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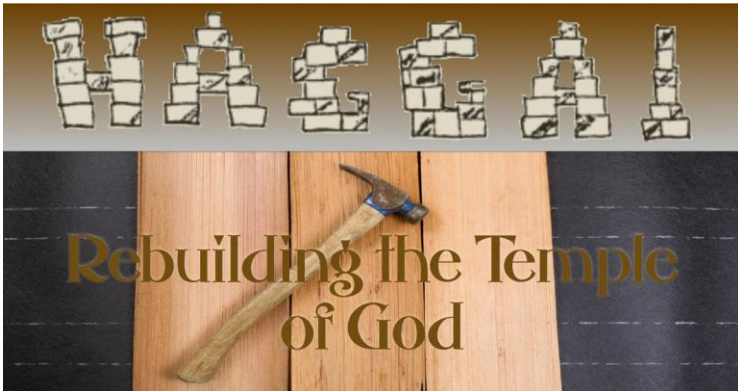
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Haggai



Haggai is the tenth of the twelve minor prophets. He was a post-exile prophet.

Habakkuk was also one of the post exile prophet as this minor prophet of Haggai prophesied, it's when these children of Judah have come out of the land of Babylon, out of their captivity. They are now free, they're now back in the city of Jerusalem in their own land and now Haggai is coming to them and prophesying, giving them a message from God.

Historical background

All the prophecies, spoken by God through the prophet Habakkuk, they were going to come to pass. The Lord said, 'I will work a work in your day', and God did work it.

God told him, 'I'm going to raise up the Chaldeans, they're going to come in like a flood, they're going to take you all and take you captives, exile you to the land of Babylon'.

Haggai, a post exile prophet, the nation of Judah, has now returned from Babylon it's the year 536 BC. They had completed 70 years of captivity in Babylon.

The Babylonian Empire had been defeated by the Medo-Persian Empire. In the book of Daniel, Belshazzar in his drunken celebration, and hand of God appeared and told him that his days were numbered. Cyrus came in and he conquered the whole of that Empire. He took over, he became God's man.

When Cyrus came into power, and when the Medo-Persian Empire was reigning, the Judean exiles were under the control of King Cyrus and he allowed them to return from Babylon to Jerusalem. Only 42,360 people along with singers and servants came.

They come from Babylon back to Jerusalem. Cyrus was gracious towards them to let them begin to rebuild their

temple. They began to rebuild the altar of offering, they put the foundations of the temple, but the Jews didn't want those volunteers of the Samaritans that we read about in Ezra chapter three and four.

They didn't want the Samaritan's help. The Jews wanted to build the temple without any help from the Samaritans. Because of this, the Samaritans, went to King Cyrus, they told all sorts of lies about what was going on. What happened was, the building of this temple was delayed because of this action for sixteen long years.



For sixteen years the foundations of the temple became waste and overgrown with weeds. The Judean were discouraged because of the opposition of the Samaritans,

which we can read about it in Ezra chapter 4. For sixteen years no work was done to the temple, all of them were living in their land but the foundations were remaining there in their sight.

Time passed, and eventually Cyrus died, his son committed suicide and then, Darius the first came into power. When he came into rule, he found the decree of King Cyrus. The decree was that the children of Judah were allowed to come back from Babylon to Jerusalem, and that they were also allowed to rebuild their temple.

Darius paved the way for the children of Judah to restart the work of the building of the temple again. For sixteen years have gone by the people of Judea were not interested in building and finishing the temple at all.

They were discouraged and disappointed, first the Samaritans now they themselves lost interest. What they could witness was all the negatives of the situation, despite they have got the decree from the king.

So, in the second year of Darius, 520 BC, God spoke through the Prophet Haggai and he began to prophesy. Within four weeks of this man opening his mouth, the work of God had begun in the temple.

Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi all prophesy in the same period, the last three books of the Old Testament come together, as it were, in time. They prophesied roughly 500 to 400 years before the birth of Lord Jesus Christ. They were the last men to speak before God spoke through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Haggai ministry of prophesy lasted only four months.

Zechariah prophesied in three years.

What do you understand from this?

God uses different men, with different gifts, in different places, over different periods of time, for different purposes.

