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Emmaus Equipping – Assignment 6
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Assignment 6-1

Slavery in the New Testament was beginning to change. Slaves counted for as many of one third of the population at the time, not counted as their own individual, but rather as property to be owned by their masters. All occupations could be slaves, from cooks and cleaners, to physicians and accountants. Almost all jobs were filled by slaves and were in effect free labour.

However by the time the NT came to be, slave owners had realized that slaves could be more productive when treated leniently. It was not uncommon for masters to teach them a trade, become friends, or even grant (or sell) them freedom.

However when it came to owning a slave, a few things were taken for common knowledge. It was a common part of life to have slaves and have them around you – remember at least one third of the population was a slave. Slaves could be bought, sold, inherited, exchanged or even seized to pay their masters debt. Masters had full power to do what they wanted with their property, it wasn't until much later (AD 20) that accused slaves were given the right to a trial.

In Paul's letter to Philemon we learn of Philemon's escaped slave Onesimus who had left Philemon's household for Rome under not great circumstances (v10-11) – slaves were not allowed to run away, and scripture implies that Onesimus may owe a debt to Philemon (v18).

There was an ancient Greek law (inherited by the Romans) allowing any escaped slave sanctuary at an altar, hearth of a home, or in this case, Paul under house arrest. The head of

the family was obligated to give the slave protection while he tried to persuade him to return to his master. If the slave refused, the head of the family would put the slave up for auction and give the price of the slave to the former master. Paul gave Onesimus protection, and now was working out the issue with Philemon.

If Onesimus, or any escaped slave, returned or was caught again by his or her master, the law stated that the master had full control over what would happen to the slave.

Punishments were harsh, largely due to the huge amount of slaves (close to 60 million) who could easily stage a revolt – so harsh punishments were deemed necessary. Crucifixion was a common punishment, also branding of the forehead with the letter F for fugitive.

Paul knows the culture, understands the predicament not only Onesimus is in for being an escaped slave, but also what was common (and maybe even expected) of slave masters when something like this happened. Philemon is both a master and a Christian, and Paul appeals to him within the bounds of what is common for the time, but also as a brother in Christ.

References taken from

- *David Guzik. Study Guide for Philemon 1. Via BlueLetterBible.org*
- *John MacArthur. Bible Introductions – Philemon. Via BlueLetterBible.org*

Assignment 6-2

The book of Haggai occurred after the capture of the Israelites into Babylon, in September of 520 BC. They had been imprisoned there for 70 years, and at the end of that 70yr period, as God had promised, he led them out.

The date we get here is taken from a pagan king, Darius the king, as Israel had no king at that time.

From there, there were only about 50,000 people remaining from the original hundreds of thousands who had entered the land of Babylon. Times were tough in resettling, and 18 years had passed since they had returned to Jerusalem.

Initially, they had begun to rebuild Gods temple, laying the foundations as described in the book of Ezra. However, for whatever reason – discouragement or lack of focus – the work had stopped and the foundations had lay dormant for 14years.

So, God comes to the prophet Haggai to deliver a message to the people.

The people at this point had hard lives. They would sow crops only to reap little, they eat and drink but never have their fill, they wear clothes but are never warm, and the wages they earn never go far (v6), and God tells them why (v9). Saying they labored for themselves while overlooking what was important, the building of the temple so God could have a place among them.

The people had convinced themselves it wasn't the right time to continue to build the temple. The land was desolate after 70 years of neglect, the work was hard, they didn't have the money or manpower, they suffered crop failure and drought, and they would have remembered easier times in Babylon. Most likely telling themselves "If it's so hard, God evidently doesn't want us to do it – at least not now".

So God calls them out – putting them to work to get it done once and for all. He was the one who caused the drought, who caused them to never gain. (v11)

We see that God, through the prophet Haggai, is showing the people they had their priorities amiss. They had neglected to put God first, so everything else lacked. God was here putting them straight again.

Themes we see reoccurring in the book are God's words to get the people's attention, to awaken them from their apathy.

The whole book of Haggai spans only three months.

References taken from

- *David Guzik. Study Guide for Haggai 1. Via BlueLetterBible.org*
- *Jamieson, Fausset & Brown. Introduction to Haggai. Via BlueLetterBible.org*

Assignment 6-3

The seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3
Ephesus, Smyrna Pergamos, Thyatire, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea

Route taken by the messenger of Revelation 2-3



Historical-cultural facts about Laodicea

- Laodicea was an important and wealthy city
- It had a significant Jewish population
- It was a centre for Caesar worship, and also Asklepios (healing god)
- There was a temple of Aslepios in Laodicea
- An earthquake devastated the region in AD60 (or AD 62). To rebuild, they refused outside and imperial help, successfully relying on their own resources. They were “too rich” to accept help from anyone.
- It was a commercial centre and it’s goods exported all over the world. Including textiles and eye-salve (a tonic for curing eye ailments).
- Laodicea had a poor water supply. It’s water came from a six mile aqueduct from a hot spring. Because of this, the water arrived lukewarm.

