

Consider Your Ways!

Delighting in the great Hope of Jesus Christ for 2022

February 13, 2022

Haggai 1:1-11

1 In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying,

2 “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘This people says, “The time has not come, *even* the time for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt.”’”

3 Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

4 “Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house *lies* desolate?”

5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, “Consider your ways!

6 You have sown much, but harvest little; *you* eat, but *there is not enough* to be satisfied; *you* drink, but *there is not enough* to become drunk; *you* put on clothing, but no one is warm *enough*; and he who earns, earns wages *to put* into a purse with holes.”

7 Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Consider your ways!

8 Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,” says the LORD.

9 “*You* look for much, but behold, *it comes* to little; when you bring *it* home, I blow it *away*. Why?” declares the LORD of hosts, “Because of My house which *lies* desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.

10 Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce.

11 I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands.”

12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him. And the people showed reverence for the Lord.

13 Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke by the commission of the Lord to the people saying, “ ‘I am with you,’ declares the Lord.”

14 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, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.

To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit; Amen.

Introduction to the Series

God has dealt with my heart to preach a series of Sermons from the **Book of Haggai** to begin the new year of 2022- that will, hopefully, bring all of us to a place where we feel the Burden and hear the Cry of the Prophet Haggai, when he thundered over and over again, “*Consider Your Ways!*”

And in order to do this- I am going to have to take a short “vacation” from our verse-by-verse “Journey” through the **Gospel of Matthew**- to carefully examine what God the Holy Spirit infallibly wrote through the Prophet Haggai about 600 years *before* Jesus was born. So, each Lord’s Day (until we are finished) I will take a section of this inspired Old Testament Book and not only *exposit* the one, single, correct Meaning of every verse- but I will also, by God’s Grace, seek to *apply* what God spoke through Haggai- to this Church and to us- as we enter the fresh and troubling waters of 2022.

Now some of you may remember that, back at the beginning of this Century- God dealt with me very strongly, to change the way I preach. Actually, I have been preaching since 1971. And I have preached, literally, thousands of Sermons. But I now employ what is called, “*Expositional Preaching*”¹, or what I call, “*Expository Worship*”- because Preaching *IS* Worship.

And to preach *expositionally*- is to go through every word; of every verse; of every Chapter of a Book of the Bible and *explain* the “*plain meaning*” of the inspired Text. You see, even though there may actually be many “Applications” of a particular verse or Passage- there is only one single Meaning of every verse of the Bible. And my effort in this Series will be to get to that one single Meaning of every verse that the Prophet Haggai had in mind when he wrote the 38 verses of this Book, as God the Holy Spirit “moved” on him.

And what that does is to help us arrive at what God the Holy Spirit wants us to know about that verse. And this is *enormously* pleasing to God- because it

¹ *Expositional Preaching* seeks to understand what the biblical writer meant to convey as God the Holy Spirit “moved” on him.

honors the great Work of God the Spirit and the “Spirit of Jesus” as they produced the only inspired Books that exist on the face of the earth. So, in reality- expositional Preaching is the *purest* and most *basic* form of Worship- because it values the Word of the Lord to the *greatest* extent- by seeking to understand what God

meant when He used those 40 human writers.

So, with every verse- I will go back to the original language that Haggai used here- which is primarily ancient Hebrew. And I will also include the proper Context of every verse. And I will also bring along the Customs of the average Jew of that day- which will help us to arrive at what Haggai had in mind when he wrote these words down about 2600 years ago.

But when we deal with a prophetic Book, like Haggai- we must also reach a *Conclusion* of the matter- a *Fulfillment* of what the Prophet wrote down. And the Reality is that the Fulfillment of the **Book of Haggai** is NOT found either finally or best in a re-constituted Nation of Israel; nor is it found in a rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem; nor is it found in the Nations of the world gathering into Israel- awaiting their final Judgment. No, like the other 65 Books of the Holy Bible- the *final* and *best* fulfillment of the **Book of Haggai** consists of two things:

1. The Person of Jesus Christ
2. The finished Work of Jesus Christ

Look what Dr. Luke was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to pen down in **Luke 24:27**, when he said,

Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Now back in the 1st Century- it was common for Jews to refer to the Hebrew Scriptures- what we call today, the “Old Testament” as the “*Words of Moses and the Prophets.*” So, even though Moses only wrote the first five Books- every Old Testament Book besides the prophetic Books were grouped together and called, the “*Words or the Books of Moses*”- while every other Book was grouped together and called, the “*Words or the Books of the Prophets.*” Another way they were grouped was simply calling the 39 Books of the Old Testament, “*Moses and the Prophets*”

So, here, Dr. Luke is offering an inspired Narrative when Jesus taught these two men,

... the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures

... and, of course, the phrase, “**all the Scriptures**” here refers to the Old Testament because no New Testament Book had been written at this time.

The Point, of course, is that every single Book of the Bible is about Jesus. And that means that all of the Old Testament examples of the men, who did great exploits- displays or illustrates some Divine Characteristic of Jesus. So, for example, most of the time when the Truth about David and Goliath is read- the Message is usually that Goliath represents the devil- while the victorious David represents *us*- as we wage war against the enemy of our soul. And so, the focus of many Sermons is in just how you and I can become like David.

But with all due respect to the many, many Church leaders who do that today- that is taking the Old Testament Narrative completely out of context. And it is totally ignoring the fact that every Old Testament Book is about Jesus- NOT us.

So, what David symbolizes in his fight against Goliath is the victorious Jesus- Who didn't merely wage war against the devil- but utterly defeated him. For example, in **1John 3:8**- the Apostle John said,

The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

So, this tells us that Jesus didn't merely wage war against the devil and defeat him one time- but Jesus utterly destroyed ALL of the Works of satan- for ALL time- which is *symbolized* in the Old Testament by David cutting off Goliath's head! And no human being on earth today can make that claim- not you; and not me; and not even David. The kicker, of course, is that this great Victory over ALL of the devil's Works by Jesus is ONLY applicable for those who are chosen for Salvation. The non-elect NEVER have victory over satan.

“*Okay, but Brother Blair, where do we fit in- in this Story of David and Goliath?*” Well, we are with the other cowards- scared to death of Goliath and hiding behind David. So, this Narrative is NOT in the Bible to illustrate how powerful or how spiritual *we* can be. It was given to us to show us how powerful and how spiritual Jesus is- in conquering satan- ALL BY HIMSELF- on our behalf! And every other interpretation is just wrong.

And the same is true in **Luke 24:27**. Jesus taught these men about how *everything* in the Old Testament was about *Himself*. So, Abraham; Noah; and Joseph in the Book of **Genesis** and Moses in the other four Books- all represent one or more perfect Attributes of Jesus.

But that also means that all the tangible and natural and earthly and temporary figures and types and shadows that we see in the Old Testament- all represent Jesus too. So, for example, Noah's Ark; the Tent in the Wilderness; the

Rock that followed them along; the daily Manna; and the Temple in Jerusalem- even Mt. Sinai itself- all represent Jesus in one or more of His pristine Characteristics.

So, the Temple in Jerusalem that the Roman soldiers tore down in *fulfillment* of Jesus' Prophecy of both **John 2:19** and **Matthew 24**- doesn't ever need to be rebuilt again. Why? We have another, spiritual Temple that is *infinitely* superior in every aspect to anything that Man could ever build. And this is why the Apostle Paul wrote this in **2Corinthians 6:16b-18**:

16 ...we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you.

18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

... showing us that the Temple in the New Covenant that God dwells in- is the physical bodies of the believers in Jesus. And this is why the Apostle John wrote this in **The Revelation 21:16-27**:

16 The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.

17 And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.

18 The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

19 The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;

20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;

26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;

27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

... showing us that the true Temple of the finished Work of Jesus- is NOT inside the walls of the *old* City of Jerusalem- which is merely a relic of the past- but inside the *New* Jerusalem. Because the Reality is that for anyone to rebuild the Temple in the City of Jerusalem now- after Jesus has lived and died and risen again- would be to grossly *minimize* the eternal and spiritual Temple that the Lord pitched and not Man (**Hebrews 8:2**). For anyone to suggest that the finished Work of Jesus involves a Man-made Temple in the City that God destroyed for its unbelief- would be to terribly *insult* the finished Work of the Lord Christ.

