

Haggai: Jesus Our Temple

- I. Chapters 1 A message to hands: “Be productive”
- II. Chapter 2:1-9 A message to hearts: “Be patient”
- III. Chapter 2:10-23 A message to heads: “Be prosperous”

Haggai is the 2nd shortest book in the OT (1,131 words in 38 verses in 2 chapters) and is the first chronologically of what is called the post-exile prophets (Zechariah and Malachi being the other two). But don't let any of that bore you as **Haggai was a prophet of action**. God called him to prophecy to the people who had begun to repatriate the land of promise after the Babylonian captivity during the reign of Darius the Great, king of Persia who had issued a decree to return during Nehemiah and Ezra's time. Not much is known of Haggai, he identifies himself as a prophet five times and is 1 of only two of the prophets that does so (Habakkuk being the other one). Based upon Haggai's book we learn that his ministry only lasted for four months from September 1st to December 24th and was only comprised of three sermons each a call to action (*five times in two chapters he says that they need to “**consider**”*). His name Haggai means “*Festival of God*” and suggests that he was born on one of the nations feast days. Ezra the priest mentions him twice (**5:1 and 6:14**) in conjunction with Zechariah who prophesied during the same time frame but was quite a bit younger. Based upon Haggai's words in 2:3 where he asks “*Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?*” It is believed that **Haggai was quite older at the time of his writing** as the temple had been destroyed at least 70 years earlier, this may account for his brief ministry.

That fact alone ought to be enough for us to read this little work of Haggai. Many of us have quite a bit of history behind us and only a few days in front of us but listen up Haggai was a man of few words, but they were non the less words calling the nation to action. **Don't allow the enemy to tell you that you have wasted your life and that it is too late for you to be of any use for God's kingdom, start now!**

I. Chapters 1 A message to hands: "Be productive"

Chapter 1: This message was given on September 1st and it seems that Haggai is speaking to the "**hands**" as they need to be productive. Based upon 1:1, **16 years had elapsed since Zerubbabel the political leader and Joshua the High Priest led a group of 45,000 exiles hundreds of miles from Babylon where they had been captive for 70 years.** When they arrived, they were so excited to rebuild the temple that they spent time weeping over its destruction 70 years earlier. **Though they had the support of King Cyrus of Persia they soon found that they were facing two types of opposition:**

- A. **External:** They had those who dwelt in the land during those 70 years that didn't want them to rebuild the temple and wrote a letter to the king *saying that their plan was to **rebuild and then rebel.** Nehemiah comes in later to deal with this issue and tells the people to have one hand on the bricks of the wall of the temple and the other on the sword.*
- B. **Internal:** They couldn't seem to get along together to the common good of all and this was further enhanced by outward circumstances such crop failures and other hardships.

There will always be opposition to our spiritual growth, some of it will be "**outside**" as those things that demand our attention and time in the world won't want to let you go

especially when it involves **rebuilding your spiritual lives**. But harder still will be the battle “**within**” from our own procrastination as our rebuilding our spiritual life will seem just too difficult and as we gain any ground instead of things getting easier they will only seem to become more difficult. Soon we will be tempted to do just as this group did “**each to their own**” as **they became preoccupied with living only for the here and now with now forethought of living for the “here after”**. Haggai address this in 1:4-6 as he say’s to them: “*Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?*” Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: “**Consider your ways!** *You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.*” The “**paneled houses**” describe **the type of wood working that would only be found in palaces**, these folks weren’t just “**getting buy**” they were “**buying and getting**”! To clarify the people’s position in 1:2 they weren’t saying **not to build**, NO they were saying, “*We’ll do it later*”, “*It just doesn’t feel like the right time yet!*” Friend’s, **the flesh is never going to get to the place that it just says, “Yeh, I want to die to my self-centered ways.”** No, that’s why Paul said in Romans 6:11 that we need to “*Reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” **Procrastination is the greatest enemy to our sanctification; it is never the wrong time to do the right thing!** Yet, with their pursuit of the things of this world Haggai says, they were “*sowing much and bringing in little*” and “*earning wages to put into a bag with holes*”. **They weren’t making what they could have been on their investment because they weren’t putting God first in their lives.** I’m not saying that in every case this is true, but it certainly was to those who had returned

and had not put their spiritual life first. ***If all we do is live for ourselves it is the surest way to have an empty life.*** If you are “sowing much and bringing in little” and “earning wages to put into a bag with holes” why not try sowing to your spiritual life! **Lay up for yourself treasure in heaven that way you won’t have to worry about bags with holes.**

