

## **“Consider Your Ways”**

It was a prophet of God who said the words above. This prophet said these words to the people of Israel during a time when God was very angry with them. This prophet was named Haggai. He went preaching to the people of Israel in about 520 B.C. (about 15 years after Israel had been released from Babylonian captivity). Upon initially returning, Israel appeared to be focused on rebuilding the temple of God. They appeared to be passionate and zealous about God’s word. Unfortunately, that attitude wouldn’t last long. Fifteen years went by, and the temple remained in ruins.

Notice four things that God wanted His people to consider during this time.

### **I. Israel needed to consider their indifference towards the Lord’s work.**

- A. This is when a person is apathetic and has no sense of urgency when it comes to completing a particular task.
  - 1. This was how Israel had become during that time (Haggai 1:1-11).
  - 2. Jesus rebuked the church in Ephesus for having the same attitude (Revelation 2:1-7).
- B. What about us?
  - 1. Are we indifferent towards evangelism (Matthew 28:19)?
  - 2. Are we indifferent towards restoring the erring (Galatians 6:1-2)?
  - 3. Are we indifferent towards our own spiritual growth (2 Peter 3:18)?

### **II. Israel needed to consider their misplaced priorities.**

- A. The nation had put off doing God’s work in order to focus on themselves (Haggai 1:2-4).
  - 1. Instead of working on the house of God, they were absorbed in fixing up their own homes.
  - 2. They felt they didn’t have enough time to dedicate themselves to God’s work.
- B. God has also given us much work to do!
  - 1. If we are not careful, we can neglect God’s work to focus more on building our “financial houses” and “intellectual houses.”
  - 2. We must always make sure that we put God’s work first (Matthew 6:33).

### **III. Israel needed to consider their need to overcome discouragement.**

- A. Upon their initial return to Jerusalem, the people of Israel allowed the neighboring enemies to discourage and intimidate them (Ezra 4:4).
  - 1. After beginning the work again, the people started to get discouraged because they knew that this temple would not come close to having the kind of glory that the temple of Solomon’s day had (Haggai 2:1-9).
  - 2. Once again, they allowed discouragement to hinder their work for God!
- B. God urged them to do four things:
  - 1. **Take Courage** (Haggai 2:4a)
  - 2. **Keep Working** (Haggai 2:4b)
  - 3. **Remember the Lord is With You** (Haggai 2:4b-5)
  - 4. **Remember Better Days are Coming** (Haggai 2:6-9)

### **IV. Israel needed to consider their need to have patience.**

- A. Evidently, Israel thought that the drought would end as soon as they started putting God first again. Clearly it was not happening that way.
- B. God urged Israel to keep working and trust Him. In time, blessings would come!