So, as I *continue* to exposit the Word of God like this- over the next several weeks- an amazing thing will happen! God will “reveal” Himself to us! And through this “Expository Worship”- we will *see* God! We shall behold the Lord Christ in His Glory! **1Samuel 3:21** says,

And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, because the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

... where the word, “**by**” as used here also means: “**through**”.

And so, that is the Way God revealed Himself to Samuel almost 1,000 years before Jesus was born. And that is the very *same* Way that God will reveal Himself to those He has chosen to know Him rightly.

So, the *primary* Method; the *initial* Means; and the *fundamental* Way God has chosen to reveal Himself to His people- is NOT through Dreams; or Visions; or Angelic visitations; or any other mystical Way. No, God’s people come to know; love; and enjoy Jesus- *primarily* by reading; studying and understanding what God has spoken “*through*” or “*by*” the sacred Scriptures.

So, if we desire to know and love and enjoy Jesus- *rightly and fully*- we must begin that Effort by understanding two things:

1. Who Jesus is

2. What Jesus has done

And all through the Bible- various writers gave us inspired and infallible Insight into what these two things look like when they said things like:

- Fixing our eyes on Jesus (**Hebrews 12:2**)
- Consider Jesus (**Hebrews 3:1**)
- But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely Jesus (**Hebrews 2:9**)
- Anoint your eyes so you may see (**The Revelation 3:18**)

... and in 1922, God the Spirit “moved” on Helen Lemmel to write a wonderful Hymn that goes, in part, like this:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful Face
And the Things of Earth will grow strangely dim
In the Light of His Gory and Grace

So, the Goal of God for us is that we too may “look full in His wonderful Face”; that the created things of this earth that are all passing away will “grow strangely dim” in our eyes; and so, we may “*behold* the Glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ.” And this is what God spoke through the Apostle Paul in **2Corinthians 4:1-6** and said,

1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,

² but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

⁵ For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake.

⁶ For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Now notice what the Apostle said was the Goal of satan in this Passage:

... the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see...

... so, “seeing” or “beholding” is the primary Goal of God. And as we see- God will reveal Himself to us through His Word.

And that is why Jesus and the Apostles talked over and over about believers being able to see; and being able to comprehend; and being able to behold. For example, in **Ephesians 3:14-19** God the Holy Spirit “moved” the Apostle Paul to write this:

**¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,
¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,
¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.**

Now look closely at the phrase from the *last* part of verse 17 down to the *first* part of verse 19:

... that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge ...

So, it is the Will of God; and it was Paul’s will that genuine believers become able to “COMPREHEND” something. Well, what is it that he wants Christians to no longer be ignorant of- but be able to comprehend or know?

... the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge ...

So, the Love of God is so powerful; and so amazing; and so full; and so different from any type of human love (Paul said here that this Love *surpasses* human knowledge) that it takes a sovereign Act of God to help us comprehend it.

But then over in **1John 4:7&8, 16b-19a** the Apostle John wrote:

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

16 ... God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

¹⁷ By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us.

So, it is God's Will that we comprehend. And it is *especially* God's Will that His people comprehend what He has spoken through His Word. It is truly the tragedy of our time that so many, who lay claim to belong to Jesus- are ignorant of what Jesus actually said.

But we must go even further because it is also God's Will that our eyes are opened; and the veil is removed; and that we know and see or behold- Jesus. And that is what the Miracle of the New Birth is all about. But it is also God's Will that we begin to love the One Who we see (*Justification*). And then it is also God's Will that we are changed into what we see (*Sanctification*).

So, we must understand that NOT seeing- or being blinded so we don't see- is the Goal of satan. So, there is a battle going on; a war- pertaining to our "seeing"; or our "beholding"; or our "comprehending".

And please notice how Paul equates "NOT seeing" or "being blinded" with being "unbelieving". So, to Paul- NOT beholding the Glory of God; and then NOT loving what you see; and, finally, NOT being changed into what you see- *typifies* those who are Lost or Unbelieving. And he then *typifies* those who are saved with being the people, who DO see; and the people who DO love what they see; and the people who are changed into what they see.

