

Consider Your Ways

It was a prophet of God who said the words above. This prophet said these words to the people of Israel when God was very angry with them. This prophet was named Haggai. He went preaching to the people of Israel in about 520 B.C. (about 15 years after Israel had been released from Babylonian captivity). Upon initially returning, Israel appeared to be focused on rebuilding the temple of God. They seemed to be passionate and enthusiastic about God's word. Unfortunately, that attitude wouldn't last for long. Fifteen years went by, and the temple remained in ruins.

Notice four things that God wanted His people to consider during this time.

Israel needed to consider their indifference towards God's work.

- This is when a person is apathetic and doesn't have a sense of urgency when it comes to completing a particular task.
- This was how Israel had become during this time (Haggai 1:1-11).
- Jesus rebuked the church in Ephesus for having the same attitude (Revelation 2:1-7).
- What about us? Are we indifferent towards evangelism (Matthew 28:19)? Are we indifferent towards restoring the erring (Galatians 6:1-2)? Are we indifferent towards our spiritual growth (2 Peter 3:18)?

Israel needed to consider their misplaced priorities.

- The nation had put off doing God's work to focus on themselves (Haggai 1:2-4).
- Instead of fixing up the house of God, they were absorbed in fixing up their own homes. They felt they didn't have enough time to dedicate themselves to God's work.
- God has also given us much work to do! If we are not careful, we can neglect God's work to focus more on building our "financial houses" and "intellectual houses."
- We must always make sure that we put God's work first (Matthew 6:33).

Israel needed to consider how poorly they were handling discouragement.

- Upon their initial return to Jerusalem, the people of Israel allowed the neighboring enemies to discourage and intimidate them (Ezra 4:4). After beginning the work again, the people started to get discouraged because they knew that this temple would not come close to the kind of glory that Solomon's day had (Haggai 2:1-9). Once again, they were allowing discouragement to hinder their work for God!
- God urged them to do four things to overcome their discouragement. They needed to take courage (Haggai 2:4a), keep working (Haggai 2:4b), remember the presence of God (Haggai 2:4b-5), and that better days are were coming (Haggai 2:6-9).

Israel needed to consider their need for patience.

- Evidently, Israel thought that the drought would end as soon as they started putting God first again. Clearly, it was not happening that way.
- God urged Israel to keep working and trusting Him. In time, blessings would come! They just needed to be patient.

Conclusion: Do you also need to consider your ways?