



fill the house

2/26 9:30am

HAGGAI 1:4

Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in **your** cieleed houses, and **this house lie waste?**

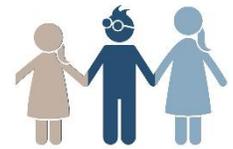


fan the flames

2/26 5:30pm

HAGGAI 1:14

And the **Lord stirred up...the spirit of all the remnant of the people...and they did work.**



fund the future

3/5 9:30am

HAGGAI 2:4

...Be strong all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you....

Pastor Jacob

Horizon Baptist Church

2/26/22-3/5/23

OUTLINE OF HAGGAI

- 1.) Haggai's First Sermon (1:1-15)
 - A.) A Rebuke for Misplaced Priorities (1:1-4)
 - B.) The Results of Misplaced Priorities (1:5-6; 9-11)
 - C.) An Invitation to Respond (1:7-8)
 - D.) The Response of the People (1:12-15)
- 2.) Haggai's Second Sermon (2:1-9)
 - A.) The Discouragement of the People (2:1-3)
 - B.) The Direction for the People (2:4a)
 - C.) The Encouragement from the Lord (2:4b-9)
- 3.) Haggai's Third Sermon (2:10-19)
 - A.) A Parable on Disobedience (2:10-14)
 - B.) The Consequence of Disobedience (2:15-17)
 - C.) The Blessings of Obedience (2:18-19)
- 4.) Haggai's Fourth Sermon (2:20-23)
 - A.) A Promise of Insignificance (2:20-22)
 - B.) A Promise of Significance (2:23)

TIMELINE OF HAGGAI

ALTAR/FOUNDATION BUILT – 537-536 BC
CONSTRUCTION HALTS – 535 BC

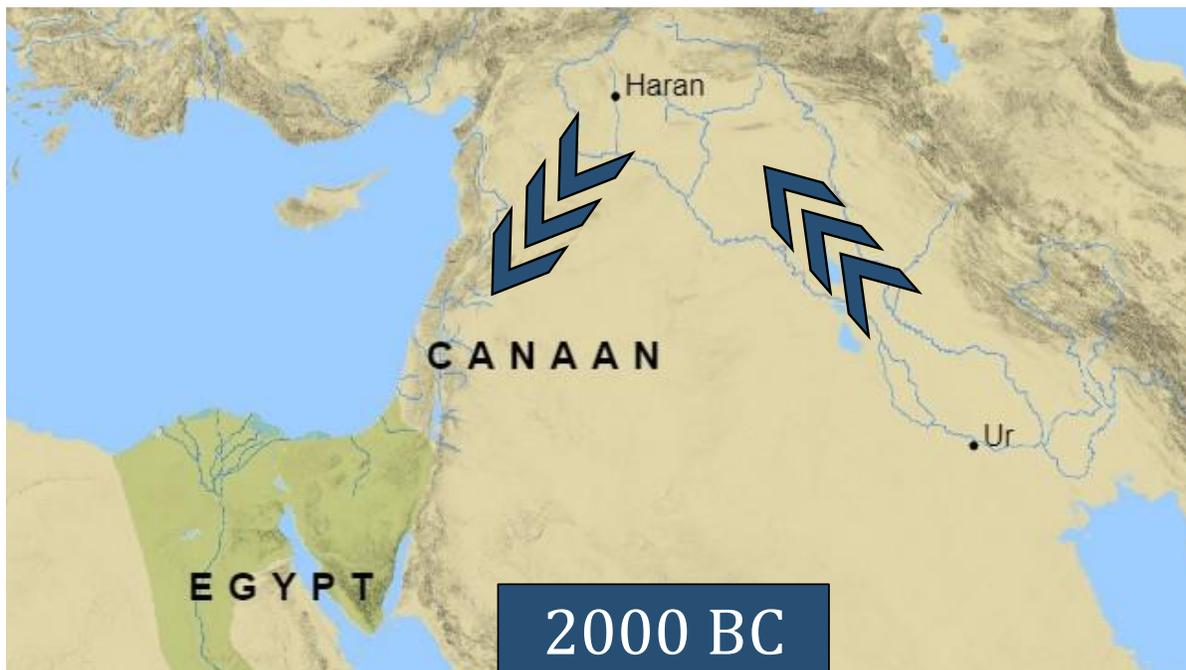
FIRST SERMON – Aug. 29, 520 BC
CONSTRUCTION RESUMES – Sept. 21, 520 BC
SECOND SERMON – Oct. 17, 520 BC
THIRD & FOURTH SERMONS – Dec. 18, 520 BC

HAGGAI 1:1-15

Introduction

Take your Bible and open up to Haggai 1. Over the course of the next several weeks we're going to be studying how God used this elderly, seemingly insignificant prophet to inspire the rebuilding of the Jewish temple after its destruction by the Babylonians around 600 BC.

But in order to really understand the ministry of Haggai, you need to understand the historical events that led up to that point in time.

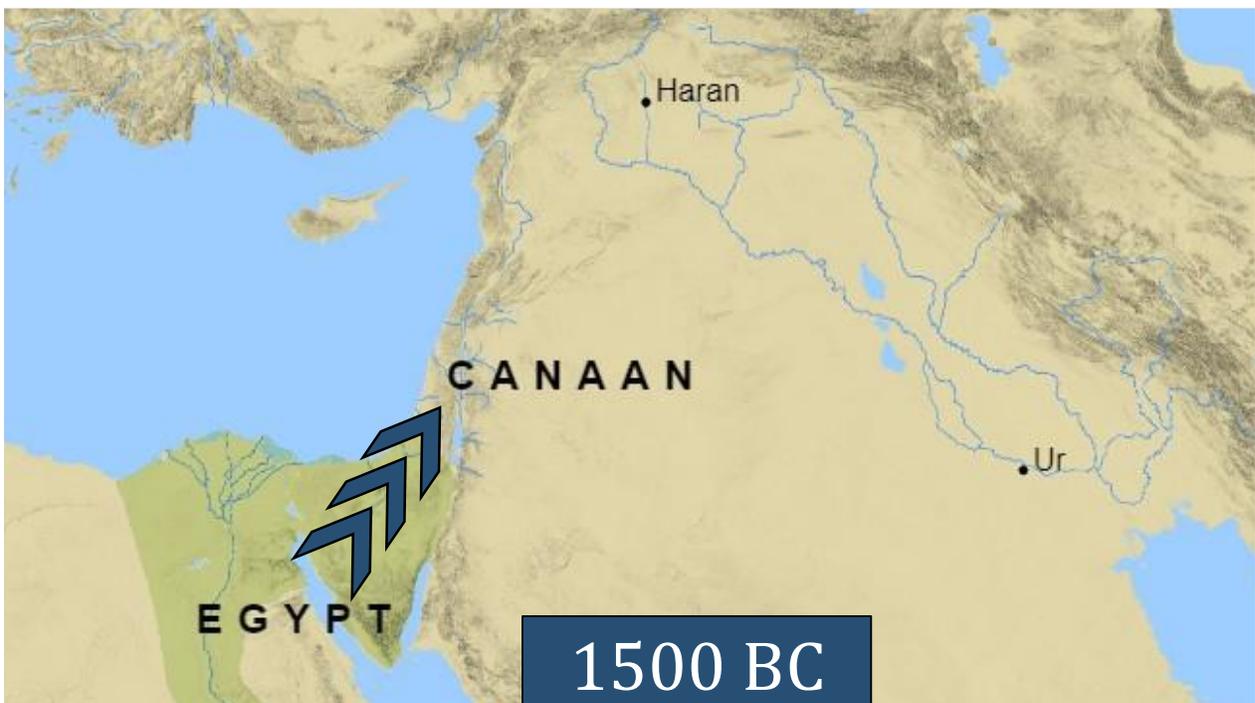


The story of the Jewish people really began around 2000 BC with the life of Abraham a middle Eastern nomad that God called to move in faith from his homeland of Ur to the Promised Land of Canaan. In so doing, God promised Abraham the land of Canaan, that his descendants would be as the sand of the sea and that through his seed (the Messiah) all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Abraham obeyed in faith.

Abraham -> Isaac -> Jacob (Israel – 12 sons would become the 12 tribes of Israel)



During a time of famine several hundred years later, the family of Israel temporarily took up residence in Egypt in Goshen where they grow exponentially from a family into a nation. When new leadership arose in Egypt, they stopped treating the Jews as guests and they forced them into slavery.



This was the case for several hundred years until God raised up Moses around 1500 BC to lead Israel on an exodus from Egypt to head back to the land that God had promised to Abraham and his descendants all those years ago.

