

Minor Prophets
Haggai
Lesson 3

Text: **Haggai 2:20-23**

Intro: Haggai has had the job of speaking to the nation of Israel, and getting them back to work on the temple. It had come to a stop for about 16 years. Opposition from outside forces, discouragement from within, and a general lack of dedication brought the work to a stand still. Haggai was sent to tell the nation it is time to finish the project, turn to God, get over discouragements and do the work. Hearing the word is one thing, but doing it is something completely different. We need to do the word of God not just hear only. Can you imagine the nation hearing the words of Haggai, and saying yes, but then going back to their house? So Haggai has given 2 messages, and it was time for the third, a message of encouragement, and something to look forward to.

I. Look Ahead, Vs.20-23

A. A Message to Zerubbabel,

i. Zerubbabel,

- a) His name meant, Descended of or from Babylon,
 - (born there is one way of looking at it)
 - but I think another way of looking at it is, he was the one that was helping go away from Babylon.
 - The Babylonian empire wanted to assimilate the people to be like they were, but the Jews were not to be like others, and it was falling to people like: Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and even Zerubbabel to lead them in the way God would have them to go.
- b) Zerubbabel was also of royal descent,
 - we mentioned this a couple of weeks ago.
 - He was the grandson of king Jehoiachin,
 - **Matthew 1:12** places him in the lineage of king David
 - and the legal heir to the throne.
 - But, he wasn't king, he was governor, appointed by Babylon.
- c) There is a biblical reason Zerubbabel did not sit on the throne.
 - And not just because of Babylon, but because of God.
 - **Jeremiah 22:24-30** “As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;²⁵And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand *of them* whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans.²⁶And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.²⁷But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return.²⁸Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? *is he* a vessel *wherein is* no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?²⁹O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.³⁰Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man *that* shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.”
 - Why did God deal with Coniah so harshly?
 - **II Kings 24:9** “And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD,

according to all that his father had done.”

- d) This all ties into the lineage of Jesus,
- the reason He was born of a virgin, so the seed of Coniah was not in Jesus,
 - through Joseph He was a legal heir to the throne,
 - but, through Mary He was the Blood Heir,
 - this is why we have the two lineages that separate, one through Coniah, and the other bypasses him.
 - So Zerubbabel was the seed of Coniah, and because of the word of God, he would not be king.

ii. God still Uses Zerubbabel,

a) even though he was not eligible to be king (according to God) he could serve as governor.

- **Vs 24** God called him, “My Servant”
 - we should not let the sins of our fathers hold us back from what God has planned for us.
 - We know a lot of people who have shared in the sins of their father,
 - at 16, 18, you may be able to blame your parents, but there is a time when the decision has become your decision.
 - Zerubbabel chose to follow God.

b) His job was going to be to help re-establish temple worship, and lead the remnant of Israel back into a relationship with God.

B. God Sends a Word of Encouragement,

i. You may be small, But Your God Is Not,

a) the kingdoms that would shake were the kingdoms of the world.

- Israel was used to being a small fish in a big pond,
 - the Assyrians, Babylon, Meds, Persians,
 - not to mention the other nations that surrounded Israel
 - but Israel has something they did not, the one true God,

ii. You are My Ambassador,

a) **II Corinthians 5:20** “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God”

- When we witness to others, we are not representing ourselves. We represent God.

b) The Signet,

- **vs. 23** I will make thee a signet, I have chosen you,
- This must have meant something to Zerubbabel, after all in what we read in **Jeremiah 22:24**
 - God told His grandfather, if you were a signet ring on my right hand, I would pull you off.
- Now Zerubbabel was being told, God will make him a signet.

c) I want to point out something about the signet, and the attitude of the two men,

- Coniah, God said if you were a signet on my hand...
 - the power and authority came from the one who was represented by a signet,
 - for God to have it on His hand indicated that he was a servant of the man,
 - this is the attitude that some people have, God serves me.
 - I think this is God's way of saying, I do not serve man, man serves me.
- Zerubbabel on the other hand was the one becoming a signet for God,

- it is the difference between thinking God serves us, and we serve Him.
- d) Zerubbabel was being encouraged to understand that he was the servant of God.
- And as a servant of God, the power, authority, and responsibility for the protection, and the provision of the nation was God's and he was the ambassador to carry out God's will.

iii. There is a day coming,

a) "I Will"

- when we have the I Will of God, we do not need anything else,
- when we have the promise of God, we can rest assured that it will happen,
- **Romans 3:4** "...let God be true, but every man a liar;..."
 - so when the world says we cant, and God says we can who will we believe,
 - when others say we shouldn't but God says we should, who do we believe,
 - when society say it is OK and God says it is wrong, who do we believe?

b) God gives His word to the Nation, and to Zerubbabel.

- I will...

C. Practical lessons form Haggai,

i. God initiates, Sustains, and encourages His work through His word,

- a) When the word came to Haggai, the people picked up where the work was left off.
- b) God supplied all they needed, using the nation in giving, Cyrus, and Darius, and giving favor in the eyes of others.
- c) And continued to encourage throughout the building process.

ii. The Work of God is Team Work,

a) We must work as a team in order to complete the work God has established that we do,

- some build, some clean, some mend, some watch and pray,
- **Ephesians 4:15&16** "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: **16**From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

b) We are co-laborers with Christ,

- **I Corinthians 3:9** "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building. "

c) Christ is the Head, we are His servants.

iii. There is always Hope,

a) When things look bad, stop looking out, and look up.

- The nation stopped the work because of opposition,
- but they started when they began to look up.
- When things start to look bad, it is time for us to look toward God,
- **Hebrews 4:16** "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

iv. God should take First Place in all Our Lives,

a) the work and progress of God stopped when the people started seeking their own desire and pleasure,

- **Matthew 6:33** "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
- **Romans 14:12** tells us that we will all give an account for ourselves.

- b) We live in a time where men have never had as much, and the distractions are everywhere,
 - we need to be cautious that they don't keep us from the will of God,
 - Question, what is another name for a distraction that keeps us from God? Idol.
- v. **Without the Presence of God, we labor in vain,**
 - a) **Philippians 2:13** "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure. "
 - there is no doubt that we can work ourselves to death, and stay busy, but it is only when the power of God is behind us that it will last.
 - All the homes that they were building have long since vanished.
 - But the things of God are still here,
 - not the temple, but remember it was never about the building, but the one who dwelled in the building.