

HAGGAI

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Haggai as we continue our study through the Word of God. So far in our studies of the Minor Prophets we have covered nine books. Those first nine prophets spoke of a period of time before Judah was carried away to Babylon, before they were taken captive.

Now, these last three books, beginning with Haggai, we see that these prophets are ministering after their return to Jerusalem from their Babylonian captivity or post exilic books. Thus, Haggai was the first of these three minor prophets who ministered during the time the children of Israel returned home from their Babylonian captivity.

The timeframe of this prophecy is 520 B. C., some eighteen years after the Jews were allowed to return home and rebuild their Temple and it was the Persian King, Cyrus who allowed them to return and that was 538 B. C.

The book of Ezra speaks of this time period. And as I have said, in around 538 B. C. Cyrus, the King of Persia issued a decree allowing the Jews to return home. And that first return was led by Zerubbabel, along with just under 50,000 Jews who returned with him, out of the 2 to 3 million that were taken into captivity by the Babylonians. And in 536 B. C. the work on rebuilding the Temple started, but that was short lived.

You see, as the foundation of the Temple was being laid, a group of Samaritans asked if they could assist in the work, if they could help out. And the political leader, Zerubbabel; the religious leader, Joshua; and the rest of the heads of the families all agreed that they would not be allowed to assist in the work.

You see, these Samaritans, who were half Jews and half Gentiles, brought with them a strange mixture of Judaism and Paganism. And those Jews who had now returned from Babylon were not going to get involved with this kind of idolatry. Keep in mind that idolatry was the reason they went into captivity in the first place!

And these people became angry and wrote a letter to King of Persia and he replied back with a letter for the work to stop immediately. And so for 15 years the work on the house of God stopped. And during that time they began to beautify their own homes. Opposition caused them to lose their focus and become self-centered instead of God-centered! Then, after some 15 years of doing nothing on the Temple, the work began once again and the Temple was finally completed in 515 B. C., some 21 years after the work first began in 536 B. C.

Again, the timeframe for Haggai is 520 B. C. and God sends this prophet to speak forth the words of God to the people in Jerusalem. Haggai is going to challenge the people to get back to work, to rebuild the Temple. He wanted them to get their priorities right and they did listen to Haggai and they started rebuilding the Temple and like I have said, they finished the Temple in 515 B. C.

And as we will see, Haggai gives a series of four messages to his people. First of all, in Haggai 1:1-15 the focus on *the completion of the latter Temple*. Then, in Haggai 2:1-9 the focus is on *the glory of the latter Temple*. In Haggai 2:10-19 we see *the focus on the blessings of obedience*. And to conclude this book and the last of the messages in Haggai 2:20-23 the focus being *the future blessings of promise*.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Haggai chapter 1 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

HAGGAI

VERSE 1

1. First of all the name Haggai is most likely an abbreviated form of the phrase, “Festival of Yahweh.” And because of that some speculate that he was born on the day of a major feast in Israel. And like his name, his message is focused on putting God first and rebuilding the Temple, the place of worship. And it should be a festive time as we gather together to worship the Lord.
2. Secondly, we need to understand that the name “Darius” means “holder of the scepter” and was a title and not his name. And this is not the same Darius we read about in Daniel chapter 5, but this Darius came later.

Now we are given the time of each of these four messages and this first one was spoken on September 1, 520 B. C. And notice that God gives these words to Haggai, who then passes them onto Zerubbabel who was the governor and Joshua who was the High Priest in this post exilic period. Now the first message that Haggai has for the people is – ***THE COMPLETION OF THE LATTER TEMPLE.***

VERSE 2

1. First of all this message is from God and not the feelings or ideas of Haggai. That is important because we can let our wants and our needs guide us and that is never a good thing. We need to let God guide us and we see that with Haggai!

And keep in mind that they did start rebuilding the Temple, but then, after two years or so the work stopped. The opposition was too much, they were discouraged and they lost their focus. Yes, the foundation of the Temple was laid and the altar was rebuilt but the Temple was not, at least not yet!

