



Haggai 1-2

That guy Haggai. In the year 536 B.C., Cyrus, the king of Persia, signed a decree allowing the Jews to return to the holy land. Commissioning Ezra to rebuild the temple. And so about 50,000 of the Jews returned with Ezra; Cyrus gave to them many of the gold and silver vessels that had been taken years earlier by Nebuchadnezzar. He gave them gifts of gold; and the express purpose was to come back and to rebuild the temple, and to re-establish themselves in the land. It wasn't an easy task.

As they started the rebuilding of the temple, there arose an immediate opposition from the people in the area. First of all, the Samaritans came down. They were people who had been brought into the land by the Assyrians after the nation of Israel had been driven out. And they were not full Jews, but they had adapted the Jewish religion along with their own religions. They worshipped God, as the Scriptures said, but they actually served their own idols, so that they were not really committed fully to the Lord. But when these people came back to begin rebuilding the temple, they came and offered their help, which was rejected. And it caused them to turn as enemies against Ezra, Zerubbabel, and those that were building the temple.

So they began to threaten: and they sent letters back to the Persian government, saying, "these people have been rebellious people; look at the history books: you'll discover that as soon as they have a temple again, these people will be rebelling against the government of Persia;" and thus, they received a cease and desist order from the Persian government about 534. And they had to cease the rebuilding of the temple after only two years. They had only just barely cleared the rubble and had laid the foundation stones when the cease and desist order came from Persia.

Now Haggai begins his prophecy in the second year of Darius the King. This is not the Darius of Daniel. But the Darius that came some sixteen years after the beginning of the rebuilding of the temple. And so the year is 520 BC.

For fourteen years, the temple has just been desolate. They did rebuild the altar: they were offering sacrifices on the altar, but the temple work had stopped and nothing further had been done as far as the rebuilding of the temple. So here at 520 BC --

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying (1:1),

So the word of the LORD came to Haggai the prophet, it was addressed to Zerubbabel, who was the governor and who was a descendant of Johaikim, and unto Joshua: who was the high priest at the time, the son of Josedech.

Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built (1:2).

They had given up the rebuilding of the temple. They said, "Oh, it's just not the time. This just isn't the time to rebuild." And thus, there was no further effort toward the rebuilding of the temple.

Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes (1:3-6).

There are holes in your pockets, you can't keep your money. You're broke, you are having difficulty, you buy clothes but you're not warm, you drink but you're not satisfied, you eat but you're hungry, you plant but you're reaping very little. Look at what's happened over the last fourteen years. You're in dire straits.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways (1:7).

You know, it's good, to every once in a while just stop and evaluate your life. Just examine your life. The

Bible tells us, that *“if we would examine ourselves we would not be judged of God.”* And sometimes, when you’re going through some real problems, real financial difficulties perhaps, when you’re just not satisfied, when your heart is not at rest, sometimes it’s good just to take a look at yourself. And just check, “How is my relationship with God? How is my devotional life? How much time am I spending with God? How much of what I have, am I spending *for* God? What are the real interests in my life? Where’s the real priority?” And many times we will discover that in the intervening time, our priorities have got sort of messed up. We put a greater emphasis upon our own comforts, upon our own interests, and we have forsaken the things of the Lord. And a lot of times we say, “Oh, I’ll get around to my relationship with God;” and there’s still that belief and there’s still that place for God, but it isn’t the first place any longer. And this is the condition of these people, and God is calling them to stop and consider now, ‘just look at what’s going on. You’re crops are failing, you’re not satisfied. Things are really not going well.’ And He said,

Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it (1:8),

Get back to work on the house of the LORD. You’ve become comfortable, you’ve spent time on your own houses, you remodeled them and you’ve got them all fixed up. But you’ve left the house of God desolate. Now get up to the mountains, cut the wood out of the forest from around Jerusalem there and get back to building the house, and God promises I will take pleasure in it.

And I will be glorified, saith the LORD. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house (1:8–9).