God uses all of us, we are each unique, He doesn't want us to copy someone else. He wants us to be ourselves, indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God and He will use us as sanctified personalities.

Haggai's name means 'festive' or 'festival'.

Like Habakkuk, and like many of the minor prophets, we don't know much about his background. We don't know where he came from, we don't know his lineage, his family, all we know is that he has come out with

Zerubbabel, out of Babylon, out of the exile. He has been delivered with those people and he is now an old man.

He has been in exile for the 70 years, and God has been preparing this man for NOW, in his old-age.

It reminds us like How God was preparing Moses all those years before using for His purpose. Similarly, God prepared Haggai all those years to prophesy for such a time as this.

Haggai was willing to fit into God's purpose, God's plan, if it only meant four months. Jesus the Son of God did only three and half years.

Rather than preaching, like the other minor prophets about compromise within society, within religion, within government or corruption within the whole of the globe of society -- this man Haggai is not talking about anything like that, but what he does prophesy about is complacency. This book can be titled as 'The Prophet of Priorities'.

There are four messages that Haggai has within his two chapters of a book. The first one begins in verse one of chapter one. And each message, each of the four messages, begin with the date of when they were given.

Priorities in your life

Haggai 1:1-15

Date: Sixth month, first day (29th August 520BC)

Haggai opened his mouth, God's message for God's men at God's time.

He told it as God had told it to him, and work resumed in four weeks, and eventually the temple had been erected. This temple is known as Zerubbabel's temple, the temple age, of the second temple period.

This temple doesn't seem to have been as extravagant and beautiful as Solomon's temple, it did not have, the glory of God, or the Ark of the Covenant. But when God's word came at God's time, and when it was obeyed by God's people, it had God's purpose gets fulfilled.

Time line

29th of August 520 BC – Chapter 1:1

17th of October 520 BC – Chapter 2:1

18th of December 520 BC- Chapter 2:20

The two key verses of this book,

1:14, So *the Lord stirred up the spirit* of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and *they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts*, their God,

2:9, *The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,* says the Lord of hosts. *And in this place I will give peace,* says the Lord of hosts."

Now I want you to notice, before we get into this lesson, the timing of this prophet of Haggai.

God's message comes in God's time and by God's messenger.

Why had it come in God's time?

It was the sixth month, the month of Elul. The month before Elul was the fifth month known as now Aa, but it's the only month not named in the bible. The whole of Judah would have remembered the destruction of the temple before they went into Babylon. So, they were already thinking about temples, and they were mourning the fact that 70 years before this is the place where God dwelt in their temple.

Secondly, the timing when this prophecy was given was significant because it was the first day of that month. The first day of the month, it was a day of rest, it was a holy day and they would worship God. More than all that it was a day were the people came to listen to what the message of God was, through the prophet of God.

God had prepared the people for God's word. You need to be prepared for God's word. The people that come into the church that don't even know God in Christ, their hearts need to be prepared to hear by the Spirit of God. That when the seed of the word of God is thrown out, God can make that to fall on a good ground and He only does it in answer to our prayers.

1. Think about what you have done

Haggai 1:5, *This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: "Think about what you have done." (NCV)*

V 1, This prophesy was directed to two people specifically, Zerubbabel and Joshua.

Zerubbabel was the civil leader of Judah, he was the political head-man.

Joshua was the high priest, he was the religious leader at the time.

Why was this message given specifically to them?

Zerubbabel, was an heir to the King David, to the Davidic throne. That means that Zerubbabel was in the Messianic line, he was related in lineage to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Joshua, of course, was the high priest. He was important because he was the man that would lead God's people, back to God.

But why does He give them this message?

Why does He not just ignore them, and come straight to the people, say it as it is and deliver the message for the people, to the people directly?

Do you know why?

Because God knows, as He knows in any age, and in any church, that if He can ignite the vision of the leadership, it will inspire the people.

"If your pulpit is on fire, they'll come to watch you burn".

V2-4, 'The Rebuke for Procrastination'.

God, through Haggai, was bringing a message of rebuke for procrastination. They were putting something off.

How do we know that?

What do they keep repeating?

