

“BACK TO WORK” – HAGGAI 1:12–15

INTRO: Prov. 25:12 *“Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear.”*

Haggai – commissioned BY God, on mission FOR God, calling people back to priorities...rebuilding God’s temple (altar built, foundation laid, but for 15 yrs. People stopped building because of the enemy’s threats) Lives became self-oriented, consumed with material things over God = lacking, empty, unfulfilled.

- 1st Word of the Lord – “Consider Your ways” (lay it to heart....heed My rebuke)

Now we see the effects of that Word...“How did they respond?”

I. PROMPTED BY GOD: INTERNALLY (V. 12,14A)

A. OBEYED

- Leaders exemplified, people followed: Zerubbabel (governor – humbled his heart, leading the people)/ Joshua (Priest – teacher, willing to be taught)/ all the remnant (50,000 in Jerusalem)...unified in obedience to the voice of the Lord.
- Obey = “to hear intelligently to do”
 - They had seen their history of failure to obey His voice (idolatry/captivity); presently they experiencing lack (physically) for disobedience. (fresh in mind)
 - They acknowledged what God was doing and obeyed His counsel.
- God shows us our failures because He loves us (relationship...THEIR God). He wants to see us succeed, not fail. He wants us to enjoy Him fully. He wants to use our lives. But we must act in obedience to His Word to see that success & enter that joy.

* What happens when we ignore His voice?

Ps 95:7–10 (children of Israel in wilderness) *“...Today, if you will hear His voice: “Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, As in the day of trial in the wilderness, When your fathers tested Me; They tried Me, though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with [that] generation, And said, ‘It [is] a people who go astray in their hearts, And they do not know My ways.’ So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’”*

B. FEARED

- Fear = “To revere, honor, respect” (Cont. English Version – “started showing proper respect for the Lord.”)
- They saw God was displeased, chastened for neglecting His house, drought on crops...didn’t want a worse thing to come...turned (fear of the LORD put them on right path).

*What does it mean to FEAR the Lord?

Double edged sword: (1 edge – fear consequences of disobedience: chastening Hand of God/ missed blessings/“tremble at His word & power”...other edge – fear of offending the God who loves me so greatly)

= I bow in respect of His authority & yet I stand in awe of His love and forgiveness toward me. (wonder, humility, reverence, trust, love)

Ps. 130:3–4 *If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.*

Prov. 1:7 (basis for knowledge) *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Heb. 12:28 (govern our service to God) *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*

Acts 9:31(vital part of church growth) *Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.*

- The Jews feared God's further chastening; yet knew His loving grace & favor to bring them back from captivity

C. STIRRED (v.14)

- stirred = "opening eyes; to waken" (strong impulse from God to fulfill His will)
- God first stirs the heart by His Spirit, then places the fear deep inside, then we walk in obedience to His Word. (His part & our part)
- Obeyed because of the fear of the LORD; they feared God because He stirred their hearts through the message.
- SPIRIT OF GOD working through the WORD OF GOD changing the PEOPLE OF GOD = REVIVAL.

* Before the work came the Word & the Spirit stirring.

Ps. 127:1 "Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it..."
Our promises and programs are nothing without the LORD moving and empowering us first. Don't get ahead of Him, but wait for Him.

II. PROMISED BY GOD: INTIMATELY (V. 13)

- Haggai was God's messenger ("dispatched as a deputy) Authority, Power, spoke the Word of the living God...reconciling people back to the Lord.
- Encouraging message came as people set their hearts right (fear of LORD, obey His Word).
- At once they passed from reprove tone "Consider your ways", to a tender tone "I am with You".

* At the moment we turn from our sin, then we find the overwhelming flood of grace & favor. Everything we need is ours in an instant...because we have HIM!

- Message was simple, yet deep: "I AM WITH YOU" (Hb. = "I with You") Speaks 3 things:

A. PARDON:

- right standing with God, right work to do now & He is with them to help in rebuilding...nothing hindering success (sure guarantee - He is with us!) Sin has been confessed, now cleansed, and ready to work with God.

B. PROTECTION:

- facing enemy, facing challenges & discouragement, dark days ahead... "I AM WITH YOU"
- 1) Presence of God dispels fears: **Romans 8:31** "If God is for us, who can be against us?" / **Ps. 23:4** "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me..."
- 2) Presence of God directs forward: gives us a sense of boldness to go forward.

Ezra 5:1-5 *Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them. At the same time Tattenai the governor of [the region] beyond the River and Shethar-Boznai and their companions came to them and spoke thus to them: "Who has commanded you to build this temple and finish this wall?" Then, accordingly, we told them the names of the men who were constructing this building. But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, so that they could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius. Then a written answer was returned concerning this matter.*

C. PROMISE:

- personal encouragement to finish the work. When down (I am with you), when discouraged (I am with you), when excited (I am with you)... to the very end.

Matt. 28:20 (our promise as we build His Kingdom) "...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"

* When we "lay to heart" God's word and choose to walk in His ways, then He stands ready to reveal Himself to us. Makes His power, presence, plans known to us....encouraging words as you face "rebuilding" areas!

III. PROVOKED BY OTHERS: UNITY (V. 14B-15)

- Unity in stirring (not just personally, but collectively); unity in obedience to His voice (v. 12) (changing their ways); unity in the work ahead to rebuild God's temple together.
- All the people (leaders/ lay people) unified for one purpose. People with different skills, talents working together for a common goal. (leading, overseeing, working).
- God has called us **all** to build up God's temple (body of Christ). Every person has a part.

Eph. 4:16 *from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

Eph. 2:19-22 *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

1 Cor. 12:4-7 *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*

- In body of Christ there is unity with diversity: (all part of Him, different jobs to do...whatever you do, do it heartily as to the LORD!)

Why is unity among God's people so important to God?

1) **In Unity comes opportunity:** encourage, build up, bless the body of Christ (working together - eyes on His cause not myself).

2) **In Unity comes accountability:** no one is left behind or left out; family - relational (work better together - stronger, faster, joy)

3) **In Unity comes ministry:** witness to the world of Jesus.

John 17:21 *that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*

- people should be able to look at God's church unified, and see what God is like.

- PROMPTED by God's Word and messenger; PROMISED God's presence; PROVOKED by one another...they rise to rebuild....heading back to work.

(v.15) Unified, they set to work: 24 days from 1st rebuke. (preparations cutting wood, planning work schedules, etc.)

In 4 short years they would rebuild & finish the temple that sat neglected for 15 yrs.