You were expecting a good crop but when it came time to harvest, there wasn’t much there. And what was there when you brought it home? I wasted it, I blew upon it, because you have the wrong priorities in your life. Jesus said to His disciples, don’t worry about tomorrow, what you’re gonna eat, what you’re gonna drink, what you’re going to wear. Things that usually concern women. And as Jesus said, the Gentiles. But He said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). Get the right priority. Don’t seek first comfortable living, security. But seek first the kingdom of God and He’ll take care of these other things. Now here is what the Lord is saying, you’re problem is, your priorities are wrong. You’ve been seeking first, the remodeling of your own house. You’ve been seeking first your own security, your own things. And you don’t have anything. You’ve left God out or you’ve put God in a secondary position.

CHAPTER 2

In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month (2:1),
so almost a month later, this next message came unto Haggai from the LORD.

Came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? (2:1–3).

How many of you remember the first temple of Solomon? This house in all of its glory. Now we are told in the book of Ezra that as they laid the foundation, it was tremendous excitement, the people were just really rejoicing and thrilled as they were laying the foundation of the new temple. But the older people who remembered Solomon’s temple, they were there weeping. This was so pitiful in comparison with the ornate glory of Solomon’s temple who had unlimited resources to build the temple, who spared no expense in the building of the first temple, who covered it with gold and silver and just made all of these beautiful furnishings. They could remember the glory of Solomon’s temple and seeing this pitiful efforts of this new temple, they just wept. And so he is saying, How many of you can remember this house in her first glory.

And how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? (2:3).

I mean, it's really nothing at all to be compared with the temple that Solomon had built. Rather pitiful. Yet, in spite of that,

Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts(2:4):

Again, the assurance, the strength, the confidence, is that I am with you. Even though this may be a pitiful in comparison with the former, yet be strong, work, do it, because I am with you.

According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts (2:5-7).

Yet a little while, now this is quoted in Hebrews Chapter 12 concerning the great earthquake that will take place during the latter part of the great tribulation period. An earthquake that will not be localized in a fault zone in a local area, but an earthquake that will shake the foundations of the earth. And as is pointed out in Hebrews, as he says yet a little while and it shall come, signifies that the severity of the shaking of the earth will be so great that everything that can be shaken, will be shaken so only that which cannot be shaken will be left. During the time of the great tribulation, there will be cataclysmic, catastrophic, events of nature that are taking place upon the earth, bringing destruction. It will be time of great destruction such as the world has never seen before, nor has ever see again, as God judges the earth in his indignation and wrath for their absolute rebellion against Him. For their abhorrence of His laws, for their obdurate stand against the things of God. Against righteousness. And as we see the world today, we see it ripening for judgment. The very things that God spoke against in His word. the very things that God hated and detested, men are doing in a flagrant violation of the commands and the laws of God. God has been patient, God is longsuffering, that's just a part of His nature.

But men have misinterpreted the longsuffering of God as God's sort of supporting what their doing. God doesn't really care that we do these things, it really doesn't make any difference to God. And the longsuffering of God is misinterpreted by men. Grossly misinterpreted in some quarters as even approval, God approves of what we are doing. Or else, why doesn't He do something about it? And so we find that a little while Gods gonna shake the heavens, He's gonna shake the earth, the sea, the dry land, but then after the judgment of those great days of judgment then shall the desire of nations come.

Then shall they see the sign of the son of man Jesus said, coming in clouds and great glory. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall they see the sign of the son of man. Jesus is just mentioned the signs of the heavens, the sun and the stars and the powers of the universe being shaken, the heavens and the earth, then shall they see the sign of the son of man coming in power and great glory. The desire of the nations and the glory of God will fill the earth. Jesus Himself shall dwell here upon the earth with His people. Paul the apostle said, And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear then shall we also appear with Him in glory. The prophet Enoch said, behold, He cometh with ten thousand of His saints to establish righteousness upon the earth. In the book of Revelation it speaks of Him coming in power and glory and those who came with Him, the church, coming in power to live and to reign with him as He establishes God's righteous kingdom upon the earth. This house will be filled with the glory of the LORD, saith the LORD of hosts. You're worried, God is saying because you don't have silver and you don't have gold. Those that remembered Solomon's temple, remember how replete it was with beautiful gold and silver vessels and all of the ornamentation of gold, but the LORD is saying, that really doesn't matter because

The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. [It all belongs to me.] The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts (2:8-9).