The time is not come, it's not right, the atmosphere, the environment just isn't right for this now, Lord. The time hasn't come.'

And theoretically what they were saying to God is: 'Your time has not come'. And what a strong rebuke God gave the people.

Why?

Because of two reasons.

1. Prophetic misunderstanding.
2. Pre-occupying materialism.

1. Prophetic misunderstanding.

Those repatriated Jews, the remnant of 50,000 that had come out of Babylon accepted a situation that cannot be changed by themselves.

They believed that they could do nothing about their situation and their dilemma before God. They had a wrong reaction to prophecy.

Jeremiah prophesied a 70-year period when there would be desolations in the city of Jerusalem, **Jeremiah 25:12**, *‘Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the Lord; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation.*

Daniel, in **Daniel 9:1&2**, *In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—² in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.*

Daniel prophesied that there would be a period of 70 years desolations within Jerusalem.

Zechariah 1:12, *Then the Angel of the Lord answered and said, “O Lord of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?”*

Zechariah also prophesied the same thing.

This remnant of 50,000 Jews that came out of Babylon they believed mistakenly, that they were in that period. And therefore, if they were in that period, they could not rebuild the temple because the 70-year period had not elapsed, it hadn't run out.

So, they saw it, that if they began to put a brick upon a brick, to build this temple, they would be outside God's calendar and it paralysed them into a wrong attitude to prophecy.

How do we know that?

Haggai 1:2, *“Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying: ‘This people says, “The time has not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built.”’*

God does not call them 'My people', He says, 'this people...this people'. God gave them a rebuke for their procrastination.

How would they know?

Why would they say that to God?

Because they believed that they had God's word on the thing, that the 70 years had not passed 'Lord, the time for it to happen hasn't come'.

It's interesting that God told them what they were thinking.

You know the best message, and the best preaching that this world knows is when you're able to tell people what they're thinking.

Remember the Lord Jesus Christ with the woman at the well in John chapter 4?

And she said that she hadn't a husband, and He said, 'You've said well because you've had some already and the one that you're with, he isn't your husband'.

And she looked into His eyes and she said, 'I perceive that You are a prophet!'

Remember the cry?

'Come see a man that told me all that ever I did!'

God was telling them what they were thinking,

- they were paralysed,
- they stood,
- they had given in to a feeling of hopelessness,
- they were in a hopeless inability and
- all the effort they could see was for no use.

They would have to wait until God's prophetic calendar had reached its destiny.

The result: Within the people of God, a total indifference, and God's work was what suffered.

Was this not the attitude of Dr. Ryland of Northampton?

When he reprimanded that young pioneer missionary William Carey, and he said to him: 'Young man, sit down, and when God pleases to convert the heathen He'll do it without your aid or mine'.

This is the attitude of those who believe that it's pointless to hope for God in these last days to move, because no such thing is prophesied within the word of God.

The word of God does not foresee a revival before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, so why should we pray for it now, why should we hope for it now?

Let me ask you a question: was the Reformation prophesied?

Was the 1859 revival prophesied within the word of God?

- The Welsh revival,
- the Scottish revival,
- Azusa Street Revival,
- Pensacola revival,
- European revivals,
- the revivals that are happening now in our world,

are they prophesied?

No! Of course, they're not!

So why should God prophesy one that will happen before Christ comes?

This is the predicament that they got themselves in to.

Now that we know so much about prophecy in the 21st century, can we get into that situation?

Where we are sitting waiting for the Lord to come, but it has led us into a place of inability to work for God and paralysed, because we believe it's pointless.

2. Pre-occupying materialism.

V 4, *“Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?”*

There was a pre-occupying materialism!

God was pointing out three things to these people!

1. Selfishness.

He says, 'Think for a moment of the time, and the money, and the energy and enthusiasm that you spend on your own houses, panel houses.

That means they were luxurious on their day, they may well even have had gardens on the roof. The time that they had spend on them, the time that they spend in them and here is My house, God's house, the chiefs house of all and it lies waste!'

2. Indifference:

'It's lying waste!' Now don't forget that they had been 70 years in captivity, and they didn't need a temple because they couldn't have a temple. When they come out of captivity they're indifferent to the need of it because they've been without it for so long.