And discouragement is one of those tools that the Devil loves to use upon us and we fall prey to it. Listen to this story and you will see what I mean. We are told,

It was advertised that the Devil was going to put his tools up for sale. On the date of the sale the tools were placed for public inspection, and each being marked with its sale price. There were a treacherous lot of implements. Hatred, Envy, Jealousy, Doubt, Lying, Pride, and so on. Laid apart from the rest of the pile was a harmless-looking tool, well-worn and priced very high.

“The name of the tool?” asked one of the purchasers.

“Oh,” said the Adversary, “that’s Discouragement.”

“Why have you priced it so high?”

“Because it’s more useful to me than the others. I can pry open and get inside a person’s heart with that one, when I cannot get near him with other tools. Now once I get inside, I can make him do what I choose. It’s a badly worn tool, because I use it on almost everyone since few people know it belongs to me.”

The Devil’s price for Discouragement was so high, he never sold it. It’s still his major tool, and he still uses it on God’s people today.

- John Laurence, Down to Earth

How true that is. May we be wise and keep our eyes on the Lord and do those things that the Lord has called us to do no matter how impossible it may seem. You see, with God all things are possible!

Now the reason for not rebuilding the Temple, they said was, “**The time has not come, the time that the LORD’S house should be built.**” That was an excuse and it is amazing the excuses we can come up with for not serving the Lord!

Benjamin Franklin said, “I never knew a man who was good at making excuses who was good at anything else.” They had their priorities all wrong, they had all the excuses for not doing the work, and yet, as we shall see, they couldn’t afford not to build the house of God!

2. Now as you look at their actions or non-actions I should say, the excuse they had for not rebuilding the Temple, it is easy to come down on them for their lack of faith, their lack of obedience and-so-on. Guess what?

People in the church today are no different. They have all kinds of excuses why they can’t do the work of God, why they can’t build His house, why they can’t serve here or serve there and as a result, they are empty, hungry, never satisfied, and they can’t understand why. They keep doing more and more other things to find what they are looking for and the problem is that they are looking in all the wrong places.

The Lord showed me this in my own life in a powerful way. A few years back, when I was younger, okay some 32 years ago, I did a lot of running. Probably some 5 to 7 days a week and some 5 miles plus with each run. I ran two Chicago Marathon’s and I loved to race. Back then you had races every week you could go to and I tried to make as many as I could because I loved the competition and I loved trying to improve each time.

And one day the Lord spoke to me and it was obvious what the problem was. It was not the running but it was my priorities. I had made running a priority in my life and I had pushed God back. Not only did I push God back but because of all the time it took to train I was pushing my family back as well. Things were out of order and I needed to change and I did.

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, “**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**” In other words, it all boils down to *PRIORITIES* and what is important to you will be the focus, the passion of your life! Guess what? The Lord wants to be the passion of your life!

Others just make excuses why they can't do something and it is more of a procrastination, or they are just stalling, delaying what they know they need to do. Interestingly enough, when Alexander the Great conquered the world by the age of thirty-three, some historians who were traveling with him asked him what the secret was in accomplishing so much by such a young age. I love his response because it is only three words, “Do it now.”

Get your priorities right, put God first and then do what He has called you to do. Don't put it off like the children of Israel were doing here. Worship was important and yet, as we will see, they let life get in the way and their other priorities supplanted God! Listen to how Haggai responds to what they have said, the excuse they made for not building the house of God, the Temple!

VERSES 3-4

1. Perspective is everything! They were saying that it was not time to build God's house and yet they had plenty of time to build their own homes. You see, their priorities were wrong and as we will see in a few minutes, they thought they were doing good, that the building they were doing would meet their needs and in the end they found out they had nothing.

Priorities, God first! And let me say this, you will not lack if you put God first. But if you don't, you will find out how much you lack and the Lord will expound on that in the next few verses.

And it is interesting that in verse 4 we see "**houses**" spoken of, in the plural and Poole makes these interesting comments on that as he wrote, "It seems to intimate some of them had more than one house, a city and a country house, and whilst God's house lay waste; they thus lavish out their wealth on private worldly conveniences, but grudge their charge against God's house . . . Do you owe so much to yourselves, and so little to your God?" Again,

PERSPECTIVE!

