

Notes

Haggai

Began prophesying in Sept. 520 BC

Five lessons from Haggai (Steve Wolfgang)

1. Procrastination and indifference have been debilitating sins among God's people (Romans 13:11-14)
2. God's presence is the primary motivation for boldness and the means of banishing discouragement (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 3:8-21; Hebrews 13:5-6).
3. Separation from bad influences and sin is a must for God's people (2 Corinthians 6:12-7:1; 2 Timothy 2:19-26)
4. The disobedient child of God can expect removal of God's blessings and His presence (2 Corinthians 9:8-11; Hebrews 12:3-13; James 4:1-3)
5. God's judgment of sin and the hope of a Messianic Kingdom (Romans 15:4-13; 2 Peter 3:10-18). (The remnant will always be saved, and the Kingdom would begin in Jerusalem to be forever established (Psalm 2; Daniel 2; Isaiah 2; Joel 2; Acts 2.)

Two audiences (Ed Rangel)

1. True believers who wanted to fix the sins of the past.
2. Fake believers who **only** wanted the blessings of God.

Purpose of Book: To awaken the Judean leadership to their spiritual responsibilities. (Ed Rangel)

Key verse: Consider your ways (Haggai 1:5, 7; 2:15, 18; 1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Jude 1:1-25)

Four major speeches (oracles):

1. First Oracle - Get Busy (Haggai 1:1-15)
 1. Oracle (Haggai 1:1-11) on the 1st day, 6th month, 2nd year of Darius - **August 29, 520 B.C.**
 2. Response to 1st oracle (Haggai 1:12-15) on the 24th day, 6th month, 2nd years of Darius - **September 21, 520 B.C.**
2. Second Oracle — Encouragement (Haggai 2:1-9) - 21st day, 7th month - October 17, 520 B.C.
3. Third Oracle - A Call for Repentance (Haggai 2:10-19) - 24th day, 9th month, 2nd year of Darius - December 18, 520 B.C.
4. Fourth Oracle - The Hope of the Anointed Christ (Haggai 2:20-23) - 24th day, 9th month - December 18, 520 B.C.

“Thus, the prophet’s recorded ministry extends a little less than four months. Zechariah’s recorded ministry begins in the eighth month of Darius’s second year (Zech 1:1), sometime between Haggai’s second and third oracles (2:1–9; 2:10–19).”¹

¹ Ham, C., & Hahlen, M. (2001–). *Minor Prophets* (p. 258). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

Name means festival “His name חַגַּי (*haggay*) apparently derives from the word for “festival” or “feast,” suggesting that the prophet may have been born during one of the Hebrews’ three annual feasts, Passover/Unleavened Bread, Weeks or Pentecost, and Tabernacles or Ingathering.”¹

¹ Ham, C., & Hahlen, M. (2001–). *Minor Prophets* (pp. 248–249). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

Exegesis by Dr. David Pawson (class notes)

- About 2500 years ago Confucius lived in China. He spent many of his years speaking words of wisdom. This man was wise and is still read today, but his writings are full of inaccuracies.
- At the same time as Confucius was writing so was Haggai in the west in Jerusalem. Haggai was not pouring out volumes of inaccurate words of human wisdom, but only wrote 38 verses breathed by the Holy Spirit of God (2 Timothy 3:16)- Thy Word is truth (John 17:17)
- Haggai spoke these verses from September 520 BC to December 520 BC (3-4 months)
- **“It was only yesterday that the Spirit of the Lord told me to get back to Haggai and listen to what this man had to say 2500 years ago, and how it is still important for us today.”** (Ed Rangel)

Haggai the man and prophet, what we know:

- Almost nothing!
- Do not know where or when he was born
- We don't know if he was married, unmarried, widow
- We don't know when, where or how he died
- **He was just a mouth-piece for God during a very critical moment in the Jewish history. The man was not as important as was the message.**

Circumstances when this man wrote:

- 586 B.C. Jerusalem fell and was destroyed
 - The city which over over 400 years had been the center of God's people.
 - The capital of God's people

- The city of David
- This is where the kings' King lived, in a house next door that Solomon had build (the temple)
 - This temple was a magnificent building (Interesting facts about Solomon's temple)
 - In today's money it would have cost about 3-6 billion dollars! (Ed Rangel from)
 - The finest temple build
 - Imagine the temple surrounded by the people's houses, clustered around the Temple (great real estate sales-location, location, location!)
 - The people were proud of the temple, it was like an idol to them (obviously a problem)
- In 586 BC the Babylonians came and ransacked, razed and completely destroyed the temple (2 Kings 24:13, The New American Commentary article)
 - They broke down the walls
 - They took the gold and ransacked the treasury
 - They killed the babies (Psalm 137:8-9; Psalm 137)
 - The house of God was destroyed utterly!
 - Jerusalem was left empty, the people of God were taken away in chains! How sad for the people who once were under the complete protection of God with overflowing blessings! (Ed Rangel)
- Imagine if that were the end of the story! We would not be here, the Davidic line to the Messiah would have been destroyed.
- This was their silly fault!
 - Prophet after prophet came to them and told them that the way they were treating God and playing "Christians" was disastrous. "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me,"