The latter house that the LORD shall build. The coming temple where Jesus shall abide. The glory of it will exceed. Now this temple that they are building is lacking many of the things of Solomon's temple.

There is no mention of the ark of the covenant being in this temple. There is the lacking of the Shekinah, that glory of God's presence in this temple. And it is lacking much of the former temple that Solomon had built where the presence of God came down and rested upon the temple. But he speaks of a yet future glory. Where the LORD Himself shall dwell in the midst of the people and the glory of that temple will exceed, will be greater than the former; for the LORD of hosts will be there and will give peace.

In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius (2:10),

So we've moved now from the sixth month and he has a message for them in the seventh month and now a message in the ninth month.

This is interesting to me, in that it would appear that his whole ministry was completed in three months. Now here I've been here for forty some years. Some guys have all the breaks. In three months he accomplished his ministry. He probably said more in three months than I have in forty five years but at any rate it sort of was fascinating to me. Now as we move into the prophecies of Zechariah next week, the interesting thing is that Zechariah begins his prophecies in the eleventh month of the second years. So two months after Haggai had finished his prophecies, then beg your pardon, in the eighth month of the second year, so there was a little bit of a crossover in Zechariah's and Haggai's prophecies. Here now in the ninth month you're in the November, December era.

In the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No (2:10-12).

Now according to the law, if something that was offered in sacrifice to God touched anything, like the garment of the priest, it made the garment of the priest holy, but that holiness could not be transferred to the garment, from the garment to something else. So the priest is holding this holy flesh in his garment, the garment has been made holy because it is holding that which is holy had been sanctified unto God but you couldn't make the transfer over to the next object. In other words, this garment couldn't touch something else and by its touch make something else holy. The transference was just from that which is holy to whatever it touched, it became holy. So it was question there was a, it was a question of the law and it of course is answered in the Levitical Law. God had made this law that you could not transfer in a secondary way. The holiness. So they answered correctly according to the law, when they said, No, it can't transfer over.

Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean (2:13).

And again that is according to the law. If you have touched a dead body, you were considered unclean for seven days, you had to go through the rights of purification before you could again minister unto the LORD within the temple and in this state of being unclean, if you touched any of the things, it constituted an uncleanness to them and you had to go through purification rights for the things that you had touched.

Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean (2:14).

The people are unclean. They have neglected Me they've neglected My house, they've only been concerned in their own welfare and thus everything they touch is unclean. Can't be accepted by Me.

And now, I pray you, consider [again the call to consider] from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD: [Before you begin to build consider what has happened in the last fourteen years.] Since those days were, when one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten (2:15-16):

That is you planted and you were expecting a good harvest, you were expecting twenty measures but when you harvested it, you only had ten.

when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty (2:16).

When you were pressing out the wine, and you were hoping by the number of grapes to get fifty vessels full, but there was only twenty that came. In other words, your expectations were not lived up to. You were expecting much more, you should of had much more, but it seemed like everything was short.

For the LORD said,

I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all of the labours of your hands (2:17);

I was bringing reminders to you. I was trying to awaken you to your negligence. I was bringing to you things that should have caused you to consider and realize, hey, were not giving God what we owe Him. We're not giving God first place in our lives. And these things were intended by God to sort of stir their minds and their consciousness.

yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD (2:17).

After all of these things, it should have awakened you, you should have been alerted but you didn't turn to Me. Now mark this day on your calendar.

Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider it (2:18).

Now that you've started putting stone upon stone, I want you to consider from the twenty fourth day, mark it on your calendar. He said,

Is the seed yet in the barn? [Is there anything left?] yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you (2:19).

It's in the winter time now. November, December, you don't have any figs, you don't have any grapes on the vine, you don't have any pomegranates or any olives on the trees. They haven't yet brought forth. Ya know you're a long way off from the harvest, really. But from this day, the twenty fourth day, I'm gonna bless you. I like that. You just mark it now. You've started again committing your ways to the LORD. You've again put God in the proper place in your life. You're again, serving the LORD and building now the house of the LORD.

from this day will I bless you (2:19).