2. Now let's apply this to our lives because I think there is a powerful application. Over the years I have had people who wanted to serve in the church and many times they took that first step. They felt God leading them into this ministry or that ministry and they went forward and then they found out there is work involved, that it is competing for their time and then, "I don't think the Lord has called me to be in this ministry right now!"

Let me say this. We will make an effort to accomplish that which is important to us no matter the cost. But if it is not important to us, if it conflicts with our time, what we want to do, then we drop out, we move on and like the children of Israel, **“The time has not come, the time that the LORD’S house should be built.”**

3. Now let’s read on and see the outcome as they put the Lord on the back burner you might say and made their own lives the focus.

VERSES 5-6

1. Notice what the Lord says to His people, **“Consider your ways!”** In other words, take a good look at where you are going. Consider what direction your life is headed in. You need to take a good look at your life, examine what is going on and then walk accordingly, follow what the Lord has for you.

Now for the children of Israel, they worked hard but the harvest was poor. They had food to eat but it did not satisfy their hunger. They had plenty to drink, but they were not satisfied. They had clothes to wear but these clothes did not keep them warm. And all the work they did, all the overtime they put in, all the money they made seems to fly away, right out the window, there was never enough!

What is God doing here? He is helping them to see where their life is at when they neglect the Lord, it is empty!

The late Harry Ironside, who died in 1951, wrote in his study of Haggai the following and how it applies to our lives even today. He wrote, "Alas, how much is sacrificed for money! Christian fellowship, the joys of gathering at the table of the Lord, gospel work, and privileges of mutual edification and instruction in divine things - all are parted with often simply because the opportunity arises of adding a few paltry dollars to the monthly income and savings. Brethren with families even will leave a town or city where the spiritual support and fellowship of their brethren is found, and where their children have the privilege of the gospel meeting and the Sunday-school, simply because they see, or fancy they see, an opportunity to better their earthly circumstances. Alas, in many instances, they miss all they had hoped for, and lose spiritually what is never regained!" (Harry A. Ironside, *Notes on the Minor Prophets*, pp. 329 -30)

And as you look at our nation that has so much, more than most people in this world, we are not satisfied, we are not happy. Why is that? Because we have lost the priorities in our life, we have pushed God out of the way and you will never have enough, you will never be fully satisfied apart from the Lord. If we could then the people in America should be so joyful and yet, many are so depressed!

If you doubt that then listen to this article. We are told,

Martin Seligman, University of Pennsylvania psychology professor and head of the American Psychological Association, believes that the United States is in the throes of an "epidemic" of clinical depression. An American today, he says, is significantly more likely to suffer clinical depression at some point in his or her life than at any other time in the past hundred years.

Other modernized nations are not far behind us. A nine-nation study by epidemiologist Myrna Weissman of Columbia University and a cross-cultural group of international scholars found that people born after 1945 are three times more likely to experience depression than people born before. Clinical depression may, however, simply be the tip of the iceberg of America's mental distress.

Skeptics will scoff - *Crisis? What crisis?* - but strip away the denial, the vested interest in the myth of sunny, can-do Americanism, and it begins to feel that something is awry at a fundamental level in many people's lives. It's not so much what's happening to us as what isn't. ***Something is missing. Something essential and meaningful has been displaced by something . . . hollow.*** The possibility that forces outside our control might be overwhelming us - changing us - is so frightening that most of us busily hunt down safe responses to our escalating anxiety. We rely in record numbers on prescription drugs. We escape into the media/entertainment pleasureplex. We pile on the amusements only to find (as Leonard Cohen sings) that "you are locked into your suffering, and your pleasures are the seal."

- <http://www.utne.com/mind-and-body/america-the-blue.aspx>

Isn't that interesting, "***Something is missing. Something essential and meaningful has been displaced by something . . . hollow.***" Absolutely, we have so much and yet we have nothing and does that sound familiar? It should because it is what Haggai has said! The Lord has been replaced with stuff. That which is satisfying has been replaced by that which is hallow. And in the end, they are left wanting!

