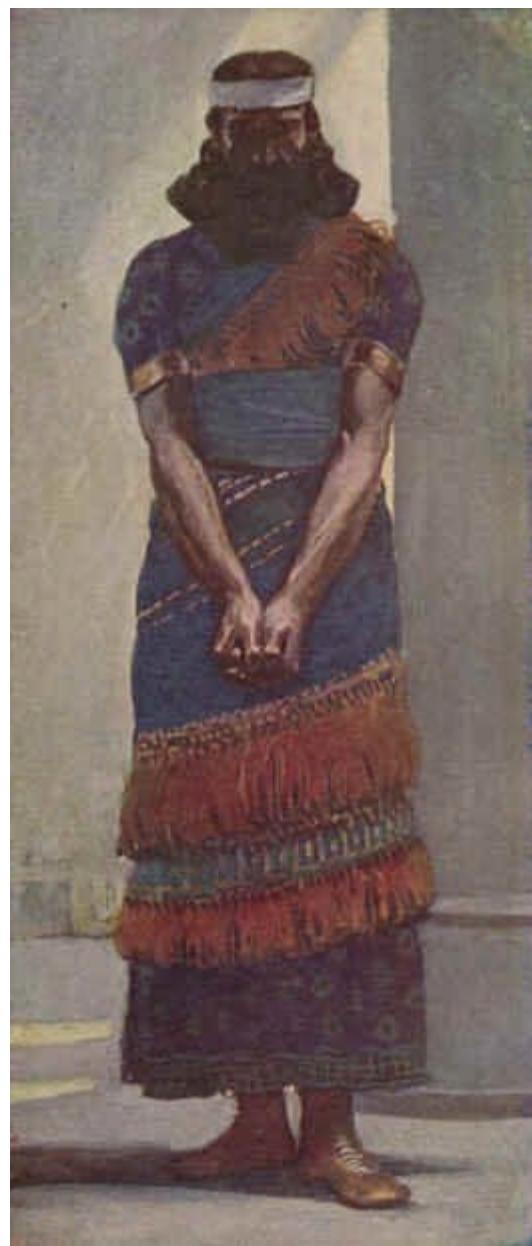


SIMPLE STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES
THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET HAGGAI
LEADER'S STUDY GUIDE



James Tissot
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HAGGAI 1

Three Months till God's Glory

Introduction: Matthew Henry

The Babylonian Captivity (586 BC) was a focal point in ancient Jewish history. Nine of the twelve Minor Prophets lived and preached before the captivity with an eye on the tragedy to come. Three of the prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, preached after the Captivity which lasted for 70 years.

Haggai and Zechariah ministered several years after the return when the building of the Temple was neglected by those who should have seen the work completed. The purpose of their ministry was to encourage the Jews to return to their work despite the opposition.

Haggai began his work two months before Zechariah who was appointed by God to confirm what Haggai had to say so that out of the mouth of two witnesses the Word would be established. Within four months the work of the prophet Haggai was completed, in the second year of Darius, king of Persia, between the beginning of the sixth month (Elul; Aug/Sept), and the end of the ninth (Chislev; Nov/Dec). Zechariah's work continued for another two years (Hag. 7:1). Some have the honor to lead, others to last in the work of the Lord.

In addition to rebuking and encouraging, the prophets also prophesied of Christ. Haggai spoke of Him as the glory of the Latter House. Zechariah spoke of Him as the man, the Branch. According to the Septuagint (LXX,) Haggai and Zechariah wrote several Psalms (138; 146; 147; and 148).

- Chapter one begins with a strong rebuke of the Jews because they had neglected to finish rebuilding the Temple.
- Chapter two continues with how the displeasure of God in allowing the spiritual work to cease was manifested in famine and scarcity.
- In chapter three the people responded to the words of the prophet in a positive way as verses 12-15 indicates.

HAGGAI 1

1 In the second year of Darius the king [reigned 522-485 BC], in the sixth month [Elul; Aug/Sept], 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,

1:1 The word of the Lord came to Haggai (lit. festive) but it was for Zerubbabel. The name Zerubbabel means, “*born of Babel, i.e. Babylon*”. He was the son of Shealtiel whose name means, “*I asked God*” (Ezra 3:2). Shealtiel, the current governor of Judah was of royal descent through David. He was the grandson of Jehoiachin, the king of Judah who was taken captive to Babylon (1 Chron. 3:17). The word of the Lord was also for Joshua, who was the son of Josedech the high priest of Israel. The name Joshua means, “*Salvation is of the Lord.*”

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.**

1:2 A large part of the solution to nay problem is to identify it. The Lord does that with astute clarity.

