

HAGGAI
Scripture: 2:10-19

Intro: The book of Haggai is about the rebuilding of temple. God had warned Israel over and over and finally Babylon had destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Then, when Israel was 50 years into the 70 year captivity, the Medes who had defeated the Babylonians, allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem. You can read about that in the book of Ezra. Well, many did return and they began to rebuild the temple and certain enemies of the Jews set in to thwart their plans to rebuild the temple. That is also included in the book of Ezra. For 16 years the rebuilding of the temple was stalled. Now they are only 2 years short of the 70 year captivity the Lord once more stirred the people up to rebuild the temple.

As I outline the book of Haggai, it has four messages. Each message begins with an introduction. The first is at 1:1 (read). The second begins in 2:1 (read). The third one is in 2:10 (read). The last one is in 2:20 (read). The man God chose to give this message to His people Israel, was Haggai. The name Haggai means a festival, or my festival, that is the Lord's festival.

So notice first this very important piece of information in verse 1, that this took place in the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month (approx. September) and on the first day of the month. That fixes the year at 520 BC because Darius I began to reign in 522 BC. About 15 years earlier, Daniel wrote that great prophecy found in Daniel 9 about the restoration of Jerusalem. And so, as we will learn, the temple was restored earlier than the walls of the city.

The book is addressed to Zerubbabel who was the son of Shieltiel who in turn was the son of Jeconiah, of whom there is much interesting history and we will see a little of it later. The name Zerubbabel, means *seed of Babylon*. But his name to the Babylonians was Sheshbazer, meaning *prince of Judah*. And when Israel returned to Jerusalem, he was appointed by Cyrus as the governor. And now, as governor, the Lord sends His message through Haggai to Zerubbabel. But the message is not only to Zerubbabel. He was the secular leader. But this message was also addressed to Joshua, who was the High Priest. He is the religious

leader. So this message is addressed to the two most important leaders in Israel at that time.

Now, since Haggai means festival, J.R. Church connects the dates given in this book to the festivals. We will look at each of those as we go along. The date for this first message then is the first day of the sixth month. Church says, "On this particular day, a series of trumpet blowings commences. They continue for the entire month of Elul, culminating at the sighting of the new moon, making the first day of Tishri, called Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. In the Mosaic Law it is called the Feast of Trumpets" (166).

I. FIRST MESSAGE (1:1-15)

A. God's People Contented (2)

And so, with that bit of background we are ready to look at Haggai's first message in 1:2-15. And in verse 2, we find the Jews content to be back in Judah without being concerned about the rebuilding of the temple (read verse 2). God has a problem on His hands. He has brought the Jews back to their land, and they need Him to tell them to rebuild the temple!

It may be that the Jews may have thought that since the exile was to last 70 years and since they were as yet only up to the 68th year the time to rebuild had not yet come. A study of history reveals that they could have rebuilt the temple when they returned to the homeland immediately after 538 BC (Richard Wolff p.30). It seems that God expected that when they returned to Jerusalem they would not need to be told to rebuild Jerusalem. That, to Him, was a given.

B. God's People Corrected (3-15)

In verses 3-4 we have a disquieting question (read). To us, the question might go like this, "Is your church life in order?" So look at verses 3-11 (read). God is saying, "It is not right to live in luxurious homes until you have the Lord's house in order, and it has affected your own welfare. So, get to work! Build My house!" Well, notice the outcome of Haggai's first message in verses 12-15. Only 23 days, and things were on the move!

II. SECOND MESSAGE (2:1-9)

Intro: The second message is introduced to us in 2:1 (read). Now the 21 day of the seventh month, being Tishri, is the last day of the feast of booths, which is a festival. Why would God give this message on the last day of the last feast of that year? Because work had been stopped during the rest of the month and now they needed to be encouraged to continue. So Haggai, whose name means a festival, gives this instruction on the last day of this festival.

This second message again is directed to the secular and sacred leaders, Zerubbabel, the governor and Joshua the High Priest. And once more Haggai begins his message with a disquieting question in verses 2-3 (read). The original temple had been destroyed almost 70 years ago. Only the elderly would remember its splendor and according to Ezra 3:8-13, the older people who remembered the former temple wept because this one was so little in comparison, while the younger people who had not seen the former one jumped for joy.

