
Becoming Christlike – Learning How from Old Testament Kings and Prophets

Session 7 – Haggai 1:12

We have been laying a foundation for our study of Old Testament Kings and Prophets.

So far, we have looked at these foundational topics:

- 1 - Know and Do What Pleases God
- 2 - God's Word is Profitable, Be Careful to Live it Out
- 3 - Understanding God's Anger
- 4 – No Secrets
- 5 – Idolatry
- 6 – Blessings and Curses of Deuteronomy 27-28

This teaching will be a transition into the Kings and Prophets study. Recently this singular verse stood out to me in a very profound way! It is so important that we look deeply at the Old Testament from beginning to end. This provides the foundation for understanding who God is, who we are, why we are the way we are as a result of the fall. It causes us to understand what Christ did for us in freeing us from the curse of the law and so many other accomplishments and blessings we have as a result of his perfect obedience.

Haggai 1:12

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

Zerubbabel is the political leader.

Joshua is the religious leader.

All the remnant of the people who have returned from captivity in Babylon

ALL of them OBEYED the voice of the Lord!

ALL of them FEARED the Lord!

Isaiah 50 years – for 50 years Isaiah had warned the people before the fall of Jerusalem. They did not listen. They did not obey.

Jeremiah (620-580BC) 40 years – for 40 years Jeremiah prophesied time and again, but the people did not take him seriously. They did not listen. They did not obey.

Ezekiel (593-573BC) 20 years – for 20 years Ezekiel warned them of the destruction to come. They did not listen. They did not obey.

Haggai comes on the scene, Haggai who only wrote 2 chapters, states that **the people obeyed the voice of the Lord and feared the Lord!** Why? Why?

They had seen the consequences suffered from disobedience. They saw the Temple destroyed. The wall of Jerusalem fallen and the exile for 70 years.

The fear of the Lord is a very good thing. It is the beginning of knowledge; it is the beginning of wisdom.

Two Summary Sections

We are going to look at two summary sections. These are not pleasant to read but they show what happened and why. One deals with the fall of Israel when the northern 10 tribes fell to Assyria in 722BC. The other deals with the fall of Judah... the other two tribes (Benjamin and Judah) in 586BC.

Jeremiah 32:16-41

Jeremiah is in Jerusalem during the siege of the city by Nebuchadnezzar. In this section in Jeremiah the Lord has told Jeremiah to buy a field. Jeremiah obeys but is praying for understanding as to why God told him to do this since the whole place is being destroyed.

Jeremiah 32:16-41

16 “After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the Lord, saying: **17** ‘Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. **18** You show steadfast love to thousands, but you repay the guilt of fathers to their children after them, O great and mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts, **19** great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the children of man, rewarding each one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds. **20** You have shown signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and to this day in Israel and among all mankind, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day.

Perhaps for himself he is recounting all of God’s greatness.

21 You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and outstretched arm, and with great terror. **22** And you gave them this land, which you swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey. **23** And they entered and took possession of it. **But they did not obey your voice or walk in your law. They did nothing** of all you commanded them to do.

This is hyperbole, exaggeration of course, they had done some things right. But they are reaping the consequences of their unbelief.

Therefore you have made all this disaster come upon them. **24** Behold, the siege mounds have come up to the city to take it,

As was predicted in 1500BC.

and because of sword and famine and pestilence the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it. **What you spoke has come to pass**, and behold, you see it. **25** Yet you, O Lord God, have said to me, “Buy the field for money and get witnesses” —though the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.”

Praying for understanding of why God told him to buy the field, and God answers him here:

26 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: **27** “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?”

God is repeating back to Jeremiah what he had said in v. 17...You’re right!

28 Therefore, thus says the Lord: Behold, I am giving this city into the hands of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall capture it.

Yes because of the disobedience of the COI year after year after year. Assyria took the northern 10 tribes and now this is happening to Judah some already sent into exile, now the city is being destroyed.

29 The Chaldeans who are fighting against this city shall come and set this city on fire and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs offerings have been made to Baal and drink offerings have been poured out to other gods, to provoke me to anger. **30 For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth.**

You’d think Judah would have learned from what happened to Israel!

The children of Israel have done nothing but provoke me to anger by the work of their hands, declares the Lord. **31** This city has aroused my anger and wrath, from the day it was built to this day, so that I will remove it from my sight **32** because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah that they did to provoke me to anger

There is a godly element to this anger, because it is going to produce a response in them. God is just and has to be true to His Word. But as we saw in Haggai 1:12 when the exiles came back they did finally obey and listen to his voice and fear Him.

—their kings and their officials, their priests and their prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. **33 They have turned to me their back and not their face.** And though I have taught them persistently,

God was patient and persistent. Jeremiah spoke the Word to them day after day trying to get them to listen.

they have not listened to receive instruction. **34** They set up their abominations in the house that is called by my name, to defile it. **35** They built the high places of Baal in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, **nor did it enter into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.**

God just can’t believe after all they have been given as the chosen people of God that they could do such horrific things.

In light of all this, now we see the mercy of God as he is relaying to Jeremiah why he had him buy the field. Yes, they are going to experience all these consequences and go into exile but look at what follows:

36 “Now therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, ‘It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine, and by pestilence’:

37 Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. **38** And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

He is giving them this great hope of what the future holds!