3. Opposition

There were hostile neighbours! And they gave opposition, but not strong enough.

The Jews managed to put up with bigger opposition in the past, but because they were down, hopeless and misunderstanding of prophecy, they gave up.

3. Reaping of Poverty

V 5-6, *Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: "Consider your ways! ⁶ "You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes."*

They were reaping nothing but absolute poverty. Haggai was prophesying by the Spirit of God that they were the ones who lose out, not God!

We cannot rob God, and in the long run we are the ones who will suffer. So, God began to remove from them all their material possessions.

1. Agriculture:
He says, 'You plant much, but you harvest little'.
2. Economy:
They could not meet their needs; their salary was not enough!

3. Inflation

Inflation was so much that the money that they put into their pockets, it was as if they had holes in it, because it fell out through inflation.

It was direct from the hand of God, God did it, and indeed God does it when men and women turn away from Him.

How do I know that?

Leviticus 26:18-20, *'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. ¹⁹I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. ²⁰And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit.*

Deuteronomy 28:38-40, *"You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it. ³⁹You shall plant vineyards and tend them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. ⁴⁰You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olives shall drop off.*

There is the law of the harvest within scripture and what you sow, you reap.

But you see in the Old Testament, there is another law of the harvest and it's this: that if you sow something unworthily, you will never reap. That's part of the deal!

4. Reason for their Poverty

V 9-11, *“You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?” says the Lord of hosts. “Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.¹⁰ Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit.¹¹ For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labour of your hands.”*

There was a reason for the poverty, that is God, and by His own hand.

God was holding back the rain. And in Palestine, you need a lot of rain if you're going to have crops. And because God was holding back the rain, the result was that the crops failed.

God was saying, if you don't take as much care over My house, as your own house I will blow all your prosperity, all your luxury, all your pleasure away'.

God intervened in the life of Judah and there was an economic disaster. The people couldn't till the fields any longer, they toiled in the fields night after night, day after day but they got nothing for it.

'Pain is the megaphone of God'. By C.S. Lewis.

They looked for much and after they sowed they were expecting something to come back. They were looking for things to happen, but they were not willing to give the obedient cost to God that would necessitate the covenant, God will give back to you.

5. Remedy for the Poverty

V 5,7-8, *This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: "Think about what you have done. (NCV)*

⁷Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Consider your ways! ⁸Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the Lord.

God says over again and again:

'Consider your ways!
Consider your ways!
Consider your ways!'

This is all down to one thing, there is one reason it's quite easy to understand but it may be extremely difficult for the Judeans to implement.

All this was because of their lack of obedience.

'Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey'.

V 7 God, was speaking a second time

God, through His word, in these days is speaking to certain people and He is working in some of our lives and He is telling us to consider our ways, to reflect upon our priorities, to readjust our lives and face to God's will.

And if we don't listen, there will be dire consequences. God is not obliged to speak once, let alone speak twice. My friend, if God is speaking to you about your heart, about personal revival in your life and giving everything to your God, and serving Him, and seeing His Spirit being manifest in your daily walk and with those around you!

Listen to Him!

Consider your ways!

Do something about it!

Repent Christian or non-Christian forsake your sins, lay down those things that so easily beset you! You can run the race, so that you can win the prize, don't forfeit it for this life!

What was it our blessed Lord Jesus Christ said?

Matthew 6:33, *'Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you'*.

But you child of God, if you don't follow, Haggai teaches that even those things, if we try and add them to ourselves, by ourselves, they could all be taken away in a flash.

6. Renewal of Purpose

V 12-15, *Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, 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 feared the presence of the Lord.* ¹³ *Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, spoke the Lord's message to the people, saying, "I am with you,*

says the Lord.”¹⁴ So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God,¹⁵ on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

There was a renewal of the purpose.

The people responded to God's word. We also need to respond to God's word as they responded, not just listen to it, but like Mary, mother of Jesus, who hid it in our hearts and work upon it, act upon it.

V 13, that they obeyed the voice of the Lord!

Because they had just come out of 70 years into captivity, they had spent the last 16 years dejected and maybe you are here and in your Christian life, you've spent a sum of that were dejected within yourself.