Could it be that the blessings of God have been withheld from you because you've sort of shuttled God off to a secondary position in your life?. That the reason why you're going through a lot of the problems, the reason why you're experiencing hardship, financial difficulties, is that you haven't kept God and the work of God as a top priority in your life. But you've just sort of let it slid, let it slip. You've become so absorbed in your own things that you've just sort of left God out. Now they responded to the word of the prophet. They started building again, they committed themselves once more to the work of the building of the temple and so God said, "OK, mark your calendar, from this day on I'm going to bless you."

And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth [again going forward to that day in the future]; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms (2:20-22),

The kingdoms of man, the government of man, the times of the Gentile reign. God's gonna overthrow the kingdoms of the Gentiles.

and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother (2:22).

Now in the book of Ezekiel Chapter 38, God speaks of the nation of Israel that has been reborn. Drawing in the land that has been reclaimed. How that during that time that they are dwelling in the land, he would put an evil thought into those leaders from the north, who would come forth with a vast army with the intent of spoiling and destroying the nation of Israel. And God promises that when this happens, that His fury will arise in His face, He will be against them, and He will destroy them with an overflowing judgment, hail from heaven and all. And interestingly enough, He declares that much of the destruction will take place through every man's sword being against his brother. Or more or less a civil war breaking out among the invading troops, that the invading troops will start to destroy each other a vast conglomerate of nations, but they'll actually turn on each other and destroy one another. And this battle in which Israel's enemies are to be destroyed when these nations have gathered together against them in the last days and interestingly enough when Israel is dwelling securely in her land. They've made peace with the Palestinians and they've made peace with Syria and all.

Then we are told as God destroys these invading nations, that He will again put His Spirit upon the nation of Israel. And I believe that at that moment, that God's Spirit again is put upon the nation of Israel, that it precludes the church being here. I believe that God is going to rapture the church out of the earth and his Spirit will then be upon the nation of Israel, and the seventieth week of Daniel which is yet unfulfilled, will begin at that moment. And that God will accomplish the final time of working with the nation of Israel, the seventieth week of Daniel, the final seven year period. Here Haggai makes reference to God destroying the kingdoms, the strength of the kingdoms of the Gentiles as He overthrows their chariots and their horses and their riders as they are destroying one another every man against his brother.

In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and I will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts (2:23).

Now this is just suggestion. Something to ponder. Be as the Bereans. Go and search the scriptures and see if these things be so. As we move into the book of Zechariah and again we are dealing at the same period of history with the same two prominent persons: Zerubbabel, the governor and Joshua the high priest. In Chapter 4, we have an interesting vision of the cups being kept filled perpetually by the two olive trees and the pipes that come out of it, and fill the cups and keep them perpetually filled. Which is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, It's not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the LORD. And these two olive trees in that vision are Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest. Now in the day when God destroys the kingdoms of the Gentiles, He promises here in Haggai that He's going to make Zerubbabel his servant, as a signet, for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

As we turn to the book of Revelation, and in Chapter 11 we read of the two witnesses that God sends to witness to the Jews in the days of the great tribulation. We are quite sure that one of the witnesses will be Elijah in fulfillment of the prophecy of Malachi which we will get in a few weeks. My suggestion that I ask you to ponder, because we do not know really the identity of the other witness, some have suggested maybe John the Baptist, others have suggested Moses, and there have been other suggestions too. But I would like to suggest, is it possible that Zerubbabel will be the other witness, because as it describes the two witnesses in the book of Revelation, it said, these are the two olive trees, referring to the prophecy of Zechariah. And the olive trees were Zerubbabel and Joshua. The fact that God said He will make Zerubbabel a signet in that day, for I have chosen thee saith the LORD of hosts, causes me to believe that surely it is possible. I'm not saying that this is so, but at least he makes a good candidate for the other witness with John the Baptist in that time. I also believe that Moses make a good candidate, I haven't ruled him out. But just take a look. Maybe Enoch, some have suggested Enoch. Two men that didn't die: Elijah and Enoch. Who knows. But don't rule out Zerubbabel because he might be one of those two witnesses of the book. We've always tried to identify the other witness. And so just to add to your list, put Zerubbabel in there too.