

## ***Haggai Chapter 1***

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### **Introduction:**

**Authorship:** Haggai - “Festival of the LORD”; to keep a feast, with the idea of dancing; to dance; to leap with joy.

- It is thought that Haggai was an old man at this time, who had previously seen the original Temple prior to its destruction. (**Haggai 2:3**)
- Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi the last three of the minor prophets each belong to that period after the Jews return from captivity. This is further described in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.
- Haggai and Zechariah help in building the Temple around 520-516 BC, Malachi is connected to Nehemiah nearly 70-100 years later as they rebuild the walls around Jerusalem.

**History:** Judah had been conquered, Jerusalem burned, the Temple demolished, and the people carried away to Babylon. After 70 years in captivity, in 536 BC Cyrus the king of Persia made a decree and allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple, about 50k under the leadership of Ezra and Zerubbabel responded to that offer.

- After clearing away the debris and as they began laying the work on the foundation the work was stopped by their enemy neighbors. No further work was done for 15 years. Meanwhile a new king, Darius (Different than in Daniel) ascended to the throne and was also kindly disposed towards the Jews. Under the direct preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, work was resumed and the Temple completed in four years. The walls of Jerusalem were built about 70 years later by Nehemiah.

**Written to:** The returned exiles.

**Time:** during the rebuilding of the Temple around 520 BC.

- First of the “post-exilic” prophets.

**Theme:** Correction and Encouragement.

**Key verse:** **Haggai 2:4** “Yet now be strong Zerubbabel, says the LORD and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land, says the LORD, and work; for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts.”

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V: 1 The Word of the Lord came to Haggai, but it was addressed to Zerubbabel, the governor who was a descendant of Jehoiakim (taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar) and the high priest Joshua.

**Ezra 4:24** “Thus the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem ceased, and it was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.”

- There had been resistance and armed raids by the locals, enemies of Israel - who also sent letters to the Persian king accusing the inhabitants of Jerusalem of rebellion, so the king ordered the building to stop.

**Ezra 4:23** “Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes’ letter was read before Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem against the Jews, and by force of arms made them cease.”

- So essentially God gave a word to Haggai for these two men.
- That would be the cause; and now the effect.

**Ezra 5:1-2** “<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the Son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them.”

V: 2 The prophet describes the mentality of the people in general. There has been a delay in the construction of the Temple with the people in effect saying, perhaps not with their lips but with their actions or lack thereof “it’s not time to build the Temple.”

- It was for this reason that they were set free to begin with: they forgot their mission.

**Ezra 1:1-3** (The command to build the house of God in Jerusalem.)

V: 3-4 The Word that now comes from the Lord through Haggai challenging the people.

- You’ve said that now is not the time to build the house of the Lord, but it is the time for you to build your own houses and leave the house of God in ruins?

**2 Samuel 7:1-2** “<sup>1</sup>Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, <sup>2</sup>that the king said to Nathan the prophet, “see now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.”

- David really had a heart for the things of God; this people, this generation - not so much. But God will speak to them through the prophet Haggai.

- Their priorities have been distorted, mis-guided.

**Matthew 6:33** “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.”

V: 5-6 Consider your ways! Think again. Examine your life, how’s it been going? What have you experienced and why? Haggai starts to walk them through it.

**Lamentations 3:40** “Let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the LORD.”

- You’ve been working hard at spinning your wheels! Trying to take care of yourself, but never quite getting there.

Jesus told the woman at the well:

**John 4:13-14** “<sup>13</sup>... whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, <sup>14</sup>but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

- He gives them practical examples that they can probably readily relate to:
  1. You sew a lot of seed, but reap little in the way of crops.
  2. You’re able to eat, but never satisfied.
  3. You’re able to drink - but your thirst is never quenched.
  4. You’re clothed, but not warmed.
  5. You earn wages, but it just seems to evaporate.
- These are lessons that weren’t learned prior to their captivity, but hopefully their captivity has brought them into a more conducive mind set..

**Isaiah 5:10** “For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath (6 gal); and a homer of seed (6 bushels) shall yield one ephah (½ bushel).”

**Jeremiah 14:4** “Because the ground is parched, for there was no rain in the land, the plowmen were ashamed; they covered their heads.”

**Hosea 4:10** “For they shall eat, but not have enough; they shall commit harlotry, but not increase; because they have ceased obeying the LORD.”

- Pre-exile they didn’t learn these lessons, post exile they seem to learn them fairly quickly.

V: 7 Again “*Consider your ways!*” - (2<sup>nd</sup> time) learn these lessons and get busy, hear the voice of the Lord and obey!

- There are times when we should do the same, examine our lives, our walk with the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 11:28** “But let a man examine himself...”

**1 Corinthians 11:31** “For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.”

**Psalm 119:59-60** “<sup>59</sup>I thought about my ways, and turned my feet to Your testimonies. <sup>60</sup>I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments.”

**Psalm 119:67** “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your Word.”

**V: 8** Clear direction. Get the materials needed, build the Temple.

*“That I may take pleasure in it and be glorified.”*

**Ezra 3:7** “They also gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.”

- So, eventually they did get started, but they’re not quite there yet.

**V: 9** They were focused on the wrong things, working hard at it but with little to show for it - because they were out of the will of God.

**Psalm 1:2-3** “<sup>2</sup>But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup>He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth His fruit in His season, His leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”

- They were not prospering the way that God intended them to because they haven’t had the right priorities.

**Proverbs 24:27** “Prepare your outside work, make it fit for yourself in the field; and afterward build your house.”

**V: 10-11** Because of these things God has withheld the rain and the dew, He brought a drought which caused the fruitfulness to cease. The grain harvest was affected, the grapes and the olives, the wheat, it all stopped - all the things that they had been laboring for.

- These are all things that were happening before their captivity, so this is a reminder for those that weren’t there to learn these lessons, they’d grown up in captivity.

**Leviticus 26:19** “I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze.”

- You don't get much water out of iron and brass is pretty hard to till.

V: 12 The people considered what Haggai presented as the Word of God.

**Isaiah 1:18** “Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

- As a result of what they heard, they “obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet.... and the people feared the presence of the LORD.”

**1 Thessalonians 2:13** “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”

- Their obedience was more meaningful than they probably knew.

**1 Samuel 15:22** “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

- There is inherent blessing in being obedient to the Word of God.

**Proverbs 8:32, 34** “<sup>32</sup>Now therefore, listen to me, my children, for blessed are those who keep My ways.” - “<sup>34</sup>Blessed is the man who listens to Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors.”

V: 13 The Lord responds to their obedience and reverence by speaking through the prophet to the people a Word of re-assurance:

*“I am with you says the LORD.”*

- God's ultimate blessing, that He would be with us, that He is for us in our midst!

**Psalms 46:7** “The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.”

**Matthew 28:20** “... and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”

**Hebrews 13:5** “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.””

**Romans 8:31** “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

- Talk about a positive outcome to God’s message through Haggai!

V: 14 They received the message with gladness and fear, with obedience - then the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel and Joshua.

**Ezra 1:1** “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,”

- Then they came and worked on the house of the LORD. The Spirit moved and the people worked!

**Zechariah 4:6** “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the LORD of hosts.”

V: 15 Time stamp - 24 days later.