But what is it that God wants us to see and that satan does NOT want us to see? Two things in verses 4& 6:

- the Light of the Gospel of the Glory of Jesus Christ, Who is the Image of God. **(2Corinthians 4:4)**
- the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. **(2Corinthians 4:6)**

... which are simply two different ways of saying the same thing.

So, these are the two things that help us to “see Jesus” which, in turn, will help us to “*Consider Our Ways*”:

Now the Book of **Haggai** is a small Book- but one that is *crucial* to understanding the overall History of the Jewish people- who lived in the *southern* Kingdom of “Judah”. For many Centuries before Haggai walked in his Ministry- many other men- called to the Office of Prophet- had cried out for Judah to NOT go the way of the *northern* Kingdom- but repent and turn back to God. And if they would not repent- the Prophets had warned them that God would not spare them either.

And so, collectively, these men said that God would raise up the barbaric and violent Babylonians (Chaldeans) to ride in and utterly destroy them- if they persisted in unrepentant Sin. And sadly, the history of the Jewish people teaches that- even though they saw the utter destruction of the northern Kingdom of Israel; and even though they had the collective cry of many Prophets- their Destruction at the hands of the wicked Babylonians came about in 587BC.

But the Old Testament Prophets also said that there was still Hope for the Jews. There was still a place of God’s Mercy and Forgiveness- for these rebels- but only if they would “*Consider Your Ways*” and repent.

The Prophets said that, after they had been carried away captive into Babylon- God would do a work in their hearts and a transformed “REMNANT” would return- who would live in a “NEW” Jerusalem- where God’s Presence would live continually in their midst.

So, now God raises up the Prophet Haggai in 520BC- about 70 years *after* the Captivity². And the Babylonian Empire has now collapsed. And much of that part of the world was now dominated by the Persians³- first ruled by Cyrus and then by Darius. And it was under the Rule of the Persians that God moved. And even though the Persians were no more- godly than the Babylonians- God would use these pagans to allow the Jews to return back to Jerusalem and to rebuild their Temple.

And Haggai tells us that this rebuilding would be done under the leadership of a Jewish high Priest named “*Joshua*” and a Governor named, “*Zerubbabel*”, who was of the physical lineage of King David. And these men- along with a remnant of Jews- would rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and restore the Temple.

Now from Ezra the Prophet’s point of view- we could say that the future looks very bright. The Jews have now come home from their 70 year Captivity! And the Walls around the City; along with the Temple; as well as the City itself are being rebuilt!

² The “Exile” occurred when the Babylonians took the Jews as slaves for 70 years in Babylon.

³ The modern day remnants of the early Persians are the Iranians of today.

Now please keep in mind that the Walls around the City of Jerusalem were not merely used as a military defense of the City. They also had a very important *spiritual* significance with the average Jew. The Walls around the City represented God's Promise to protect and defend His people against the pagan enemies of Israel. So, the Walls around the City are a natural example of the spiritual Barrier or the "Hedge of Protection" (**Job 1:10**) that God places around the hearts and minds of every genuine believer. And that means that these spiritual Walls of Safety and Peace are *established* and *maintained* NOT merely with brick and mortar- but also with the Truth of God's Word.

The City of Jerusalem in Haggai's day represented the "Habitation" or the fulfillment of God's Promises; while the Temple represented the very Presence of God- which is now, in the New Covenant- the heart and mind of every believer in Jesus.

You see, it was unconscionable to the average Jew that God would even deal with anyone, who was not born Jewish. And it was equally unthinkable that God would prosper and bless the pagans. So, the fact that the Jews have now been set free from their Captivity by the Chaldeans testified that God was with them. And so, there is much to be happy about.

Yet Haggai is not happy. At all. This Prophet is very troubled at what he sees. And it was while his heart was in this "Troubling" that Haggai writes this Book. So, this Book contains Haggai's Sermons or his Prophecies; or his spiritual Burden.

Now the **Book of Haggai** is divided into four main Parts- or four Sermons or four Prophecies- each with a precise date. For example, the *first* Message, delivered by Haggai to Zerubbabel, the Governor, and Joshua, the Priest, is dated (according to 1:1) in "**the second year of Darius** (King of Persia), and on "**the first day of the sixth month.**" And, according to my calculations- this works out to be August 29, 520 BC. And this first Message or Sermon or Prophecy extends all the way to the end of Chapter 1.

