

Haggai

Charting a Pathway to Renewal

Background

The sequence of events in this period of time is crucial to understanding the vital message that Haggai offers. The overthrow of Babylon by the Persians is recorded for us in Daniel 5. Cyrus the Persian ruler makes a decree that allows Jewish captives to return to Jerusalem under the governor Zerubbabel. This return, though initially joyful, turns into a squabble over the rebuilding of the temple. External harassment comes from Samaria and a political stalemate ensues. But the ministry of Haggai provides the spiritual motivation for the completion of the temple project. . Haggai and Zechariah are contemporaries. They are both used to God to prod the exiles who have returned from Babylon to Jerusalem to build the temple under Zerubbabel.

Outline

- I. A Call to Renew the Work of God 1:1-15
- II. A Call to Reject a Negative Spirit 2:1-9
- III. A Call to Personal Holiness 2: 10-19
- IV. A Call to Participate in God's Triumph 2:20-23

Cardinal Thought

Haggai clearly reminds us that God does not forget His people and His restoring power is never just half a job. It supplies all the necessary resources for true renewal of individuals, communities and nations. Enemies are subtle and will try to undermine God's work by misdirecting our focus away from God's cause. Our efforts to focus on visible forms of ministry and institution building neutralize the true power of God to transform people and communities. Yet God's restoration goes to the place where despair may be the greatest and lifts from that point to bring true restoration.

Main Themes

1. Critical moments in history require a people of God who will see Him as Lord of history.
2. When "all is shaken" the kingdom, glory and person of our Lord will remain.
3. The keepers of any nation are its righteous remnant whose humble commitment of the entirety of their lives to God's cause pleases God.
4. Never exchange the novelty of spiritual excitement for a "long obedience in the same direction."

Bridge to the 21st Century

- Walking with God is a long obedience in the same direction
- Attitude shapes relationship
- Sin is not an outdated word
- Big things can appear with small starts