What can we do? You know the answer but many don't want to deal with the answer. The answer is to return to Jesus and He will bring the satisfaction, the fulfillment that you need into your life! You will not hear that from a therapist but listen to what the Lord is telling His people to do!

VERSES 7-11

1. Now just in case they thought that all these problems were just a series of bad luck, of misfortune, God lets them know that He has brought this upon them because they had neglected Him! And once again God is calling for them to do a heart check, to see how their relationship with God is going.

As Christians I think that is important for us to do, to examine our relationship with God. To see how we are doing. Too often we say, "I'll get around to it!" But the reality is, we are making excuses for our walk with God or our lack of walking with God. If you want your life to be dry, to be barren, to be unfruitful, put your will above His, put your desires above His, and these things will come upon your life!

This should just make sense. If you don't put Him first you will find that all your work will come up short. That what you bring in, the harvest will be small. That you may fill yourself with food and yet not be satisfied. You may have the best clothes but your heart is still cold. You might be making lots of money but you have nothing to show for it. In other words, with all you do and all you have you are still empty apart from God and God is saying "**Consider your ways!**"

2. Remember the song, I think it was by the Beatles, that goes, “Get back to where you once belonged!” In a sense that is what God is telling them here. You see, they had paneled homes and yet the house of God was left in ruins. They had left their first love, the Lord, and put their own desires above His. And God wants them to get started once again on building His house. They had laid the foundation and had an altar for sacrifice, but that was as far as they got. Now God wants them to go and gather the wood for the Temple to be rebuilt.

3. Now as you read all that the Lord brought upon their lives you might think that God is not being fair, that He is not being good. That is not true. When you disciplined your children was it because you were being mean, you were not being good? Absolutely not, we disciplined our children because we love them and we want what is best for them and sometimes that kind of correction is needed to keep them safe and to get them back on track again.

That is exactly what we see the Lord doing here and they will build the Temple, they will worship the Lord. So all that came upon them was for their good and not to destroy them. May we learn that lesson!

VERSE 12

1. We do not see this very often in the Scriptures where the prophet speaks for God and the people listen, they obey what the Lord is saying through the prophet. Poor Jeremiah, all those years in ministry, all those years speaking for God and no one was listening, no one wanted to hear what he had to say. But they do listen to Haggai and they respond to what he told them!

And it began with the leadership, Zerubbabel and Joshua, the political leader and the spiritual leader, and the people followed after them! Make no mistake about it, those in position of authority are held to a higher degree of accountability. If they are leading people astray, God will judge them!

But notice here that they not only obeyed the Lord but they feared the Lord. And I think the reason that they obeyed the Lord is because they feared Him. They recognized who He is and they respected that and obeyed Him. Why do we see so many people today doing what they want? Because they do not fear the Lord and thus, they are not obeying the Lord.

2. Now what the prophets of old went through we too are struggling with. You see, many times as a pastor or a person of God is speaking today it is not taken well. People get all upset, saying things like “Who are you to judge me?” and-so-on. They don’t like it when false doctrine is exposed. And there are many people who cling to these false teachers and they get mad when you try to talk with them about it. They get upset or may even say things like, “Don’t touch the Lord’s anointed!” Hey, if they are teaching false doctrine they need to be exposed. And that quote out of the Bible is from David and he was speaking of not killing King Saul. We need to kill false doctrine or it will kill us!

Now here’s the thing. Don’t get angry but “**Consider your ways!**” Check it out to see if what they are saying is true, and if it is, repent and get right with God. If it is not true, extend to them grace and mercy as God has extended to you.

But if you cling to false prophets and false doctrine you are not “**Consider[ing] your ways!**” And the danger is that you will move farther and farther from God because you do not fear God and thus, you are not obedient to Him!

VERSES 13-15

1. Now here was the problem. They let the enemy bring fear, doubt, discouragement into their lives and it caused them to stop the work of God. What is the solution to that problem? What can we do when fear, doubt, discouragement comes upon our lives?