They spent 16 years in spiritual luke-warmness, but it took them only four weeks to get up and to get started.

Don't you believe the lie of the devil that you will have to be more spiritual, and it's going to take weeks, it's going to take months.

Spiritual growth does take time, maturity does take time. But the devil would love you to know that you can't do it but the Spirit of God can do anything!

And in four weeks they had begun work on the temple, Verse 1 the word came on the 1st day of the sixth month and in verse 15, 24th day of sixth month, they were deceived thinking that 'The time hasn't come'.

My dear brothers and sister, if God has been speaking to you about prayer, the time has come to start praying, now.

If God has spoken to you about spreading the Gospel, don't wait till you feel you are able to do it, don't wait till you do a course on it, the time is now.

If God is speaking to us about our need in this fellowship for prayer and for seeking the face of God for blessing, then the time is now!

For let's face it, how long have we got?

And if we tell those that are unsaved, 'Now's the day of salvation, now is the accepted time'. Are we not hypocrites before God if we say, 'Tomorrow will do'. They had the renewed purpose, but I don't want you to miss this fact, that God told them of His assurance of His presence.

Conclusion

V 13, God says this to them: *'I am with you'*.

He was with them, even at that moment in time, He was saying, 'I am with you, but you've got to act upon My presence in your life, or nothing will happen'.

So, it's not enough simply to be saved, it's enough to get you to heaven, but it's not enough to please God. You've got to be saved and act, and the word of God says, 'Work out your salvation day by day'.

God says that I am with you.

He told **Isaac** in Genesis 26:24

He told **Jacob** in Genesis 28:15

He told **Moses** in Exodus 4

He told **Joshua** in Joshua 1,

He told Prophet **Jeremiah**, chapter1,

He told Isaiah in **Isaiah** 43,

Jesus told us all in Matthew 28, that He will be with us very end of this age!

Go and do it and I am with you!



This word of the Lord stirred Zerubbabel, Joshua and all the people!

The leadership was stirred from indifference to obey God's voice!

They weren't just stirred for a minute, not just an emotional experience in a meeting but something that changed their lives. They made a commitment and able to persevere in the work of God till the temple was built.

They acted upon what God had told them and they obeyed.

And on the 21st of December 520 BC the work began on the temple. And Judah responded and in a very short time, even though they had been asleep for 16 years they considered their ways, they obeyed God. And do you know what it says?

To all the children of God, forget about the wasted years and get up and break-up the fallow ground and seek the face of God -- 'I will restore the years that the locusts have eaten'.

Judah had to rethink its priorities. The temple of God today is the church of the living God, Let me ask you as we close: how much building is going on?

So, what is your priority in life?

Are you so busy building your kingdom or God's Kingdom?

Does your time and finance shows that you're on God's mission??

Session 02

Missing the Blessings?

The Best is yet to come!

17th of October 520 BC – Chapter 2:1

As we come to chapter 2 we can hear the sound of the workmen beginning to rebuild in the background. After seventy years without a temple they begin to clear the rubbish and begin the building work.

The work begins on the foundations that were laid sixteen years before in Jerusalem. They had many setbacks and discouragements during the course of these many years now after they heard the word of the Lord they again build the temple.

When they heard the word of God it touched their hearts and a new lease life birthed.

Within a month from the work restarted they encounter yet another problem. This time it's not from the enemies but by false religion.

Tishri, is the seventh month in the Jewish calendar, this is when they celebrate the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles. On the first day of

the month they celebrate the Feast of Trumpets, the tenth day they celebrate the Day of Atonement, and on the 15th Day the Feast of Tabernacles starts, and it goes on until 21st day of the month.

Just when people were lifted from their discouragement of sixteen years now these month-long festivals was going to bring yet another discouragement. It may be festival or good thing still it's a discouragement for the work of the Lord.

Haggai comes up with a great message of encouragement that was delivered on the 17th October 520B.C, which is the final of Feast of Tabernacles, for the people of God.

