

Spiritual Growth Lessons from Christian Ambassadors

Lesson 49

Jesus - The Only Foundation For Spiritual Life

By Sharon K. Griffiee

Build a strong foundation! In the natural world, a good foundation is necessary to properly support a building. If the foundation of a building is not laid properly, the whole building can collapse. The same thing is true in the spiritual world. The right foundation is necessary to support the building of our spiritual life. The wrong foundation can result in spiritual disaster.

What then is the right foundation? Many people think that joining the right church puts them on the right foundation. And so the quest begins to find the right church among the thousands of churches in the world. This often turns out to be a major disappointment. Feeling empty and unfulfilled, many give up in despair.

Where is the right foundation to be found? Scripture reveals to us that the only foundation of a good spiritual life, that will stand the test of time, is that which is built on Jesus Christ.

***I Corinthians 3:11 (KJV)** - For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

The writer of Psalms in the Old Testament realized the importance of foundations for he asked the following question;

***Psalms 11:3 (KJV)** - If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

David's response to the question (verse 4) was that the righteous can trust in the LORD, whose throne is exalted in the heavens.

As we consider how important it is to build a strong spiritual foundation in our own life, we can turn to the Book of Haggai to learn more. Haggai was a prophet who lived about 520 B.C. It had been several years since Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest, led the first return of exiles to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of God. This small group of people started to rebuild the Temple. But, before it was finished the people begin to think

about other things. Unfriendly neighbors tried to discourage them. Some people began to complain that the new Temple would not be as nice as Solomon's Temple, which had been destroyed sixty-six years earlier. One thing led to another and before long, they let all these distractions get the best of them. Instead of pressing forward with courage and faith, they begin to think more about building their own beautiful homes to live in. So they up and quit building the Temple. Not a good decision to neglect building the Temple of God, which He had commanded them to build!

Because they put their own selfish interests first, building on the *wrong* spiritual foundation, God began to touch their circumstances. He sent a drought on the country and their crops started drying up. The people could not afford enough clothes to keep them warm. They ended up living in poverty. With these hardships coming upon them, which they had brought upon themselves through disobedience, Haggai appeared to them with a message from God;

***Haggai 1:3-7 (NIV)** - Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?" Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. 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." This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways".*

Give careful thought to your ways! The purpose of Haggai's message was to get the people committed to the work of rebuilding the Temple of God. But, before the reconstruction of the Temple could be completed, the hearts of the people needed to be built up. Their lives needed to be built on the *right* spiritual foundation. Haggai gave them a

glimpse of what they had lost by following their own selfish ways. And, he gave them a vision of what God has in store for those who put God first in their lives. Haggai encouraged the people to repent and to seek right priorities; to get their minds off of themselves and onto God. If they would obey, they would see God's glory in the new Temple.

Haggai was certainly successful in getting the Lord's message across. Dates suggest that within three weeks of his initial sermon, the people became obedient. Haggai continued to remind them of their dependence upon God, and gave them a special promise from God. From the day that Israel started to build on the *right* spiritual foundation, God began to bless them. Awesome!

Haggai 2:18-19 (NIV) – *“From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the LORD’s temple was laid. Give careful thought: Is there yet any seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit. ‘From this day on I will bless you.’ ”*

Though everything in their lives had fallen apart, because of their disobedience – the day they started to build on the right foundation, God began to bless them! The same thing is true for each of us. We may have lost everything through disobedience, but from the day we start to build on the *right* spiritual foundation, God will begin to bless us.

What is the right spiritual foundation? In

Haggai's day, God required that a physical temple be built to house the glory of God. But, in this present age, the body of the believer is the Lord's temple until Jesus returns. The *right* spiritual foundation is Jesus Christ! And, Jesus Christ must live in the heart of the believer!

I Corinthians 6:19-20 (KJV) - *What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

If you belong to the Lord Jesus, you will be found glorifying God in your **body** and in your **spirit**.

II Timothy 2:19 (Amplified Bible) – *But the firm foundation of (laid by) God stands, sure and unshaken, bearing this seal (inscription): The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names [himself by] the name of the Lord give up all iniquity and stand aloof from it.*

Questions for personal or group study:

1. In the natural world if the foundation of a building is not laid properly, what can happen to the building?
2. How important is it to build your spiritual life on the right foundation?
3. What is the right (only) spiritual foundation that will stand? (See: I Corinthians 3:11)
4. The prophet Haggai was with the first group of exiles who returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of God. What problems did he encounter with the people who started to rebuild the Temple? (See: Haggai 1:2-4)
5. What was the content of the message that God sent Haggai to deliver? (See: Haggai 1:5-11)
6. How did the people respond to Haggai's message? (See: Haggai 1:12)
7. What specific word did God give through Haggai to stir up the spirit of the people to begin work on the temple once again? (See: Haggai 1:13)
8. From the day that Israel started to build on the *right* spiritual foundation, what promise did God give them? (See: Haggai 2:19b)
9. What Scripture reveals to us that our body is now the temple of the Holy Spirit?