In verses 4-5 we have a command and encouragement to be strong in the work (read). They were in the 7th month and this month was filled with three festivals. And so the Lord encourages them to continue the work in spite of the festivals.

From all that, consider now the wonderful prophecy of verses 6-9 (read). There is a question that remains for us to answer here. What do these words speak of, "Once more I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 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."

Let us go to Hebrews 12 (read 25-29). At this point this prophecy had not been fulfilled and so we know it is still future. And then, because there is no temple in the New Jerusalem, I conclude this is a reference to the millennium. So verse 28 says, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." The millennium still

lies before us. In this life we have trials many, but no matter how dark it gets, our future is bright.

Well, the temple that was built in Haggai's day was not much compared to Solomon's temple. However, Herod later added to this temple and beautified it until it was more glorious than the temple Solomon built. But the temple spoken of here is the temple that will be built in the millennium, and Haggai says it will outshine them all. After Solomon built the temple, the glory of God filled it. I do not find the glory of God ever returning to the temple that was rebuilt in Haggai's day. However, in the millennium, the glory of God will once more fill the temple. This is all described in Ezekiel 40-46. And in Haggai 2:9 we are told that in this place God will give peace. Peace will be the outstanding feature of the millennium.

III. THIRD MESSAGE (2:10-19)

Intro: Well, when we come to Haggai 2:10, we have an introduction to the third message of Haggai (read). This message came on the 24th day of the ninth month, the month of Kislev. J.R. Church notes that at the time Haggai wrote, this day was not important on the Jewish calendar but 355 years and a day later, the feast of Hanukkah would be born. Let me read from Church's comment, "It all started on Kislev 25, 168 B.C., when Antiochus Epiphanes and his Syrian army desecrated the temple by slaughtering a swine on the sacrificial altar. Worship was halted and the people were ordered to eat swine. This prompted a revolt led by Judas Macabbeus and a band of freedom fighters. After a war that lasted exactly three years, they succeeded in driving out the Syrians and set about to cleanse the sanctuary - on the 25th day of the ninth month, in 165 B.C." (168). Could it be that the Lord had this in mind when He inspired Haggai, whose name means festival to write this on this date? It could be.

A. Questions (2:12-13)

I want you to notice that this third message also begins with a disquieting question (read 11-13). Here is the first question: "Can the holy make the unholy, holy?" The answer is a resound, "No!" Right on the

heels of that question comes another in verse 13. Here is the question: "Can the unholy make the holy, unholy?" Answer? "Yes!"

Richard Wolfe, commenting on these principles says, "The first question illustrates the principle that the influence of holiness is not as far-reaching as the power of the unclean. One drop of filth will defile a vase full of water, but many drops of clean water will not purify a vase full of unclean water. Whereas a healthy man cannot communicate his health to another man by touching him, a sick man can communicate his disease. One single decayed apple thrown into a basket of fresh apples can communicate its rottenness to the entire basket. There are many ways to vice, but only one to virtue" (Richard Wolff on Haggai p.64).

That brings us to verse 14 (read). What is the point here? Israel had been defiled and had become unholy. Whatever they touched became unholy because they were unholy. If they were to rebuild the temple, they would first need to be cleansed, otherwise, whatever they touched there would also become defiled.

And so, in verses 15-19, we have the application of this. Israel had toiled in the land, but God had not blessed them because of their defilement. Now they were to be cleansed and after this, once more they would be blessed. So let us read verses 15-17 (read). Israel had suffered for her uncleanness. And now she had been instructed to be cleansed. And after she is cleansed, God foretells what will happen in verses 18-19 (read).

So, Israel is called to consider, to observe, to mark the time when she is cleansed and then to watch what will happen.

IV. FOURTH MESSAGE (2:20-23)

Intro: That brings us to the introduction to the fourth message in verse 20 (read). On this 24th day of the ninth month the Lord gave Haggai a second message as well. Now let me make a note here. The first message was directed to Zerubbabel, the secular leader and Joshua, the High Priest, the spiritual

leader. The second message was directed to both of them again. The third message was directed to the priests, but this fourth message is directed only to the secular leader, Zerubbabel.

