

Haggai 2:20-23

Minimize the Introduction

1. Priority
2. Perseverance
3. Purity
4. Perspective

READ/PRAY

In order to adequately prepare for the presence of God, we must gain the right perspective: God's perspective. God's perspective is usually vastly different than ours.

We have an fleshly perspective, God has a spiritual one.
We have a temporal perspective. God has an eternal one.
We have a selfish perspective. God has a kingdom one.

Isa 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

If we are to really be prepared for the presence of God, we must see things from his perspective. In order to see his perspective, we must know three things.

I. Future Promise

- A. God has the ability to order a promising future
 1. He is Sovereign over heaven and earth, over kings and kingdoms, over man and beast and he has a plan
 2. He is in control and is never taken by surprise
 3. He has the power to order the future...and therefore no matter what things "look like" the future is bright!
- B. Look at the future promised to Zerubbabel in this passage of scripture.
 1. **Shaking** **v21-22**
 - a. God was going to subdue kings and kingdoms
 - b. God was going to subdue armies and chariots and horses
 - c. The world was going to be shaken and transformed in dramatic ways!
 2. **Servant** **v23a**
 - a. God promised to take Zerubbabel as his servant.
 - b. The term, my servant, is especially used of one who will be David-like.
 - c. What God was subtly saying was that, through Zerubbabel, He would restore the royal line of David, which had been all but forgotten during the past 50-70 years since Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem.

3. Signet Ring v23b

- a. Haggai likens Zerubbabel to a signet ring.
- b. The signet ring was an important item in the ancient near east.

1. Gen 41:41-43 *And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, "Bow the knee!" Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt*

2. Esther 8:9-14

- c. b. In other words, he was saying that Zerubbabel had divine approval.

4. Zerubbabel was given a future of promise and hope from God through Haggai.

C. What does the future hold for us?

1. Revelation 7:9-12

2. In a very real sense, God is shaking the nations as part of His Rev 7 plan!

3. Acts 17:26-27 *And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.*

4. We get to be His servants...and we have Divine approval...His signet ring.

a. Matthew 28:19-20

b. Acts 1:8

II. Past Problems v23a

A. Zerubbabel had an extremely problematic past.

1. His Heritage

- a. Zerubbabel was not just the son of Shealtiel. He was the grandson of Jechoniah?
- b. Jechoniah was actually cursed by God, and cut off from the royal lineage.
- c. Jer 22:24-30 You were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off and give you into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.
- d. Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not be a success,
- e. And none of his offspring shall sit on the throne of David and rule again in Judah.
- f. Zerubbabel had a heritage that was very problematic.
- g. With a grandfather like that, who needs enemies?

2. His Home

- a. His name means seed of Babylon. He was born in captivity.
- b. He had never seen Jerusalem. He was not a citizen of Judah.
- c. He grew up in Babylon!

3. His History

- a. In many ways, Zerubbabel was a Babylonian. It was all he knew
- b. According to Josephus and other writings outside of the Word, Zerubbabel was a friend of Darius the king and actually was called the king's cousin
- c. Zerubbabel was Babylonian enough that he was made governor of Judah and likely collected taxes from the remnant for the Persians

B. Needless to say, looking back, Zerubbabel didn't have much reason to look forward

1. The good news is, God can overcome a problematic past
2. He can take you and use you in spite of your family
3. He can take you and use you no matter where you were born, where you grew up, or how you grew up.
4. He can use you in spite of the baggage you bring to the table from your past

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

III. Present Hope v23b

A. Here is the problem

1. Though we may believe that God can order a promising future
2. Though we may believe that God can overcome a problematic past
3. We live in the puzzled present
4. We can sing about the sweet by and by, but the fact of the matter is, we live in the nasty now and now.
5. And it is in the here and now that we lose perspective.

B. I am sure that Zerubbabel had very little present hope

1. What is clear is that Zerubbabel did not usher in a triumphant period of rule such as verses 20-23 describe.
2. Haggai's grand predictions concerning Zerubbabel turned out to be a failure.
3. Not long after this prophecy was given, Zerubbabel disappears from history.
4. We know nothing of what became of him or under what conditions he concluded his life.
 - a. If only he could have known!
 - b. Haggai's promises find their ultimate expression in a greater Zerubbabel who was to come.
 - c. Matt 1:12 *And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel.....all the way to Jesus!*

C. Missionary William Leslie?

D. You may be wondering...how could I be used. I am not even part of the family of God!!

1. Zerubbabel might have thought the same thing.
 - a. After all, didn't God give his word about Jechoniah being cut off?
 - b. David's line through Solomon became extinct because of this curse
 - c. How do you get around that??
 - d. According to the principles of the Jewish law the inheritance passed to the next of kin, Shealtiel who came through the line of David's son Nathan.
 - e. Zerubbabel was not Jechoniah's biological grandson. He was his legal son by law.
 - f. So, in a perfectly legal manner, Zerubbabel became part of the family of Christ!

2. It is the same with us.
 - a. By law we are children of Adam...guilty...accursed.
 - b. By legal adoption, through Christ we can be forgiven and made children of God...part of the family of Christ....and it is perfectly legal.
 - c. THE GOSPEL