

Haggai

1. To understand this book we must review the circumstances that lead to this time.
2. This book is called by man a minor prophet. This is due to the length of the prophecy. No matter the length, it is still God's prophecy and it is important.
3. The date is 520 BC (approximate date and all dates used will be approximate).
4. Haggai is probably the human instrument that penned down this book (II Peter 1:21), but it was God who breathed it (II Tim. 3:16) and it is profitable for us.
5. This is written to the remnant of the Jews who returned to Jerusalem after 70 years of captivity in Babylon.
6. The purpose of this prophecy was to encourage and to awaken the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem to build the temple because they had become apathetic to the work of God.

A. Circumstances that lead to this time.

1. Israel had sinned and the Lord divided the nation after Solomon's reign and gave 10 tribes (the Northern Kingdom called Israel) to Jeroboam (who was not a descendant of David) who made two calves of gold and set them up as gods in Dan and Bethel. (I Kings 12:28-29) (945 BC)
2. This became a stumbling block to Israel and the Lord raised up Assyria to punish them, and in 721 BC the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom went into Assyrian captivity and were scattered and lost their identity as a tribes of Israel.
3. After the Northern Kingdom was taken captive, the Lord sent prophet after prophet to Judah, the Southern Kingdom, to warn them that they would face captivity also if they continued in their idolatry and in their failure to obey the Word of the Lord.
4. Jeremiah warned that Judah would serve the King of Babylon, who was on the verge of becoming a world power, for seventy years: (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10) Scripture does not predict that the Jews would be 70 years "at" Babylon but it does say that the Lord appointed a 70 year period for Babylon to rule over them.
5. In 609 BC, captivity began for Judah as she became under tribute to Babylon under the leadership of Jehoiakim, King of Judah. (II Kings 24:1-4) Jehoiakim allied with Babylon in rebellion against Egypt, whose king had just placed him in his brother Jehoahaz's place as king of Judah. (II Chron. 36:2-4)

6. Because of King Jehoiakim's rebellion against the King of Babylon after three years of tribute, (II Kings 24:1) in 607 BC Nebuchadnezzar came, besieged Jerusalem, took part of the vessels out of the house of God, and took the king's seed and princes--those who would have been possible future kings of Judah. (Dan. 1:1-4) Daniel and the three Hebrew boys we know as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were some of these princes.

7. In 597 BC Nebuchadnezzar came against Jehoiakim and carried him bound to Babylon along with more vessels from the house of God. (II Chron. 36:6-7)

8. Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim's son, began to reign in Jerusalem but after three months, Nebuchadnezzar carried him to Babylon along with thousands of captives including Ezekiel, and carried more vessels from the house of God. (II Chron. 36:9-10; II Kings 24:11-16) (597 BC)

8. Nebuchadnezzar set Zedekiah as king of Judah. (II Kings 24:17) He was supposed to be a puppet king, but he rebelled against the king of Babylon. Therefore, in 586 BC Zedekiah was taken and his eyes were put out and he was carried captive to Babylon along with many more captives. Also Jerusalem was burned, the walls broken down, and the temple destroyed. (II Chron. 36:11-21)

9. Jeremiah prophesied in Jer. 25:11-12 that God would punish the King of Babylon after 70 years of Judah being in captivity. In 539 BC this prophecy was fulfilled. (Dan. 5:1-6, 25-28, 30-31a) Along with Darius the Median was Cyrus the king of Persia, whose heart was stirred to let Judah go back to their homeland to build the house of God. (temple) (II Chron. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-2) He did this, not because he was saved, but because the usual policy of kings who conquered was to adopt the gods of conquered countries and win their favor by supporting their worship. The real reason was that the Lord turned his heart to do this. (Pro. 21:1)

10. Now the Jews were no longer in servitude. God had kept His Word. The 70 years of captivity had passed, but the city of Jerusalem and the temple still lay in ruins--desolate. The word of God spoke of 70 years of desolation; therefore, the 70 years was a dual prophecy: 1) The children of Judah would be in captivity for 70 years and 2) the temple would lie desolate for 70 years. Daniel understood this. (Dan. 9:1-2) This is Darius the Mede, not Darius the King of Persia as in Hag. 1:1 = different time and different king.

11. So Cyrus made a decree in 539 BC that the Jews could return to Jerusalem to build the temple. (Ezra 1:3-6) He even made available the vessels Nebuchadnezzar had removed from the temple and brought to Babylon. (Ezra 1:7-11)

12. Only a remnant had a heart for God and desired to return to Jerusalem. The sad part about it was the majority of the nation and most of the princes remained by preference in Babylon and Assyria where they were prospering. The remnant (42,360 - Ezra 2:64) was a feeble remnant when you compare this number to the total number of Jews. We do not know the total number of the Jews at this time but I'm sure it exceeds the number which came out of Egypt--about 2,500,000 = 2.5 million. Thus, this

remnant would only be about 1.7%. The majority were content with the world--the way things were.

13. The decree was made in 539 BC and they got things together and came to Jerusalem in 536 BC led by Zerubbabel, prince of Judah (Sheshbazzar; Ezra 1:8), who was of the tribe of Judah of the house of David. He is listed in the genealogy of Jesus in Mat. 1:12-13 as Zorobabel. This did not just happen by chance. God was and is in control.

14. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were excited and ready to build. So they built an altar, sacrificed to the LORD, kept the feast of tabernacles, and laid the foundation of the temple.

15. As they began to build, their adversaries tried to stop the work by various means:

A. Some came desiring to join up with them. (Ezra 4:1-2) These were the Samaritans, part Assyrian and part Hebrew. They came about when Assyria placed their people along side the Hebrews (of the poorest sort) left behind when Israel went into Assyrian captivity. They worshiped the idols of the Assyrians and then of Babylon. They lied to Zerubbabel because they did not seek nor worship the God of Judah. The devil will lie to you to get you to yoke up with him.