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 [roofed] houses, and this house lie waste?***

1:2-4

The prophecy begins with a statement setting forth the position of the people. Knowing the hearts of the people the Lord articulated in public what was being said in private. The people had decided the time had not arrived for the Lord's house to be rebuilt. This had not always been the people's position. Once, the Jews believed God wanted them to build up the House of the Lord and they were eager to do that. Within a year after returning from captivity they had set up an altar for sacrifice and laid the foundation for the Temple (Ezra 3:10). Then they met opposition and decided it was not the time to build. The opposition came from the Samaritans. Using the power of words and weapons the Samaritans hindered the work of the ministry. For 18 years the people did nothing for the Lord, but they did a lot for themselves as the prophet points out (1:4). Haggai asked a penetrating question. “*Why was it all right for the people to live in nice, comfortable houses with ceiling tile while the Lord's house lies in waste?*”

5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Consider your ways.**

1:5 One reason why Christians sin so easily is they do not consider their ways. They do not consider the nature of evil. They do not consider the far-reaching consequences of personal choices. They do not anticipate how an attitude and action today can lead to devastating results tomorrow. The main reason for this lack of serious consideration of spiritual matters is the thought that something different “ought” to be done. As a result, the truth is deliberately suppressed so the self-centered moment might be enjoyed and the principle of pleasure experienced. .

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.**

1:6 Ironically, the attempt to keep more resources for oneself at the expense of spiritual matters and the known will of God does not bring any reward. The people sowed much and had poor harvests. They drank much but never quenched their thirst. They bought many clothes but never kept warm. They made a lot of money but it dribbled away as if they had put the money in a bag with holes. The divine law is easily forgotten. *Proverbs 3:9-10 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: 10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.* To those who do not believe they can afford to give to the cause of Christ and gospel work the response is this, “*You cannot afford NOT to give!*”

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.**

1:7-8 The Divine answer to this practical problem was for the people to consider their ways and then go to the mountains and find wood and build the house of the Lord. When this happened, the Lord would take pleasure in the work and He would be glorified. The point is easy to understand. There is a cause and effect relationship between the people of God's attitude towards the will of the Lord and their personal prosperity and happiness. Those who see the Church only as an option, a collection of private opinions, and an opportunity for social advancement, will know personal deprivation.

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 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.**

1:9-11 Lest the people misunderstand, the prophet repeats the point. The people looked for much, and their expectations came to little. God "*blew*" as it were upon the harvest results so that the fruit of labor was "*blown away*." Why? Because the house of God was allowed to lie in waste while every person returned unto his own home. Therefore God sent a drought to the land and scarcity of food.

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.

1:12 Notice when the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God.

1. The people obeyed when they were confronted with the consequences of their words and deeds which were contrary to the known will of the Lord.
2. The people obeyed when they had tried matters their own way. As the Prodigal Son's father allowed him to go and squander the inheritance he received so the Lord allows Christians to squander much time and money in order to teach eternal lessons.
3. The people obeyed when they came to the end of their fleshly resources. The Lord knows how to extract what is owed Him. The Babylonian captivity lasted for seventy years because seventy times the people of Israel had not honored God's will in regard to the land (2 Chron. 36: 20 –23). Apparently that lesson had been forgotten and so had to be repeated.
4. The people obeyed after they word of the Lord came to them again calling the nation to thoughtful repentance.
5. The people obeyed after the promise of God was repeated and believed that He would have pleasure in gospel obedience.
6. The people obeyed when they had learned to fear God once more. Fear of God came with an acute awareness of His sovereignty over nature and thus their lives as the gospel was preached by the prophets.

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

1:13 "*I am with you*." Here are precious words in the midst of life's dark days. "*I am with you*" saith the Lord.