- says the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 3:5)
- They didn’t listen. They laughed, they scorned, they mocked, they denied what the prophets said. Their attitude was, “Don’t listen to those crazy prophets. They are always negative and doom and gloom is their message.” So what did they do? They hired their own preachers and prophets that they could manipulate and make them say nice and soothing things. (Ed Rangel) - (2 Timothy 4:3) They would say God will not judge His people like that, Our God is not like that!”
 - But God is like that. There always comes a point when God’s patience is exhausted and He acts to make things right (“vengeance is Mine...” - Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:17-19)
 - Adam and Eve were cast out and later died because of God’s righteousness - Ed Rangel
 - The world in Noah’s day was destroyed because the stench of man’s corruption could no longer be tolerated by God (Genesis 6:5-8) -Ed Rangel
 - Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because they were too far gone (Genesis 18:20; Ezekiel 16:49) -Ed Rangel
 - One day the Lord will act in a similar manner, but it will be eternal, no second chances. (2 Peter 3:9-11) -Ed Rangel
 - God was not finished with them. He had promised and would keep His promise. (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18) God will make sure that a faithful remnant would be protected. But this does not mean that He will not punish and chastise His children. He will make us understand that He is our God, that He is in charge and that I am to submit to Him.(Proverbs 3:12; Hebrews 12:6-11)
 - God would bring them back once they realized why they lost what they had, once they realized why they were captives, once they were willing to repent.

- God brought them back in 538 B.C., 50,000 Jews came back, across the desert.
- Coming back looking for the hills of Judea, the beauty of Jerusalem, and then looking down from the Mount of Olives seeing the wreck of a once lovely city.
- They began to rebuild in the first wave of immigration, 50,000 of them.
 - Enthusiastic work for the Lord continued as they quickly laid foundations for a new temple. Excitement and celebration were in the air, and the people had a mind to work for the Lord ([Ezra 3:8-11](#)).
 - They began to rebuild, slowly, stone by stone. (City was about 160 acres)
 - They began to rebuild the temple of the Lord, but what a gigantic task that was! (Temple was about 14 acres)
 - The smallest stones weighed about 2-3 tons.
 - But when opposition to the building project arose, the entire operation came to a standstill([Ezra 4](#))
 - Their enthusiasm and motivation faded.
 - Over time the nation got used to the routine of life without the temple.
 - Deserted like an abandoned neighborhood lot, the foundation was overgrown by weeds, and the temple was soon forgotten.
 - They didn't even finish the foundation of the temple. So they laid the foundations to their homes.
 - Over the next 10-15 years, the people apparently became preoccupied with the construction and improvement of their own homes -- building beautiful houses with decorative woodwork for themselves.
 - This concept isn't really a stretch for us to visualize, is it? Imagine the "Home Depot" of Haggai's day – lined with exotic timbers, ornate tapestries, and fancy rugs. How many of us would have gotten caught up in the allure of redecorating right along with the rest of the crowd?
- **Then things got worse.**
 - Inflation hit them
 - The cost of food spiraled
 - They found it harder and harder to make ends meet
 - The wheat fields were not producing

- The oil was drying up
- When they got their wages it lost its value over night
- They were putting their money in purses with holes!
- Haggai 1:2-6, 8-11)
- Even though they were living in better homes than what they had ever lived in, they were living beyond their means, never enough, they took one step forward and several backwards.
- **Into this adverse situation comes an unknown man with a message from God.**
 - But the Lord spoke to the people through the prophet Haggai about refocusing their attention on the temple project: “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?” “...Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored.” (Haggai 1:4-8.)
 - “Do you know see any connection between your neglect for God’s work and your problems with inflation?”
 - This bold man came and spoke the high priest Joshua, and the political leader (governor) Zerubbabel (Haggai 1:1) - “Listen, listen, God has something to say about the mess you are in.”

The message (two messages, we will look at one here, and the second later.)

- 1st message: God’s work must have priority!
- 2nd message: God’s workers must have purity.
- “If we are going to be free from anxiety, free from the worry of what we are going to eat, free from the anxiety of our money, houses and possessions, we need to understand that God’s work comes first-**ALWAYS!**
- “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. “So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Matthew 6:33-34)
 - “Why are you so worried about staying caught up with your bills? Why are you so obsessed with staying alive? Why are

you so consumed and full of anxiety over the lack of oil and wheat?”

- Seek first the Kingdom of God **and** His righteousness...
- When these two things are met:
 - God’s work must have priority!
 - God’s workers must have purity.
 - **Then** Gods people will have enough, God’s people will have an abundance.