B. By weakening the hand of the people of Judah. (Ezra 4:4) By stopping supplies coming in to Jerusalem and by causing them to fear and doubt God's ability to do what He said.

C. By accusations against them. (Ezra 4:5) They hired counselors to frustrate the people's purpose. They wrote letters to the king of Persia saying that the people of Judah would rebel against their king when the city was built. (Ezra 4:12-13) This continued until 521 BC--about 15 years.

16. Finally in 521 BC the king of Persia--Darius the king--ordered them to cease the work. (Ezra 4:23-24) It probably wasn't a hard task to get them to quit. In fact, they were not getting very much done because they had become weary, worn, discouraged, sidetracked, and very unconcerned about the things of God.

17. Where's God? He's at work:

A. He caused the king to make a search in the house of rolls (Ezra 6:1-3) and he found where Cyrus made the decree to allow the Jews to build again the temple in Jerusalem. And that decree could not be altered, thus Darius made a decree to let the temple be done with speed. (Ezra 6:11-12)

B. He also raised up two prophets for such a time as this: Haggai (Hag. 1:1) and Zechariah. (Zech. 1:1; Ezra 5:1) By having two, God is establishing every word He says through them. (Deut. 19:15)

18. The purpose of this book is to encourage and to awaken the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem to build the temple and had become apathetic to the work of God.

19. Thus, Haggai gives four messages with each one dated. His ministry lasted a little shy of four months. In each message he deals with a different obstacle that was keeping them from accomplishing God's will and finishing His work.

20. May we apply this to ourselves and ask ourself if this is what is hindering the work of God in this place. (Rom. 15:4)

CHAPTER 1:

V. 1

1. "In the second year" = the prophet dates all his prophecies, as though he kept a strict diary of all the important events in rebuilding the Temple.

2. "Darius the king" = thought to be the fourth king of Persia.

3. "In the sixth month" = corresponds to about our September; thus, fall had set in and winter is just around the corner; we know this because Jerusalem is about the same degree north of the equator as we are.

4. "In the first day of the month" = the time of the new moon which was a time when the people assembled for worship; thus, it was an appropriate time for the preaching of Haggai's divine message.

5. "Came the word of the LORD by Haggai" = refers to the message the LORD laid upon Haggai (His chosen vessel) to deliver to Judah concerning rebuilding the temple.

6. "LORD" = Jehovah; the self existent one who stands alone with no aid from anybody or any other being in this world or out of this world; the self existent one who reveals Himself to man; the "I AM" who met Moses at the back side of the desert; Jehovah is concerned for His people.

7. "Prophet" = one who foretells and speaks out Jehovah's message; one moved by the Spirit of God declaring what he has received by inspiration (God breathed). (II Tim. 3:16)

8. "Unto" = to; the message was spoken to the leaders (Zerubbabel and Joshua) who in turn gave it to the people.

9. "Zerubbabel" = governor of Judah and political leader; his name means "born or begotten in Babylon;" he was sometimes called Sheshbazzar and was made governor of Judah by Cyrus (Ezra 5:14); he was a prince or ruler of Judah (Ezra 1:8) because he was of the royal lineage--from the tribe of Judah, of the house of David, the grandson of

Jehoiachin and is in the genealogy of Jesus in Mat. 1:12-13 (spelled Zorobabel); the son of Shealtiel, who is also listed in Jesus' genealogy.

10. "Joshua" = high priest and religious leader of Judah; this is not the Joshua who replaced Moses, for he lived about 950 years earlier and was not of the tribe of Levi; son of Josedech who was high priest at the time of the Babylonian invasion. (I Chron. 6:15)

11. "High priest" = chief priest; his chief duty was (once a year on the day of atonement) to enter into the Holy of Holies (from which the other priests were excluded) and offer sacrifices for his own sins and the sins of the people.

12. "Saying" = introduces what Haggai said.

B. Obstacles

1. Obstacle #1: Putting self ahead of the Lord. V. 1-15

1) The message--Consider your ways V. 5 & 7

V. 2

1. "Consider your ways" = verses 5 & 7; from two Hebrew words which mean to set or fix your whole inner being on what you are doing; take inventory of what you are doing--your ways, your actions, and your attitudes.

2. "LORD of hosts" = Jehovah Sabaoth; the warring name of God; properly denotes armies or military hosts organized for war; refers to the unseen realities of the angels who are represented as arranged in military order under their commander and king; communicates the idea of God as the Sovereign king whose reign and dominion is above every force or army on earth or in the heavens.

3. "This people" = not "my people" but "this people" to show the displeasure of the Lord.

a. Consider your excuses.

4. "The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built" = they thought that because everything did not immediately fall in place, it must not have been His will--the time has not come.

A. They did not understand Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the 70 years of servitude (people) and desolation (city and temple).

B. We need to remember that God's Word (His promises are infallible) incapable of error. At the same time we need to remember our own interpretations are fallible--are subject to error. (Rom. 3:4)

C. Instead of this prophecy being a tonic to them, it had become a narcotic. They had given way to the feeling that building the temple was hopeless; therefore, they became unconcerned and indifferent and God's cause suffered.

D. The people were getting use to being without a temple and that would prove fatal.

E. Sounds like today with those called the people of God--the church. Many are use to being without God and that will prove fatal. "It's not time yet."

a. No use to be concerned about revival because the Word of God does not foretell of a great revival toward the end of the age. Can you put your finger on Chapter and verse in the Bible where the revival of the 1600's and 1700's was foretold?

b. Consider your excuses.

a) I want to be saved sometime but not now. I have got some living to do. "The time is not come." Jesus called the farmer who was going to build bigger barns "a fool." (Luke 12:20; Pro. 27:1; James 4:14; Mat. 24:44; II Peter 3:9) Today may not be your day but if you take the attitude of indifference and unconcern you may miss God's time. (Heb. 3:7-8)

b. I want to do God's will in my life but I'm too busy. I don't have time right now. How easy it is to make excuses for not doing the Lord's work, then forget those same excuses when we want to do our own will. The weather is too bad to go to church but not to do what we want--to go hunting or shopping. I can't sit in those long church services but sit through a double-header baseball game and never complain.

