

Minor Prophets
Haggai
Lesson 1

Text: **Haggai 1:1-15**

Intro: Last week we did a time line of the events leading up to the time of the return of Israel to Jerusalem. So far we have looked at the prophets that warned Israel of the coming invasion, at the prophets that prophesied in the captivity. But now we are going to look at the prophets that prophesied after the captivity.

One would think, that after all Israel had been through, they would hardly need a prophet to come to them and warn them about following the Lord, but as most of us, we tend to forget quickly, especially when things are going good.

We are going to do Haggai a little different, usually, we spend the first week in an introduction, setting up the book, but because of last week's lesson, we are going to get straight into the book of Haggai.

I. Introduction:

A. About the Book

i. The Prophet,

a) Haggai,

- **Vs. 1** tells us who the prophet is, Haggai,
 - his name means “Festival, or Festive” it is suggested that he was born on one of the feast days.
 - He is mentioned in the book of **Ezra, (5:1 & 6:14)** this is the extent of the background we have on him.
- **Vs. 1** also tells us who he was speaking to
 - Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, a descendant of Jehoakim, one of the last kings of Israel.
 - Zerubbabel was governor of Judah.
- He was also speaking to Joshua, the son of the high priest Josedech.
 - Josedech was the high priest of Israel when the Babylonian conquest began.
- So the prophecy came to the civil leader, and the religious leader.
 - This takes us back to the other prophets where they would pronounce judgment on Israel, but it would start with the rulers.
 - The rulers were not only in charge of their own actions, but the actions of the rest of the nation.

ii. The Time,

a) in the 2nd year of Darius, **Vs.1**

- Darius began in 521 B.C. So we can place this about 519 B.C.(6th month September)
- But more importantly it was about 17 years after Cyrus released Nehemiah to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.
 - 17 years passed, with little or no work done.
 - The people started, Cyrus gave them money to buy what they needed, Tyre and Sidon sent lumber to the project.
 - But the people let life get in the way, they left the building of the Lord's

house to building their own homes.

iii. The Message,

- a) the message is simple, it is time to build God's house.
 - Complete what has been decreed and started.
- b) In the first chapter, Haggai will give 4 words of encouragement to the rulers and the people to try to get them back on track,

II. Rekindling the Fire, Vs.1-15 (Four Admonitions)

A. Put God First, vs.1-4

i. Excuses,

- a) there will always be excuses for anything we want to do or not to do.
 - If all we need is a reason, then it won't be hard for us to find one.
 - I like to say, an excuse is a convent reason to do what we want to do.
 - Ben Franklin said "I never met a man that was good at making excuses that was good at anything else"
- b) They said it is not time,
 - the Jewish people who looked into the prophecies saw that it would be 70 years before Israel returned. (**Jeremiah 25:1-14**)
 - They translated that by say it would be 70 years before the temple was rebuilt,
 - it wasn't destroyed during the first invasion, but in the 3rd, about 586 B.C
 - which would put the time now at about 67 years later???
- c) So Haggai is saying, you said it was not time, is is still not time,
 - if your excuse was 70 years has not passed, then it's only 3 years, we had better get a move on.
 - He was using their own excuse against them,
 - I love it when someone makes an excuse, then you can dismiss it,
 - I can't go, My car is giving me trouble, OK, I'll drive...

ii. The Evidence was there for them to complete the work,

- a) God had put it on the heart of Cyrus to send them back,
 - **II Chronicles 36:22&23 & Ezra 1:1-4**
- b) He gave them money and supplies to rebuild,
- c) even the prophets spoke of the rebuilding
 - **Isaiah 44:28** "That saith of Cyrus, *He is* my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."
 - **Isaiah 45:13** "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts."

iii. Inconsistency,

- a) the people said it wasn't time to build the house of God, but it was time to build their own houses.
- b) Their houses were no ordinary homes they were Ceiled houses,
 - that is to say paneled.
 - This was a practice common for kings, but not for ordinary citizen.
- c) They were putting their comfort and desires above that of God,
 - the word of God is clear that we should place Him first in our lives.

