

Consider Your Faith

Haggai 2: 20-23

Today I hope to conclude our study in the book of Haggai. Although written some 2,500 years ago, it has been very relevant for our day. If there were any doubts, I hope our time in Haggai has confirmed the timeless nature of God's Word within your heart and offered a new appreciation for its relevance, even as many seek to discredit it.

We have been challenged to consider our Ways, our LORD, and our Actions. In these final verses, God presents a final challenge to consider our Faith. In order to fully comprehend the words we have read, we must be reminded of the context. These had returned to Jerusalem after the long, seventy year captivity in Babylon. The city and Temple lay in ruins. There was much work to be done and the task ahead was daunting to say the least. The memories of captivity continued to fill their minds and plague them with fear. It is evident that many of them wondered if they would ever complete the task ahead, and even if the work was really worth the effort. To be honest, the people had grown discouraged and weary in the work. They needed a word of hope and assurance to encourage their efforts. The Lord wanted them to consider their faith. If they were depending solely on their own abilities and that of others, then they would not prevail. However, there was a strength and power behind them that knew no bounds!

Although the setting and challenges are much different, we too face an atmosphere of opposition. We have not experienced physical bondage, but the world around us seeks to defeat the work of the church and the witness of Christ. We have become a minority in an increasingly hostile world. The task ahead of us can seem overwhelming as well. Just as the people of old, we need a word of encouragement and assurance. We too need to consider our faith. We need reminded of the strength and power of the God we serve. We will surely fail if we are depending upon our own abilities, but with the help of the Lord, we can prevail.

As we conclude our study in Haggai, I want to consider the [realities](#) within the text as we think on the challenge to: [Consider Your Faith](#).

I. A Pointed Message (20-21a) – As with the other messages, God clearly had a word for the people. He was not speaking just to make conversation or occupy Haggai's time. He had a word that needed to be heard and heeded. Consider:

A. The Timing (20) – [And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month...](#) This word came on the same day as the previous message. God had challenged the people to consider their actions, their way of life, and during the same time there was a challenge to consider their faith. Changes needed to be made in their lives; and along with those changes, there needed to be a resurgence of faith. Living godly lives was necessary, but apart from faith they would never prevail. They needed to seek the Lord and His strength, not their own.

- I think you would agree that we too need to consider our faith at this moment in time. Clearly there is a need for those who will consider their lives before the Lord and seek to remove anything that hinders our service to Him, but that alone isn't enough. In fact, it will be impossible apart from faith and dependence on the Lord. The modern church has depended on the abilities of men and man-made programs to produce results far too long. I am thankful for the God given abilities we possess and I am not opposed to programs and activities within the church, but somewhere in the process, we have left God out of the equation. Living a godly life is essential to accomplish the work we have been given, but we will never accomplish anything of lasting value in and of ourselves. We must seek the Lord, His wisdom and strength to overcome and thrive!

B. The Target (21a) – *Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah...* This message was specific to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah. The people remained under the authority of the Babylonians, and the governor's power was limited, but he was regarded as a leader among the people. In fact, Zerubbabel was the grandson of Jehoiachin, next to the last king of Judah. While this message had application for all the people, it was given directly to Zerubbabel. If his faith was weak and lacking, the people would sense and know that, leading to a lack of faith among them.

- This passage challenged me directly. We live in a time when most are unwilling to assume responsibility. Many are happy to take the credit for success, but are unwilling to assume responsibility for failure. Most leaders are happy to bark out directions and expectations, but would rather not be held accountable for results. Whether we like it or not, organizations rise and fall with leadership. I realize the church is not an organization; she is a living organism, the body of Christ, but the principle remains the same. If the leadership within the church is lacking in faith and desire, the church as a whole will be lacking as well. Those of us in leadership roles will give account to God for how we have led and the impact we have made. I cannot expect faith and commitment in the pew, if it is missing in the pulpit. Teachers, don't expect it of those who listen to your lesson if it is lacking in your life!

II. A Powerful Message (21b-22) – The word that God spoke to Zerubbabel revealed His great strength and power. Notice:

A. The Severity (21b) – *I will shake the heavens and the earth.* God reminds Zerubbabel of the mighty power He possesses. He speaks of a time yet to come when He will literally shake the heavens and the earth in judgment. He possesses all power and will work in a manner that pleases Him. He is merciful and longsuffering, but His mercy will not endure forever! God reminded the people that He remained in control and had the power to accomplish His will.

- There can be no doubt that we have experienced great decline among the church in America in recent years. We face struggles and opposition that were not present just a few years ago. Many wonder if the church will survive. We wonder how bad things will get in our future. How

will society respond to the church and people of faith? I am convinced that more difficulty is in our future. In fact, we will likely face persecution for our faith even in America, but we can rest knowing that the church will prevail. Trials and adversity will come, but we serve the Lord Jesus Christ. He did not die for the church to allow her to perish. Struggles will abound, but the Lord remains on His throne and in control.

