

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

We are going to begin a new study this evening -

Turn your bibles with me to the book of Haggai 1

If you are having trouble finding it – it is in between the two books that start with “Z”
Zephaniah and Zechariah.

Habakkuk – Zephaniah – Haggai – Zechariah and then Malachi – to end the Old
Testament.

Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament (38 verse)– only Obadiah is
shorter.

It is short – but as we will see over the next few weeks, it is very powerful and
inspirational.

As we see the Lord use the prophet Haggai to bring a word of exhortation to the people
of Israel that their priorities are out of order.

And because their priorities are out of order – they are missing out on a tremendous
blessing.

Let's pray...

Read Haggai 1:1-6

Now before we get in depth into the text –

I think it is very important to provide a little background and context of what is going on during this time frame.

When the Lord brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land

–

One of the things that occurred is that the Children of Israel rebelled against the Lord.

We saw that in our studies through the Book of Judges and 2 Kings

The Children of Israel turned their back on God, they failed to keep the Sabbath years – where they would allow the land to rest and trust God for His provisions, and they began to worship some of the pagan gods of the nations that surrounded them.

Molech, Baal and Asherah

They did this for 700 years

And God would send prophets to warn them – and the Israelites rejected the prophets.

So God uses the Assyrians and Babylon to bring judgment upon His people

They destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and the Babylonians take the Israelites into exile for 70 years.

At that time, the book of Ezra tells us that the Lord stirred the heart of Cyrus – the king of Persia (they were the new big dog in the land - they had conquered Babylon during the 70 years of exile)

Cyrus gives the Jews they Jews permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.

The problem was that the majority of the Jews did not want to back – they enjoyed living in exile –

So only a small remnant of Jews returned to Jerusalem

And they were led by Zerubbabel and Joshua

And as they started working on the temple – they began to face opposition

They encountered opposition from the Samaritans – who were jealous that they were not allowed to be a part of the reconstruction – so the Samaritans began to cause trouble by sending word to Cyrus that the Jews were planning to rebel against him.

So Cyrus receives word of this and stops the work on the temple.

As all this is going on –

They also encountered opposition from within –

Some of the old timers who had seen the first temple (the one that Solomon built) they began to complain when the foundation of the new temple was laid. They were discouraged that the new temple was not going to be as glorious as the old temple.

So this leads the people to become idle

And by idle – I don't mean that they sat there and didn't do anything (as we will see – they were doing other things) – by being idle, they stopped doing the work that God wanted them to do.

And when we are idle that way – the enemy begins to work in our mind.

Telling us that the work is not important or that the work is too hard or that it is no the right time.

Trying to convince us to stop what God has called us to do.

Turn with me to Nehemiah 6

The book of Nehemiah happens around the same time frame as Haggai –

God uses Nehemiah to rally the people to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem.

[Neh 6:1-3 NKJV] 1 Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and [that] there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), 2 that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, “Come, let us meet together

among the villages in the plain of Ono.” But they thought to do me harm. 3 So I sent messengers to them, saying, “I [am] doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?”

Nehemiah says – I am not going to stop what God has called me to do –

And when we are busy with the work of the Lord,

we don't have time for the enemy.

We don't have time to play his games

We don't have time to mess around

And that is the problem with idleness

The people started to do their own thing – instead of what God called them to do.

Keep in mind what the significance of the temple was –

The temple was the place where God met His people in the Old Testament

So the failure to rebuild the temple showed their spiritual apathy toward God.

Their priorities were all off

So God sends Haggai to get the people back on track with God.

[Hag 1:1-6 NKJV] 1 In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, 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." ' "

I want to draw our attention to a few things here in the first two verses –

The first thing is the time stamp.

We are going to see several time stamps in Haggai – and one of the things that we will notice is that Haggai's ministry only lasted 3-4 months.

God placed it in his heart to go to Jerusalem and bring this exhortation to them – and Haggai was obedient to what the Lord called him to do.

Not only do we know how long his ministry was – but we also know how long the work on the temple had stopped.

From the time God stirred the heart of Cyrus to the time that God called Haggai – 16 years had passed.

And only the foundation was laid.

They worked on the temple for about two years and the work was stopped.

And notice what the people's excuse was

The time has not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.

This reveals that they knew it should be built –

It reveals that they knew it was God's will for them to rebuild the temple.

but they were putting it off.

It should be built – but they were waiting until it was a more convenient time.

It should be built – but the work was too hard at the present time – there was too much opposition.

Yes, The King of Persia had stopped the work – but they chose not to push back against the accusations.

They simply accepted them and moved on with their lives.

Haggai doesn't beat around the bush and tells them – you guys are making a bunch of excuses instead of doing what is right.

The remnant had grown complacent

The remnant had grown apathetic

The remnant had grown comfortable in the status quo

Initially – when they returned to Jerusalem they had a zeal to do the work of the Lord – they very much wanted to rebuild the temple – but when the opposition came – they wilted.

Turn to the Gospel of Matthew 13

[Mat 13:3-6 NLT] 3 He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: "Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. 4 As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. 5 Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. 6 But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died.