The *second* Message of this Prophet is found in **Haggai 2:1-9** and, according to **Haggai 2:1**- is dated on "**the 21st day of the seventh month**"- which works out to be October 17, 520 BC. The *third* Message is found in **Haggai 2:10-19** and according to **Haggai 2:10**- is dated on "**the 24th day of the ninth month**" (December 18, 520 BC). And finally, the *fourth* Sermon or Prophecy or the fourth portion of his Burden is found in **Haggai 2:20-23** on the very same day as the *third* one.

Now one of the things that we see when we look at this little Book long enough is that the *first* and *third* Messages are very similar; while the *second* and *fourth* Messages are also very similar.

So, my Plan is to go over one Message each week- until we cover each Part of Haggai's Burden. And as we go into each Part- I'm going to *apply* that Part with an area of *our* lives in the 21st Century- so we can be obedient to the Prophet's Call and "*Consider Your Ways!*"

Sermon 1 (Haggai 1:1-15) *Misplaced Priorities*

Haggai begins his Prophecy by accusing many of God's people of having "*Misplaced Priorities.*" Yes, they have come back from their Captivity- and that truly is a wonderful thing. But they are spending all their time and energy and the financial Blessings that God has given to them in rebuilding their *own* houses- while they leave the House of God in shambles. So, Haggai says to them,

Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house *lies* desolate?

... and then the Prophet utters his Call for Repentance by saying, "*Consider Your Ways!*".

Now we need to remember that the entire Covenant that God had given to them at that time- centered around the Temple in Jerusalem. So, with the Temple lying in shambles- there could be no genuine Worship. Because, by extension- there was no animal Sacrifices to God; and no Levitical Priesthood. The Old Covenant *depended* on the Temple in order to function.

Now under the glorious New Covenant- the physical Temple in Jerusalem is irrelevant. The center of Worship now- the focus of our Worship- the object of our Worship is Jesus Christ- NOT a building. So, these saints trying to worship back then without a temple would be like us trying to worship without focusing on Jesus- a complete waste of time.

So, Haggai's first Message in Chapter 1 reveals to the Governor and the High Priest and the people that the reason they are all frustrated- is because they have tried to make their own individual lives comfortable while neglecting the Temple of God. They have completely forgotten why God chose them in the first place.

God didn't choose the Jews to be holy- so they could live their lives according to the dictates of their own hearts. Instead, God chose them to witness or testify to the lost pagan world about how glorious God is. And over and over again- God warned them that if they neglect the main Purpose of their Calling- God would lay the same Curses on the Jew that He had placed on the pagan nations of the world that did not even know God.

So, Haggai confronts the people with the Divine Curses found in the **Book of Deuteronomy** and told them that all these terrible Plagues had come upon them because they had neglected to “*put God first*” and rebuild the Temple. Look with me at **Haggai 1:4-6**:

⁴“**Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house *lies* desolate?”**

⁵**Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, “Consider your ways!**

⁶**You have sown much, but harvest little; *you* eat, but *there is not enough* to be satisfied; *you* drink, but *there is not enough* to become drunk; *you* put on clothing, but no one is warm *enough*; and he who earns, earns wages *to put into a purse with holes.*”**

So, they lived in perpetual Frustration and Discontentment. Nothing satisfied them. And we must not pass over this Lesson as though we are somehow immune to this; or that these Curses somehow don’t apply to us. I mean we are still being affected by a world-wide Pandemic that has baffled the smartest people in 175 nations of the world.

And the cry that I hear most commonly is, “*We want to get back to normal*”. But God is saying, “*Consider your ways!*” The Virus sweeps the world; brings Industry to its knees; bankrupts hundreds of thousands; and kills millions of people.⁴ Yet far too many people see no need of humbling themselves; or of repenting of personal Wickedness; and misplaced Priorities; and cry out to God for Mercy.