V. 3

1. "By" = refers to the channel or human instrument the LORD (Jehovah) spoke through.

2. "Prophet" = foreteller; one moved by the Spirit of God declaring what he has received by inspiration (God breathed).

b. Consider your houses.

V. 4

1. "You" = "ye" = "your" = the returning remnant of Israel who came to Jerusalem after the 70 year captivity in Babylon.

2. "Dwell" = to live in.

3. "Cieled houses" = houses finished on the inside; probably covered with cedar boards from the cedars of Lebanon; no doubt it had taken a considerable amount of time to gather the material and do the work to cieled their houses.

4. "Is it time (to build your houses), and this house (the house of God; temple) to *lie* waste (ruin)?" = a thought provoking question--consider what you are doing.

A. You are providing for the body's comfort which is temporal, here today and gone tomorrow, but making no preparation for your soul which will either be comforted in heaven or tormented in hell. Without the temple they had no way to properly meet God.

B. This applies to the church, which is not the building but that visible body of baptized believers which the Lord builds and empowers. Without the church, (human instruments) no one will be saved. (Mat. 16:18-19)

C. Consider where your emphasis is--on your houses which represent material things or on the "church of the living God which is the pillar and ground of truth." (I Tim. 3:15; Mat. 6:33)

V. 5

1. "Therefore" = in view of the fact just mentioned.

2. "LORD of hosts" = Jehovah Sabaoth.

3. "Consider" = to set the mind to; examine.

4. "Ways" = course of action.

5. "Consider your ways" = from two Hebrew words which mean to set or fix your inner being on your actions.

c. Consider your lack.

V. 6

1. "Ye" = the remnant of the returning captives from Babylon.

2. "Ye have sown much" = they expended themselves to the fullest extent in the time of sowing; they spared no effort to insure prosperity.

3. "Bring in little" = harvested very little, even less than sown.

4. "Ye eat, but ye have not enough" = grain grown in drought lacks nutritional value; also there was not enough to satisfy; application: they that have an appetite for the things of this life, such as wealth, position, honor, and the praise of men, are constantly eating, but never satisfied; their souls hunger but they will not take of the "Bread of life" that they may live forever. (John 6:51)

5. "Ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink" = in drought times it takes more water, yet the water was not as pure for the streams and rivers were muddied and would not satisfy (Amos 4:8); those who drink at the fountains of this world will never be satisfied. (Isa. 55:1)

6. "Ye clothe you, but there is none warm" = the clothes they had, when put on, did not keep them warm from the winter's cold and they did not have anything left over to trade for more clothes; application: those flimsy garments of self righteousness cannot keep one's heart warm in the cold season of adverse circumstances, but the righteousness of God can.

7. "He that earneth wages" = a hired laborer; God did not only deal with the farmer but also the laborer as well.

8. "Earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes" = inflation, due to the drought, took toll on his wages; the money he received was not enough to purchase what he needed even though he thought it would be more than enough; it was as if he had his money in a bag full of holes that allowed the coins to fall out and be lost forever; application: the wages we earn by the efforts of our pride and self-seeking become of no practical value to our soul.

9. When we leave God out, our possession fail to last or fail to satisfy and our earnings vanish away. (Pro. 23:4-5)

10. These Jews knew God's conditional promise of Deut. 28--that if they honored and obeyed Him, He would bless them and their land and crops, but if they failed to obey Him, He would send a curse upon them and their land. But they had not trusted His Word (His promise), so they lost the blessing.

11. We need to remember that when God is forgotten, all labor is without profit.

V. 7

1. "LORD of hosts" = Jehovah Sabaoth.

2. "Consider" = to set the mind to; examine.

3. "Ways" = course of action.

4. "Consider your ways" = from two Hebrew words which mean to set or fix your inner being on your actions.

d. Consider the work to be done.

V. 8

1. "Go up to the mountain" = refers to the mountain of Lebanon where they had to go to get cedar lumber.
2. "Bring wood" = cedars of Lebanon.
3. "And build the house" = refers to the temple of God in Jerusalem; place where God said He would meet with His people.
4. "I" = "LORD" = Jehovah.
5. "I will take pleasure in it" = means the Lord would be pleased with the obedience of the people.
6. "I will be glorified" = means the completed temple would show forth to the world the correct opinion or estimate of who God is.
7. To build the temple of God would take work, labor, and sweat; therefore, the admonition to "consider." Lebanon was about 140 miles like a crow flies and many more miles uphill and down and around. They had no chain saws, sawmills, 18 wheelers, or timberjacks to get the job done. It would take hard labor to build the temple, but without the temple the people could not properly meet with God.
8. Application: the Lord's church will not be built by formal prayers or powerless sermons or social activities. It is a spiritual building and needs spiritual stones (I Peter 2:5)--souls quickened by the Holy Spirit of God. (Eph. 2:1) Where do these stones come from? We can plant and water but we need to go up to Mt. Calvary and have our sins forgiven and then pray in Jesus' name for sinners who are lost, that the Lord will give the increase. (I Cor. 3:6-7) That will take work and sweat and there will be opposition from the flesh (I Cor. 9:27), the world, and the devil. That's why Paul warned not to be weary in well doing. (Gal. 6:9)

V. 9

1. "Ye looked for much, and, lo *it came* to little" = they expected a good harvest but brought home less than they sowed; Isa. 5:10 shows the results of God's woes upon Israel because of their sin; "bath" = 8 gal; "homer" = 86 gal; ephah = 8 gal 3 pt or 1 bu 3 pts; therefore they only got about one tenth as much as they sowed.
2. "When ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it" = symbol of decay or waste.

3. "Why?" = then the "Lord of hosts" = the warring name of God answered this question.

