

Larry Crabb - *"When it seems that nothing good is happening, it is easy to live for whatever good things you can provide for yourself and to lose interest in My plan. Before you build your house, build My temple!"*

Because of the people's misplaced priorities, **they put the rebuilding of their own personal lives before the rebuilding of life with God!**

The temple was the center of their religious expression, & it was put on the back burner. *Have we done the same with "church" since Covid?*

- 3) **Renew** (2:1-9) – A passion for the things of God, based upon what He can/will do, not based upon our own human limitations!

Once the people started the rebuilding of the temple again, their faith in God, and what He was doing, was put to the test!

The foundations for this new temple were disappointing and uninspiring! The size and grandeur of it seemed to pale in comparison!

But thus saith the Lord of hosts: **"I will fill this temple with glory. The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former."** *Do we need to renew our hope in what God can do, even in a small church?*

- 4) **Righteously inquiry** (2:10-19) – It's ok to ask questions & inquire about that which pleases the Lord! It had been a while since they had worshipped God as they ought. **Seeking Godly answers is the pathway to obedience.**

God wanted to pour out His blessings upon His people, but they were too focused on themselves! Therefore, God withheld His blessings! But obedience was the key to releasing God's blessings once again!

Are we asking the right questions, that seek the right answers, as to how to live a life that brings glory to God? We must put God first!

- 5) **Respond in faith** (2:20-23) – This 2nd temple for worshipping God was rebuilt, and God's people were restored after the exile, but another temple and another restoration far better was still to come!

Jesus Christ, the perfect embodiment of the presence of God, and the one who would restore His people from the exile of sin was still coming!

Haggai called God's people to live their lives in response to this promise!

We too are to do the same today in response to Jesus' 2nd coming!

What does it mean when someone says, "It's time for R & R"? We are living in a critical time in the history of God's people! **What will be our narrative?**

I believe Haggai's words are incredibly applicable today! I believe God is telling us that the time for:

- **"Rest" & "Relaxation" has past!**
- **"Resistance" & "Reclusiveness" is behind us!**
- **"Returning" & "Rebuilding" is now!**

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