The worst thing we could ever do is to *waste* this Pandemic. To go through such a once- in- a- Century Plague like this and remain unbent; unbroken; and unbowed; to live through this and NOT be transformed by it- to not become more Humble; and more godly; and more hungry to see God exalted and glorified by and through our lives- that would truly be the height of Arrogance and Evil.

So, like these Old Testament saints, if we devote ourselves to sowing and eating and drinking and clothing ourselves and earning wages- yet we neglect our Divine Call- God has promised to do with us what He did with them. And this is why the Apostle Peter said this in **1Peter 2:9a**

... you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION

⁴ I agree that, sadly, Politicians have used this Pandemic as an excuse to acquire more Power. I also agree that the death count is probably way too high. And I also agree that there has been contradictory advice and instructions from people, who were in charge. But even with all of that- we must know that God is speaking through this Virus.

Praise God we have been chosen by God! What an incredible privilege! And we have been called and chosen by God as a “chosen Race; a royal Priesthood; a holy Nation; and a People for God’s Own Possession! Yes! But WHY have we been chosen? To build our own homes? To pad our own nests? To live our lives according to the dictates of our own hearts and do what is right in our own eyes? NO! Peter told us WHY we have been chosen in the next part of this same verse:

1Peter 2:9b

... so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

... and then in **1Peter 2:10-12** the Apostle gave us specific Instructions as to how we are to live our lives precisely because we HAVE been chosen by God:

10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

So, the main Purpose as to WHY God chose us- is so that we might PROCLAIM God’s Excellencies! And that means that if we do all sorts of nice things- yet if we do NOT proclaim God’s Excellencies in what we say; and in how we live our lives- then truly we have wasted the Call of God! And that would be a Tragedy beyond words!

So, just like the Old Testament saints- God is warning us that if we forget about our Ministry in the Body of Christ (which is the Temple of God according to **1Coorinthians 3:16&17**), we too will live in constant Frustration. So, if we spend our time and energy- seeking Comfort and Security from the pagan world- rather than being Faithful; Fruitful; and Busy about the Work of the Kingdome- if we do not live our lives for the Glory of God- then every worldly Pleasure we get will leave its sour aftertaste of Depression and Guilt and Frustration.

Now the reason I mention the Glory of God here- is because of what Haggai was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to say in verse 8. Haggai's Remedy for this Curse of Frustration goes like this:

Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,” says the LORD.

So, both then and now- the *real* Problem is NOT the neglect of a building- but indifference to the Glory of God. The Temple of the Old Testament existed solely for the Glory of God. And the Church today exists solely for the Glory of God (**Ephesians 1:6, 12, &14**).

Now notice that Haggai deals with “Spiritual Indifference” rather than outright Wickedness. The Prophet deals with God’s people being bored with God; weary of living their lives in accord with God’s Will; and indifferent to the Glory of God.

And this tells us that Indifference to the growth and spiritual Prosperity of the Church of Jesus and its Mission- is ALWAYS a Warning of a Failure to love and be amazed at the Glory of God. And the sour Fruit of this Indifference is a Life of chronic Frustration. And as we heed the Prophet’s Warning to, “Consider our Ways” we will realize that he who seeks to save his Life; he who seeks to live his life to the dictates of his own heart and to do what is right in his own eyes- will lose his Life to continual Frustrations. But he who loses his Life for the Glory of God and the good of the Cause of Jesus Christ- will find a Life that is deep and fulfilling and satisfying. And Verse 9 sums up the situation in Jerusalem:

You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?” declares the LORD of hosts, “Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.

Then in verses 12–15 Haggai reports that Zerubbabel and Joshua and the people obey and begin to work on the Temple, on the 24th day of the sixth month. So, after 18 years of neglect and frustration, the people begin to learn their Lesson- a Lesson we must NEVER forget:
from **Matthew 6:33b**:

... seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Now the Good news is that **Ezra 5:1-12** tells us that the people were indeed stirred by this Burden of Haggai. And Joshua and Zerubbabel finally did lead the people in rebuilding the City of Jerusalem and the Walls and the

Temple. And we should praise God for that. But that came on the heels of them examining themselves to see where they were failing God.

So, may God grant to us that we will hear the Prophet in our day and that we too will, “*Consider Your Ways!*”.

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.