4. "Because of mine house that *is* waste, and ye run every man into his own house" = in essence He said because you put yourself ahead of God which is sin. (Isa. 59:1-2)

V. 10

1. "Therefore" = in view of the fact or reason just mentioned, the Lord sent a drought. (verses 10-11)

2. "The heaven over you is stayed from dew" = the God of heaven restricted or held back, not only rain, but the dew as well--called a drought in verse 11.

3. "And the earth is stayed *from* her fruit" = without water the ground cannot produce a good harvest--fruit was stayed or held back.

V. 11

1. "I" = Jehovah.

2. "Called for a drought" = withheld the rain and the dew.

3. This drought (desolation) was upon:

A. "The land" = all the area they farmed was affected.

B. "The mountains" = even the streams dried to a trickle, if they ran at all, due to the drought.

C. "The corn" = generic word for all grain, corn included.

D. "New wine" = refers to the "must" or grape juice squeezed from grapes.

E. "The oil" = olive oil taken from olive trees.

F. "*That* which the ground brought forth" = everything was affected.

G. "Men" = human beings; male or female; young and old; all were affected.

H. "Cattle" = beast of the fields; this included sheep, goats, and whatever animals they may have had; all were affected.

I. "All the labours of the hands" = the laborers were affected along with the landlords.

4. Verses 10-11 basically are repetition of verse 6 by way of explanation. Everything was in desolation which is the meaning of the word "drought." Thus, the admonition of verses 5 & 7. When everything we touch turns to dust, we need to consider our ways.

5. Remember "consider" means to set or fix your whole inner being on what you are doing; take inventory of your ways, your actions, and your attitudes.

2) The people's reaction to the message. V. 12-15

V. 12

1. "Then" = after Haggai had delivered his message from the Lord to the leaders of the remnant.

2. "Zerubbabel" = governor of Judah and political leader; the son of "Shealtiel;" both are listed in the genealogy of Jesus in Mat. 1:12-13.

3. "Joshua" = high priest and religious leader of Judah; son of "Josedech" who was high priest at the time of the Babylonian invasion. (I Chron. 6:15)

4. "High priest" = chief priest; his chief duty was, once a year on the day of atonement, to enter into the Holy of Holies and offer sacrifices for his own sins and the sins of the people.

5. "All the remnant of the people" = that small number of people that came out of captivity and returned to Jerusalem.

6. "Obeyed" = they heard the message, listened attentively, and prepared to rebuild the temple.

7. "The voice of the LORD" = the message Jehovah spoke through His prophet Haggai.

8. "Their God" = used twice here and once in verse 15; implies that the nation had now moved into closer conformity with the relationship she sustained to God as His chosen, covenant people.

9. "The words of Haggai the prophet as the LORD their God had sent him" = Haggai was God's man for the hour; his words were God breathed--inspired. (II Tim. 3:16)

10. "The people" = the remnant.

11. "Did fear before the LORD" = they revered Jehovah.

V. 13

1. "Then" = after the people responded to the first message of the LORD.

2. "Spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people" = this indicated that the people recognized Haggai as Jehovah's spokesman, invested with divine authority.

3. The message = "I *am* with you, saith the LORD" = this message was short but it could not have been more comforting or strengthening; the turning of the people to the Lord was heartfelt, otherwise this strong word of assurance would not have been given to them.

V. 14

1. This verse shows what the Lord did for the people once they revered Him.

2. "LORD" = Jehovah.

3. "Stirred up the spirit" = means to awaken the spirit; carries the idea of opening their eyes spiritually; this lets us know that every good intention and purpose of the people of God issues from the Lord as the source; the term is used three times in this verse which indicates that the battle is won or lost in the realm of the spiritual, not in any favorable or unfavorable outward condition.

A. "Stirred the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel" = the political leader.

B. Stirred "the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest" = the spiritual leader.

C. Stirred "the spirit of all the remnant of the people" = the small number of Jews that came out of captivity back to Jerusalem.

4. "They came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts" = this has a future aspect to building the temple; what happened at this present time-- they began preparation to rebuild the temple.

V. 15

1. This verse gives another precise date which is 23 days after verse 1. Some of that time was used for the leaders to tell the people what the Lord had said. It also took some time to consider their ways and then repent and get right with God. They did not want to go off half cocked.

2. And when the Lord stirred them, they organized their forces and began to build.

3. May the Lord help us to apply this to our hearts. As God reassured them He was with them, to help, to guide, and to protect, then so is He with us when we fear--reverence--

Him. (Psa. 85:9) And when we know this, then we, like the remnant, do not need to worry about the circumstances, Samaritans, nor the King's decree.

4. Rom. 8:33 asks the question, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" There may be a lot on this earth that will charge God's elect, but what does that matter as long as the Lord is with you.

5. Notice one thing: The Lord loved this people and was interested in them even though they were unconcerned, indifferent, selfish, and had neglected the work of God. He sent them a man and a message and they responded. Now what will we do with the message the Lord has sent our way?

CHAPTER 2:

1. Obstacle #2: Looking back and not looking ahead. V. 1-9

V. 1

1. "In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month" = the time is 27 days after they began the work in Haggai 1:15; this was the 21st of Oct.--the last day of the feast of tabernacles (Lev. 23:34, 41-43); this day should have been a great day of rejoicing and praise as they looked back at their forefather's deliverance from Egypt.

2. "Came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai" = refers to the message the LORD laid upon Haggai (His chosen vessel) to deliver to Judah concerning rebuilding the temple.

3. "LORD" = Jehovah; the self-existent one who stands alone with no aid from anybody or any other being in this world or out of this world; the self-existent one who reveals Himself to man; Jehovah is concerned for His people.

4. "Prophet" = a fore-telling one who speaks out Jehovah's message.

5. "Saying" = introduces what the LORD told Haggai to tell the leaders and the remnant of people who came out of Babylonian captivity and were in Jerusalem.

V. 2

1. "To Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah" = the political leader of Judah.

2. "To Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest" = the religious leader of Judah.

