

CONSIDER YOUR WAYS

By Keith Greer

Haggai was sent to speak to the exiles returning from the Babylonian captivity, sixteen years before they returned under the decree of Cyrus.

"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem." {Ezra 1:2,3}

God's people had laid the foundation of the temple, then ceased for sixteen years. Haggai was sent by God to stir up the people to finish rebuilding the temple.

"Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins? Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: **'Consider your ways!'**" {Haggai 1:4,5}

God's people had looked to take care of their own needs and allowed God's house to lie in waste. Who were they putting first? Sounds to me like they were making the same mistakes of the past all over again!

"You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes. Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Consider your ways! ', {Haggai 1:6,7}

What were they guilty of? Putting material gain ahead of spiritual gain! This story is old as time. Jesus Himself warned us concerning this trap of Satan.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. "{Matthew 6:19-21}

Man must determine for himself what will be most important in life, material or spiritual things. Many people make the foolish decision which will result in the loss of their soul. Temporal over eternal.

"Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid; consider it." {Haggai 2:18}

The nation needed to finish the temple to display to God their faith and trust in Him. Following the preaching of Haggai, they renewed the work and finished the rebuilding of the temple.

"So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God," {Haggai 1:14} God's word stirs people to action! It's still that way today!

What lessons can we learn from the prophet Haggai? We could learn many, but I want to give two for you to consider:

The power of the message as it is proclaimed. Preach God's word. Plant the seed. Give people truth and watch God's word do the rest! Paul told us that word is God's power to save sinful man, Romans 1:16. James explained that it must be "engrafted" to save us, James 1:21. Sadly, many have gone away from God's word to emphasis other things to lead one to Christ. Unfortunately, such detours will not lead precious souls to Him but further down the wrong path.

Importance of self-examination. Man needs to always be taking inventory of his life. God's word will allow us to accomplish this task. Each of us needs to continually have a "spiritual checkup" to monitor where we are on our spiritual journey. "Consider your ways!" ***