

“Give Careful Thought to Your Ways”

Haggai 1: 1 – 7

As the first exiles returned to Israel from Babylon, work was begun immediately on the destroyed temple in Jerusalem. The foundation was laid, and then the work stopped due to opposition from surrounding nations and no work was done on the temple for fifteen years. Then Haggai came on the scene as God’s prophet and presented God’s word to those people who had become selfishly pre-occupied with their own affairs. They were more concerned about their own houses than God’s house. Regardless of all the excuses, God said through Haggai in (verse 5), “Give careful thought to your ways”. Why do you expect so much and get so little? Again in (verse 7) the same words, “Give careful thought to your ways”.

Just like God’s people in Haggai’s day, many Christians today are not putting their relationship and service for God first in their lives. How can God abundantly bless those who do not honor him? We find here the prophet Haggai exhorting the people to put first things first, to renew their courage and commitment and give God his rightful place in their hearts. So today, let us allow Haggai to speak to us. His message is short, so we need to give our undivided attention to his words as he gives us four areas for our consideration as we hear God say through him, “Give careful thought to your ways.”

1. **Be Involved.** (Haggai 1:14). In (verse 13) Haggai gives the Lord’s message to the people and through that message the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest and all the people. Everyone needed to be reminded of their need to be involved in the Lord’s work. And so it is today with so many things around us to distract and draw us away from God.
2. **Be Strong.** (Haggai 2:4). The same people God instructed to be involved he now admonishes them to be strong. Be strong in the Lord, not in yourself. God has promised to be with his people as (Isaiah 41:13) reminds us, “For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you.” I met a young girl once who was a college student. Her name was Debbie Osgood and she had contacted a disease that she knew would take her life. She would go to classes until she needed to go to the hospital for a while and then the cycle went around again. Every chance Debbie got no matter whether in school or in the hospital she would talk to people about Jesus. She was eighteen when she died and in her funeral service which she wrote she asked this question, “Have I done everything I was supposed to do, Jesus?” Is our faith free from weakening doubt no matter what our circumstances may be?
3. **Be Clean.** (Haggai 2:14). God is not pleased with defiled offerings. Have we experienced God’s cleansing and forgiveness, and do we live daily for him with clean hands and a pure heart avoiding defiling influences?
4. **Be Glad.** (Haggai 2:23). “Signet ring”, indicates something precious and honorable. As Christians we are God’s chosen because of our faith in Jesus Christ. Knowing we are God’s people should fill our hearts with joy and gladness as we walk with him daily.

So, knowing these things may we each, “Give careful thought to our ways”.