

Connecting Through the Word
“Consider Your Ways”
Haggai 1-2

Haggai 1:1-8

1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest:

2 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD.”

3 Then the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet,

4 “Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?

5 Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways.

6 You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

7 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways.

8 Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the LORD.

Galatians 6:7-9

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

Haggai begins the last section of the Minor Prophets

There is 100 years between the books of Zephaniah and Haggai.

Review of Israel’s History

The United Kingdom - 1095-975 B.C

The Northern Kingdom, Israel - 975-722 B.C.

The Southern Kingdom, Judah - 975-586 B.C.

Period of Exile in Babylon - 586-536 B.C.

Post-Exile Period - 536-400 B.C.

400 Silent Years to Birth of Christ - Matthew

In 536, Ezra took about 50,000 Jews and returned to the Holy Land. They rebuilt the altar and started the sacrifices again, and in 535 the foundation was laid for the temple.

But there was considerable opposition and the work stopped. It was not until 520 that the people took up the work again; and in 515 the temple was finally completed.

It was the work of four godly men that finally brought the task to completion:

Zerubbabel, the governor

Joshua, the high priest

Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets.

Ezra 5:1

Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them.

Ezra 6:14

So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

The purpose of Haggai's ministry was to awaken the lazy people and encourage them in finishing God's temple. It was easy to get the work started when they first arrived in the Holy Land

because everyone was dedicated and enthusiastic. But after months of trial and opposition, the work lagged and finally stopped.

The people needed to be encouraged to get back to the work of building the temple. The place of worship and prayer. When we are neglecting the things of God, we need a “Word from the Lord!”

Today, we are listening to the experts, the scientist, the politicians, and the media. We are listening to our friends and family members! They are all giving us their expert opinions!

And what we really need is a “Word from God.”

At least 10 times in chapter one we read:

“the word of the LORD came...”

“thus says the LORD of hosts”

“thus says the LORD”

“declares the LORD of hosts”

“the voice of the LORD their God”

“the LORD’S message”

At least 15 times in chapter two we read the same words:

“the word of the LORD came...” 3 times

“says the LORD of hosts” 4 times

“declares the LORD...” 8 times

1 Thessalonians 2:13

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

2 Peter 1:19

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

In this little book we have four sermons from Haggai, and each one of them has a specific date.

In each message, Haggai points out a particular sin that will keep us from accomplishing God's will and finishing His work.

Haggai’s First Message (1:1-15)

It was on September 1, 520, that Haggai delivered this message. Sixteen years had passed since the laying of the foundation, and the temple lay unfinished.

This message was delivered to the two leaders of the nation, Zerubbabel and Joshua, the civil ruler and the religious leader.

Haggai does not waste any time; he gets right to the point of his message.

The People are Making Excuses

Haggai 1:2

“Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD.”

"It isn't time to rebuild the house of the Lord" was their defense of their inactivity.

Billy Sunday called an excuse "the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie,"

Benjamin Franklin wrote, "I never knew a man who was good at making excuses who was good at anything else."

The People Were Distracted, Putting Self Before the LORD **Haggai 1:3**

“Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?”

The people were terribly inconsistent: it wasn't time to build the house of God, but it was time to build their own houses! And some of the people had built, not just ordinary dwellings, but "paneled houses," the kind that kings built for themselves

He points out their selfishness: they had built their own houses, but they said it was not time to build God's house. In other

words, they were putting self ahead of the Lord. Some of the Jews even had "ceiled houses," which would be luxuries in that day.

This sin is with us today, putting our own desires ahead of the will of the Lord. How easy it is to make excuses for not doing God's work! The weather is too bad to go visiting or to attend church, but not too bad for a hunting trip or a shopping spree. People will sit through a double header baseball game and never complain, yet they start to fidget if a church service runs five minutes overtime.

Haggai Admonishes Them to Consider their Ways Haggai 1:5&7

Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways.

What is the result of your present activity?
You sow and work hard – harvest little and lack results
You eat much – you are still hungry and lack
You drink – and you are still thirsty
You put on clothes but can't get warm
You work hard and save money – only to put it in a bag with holes in it.

You appear to be wasting your time and resources
Consider how you thought you would get a great return on your efforts – “You looked for much and it came to little.”
Why? “Because I blew it away!”
Why? Because you left ME out of your life and plans! Vs. 9

God removes His hand of blessings!
We fail to believe and obey the Word and Promises of God!

The Jews knew God's promise that He would bless their land if they honored Him (see Deut. 28), but they did not trust His Word, so they lost the blessing.

Matthew 6:33 *“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*

The People's Response to the LORD'S Message

Haggai 1:12

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD.

They Obeyed They Feared the LORD

God Responded to the People

The Lord assured them of His presence

Haggai 1:13

Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD's message, “I am with you, declares the LORD.”

The Lord stirred up their spirit

Haggai 1:14

And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,

The Lord gave them enthusiasm for the work
The Lord gave them energy to do the work
The People begin to put the LORD first in their Lives!