God used Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, and He used his successor Joshua to lead Israel back into the Promised land of Canaan where they would dwell under the leadership of Judges for the next 500 or so years.

Then, around 1000 BC, Israel insisted on having a king like the surrounding nations did. God acquiesced, and Israel's first king was a man by the name of Saul.



King Saul -> King David -> King Solomon (built a magnificent temple to God) -> Rehoboam (fool under whose leadership the kingdom is split two)



The kingdom of Israel was divided into:

- Northern kingdom (10 tribes of Israel)
- Southern kingdom (2 tribes of Judah and Benjamin)



These two kingdoms continued for several hundred years until the northern ten tribes of Israel were invaded and conquered by the much larger Assyrian empire and carried away as captives from their homeland around 722 BC.



Then about a hundred years later, the southern kingdom of Judah was invaded and conquered by King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire. The Jews of the southern kingdom were carried away captive from their homeland around 607 BC. When Jerusalem (the capitol city) fell as part of that conquest, the walls were torn down, the temple was destroyed, and the city was left in ruins.

It seemed like game over for the Jewish people (they had a good 1500 year run from Abraham up to this point in time), except for it wasn't because God still had a plan, and He was going to keep His word in a most miraculous way.



About 70 years after the southern kingdom was taken captive by Babylon, Babylon itself was invaded and conquered by King Cyrus and the Persian empire around 539 BC. At this point in time, there was a Jewish scribe by the name of Ezra that kept detailed records of the miraculous events that God orchestrated following the fall of Babylon to Persia.

Listen to what Ezra wrote in Ezra 1:1-5 - 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, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Who is there among you of all his people? 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 the God,) which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. 5 Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.



- The story of the Jewish people was over. The line of the Messiah was destined to fail, or at least so it seemed until God put it in the heart of a pagan Persian king to commission the return of 50,000 Jews to Jerusalem to reinhabit the land and rebuild the temple that had been brought to ruins.
- Those 50,000 Jews included a...
- Political leader – Zerubbabel
- Religious leader – Jeshua
- Two prophets
 - o An old man by the name of Haggai
 - o A young man by the name of Zechariah

Sermon

Ezra 1 describes Cyrus' commission for all of these Jews to return.

Ezra 2 provides a list of the families that returned as well as the amount of gold and silver they gave towards the rebuilding project of the temple (i.e. roughly \$33 million worth).

- 50,000 people with 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6720 donkeys
- Ezra 2:68-69 - 68 And some of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the Lord which is at Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place: 69 They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pound of silver, and one hundred priests' garments.

- 61,000 drachmas -> 500 kg of gold -> the price of 1 kg of gold today is \$63,000 -> 500kg of gold is worth \$31.5 million
- 5000 pounds of silver -> 3 tons -> the price of 1 ton of silver today is \$500k -> 3 tons of silver is worth \$1.5 million.

Ezra 3 describes how that when the group arrived back, they immediately rebuilt the altar so that they could start sacrificing and worshipping even without a building. Then shortly after that, they laid the foundation, a monumental milestone in the rebuilding effort. (537-536 BC)

- 3:1-6 – before they rebuilt the foundation or the building, they rebuilt the altar. They started performing the daily sacrifices. They started worshipping. The lack of a building did not prevent them from worshipping God.
- 3:7-13 – in the second year after their arrival, they laid the foundation

They are making incredible progress in the rebuilding of the temple up until Ezra 4. Guess what happened in Ezra 4? Opposition mounted...opposition from the peoples in the surrounding regions. As a result of that opposition Ezra 4:24 says, “Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.”

- 4:4-5 - 4 Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, 5 And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.
- Opposition is described under every ruler.
 - Cyrus (4:5)
 - Darius (4:5)
 - Xerxes (4:6)
 - Artaxerxes (4:7)
 - Two perspectives on verses 6-23
 - This a parenthesis that flows logically but not chronologically. Ezra describes the opposition from Cyrus through Darius through Xerxes and Artaxerxes. Then he backtracks in verse 24 to the halting of the building of the temple during the reign of Darius.
 - Xerxes and Artaxerxes refer to Cambyses (8-year reign) and Smerdes the magician (7 month reign) whose reigns took place inbetween Cyrus and Darius.
 - Regardless, the work came to a stop in verse 24.
 - Ezra 4:24 - Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

- Because of opposition, the rebuilding effort of the temple was halted for somewhere around 15 years up until around 520 BC...the year in which God raised up a man to revive the rebuilding efforts.

Listen to what Ezra 5:1-2 says, “1 Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. 2 Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.”

In 540 BC, God miraculously worked through a pagan king named Cyrus to instigate the rebuilding of His temple, and in 520 BC, God miraculously worked through an old insignificant prophet, Haggai, to finish what began with Cyrus.

Haggai’s entire recorded ministry consisted of 4 short sermons preached over a 4-month period, and yet God would use the faith and the zeal of this seemingly insignificant man to inspire a people to rise up and rebuild the house of the Lord. Today, as we begin our study of his ministry. we are going to look at the first sermon he preached nearly 2500 years ago in the summer of 520 BC.

Look with me at Haggai 1:1.

Sermon

1 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,

The Date of the Sermon – in our modern system of dating (August 29th, 520 BC)

The Preacher of the Sermon – Haggai (whose preaching ministry lasted 4 sermons, and whose preaching I bet a lot of you would have liked because it was short and very direct, very easy to understand)

- Whereas Zechariah his younger counterpart that would follow him ministering for another 50 years was very cryptic and apocalyptic, Haggai was a biscuits and gravy kind of preacher.

The Audience of the Sermon – initially addressed to the political leader (Zerubbabel) who was the grandson of the last true king of Judah (Jehoiachin – who was replaced by Nebuchadnezzar with a vassal king named Zedekiah) and the religious leader (Joshua) who was the son of the last high priest Judah had before the Babylonian captivity. The sermon was initially pointed at the leadership but then expanded to the Jews in general beginning in verse 3.

What did he say in his sermon? His sermon consisted of three very direct points, and this morning, we're going to take some time to break them down beginning with his first point in the following verse which is...

1.) A Rebuke for Misplaced Priorities (1:2-4)

2 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.

Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts (*the Lord of Armies*) saying, This people say – the common view, the prevailing opinion among the people is that

The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built – Haggai begins his sermon by saying this, “The common view among the people today is that the timing is not right for God's house to be built.”

- The altar had been built. The foundation had been laid, but the timing (according to the prevailing opinion) just was not right to finish the project, and apparently the timing had not been right for 15 years.
- Why would that sentiment pervade the people? Why would they think that the timing was not right to finish what they had started all those years ago?
- It could have been for a variety of reasons, but there are two particular reasons that come to my mind. Perhaps it was because...
 - o There were obstacles.
 - If you think about it, that's what stopped the rebuilding efforts in the first place.
 - There was still opposition from the nations that surrounded them.
 - There was a new ruler of Persia. It was a time of political uncertainty.
 - They were in a recession, an economic downturn.
 - Perhaps they reasoned that because there were obstacles, the timing just was not right to finish building the temple. The stars had not yet perfectly aligned.
 - Application – there are always obstacles to the work of the Lord. There is always opposition, and there always will be opposition.
 - When I think about the current set up of our church here in the corner of this industrial building, one of the big needs we really have is space.
 - We need more space. We are crammed into 6000 square feet, and we realistically need closer to 10,000 square feet. That's what our building emphasis is all about, praying and believing and giving towards meeting that need.
 - But Pastor, don't you realize there are obstacles?

- Pastor, don't you realize we're in California where outhouses sell for half a million dollars?
 - Pastor, don't you realize there's inflation? Do you not see the rising interest rates?
 - Pastor, there's not a lot of inventory, and we're headed for a down turn, and we're in an area where a lot of people don't know the Lord.
 - Friends, there are always obstacles! And there will always be opposition, and if our attitude is that we will only move forward when the path is free of obstacles, then my friend the timing will never be right. If we are going to be used by God we must not be deterred or discouraged by the obstacles that line the path. For our God is bigger than any obstacle that lines our path.
 - Perhaps they thought the timing was not right because of the presence of obstacles. That's what had stopped the rebuilding efforts in the first place.
- Perhaps they thought the timing wasn't right because there were distractions/other priorities in their lives (Sorenson, 2007)
 - "Man, I know that this would be great and God could be glorified in this temple, but Haggai, I've got some other things going on in my life right now. I've got crops to plant. I've got a business to run. I've got a swimming pool to install. I've got a vacation to take."
 - Application – I'm here to tell you this morning that just as there will always be obstacles that threaten to discourage us from the work that the Lord has called us to, there will always be lesser things that seek to distract us from the work that the Lord has called us to.
 - Things like hobbies, vacations, careers, and luxuries...things that are not bad in and of themselves, but that become idols when they replace God as the number one priority in our lives.
 - In Matthew 6, Jesus did not say to give God the left overs of our lives. He said to seek ye first the kingdom of God.
 - The Jewish people had become discouraged by opposition and distracted by pleasures to the point that the common view among the people was that the timing was not right to invest in God's house, and that sentiment persisted for 15 years.

