

December 25th – Make God First

*“This people says, ‘The time has not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built.’
Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, ‘Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in
your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?’”
(Hag. 1:2-4)*

About 2600 years ago, Israel (Judah) was besieged by the Babylonians. The Babylonians destroyed nearly everything in Jerusalem, including the temple that Solomon had built for the glory of God. Not only that, but practically all of the males, along with some of the women and children, were carried away to Babylon. Just a few decades later, the Persians overcame the Babylonians and the Persian King allowed the Jews to go back home and repatriate their homeland.

Upon their return, the Jews were shocked and saddened by the devastation they found. So where did the Jews begin their rebuilding efforts? They started with their own homes, and for that reason God cursed their efforts and sent a prophet named Haggai to confront them. Today’s verses are the words God spoke through his servant. Essentially, God was asking, “Why have you finished your own houses while the house of God lies in ruins?”

That’s a problem we still have today – we give ourselves the first and best, while God receives anything that’s left. Think about it – one example is the way people give to the Lord’s work. Instead of tithing biblically (the first 10% to the Lord), some people elect to pitch in a few dollars if there’s anything left. We give God the leftovers of our time, our effort, our thoughts, etc. Instead of making God last, let’s vow to keep the Lord and His work first in everything that we do!