

THE PROPHECY OF HAGGAI

BIBLE TEXT : Haggai 1:1-15; 2:1-23.

LESSON 427 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Ye have sown much, and bring in little, ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" (Haggai 1:6).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Haggai 1:1-15

1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,
2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.
3 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,
4 *Is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house *lie* waste?
5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.
6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes.
7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.
8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.
9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, *it came* to little; and when ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that *is* waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.
10 Therefore the heaven over you

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Challenge to Finish the Temple

1. Haggai's prophecy came in the second year of King Darius, Haggai 1:1;
Ezra 4:24
²⁴ Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.
2. The people had said the time had not come to build the Temple, Haggai 1:2-4.
3. Their selfish ways and neglect of the Temple project had brought trouble, Haggai 1:5-11.

II Work Resumed

1. The governor, high priest, and all the people obeyed the call, Haggai 1: 12;
Deuteronomy 5:29
²⁹ O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!
2. The prophet brought encouraging word from the Lord, Haggai 1:13;
Isaiah 41:10
¹⁰ Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.
3. Everyone's spirit was stirred, Haggai 1:14,15;
Ezra 1:1-2
¹ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying,
² Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah.
3. The glory of this Temple did not compare with the first one, Haggai 2:1-3,
Ezra 3:12
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:
4. The prophet prophesies of the glory yet to come to the Temple during Christ's Millennial Reign, Haggai 2:4-9

III Blessings

1. Godliness and holiness are not contagious, Haggai 2:10-12.
2. Sin, unfaithfulness and backsliding spread, Haggai 2:13, 14.
3. Remember the misery before this Temple project was resumed, Haggai 2:15-17;
Deuteronomy 28:15-68

is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit.

11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, 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 did fear before the LORD.

13 Then spake Haggai the LORD'S messenger in the LORD'S message unto the people, saying, I *am* with you, saith the LORD.

14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,

15 In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

Haggai 2:1-23

1 In the seventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying,

2 Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,

3 Who *is* left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? *is it* not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

16 Cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the field.

17 Cursed *shall be* thy basket and thy store.

18 Cursed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

19 Cursed *shalt* thou *be* when thou comest in, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out.

20 The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

21 The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it.

22 The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

23 And thy heaven that *is* over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee *shall be* iron.

24 The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

25 The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

26 And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray *them* away.

27 The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.

28 The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:

29 And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save *thee*.

30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.

31 Thine ox *shall be* slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass *shall be* violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep *shall be* given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue *them*.

32 Thy sons and thy daughters *shall be* given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail *with longing* for them all the day long: and *there shall be* no might in thine hand.

33 The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed always:

34 So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

35 The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.

36 The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I *am* with you, saith the LORD of hosts:

5 *According to* the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it *is* a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry *land*;

7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

8 The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

10 In the four and twentieth *day* of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

11 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests *concerning* the law, saying,

12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

13 Then said Haggai, If *one that is* unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

14 Then answered Haggai, and said, So *is* this people, and so *is* this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so *is* every work of

37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee.

38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather *but* little in; for the locust shall consume it.

39 Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress *them*, but shalt neither drink *of* the wine, nor gather *the grapes*; for the worms shall eat them.

40 Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint *thyself* with the oil; for thine olive shall cast *his fruit*.

41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity.

42 All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume.

43 The stranger that *is* within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.

44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

45 Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee:

46 And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

47 Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all *things*;

48 Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all *things*: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;

50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:

51 And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which *also* shall not leave thee *either* corn, wine, or oil, *or* the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.

52 And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:

54 *So that* the man *that is* tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:

55 *So that* he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.

56 The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter,

57 And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all *things* secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this

their hands; and that which they offer there *is* unclean.

15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD:

16 Since those *days* were, when *one* came to an heap of twenty *measures*, there were *but* ten: when *one* came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty *vessels* out of the press, there were *but* twenty.

17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye *turned* not to me, saith the LORD.

18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth *month*, *even* from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider *it*.

19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless *you*.

20 And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth *day* of the month, saying,

21 Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;

22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

23 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD;

⁵⁹ Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, *even* great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

⁶⁰ Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.

⁶¹ Also every sickness, and every plague, which *is* not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

⁶² And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldst not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.

⁶³ And it shall come to pass, *that* as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

⁶⁴ And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, *even* wood and stone.

⁶⁵ And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

⁶⁶ And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:

⁶⁷ In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

⁶⁸ And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy *you*.

4. Blessings have multiplied and will increase more as the work of God is advanced, Haggai 2:18–23;

Deuteronomy 28:1-14

¹ And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

² And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

³ Blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the field.

⁴ Blessed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

⁵ Blessed *shall be* thy basket and thy store.

⁶ Blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou comest in, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out.

⁷ The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.

⁸ The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

⁹ The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

¹⁰ And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.

¹¹ And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers to give thee.