The remnant – becomes a perfect picture of the seed that fell on shallow soil – because they were no longer growing – they had become idle

Here is the application for you and me -

God calls us to do certain things –

Many of us understand His will for our lives

We know what door He wants us to go through

The problem is that sometimes we get to the door and we find that the door is closed – and we give up.

We encounter push back / we encounter opposition and we stop

Church, we need to understand that everything we do as we walk in obedience to the Lord – we are going to encounter opposition.

We must be very careful to think that opposition means – the time had not come – and grow complacent.

Now we are going to see what they were doing instead of God's will.

3 Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 "[Is it] time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple [to lie] in ruins?"

The people in Jerusalem – their excuse was that the time was not right to rebuild the temple – and God knew their heart – so He rebukes them through the prophet Haggai

–
 “You say it is not time – is it time to dwell in your paneled houses”

In Israel – everything was built from stone or rock -

Wood had to be imported – usually from Lebanon in order to construct big projects – like the temple.

In fact – many bible scholars believe that the wood that these individuals decorated their walls – it was wood that had been set aside specifically for the rebuilding of the temple.

In His rebuke – God is telling them that what they had been doing for the last 15-16 years – it was in direct opposition to what He wanted them to do in the first place when He first sent them home.

They were using the very same things that were supposed to be dedicated to the temple – for their homes.

They had allowed their comfort to take precedent over what God wanted them to do in their lives.

Turn your bibles to 2 Samuel 7 –

Here in 2 Samuel –

One of the things that King David does after he conquered Jerusalem was that He brings the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

[2Sa 7:1-2 NKJV] 1 Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, 2 that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains."

David was troubled by the thought that he lived in a nicer house than the Ark of the Covenant

The palace that he lived in was a house of cedar – luxury home.

And so – he desires to build a temple for the Ark of the Covenant

And as you continue reading 2 Sam 7 – we find that God says no to David – he tells David through Nathan that his son will be the one that builds the temple.

But the difference between David and the people in Jerusalem during the time of Haggai is that David's heart was filled with the question, "What can I do for God?"

He was so filled with gratitude and concern for God's glory that he wanted to do something special for God.

That is not what the people in Jerusalem wanted – they were looking out for themselves.

But the thing is church –

God desires His people to follow after Him –

And when He sees us go in a different direction – He is going to do everything He can to bring us back.

He is going to do everything He can to grab our attention – to stir us up – to wake us up and show us what is going on in our lives.

To reveal to us if our priorities are off –

[Mat 6:33 NKJV] 33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

So here is the message that the Lord has for His people -

5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways!

Consider your ways?

Five times this phrase is found in these two chapters -

God is challenging them –

Look at your life

Search your heart

He is inviting them to take a step back – and ask themselves,

What am I doing right now that may not be the best thing for me right now.

He wants them to think deeply about everything that is going on in their lives right now and look at the consequences that they are going through because they failed to be obedient to God's calling.

[Psa 139:23-24 NKJV] 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 And see if [there is any] wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

In the NLT – verse 24 reads

[Psa 139:24 NLT] 24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Show me what's going on in my life that I need to remove.

Show me where my priorities are out of whack.

This is what we are to do on a daily basis – seek Him and ask Him to examine ourselves so that we do not become like the people in Jerusalem.

So that we don't fall into the trap of getting caught up in the daily routine.

So that we do not fall into the trap of not seeking the Lord every day to find out what He has for us today – what He has for us this week – and so on.

For us, considering our ways is a way that we invite God into the process of Him examining our lives – like the psalmist

Because we can consider our ways and think everything is good – but when we invite God to consider our ways – He points out certain things in our life that are out of order.

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.”

Verse 6 – is what the Lord wants the people to consider.

You work

You eat

You drink

You buy clothing

You try to save

But it is all gone in a moment – it is like your pockets or wallets have holes in them

The Lord wants them and us to make the connection between what is going on in our lives and connecting it to their priorities.

Because here is the things church – when we are not walking with the Lord –

The world is incapable of satisfying our needs.

There is this aspect that when we don't have our lives prioritized in the right order – we are always going to be lacking because the world is incapable of filling the void that only God is capable of filling.

We are going to work and work and have nothing to show for it.

Because of their selfishness the people missed God's blessings.

Haggai points out a sobering reminder:

What happens in your heart affects every other part of your life. Because the people had pushed God out of the center, they suffered in every area.

However, when God is at the forefront of our lives

When we allow God to lead,

When we allow God to guide and direct us – He is the One who provides for our needs – by His riches and glory and His grace.

[Isa 55:1-2 NKJV] 1 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend money for [what is] not bread, And your wages for [what] does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat [what is] good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.

And this is what happens when Jesus becomes our priority.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

I read it earlier –

We must place God's will above our own.

There is nothing wrong with living in a nice home, but there is something wrong with neglecting God's priorities to pursue our own.

First things first, and honoring God is more important than houses or any other material thing.

May we consider our ways.

Amen.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.



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Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'



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