3. "High priest" = chief priest; his chief duty was, once a year on the day of atonement, to enter into the Holy of Holies and offer sacrifices for his own sins and the sins of the people.
4. "To the residue of the people" = refers to the remnant (in fact "residue" is translated from the same Hebrew word as "remnant" in Hag. 1:12); means that small number of people that came out of captivity and returned to Jerusalem.
5. "Saying" = introduces what Haggai was to tell the people.

V. 3

1. To understand these verses one needs to realize that it had been just 27 days since their spirit was stirred to rebuild the temple (Haggai 1:14), and now they were already discouraged again. Therefore the Lord asked them some questions to get them to think about what they were doing or I should say failing to do.
2. "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory?" = the question is who out of this remnant actually saw the temple Solomon had built, which was destroyed in 586 BC; 15 years before, in their second year of their coming to Jerusalem (Ezra 3:8), when they had begun the foundation, the old men who had seen the original temple wept (Ezra 3:10-13); the first temple had been destroyed 66 years before Haggai's prophecy, which means for anyone to have seen the temple to really remember it, they would have to be close to 80 years old, and even then the temple had been desecrated for 27 years due to the last four kings of Judah; only a few of the remnant had laid eyes upon the first temple and no doubt others had heard about the splendor and glory of it.
3. "This house" = "her" = from God's viewpoint there was but one house of the Lord in Jerusalem, whether built by Solomon, Zerubbabel, or later by Herod; the prophet identifies the present temple with Solomon's temple, as being adapted for the same purposes, to fill the same place in the national life of Israel, built on the same hallowed spot, and partly with the same materials.
4. "Glory" = splendor and magnificence.
5. "Ye" = "your" = the older men he addressed these questions to.
6. "How do ye see it now?" = they saw it (even though there was only a part of the foundation done; the foundation was not finished until sometime later do not know the exact date; four years later the temple was finished); it could be seen, even with just part of the foundation done, that it was greatly inferior to the first temple which is why they wept.
7. "*Is it* not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" = indicates those who saw the first temple now it seemed to them, when compared to the foundation, that it was as if it had no existence; this attitude caused discouragement among those who had not seen the first temple and the Lord sent a message to stir them again.

V. 4

1. "Now" = at this time.
2. "Be strong" = be of good courage--so translated in Psa. 27:14; 31:24; used commonly in exhortations to persevere (not to abandon whatever is undertaken) and hold fast in the midst of whatever obstacles you face; this is a three-fold exhortation.
 - A. To "Zerubbabel" = the political leader.
 - B. To "Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest" = the religious leader.
 - C. To "All ye people of the land" = refers to each and every one of the remnant which came back to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity.
3. "Saith the LORD" = Jehovah was speaking here to Haggai who was to tell all the group what the Lord said.
4. "And work" = an exhortation to work on bravely and finish what you have started--the temple.
5. "For" = introduces why they could be strong and work bravely--"I *am* with you" = means the Lord would be their constant strength; the consciousness of God's presence gives confidence and strength.
6. "Lord of hosts" = Jehovah Sabaoth; the warring name of God; properly denotes armies or military hosts organized for war; refers to the unseen realities of the angels who are represented as arranged in military order under their commander and king; communicates the idea of God as the Sovereign king whose reign and dominion are above every force or army on earth or in the heavens; has the idea of Rom. 8:31.

V. 5

1. "You" = "ye" = refers to the nation of Israel which was now represented by this remnant of Israel in Jerusalem.
2. "I" = the LORD; Jehovah.
3. "*According*" = in italics, thus not in the original but supplied by the translators to indicate that the LORD's presence (verse 4) would be with them "*according* to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt" = the Lord promised Moses and Israel that He would be with them and made His presence known by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exo. 29:45-46; 33:12-14); He also promised the church He would be with us always. (Mat. 28:19-20)

4. "So my spirit remaineth among you" = this is another way of saying "I am with you" = thus double emphasis.
5. "Remaineth" = to dwell; the tense reveals continuous action.
6. "Fear ye not" = do not be frightened no matter what the odds are; since the Lord had been faithful to that promise through all the centuries of Israel's past history, then He could be relied upon to uphold His word in Haggai's day and ours as well; implies to look ahead by faith.
7. The Lord wanted the people to look ahead by faith. They should have been rejoicing on this 21st day of the 10th month, but instead they were looking back at the first temple at all its glory and splendor and comparing it to the one that was now being built. When they did, they became depressed and discouraged.
8. Does this sound familiar? We are doing the same thing--looking back at what we have heard about the church and revival 50-60 years ago, but have not really seen it. Yet when we compare, we get discouraged and disheartened and then unbelief sets in and we wonder if God will ever move again.
9. We need to look back at some things, but usually we look at the wrong things. (II Peter 1:12-13) We need to look at what God has done for us and at the same time look ahead with great expectation to what He is going to do.
10. The feast of tabernacles required looking back, but it also required to look ahead because the tabernacle represented the Lord's shelter in the world to come. There is a better day coming. In fact the best is yet to come for God's children. That ought to encourage us instead of discourage us.
11. Adoniram Judson was in the Burma jail for seven years and when he was asked, "What do you think about the future now?" He answered, "The future is as bright as the promises of God."
12. The best is yet to come. That is exactly what the Lord was saying in this message through Haggai to this feeble remnant--the best is yet to come which was an encouragement to keep on keeping on.
13. The Lord promises the remnant of a better day coming in verses 6-9.

V. 6

1. "For thus saith the LORD of hosts" = double emphasis as to where the message came from; see notes on verse 4.
2. "Yet once, it *is* a little while" = equivalent to "once again within a little time;" remember. (II Peter 3:8)

3. "I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry *land*" = at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai there was a great physical commotion (Psa. 68:7-8); this prophecy is an answer to two distinct questions of the four apostles in Mat. 24:3; this is still future for us; this precedes the rapture as Jesus told the four apostles in Luke 21:25-28 and ushers in the wrath of God which is a period of time known as "the day of the Lord" (Rev. 6:12-17); this prophecy could be a dual prophecy and also apply to the overthrow of the Persian empire by Alexander the Great--Grecian empire.