- It was vulnerable to its enemies because of the way its water supply could be so easily cutoff. So the city would prefer to compromise and be accommodating of any potential enemies.
- The name Laodicea means “rule of the people”
- The textile merchants were known for a glossy black wool they used to make beautiful garments
- Laodicea and Colossae were about 9 miles apart

References taken from

- *David Guzik. Study Guide for Revelation 3. Via BlueLetterBible.org*
- *ESV Global Study Bible*
- *Map taken from bibleinfo.com*

Assignment 6-4

A Samaritan was an inhabitant of Samaria. There is a difference between the Samaria of the Old Testament and the Samaria of the New.

In 930 BC, after the death of Solomon, the ancient kingdom of Israel was split into two. The north became known as the kingdom of Israel, the south as the kingdom of Judah.

In the time of Israel’s OT monarchy, Samaria was built by Omri, the sixth king of Israel (885-874 BC), to be the new capital. Built on a hill, it was virtually impenetrable by enemies. Its inhabitants were Israelites and was located in central Israel. It remained the capital until the end of the northern kingdom.

In NT times, Samaria was the central region of Palestine and its inhabitants were non-Israelites.

In 720 BC it was conquered by the Assyrians, leaving only a “remnant of Israel” to occupy the land. Assyrian captives from distant places also settled there, which meant intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles and the introduction of worship of foreign gods. It was rebuilt into a fabulous and re-fortified city, however this marvelous construction also came with temples to worship these foreign gods.

The cast-out Jews from Samaria, eventually returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and walls of Jerusalem. Ezra and Nehemiah refused to let the Samaritans share in the experience due to their polluted worship practices. The rejection led to a bitter hostility between the Jews and Samaritans ever after.

The Jews of Samaria believed Mount Gerizim as the chosen place of God, and the only center of worship because of a tradition that Adam sacrificed there. Their scriptures were limited to the first five books of the bible, and Moses was regarded as the only prophet and intercessor in the final judgement. They also believed 6000 years after creation a Restorer would arise and live on earth for 110years, and that on the Judgement Day the righteous would be resurrected in paradise and the wicked roasted in eternal fire.

In the days of Christ, the relationship between the Jews and Samaritans continued to be strained.

References taken from

- *Holman Bible Dictionaries. Via StudyLight.org*
- *The Nuttall Encyclopedia. Via StudyLight.org*
- *Kitto’s Popular Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature. Via StudyLight.org*

- *Bridgeway Bible Dictionary. Via StudyLight.org*

Reading these articles highlighted why it was frowned upon for Jesus, a Jew, to be not only in the town of Samaria, but also interacting with a Samaritan. Samaritans were considered enemies of Jews, and most Jews actively went out of their way to avoid Samaria and anything to do with its inhabitants. This is shown when the woman asks “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?”

Jesus may have sent his disciples away to get food because he knew their presence wouldn't have been conducive to the conversation. The disciples were naturally hostile towards the Samaritans.

It explains why the conversation led to the woman asking about the correct place to worship. She knew the Jews believed differently and she likely had very little interaction with Jews.

The woman knew the Messiah was coming, although the timeline of the Samaritans differed significantly.

Interesting that the conversation went to her husbands – could this have anything to do with the different gods Samaritans worshiped?

Assignment 6-5

Questions on the book of Nehemiah

1. How much time passes between the month of Kislev in Neh 1:1 and the month of Nisan in Neh 2:1?

Four months. Four months which Nehemiah used to pray to God about the condition of Jerusalem and its people.

2. Where is Susa (Neh 1:1)?

Susa was the winter capital of the ancient Persian empire. The territory is now in the modern Iran.

3. For which empire did Susa serve as one of the three royal cities?

The Persian Empire. Alongside Ecbatana and Babylon.

4. What other biblical character lived in Susa?

Queen Esther.

5. Did this character live before Nehemiah or after?

Esther lived under the rule of King Ahasuerus, approximately 483 BC, which was before Nehemiah's time.

6. Which empire did King Artaxerxes rule over, and when (Neh 2:1)?

King of Persia, from 465 to 424 BC.

7. What was a cupbearer's (Neh 1:11) status in the royal court?

The cupbearer was a significant position in any ancient royal court. They were essentially the personal bodyguard to the king, being the one who tasted wine and food before the king did, making certain no one could poison the king. This gave him frequent access to the king's presence and potentially a man of influence. Inversely, it meant the king would have a great deal of trust in his cupbearer, who had to be a man of faithful and impressive character.

References taken from

- *David Guzik. Study Guide for Nehemiah 1 and 2. Via BlueLetterBible.org*

- *Holman Bible Dictionary. Via StudyLight.org*