

Haggai

- I. Haggai is a small book of a minor prophet but “...who hath despised the day of small things?” (**ZEC 4:10**). c/w **MIC 5:2; LUK 12:32**.
- A. Even jots, tittles and least commandments are important. **MAT 5:18-19**.
 - B. This small scripture is for our learning, patience, comfort and hope. **ROM 15:4**.
 - C. Haggai did have a tag-team partner since sometimes two are better than one. **EZR 5:1; EXO 4:14-15; ECC 4:9-11; MAR 6:7**.
 - D. This small book presents:
 - 1. warnings against procrastination, apathy, materialism.
 - 2. good advice as touching the building of God’s house.
 - 3. the comfort of God’s mercy.
 - 4. invigoration from the knowledge of God’s support.
 - 5. hints of the superiority of N.T. spiritual blessings.
 - 6. prophecy of Christ and good things to come.
 - E. The occasion of the prophecy was the rebuilding of God’s house, the topic of the Book of Ezra. Haggai reproves the builders for abandoning the work because of challenges from the civil power.
 - F. The prophecy is spoken to Zerubbabel (governor), Joshua (high priest) and the people. **HAG 1:1, 13; 2:2**.
 - 1. It was a rare occasion when the civil power, religious power and the people were simultaneously receptive to and reformed by the word of God. **HAG 1:14**.
 - 2. This was **ZEC 4:6** in action.
 - 3. This threefold harmony with the word of God may be juxtaposed against the generation to which Christ was sent. **ACT 4:27**.
 - 4. *Zerubbabel* means “born in Babylon” and *Joshua* means “Jehovah is salvation.” It is as if the future of Israel’s religion was hinted at: a false system of political and carnal interest learned in Babylon and a true system rooted in Jesus as God manifest in the flesh Who brought a spiritual salvation and kingdom.
 - a. Remember that *Joshua* is spelled *Jesus* in the N.T. **ACT 7:45; HEB 4:8**.
 - b. If one be born in Babylon spiritually, he must fully come out of Babylon unto Joshua/Jesus, as did Paul the Pharisee. **PHIL 3:5-9**.
 - c. Jesus still calls people out of Babylon. **REV 18:4**.
- II. Haggai was a post-Babylon prophet to Israel, as were Zechariah and Malachi. The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and parts of Daniel were also post-Babylon.
- A. One of the things of which the Jews complained during the captivity was the absence of useful prophets. **LAM 2:9; PSA 74:9**.
 - 1. The land of Israel had been mostly emptied of true prophets (Daniel and Ezekiel taken to Babylon) and Jeremiah’s prophecy yielded no converts before he was taken to Egypt.
 - 2. Considering their malicious disregard and treatment of the prophets prior to the captivity, it was a just judgment that God should leave them without one. **2CH 36:15-16**.
 - 3. Unlike their exodus from Egyptian captivity, no mention is made of a prophet leading them from Babylon. **HOS 12:13**.
 - 4. A people who hypocritically or callously regard the ministry of a man God puts among them may someday find themselves without one. **EZE 33:30-33; LUK 9:5**.
 - 5. Individuals who sell themselves to worldliness or sin will similarly find the