V. 7

1. "I will shake all nations" = future prophecy referring to nations gathering in the valley of Megiddo toward the end of the period of the wrath of God; also known as the battle of Armageddon where the nations then will turn on one another and all will be destroyed.

2. "The desire of all nations shall come" = they desired the things that a mighty ruler would bring; and what they desired will be granted (come), not like they really wanted for they wanted a mediator to bring peace, a deliverer--a man with a plan, a healer, and a king; therefore, nations will be deceived into thinking the Antichrist has the answers; the desire of all nations shall be granted.

3. "And I will fill this house with glory" = manifestation of that which brings forth praise; refers to the Lord's presence, His Shekinah glory which would be more glorious than all the gold, silver, and etc. used by Solomon to embellish the first temple; in fact His glory filled the tabernacle and the first temple when they were finished. (Exo. 40:33-34; II Chron. 5:13-14)

4. "I will fill" = the glory was not to be anything which came from man; but directly from God.

5. "This house" = from God's viewpoint there was but one house of the Lord in Jerusalem, whether built by Solomon, Zerubbabel, or later by Herod; the prophet identifies the present temple with Solomon's temple, as being adapted for the same purposes, to fill the same place in the national life of Israel, built on the same hallowed spot, and partly with the same materials.

6. "Saith the LORD of hosts" = used the warring name of God which reveals the One who will do what He says and no other force can stop Him; to hear these promises, concerning such a glorious future from the One who could not be defeated, should have been great consolation to these depressed and discouraged Israelites and caused them to look ahead by faith and finish the work at hand. (Num. 14:21; Psa 72:19)

V. 8

1. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine" = these poor exiles had little with which to decorate the Temple, but the Lord assured them that He would supply what they lacked for He had more than Solomon had. (Psa. 50:10)
2. The Lord's presence is glory beyond any embellishment of gold or silver.
3. "Saith the LORD of hosts" = double emphasis; should have given the Israelites double consolation.

V. 9

1. "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former" = this refers to the future Millennial temple which Ezekiel saw (Ezekiel chapters 40-48) which was after the likeness of Solomon's temple; the glory is the Lord's; to interpret that glory to be something material is to do injustice to the Scripture.
2. "In this place will I give peace" = it was on this temple mount where Christ accomplished the basis for spiritual peace (Col. 1:20); He grants peace of heart and mind to believers now (Rom. 5:1), but ultimately He will bring world peace as the Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9:6-7; Luke 1:78-79)
3. It is okay to look back, but do not look back without looking forward or you will get discouraged and disheartened like these Israelites.
4. God always reserves the best for last but only the eye of faith can see it.

3. Obstacle #3: Failure to confess sin. V. 10-19

V. 10

1. "In the four and twentieth *day* of the ninth *month*" = equivalent to Dec. 24th; this is two months after the second message (verse 1) and three months after the first message (Hag. 1:1).
2. "In the second year of Darius" = Haggai dates this to show this message was in the same year as the first message (Hag. 1:1); Darius is thought to be the fourth king of Persia.
3. "Came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet" = refers to the message the LORD laid upon Haggai (His chosen vessel) to deliver to Judah concerning rebuilding the temple.
4. "LORD" = Jehovah; the self-existent one who stands alone with no aid from anybody or any other being in this world or out of this world; the self-existent one who reveals Himself to man; Jehovah is concerned for His people.

5. "Prophet" = a fore-telling one who speaks out Jehovah's message.
6. "Saying" = introduces what the LORD told Haggai to tell the leaders and the remnant of people who came out of Babylonian captivity and were in Jerusalem.
7. It is interesting to note that Zechariah, a contemporary (living and prophesying at the same time) of Haggai, had also spoken a message from the Lord about a month before. (Zech. 1:1) His message had earnestly warned the people that they should not be like their forefathers who had ignored the words of the prophets.

V. 11

1. "Thus saith the LORD of hosts" = Jehovah Sabaoth; the warring name of God; properly denotes armies or military hosts organized for war; refers to the unseen realities of the angels who are represented as arranged in military order under their commander and king; communicates the idea of God as the Sovereign king whose reign and dominion are above every force or army on earth or in the heavens; has the idea of Rom. 8:31.
2. "Ask now the priest *concerning* the law" = the priests in Israel were the authoritative teachers of the Mosaic Law and were commissioned by God to interpret the Law. (Deut. 17:8-9)
3. "Saying" = introduces what the Lord told Haggai to tell the priest.

V. 12

1. First question asked to the priest, "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?"
 - A. "Holy flesh" = flesh of animals sacrificed to God.
 - B. "Skirt of his garment" = wing of his garment.
 - C. The question paraphrased, "If a man carrying holy flesh touch another object, would that object, by contact with the man's garment, become holy or set apart to the Lord?"
2. "And the priests answered and said, No" = they answered correctly, for whatever touched the hallowed flesh became itself holy but it could not communicate that holiness to anything else; thus the man would be holy but not the things that the fringe of his garment touched.

V. 13

1. "Then" = introduces the second question asked by Haggai to the priest.
2. "If *one that is* unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean?"
 - A. "Unclean" = foul in a religious sense; means to be unclean ceremonially by reason of contact with a dead body.
 - B. "Any of these" = refers to the list of objects in v. 12.
3. "And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean" = a polluted human being communicates his pollution to all that he touched. (Num. 19:22)
4. The principle is that moral cleanness cannot be transmitted, according to the Mosaic regulations, but moral uncleanness can be transmitted. A man cannot transmit his health to a sick child, but a sick child can communicate his disease to a man.
5. This principle is always true. Does the clean boy clean up the mud puddle he walks through or does the clean boy become dirty when he walks through the mud puddle? Everyone knows the answer to that. That is why you cannot let your children run with the defiled crowd lest they become defiled. You may say I cannot deprive them of the crowd they run with by saying "no." But when you say "no" you are depriving them of premature pregnancy, VD, a ruined liver due to strong drink, a fried brain because of dope, and aids. I'd say there are many who wish their mother and dad had deprived them and said "no," but their life is wrecked and ruined.
6. The clean will not rub off on the dirty but dirty on the clean and both will be defiled. The same is true with Judah as verse 14 brings out.