B. Trust in God's Promises, Vs.5-11

i. Examine your ways,

- a) the word consider means, give careful thought.
- b) God has always promised blessings if people follow his word, and promised trouble if they disobeyed.
 - See **Lev.26:18-20 & Deut. 28:38-40**
- c) The New Testament also gives us the directive to examine ourselves
 - In fact when a church takes communion, one of the things the individual members are suppose to do is examine themselves,
 - to take a long, and honest look at their life, and see if they were living up to what the word of God tells us to do.
 - See **II Corinthians 13:5-10**

ii. Look at what was happening,

- a) Ye have sown much, and bring in little;
 - they plant, but the amount of crops isn't what it should be.
- b) ye eat/ drink, but ye have not enough;
 - they cannot be satisfied with what they had
- c) ye clothe you, but there is none warm;
 - the clothing is not sufficient,
- d) and he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes.
 - It doesn't go as far as it should.
- e) It seemed that nothing they were doing was being blessed,
 - why wasn't it?
 - After all weren't they still under the blessings of God?
 - He had brought them out of bondage, and now what was going on.
- f) Sometimes it is what we are doing that stops the blessings,
- g) **Vs.8** go into the mountains and get wood, to rebuild with,
 - why would God tell them to go get wood?
 - Didn't they already have wood?
 - **Ezra 3:7** “They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.”
 - there was already wood sent to do the work, but what happened to it?
 - Remember the paneled houses?
 - The people took and uses that which was suppose to be the Lords,
 - now to translate this to New Testament Churches,
 - I do not thing the word of God commands us to tithe,
 - I do think there are blessings, and I also think we are held accountable to our commitments.
 - I wonder how many have uses what God told them to give to the Lord for their own benefit?
 - I wonder how many have used what was the Lord's for their own benefit?
 - God will not bless that type of life,
 - they never have enough,

iii. Vs.9-11, Just to be clear about it,

- a) The prophet goes back and tells exactly why it was the way it was,
 - they did not put God first, and they did not trust in God's word.

- There is a principle in the midst of these verses that speaks volumes to the way we are to act, and respond to situations:

C. Reverence God's Name, **Vs.7&8**

i. God is Holy,

- a) God is Holy and He desires His people to be Holy
- b) we are to be a reflection of His Holiness,
 - and when we work, God is glorified,
 - **John 15:8** “**Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.**”
- c) Here is how we glorify God,
 - we work, and God is glorified by what we do.
- d) The same is true in reverse,
 - our unrighteousness also reflects on God,
 - Israel was reflecting wrongly on God when they put off the work,
 - what message does this send to others?

D. Obey God's Command, **Vs.12-15**

i. Obey The Word,

- a) When obeying the word:
 - we don't weigh the options,
 - we don't examine the alternatives,
 - we don't negotiate the terms,
 - we simply what we are told, and leave the rest up to God.

ii. Top Down Obedience,

- a) notice that the word went to the leaders, the religious and the civil leaders,
 - then it went to the people,
- b) Now the obedience went from the leaders to the people,
 - we need to be careful in our leadership roll.
 - Not to expect obedience from those we have been placed over, while not obeying ourselves,
 - this includes parents, spouses, and workers.
 - We need to practice top down obedience.
 - That being said, just because one over us doesn't obey doesn't give us the right to be disobedient.

iii. Lord of Host,

- a) this phrase is used 10 times in this little book,
 - **1:2,9,14 ; 2:4,7,8,9,23**
 - it means Lord of the Armies,
- b) I think it goes to point out that the Lord is the leader, not only of Israel, but also of Heaven,
 - the angelic host, and being Lord of the heavenly host, they obey,
 - and Lord of the people, we should also obey.

iv. Obedience is Rewarded,

- a) **John 7:17** “**If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.**”
 - Obedience leads us to further truth,
 - **Vs.13**, God promised He was with them, (as He will remind them again in the next chapter He is with them, Vs.4)

- b) God has been working this through for a long time,
 - starting with the captivity, but Cyrus, as we read earlier, how God prepared him for the job,
 - Then the leaders, Haggai to deliver the word, and then for the people to have a heart to continue the work.
 - **Philippians 2:13** “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.”
- v. **Why a 3 Week Delay,**
- a) Notice the time the word was delivered, and then notice the time it was acted upon,
 - **Vs.1**, 6th month and 1st day,
 - **Vs.15**, the 24th day of the month. Why?
 - b) **Luke 14:28&29** “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it? **29**Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,”
 - this job sight was laying dormant for 16 years?
 - How bad can it get, there was no wood to do the work, they had to clean up the sight,
 - there would be a lot to do before you could jump int the building,
 - I know a place right now, that was a very expensive building, the owners went through bankruptcy, and the building lay empty for 10 years before it was bought, but before the new owner could work on it, it had to be repaired, cleaned, and due to code changes, he was not able to keep a large portion of what was already there. A long story short, the building is still empty because the owner didn't count the cost.
 - c) Once we count the cost,
 - d) we prepare, then it is time to get up and get going,
 - we can say we have all the faith in God in the world, but James says:
 - **James 4:17,18, & 26** “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. **18**Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works...**26**For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”