*"There's a peace in my heart
that the world never gave,
A peace it cannot take away;
Though the trials of life may surround like a cloud,
I've a peace that has come here to stay!"*

*Constantly abiding, Jesus is mine;
Constantly abiding, rapture divine;
He never leaves me lonely,
whispers, O so kind:
"I will never leave thee,"
Jesus is mine.*

*All the world seemed to sing of a Savior and King,
When peace sweetly came to my heart;
Troubles all fled away and my night turned to day,
Blessèd Jesus, how glorious Thou art!*

*This treasure I have in a temple of clay,
While here on His footstool I roam;
But He's coming to take me some
glorious day,
Over there to my heavenly home!"*

Anne S. Murphy

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,

1:14 Jesus said, *"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing"* (John 15:6). Without the Lord there is no power or energy to do that which is right and good. But when the Lord comes to stir up His people mighty deeds are accomplished. A conscious dependence upon the Lord is essential for Christian strength and service which is why the apostles were told to remain at Jerusalem until they were filled with power from on high (Luke 24:49).

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

1: 12-15 The spiritual dynamics of this passage are easy to comprehend.

1. Spiritual priorities should give way to personal comforts. People need something and Someone other than themselves to live for and love.
2. Selfishness will not go unpunished in time. God knows how to take away the toys of time. He knows how to "blow" away our resources no matter how much we gather in.
3. Sometimes even the leadership as well as the led need to be stirred up to build the House of God for the word of the Lord came to Zerubbabel and Joshua and then to the people.
4. Though the people of Israel might have thought they had good reason to neglect to work of God, they had none or the Lord would not have sent the drought or the scarcity. The people needed to learn to obey (1:7) once more.
5. Twenty-three days after first receiving the Word of the Lord work began again on the House of God. There is a time element in spiritual matters. Fortunately God is very patient as He waits for His people to comply with His will. Nevertheless, to obey sooner rather than later is better. Certainly this is true in the matter of salvation. *2 Cor 6:2 Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*) Let the word go forth that souls are not to linger in coming to Christ.

*"Why do you wait, dear brother,
 Oh, why do you tarry so long?
 Your Savior is waiting to give you
 A place in His sanctified throng.*

*Why not? Why not?
 Why not come to Him now?
 Why not? Why not?
 Why not come to Him now?
 What do you hope, dear brother,
 To gain by a further delay?
 There's no one to save you but Jesus,
 There's no other way but His way.*

*Do you not feel, dear brother,
 His Spirit now striving within?
 Oh, why not accept His salvation,
 And throw off your burden of sin?*

*Why do you wait, dear brother?
 The harvest is passing away,
 Your Savior is longing to bless you,
 There are danger and death in delay."*

George F. Root

6. In spiritual matters Christians are to exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3:13).

Leader's Study Guide

Questions for Haggai 1

1. What charge did God lay against the people of Israel?

Answer.

The Lord charged the people of Israel with deciding the right time had not come to repair the place of worship in Jerusalem (Hag. 1:2).

2. What was the divine solution to the sad situation?

Answer.

To reverse the hardships of the land the people were to repent and then obey. They were to go to the mountains and gather wood to rebuild the holy temple where God would visit His people and take pleasure in His house again.

3. What form(s) of judgment fell upon Israel for their disobedience in not rebuilding the temple?

Answer.

Because work had started on a project ordained of God the Lord brought economic hardship to the nation. Their crops failed. Their financial resources dribbled away. There was literal drought that reflected the spiritual drought of the soul.

4. What precious promise was given to the people in Haggai 1:13?

Answer.

In Haggai 1:13 the Lord promised to be with His people in their labors. Material blessings would come in gospel obedience to spiritual activity.

5. When did the people decide to do what God wanted them to do?

Answer.

The people finally obeyed the Lord's will.

- The people obeyed when they were confronted with the consequences of their words and deeds which were contrary to the known will of the Lord.
- The people obeyed when they had tried matters their own way.
- The people obeyed when they came to the end of their fleshly resources.
- The people obeyed after they word of the Lord came to them again calling the nation to thoughtful repentance.

- The people obeyed after the promise of God was repeated and believed that He would have pleasure in gospel obedience.
- The people obeyed when they had learned to fear God once more.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. The gospel calls upon individuals to consider their ways and change Isaiah 55:7 promises, *“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”* However, in light of Revelation 22:17 is it ever too late to repent?
2. As you consider your ways, what immediate changes will you confess need to be made immediately? Be very specific as to what needs to be changed in the life and how that change will come about.
3. During the ministry of Christ, the Lord indicated that God was not impressed with buildings of stone for the Father wanted people to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-23). What should the proper attitude of Christians today be toward building beautiful houses of worship and great cathedrals?
4. Is it right to neglect spiritual work while taking care of private matters? Why is this done?
5. What can be done, if anything to invite the Lord to stir up His people to holy service (Hag. 1:14)? If God sovereignly moves upon the heart to motivate the mind in a certain direction, are individuals mere puppets on a string?