3 Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,

- Here was God's response to that sentiment...

4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?

You say that it's not the right time to invest in the work of the Lord, and yet you say such things from the comforts of your own fully finished homes...while my house lies in ruins. Is it time for you to dwell in your furnished homes while my house lies waste?

Application – There was a clear visible need as it pertained to the house of God, and Haggai began his message by directing the attention of the people to that need.

Point 1 – Haggai issued a rebuke for misplaced priorities

But then he went on to explain...

2.) The Results of Misplaced Priorities (1:5-6, 9-11)

5 Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.

Think about your behavior. You have prioritized your own self-interests over God's, and what has been the result of your misplaced priorities?

6 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.

Ye have sown much and bring in little – as farmers, you've planted a lot. Haven't you? And yet how have the harvests been? Pretty light recently. Hmmm I wonder why that it is.

- Haggai 1:10-11 - 10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. 11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.
- Haggai 2:15-17, 19 - 15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord: 16 Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. 17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the Lord. 19 Is the seed yet in the barn? 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.

Ye eat, but ye have not enough – you're eating, but not enough

Ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink – you don't have enough drink

Ye clothe ye, but there is none warm – you don't have clothes

- You have prioritized the comforts of your own life over the glory of the God that brought you here from Babylon to rebuild the temple, and what has the result been?
- The basic needs of food, water, and clothing in your life are not even being met.

And he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it in a bag with holes – When you get your paycheck and you deposit it in your bank account, it's like there's a hole in the bottom of the account, because when you go back in later that day to look at your balance, you discover that the money is gone. Where did it all go?

- “The money they did make would not make ends meet. It was as if their bag (i.e., their bank account) had a hole in it. There may have been a steep rise in inflation.” (Sorenson, 2007)

9 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.

Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little – you planted. You invested, and you expected a substantial harvest, but when the harvest actually came, it was significantly less than what you had hoped for.

God, why is this happening? Why does everything we touch turn not to gold, but to ashes? Look at God's answer.

And when ye brought it (your meager harvest) home, I did blow it away – the little that you did bring home I soon brought to naught.

- You want to know why your fortunes have soured?
- It wasn't bad luck. It wasn't natural causes. It was me. I did it.
 - o What? Why would you do that, God?

Why? Saith the Lord of hosts – You want to know why? I'll tell you why.

Because of mine house that is waste, - I brought you from Babylon to Jerusalem to rebuild my house, to glorify my name, to advance my purposes, and it's been fifteen years and my house is in ruins. You have neglected the work that I called you to. You have removed me from the throne of your heart.

Meanwhile...

and ye run every man unto his own house. – You have all hastily busied yourself with the affairs of your own homes and your own comfort. You have put your house above my house. You have prioritized your personal pleasure above my divine purposes.

- You have forgotten your place. You have forgotten that I am God and that you are not. You have forgotten that my life does not revolve around yours, but yours around mine.
 - o I didn't just save you from bondage so that you could live comfortably in the leisure of your own home. I saved you for a purpose, and you have forgotten that purpose.

- You have misplaced your priorities. You have forgotten your purpose, and in response I have brought the works of your hands to naught.
 - o As I think about what God did with the Jews, it's a reminder to me that God's economics make no sense.

Application - I say that as someone who graduated as summa cum laude with a degree in economics and then got an MBA on top of that...who lives, breathes, and sleeps numbers and likes it.

- God's economics make no rational sense because what the Scripture teaches about finances takes faith.
 - o The Scripture teaches that what you sow in generosity to God's purposes, you reap in the harvest of God's provision. That principle of giving in faith (trusting in God's provision) is scattered all across the pages of Scripture.
- Luke 6:38 – Jesus says give and it shall be given unto you.
- 2 Cor. 9 – sow a little, reap a little. Sow a lot, reap a lot.
- Prov. 3:9-10 - 9 Honour the Lord with the firstfruits of all thine increase (first dibs on your finances) :10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty (why? Because God will fill them)
- The Scripture teaches that what you plant in generosity to God's purposes you reap in God's provision.
 - o What had happened here with the Jews was the opposite. Rather than prioritizing God's work in building the temple and depending on God to provide their needs, they had put themselves and their own needs first...and do you know what God did? He said, "Fine." ...and He took everything from them.
 - o Matthew 6:33 – but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.
 - It takes faith to give God first dibs when it comes to your life and your finances, but when we do, God always keeps His Word.

Haggai said to the Jews, "You have leaned on your own understanding and looked out of your own self interests. You have prioritized your comforts over God's calling, and what has it brought you? Nothing."

10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.

Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew – I have made the climate so dry that there's not even dew on the ground in the morning.

- “In the dry season (April-October) morning dew, often heavy in Palestine was essential to the growth of summer crops. So the absence of dew brought about by God was devastating.” (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983)

and the earth is stayed from her fruit –the ground has stopped producing crops

11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains – in judgment on the people for their misplaced priorities (for neglecting His house), God withheld dew and God withheld rain, the absence of which affected their three primary crops.

The drought came upon

And upon the corn (*the grain*), and upon the new wine (*grapes*), and upon the oil (*olive crop and olive oil*), and upon that which the ground bringeth forth – anything else the ground produced

Further, the drought came upon

And upon men, and upon cattle –no water -> no crops -> not enough food for the people or the animals

And upon all the labour of the hands – the result of God’s judgment on their misplaced priorities was that all of the labor of their hands was for nothing

Haggai issued a rebuke for their misplaced priorities.

- You have allowed discouragement and distractions to deter from the work God has called you to. How long will you sit in the comfort of your fully furnished homes while God’s house lies in ruins?

Haggai detailed the results of their misplaced priorities.

- Because you have placed your comforts above God’s calling, God has taken the works of your hands and brought it to nothing through a terrible drought.

Then Haggai provided the people with...

3.) An Invitation to Respond (1:7-8)

7 Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.

This morning, I want to challenge you to do the same. Consider your ways.

Have you placed your comforts above God's calling on your life? Do your time, talents, and treasures revolve around your wishes or God's? Have you allowed discouragement or distractions to deter you from the work that God has called you to?

Haggai says, "I want you to think about what you've done, and I'm going to tell you exactly what you need to do."

- I love how straight up and to the point Haggai is.

8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.

Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house – Go up the mountain. Get the wood. Build the house.

- Let me summarize that for you this morning: get your priorities straight and take part in the work that God has called you to do.
- "The need for bringing timber down from the mountains may imply that they had used up for their own houses the lumber purchased for rebuilding the temple a few years before (Ezra 3:7)." (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983)

When you do that...when you do the work that I brought you here for...When you put me first...

And I will take pleasure in it And I will be glorified, saith the Lord – When you, in faith, take part in the work that God has called you to...do you know what happens? It pleases God, and it glorifies God.

- I don't know about you, but in my life, there is nothing more that I want than to please my Father and to glorify my Father.
- How do you do that? Faith...faith... In faith, you do the work that God has called you to do.

Make no mistake about it. When Haggai told the people to go up the mountain, to get the wood, and to build the house, that was a command that took incredible faith to obey.

- Think about it. If you were in the middle of a drought with little food and water, not sure of how you were going to make ends meet, not sure where your next meal was going to come from, then how much faith do you think it would have taken for you to drop everything and start construction on the house of God? A lot.
 - o God, how's the temple going to feed my family? Build the house, and I'll feed your family. Seek you first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be provided for you.
 - o God, that doesn't make sense. Why don't you provide the rain, and then we'll build the temple...Nope. That's not how it works. God works in ways so that when it is all said and done we do not give glory to the rain. We give glory to Him.

- The call to build the house was an invitation to respond in obedient faith.
 - o An invitation to follow His direction and trust that He was going to provide on the other end.
 - o In faith, build the house, and I will bring the rain.