Haggai's Second Message (2:1-9)

Haggai 2:2-3

“Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, ‘Who is left among

you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?

The People Begin Looking Back Instead of Looking Ahead

The people had been working about seven weeks when Haggai preached his second sermon on October 21, the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34). It was supposed to be a great day of joy and praise, but instead it was a day of discouragement and complaining. Why? Because the people were looking back instead of looking ahead.

When they had laid the foundation sixteen years before, the older men had wept because they remembered the glory of Solomon's temple (Ezra 3:12); and now some of the people were discouraged because the new temple lacked splendor and glory.

Haggai Encouraged the People to be Strong

Haggai 2:4-5

Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. Work, for I am with you, declares the LORD of hosts, according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

In God's work, we must look ahead in faith.
"Be strong and fear not!"

God Reminds the People of Future Blessings and Peace

Haggai 2:6-9

"For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and 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 silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. 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."

God promises that the glory of the latter house (the temple during the millennial kingdom) will far exceed the glory of the former house (Solomon's temple). "And there I will give peace." The best is yet to come.

The Desire of All Nations

And the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts (Hag. 2:7).

Jesus Was the Desire of All Nations:

- As the Kinsman of the whole family.
- Because He only could bestow those precious blessings which the world needed.
- Because all nations shall one day be made happy in Him.

He Appeared:

- At the very period marked out for His birth.
- In the very manner which had been foretold.
- For the performance of the very work which had been before marked out for Him.

The Prophet Haggai Mentions Certain Remarkable Events Which Should Distinguish the Messiah's Coming:

- All nations were to be shaken.
- The Jewish temple should be filled with His glory.

Haggai's Third Message (2:10-19)

The People Had Unconfessed Sin in Their Lives

The people expected material blessings the very day they began to work on the temple, but here it was December 24 and things were still difficult.

Haggai explained why God had not yet blessed them: they were still unclean; they had not confessed their sins. "You cannot give someone your holiness or health," he explained, "but you can give someone your uncleanness and sickness." And because the people were unclean, their work was unclean.

Haggai 2:11-14

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying, 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?' ' ' " Then the priests answered and said, "No."

And Haggai said, "If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?" So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

Then Haggai answered and said, " 'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the LORD, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean."

Read Zech. 3 in connection with this message; Zechariah had preached his message in the eighth month of the same year (Zech. 1:1), just one month before Hag. 2:10-19. God was able to cleanse the people of their sins, if only they would repent.

Once the nation had been cleansed, God promised to bless them (v. 19). It is not enough to do God's work; we must do it with clean hands and a pure heart.

Three times Haggai ask the people to "Consider." **Unconfessed sin is one of the greatest obstacles to accomplishing the Lord's work.**

"Is the seed in the barn?" Answer is no.

Haggai admonished to the people to trust the LORD for future blessings.

Haggai 2:19

Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on I will bless you."

Later that same day....

**Haggai's Preached His Forth Message (2:20-23)
A Message to Zerubbabel to Look Ahead**

This final message, preached the same day as the third message, was directed to the governor personally.

No doubt Zerubbabel needed special encouragement as he directed the work of the Lord. Satan always attacks spiritual leaders, and it is our duty to pray for them and work with them. Perhaps Zerubbabel saw the great empires around him and feared for the future of the tiny remnant of Jews. Circumstances have a way of discouraging us as we seek to build the work of the Lord.

But God encouraged the governor's faith. Unbelief always robs us of God's blessings. "I will shake the heavens and the earth," God said. "Don't be afraid of these kingdoms. I will overthrow them and destroy them. As for you, Zerubbabel, you are as a signet, a very precious jewel, to Me. I have chosen you—don't give up." How this message must have encouraged the governor and strengthened his faith.

Zerubbabel was an ancestor of Jesus Christ; his name is listed in the genealogies (see Matt. 1:12 and Luke 3:27). Zerubbabel is an OT type or illustration of Christ. Here Christ is seen as God's chosen signet, His precious seal. A signet speaks of authority and honor. God gave Zerubbabel authority to finish the temple; God gave His Son authority to save the lost and build His temple, the church (John 17:1-3).

What work is it God has called you to do before Christ returns? Have you started it but not finished it?

Are you discouraged?

Then beware of these things that hinder the work of the Lord: putting self ahead of God; looking back instead of ahead; unconfessed sin and not remembering and believing God's promises.

Notice the wonderful promises God gives us:

"I am with you" (1:13); "Fear not" (2:5); "I will bless you" (2:19); "I have chosen you" (2:23).

Claim the promise of Phil. 1:6 and rise up and do the work of the Lord!

And Outline of Haggai

God's Callings To His People

A Call to Construction of the Temple (1:1-15)

- Introduction (1:1-2)
- The Reprimand (1:3-6)
- The Remedy (1:7-8)
- The Rebuke from God (1:9-11)
- The Reaction of the People (1:12-15)

A Call to Courage in the Lord (2:1-9)

A Call to Cleanness of Life (2:10-19)

A Call to Confidence in the Future (2:20-23)