

## Introduction:

God spoke of a time when a remnant would return from captivity and rebuild Jerusalem. **Isaiah 44:28** *Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."' 538 BC Cyrus allows the Jews to return.*

**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, **2** Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. **3** Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem. **4** And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.*

536 BC Zerubbabel takes about 50,000 people back to Canaan. After 7 months they had restored the altar and offered sacrifices. Two years and 2 months after their return, they laid the foundation of the temple, **Ezra 3.8**. Then opposition arises from the people.

For the next 16 years they did nothing to the temple. **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.*

**Ezra 5:16** *"Then the same Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem; but from that time even until now it has been under construction, and it is not finished."*

520 BC God sends Haggai with a plain and simple message. **Get back to work and build the temple!**

I) **Haggai**

A) **Straightforward speaker, without poetry or imagery.**

B) **Second shortest book among the minor prophets.**

1. Some will say he was the idea preacher.
2. Say what needs to be said and sit down without delay.

C) **The dates of Haggai's message**

1. ***Haggai 1.1-11*** Second year of Darius, 6<sup>th</sup> month, 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month. September 1. 520 BC /
2. ***Haggai 1.12-15*** Second year of Darius, 6<sup>th</sup> month, 24<sup>th</sup> day, September 24.
3. ***Haggai 2.1-9*** Second year of Darius, 7<sup>th</sup> month, 21<sup>st</sup> day, October 21. 520 BC)
4. ***2.10-19*** Second year of Darius, 9<sup>th</sup> month, 24<sup>th</sup> day, December 24, 520 BC\_

II) **First Message (*Chapter 1.1-11*)**

A) **Calling attention to the problem.**

***Haggai 1:2 "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built."'"***

1. Now is not the time. Seeking to justify their inactivity.
2. But they had time to build houses of luxury, and work on their farms.

***Haggai 1:4 "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"***

- a. God knows the difference between a reason, an excuse, and when a reason becomes an excuse.
- b. They found the time and the means to build their houses.

- c. Ex. Man who justifies not going to services due to a sick wife, but he goes fishing!

**B) Their material blessings had dried up.**

**Haggai 1:5** *Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! 6 "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."*

1. Bad harvest, drought, vineyards dried up, lack of wool, not enough money.
2. God tells them to consider their ways.

**Haggai 1:7** *Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways!"*

3. They needed to put first things first!

**Haggai 1:8** *"Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD.*

- a. Build the temple and Glorify God.
  - b. Perhaps some thought they could not build because they lacked the money, the material, the time.
  - c. God is saying, go out and get the materials.
4. Their neglect of God had brought on their problems.

**Haggai 1:10** *"Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. 11 "For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."*

- a. Their failure in the business world was because of their failure to honor God.

- b. Sometimes people's solutions are their biggest problems. Amazing the number of times people will decided to forsake God's word thinking it will make their lives better.

## II) Their Response.

**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 presence of the LORD. **13** Then Haggai, the LORD'S messenger, spoke the LORD'S message to the people, saying, "I am with you, says the LORD." **14** So 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, **15** on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

- A) The people responded positively.
- B) It was a simple but powerful message.
  1. They had forsaken God
  2. Their circumstances was due to their unfaithfulness.
  3. They needed to repent
  4. They needed to build the temple.

## III) Message of Chapter 2

- A) A comparison of the temples.
  1. Earlier the people cried and shouted for joy.

**Ezra 3:12** But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy,
  2. The glory of the temple was not its size or materials in it but the

Lord.

**Haggai 2:3** *'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? 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.*

**Haggai 2:7** *'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.*

**B) They had more to do.**

**Haggai 2:10** *On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 11 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying, 12 "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." 13 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." 14 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.*

1. The lesson being unclean goes back to **Numbers 19.22**.
2. They had to be cleansed and made holy before God would bless them.
  - a. In other words building of the temple was necessary and commanded but they had to be pure internally.
  - b. Just because a person carries a Bible does not mean he is right before God.

- c. To be holy one must turn to the Lord.

**Haggai 2:17** *'I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me,' says the LORD.*

**C) A reminder of their past problems and future blessings**

**Haggai 2:18** *'Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid-consider it: 19 'Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.'*

1. The bad harvest was due to their disobedience and God withholding His blessings.
2. The future good harvest was due their obedience and God blessing them.

**IV) Lessons For Us From Haggai**

**A) Don't let your reasons become excuses.**

1. There are real reasons for certain actions but after awhile they can become crutches we use to excuse our inactivity.

**Luke 14:16** *Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 "and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' 18 "But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19 "And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20 "Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' 21 "So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor*

*and the maimed and the lame and the blind.'*

2. Each had an excuse but they could have come to the feast.

**B) Don't substitute material goods for spiritual necessities.**

1. We build our own "panel houses" but are indifferent toward God's house.
2. We are experiencing great economic times but the Lord's church is declining.

**C) Spiritual blessings come from God**

1. God can withhold His blessings and He can increase them.

**Conclusion:**

Haggai mentions the Lord 26 times in 38 verses. God expects us to hear, believe, change, and do His will.