Illustration – story of how HBC got into 4098 Calle Tesoro

- There was a pretty cool story I heard a while back about a church plant, and it was actually a church that was here in southern California.
- The church had started and God was growing it, but as is the case with most church plants in southern California, they struggled with finding a permanent place to gather.
- Over the first several years of their existence, they were in and out of a number of different schools that they rented. They had to set everything up and tear everything down for every single service, and for different reasons they had to switch back and forth between different schools.
- They were trying to find a long term meeting place that they could lease, but there just wasn't a lot of inventory on the market. There was this one building that had just popped up. It wasn't a church, but it had been used as some sort of religious facility. Any ways they thought they could make it work, but it was way out of their price range. Nevertheless, they put in a lease offer sheet offering to pay about half the rent of what the space was actually worth. A couple weeks past. They hadn't heard anything back which was fine. It was a long shot anyways.
- Then out of nowhere the Pastor got a call from the school they were renting at the time basically saying that they would no longer be able to meet there. It was crushing. He was tired and discouraged and not sure what they would even do for that weekend. He cried out to God, and wouldn't you know it? That same day, he got a notification from the church's realtor that the building owner had accepted their lowball offer for the leased space. One door closed and the same day God opened the next one. They had services in that leased space that weekend.
- Folks, you know what the name of that church plant was? Horizon Baptist Church...and the leased space that God provided is the one that you are sitting in right now.

God is in the business of sending rain for those who will climb up the mountain in faith and put Him first. May we fill this house with faith in our God this morning.

How did the people respond to Haggai's message?

12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, 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 did fear before the Lord.

13 Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the Lord.

14 And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God,

15 In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

May we do the same.

HAGGAI 2:1-9

Review

Take your Bibles and open up this morning to Haggai 2.

As you are turning there, I want to remind you of what we covered last Sunday previously on Horizon Baptist Church.

I want you to recall that around 607 BC the Babylonians conquered the southern kingdom of the Jews. When they did, they destroyed everything in Jerusalem (the city, the walls, the temple), and they took the Jews captive to Babylon.

For the next 70 years or so the Jews remained in Babylonian captivity until God raised up a Persian king by the name of Cyrus who conquered Babylon around 539 BC.

That regime change would turn out to be incredibly significant for the Jewish people who were in captivity, because God would put it in the heart of this Persian king to send 50,000 Jews back to Jerusalem to repopulate the city and rebuild the temple.

That's exactly what happened. All of those Jews, including Zerubbabel (the political leader), Joshua (the religious leader), and Haggai (the prophet whose ministry we are studying) made the journey back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.

Shortly after they arrived, they began making great progress in rebuilding the temple that the Babylonians had destroyed some 60-70 years prior. Around 537-536 BC, they rebuilt the altar for sacrifices. They then laid the foundation, but shortly after the foundation was laid, opposition arose. As a result of that opposition, work on the temple halted around 535 BC...and it stayed that way for roughly 15 years...until 520 BC when God raised up a man (the prophet Haggai) to call the people back to the work of the Lord.

He preached his first sermon on August 29th of that year. It was a pointed message in which he rebuked the people for their misplaced priorities, for allowing God's house to lie waste for 15 years. He then explained in detail the results of their actions. The severe drought they were facing and the economic recession it had brought about were no accident. They were acts of God's judgment on the people for living in disobedience to him for over a decade, having forgotten God's calling on their lives.

Then Haggai ended that first message with an invitation to respond. He said, "Drop what you're doing. Go up the mountain. Get the wood, and build the house." How did the people respond?

Well, according to verses 12-15, after 23 days of perhaps planning and gathering supplies, on September 21, 520 BC, work on the temple finally began again. That's where we left off last week at the end of Haggai 1.

Look with me this morning at Haggai 2:1 as we discover what happened next.

Sermon

1 In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, saying,

2 Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah (*the political leader*), and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest (*the religious leader*), and to the residue of the people, saying,

Haggai's first sermon took place on August 29th. Construction began 23 days later on September 21, and now we are in October about a month into the rebuilding project as Haggai prepares to deliver his second sermon.

- Whereas his first message was more of a rebuke to the people because they had gotten distracted, his second sermon was more of an encouragement to the people because they had gotten discouraged.
- Furthermore, I don't think the timing of Haggai's second sermon was an accident either. October 17th (the date of this message) was the last day of the Jewish festival of tabernacles.



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- That festival was an annual celebration in which the Jews remembered their wilderness wanderings. It was a festival in which they looked back at the time in between their exodus from Egypt and their arrival in Canaan. That time period of wilderness wandering was one in which the people had no permanent homes. They dwelled in tents and guess who also dwelled in a tent during this time period? God did. They had no temple. They had a tabernacle/tent in which they worshipped God during their travels through the desert.

It's the last day of this festival in which the people were gathered together to remember and celebrate God's provision for them during their wilderness wanderings, and Haggai is

going to piggyback off of that context to deliver the second of his four sermons to the people.

What did he say?

Well, the first thing he did was to address the discouragement of the people.

1.) The Discouragement of the People

Disinterest had been overcome in Haggai's first sermon, but now the threat of discouragement loomed large. (Phillips, 1998, p. 252)

And yet, before responding to the people's discouragement, Haggai asked three rhetorical questions that were meant to shine a light on the people's discouragement and draw it to the surface.

Look at the questions he asked in verse 3.

3 (1) Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? (*that saw it before the Babylonians destroyed it*) (2) and how do ye see it now? (*how does it compare?*) (3) is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

When reality falls short of our expectations, discouragement inevitably sets in. Amongst those Jews who were part of the rebuilding effort, there were apparently a number of the elders who had been around long enough before the fall of Jerusalem to remember what Solomon's temple used to look like. They were those who had seen the house in its first glory.

- "Solomon's temple had been one of the unsung wonders of the world. The temple glistened with precious stones and the whole house was overlaid with gold. It was literally painted with gold. Some have estimated that Solomon's temple contained nearly half the world's gold supply at the time, and that the value of the temple may have been over a billion dollars." (Phillips, 1998, p. 253)
 - o It was something else.
- Haggai began his message with a series of questions directed to the seniors among the people...seniors who had allowed comparison of what God had done in the past to discourage them in the midst of what He was doing in the present.
- These folks should have been the ones leading the charge. They should have been the ones trusting most in God's faithfulness and provision. They should have been the ones working hardest to encourage the next generation to move forward in faith despite the obstacles...and yet they were doing the opposite. These aged men and women were being Debbie downers wallowing in discouragement spreading their Eeyore syndrome to as many people as they could come in contact with. They had been doing so for quite some time.
 - o Back when the foundation of the temple was laid some fifteen years prior, do you know how these men and women reacted to that wonderful achievement?

- Ezra 3:11-13 - 11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. 12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: 13 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 noise was heard afar off.

When they should have been praising God for what He was doing in the present, they were wailing over the fact that it was not what He had done in the past. They should have been encouraging the next generation pushing them forward, and instead, their negative attitudes were holding them back.

Application – In this church, we need some mature, experienced men and women of God that will not bemoan to this next generation how terrible things are and how unfortunate they are as Christians to be growing up in this time period. We need some mature men and women of God who will turn around to the next generation and tell them how good God is, how great it is to be a Christian, how God has been faithful in their life, and how the future is as bright as the power and promises of God Almighty.

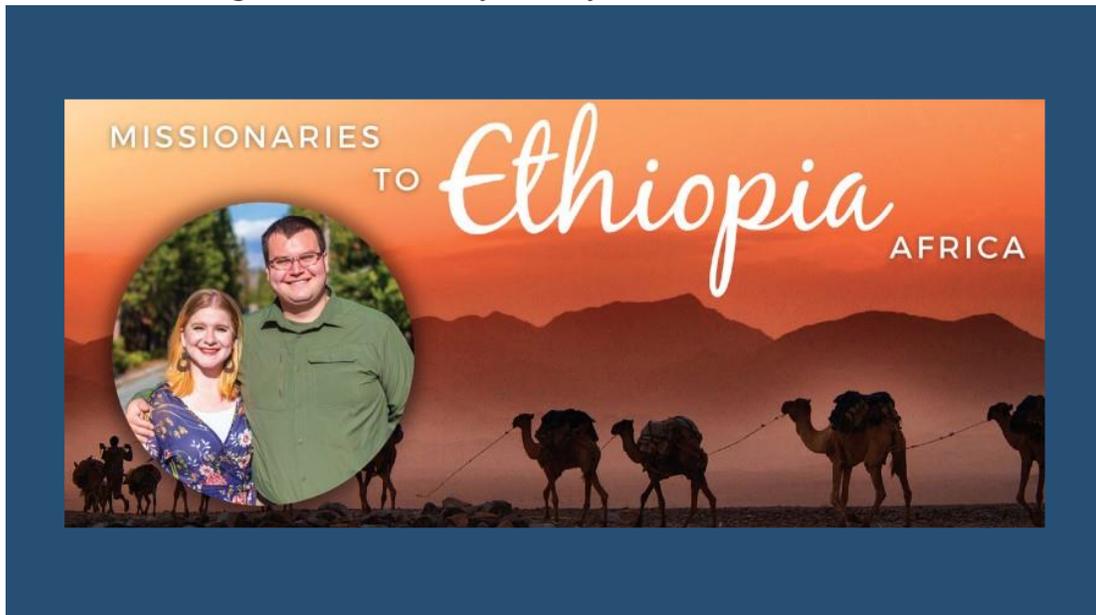
- We need some godly encouragers in our midst.