- prophecy of scripture or even the revelation of nature itself to no longer speak to them for their good as intended. **ISA 29:9-12; ROM 1:20-27, 31.**
- B. Haggai was a contemporary of Zechariah. Both were raised up by God to invigorate the people in the rebuilding of the temple. **HAG 1:1 c/w EZR 4:24; 5:1.**
1. Haggai's calling came years after King Cyrus of the Medes and Persians had issued the decree of the Jews' return to their land. **EZR 1:1-3; 4:3-5.**
 2. This great return and rebuilding program was the *fulfillment* of Jeremiah's prophecy and God was definitely pleased to be there. **JER 33:1-16; ZEC 1:16.**
 3. No post-captivity book of the O.T. sets forth promises from God of another return and rebuilding of Israel or the Jewish temple. The closest thing to a prophesied "return" is **MAL 1:1-4** which doesn't favor antichrist Jews, given Paul's words in **ROM 9:6-13.**
 4. Though God had shown Himself merciful and faithful in returning them to their land, the Jews had not diligently applied themselves to the rebuilding of God's house.
 - a. There is indication that nearly fifty years had elapsed by the time that the temple rebuild was complete. **DAN 9:25 c/w JOH 2:20.**
 - b. God called Haggai to "reboot" the delayed program.
- C. Haggai's name (*Chaggay*, SRN H2292) means "festive."
1. It was indeed a festive occasion when the temple was finished. **EZR 6:14-22.**
 2. There was a festive occasion when that rebuilt temple and its system was "finished" in a different sense. **JOH 19:30; MAT 27:50-54; REV 5:1-12.**
 - a. The reception and coronation of Jesus Christ in heaven was owing to the "rebuilding" of the temple of the body of Jesus Christ. **JOH 2:19-21.**
 - b. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is so important that without it the gospel message is anything but festive. **1CO 15:16-19.**
 3. When the heart by penitent conversion becomes an active temple unto God, it is a festive moment in earth and heaven. **ACT 8:35-39; 16:34; LUK 15:10, 32.**
 - a. The body of a saint is God's temple to be kept clean. **1CO 6:18-20.**
 - b. Conversion begins with belief in the heart. **ACT 8:37; ROM 10:9-10.**
 - c. Obedience should be from the heart. **ROM 6:17; EPH 6:6.**
 - d. Christ dwells in the heart by faith. **EPH 3:16-17.**
 - e. A temple built of stone requires only occasional maintenance; a temple for God in the heart and body requires continual maintenance. **HEB 3:12-13.**
 - f. "It is easier to build temples than to be temples to God." (Matthew Henry)

III. **HAG 1:1-11.**

- A. This Darius was not Darius the Mede (co-regent of Cyrus) but a successor, Darius Hystaspis of whom Josephus in his Antiquities "...relates, that, when a private person, he vowed, if ever he became king, whatever of the holy vessels were in Babylon, he would send to the temple at Jerusalem; and upon solicitations made to him, the Jews were encouraged to go on with the building of it..." (John Gill's Commentary on the Bible)
1. If so, then the Jews were for a season delaying their duty under a faulty assumption about unfavorable circumstances.
 2. How oft have we put off doing what we ought to do for similar reasons?
- B. God had opened a great door for His people to return and rebuild.
1. Wherever God opens doors, adversaries may be expected to abound. **1CO 16:9.**
 2. Christianity is a struggle, a warfare. Accomplishing anything of value for Christ will mean overcoming obstacles and setbacks. Think about this when it comes to:

- a. building personal faith and character. **LUK 17:3-5; 2CO 12:8-10; JAM 1:2-4.**
 - b. personal battles against temptations and insecurities. **2CO 7:5; 1PE 5:8-9 c/w 2TI 2:20-21.**
 - c. witnessing to others about the truth of the gospel. **2CO 10:4.**
 - d. training children. **PRO 22:6, 15; 19:18.**
3. When it comes to building God's house by evangelism, Paul's experience with the Thessalonians is telling. There was trouble:
- a. preceding the mission. **1TH 2:1-2.**
 - b. during the mission. **ACT 17:5.**
 - c. after the mission. **1TH 2:14; 3:2-5.**
4. Therefore, we should not think it strange that not everything in Christian experience is a cake-walk. **1PE 4:12.**
- a. Expect troubles. **JOH 16:33.**
 - b. We are not to give up because of trials, tests, troubles, etc. Christian success requires faith, resolve, effort, resilience and patience. **GAL 6:9; HEB 6:11-12; 2TI 2:3.**
 - c. Let us not be as those who start to build but do not finish. **LUK 14:27-30.**
- C. Haggai delivered the word first of all to the leaders. **v. 1.**
- 1. Consider that the letters to the seven churches in Asia were written to the angels (pastors) of the churches. **REV 2-3.**
 - 2. Leadership needs to set the tone for the rest. Where leadership sets a bad example, others are likely to follow suit. **GAL 2:11-13; JAM 3:1.**
 - 3. Note the example that Haggai himself set:
 - a. He was not convinced that a spurious decree from a government official should dictate the saints' obedience to God. **ACT 5:28-29.**
 - b. It may also be noted that Haggai was likely aware that building the temple was not entirely an act of gross civil disobedience, since King Cyrus had previously decreed it and the Medo-Persian laws were considered to be unalterable. **DAN 6:15.**
 - c. Sometimes faithful, informed saints are sadly labelled rebels against civil authority when in actuality they are the defenders of the civil order.
 - d. Haggai did not just give orders. He helped in the building effort. **EZR 5:2 c/w 2TI 2:6 ct/w MAT 23:2-4.**
- D. The Jews had been pressured to cease the building of the temple. But it seems that they had capitalized on that as an excuse to continually devote themselves to their own interests, leaving the house of God on indefinite hold. **vs. 2-4, 9.**
- 1. Mind that they didn't say, "We will never build..." but rather, "...The time is not come..."
 - a. They were procrastinating in favor of their own interests. **c/w ACT 24:25; LUK 14:15-20.**
 - b. Beware the "convenient season" excuse. Repentance and forward faith are always in season and the gospel must be preached regardless of season. **HEB 3:7-12; 2TI 4:2.**
 - 2. Matthew Henry had this observation: " 'God's time has not come for the doing of it; for (say they) the restraint laid upon us by authority in a legal way is not broken off, and therefore, we ought not to proceed, though there be a present connivance of authority.' Note, There is an aptness in us to misinterpret providential discouragements in our duty, when they are only intended for the trial and exercise