The same solution they received into their lives - **“I am with you says the LORD.”** You see, allow the Word of God to lift you up, to remove any fear, to help you get refocused. It is as Paul said in Romans 8:31 **“... If God is for us, who can be against us?”** And the reality is no one but ourselves are really against us. We can get in the way of God, but don’t allow that. Hold onto His Word and if you do, you will respond as the children of Israel responded.

Let me share this story with you because as much as the enemy tries to silence the people of God, they can’t. So often the enemy wants to discourage us because of the situation we are in and we think God can’t use us. Keep in mind that God is in control and it is amazing what He can do.

Keep in mind that John wrote Revelation on the Island of Patmos, banished there to silence him and yet, it didn’t! Listen to what happened in the life of John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim’s Progress. We are told,

John Bunyan’s preaching was so popular and powerful, and so unacceptable to leaders in the seventeenth-century Church of England, that he was jailed in order to silence him. Refusing to be silent, he began to preach in the jail courtyard. He not only had a large audience of prisoners, but also hundreds of the citizens of Bedford and the surrounding area would come to the prison daily and stand outside to hear him expound Scripture. He was silenced verbally by being placed deep inside the jail and forbidden to preach at all.

Yet in that silence, he spoke loudest of all and to more people than he could have imagined. It was during that time that he wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the great Christian classic that has ministered the gospel to tens of millions throughout the world. For several centuries, it was the most widely read and translated book in the world after the Bible. Bunyan's opponents were able to stop his preaching for a few years, but they were not able to stop his ministry. Instead, they provided opportunity for it to be extended from deep within a jail in the small town of Bedford to the ends of the earth.

- John MacArthur

Here's the thing. No matter what we are going through, no matter who is coming against us, remember what the Lord said in Isaiah 41:10, "**Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.**" That should bring comfort to our hearts and to our lives.

2. And notice what took place here in verses 14 and 15 of Haggai chapter 1. The Spirit of God came upon them and empowered them to do the work that was before them. We saw 23 days earlier the message was given, and now as they are empowered by God the work begins once again on the house of God! In other words, they rolled up their sleeves and they got to work!

As Christians we are called to walk by faith, trusting in God and His Word and to be empowered by the Spirit of God to finish the work. If you are lacking in any of those areas, ask God to help you, to increase your faith, to help you to trust in His Word, and to baptize you with the Holy Spirit so you can do the work! It is what the children of Israel needed to complete the work and it is what we need to complete the work!

HAGGAI 2

VERSES 1-3

1. The second message given by the prophet Haggai was almost 2 months after the first, and almost 1 month after the work of rebuilding the Temple started up again. This second message was given on October 21, 520 B. C.

The first message was a rebuke for their not putting God first and the call was for ***THE COMPLETION OF THE LATTER TEMPLE.***

The second message is an encouragement, looking ahead to the future Temple and all of its glory. And here in Haggai 2:1-9 we see the message of ***THE LATTER TEMPLE.***

Keep in mind that Haggai spoke some 66 years after the Temple was destroyed. Thus, there were some people who had seen the beauty of Solomon's Temple and now they are comparing it to this one! Not too impressive!

Ezra 3:10-13 describes what those who had seen the first Temple felt like 16 years before this prophecy of Haggai, when the work of rebuilding the Temple first began. And if you remember Solomon's Temple as we studied Kings, it was a glorious structure. And this second Temple was a shack compared to it. It was nothing.

Listen to what transpired as the foundation of this second Temple was being laid in Ezra 3:10-13, **“When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD: ‘For 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. *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, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.*”**

The people who never saw Solomon’s Temple were shouting for joy, they were excited to be home and have a place to worship God once again. On the other hand, those who saw Solomon’s Temple wept because this low budget project was nothing to them. It was an embarrassment to them.

Maybe that is a problem we have at times. We look at what others have done and we feel, “Wow, I can never match up to what they are doing. My work is nothing compared to what they are doing. What’s the use, maybe I am not called to this work!” And thus, we stop moving forward. The work stops.