HAGGAI 2

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,

1:1 Forty-nine fifty days after the Word of the Lord first came to Haggai, it came again. In matchless grace the Lord speaks and speaks again.

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?*

2:2-3 Before the anticipated glory could come, there was work to be done on the temple. But in order for the work to be done, God had to silence those who were again opposing the work of reconstruction. God had been listening to the words of the people of Israel and He was not happy with what He heard. Therefore, the Lord sent His prophet Haggai to stop the voice of spiritual criticism. Those who remembered the former Temple of Solomon should have been encouraging the work of reconstruction but instead they were discouraging it instead by negative comparisons. Finally, God said, “*Enough! Be silent!*” There is good reason for the divine censor. No legitimate work for the Lord should be discouraged by negative criticism. And when unjust criticism does arise so that the work of God suffers, it should be exposed. It was in secret that the people spoke. It was in the open God announced who was doing the talking and what was being said.

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:

2:4 The Lord of hosts. The concept is that of a great military army with banners flying and everyone in full armor displaying a moment of victory and power. Leading the army was the Lord of hosts. . The term is also applied to the stars of the heavens. The sovereignty of God is emphasized.

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.

2:5 As the Mighty God of power the Lord would in grace honor His covenant made with Israel. The Lord did not have to honor the terms of the agreement for the covenant had been violated. Still, God had not forgotten His people. Now, they had nothing to fear. He would come and visit the nation.

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.

2:7 The Desire of all nations. Better, “*that which is most desired*,” or, “*the treasure*” of all nations shall come. This verse has been applied to the Messiah personally. Another understanding is that the wealth which the people delight in shall come as an offering to Jehovah (cf. Isa. 60:5; 61:6).

2:6-7. The Lord would do more than simply visit His people. He promised to change the course of nature and nations in order to bring His glory to this reconstructed house. The ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy took place on Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem and then made His way to the temple. The King came and filled the house with the glory of His personal presence. Then, in the glory of righteousness the King cleansed the temple of the moral filth and corruption it had acquired. *Matthew 21:10-12 “And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. 12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves.”*

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.

2:9 God made two great promises.

First, The Lord promised to be with the people (2:4). That is the secret of success in any spiritual understanding. God must be with the people in all His glory.

Second God promised to give peace (2:9). The greatest peace is to have peace with God. This involves the following.

- **Salvation and surrender.** Salvation comes by surrendering the sword of rebellion. The formal surrender of WW II took place on the battleship Missouri. As the highly decorated admiral of the Japanese offered his hand of surrender to the American General, Macarthur replied, “*Your sword first please, sir.*” C.S. Lewis has written, “*We are not merely imperfect creatures who must be improved: we are...rebels who must lay down our arms.*”
- **A dying to self and sin.** There can be no peace as long as there is a lingering love affair in the heart with sin. Spiritual death must come to the soul for conversion to Christ involves a radical and complete transformation wrought in the heart (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23), by God the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5; Eph. 4:24), by virtue of which a person becomes a becomes “*new men*” (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10), no longer conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9)

- but in knowledge and holiness of the truth is created after the image of God (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; Rom. 12:2).
- **Sanctification.** As there is salvation, so there must be a spiritual renewal of the heart. Salvation without a holy life is meaningless. A holy life is naturally desired (Psa. 51). A holy life is the work of the Holy Spirit who will be given to all who ask (Luke 11:13). A holy life is more than teaching (John. 3:3). It is a specific change for faith without holy works is dead. A holy life is a perfected life (Matt. 5:48 cp. Lev. 19:2). The perfect heart involves an internal disposition of desire to obey the Lord. A holy life is more than half measures (Matt. 6:21). There is a radical change. A holy life is more than morality (Matt. 19:23; Mark 10:23; Luke 28:24).
- **Slavery (Rom. 6:16-18).** Peace with God involves being a slave to God. And that too is all right for the Lord's burdens are much lighter than sins. When God comes to His people in glory and with peace, then it can be said that the best days are not past but ahead.