1st message: God’s work must have priority! (Haggai 1:1-15)

- The basic sin of God’s people was, “Some other time.”
 - “Yes, I’m interested.”
 - “Yes, I would like to help.”
 - “Yes, I care for the Lord and His people.”
 - “But the time is not right, now. Someday when things ease up I will do it. But not right now. (Common Spanish answer to an invitation to worship God, “Si Dios quiere.” “If the Lord wills.” **OF COURSE THE LORD WILLS THAT WE WORSHIP AND SERVE HIM, NOW!**)
- A basic truth about life: It will never get easier. You will always have things to do, people to see, games to attend.
 - If you get in the habit of putting God on the back burner, making Him a relief pitcher, get to Him when I have time...then you will NEVER have time.
 - It is all about priorities...what do I want to do, when do I want to do it, and How important is God to me. (Ed Rangel)
 - There is not time like the present.
- The people were saying, “Yes we need to rebuild the house of God. But, right now we are so consumed about our own houses, painting, marble counter tops, inset, overlay doors, tiled floors, and we are having to work two and even three jobs just to make ends meet. One day when everything is done and I’m all caught up, then I will help rebuild the temple.”
- **AND THE HOUSE OF THE LORD LAID WASTE.**
- **“Consider your ways.**
 - “Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Consider your ways!
“Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the

temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,” says the Lord. (Haggai 1:6)

- The word of Lord says consider why you are so stressed. Use your head and common sense. Use the gift God has given you. **CONSIDER YOUR WAYS.**
- God’s word doesn’t need to tell us what is happening (news media tells is that), God’s word tells us why things are happening. We need to open our eyes and pay attention.
- “Your money is going to waste. You cannot get a head, things are falling apart. Have you ever stopped and **CONSIDERED WHY?**”
- Possibly the governor offered some reasons to the people, and the high priest did too, but God tells us **WHY.**
- **Could it be that we are neglecting God?**
 - Could it be that the reason why we just can’t get ahead is because God is not 1st in our lives? Maybe He is 2nd, or 3rd, or even last in your list of priorities.
 - Do you not see the **contrast** between your houses and the house of God?
 - One is decorated and designed with the most expensive materials.
 - The other lays in waste.
- Prosperity depends on God. He is willing and waiting to bless us when are ready to put Him first in our lives.
 - He wants a people who will put Him first.
 - God keeps His word, how about you?
 - God’s house is more important than yours.
 - God’s work is to be done by God’s people.
 - **In this way we are tackling the cause of the disease, not the effects.**

How do we apply this to our day?

1. To our nation:
 1. During times of national crisis: war, 9-11, disease or as in our case today, a COVID-19 pandemic, we turn to God. We seek God. Folks are getting upset and angry, even hostile toward the government because some are floating the idea of closing down churches for a while. The church buildings were not at capacity before the pandemic.
 2. Just as in war time, or 9-11, after the crisis passed and we came back from war to peace, and within 10 years things go back to normal. Economy grew and our homes got better and bigger. Our tables overflowed with food. We saw the blessings of God.
 1. We became an affluent society
 2. Then we became a permissive society.
 3. “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.” (Psalm 33:12)
2. To the church, God’s people
 1. Have you your priorities right?
 2. Haggai’s message was not really dealing with the physical building of the temple, although that is what he addresses. What he was dealing with was a people whose relationship with God was at odds. A people who no longer thought it important to be right with God. A temple laying in waste was a sign of their apathy and indifference.
 3. In Haggai’s day, “building the house of the Lord” actually implied *much* more than just the physical building. The temple of the Lord pictured the people’s connection with God. It was the focal point of the entire spiritual life of the nation – the basis of their relationship with a holy God, their worship of God, and their service and work for the Lord.
 4. Today we see the same. The church building is not the church. The church is the people. The Kingdom people is often guilty of neglecting their relationship with God, putting Him last on the list, if He makes it on the list at all. We need to be busy about fixing our relationship with God,

and preaching the Gospel to all the world (Matthew 28:19ff - this is the first priority the church has- “and lo I am with you even to the end of the ages.”)

1. There’s a powerful spiritual parallel in this story for us. When we trusted in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our salvation, we “established the altar” in our lives. We were excited about following the Lord, and we began construction on a spiritual foundation for a solid Christian life and walk. But what about now? Are we continuing to build, or have we gotten sidetracked?
5. A few simple challenges might help us evaluate where we stand:
 1. Do we spend hours on our own projects and hobbies, but barely make it through a few minutes of personal devotional time?
 2. Do we find excuses to skip church or Bible study, while planning to do other “more interesting things” on the very same day?
 3. Do we routinely watch TV and/or surf the web each day, but give very little time to serving the Lord - at church or in other areas of Christian service?

For about three weeks nothing visibly happened. But the seed had been planted and it was about to germinate.

Matthew 28:19ff