Spurgeon gives to us this perspective and as we listen to what he wrote may it encourage us in the work we are doing. He wrote, “The smallness of our gifts may be a temptation to us. We are consciously so weak and so insignificant, compared with the great God and his great cause, that we are discouraged, and think it vain to attempt anything . . . the enemy contrasts our work with that of others, and with that of those who have gone before us. We are doing so little as compared with other people, therefore let us give up. We cannot build like Solomon, therefore let us not build at all. Yet, brethren, there is a falsehood in all this, for, in truth, nothing is worthy of God. The great works of others, and even the amazing productions of Solomon, all fell short of his glory.”

That is the perspective to have and think about it. What God has called you to do won't He equip you to do it and not only that but won't it accomplish what God desires? Of course it will!

And if you are still struggling in this area A. W. Tozer has this prayer to once again put things into perspective for us. He wrote,

Dear Lord, I refuse henceforth to compete with any of Thy servants. They have congregations larger than mine. So be it. I rejoice in their success. They have greater gifts. Very well. That is not in their power nor in mine. I am humbly grateful for their greater gifts and my smaller ones. I only pray that I may use to Thy glory such modest gifts as I possess. I will not compare myself with any, nor try to build up my self-esteem by noting where I may excel one or another in Thy holy work. I herewith make a blanket disavowal of all intrinsic worth. I am but an unprofitable servant. I gladly go to the foot of the cross and own myself the least of Thy people.

If I err in my self-judgment and actually underestimate myself I do not want to know it. I purpose to pray for others and to rejoice in their prosperity as if it were my own. And indeed it is my own if it is Thine own, for what is Thine is mine, and while one plants and another waters it is Thou alone that giveth the increase.

- A. W. Tozer, The Price of Neglect

Again, the correct perspective to have. And we also need to remember that as Christians we need to be careful that we don't discourage the people of God in doing the work, especially the young people. Don't make the past better than it was, and it may have been great, but God is still working, and never forget that. He is doing new works!

As we discourage people in the work what happens many times is they drop out and those that are doing the discouraging don't do the work but just focus on the glorious past. May we shout for joy at the work that God is doing here today, thanking Him for what He has done and asking Him to do even more tomorrow!

VERSES 4-9

1. I love how the Lord is encouraging them in the work and let's face it, we all need that encouragement from time to time. We need to let God's Word encourage us in the work we are doing as Paul said in I Corinthians 15:58 "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**" Thus, be strong in the Lord, be confident in Him, for He is with you, working in you and through you for His glory.

And I like that it is God's Spirit who will strengthen us. It is as Zechariah 4:6 says "**So he answered and said to me: 'This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.'**" We can't do it on our own and God never asked us to do it on our own. But by His Spirit working in us He will give us the power, the strength, the ability we need to accomplish the work He has called us to do!

2. Now as I look at these verses I think Haggai is speaking of the Millennial Temple, not this one and later on Herod's Temple as he refurbished this one that was built in Haggai's day. You see, we never see the presence of God or the *SHEKINAH* glory come upon it like it did when Solomon dedicated the first Temple. In fact, the Talmud says that the *SHEKINAH* glory never filled or was in the rebuilt Temple.

Like I have said, I believe this is looking into the future, from the Tribulation Period really on into the Millennial Reign of Christ. Paul, in Hebrews 12:25-29 says, "**See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.' Now this, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.'**"

During the Tribulation Period, specifically the Great Tribulation, the foundations that man has built upon will be shaken, every island and mountain will be moved as God judges rebellious man. And out of that is born the Kingdom Age where God Himself will dwell in this new Temple, as our Lord Jesus is the *Desire of all Nations!* We see the Lord return in Matthew 24:30, where we read, “**Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**” That glory will not only fill the Temple, but the whole earth!

And obviously this Millennial Temple will far outshine the second Temple, even Solomon’s Temple and the Temple that will be rebuilt during the Tribulation Period. Why? Because Jesus will be there!

