

CONSIDER YOUR WAYS

"A Call To Finish What Was Started"

I. **Haggai 1:1-15** - State the theme and the Title - This two chapter book talks about the greatness of the work that God has called them to and the value of the worker that has been chosen.

A. Give brief history of leading up to the writing of this book
Ezra 1:2 - 2:64-65 (they were called back to the place of blessing)

1. **They started with great resolve and enthusiasm - Ezra 3:8**
But after two years they quit - Ezra 4:24

2. In Ezra 4:1-5 it states the reason for their stopping the work.

- **They started receiving outwork opposition which eventually caused inward indifference**
- Every experience has it's honeymoon.
- **The enemy can't attack the work for the work attacks him. He attacks the worker in hopes that the work will stop.**
- This opposition moved them from being a prophetic people to being a self preserving people.
- **Opposition is designed to take our eyes off the Lord and His interest and put them on ourselves and our interests.**

B. The enemy does everything he can to get us to lose “our will to war.”

1. **Exod 13:17-18** - *God did not lead them through the land of the Philistines, although that was the most direct route from Egypt to the Promised Land. The reason was that God felt The people might become discouraged by having to fight their way through, even though they had left Egypt armed; he thought they might return to Egypt. Instead, God led them along a route through the Red Sea wilderness.” (TLB)*

2. They were armed and equipped for battle, but they weren't ready for battle.

It's very tempting to talk about the land, to analyze the situation, to size up the giants, to weigh the pros and cons, and never really do anything about taking the land.

- a. God knew if they actually faced battle they would change their mind and go back.
- b. They would have preferred bondage over battle.**
- c. They would rather waste their lives by preserving self than sowing their lives in service to the Savior.

3. **Numbers 13:27-33** - tells us of the time when God did lead them up to battle.
 - a. They came to the edge, saw the giants, and drew back.
 - b. They made a decision to retreat, they changed their mind.**
 - c. Once they did they began a long, unnecessary trip to nowhere.
 - d. Numbers 33 details this. If you look at the meaning of the names of the places they traveled to, you may find a few you are familiar with.**
 - 1) Marah = bitter 2) Sinai = thorny 3) Kibroth-hataavah = graves of lust.
 - 4) Rissah = ruin 5) Haradah = fear 6) Tarah = delay**
 - 7) Moseroth = bondage 8) Zalmonah = shady 9) Punon = darkness
 - e. Some of the other places that God led them to meant; health, beauty, sweetness, prosperity, pleasantness, and holy.**
 - f. Other places meant nothing, they were neither good or bad, just a place.
 - g. The wilderness is where you are led into different things some good and some bad.**
 - 1) You stay longer in the bad than you want to.
 - 2) You leave quicker from the good than you care to.**
 - 3) But mostly you just exist.
 - h. You know you are in the wilderness when you don't stay in any one place too long**
 - 1) You visit instead of reside
 - 2) You wander around the promises but you don't inherit them.**
4. If God can't lead you into war, He will lead you into the wilderness.
 - a. If you are presently in a wilderness and are baking.**
 - b. It's because you refused to go into a war and battle.
 - c. The choice is either to war or to wander.**
5. The wilderness is designed to eventually give you the "**will to war.**"

C. 14 years has passed and the Lord has sent the Prophet Haggai to call the People to finish what was started.

1. Verse 4 "This house lies desolate" = to abandon - void of habitants - deserted - joyless - as if separated from a loved one
 - **God wanted them to rebuild the temple so He could be near His People (in the NT we are the Temple) The Lord wanted the relationship more than they did.**

2. Verses 5-11 - "Consider Your Ways" = Evaluate or look at the result.

- Whenever the Temple is desolate so are the people.
- **You can tell when you need to rebuild the Temple (relationship) when: Verses 6-7 & 9-10**
- when your life starts to become empty, dissatisfying, and discontent.
- **when increase Activity produces decreasing results.**
- your expectations of yourself and others increase and the ability to meet them causes you to become critical and pessimistic.

D. Verse 8 - The Lord calls them to rebuild the temple (relationship)

“Its a call to finish what was started.”

- 1. Phil 1:6 - And I am sure that God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns. (TLB)**

“There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish.”
(The Message)

2. Read poem don't quit

E. The People's response.

1. Verse 12 - they heard and obeyed

- Biblical hearing doesn't take place until application takes place.
- **The word is not for entertainment but for obedience**

2. Verse 12 - They showed reverence

F. God's response.

1. Verse 13 - "I AM WITH YOU"

2. Verse 14 - "The Lord stirred their Spirit to finish what was started."

IN CLOSING: Jeremiah 18:1-5 - "The clay was marred in the hand of the potter, so He made it again."