V. 14

1. "Then answered Haggai" = introduces what Haggai said to the priest by commandment of the Lord.
2. "So *is* this people, and so *is* this nation" = the nation was defiled and so was the work and sacrifices which were offered = "so is every work of their hands, and that which they offer there *is* unclean."
3. "There" = refers to the altar they had set up, an altar due to fear when they first came to Jerusalem in 536 BC (Ezra 3:3); one holy thing (altar) does not make them holy or clean.
4. "Before me" = before the LORD (Jehovah); no doubt they thought they were okay, but the Lord knows and sees the heart.

5. These people had unconfessed sin in their lives, thus, they were unclean which made even the altar of God unclean and also their work. We do not know what their sin was and neither did the Lord say. He did not even make mention that it was many sins. It may have been basically one. It was not the open sin of rebellion, or adultery, or drinking, or stealing, and etc. I think it may have been a wrong attitude and motive which led to grumbling and complaining.

6. They no doubt viewed their work as special merit thereby placing God under obligation to bless them (at least they thought this way). We can't do that. God is God! You have to come God's way or suffer the consequences. They expected material blessings the very day they began the work on the temple especially after their preparation in Haggai 1:15. Now three months later, things were difficult. Thus, Haggai explains why God had not blessed them--sin unconfessed.

7. Many come to the Lord with a wrong motive expecting to obligate God. But sin is a wrong motive and it must be confessed, which requires repentance, before God will cleanse and bless. Unconfessed sin is one of the greatest obstacles in accomplishing the Lord's work. We must do it with clean hands and a pure heart. (Psa. 24:4-5)

V. 15

1. "And now" = after the main message was delivered.
2. "I" = Haggai.
3. "Pray" = word of entreaty; to beg; to ask earnestly.
4. "You" = probably included all the people in Jerusalem even though he had been speaking primarily to the priests.
5. "Consider" = lay it to heart; give some serious thought about; take it to heart and deal with it.
6. "From this day and upward" = means to think back--give some serious thought about = "from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD" = look back to the time you came back to build; refers to all those 16 years they had been back at Jerusalem and had neglected the temple, not just the last three months after they started again to build in Haggai 1:15.

V. 16

1. "Since those *days* were" = through all that time; probably refers to about 14 years of the 16 years they had been in Jerusalem; this would be about the time they began to neglect the house of God and allowed their own houses to become priorities.

2. "When *one* came to an heap of twenty *measures*, there were *but* ten" = "*measures*" is in italics, thus supplied by the translators; the particular measure is not the total harvest and is not the important part, but it is the proportion only that is important to consider.
3. "Heap" = the collection of sheaves not yet threshed (Ruth 3:7); when threshed it yielded only half what they expected; this could apply to barley, wheat, oats, and corn.
4. "When *one* came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty *vessels* out of the press, there were *but* twenty" = "*vessels*" is in italics, thus supplied by translators; the number and size of the vessels is not the total harvest, thus not the important part but again it is the proportion only that is important to consider.
5. "Pressfat" = a wine vat; the vat into which flowed the juice forced from the grapes when trodden out by feet in the press; when pressed they did not get half what they had hoped for; why? the next verse tells us.

V. 17

1. "I" = "LORD" = "me" = Jehovah speaking through His chosen vessel.
2. "You" = "ye" = the remnant of Judah who came out of Babylonian captivity back to Jerusalem.
3. "Smote" = to strike severely; in Haggai 1:11 He had already told them He sent a drought and now He lets them know He is also the originator of:
 - A. "Blasting and mildew" = blight and paleness--two diseases of grain caused by the drought; these caused a severe cut in harvest; Moses had foretold these as chastisements if they were disobedient (Deut. 28:22); Amos mentioned them also in Amos 4:9.
 - B. "Hail" = masses of ice or frozen vapor, falling from the clouds in showers or storms; this smote their grape vines which along with the drought produced less than half what they hoped to harvest; this also affected everything they labored at = "in all the labours of your hands."
4. "Yet ye *turned* not to me" = they did not repent; in spite of these visitations from the Lord, there was not one among them who shook off his idle inaction and began action upon the Lord's work--building the temple.

V. 18

1. "Consider" = lay it to heart; give some serious thought about; take it to heart and deal with it; this word is used in this verse the fourth and fifth time in this book.

2. "From this day and upward" = means to think back--give some serious thought about = "from the four and twentieth day of the ninth *month*, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid" = this is almost the same reading as verse 15, yet by using this repetition and in this context the Lord may have wanted them to also consider these last three months (from Haggai 1:15 til now):

A. They were still not blessed because of unconfessed sin.

B. They did not have a sign of things getting better; thus, He asked them a question in verse 19 that should cause them to consider again.

V. 19

1. "Is the seed yet in the barn?" = there was yet no seed in the granary; the harvest had been blighted.

2. "Yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth" = the trees had been stripped with hail that year before they started work in Haggai 1:15 three months before; therefore, there was no harvest that year; also there was no sign of leaf, bud, nor fruit, for it is December and things looked bleak for them; also there had not been a change in their hearts.

3. The LORD wanted them to consider what He had done--just what He said He would if they didn't obey Him. (Deut. 28:15)

4. Now He wants them to consider what He can and will do if they would meet His conditions. (Deut. 28:1-2)

5. "From this day will I bless *you*" = conditional promise; they must confess which requires repentance--change of heart, mind, and direction; a turning from sin to God and taking up sides with God against self; this basically was what the Lord told Solomon in II Chron. 7:14; this is the promise that Nehemiah claimed in Neh. 1:7-9.