Illustration – when I think of encouragers in my life, I can't help but think of my late grandmother and grandfather. Looking back now, I realize that my brothers and I, growing

up, were a three pronged wrecking ball crew. We were off the walls crazy. My dad had a full head of gray hair by the time he was 30. My parents literally could not get baby sitters for us because we were such a handful...but do you know who was always happy to have us come stay with them? My grandparents up in Jacksonville.

- They loved us and encouraged us like nobody else. Their church up in Jacksonville was our home away from home. My grandma played the organ there. My papa was a deacon there, and he taught kids, teens, college students, married couples, and senior adults the Bible for over 65 years. They loved the Bible. They loved Jesus, and they loved people. The last Sunday School class they led was a senior citizens class called the Victory Class. They build that class from scratch, and in its hay day, that class was running 125 seniors every Sunday.



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- My brothers and I were such knuckleheads, but my grandparents were always such godly examples and encouragements to us. My brother Tim is going to Africa with his wife as a missionary this year. We're getting together one last time as a family in May, and then they're leaving to go to Ethiopia. Why Ethiopia? When my brother was a teenager he went on a missions trip to Ethiopia that changed his life. Guess whose church he went with? It wasn't ours. It was my grandparents' church. They were a big part of making that trip happen for him. They didn't discourage the faith of the next generation. They did everything they could to encourage it.

We need some godly, experienced men and women in our church who will encourage the next generation to love and serve Jesus.

Don't ever minimize the working of God because it looks smaller from your perspective (in a child's heart; in a teenager's heart). For if God is at work at all, then what He is doing is not insignificant. For little is much when God is in it.

Haggai asked these men and women how they saw the current temple that they were rebuilding. He was drawing out the fact that in the eyes of many of them it was nothing like the old one. But what many of them failed to understand was that what made the temple great was not the gold painted on the walls.

It was the God that inhabited it. It was the worship that took place within it. They were so consumed with how they saw it that they failed to step back and see how God saw it.

Haggai began his message by addressing (drawing to the surface) the discouragement of the people, but then he went on to provide direction for the people.

2.) The Direction for the People

He said, "I know that many of you are dealing with some discouragement right now as we're about a month into the rebuilding project and reality is falling short of your expectations. Let me provide you with some direction. Let me tell you what you need to do."

4 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:

Haggai provided the people with two concrete next steps in the midst of discouragement, the first of which was to have the right attitude.

What was the right attitude?

A.) The Right Attitude

Yet now be strong – take courage...have faith

- Get your mind off of the obstacles. Get your mind off of the discouragements. Don't bemoan what God is not doing. Have faith. Take courage in the fact that He is with you and that He is working.
 - o What Haggai directed the people to do was not original with Him. It is an oft repeated command found all throughout the pages of the Old Testament.
 - o When Joshua was preparing to take over for Moses and lead the Israelites from the wilderness into the Promised Land, do you know what God told him?
 - Joshua 1:9 - Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.
 - o When Solomon was preparing for the task of building the original temple, do you know what his dad David told him?

- 1 Chr. 28:10, 20 - 10 Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: **be strong**, and **do it**. 20 And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.
- Faith is the right attitude. It's an attitude of confidence in who God is and what He can do.



Illustration – Don Chitty & the Navajo Indians

- When I was 15, I went on a missions trip (also with my grandparents' church) to a Navajo Indian Reservation in Waterflow, New Mexico. We went there to help serve alongside of missionaries Don & Regina Chitty as they ministered to the Native Americans that lived there.
- Not long after I arrived and got to meet Pastor Chitty, he told me the story of how their ministry started, and it was a story I'll never forget. Don Chitty was a highly decorated war veteran that served in the Marine Corps. While in Vietnam, he earned twelve purple hearts and numerous other medals. Eventually, he was saved out a life of sin, and during a missions conference at his church, as a veteran, God spoke to him about working with the Navajo Indians, and he surrendered.
- He took his family to the reservation in New Mexico and began soulwinning trying to reach Native Americans, but at the outset he learned the hard way that a lot of them were very closed off to the gospel message, especially coming from an outsider. From the get-go, he had literally no success. Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, every week they would have their church services, and he

would preach to his wife and kids...and that was it. Weeks turned into months which turned into years, and for 3 years Don Chitty, despite being faithful in evangelism and preaching, saw literally no fruit. He could have gotten discouraged. He could have quit. He could have given up, but he didn't. He continued on in God's strength. He was strong. He was courageous. He had an attitude of faith.

- On one random Wednesday night, after three years of preaching to his wife and kids, 79 Navajos showed up. How do you explain that? God. Pastor Chitty led many of them to Christ. Six months later they were running 250, and now nearly 4 decades later, the mission has grown into one of the largest works with Native Americans in North America. How do you explain that? God.
 - o Friend, God is with us, and God is working, and sometimes when we're dealing with discouragements, we just need to buckle down and have the right attitude...an attitude of faith in our God.

We've got to have the right attitude, but we've also got to take the right action.

Look back down at what Haggai said. He said, "Be strong, and work!"

B.) The Right Action

And work – or as David told Solomon all those years ago, "Be strong and do it."

Be strong. Have faith and do the work that God has called you to do.

What does that mean?

For the Jews it meant to go up the mountain, to get the wood, and to build the house. Simple actions of obedient faith. For it took faith to put God first trusting that in His timing, He would provide their need...that He would bring the rain.

I know that there are discouragements, and I know that there are distractions, but if we are going to continue to be used by God, we've got have the right attitude and take the right action. We've got to have faith and give, trusting in God to use us and to provide in His timing.

Why? Why do we need to be strong and work? Why do we need to have faith and give? Why do we need to have the right attitude and take the right action?

Haggai provided two encouraging answers to those questions. We've seen the discouragement of the people. We've seen the direction for the people, and now finally this morning we see the encouragement from the Lord that was the foundation for Haggai's direction to the people.

- Here's what you need to do, and here's why you need to do it.

3.) The Encouragement from the Lord

Look back with me at verse 4.

4 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: (*why?*) for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts:

5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

Why do we need to have the right attitude? Why do we need to take the right action? Why? Why? Why?

A.) Because God is with us.

That truth is one of the most powerful and persistent promises found all throughout the pages of Scriptures.

Exodus 29:45-46 - And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.

- Haggai reminded the Jews that God was with them when they were slaves in Egypt.
- God was with them when Moses led them out of Egypt.
- God was with them when they dwelt in tents in the Sinai wilderness for 40 years.
- God was with them when Solomon constructed one of the most magnificent structures the world had ever seen.
- And God was with them now when the temple they were constructing would be nowhere near as majestic as Solomon's.
 - o All throughout the pages of Scripture, God encourages us with His presence.
 - o The reason He does that so often is because we are so prone to forget that truth. It's not that He has left us. It's that we have forgotten that He has been standing there all along.
 - o If you are a Christian this morning, then my friend there is no problem, no obstacle, no need, no situation that you face alone. He is with you, and He is with us.
 - Friend, our God owns the cattle on a thousand hills.
 - Our God knows the number of hairs on our heads.
 - Our God is working and moving and looking for Christians to use to seek and save the lost. The question is not whether He is willing, but rather whether we are.
 - Matt. 28:20 – 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.
 - Hebrews 13:5 - 5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Be strong and work! Have faith and give! Why? Because God is with us. The obstacles and the needs and the discouragements that we face, we do not face alone.

- He knows our situation with our facility here.
- He knows our heart.
- He knows our need, and He is with us in the midst of it.

Be strong and work. Have faith and give. Why? (A) Because God is with us

B.) Because God is working

6 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; 7 And I will shake all nations,

Haggai said to the people, "I know that your situation may seem insignificant and discouraging and dire at the moment, but your God is anything but insignificant, and your God is working, and there is coming a day in which your God will judge this world and the evil within it."

Haggai is here referring to the end times (Matt. 24:29-30), the tribulation time period in which God's wrath against sin will be poured out on an unbelieving world, a time period culminating in the violent shaking of the battle of Armageddon (Zech. 14:1-4).

