

September 8, 2024
The Bridge Bible Fellowship
L.G. Redekopp
Text: Haggai

Haggai: Context, Name, Focus and Call

1. Context

2. Name

3. Focus

4. Call

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Suggestions for Self Study and Discussion

1. Concerning the compound name Yahweh Sabaoth (The LORD of Hosts) appearing so plentifully (91 times) in the writings of the post-exilic prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, an instructive exercise is to observe how that name is employed in Isaiah's writing (where it appears around 60 times). Referring simply to the first six chapters of Isaiah (verses 1:9, 24; 2:12; 3:1, 15; 5:7, 9, 16, 24; 6:3, 5), ponder and discuss the understanding you discern as to the being and nature of God from these texts. Give attention to neighboring verses to gain context.
2. Through the Spirit's inspiration Haggai issues the call to "consider" four times in his brief writing. In the first chapter the call to "consider your ways" is issued twice (vs. 5 & 7), while in the second chapter the call to "consider from this day ..." is also issued twice (vs. 15 & 18). In a very real sense, these statements comprise the principal appeal communicated by Haggai to these returned exiles, and the literal sense of the call is an appeal to "set your heart" – an engagement involving both the mind and the heart.
 - a) Examine the context surrounding the twin call to "consider your ways" (1:5, 7), and seek to clarify the immediate application in context. Then also, reflect on possible application relating both to your individual walk of faith and our corporate context (i.e., our TBBF family and mission).
 - b) With respect to the phrase, "consider from this day ..." (2:15, 18), it is worth noting that the sense in multiple commentaries has been variously translated "consider from this day backward/onward/upward". As such the phrase could be seen as enjoining either a backward (retrospective) view, or a forward (prospective) view, or even an intensified upward view. Thus, with Haggai's repeated emphasis on this call to "consider", engage both a 'backward glance view' and a 'forward anticipatory view' relating to:
 - your personal Christian experience/ faith-pilgrimage; and
 - our missional call as a local church.What important "considerations" might you highlight in relation to these important spheres of our Christian walk and calling gained from either your backward glance or your forward glance?
3. Haggai and Zechariah, as well as Ezra in his the historical writing, make reference to Zerubbabel as the civic leader/governor of these earliest exiles returning from Babylon. An interesting fact: the name Zerubbabel appears in both genealogical accounts of the Incarnate Christ listed in the New Testament (see Matt. 1:12 and Luke 3:27). As such he is the last descendant in the line of David to be mentioned in the OT.

Question: Might we not see in this fact evidence of Yahweh Sabaoth jealously working on behalf of fulfillment of both the Abrahamic and the Davidic covenants (Gen. 12:1-3; II Sam. 7:8-17), and also in fulfillment of the proto-evangelic "seed of the woman" promise of Gen. 3:15?

 - Consider and discuss the implication of this fact in light of the statement from Zech. 1:14, "Thus says Yahweh Sabaoth, 'I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion'."
 - In this regard, might we not also find herein a connection to Haggai's reference in Hag. 2:6-9, where Yahweh Sabaoth extols the prospect of that glorious age when the Millennial Temple will stand in Jerusalem and Messiah will be in their midst? Is this one of the valuable results to be realized from a "setting the heart" to engaging a more 'far-reaching' backward and forward glance? To see the active working of God which gives strong foundation for holding onto promises pertaining to the future of great glory and to "building" in the present?.