And in this closing passage, we have two prophecies. The first is concerning the nations and we find it in verses 21-22 (read). Now I want you to notice in particular what the prophet is saying. First, God says, "I will shake heaven and earth." This will be an incredible shaking. Second, the Lord says, "I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, I will destroy the strength of the Gentile Kingdoms." And last, "I will overthrow chariots and those who ride them; the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother."

Now I ask, when will all this happen? Well, we read Hebrews 12:25-29 earlier and saw that it had not happened to that point, and from history we know it has not happened yet, so it lies in the future yet. Also, verse 22 tells us that the Gentile kingdoms will be overthrown, and that has not yet happened.

So, let me tell you when it will happen in my view. Everyone of these prophecies happens at the end of the tribulation, just before the millennial kingdom is set up. Go with me to Revelation 6 (read 12-17). This same thing is given in other places in the book of Revelation.

That leaves us with one more prophecy, and this one is related to Zerubbabel in verse 23 (read). Now what is difficult here is that according to Jeremiah 22:30, no offspring of Jehoiachin, the second to last king in Judah, also known as Coniah or Jeconiah, would prosper sitting on the throne. He was a wicked king and reigned only three months when Nebuchadnezzar took him to Babylon as a captive and set Mateniah, who is known as Zedekiah on the throne as the last king of Judah.

The Lord had said that none of his descendents would prosper sitting on the throne of David. If you check Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, you will find Jeconiah in that lineage. But, you will also find that Jesus was not the blood son of Jeconiah. Joseph, His adoptive father was of the line of Jeconiah, but Jesus

was not Joseph's blood son. Jesus gained His bloodline right to the throne of David, not through Joseph, but through His mother Mary.

But the question here is how could Zerubbabel become as a signet ring since he is a direct descendent of Jeconiah. Jeconiah was his grandfather. Well, this prophecy does not say that Zerubbabel will sit on the throne during the millennial kingdom. The One who sits on that throne will be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. But I expect that just as Pharoah gave his signet ring to Joseph to sign and seal what he wished, so the Lord Jesus will give this honor to Zerubbabel in the millennial kingdom.

So, when we come to the millennial kingdom, the earthly Gentile kingdoms will be overthrown. The antichrist's armies will be destroyed. The Lord Jesus will return to earth with His wife, the Church. The Old Testament saints will be resurrected, including Zerubbabel. Jesus will set up His kingdom. Zerubbabel will be like Joseph of old. The 12 apostles will rule from 12 thrones. We the Church, will be given joint rulership with them over the newly formed millennial kingdom.

CONCL: And so, in conclusion, the book of Haggai is about the urgency of rebuilding the temple. And as we close, I want to take time to tell you a little story from our present day. A while ago I received an e-mail from Gershon Solomon in Israel. I have mentioned him to you before. Since the book of Haggai has been about the rebuilding of the temple, now, some 2500 years later we are once more hearing of the rebuilding of the temple. Here is what Gershon Solomon wrote:

"Before the 1967 Six Day War I was terribly injured as a young Israeli officer in a battle when the Syrian Arabs attacked my unit. G-d miraculously saved my life when He appeared in the field of battle with His Angels and called and anointed me to build His Holy Temple on Mount Moriah -- the location of the First and Second Temples -- in Jerusalem.

"After one year in the hospital, I rejoined my army unit, still walking with two crutches. It was during the Six Day War in 1967 when the Arab countries attacked Israel from

all sides. On the third day of the war, after a heavy battle, Israeli paratroopers entered biblical Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate and we went immediately to the Temple Mount through the Tribes Gate. It is not an accident that the Israeli forces entered the Old City of Jerusalem through the Eastern Gates because tradition tells us that the Messiah will come through the Eastern Gate to the Temple Mount. Tears of joy and excitement filled our eyes when we stood in front of the Holy of Holies on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. As we stood there, I once again heard the [call](#) of G-d: "For this moment and most holy place I saved your life. Build My house so I will again dwell among My people Israel and among all my creation." This was the moment I had prepared myself for all of my life. We felt the presence of G-d so strongly amongst us. We felt like we were in heaven in front of the Throne of the Holy One of Israel, the King of Kings, the G-d of our forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When we heard General Mota Gur stating, "The Temple Mount is again in our hands", life stopped in the streets of Israel and in the battlefields. Israelis cried together with the soldiers because of the great joy and excitement. A hundred generations of destruction and exile were over! In six days the General and Commander of the Israeli Army, together with His soldiers, had defeated all of the Arab forces.