"A people in the care of a covenant keeping God who is able to shake all nature and all nations with equal ease, need have no fear." (Phillips, 1998)

He is working to bring about justice, and He is working to bring about His glory.

...and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

And the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts – what is that which all nations desire? Some think that this is in reference to treasure and God adorning His temple with treasure, but I do not believe that the answer here is found in a what, but in a who. The desire of all nations is not found in an object, but in the person of Jesus Christ: God in the flesh.

- When Jesus was brought to the temple to be dedicated according to the law, listen to what was said of Him by Simeon in Luke 2.
 - o Simeon took the baby Jesus into his arms, and he said this: "29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

- “Though the ultimate reference is to the glory of God in the millennial temple (Ez. 43:1-12), Christ’s bodily presence in the temple at His first coming may also be implied in Luke 2:32.” (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983)
- The first temple was a wonder of the world, one of the most remarkable architectural structures ever built...and in that sense, the second temple would be no comparison. But the second temple would have one thing that the first temple lacked: the physical presence of God in the flesh, Jesus Christ.
- It was there in that temple that they were building that Jesus Christ was brought as a baby to be dedicated to God. It was there that as a 12 year old boy He astonished the religious leaders with His knowledge of the Scriptures. It was there He would sit and teach as a rabbi. It was there He would overthrow the tables of money changers. He filled that house with glory during His time on earth, and He will do so again when He returns the second time. (Phillips, 1998, p. 255)
 - o John 1:14 - And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Application - Do you see the significance of what was happening here in Haggai 2? The people looked at the temple that they were rebuilding, and those who had seen the splendor of Solomon’s temple were discouraged because all they saw was a building. They did not see what God would do within that building. They did not realize that they were laying the bricks upon which the Son of God would walk 500 years later.

- When God is working, there is no such thing as insignificant. Don’t ever belittle the small things that God is doing because nothing God does is small. You might think to yourself, “Well, we’re just a small church, a small gathering of believers. In the grand scheme of things, we are pretty insignificant...and in thinking those things, you’d be half right. We are insignificant, but our God is not. and God delights in taking that which is insignificant and using it in remarkable ways to bring glory to His name.

8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.

“Solomon’s temple was encased in gold as if it were as cheap as paint. But what need did God have for gold? All the gold on earth was His. If He wanted to, He could create whole galaxies of gold. The value of the gold was determined by the sacrifice and devotion of those who gave it. Those who did not have gold but gave what they had out of love and gratitude pleased God just as much as the wealthy who gave their gold.” (Phillips, 1998)

Psalms 24:1 - The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

Psalms 50:10-12 - For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

The earth is the Lord's and everything within it. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and He promised the people that...

9 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.

The temple they were rebuilding would have a glory greater than Solomon's temple not because of the gold upon it, but because of the presence of the Messiah within it. Beyond that, the ultimate fulfillment of this greater glory will be in the end times during which God will set up His millennial kingdom of peace upon the earth. (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983)

My friend, be strong and work. Have faith and give. Why? For our God is with us, and our God is working and through giving in faith, we can not only have a part in what He is doing, but in what He will do as well. This morning as we come to the close of our youth takeover service, I ask you, "Will you fund the future with me today?"

Illustration – voicemail from Nana

- My grandmother and grandfather both passed away in 2021. I can't have any more encouraging conversations with them, but I have saved on my phone some voicemails that I will from time to time go back and listen to. There was one in particular from the fall of 2020 from my grandmother that was particularly meaningful. It was at the height of all the Covid craziness and a lot of other issues. In that voicemail, she said this:
 - o I'm much in prayer for you and your work there. I trust that your people are hanging with you and doing a good work, and I trust that your situation there will get easier. And the lord will work things out for you. Take good care and know that the Lord loves you and I love you and I love your family.
 - o Before passing she insisted that I have her dad's pulpit, and it's wasn't cheap either. It cost like \$600 to ship that thing cross country. But that pulpit is the pulpit I preach from every Sunday.
 - o Even to the end, as her dementia was progressing, her heart was to encourage and support those who would come after her...and though she is gone, her impact lives on, and it lives on in the man you see in front of you every Sunday.
- As we consider what the Lord might lead us to put on these cards, I'm not asking you to give to a building. I'm asking you to fund the future this morning...to encourage and support the next generation as you make an impact that will live on as well.

HAGGAI 2:10-23

Review



TIMELINE

ALTAR/FOUNDATION BUILT – 537-536 BC
CONSTRUCTION HALTS – 535 BC

FIRST SERMON – Aug. 29, 520 BC
CONSTRUCTION RESUMES – Sept. 21, 520 BC
SECOND SERMON – Oct. 17, 520 BC
THIRD & FOURTH SERMONS – Dec. 18, 520 BC

 **finish the story**

After the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, they got off to a great start. Between 537 and 536 BC, they rebuilt the altar so that they could start offering sacrifices, and then they laid the foundation. They were making great progress, but then opposition hit, and work halted on the temple for about 15 years between 535 and 520 BC (that's the time period represented by the dotted line on the slide).

What changed in 520 BC? In that year, God raised up a prophet by the name of Haggai to preach 4 messages over a 4 month period aimed at restarting and reenergizing the rebuilding of the temple.

He preached his first message in August of 520 BC. 23 day later the rebuilding efforts started, and then about a month into the project, Haggai delivered his second sermon, a message of encouragement to the people.

- "I know some of you are discouraged. Be strong and work, for God is with us, and God is working."

The rebuilding efforts continued and a couple more months passed until December 18, 520 BC on which date Haggai would deliver both his third and fourth messages.

Look with me this evening at Haggai 2:10.

10 In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, 11 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, 12 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. 13 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. 14 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.

Haggai began his third sermon with a parable on disobedience.

“It was now three months from the time the people had commenced to build, and two from the day when the second address was delivered. On the weather at this time depended the hope of the yearly crops.” (Spence & Exell, 1883)

“Sacrifices without obedience (in respect to God's command to build the temple) could not sanctify. Now that they are obedient, God will bless them, though no sign is seen of fertility as yet.” (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1884)

1.) A Parable on Disobedience

11 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,

Haggai made his third message interactive by involving the priests. He came to them with two questions, and he was going to use their answers to make a point.

The priests were the spiritual leaders of the people that conducted the sacrifices and ministered in the temple. They were experts on the law, and it was literally their job to know God's law, obey God's law, and teach God's law.

Illustration – What Haggai did here would be like if he came to our church and found me and Pastor Young and said, “Guys, I've got some questions for you.”

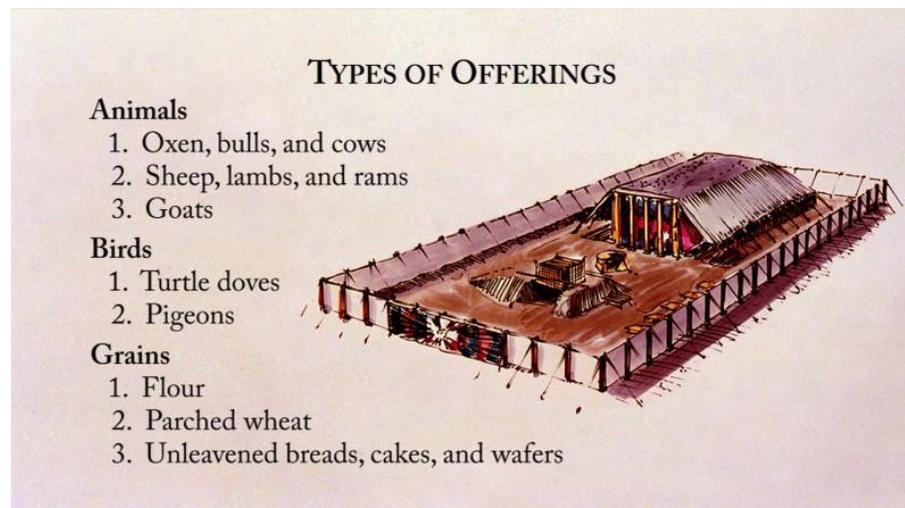
- Wonderful! What do you got?

12 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.

What in the world does that mean? Well, to a Jew living at that time, this would all be really obvious, but we're going to have to do a little bit of work tonight to understand the question that Haggai just asked.