VERSES 10-14

1. This third message was given on December 24, 520 B. C, and it is a rebuke of their present condition, their disobedience to the Word of God. And this third message covers Haggai 2:10-19 and the focus will be ***THE BLESSINGS FOR OBEDIENCE.***

2. Here we see a series of questions being asked to the priests and they should be able to answer them. The first one deals with something that is unholy, if something touches it will it make it holy? And the answer is simple, of course not and they got question number one right.

It would be like having a clean glass of water and one that is dirty. You can’t make the dirty water clean by adding clean water to it!

3. Then, in verse 13 it speaks of making someone who is clean unclean. In other words, you can't impart holiness to anyone else but you can make them unclean. You see, you can transmit defilement from one person to another. Question number two answered correctly.

Again, think of the two glasses of water. If you had clean water and put just one drop of the dirty water in that clean water, what would happen. The clean water would become dirty!

4. So what is the point here? What is Haggai trying to say? Verse 14 answers that for us, “... ‘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.’”

The point is this. The people doing the work on the Temple, or on anything for that matter, they could not impart or transmit any holiness to it but they surely could impart or transmit defilement upon it by doing the work out of the wrong heart. You see, the people were not concerned about the house of God, they neglected the Lord, and God wants them to rebuild, to return to Him, that is the main issue.

That is an important lesson for us as Christians. Don't get so busy doing the work that you leave the Lord out of it! And don't do the work with a wrong heart attitude. You will bring defilement to it!

5. Now Haggai will speak of what they needed to do, the obedience they needed in their lives as we read on.

VERSES 15-19

1. God wants them to once again look back over those 15 years and see what has taken place since they neglected the house of God. And the Lord will go over a few things just to help them remember.

He wants them to remember that they should have had more but they didn't. What they expected to get they didn't because they left God out. And God was doing these things to His people to awaken them out of their spiritual sleep and so they would return to Him. That is always God's desire, restoration not destruction!

And God has shown them what happened to them in the past when they were not serving Him, when they did not put Him first in their life. That is what you will get for disobedience.

But, this is what will take place as you put Me first in your life, as you serve Me. Mark this day down and see the blessings I will bestow upon you! As you serve the Lord, as busy as you may be, God will also give you the time to do the other things that need to be done. God will provide as you serve Him and you will be satisfied. And notice what the last part of verse 19 says, “**. . . But from this day forward I will bless you.**” ***THE BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE!***

VERSES 20-22

1. This fourth message comes on the 24th of December, 520 B.C. the same day as the previous message. And this message speaks of a future judgment and a future encouragement, that God is going to raise up someone to led His people. And we will see that in verse 23 in a minute. And the focus of this message that covers Haggai 2:20-23 is ***THE FUTURE BLESSINGS OF PROMISE!***

And what we see here is that the Lord is speaking of a future day, the end times you might say. The Lord is speaking of the Tribulation Period where His wrath will be poured out upon a Christ rejecting world. You see, the Kingdoms of men, the governments of men will come crashing down and the times of the Gentiles, the time where the Gentiles rule over God's people will be completed!

The times of the Gentiles began with the Babylonian captivity and it continues on today. Israel, even though they are a nation again, are under the bondage of Gentile world powers. But that day is coming to an end and Jesus spoke of it in Luke 21:20-24, where He said, **“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”**

2. What happens next? Look at the last verse.

VERSE 23

1. Please understand that this is not speaking of Zerubbabel sitting on the throne as King, not at all. But it is showing us that Zerubbabel is a type of Christ. In fact, in Matthew 1:12 we see in the lineage of Jesus Christ this man Zerubbabel!

And we know from the Scriptures that it is Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who will come and sit upon the throne of David and rule and reign from Jerusalem for one-thousand years! And His glory will not only fill the Millennial Temple, but the land. His glory will far outshine anything else that was ever built!

2. As we close our study here in Haggai keep in mind that in just some four months this prophet ministered a series of four powerful messages to encourage the people after he rebuked them for leaving the Lord out of their lives.

Thus, as the people were encouraged, the work was completed! My we have hearts like this prophet Haggai. Hearts that desire to encourage people, to spur them on in the work. It is as Paul said in Hebrews 10:24-25, “**And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**” May we do that!