6. "This day" = Dec. 24, 520 BC in the second year of Darius, king of Persia; from now on improvement in the season should begin and make itself evident; it seems that spring would come early if they would repent.

7. "Bless" = a term often used for sending fruitful seasons; means He will send the early and latter rain if they would meet His conditions. (James 5:7)

8. He will do what He has promised Israel. (Jer. 3:12-13, 22)

9. Application: Consider:

A. What God has done = withholden power (Jer. 3:3); no latter rain spiritually speaking; Why? sins unconfessed by those who claim to be saved--holding grudges, been hurt, bitterness, grumbling, complaining, tired of going through the motion,

discouragement; therefore no latter rain and it's not God's fault we are in the mess we are in.

B. What God can and will do = He will do what He said (II Peter 3:9; Psa. 145:18-19) for the lost--Isa. 25:9; that day is when there is a finished work of the Holy Ghost; for the saved--I John 1:9; Pro. 28:13; it is not God's fault the lost are not saved and it may not be the sinner's fault as much as it is our fault (the saints) or my fault (the preacher).

C. Result = no seed in the barn = no souls being saved; could be due to unconfessed sin; Joshua 7:19--confession gives God glory.

4. Obstacle #4: Unbelief. V. 20-23

V. 20

1. "And again" = the second time; refers to the second message on the same day = "four and twentieth *day* of the month" = the 24th day of Dec. or the same day as the message of verse 10.
2. "The word of the LORD came unto Haggai" = refers to the message the LORD laid upon Haggai (His chosen vessel) to deliver.
3. "LORD" = Jehovah; the self-existent one who stands alone with no aid from anybody or any other being in this world or out of this world; the self-existent one who reveals Himself to man; Jehovah is concerned for His people.
4. "Saying" = introduces what the LORD told Haggai to tell to the leader of the people.

V. 21

1. "Speak to Zerubbabel" = "governor of Judah" = the political leader of the remnant who came back to Jerusalem out of Babylonian captivity; no doubt he needed encouragement as he directed the work of the Lord; Satan attacks the leaders and they need your prayers and need you to work with them; Zerubbabel saw the great empires around him and no doubt feared for the future of the feeble remnant of Jews; circumstances have a way of discouraging us as we seek to do the work of the Lord.
2. "Saying" = introduces the message that Haggai was to deliver to Zerubbabel to encourage his faith; this can apply to us as preachers and laymen.
3. "I" = Jehovah.
4. "Will shake the heavens and the earth" = it is possible that Zerubbabel, as the governor and civil leader, had wondered about the previous prediction (verse 6-7) concerning the change among world powers and kingdoms; he may have been

concerned about how these dealings of God would affect the people over whom he was head. (see notes on verse 6)

V. 22

1. "I" = Jehovah.

2. "Will overthrow the throne of kingdoms" = some interpret this to mean the Persian Empire which was overthrown by Alexander the Great; but the use of "throne" in the singular is a reference to the ultimate overthrow of this world system, which is dominated by Satan embodied one day soon in the Antichrist, which will fall in the future at Armageddon.

3. "Will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen" = to render desolate the power of the Gentile nations of this world.

4. "Will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down every one" = refers to all the armies of the nations of the world which will be overthrown and brought to desolation and not one will be left; refers to the battle of Armageddon.

5. How will this come about? = "by the sword of his brother" = Rev. 19:15 says out of our Lord's mouth will go a sharp sword which means He will speak when He sets foot upon this earth and all Satan's armies gathered in the valley of Armageddon will turn on one another like in Jehoshaphat's day. (II Chron. 20:23)

V. 23

1. "In that day" = this is referring to a period of time which includes the rapture and the wrath of God which reaches its zenith at Armageddon.

2. "Saith the LORD of hosts" = Jehovah Sabaoth; the warring name of God; properly denotes armies or military hosts organized for war; refers to the unseen realities of the angels who are represented as arranged in military order under their commander and king; communicates the idea of God as the Sovereign king whose reign and dominion are above every force or army on earth or in the heavens; has the idea of Rom. 8:31.

3. "I" = "my" = "LORD" = Jehovah who is also the LORD of hosts.

4. "Zerubbabel" = "thee" = "my servant" = "the son of Shealtiel" = the political leader of the remnant of Jews who came back to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity.

5. "Will I take thee and will make thee as a signet" = the signet was an object of worth and care to the Oriental; its stamp was a mark of honor and authority; in olden time, when the signet ring was used to sign letters and documents, it represented the owner,

who always wore it; it was his prized possession; the Lord's saints are called jewels in Mal. 3:17; the meaning is that the Messianic descent was to come through Zerubbabel, of the line of David, just as it did through David himself; the Lord gave Zerubbabel authority to finish the temple and there was honor in a job well done.

6. "For" = introduces the reason Zerubbabel would be made a signet = "I have chosen thee" = this is not a personal assurance only to Zerubbabel, for neither he nor his natural seed reigned in Jerusalem; therefore, the fulfillment must be looked for in his spiritual progeny and in Christ; so Zerubbabel was honored to be placed in this company to point to the chosen One of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. All of these "I wills" or promises of Jehovah should have brought encouragement to Zerubbabel in his day and to us today because all of Jehovah's promises are yea and amen. (II Cor. 1:20)

8. May we take heed to the message of Haggai:

- A. Consider our ways.
- B. Consider what God has done.
- C. Consider what God can and will do.
- D. Put our hand to the work.
- E. Put our eyes on the future.
- F. And stand on the promises of God.

9. For the best is yet to come:

- A. Salvation to the seekers.
- B. And heaven for all saints.

10. For the record: according to history the temple was finished in 516 BC--four years after Haggai came with the Lord's message to challenge and encourage the people to build the temple.

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desire is that they may be of help to others. Please overlook any errors. If our church can be of any help to you please let us know.

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