- of our courage and faith. It is bad to neglect our duty, but it is worse to vouch Providence for the patronizing of our neglects.”
3. How easily do we rationalize our way out of doing things we know full well we can and ought to do. **PRO 22:13; ECC 11:4.**
 4. Mark that it isn't that the Jews didn't have any time at all. They had time for their own houses (**vs. 4, 9**); just not for God's house---an enduring disorder.
 - a. As much as we treasure our own dwelling, working and spending to maintain or improve it, we do well to remember that “The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob” (**PSA 87:2**).
 - b. When we become consumed with the cares of this world, the things of God always suffer. **LUK 8:14.**
 5. The Jews were more concerned with their own affairs than building God's house. Where do we stand on this?
 - a. How much are we praying for evangelism?
 - b. How much are we witnessing when God opens that door?
 - c. Saints are to be “...building up yourselves on your most holy faith...” (**JUDE 1:20**). Are we really so busy that we can't make it to church or attend to an occasional bible study, or spend personal time in Scripture?
 - d. Our outward man, the physical body, is a house. **2CO 5:1.**
 - (1) Our nature is to nourish and cherish our bodies. **EPH 5:29.**
 - (2) What if we give ourselves to feeding and buffing up our bodies to the neglect of the spiritual house within them? **MAT 4:4; 1TI 4:8.**
 - e. See **PHIL 2:21.**
 6. If the Jews should amend their ways and give God's house its rightful priority, God would take pleasure in it and be glorified. **vs. 7-8.**
 - a. The church with which God is not pleased is a church in trouble. **1CO 10:5.**
 - b. A faithful minister will desire God's pleasure and glory for His house. **2TH 1:11-12.**
- E. Because they had been over much consumed with the affairs of their own houses to the neglect of God's house, God had subtracted their carnal needs. **vs. 6, 9-11.**
1. By contrast, when we seek God's things first, God adds to us our needful things. **MAT 6:33.**
 2. Mind that the drought which the Lord had sent was not just upon crops and land but upon men (**v. 11**). Western Civilization is in such a drought.
 3. Let us cultivate David's heart. **2SAM 7:2; PSA 132:3-5.**
 4. Contrast “...bag with holes” (**v. 6**) with “...provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not...” (**LUK 12:33**).

IV. **HAG 1:12-15.**

- A. Haggai's rebuke was met with a proper response: church leaders and church members united against error because they believed the rebuke was from God. **v. 12 c/w 1TH 2:13-14.**
 1. Rebukes from God should yield our rebuke of our lusts and sins. **JOB 34:31-32; 42:6 c/w ROM 6:21.**
 2. As God promised the remnant who would repent that He would in turn “...rebuke the devourer for your sakes...” (**MAL 3:10-11**), so He will also rebuke Satan, our devourer. **JAM 4:7 c/w 1PE 5:8-10.**
- B. Subsequent to their clearing of themselves, the word from the LORD was, “I am with you...” (**v. 13**).