We walked with great excitement from place to place on the Temple Mount, looking at the remains of the holy Temple. Suddenly a civilian appeared and presented himself as a tour guide. He was not dressed as an Arab and did not speak Arabic, but English. He asked us to allow him to guide us on the Temple Mount. When we asked him why he wanted to do this he told us that G-d sent him to show us the location of the Jewish Temple and to tell us that the G-d of Israel had returned the Temple Mount to his children Israel. He took us to the Dome of the Rock, showed us the rock, and said that this is the location of the Holy of Holies. Then he took us to the Eastern Gate and said the Messiah, the seed of David, will come from here. He said that even in the Koran it is written that G-d will redeem His chosen people Israel and will return them to their place on the Temple Mount. He said: "You can see with your own eyes that the time has come and I am sure that Israel will soon rebuild the Temple." As we walked from place to place he suddenly disappeared and we did not see him anymore. He was no longer on the Temple Mount. Each of us was sure that he was an angel sent by the G-d of Israel to share with us and

all the people of Israel the godly significance of this godly moment. He appeared as a human being as in the biblical times but we were so sure that he was an angel of G-d. It seemed like a dream but we were awake and we knew it was reality. The holy Tanach was opened at this exciting moment and the Word of G-d was prayed and was heard all over the Temple Mount:

"A Song of Maalot. When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like men who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then they said among the nations, The Lord has done great things for us and we are glad." (Psalm 126)

As a child I was told that in the heavens, above the Temple Mount, there is a gate from where in the biblical times G-d reflected His glory and spoke His Word to His children Israel. After the destruction of the Second Temple this gate was closed and will be reopened when the end-time Temple is built. I lifted my eyes to heaven and could see that the sky was glorified by the Spirit of G-d. I was sure that He was crying like us with joy. Then I could see, written like with letters of fire, the Word of G-d to His prophets Isaiah and Micah to our generation:

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow to it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for Torah shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide concerning far away strong nations; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken it." (Micah 4:1-4 and Isaiah 2:1-4)

These godly moments are the highlights of my life. When I stood in front of the Holy of Holies, I swore before the G-d of Israel that I would not be silent or rest until the Temple of G-d is rebuilt. I dedicated my entire life to G-d and for this most holy cause. At this exciting moment, we

could hear Messiah ben David, the Messenger of the G-d of Israel, knocking on the Eastern Gate of the Temple Mount calling to Israel: "Open the gate. I am here." However, the Israeli leadership did not listen to this call. Twelve hours later in a moment of terrible weakness the Defense Minister of Israel, General Moshe Dyan, took down the Israeli flag from the top of the Dome of the Rock and gave the Arabs back the keys to the Temple Mount. It was a terrible sinful act resulting from spiritual weakness. He was afraid that if he removed the mosques and rebuilt the Temple, as G-d expected Israel to do when He returned His holy Temple Mount to them, then one and a half billion Muslims would come against Israel to destroy her. He did not listen to the call or trust the promises of the G-d of Israel.

When this happened I knew what my task was and I immediately called Israelis who were faithful to the G-d of Israel and formed the Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful Movement. For 44 years, we have been carrying the following call of G-d to His people Israel and to the entire world:

"Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say that the time has not yet come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Is it time for you, yourselves, to dwell in your well-timbered houses, while this house lies in ruins? Thus says the Lord of hosts; "Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, says the Lord." (Haggai 1:2, 4,7-8)

Day and night, we carry this message to Israel and to the world. We feel His blessings, encouragement, and presence in our holy work. There is a great awakening in Israel and many wonderful people from all over the world have joined us in this work. We know that we soon shall stand together with all our Faithful friends from Israel and all over the world in His rebuilt house and we shall give Him thanks for the great privilege that He has given us to be builders of the house of G-d and to open the Eastern Gate of the Temple Mount for Messiah ben David, sent by the G-d of Israel to lead His chosen people Israel and all the world in righteousness.

In G-d we trust!!