Leviticus 23 gives the complete details of the Israel Festivals. In verses 34 to 44, details of the Feast of Tabernacles can be found, which is,

- a) Celebrate the autumn harvest
- b) Honouring God for all gathering of crops
- c) Remembrance of spending 40 years in the wilderness

Some of the rituals of the Feast of Booths,

- For seven days the people lived in little booths,
- little tents constructed from palms trees and willows and leaf trees and branches,

- they were all decorated with beautiful fruit from the harvest.
- Every day of those seven days they went on a procession to the Gihon Spring, where the priest would fill the golden pitcher with water.
- He would return to God's temple and then he would pour that water upon the altar as a sign, to remember that God gave the water to them supernaturally, while they were in the wilderness for forty years,
- The festival ended with great celebrations, happiness and great time of rejoicing what God had done.

On this day, Haggai gave this message!

They still did all the above rituals but no rejoicing, joy was missing because there was no temple.

It was not a joyful festival, their crops at this time were destroyed, they had nothing to celebrate from God.

There was no temple and all that they could do on this occasion, has to remember when they came to Solomon's Temple, where there was great joy, great festivities, that they had in the past.

Do you no longer have joy in our celebrations?

- When you come to the church meetings,
- when you come to the prayer meeting, or
- when you absent yourself from the prayer meeting, or
- When you come to the Lord's Table, or
- When you come into the presence of the Lord

Do you have that joy?

Do you have that celebration?

Or have you lost the joy, because of disappointments and discouragements in your life?

Or is it, like these people at Haggai time, looking back about 86 years how they had been in the temple, now sulking because there is no temple?

They were looking back to the good old days when all the nations came together to worship God in His Glory, the beautiful place?

Can you remember great days? Can you remember the good old days?

Haggai knew that the people of God were thirsty, hungry, and weary in the desert looking for satisfaction. Their disappointments were high, so Haggai comes with the

message like pouring of the water upon the altar in the temple.

V 1-3, *In the seventh month, on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying: ²“Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: ³‘Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?*

Haggai’s message was, you have a backward look. You are all looking to God's old temple. Leaders Zerubbabel, Joshua and all the people were living in difficult days, but they were all remembering the good old days.

There are two different kind of mood among the people who were building the temple.

Older generation who had seen the Solomon temple in its glory, they start building and putting the brick upon brick and when the building taking shape they start to cry. The reason they were remembering the good old days!

The younger generation who haven’t seen the old temple start putting the brick upon brick they see the temple is shaping they were filled with joy and rejoicing!

Ezra nails the same point when he brought the exile from Babylon to Israel.

Ezra 3:12, *'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'*

There was no way you can compare with the temple of Solomon and Zerubbabel!

There were five differences between the old and the new. This new temple, Zerubbabel's temple, didn't have,

- the ark of the covenant,
- have the holy fire,
- have the Shekinah, glory of God
- Spirit of Prophecy, and
- Urim and Thumim.

Haggai asked them:

- Is there any left among you that saw it?'
- And how do you see it now?'
- Remember the old temple?
- In your eyes the comparison of the old this might be nothing?

Memories can be either encouraging, or they can also be discouraging.

If you get stuck in your past, then you are in trouble.

The old days are gone, you can't bring history back, but what you can do is bring God back.

They looked back and all they could see was the old temple, but God through Haggai wanted them to look ahead!

Upward look

*V 4 -5, Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the Lord; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the Lord, 'and work; for I am with you,' says the Lord of hosts. ⁵ 'According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; **do not fear!**'*

What was God saying?

'My children, finish the task, children be encouraged'. 'Be strong', they needed courage.

We must have an upward look and we must be encouraged.

God has said to them, 'Be strong and work' - the two come together.

Don't be discouraged and work, because you're wasting your time.

Be strong and work, be encouraged in Me and work.

Do you remember when Moses had finished his work, when he had done all that God had told him and planned for him to do? When it was time to pass on the mantle to Joshua how he would have felt?

How can I be like Moses?

Moses! The man that brought the children out of captivity in Egypt!

The man of miracles, the man that saw God up on the mount!

How can I be like him?

- **What did God say to Joshua?**
- **What God said to Haggai? What God said to the people?**
- **What God says to you now?**

'Be strong and of a good courage!

What made Moses great will make you great Joshua!

Same God will make Haggai great and will make us all great!

'For I the Lord God am with you'.

These were only men just like you and me! Don't ever forget that!