39 I will give them one heart and one way, **that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them.**

And this obedience will be a good thing! It will enable God to bless them. God's will is always for our good. People think obedience to God is going to require sacrifice and giving up things, but everything is always for our good.

40 I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. **41** I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.

Yay says God! I can finally bless you and do good for you because you are being obedient. I can't violate my nature. I can't overstep your free-will.

So God is explaining to Jeremiah that they are going to come back from exile and when they do, they will finally obey and fear God.

Again, there is no quick, easy or "Cliff Notes" way to gain an understanding of the Old Testament. It takes time. It takes thought. The ESV Study Bible has an introduction to each Book that lays a good foundation for our reading. Over time as the spirit of God works within you, you see how it all fits together.

Then when you read the gospels and see Christ referring to the Old Testament, you see the scribes and pharisees asking him questions about the law and Moses, it all comes alive. God works within us to enlighten our understanding and we see who the Christ was and what we have as a result of what he did.

2 Kings 17:6-15

Before the fall of Judah was the fall of Israel. This is another summary section. This happened in 722BC. Isaiah is alive and prophesying at this time. He began prophesying in 740BC which can be surmised by the years of the reign of Usiah.

2 Kings 17: 6

6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

They were taken away. That was the Assyrian way of dealing with captured peoples, they would disperse them into their own land so they could not conspire to gain power and revolt.

7 And this occurred **because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God,** who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, **and had feared other gods**

Instead of fearing the Lord their God, they feared other gods. They didn't fully drive out the tribes and instead were influenced by them due to intermarriage and curiosity.

8 and walked in the customs of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced.

God had specifically told them don't practice the customs of the other nations and don't worship their idols.

9 And the people of Israel **did secretly** against the Lord their God things that were not right. They **built for themselves** high places in all their towns, from watchtower to fortified city.

10 They **set up for themselves** pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, **11** and there they made offerings on all the high places, **as the nations did whom the Lord carried away before them.** And they did wicked things, provoking the Lord to anger, **12** and they served idols, of which the Lord had said to them, "You shall not do this." **13** Yet **the Lord warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer**, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets."

Not only did he give them the law, he warned them via prophets, he is patient with them he continually exposes their sin to them, giving them the chance to repent but they don't!

14 But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the Lord their God. **15** They despised his statutes and his covenant

It is very similar to the USA today. Many people despise God's Word. They despise the truth of the word that is so plain and obvious. They disobey and go against everything that God has established as right. Marriage between a man and a woman, despise and do the opposite. You can list every Biblical principle and see how man is stubborn and wicked and goes his own way.

that he made with their fathers and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false,

James 3:14

14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth

What we follow, what we look at is what we become. If we pursue what is false, we become false. We want to be true to the truth.

and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the Lord had commanded them that they should not do like them. **16** And they abandoned all the commandments of the Lord their God and **made for themselves** metal images of two calves; and they made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. **17** And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings^a and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. **18** **Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight. None was left but the tribe of Judah only.**

19 Judah also did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced. **20** And the Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

The point is they had the Old Testament Law. They knew there were blessings for obedience to it and cursings for disobedience to it. They did not obey. God continued to send prophets to warn them and to try to get them to obey, being a kind, loving patient God. They persisted and suffered the consequences. Because the consequences were so severe...when they did return they learned enough, so they feared the Lord and obeyed.

That was the context of what we saw last in our opening verse in Haggai. They got back and rebuilt the altar.

Many years prior God had prophesied tht there was going to be a king of Persia named Cyrus who was going to look favorably on the exiles and let them return. Now Ezra records this.

Ezra 3:2-7

1 When the seventh month came, and the children of Israel were in the towns, the people gathered as one man to Jerusalem. **2** Then arose Jeshua the son of Jozadak, with his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel with his kinsmen, and **they built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings** on it, **as it is written** in the Law of Moses the man of God.

Why was building the altar the first thing they did? They knew that the were going to need to make sacrifices to receive covering for their sins. They are going to be obedient!

3 They set the altar in its place, for fear was on them because of the peoples of the lands, and they offered burnt offerings on it to the Lord, burnt offerings morning and evening. **4** And they kept the Feast of Booths, **as it is written**, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to the rule, as each day required, **5** and after that the regular burnt offerings, the offerings at the new moon and at all the appointed feasts of the Lord, and the offerings of everyone who made a freewill offering to the Lord. **6** From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord. But the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid. **7** So they gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the Sidonians and the Tyrians to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the grant that they had from Cyrus king of Persia.

Sin and disobedience to God, even though we are in the age of Grace still has serious consequences. We see that all around us on a daily basis. The COI had to seriously hit rock bottom to wake up and decide to be obedient, rebuilding the altar, observing the feasts etc.

As we interact with people, we see the pain and suffering in the lives of those around us, sickness, loss, suicides, addictions, fentanyl deaths, on and on. Often people have to hit bottom before they reach out to God. The only answer is to come to God to repent and begin to build a life according to the way God has designed it.

People today have a choice if we present them with the gospel. Pain is a gift. It tells us that something is wrong. Emotional, mental, physical, emotional pain are all warnings and opportunities to realize something is wrong.

Blaise Pascal said, "There is a God-shaped hole in everyone's heart." It can only be filled by God. People are empty so they try to fill that hole with everything else under the sun.

Only the spirit of God and the Word of God can give the wholeness we seek.