1. The assurance of God's support and comfort came *after* godly repentance. **2CO 7:9-11 c/w 2CH 15:2.**
 2. God places more value on being *with* the humble, contrite spirit than being *with* the builders of carnal edifices for Him to indwell. **ISA 66:1-2.**
 3. "I am with you" is the promise that resides with the faithful builders of God's spiritual house. **MAT 28:19-20 c/w 1CO 3:9.**
 4. "I am with you" is the very name of our Savior, the Head of the church. **MAT 1:23.**
 5. "I am with you" is the inspiration we need to face all obstacles. **ROM 8:31.**
 6. "I am with you" counters the fear of evil. **PSA 23:4.**
 7. "I am with you" is better than the sobering cautions of **JOS 7:12** and **REV 2:4-5.**
 8. "I am with you" is a continual promise to the faithful, even in the face of abandonment, with one exception. **2TI 4:16-17; MAT 27:46.**
- C. Seeing their change in attitude, God stirred up the people to the work. **v. 14 c/w PSA 110:3; 119:32.**
1. God stirs up His builders to stir up themselves. **2TI 1:6.**
 2. Things get built when people have a mind to work. **NEH 4:6.**
 3. NOTE: Evangelism is a matter of the Holy Spirit's gospel stirring up the Holy Spirit in regenerate men to stir their spirit to repentance, faith, baptism and good works by which they may conclude they are the sons of God. **ROM 8:14-17 c/w EPH 1:13-14.**
- D. They had hearkened unto Haggai as *a man sent from God*. **v. 12 c/w JOH 1:6; 13:20.**
1. Being without prophets for some time, and their spirit being right, they treasured up Haggai's words in their hearts and acted accordingly.
 2. "It is sometimes so; when good preaching is most scarce it does most good, whereas the manna that is rained in plenty is loathed as light bread." (Matthew Henry) Note **PRO 27:7.**
 3. Their reception of Haggai being so positive, God sent them Zechariah shortly thereafter. **HAG 1:1 c/w ZEC 1:1.**
- E. It took only about three weeks for them to hear and respond. **vs. 1, 15.**
1. We do well to strike while the iron is hot when under conviction. **PSA 119:60.**
 2. "Those that have lost time have need to redeem time; and the longer we have loitered in that which is good the more haste we should make when we are convinced of our folly." (Matthew Henry)
- F. "...and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God," (v. 14).
1. There was not much of a building at this point. The secondary foundations were not even laid until three months later. **v. 15 c/w HAG 2:18.**
 2. Their first work would have been the preparations: gathering of materials, etc. **HAG 1:8.**
 3. We do well to consider that preparation for construction is part of the construction process.
 - a. Prayer, witness, preaching, repentance and faith are as important as the baptisms which actually build the church of Jesus Christ. Baptism adds *prepared* lively stones to God's spiritual house. **ACT 2:41 c/w 1PE 2:5.**
 - b. Paul emphasized his preaching of the gospel over baptism. **1CO 1:17.**
 - (1) The preached gospel accomplishes its purpose whether or not folks are converted and baptized. **2CO 2:14-16.**
 - (2) Sometimes, baptized stones are dead, not lively. **JUDE 1:4.**
 4. God's imperfect house is still God's house. **ROM 7:18-8:1; REV 2:4-5.**