The only thing that made them great was that they knew their God, and He was with them.

Three times God said to Joshua! Maybe he needed to hear it three times!!!

To 'Haggai, I am with you, says the Lord of hosts'

The Lord of armies is with us! The God of war is our strength! God's presence, but also there was God's promise.

Do you remember the church in Philadelphia in the book of Revelation?

They're described as having a little strength.

What does the Lord say?

That His word, and His name, abided with them. He was the holy and the true One, right in their midst as He is in our midst today.

As a Christian,

if you are indwelt with the Holy Spirit of God,
filled with the Holy Spirit,
if we are surrendered in all and yielded to God,
you can be assured that no matter what you go through,
where God takes you, that you have God's presence and
God's power and He will perform.

These people were looking backward, and God asked them to look upward!

V 6–9, *“For thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land;’⁷ and I will shake all nations, and **they shall come to the Desire of All Nations**, and I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the Lord of hosts. ⁸‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts. ⁹‘The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says the Lord of hosts.”*

Not only God promised His presence will be with them, but He also gives them what God has in store for them.

Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens'

When?

In a little while.

What does it mean?

Imminent but not immediate!

There are too many interpretations for this verse, but I firmly believe that in the context of this passage of Scripture is futuristic.

It refers to something that will come in our future!

Zechariah 14:4-5, *And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. ⁵Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, And all the saints with You.*

Same thing the Lord spoke about this in Matthew 24, we looked at this in details in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 16:18-20, *And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.* ¹⁹ *Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.* ²⁰ *Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

The author of the book of Hebrews quotes the Prophecy of Haggai in his epistle.

Hebrews 12:26, *whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.”*

When the Lord returns to the Mount of Olives, He will shake the earth, but after the millennial reign and after the temple is set up again, the earth will shake once more, the earth and the heavens and everything will be in a ball of fire!

V 7, What is the desire of all nations?

Some people believe this verse refers to the millennial temple that we read about in Ezekiel chapter 40 to 48,

and it may have an inference to that, because of the verse after it is talking about silver being God's and gold being God's.

But do you know what this verse means? What is the desire of all nations?

Isaiah chapter 2 talks about that He is the peace of all nations.

Isaiah 11:4, *But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.*

Hebrews 8:11, *None of them shall teach his neighbour, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.*

The desire of all the world is the knowledge of the true God, none other than Lord Jesus Christ.

Great Shekinah glory of God, will fill God's temple, and God's world and all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God.

This prophecy has already been fulfilled in measure, because in verse 9 we read that the glory of the latter house shall be greater than that of the former.

Zerubbabel's temple may not be filled with gold like Solomon's temple. God says this temple's going to have more glory than Solomon's.

He was talking about Zerubbabel's temple, He wasn't referring to the millennial temple.

Herod's temple, 20 B.C, he rebuilt show his might he built for 55 years, was a refurbishment of Zerubbabel's temple.

Luke chapter 2 we read the story where our blessed Lord Jesus Christ in the form of a babe, was taken into that temple, and that temple saw the desire of all nations as a baby!

And Christ came to it, Jesus did say that He was greater than Solomon.

Millennial temple will be greater, because He will fill it with all His glory, and He will bring that peace to all nations that will flow like a river into the whole earth from Jerusalem, and from Christ and His temple.

Conclusion:

Did the Lord not say that He was the desire of all nations when He spoke in John chapter 7?

John 7:37-38, *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*

We Christians are a temple and God no longer lives or dwells in temples made with hands, and He doesn't dwell in buildings. He dwells in you and me if we are saved.

Three questions I would like to ask you so that you may ponder?

1. As a Christians and as the temple of the Holy Spirit that God has made, is God manifesting in His body? Could 'Ichabod' be written upon our lives, that the glory has departed? 1 Corinthians 6 :15-20, Paul encourages us to remove, the rubbish away, the debris that's in our lives, clear it all away!

2. We are to conform to the image of Son of God, (Romans 8:29) and Peter says that each of us are a living stone in the building, we are so important, but we will only fit into the building if we're continually being shaped into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. In the building of God, we must be built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, 1 Corinthians 3:11-12. How is your building?