

## 37 - Haggai

Haggai

Key Verse:

### INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI

"Haggai" means "festival." Haggai must have been a young boy when he was taken as an exile to Babylon. He may have witnessed the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C. Now, he was an old man. He and Zechariah, a younger prophet, returned to Jerusalem to give encouragement and spiritual direction to the exiles who had returned to rebuild the temple (Ezra 5:1-2).

Seventy years after the exile to Babylon, Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon and gave permission for the exiles to return home. This fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer 29:10-14). However, after 70 years in Babylon, many of the exiles had made new lives for themselves and they did not want to return to rebuild the ruined city of Jerusalem. Those who returned with Zerubbabel had a clear mission: To rebuild the temple of God. They worked hard and laid the foundations (Ezr 3:8-10). Then, the Samaritans living in the land persuaded the Persian government to make them stop. About 15 years later, Darius became king, and government policy changed. But the people hesitated to start again. Haggai and Zechariah strongly encouraged Zerubbabel to finish the temple. It was finished and dedicated in 516 B.C. (Ezr 6:15-18).

The messages of Haggai were delivered during a four month period in 520 B.C..

### LET'S REBUILD THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

Haggai 1:1-15

Key Verse: 1:14

#### 1. Give careful thought to your ways (1-11)

The exiles had returned to Jerusalem by God's grace. They came with the mission of rebuilding the temple. They worked hard and laid the foundations, but the people of the land had used political tactics to make them stop work. Nothing had been done for fifteen years. During that time, things did not go well. The people worked hard to survive, but nothing worked out. Haggai challenged them to "give careful thought to your ways." (5,7) Because they only worked for themselves and had not rebuilt God's house or done any work for him, they did not have God's blessing. So all their work was vain and useless. We need God's blessing.

#### 2. The people obey (12-15)

The people, beginning with their leader Zerubbabel recognized the prophet as God's servant. They accepted his rebuke and repented and began to work on the house of the Lord again. The Lord was with them and they worked with spirit.

Prayer: Lord, help me to do your work first--with heart and spirit.

One Word: Do God's work first

## THE DESIRED OF ALL NATIONS WILL COME

Haggai 2:1-9

Key Verse: 2:7

### 1. Be strong and work (1-5)

The small remnant of returned exiles began to rebuild the house of God. They were poor, and the work was hard. They soon realized that they could not build a wonderful, magnificent temple such as the one Solomon had built. They were discouraged. Haggai encouraged them to be strong and work hard. God had promised to be with them. The temple was the symbol of his Presence among them. They did not have to worry about reaching the glorious standards of the past--they just needed to keep on building by faith.

### 2. The desired of all nations (6-9)

They built the house of the Lord as they looked forward to the coming of the Messiah--the Desired of all nations. God himself would come and fill his house with his glory. His coming would shake the nations of the world. The house filled with the Spirit and Presence of God is far more glorious than the magnificent building which Solomon had built.

Prayer: Lord, help us to build your house by faith. Fill us with your Spirit today.

One Word: Build a spiritual house

## GOD'S SIGNET RING

Haggai 2:10-23

Key Verse: 2:23

### 1. The way of holiness and blessing (10-19)

It is easy to become defiled, but hard to become pure. According to the law, a person is defiled if he touches something unclean. But a person is not made holy by touching something holy. God made a way for people to become holy and blessed. It is the way of repentance and forgiveness. In the Old Testament, blood sacrifices were made in the temple for the forgiveness of sin. These sacrifices point to Jesus, the Lamb of God. The people of Haggai's day needed to rebuild the temple. We need to come to Jesus with repentance and faith.

### 2. The Lord's Signet Ring (20-23)

A signet ring is the symbol of a king's authority. God's promise to Zerubbabel was fulfilled by Jesus. Zerubbabel stood in God's redemptive history as a direct descendant of David and an ancestor of Jesus. He led his people to repent and come to God and do his work.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for Jesus who has all authority in heaven and on earth. I come to him for forgiveness and blessing.

One Word: Jesus is God's Signet Ring