Haggai says in 1:9 “You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?” says the Lord of hosts. **“Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.”** We need to ask, does God’s house in my heart lay in ruins? Perhaps that’s why what we bring home blows away? The solution to this is: **Rebuild the temple so that what you bring home won’t blow away!**

Haggai records the response of the people in 1:12-14 as we read that “Then Zerubbabel and Joshua, with all the remnant of the people, “obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the people feared the presence of the Lord”. And with that obedience the Lord said, “**I am with you**”. Then the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, Joshua and all the remnant of the people and “*they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God*”. **Saints, the work of God in rebuilding the temple of our hearts always begins with the same step, obedience! It took only 23 days for the people to begin the work that they had let go for 16 years.** The lack was not do too: **Time, Talent or Treasure** it was **a lack of obedience** as **what they weren’t willing to do for 16 years they started again once they obeyed the word of the Lord 23 days later!**

II. Chapter 2:1-9 A message to hearts: “Be patient”

Chapter 2:1-9: This message came out in October and here Haggai speaks to the “**hearts**” to be patient. In Ezra 3:10-11 16 years earlier when the builders laid the

foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests blew the trumpets, and the Levites banged the cymbals to praise the Lord and all the remnant sang responsively giving thanks to the Lord saying, “*He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel.*”

“*Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.*” Now that they had started there were a few old timers like Haggai that could recall the “*temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?*” (2:3) **Oh how easy it is to become discouraged in the work my friends at the rebuilding of your spiritual life as you recall what it once was and see all the work that needs to be done.** But Listen to the Lord’s encouragement to be patient and let the Lord rebuild the temple as he says in 2:4-5 where He says, “*Yet us now be strong, Zerubbabel, ' says the Lord; 'and be strong, Joshua, and be strong, all you people of the land, ' says the Lord, 'and work; for I am with you, ' says the Lord of hosts. 'According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!'*” **Never let, discouragement for what was lost keep you from the hope of what God will do in your heart if you just “Work” because He is with you.** In 2:7 God says, “*I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory, ' says the Lord of hosts.*” **The temple that Solomon had built was shaken by the presence of God but here God promises that when He comes into this rebuilt temple He will shake the nations.** Listen to what He promises in 2:9 “*The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former, ' says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, ' says the Lord of hosts.*” **Don’t let regret slow you down, be patient, God’s going to complete what He has planed!** So, God speaks through Haggai to the people’s heart to

be patient as He will make the latter work greater than the former work. **Just when you think you've blown it, your washed up, past your prime; God wants you to know not so just keep working you'll see!**

III. Chapter 2:10-23 A message to heads: "Be prosperous"

Chapter 2:10-23: This is Haggai's third and final message given in December, aimed at the heads of the people to be prosperous. In verses 10-14 **God asks two questions to the priests:**

1. "If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?" And the priests answered, "No".
2. "If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?" And the priests answered yes, "*It shall be unclean.*"

The point God is making is that, **holiness cannot be passed on, but corruption can. If you hang around sin it's going to affect you but just simply going to Church won't make you holy as you have to obey the Lord personally.** God wants them to know this before as He says in 2:15 a "*stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the Lord*" that **being busy with the things of God is not the same thing as allowing the Lord to deal with your heart!** Ezra tells us that, **the nation had been holding religious service for the last 16 years, but they hadn't been obedient personally the whole time! God doesn't not want lip service He wants life service! God says in verses 15-19 that all those things that wouldn't come together in their lives was His way of nudging them back to getting their hearts right.** Then He says in 2:19b "*But from this day I will bless you*" because now in 23 days they had responded. We need to ask ourselves: Are there fruit

trees in my life not yielding fruit? I their still seed in my barn. Why not build upon the foundation that was laid in Christ years ago and you will see that from the day you start He will bless!

Haggai concludes in verse 20-23 with a glorious description of the future glory of His work in the nation. Saints, let's spend some time asking God to enable us to get to work rebuilding our spiritual lives:

- That our hands will “*Be productive*”
- That our hearts will “*Be patient*”
- That our heads will “*Be prosperous*”