

Is it time?

Preamble

- recap history of Judah from exile onwards
- read Ps 137

Psalms 137:1

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

- the national mood of the Jews in exile



Ezra 1-6

- the return to Jerusalem - sanctioned and funded by Cyrus
- 42460 Jews returned to Judah
- those who had, gave to the work Eza 2:68
- burnt offering was resumed
- foundations of the temple laid Eza [3:10](#)

- the opposition by the Samaritans Eza 4:4-5
- the work stops

Read Haggai Ch 1



Hindrances to God's work

- External opposition (Ezra 4)
 - Negative responses to opposition
 - Fear
 - Assume that the original task is not the will of the Lord - give up
 - Lethargy
 - Focus on Individual concerns - focus on own needs, go about daily business - Skewed priorities
 - Hag 1:4, 9 - God's house (the temple) lay in waste but the people were concerned only with their own comforts and homes.
 - Selfishness
- Lack of leadership
- Lost vision
 - Proverbs 29:18 "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

The consequences of disobedience and neglecting the work of the Lord

Loss of the Lord's blessing and the consequent futility of labour

- v5-6 work without reward, without satisfaction, a constant hunger (like diabetes!)
- v8-11 financial hardship, ruin, unprofitable harvests, drought
- "... I did blow upon it" (Hurricane /Tsunami)
- Ecclesiastes 6:2

A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.

- Psalms 127:2

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Rejection by the Lord

- Revelation 2:4-5 (message to the church at Ephesus) "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

"... if loving God totally is the greatest commandment, then not loving Him and not making Him the first priority is the greatest sin."

Remedy

- Blunt message - short, sharp knock



Haggai's admonition as it is applied today (or in the New Testament)

(For those absorbed in their own "needs")

- Philippians [4:12](#) "-- I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry,

both to abound and to suffer need."

- 1 Timothy 6:6 "But godliness with contentment is great gain."
- Luke [12:15](#) "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."
- Proverbs [15:16](#) "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith."

Responses to the preaching of God's word

How did the people know Haggai was God's prophet?

- Prophets are recognized because they speak the truth, they honour God, they uphold his word, are concerned about his glory and the Holy Spirit stirs up the people as a result of their preaching.

Negative responses:

1. Who is this person to tell us what to do?
2. I am a good person... I don't break the law, I offer sacrifices, I'm nice to others
- ...
3. How do I know this is a messenger from God?

Positive responses:

1. Listen with the message with open mind
2. Search the scriptures (like the Berean Christians)
3. Pray for discernment and the Spirit's searching
 1. Psalms 139:23-24 "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
4. Obedience to God

Correct responses to the Lord's admonition (v12,14)

1. Obey
 - 1 Thessalonians [2:13](#) "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 - 1 John 5:3 "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
2. Fear
 - Joshua 24:14 "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the

other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord."

- Psalms 111:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever."

3. Do

- James [1:22](#) "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."
- Philippians [2:13](#) "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Positive response to opposition

- assume the opposition is a signal that the task is indeed the will of the Lord and is now being opposed by Satan

The reward for obedience

"I am with you, saith the Lord."

- the presence of the Lord is the blessing

- See Psalms /proverbs
- "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world" Matt 28:19=20
- Philippians [4:13](#)

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

- Philippians [4:19](#)
But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
- Hebrews 13:5
Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Why is it important to know and feel that God is with us?

- Walking right with the Lord brings a sense of peace and assurance that we are doing His will
- Confidence to continue - knowing that all our needs are supplied
- The safety net of His protection

For our reflection

- What is God's instruction (building the temple) to us today?
- Have we responded any better than the Jews? Are we absorbed in ourselves? How fervently do we care about and go about God's business?
- Are we finding our own existence (the rat race) futile?

- Will we heed Haggai's admonition? Haggai 1:8 "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord."
- Will we respond in obedience like the Jews?