¹² The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

¹³ And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do *them*:

¹⁴ And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, *to* the right hand, or *to* the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

NOTES:

The prophecy of Haggai was given during the second year of Darius, king of Persia. (This was not the same Darius who had Daniel cast into the lions' den.) Some 16 or 17 years before this time, Cyrus, first king of Persia, had given the captive Israelites their freedom. He had been stirred up of the Lord to do so. He had felt impressed to have the house of the Lord built in Jerusalem, and had called upon the captives in Babylon who served the true God to arise and go to Jerusalem to start building. God was bringing to pass His plan in stirring up this heathen king to do these things. Usually the kings kept their captives in subjection. Nebuchadnezzar had brought the Israelites into captivity but Babylon was overthrown by Cyrus, and had become only a province in the kingdom of Persia.

Vision Lost

Haggai comes forth to tell Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest, that the Lord is calling the people to account for their failure to finish the house of the Lord. It was time to forget their own comforts and the beauty of their ceiled houses and build the Lord's house. Their enemies had discouraged them and stopped them but it was time now to build the Temple (**Ezra 4:24** ²⁴ Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.). Their unfaithfulness and selfish indulgences had spread until such were the prevailing sins of the whole people. They perhaps became more and more discouraged as the rain was withheld and they had to work harder for less and less.

One is reminded of the testimony of many people who, when they withheld from God their tithes (which are rightly His), suffered for it. When one honours God by paying tithes, God makes the remaining ninetenths go farther than the whole would have gone had the tithes been withheld. The reasons for God's blessings are the same today as they were then. When one honours God, serves God, pays his vows and remembers to have no other gods before Him, the blessings come. When one forgets God, troubles multiply.

Even if the trouble does not come immediately, the reckoning time will arrive. Some have found that the fruits of their backsliding did not show up until their children were old enough to go into sin. Then the parents suffered the terrible remorse of remembering that they were responsible for having failed to bring their children up around a family altar and in church and Sunday School.

Another Chance

God was faithful to these people even though they had

forgotten their obligations to Him. He sent His prophet to tell the governor and high priest what the trouble was and what to do about it. They and all the people obeyed the call to go to work, and set to the task of building the Temple. The prophet brought encouraging word from the Lord that He was with them. How they must have been blessed in their labours when they heard that word from the prophet! In these days, the Spirit of the Lord bears witness with ours when we are on the right road, and faithfully warns us when we are about to deviate.

Captive Israel Set Free by Cyrus

There is something beautiful about the fact that the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel and Joshua and all the remnant of the people. It was God, too, who had stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, when he set the Israelite captives free and some 50,000 of them had returned to Judah. It seems unnatural for a heathen king to release these religious people, but God had put it into his heart to do so.

The time was ripe for God to fulfil His plan. The Israelites had been punished for their sins and when they had learned their lesson God gave them their liberty to return to Judah. But many of them did not appreciate it, and stayed behind in Babylon. Those who did return to Judah seemed to have lost heart quickly and soon were spending all their time in keeping their houses beautified and comfortable.

There is a warning in that for us today. God has done so very much for us! He has set us free from the bondage of sin, and when material things multiply around us there is the danger that we will forget the main reason for living, which is to serve the Lord who has redeemed us, and to make Him the centre and purpose of our life.

The Different Temples

The glory of this Temple that they were building did not compare in size or beauty with the first Temple, but the prophet exhorted them to be strong and to finish the work, for greater and more glorious things were promised. The prophecy of Haggai 2:9 has not been fulfilled yet, but it will be when Jesus rules the whole earth during His Millennial Reign. In that day we will go up to Jerusalem to worship, and from Jerusalem will go out righteous judgment.

Even at the best, the tabernacle and temple worship has served as only a shadow of the real. In a spiritual sense today we bask in the glory foreshadowed by the Temple, and look now for the One who is greater than the Temple -- for Christ and His return to earth again.

Desire

Some have the idea that by association with Christian people they will become Christians, but this lesson teaches us differently. Just because a thing is holy is no assurance that a thing defiled will be made holy by touching it. But on the other hand, the pure may be defiled by coming into contact with the defiled. You may get into sin by association, but into salvation, never! True righteousness comes to those who desire it, who will look to Him who is able to make them righteous.

When these people obeyed the Lord and followed Him, they had the joy of the Lord. They were an encouragement to one another in the same way as one Christian is an encouragement to another today, but one man cannot answer for another's never-dying soul.

Blessings

Haggai reminded the people of the struggle they had before they started to build the Temple. They suffered want. When they looked for harvest it was very scanty. The blasting, the mildew,

the hail and the drought were all sent upon them because they had forgotten God. Now that they had started labouring on the Temple, they saw the hand of God blessing in every way. The rains came; the seed grew. The Lord fought their battles for them to the subduing of peoples and nations. He is the same God today!

QUESTIONS

1. What king gave the people of God permission to build the Temple?
2. What excuse did the people give for not continuing with the building of the Temple?
3. What indictment did the prophet bring against the people?
4. What did he tell them had been the consequence of their selfishness?
5. What was the effect of Haggai's message on Zerubbabel and Joshua?
6. Was this Temple as large and as beautiful as the first one?
7. What was the promise given concerning the glory of the house of the Lord in the future? To what era does that refer?
8. How were the people to fare now that they were engaged in building the house of the Lord?