If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment – suppose a man is carrying with him a piece of sanctified/holy meat

- What was holy meat? Are we talking venison, steak, prime rib, carne asada, pork (oh wait no, definitely not pork)?
- When Haggai talked about holy meat here he wasn't talking about the type of meat. He was talking about meat that was offered to God as a sacrifice on the altar.
- What does that mean?
 - o Back in the Old Testament before the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, Jews offered different types of sacrifices to God as acts of worship and for when they sinned against God.
 - In the Old Testament, there were 5 main types of sacrifices/offerings to God
 - Burnt offering (Leviticus 1; 6:8-13; 8:18-21; 16:24) – a voluntary act of worship to God in which you offered an animal
 - Grain offering (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23) – an act of thanksgiving to God in which someone offered God part of the fruits of their field
 - Peace offering (Leviticus 3; 7:11-34) – an act of thanksgiving followed by a shared meal (animal or grain)
 - Sin offering (Leviticus 4; 5:1-13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17; 16:3-22) – mandatory offering which was required when one sinned (animal for the common man, grain for the very poor)
 - Trespass offering (Leviticus 5:14-19; 6:1-7; 7:1-6) – particular type of sin offering that had to be a ram and was offered for an unintentional sin in which an offended party required reimbursement
 - o There were typically two types of things that they offered as sacrifices: grains and animals.
 - Illustration – hamburger bun and beef patty



(Redeemer of Israel, 2014)

- When you presented your offering, most of the time sacrifices were split into two, sometimes three portions:
 - o Illustration – have a kid bring up the piece of meat to me as the priest
 - o God’s portion – which would be burned up.
 - o The portion for the priests/Levites – which they would eat and which would provide their daily sustenance
 - o If there was a third, the portion kept by the person offering the sacrifice (Got Questions)
- In the Old Testament, when the priests would make the animal sacrifices, the flesh of the animal would be ceremonially sanctified/made holy by the altar on which it was offered. Furthermore, part of that meat was to be carried away and eaten by the priest as part of his provision. (Poole, 1990)
- Jeremiah 11:15 - What hath my beloved to do in mine house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee? when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest.
- Leviticus 6:25-27 - 25 Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord: it is most holy. 26 The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. 27 Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy: and when there is sprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment, thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in the holy place.

Suppose a priest is carrying with him some of this sanctified/holy meat that was offered on the altar...

And with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? – suppose his garment brushes up against some other common thing (i.e. bread, stew, wine, or oil), will the meat that has been ceremonially sanctified on the altar make those common items ceremonially sanctified as well?

And the priests answered and said, No. – this was a pretty straightforward question. The answer was obvious.

Then Haggai asked another question.

13 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.

If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean – In the Old Testament, one of God’s laws for cleanliness was that if you came in contact with a dead body, you had to quarantine. Does anyone know how long you had to quarantine? It was 7 days. (illustration – sort of like Covid)

- Frankly, at that period of time in world history, before the advance of modern medicine that was a good thing because dead bodies could carry with them all kinds of diseases and sickness. Right?
- Leviticus 21:10-11 - 10 And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes; 11 Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother;
- Leviticus 22:4-6 - 4 What man soever of the seed of Aaron is a leper, or hath a running issue; he shall not eat of the holy things, until he be clean. And whoso toucheth any thing that is unclean by the dead, or a man whose seed goeth from him; 5 Or whosoever toucheth any creeping thing, whereby he may be made unclean, or a man of whom he may take uncleanness, whatsoever uncleanness he hath; 6 The soul which hath touched any such shall be unclean until even, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water.
- Numbers 19:11-13 - 11 He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. 12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. 13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.

If someone is exposed to a dead body and thus needs to quarantine for 7 days...if that person comes in contact with any of these other common items, will those items then be considered exposed/unclean as a result?

And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. – The priests answered yes based on Numbers 19.

- Numbers 19:22 - 22 And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even.
- Illustration – If I am a healthy person and I come in contact with a sick person, can my health magically spread to them? No. Can their sickness spread to me? Yes.
- Your health can't spread by coming in contact with another person, but your disease can.
- Illustration – If am a clean person, and I rub up against a dirty person, will my cleanness rub off on them? No. Will their dirtiness rub off on me? Yes.
 - o The only exception to this is Jesus Christ.

Here's the point Haggai was making: sin our lives makes us unclean, but it doesn't just make us unclean, it makes our worship unclean as well.

14 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 (*in worship*) is unclean.

Haggai was particularly concerned with sin and worship. He said, “When you are living in unrepentant sin and then try to worship God like nothing’s wrong, that doesn’t work. Your sin has made you unclean, and it has made your worship unclean. Before you try to worship God, you need to confess and repent of your sin.”

This makes a lot of sense when you understand that “even though the temple was in ruins for 15 years, what had the people rebuilt? The altar...the altar for sacrifices, for acts of worship. All this time the people were living in disobedience to God (by not rebuilding the temple), and at the same time they were trying to worship God through sacrifices. What was God saying through this illustration? “Your disobedience has polluted your acts of worship. I don’t want your worship while you’re living in disobedience any more than you would want flowers from your spouse while they were living in open adultery. Why? The sin has corrupted the act of service.” (Phillips, 1998, p. 256)

“The application of the parable was “this people.” They were spiritually unclean. There was sin in their lives. The sin seemingly was their lack of dedication in doing God’s work—in this case the rebuilding of the Temple. They had become spiritually lukewarm, complacent, and lazy. Everything had become more important to them. They were busy building homes, raising families, making a living and developing their agricultural businesses. God proceeded to draw their attention to how their financial problems were a result of their lack of service to God. In other words, God had chastened them financially to get their attention.” (Sorenson, 2007)

Haggai provided a parable on disobedience, and then he reiterated the consequences of their disobedience and polluted worship.

2.) The Consequences of Disobedience

15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD:

And now, I pray you – I entreat you. I urge you.

Consider from this day and upward – I want you to think back from the period of time between today and...

Before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord – I want you to think on the period of time from today going back 15 years two when the foundation had been laid but no stones laid upon it.

16 Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty.

Since those days were – during that time period.

When one came to an heap of twenty measures – when you expected/budgeted/planned to have twenty measures of grain

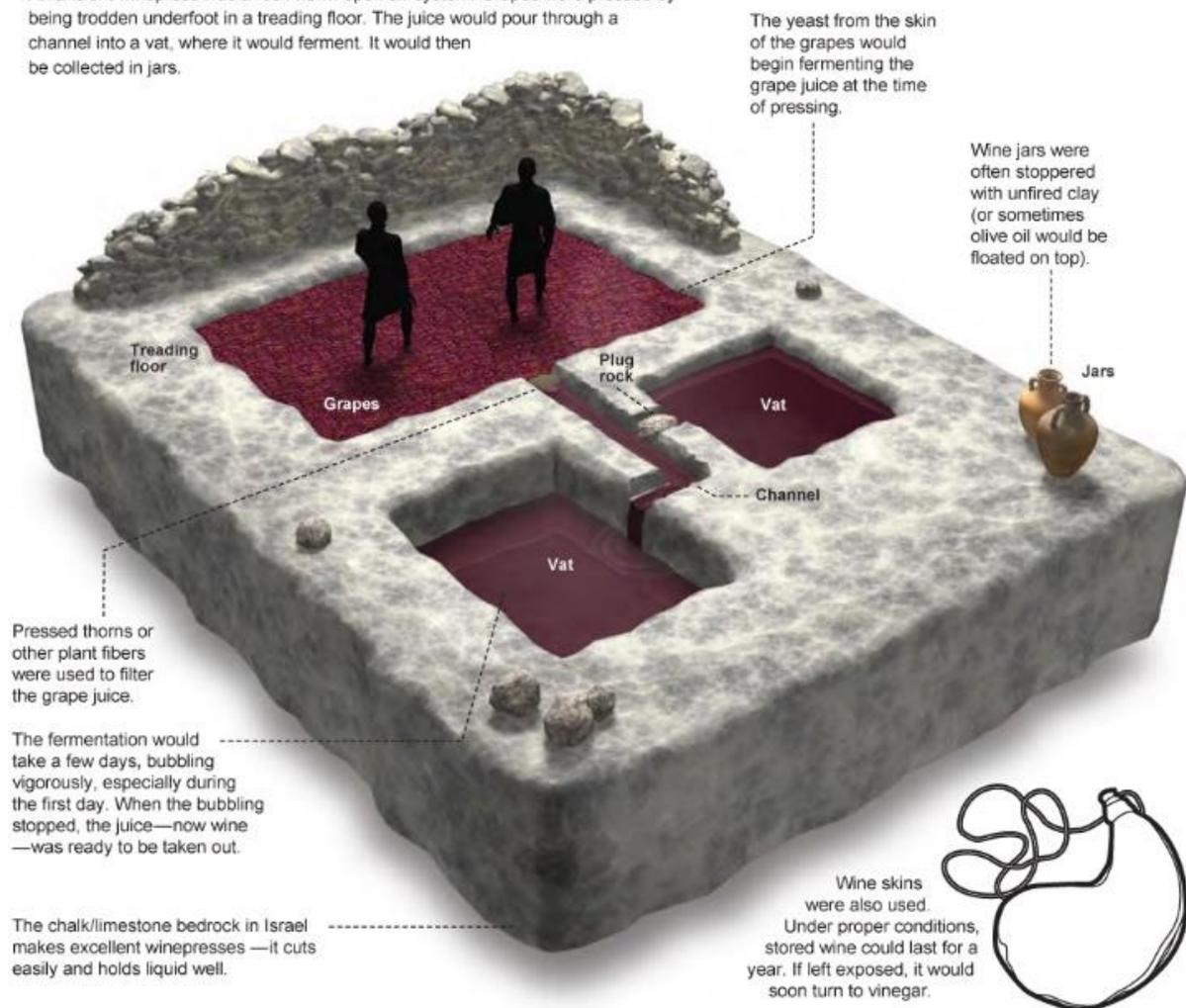
There were but ten – there were only ten measures.

