

There's Something to Think About Ep. 13 Haggai: God's Great Admonition

Have you ever had a parent, or have you as a parent, say, "Child, don't make me tell you again!" Repetition of a command typically emphasizes the urgency or significance of the instruction. I tell people all the time, when God repeats Himself, he means for you to pay attention!

God repeats a phrase in the three chapters of Haggai that demand our attention. Check it out. In chapter one verse 5 the LORD says, "Give careful thought to your ways." Same chapter verse seven He says, "Give careful thought to your ways." Chapter three verse 15 He says, "Now give careful thought to this from this day on . . ." Verse eighteen he says it twice, "Give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid. Give careful thought . . .".

Each time God directs His people to consider carefully some aspect of their current situation. These messages are written to the remnant of Israel who returned from captivity in Babylon to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and reestablish the worship of Yahweh in a rebuilt temple. These folks are back in Jerusalem but they have focused on rebuilding their own homes, promoting their own self-interest while the temple of the LORD remains in ruins. They keep putting off that project saying, "The time has not yet come for the LORD's house to be built." They are focusing on themselves, making their comfort a priority, and neglecting God and His glory.

The first time God calls for their attention, He directs them to the sparse, disappointing fruit of their labor. They are working hard, but gaining less than they expect. God takes credit for that. The second time He renews His expectation for them, telling them to get started on the temple building project. He reveals that He has withheld abundance because they have withheld devotion.

The people take God's admonition seriously and get started on the Temple project. On the day they start the foundation God calls them to reflect on their previous misery and compare what life was like before they made God their life priority and what life will be like after they prioritize God's glory above their own convenience and comfort. He says, "From this day on I will bless you!"

On this New Year's Day, I urge you to make God, His Person and His purpose, the priority of your life. Get to work on those projects of faith and worship and devotion and obedience that you've been putting off, saying now is not the time. Now is the time, and great blessing awaits in 2021 for those who put their trust in God and make His glory the priority of their every desire, intent, and action.

Until next time, Happy New Year, and there's something to think about.