B. The Prophecy (22) – *And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.* Here God speaks of a time yet future for Zerubbabel and the people of Judah. They knew according to the prophecy of Daniel that the Babylonians would remain in power for many more years. They would not live to see these words fulfilled. In fact, we haven't seen these words fulfilled yet. God is speaking of the end times when the Antichrist comes and establishes his dominance upon the earth. Although he will come, possessing great power and deceiving many, God will have the final say. God will bring defeat and judgment to the Antichrist and all who follow him.

- You might ask: if the people would not live to see this fulfilled, why did God see the need to share this with them? What benefit was there in this prophecy? What benefit or application does it have for us? First of all, God wanted them to realize and know that He was sovereign and in control of the kingdoms of the earth. They faced great adversity and bondage by a foreign king, but the kings of Babylon did not surpass the authority and power of God. They simply needed to trust the Lord and depend on Him! Things are rapidly changing in our world as well. The President, Congress, and the Supreme Court continue to pass legislation that hinders and restricts our religious liberties. The rulers of this world, for the most part, are not sympathetic to the cause of Christ or believers. We are a small minority in a world of over 7 billion people. However, we must not lose heart. Our God remains seated upon His throne! Jesus Christ our Lord is seated at the Father's right hand, interceding on our behalf. Although the world may reject Jesus as the sovereign Savior, He remains in complete control.
- Second the people needed to be reminded that God's Word would never fail. Things may have seemed out of control, but it was all proceeding according to God's sovereign plan. Judah may have been forced to deal with bondage, but the plan for redemption was still in place. Jesus would come in the fullness of time. He would bear our sin on the cross and provide for our redemption. He would rise triumphantly the third day and ascend back to the Father. Every prophecy and promise God made would be fulfilled. In the end times, the Antichrist will establish world dominance, but it will only be for a season. God remained in control in Zerubbabel's day and He remains in control in our day. World events are not surprising to our God. In fact, He is orchestrating them, setting the stage for Jesus' return. I don't know how bad things will get, but there is an appointed day on God's calendar when Jesus will come again for the church. He will then defeat the Antichrist, and the kingdoms of this world, establishing His kingdom here on earth!

III. A Promising Message (23) – There had been little to rejoice in during their captivity and the struggles of rebuilding, but God offered a promising message to Zerubbabel and the people. Consider:

A. The Recognition (23) – **In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.** God speaks specifically to Zerubbabel, calling him by name. There had been great adversity, and his fathers had not been faithful, but Zerubbabel had found favor in the Lord. He was recognized of the Lord and cared for by Him.

- This is a simple truth, but it brings great comfort to me. Our Lord knows each one of His. The world may never know who we are, but the children of God are precious to the Savior! He bled and died for our redemption. He has written our names in the Lamb's Book of Life. We have no way of knowing what our future holds, but we are known of Him! He will not lose a one that has been placed within the family!

B. The Restoration (23) – **In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.** This must have been very comforting to Zerubbabel. His grandfather had been very wicked in the eyes of God, but the Lord promised restoration for Zerubbabel. He would not be cut off due to the actions of his fathers. Zerubbabel is listed in both genealogies for Christ, through Solomon and Nathan. He was a chosen vessel of the Lord, receiving restoration after the rebellion and captivity of Judah.

- There is prophecy here as well that we cannot miss. The "signet" God spoke of refers to Jesus Christ, the coming Savior. We too were like Zerubbabel and the people of Judah. Sin and rebellion had caused separation and bondage. Jesus Christ our Lord came to redeem us from sin and provide restoration to God. Through Christ our Lord, we now enjoy fellowship with the Father. That ought to provide comfort and assurance for whatever we may face in life! What could we possibly face that we can't endure walking with the Lord?

C. The Redemption (23) – **In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.** God referred to Zerubbabel as His servant, chosen of the Lord. This was not because of his merit or worth, but simply the grace and mercy of God. God extended grace to the undeserving and withheld judgment according to His mercy. He may have to deal with difficulty and opposition in life, but He had been chosen of the Lord.

- This makes all the difference for the children of God. He never promised a life of ease, but He did promise to be there with us each step of the way, never leaving or forsaking us. We, like

Zerubbabel, were undeserving of such mercy and grace, but He chose to extend it through the sacrifice of His Son. He paid our sin debt as He bore our sin and suffered the righteous judgment of God upon the cross. He fully purchased our redemption and our account is paid in full. We too may have to deal with great adversity, but we are secure in Christ our Lord. Regardless of what we face, we are promised eternal life in heaven. We will spend eternity in the presence of our Savior and Lord. Life may be hard; difficulties will come, but there is a better day ahead for the redeemed!

Conclusion: This has been an enlightening and challenging study. God deserves and expects us to live in a way that honors Him. We are to be light in a dark world. We are to live in submission to His will. This is a difficult task, but we are not alone. He will equip us to honor Him and be of service to Him if we will only submit to Him.

I am certain that we will face difficult days in the future, but we do not have to face them alone. Jesus provided the means of salvation and He offers restoration to God and strength for the journey. Do you know Him as Savior? Have you surrendered your will and received salvation in Christ? He alone can save, and He alone can provide the strength you need. Christian, is your life what it should be? Are you living up to the Lord's expectations? If not, come to Him today in repentance and seek guidance for your life!