V. **HAG 2:1-9.**

- A. All the prophets gave witness of the Lord Jesus Christ and the days of the setting up of His spiritual kingdom. **ACT 10:43; 3:24.**
- B. Haggai here points the Jews to Messiah's coming and a superior glory for the house of God in order to console and animate them in their work.
- C. **v. 2 c/w HAG 1:12.** "The encouragements here are sent to the same persons to whom the reproofs in the foregoing chapter are directed; for those that are wounded by the convictions of the word shall be healed and bound up by its consolations." (Matthew Henry Commentary) Note **ACT 2:36-39.**
- D. At issue here for the construction crew was the pitiful appearance of their efforts compared with the magnificence of Solomon's temple. **v. 3 c/w EZR 3:12.**
1. Let us not dwell too much on how good things used to be (**ECC 7:10**), especially if that becomes an excuse to wallow in pity and do nothing.
 - a. Remember this warning if your faith has been tested or troubled. **1CO 10:13; PHIL 4:12-13.**
 - b. NOTE: sometimes saints backslide and see their spiritual lives in shambles and consider rebuilding to be a hopeless cause, especially when the world adds its scorn and mockery to their failings (**PSA 69:26**). Never forget that the God Who first made man out of dust can rebuild man from the broken stones of a once-good temple.
 2. Projects for God which seem pathetic are only pathetic if God is not in the matter. **JOH 6:9-13; ZEC 4:9-10.**
 - a. By contrast, presuming to build for God by conforming efforts to the world or the flesh is truly pathetic. **MAT 6:7; ROM 12:1-2.**
 - b. "Loaves and fishes" religion which appeals to the flesh is as leaven in the lump: greater size without substance. **JOH 6:26, 66-67.**
 3. Christian faith is not a numbers game and the early N.T. church was as a grain of mustard at the beginning. The religion of Almighty God was rebuilt by a faithful remnant of the former order and it prospered. **MAR 4:30-32; ACT 17:6; 21:20; ROM 16:25-26.**
 4. The apostolic writings (the N.T.) pale in comparison by volume to the writings of Moses and the prophets, yet they are the more excellent glory. **2CO 3:7-11.**
- E. As an encouragement to the work, Haggai reassures Zerubbabel, Joshua and the people that the Lord is with them. His spirit remained among them. **vs. 4-5.**
1. Though Israel had oft grieved and vexed His Spirit (**ISA 63:10**), yet He remained there. God's longsuffering with Israel was amazing both for His patience to save them and for their historic indifference to it. **ROM 2:3-5; 10:19-21.**
 - a. The Spirit continued with Israel until they murdered Christ, at which time He abandoned the nation to indwell the N.T. church as surely as He once abandoned King Saul to abide with David. **1SAM 16:14; 18:12 c/w MAT 21:42-43; ACT 2:1-4; ROM 11:25.**
 - b. God has promised His Spirit's presence to ever be with His church, but His church may not always be the same group. Faith will be preserved in the earth, but where? The local churches noted in the Bible all became so many "Ichabod churches" (the glory is departed). **c/w 1SAM 4:19-22.**
 - c. As long as God's spirit remains, there is hope for even the deadest of churches. **REV 3:1-4.**
 - d. NOTE: Saints should take heed of the warnings against vexing, grieving, quenching the spirit of God to the point that God turns them over to their

own devices and withholds repentance from them.

EPH 4:30; 1TH 5:19; 2TH 2:10-12; 2TI 2:24-26.

- (1) Remember King Saul whom God had *given another heart* yet he sinned away the Spirit and was left in distress. **1SAM 10:9; 28:6.**
 - (2) Sin should be answered with prompt repentance to avoid this condition. **PSA 51:8-12.**
 - (3) The theme of the Book of Haggai is rebuilding. Let us be cautious to only rebuild that which is good, not that which is evil. **GAL 2:18.**
2. That His spirit remained with Zerubbabel and Co. was the underlying reason for a successful venture. **ZEC 4:6 c/w JOH 15:5.**
 3. This rebuilt temple would enjoy a greater glory than Solomon's temple. **vs.7, 9.**
- F. This remnant of Israel was only a shadow of the Israel that was, yet their hands would be used for a greater glory. God is pleased to glorify Himself through things of little worth and account. **LUK 12:32; 1CO 1:27-31.**
1. What a comfort this is to a church that has suffered loss or strayed from the good old paths. God can yet be glorified in such if they repent. **JER 6:16; REV 2:4-5.**
 2. Solomon's temple was renowned for its construction details and wealth but what are those to the Mighty Creator? **v. 8 c/w PSA 24:1.**
 3. Solomon's temple was also glorious for the service which God gave it to perform but something more glorious was in store.