

Starting the New Year Right

Haggai 1:5-15 (NIV)

Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. ⁶You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it."

⁷This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. ⁸Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored," says the Lord. ⁹"You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?" declares the Lord Almighty. "Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. ¹⁰Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. ¹¹I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands."

¹²Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord.

¹³Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: "I am with you," declares the Lord. ¹⁴So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God, ¹⁵on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius.

1. WE ALL NEED TIME FOR REFLECTION.

- In our fast paced world, we must build in time for reflection.

v. 5 and v. 7 "Give careful thought to your ways."

See Insert "Questions for a New Year"

- We have to guard against following our desires rather than God's.

v. 6 "You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it."

v. 9 "You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?" declares the Lord Almighty. "Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house."

- God will not tolerate our selfishness for long.

vv. 10-11 "Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands."

2. WE MUST DETERMINE WHICH KINGDOM WE ARE GOING TO BUILD.

- God placed us here to build his Kingdom.

v. 8 "Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored," says the Lord.

- We have to realize that we cannot do it in our own strength.

John 15:5 (NKJV)

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

3. WE CAN "RESOLVE" AND "RESOLUTE" ALL DAY, BUT IT IS OUR ACTIONS THAT COUNT.

- God is on our side to help make us successful in all that we do.

v. 13 "... 'I am with you,' declares the Lord."

- We must move beyond our best intentions and get to work.

v. 14 "...They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God. . ."

Proverbs 21:5 (NLT)

Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.

Periodic reflection allows us to make sure that we are laboring for the right things at the right time.