- You disobeyed which polluted your worship, and then what happened as a result? Your grain harvest decreased 50%
- Perhaps this was the result of harvesting less than expected or it may have been the result of harvesting 20 measures, storing them, and then later discovering half of the grain had been lost perhaps due to disease

When one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press – when you went to the wine vat to draw out fifty vessels/measures of juice

A Winepress in Ancient Israel

An ancient winepress was a rock-hewn open-air system. Grapes were pressed by being trodden underfoot in a treading floor. The juice would pour through a channel into a vat, where it would ferment. It would then be collected in jars.



- What's a winepress?
 - o It consisted of two tubs: an upper tub and a lower tub. They would put the grapes in the upper tub and mash them. Guess what would happen? The juice would flow down to the lower tub where they would collect it in pitchers.
 - o When you went through this process, you expected to get fifty pitchers worth of juice, but...

There were but 20 – the harvest was 40% of what you anticipated

17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD.

I smote you with blasting and with mildew – I brought about different types of crop disease

- Deut. 28:22 - The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish

And with hail in all the labours of your hands – which would have destroyed the grape crop

- Psalm 78:47 - He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost.

Here's what God was saying, "Because of your disobedience and your corrupted worship, I disciplined you...not because I hated you, but because I loved you and wanted you to obey."

Application – kids, when your parents punish you, it's not because they hate you. It's because they love you, and they want what's best for you. For me, that was one of the most significant lessons I learned as a kid. I learned that if I obeyed my parents (1) things typically turned out better and (2) when I wanted something, they would typically say, "Yes."

I tried to get your attention through discipline...

Yet ye turned not to me, saith the Lord – You did not consider your ways.

- Recall that with the Jews, it wasn't just the discipline alone that led them to repent and start rebuilding the temple. It was that discipline combined with the preaching of the Word of God by Haggai.
 - o What a great reminder that there is power in the preaching of the Word of God.

Haggai 1:6 - 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.

Haggai 1:9-11 - 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. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

Haggai gave them a parable on disobedience. He explained the consequences of their disobedience, and then as the last point in his third sermon, he reassured them of the blessings of obedience.

3.) The Blessing of Obedience

18 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.

Haggai here repeated what he had said in verse 15. "I want you to think about the fifteen year time period between when the foundation of the temple was laid and today."

Consider now from this day and upward – I want you think back on this period of time

From the four and twentieth day of the ninth month – from today, which was 12/18/520 BC, going back to

The day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it – think back on this roughly 15 year period of time between the laying of the foundation and today

Haggai 2:15 - And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD:

Here's where it gets interesting.

19 Is the seed yet in the barn? 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.

Is the seed yet in the barn? – you've been at this with the temple rebuilding project for three months, and yet is the barn filled with corn? Have you started reaping the blessings of your obedience yet? No. Furthermore...

Yea, as yet – up to this point in time

the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, have not brought forth – it's been three months since you obeyed and began rebuilding the temple...and yet you have not yet seen the blessing from God for that obedience yet, have you? No.

- They had neither the core crops (corn, grapes, and olive) nor the luxuries (pomegranates and figs). (Waalvord & Zuck, 1983)

Have no fear.

From this day will I bless you – from this day forward the blessing begins.

- This is a great reminder to us that God's blessings on our obedience are not always immediate or apparent, but they are certain.

Two primary takeaways

- You can't live in unrepentant sin and then worship God like there's nothing wrong. Your sin corrupts your worship.
- When we do obey, God's blessings are certain, even though they are not always immediate.

Proverbs 3:9-10 - Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Malachi 3:8-11 - Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

Matthew 6:33 - But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Leviticus 26:3-13 - If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall

before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.

Then finally tonight, we'll finish up briefly tonight with Haggai's fourth sermon found in verses 20-23.

20 And again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying,

This was Haggai's final sermon, and it was delivered on the same day as his third sermon.

- Illustration - That was the Sunday morning message. This is the Sunday night message.

21 Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;

Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah – this message is addressed to one person, Zerubbabel, the political leader of Judah, who was the grandson of the last rightful king of Judah.

- “although Haggai's final message was addressed to Zerubbabel, who was the living legal representation of the throne of David, the prophetic focus of the message looked far beyond Zerubbabel to his descendant Jesus Christ and the end times.” (Phillips, 1998)

He began his message by saying...

I will shake the heavens and the earth – here God once again promised to bring down judgment upon world powers.

- It's like the Lord is saying to Zerubbabel, “I know that right now as it pertains to the world stage, you are an insignificant leader of a seemingly insignificant people, but there's coming a day in which I will bring down judgment on those world powers.”

22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, 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.

And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen – God promised to destroy those that stand in opposition to Him and His people

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 – in the last days these world powers will fight amongst themselves, but the ultimate overthrow of these world powers and the antichrist that leads them will take place when Christ returns at His second coming and destroys them at the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21)

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

In that day – the end times

,saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet – God promised to one day make Zerubbabel like a signet ring. What was a signet ring? It was a special ring that rulers wore to place their seal of approval on official documents. It was incredibly important as a symbol of the king's authority. It was significant.

- Gen. 41:39-42 - And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck
- What God was promising Zerubbabel here was that there was a coming a day in which he would be made significant. Why?

For I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts. – God had chosen him for a purpose. He was chosen as one through whose line the Messiah would come. Jesus would make Zerubbabel significant. This prophecy that has been partially fulfilled will one day be completely fulfilled in Jesus Christ. One day when Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom on earth, He will rule as king and function as the representative of God the Father's authoritative rule.

- Matthew 1:11-12 – 11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;
- Matthew 1:17 – So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.
- Zerubbabel himself was chosen as the one through whose lines the Messiah King would come. Zerubbabel was chosen as a type/representative of that coming Messiah King. That Messiah King, Jesus Christ, was chosen as both the object of the Father's love and the one to which He would one day delegate ruling authority in His kingdom.
- "This prophecy is Messianic. God's true signet is Christ. He is the one who is the executor of the divine will on earth. He is the One who is coming back to reign. After

Zerubbabel, the Jewish nation fell into a decline, in spite of the brief revival under Nehemiah. The promised land became a pawn in the struggles between Syria and Egypt, and as political power moved westward into Europe, Judea became just a small province in the Roman empire. The Jews fell into an obscurity that lasted for centuries. Then God sent His signet into the world. He was born of a woman of the royal family of David. The circumstances of the royal family had been so reduced that one branch was represented by a peasant woman living in a despised provincial town (Mary) and its other branch was represented by an unknown carpenter (Joseph). So the world did not acknowledge God's signet. His own people gave Him a cattle shed in which to be born and the world gave Him a cross on which to die. God's signet returned to heaven, but He's coming back. In that day He will impose all the authority of His throne on the world." (Phillips, 1998, pp. 260-261)

- Jeremiah 22:24-30 - 24 As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; 25 And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. 26 And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die. 27 But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return. 28 Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? 29 O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. 30 Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

Application

Haggai was an insignificant preacher who preached to an insignificant people led by an insignificant leader encouraging them to rebuild an insignificant building...or at least so it would have seemed on the surface...but beneath the surface God was working to bring about something significant. He was working everything together (the building, the people, the line of Zerubbabel) in preparation for the coming of His Son, the most significant event in the history of the world.

My friend, there is no such thing as an insignificant work of God. For little is much when God is in it, and God is working all things together for His good.

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