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,

2:9 Eighty-three days after the first divine visit to Haggai, sixty-three days after the second came the word of the Lord for the third time.

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.

2:12 The people of Israel were sent to ask their spiritual leaders two questions. The first question was this. *“If the lap of the clothing of a priest contained an animal which had been slain as a sacrifice touched anything else, would the object that had been touched be holy because it had come in contact with the cloth?”* The correct answer, “*No!*” According to Leviticus 6:27, the clothing of a priest was also holy but it too had to be cleaned. The clothing could not communicate holiness any further.

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.**

2:13 There was a second question, which had reference to the spread of legal defilement through the touching of a dead body (Num. 6:6; Lev. 19:22). This uncleanness was one of the strongest kind; it lasted seven days and could only be removed by being twice purified with sprinkled water, prepared from the ashes of the red cow (Num. 19).

The question was asked, “*If a person who had been made unclean by touching a dead body in turned touched other objects such as bread, food, wine, oil, or meat, were all those objects unclean?*” The correct answer, “*Yes!*” The objects touched were unclean in the eyes of the Law. According to Numbers 22, he who was defiled by touching a dead body made everything that he touched 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 their hands**; and that which they offer there is unclean.

2:14 The prophet Haggai now applied these provisions of the Law to the ethical relation to the Lord. Israel, in its attitude towards God, resembles, on the one hand, a man who carries holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and on the other hand, a man who has become unclean through touching a corpse. Israel is both holy and profane! Israel, as a holy nation, has become defiled through sin. Now, everything the people touch also becomes defiled. They touch the land to produce crops but the crops do not grow well. Why? An unholy people have planted the crops. The curse of God has come because the people have been faithfulness to the Lord (2:15-17).

15 **And now, I pray you, consider [remember] 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.

2:15-16 The people are called upon to consider the evidence and the truth of the prophetic words. “*Remember*,” said Haggai, “*when you started to lay stone upon stone to rebuild the Temple?*” What happened? You met opposition. This led to discouragement and discouragement led to failure to complete the holy task. As a result, the Lord's house lay in ruins. Sacrifices were not offered. Religious education was denied the children. And worse of all, there was a lack of faith. Meanwhile, daily personal life continued but it was a life without God. To induce repentance more judgment fell upon the nation in the form of drought and crop failure.

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

2:17 There is a strength to sin that defies the most severe forms of divine discipline. Though the crops of Israel were afflicted with blastings or a fungus and the sky rained down hail, still the people would not repent and turn to God. There is a strength to sin that rivals divine omnipotence. The truth of this must be told far and wide for it is a satanic deception for the minds to embrace the notion that at any time there can be self-moral reformation and the soul can cease from doing wrong. Let the strength of sin be preached along with its deadly God defying results.

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman told of a distinguished minister, Dr. Howard, from Australia who preached very strongly on the subject of sin. After the service, one of the church officers came to counsel with him in the study. “*Dr. Howard*,” he said, “*we don’t want you to talk as openly as you do about man’s guilt and corruption, because if our boys and girls hear you discussing that subject they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but do not speak so plainly about sin.*“ The minister took down a small bottle and showing it to the visitor said, “*You see that label? It says strychnine—and underneath in bold, red letters the word ‘Poison!’ Do you know, man, what you are asking me to do? You are suggesting that I change the label. Suppose I do, and paste over it the words, ‘Essence of Peppermint’; don’t you see what might happen? Someone would use it, not knowing the danger involved, and would certainly die. So it is, too, with the matter of sin. The milder you make your label, the more dangerous you make your poison!*” God calls upon individuals to consider the strength of sin and their hardness in the same.

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.

2:18-19

Would the people admit that all this was true? God wanted to know. He still wants to know for this is the great challenge to any religious people. There is something about human nature that makes the heart not want to accept responsibility for the sad state of affairs we find ourselves in. Being a “*victim*” is to be preferred to accepting responsibility. Shifting the blame to others is more comforting than being humbled by personal failure. One clever person wrote,

“*At three I had a feeling of
Ambivalence toward my brothers,
And so it follows naturally
I poisoned all my lovers.
But now I’m happy; I have learned
This wonderful lesson taught;
That everything I do that’s wrong
Is someone else’s fault.”*

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;

2:21 Because Israel accepted the verdict of truth that she was responsible for the consequences of sin, there could be a new day. From the 24th day of the ninth month Cheslev (Nov/Dec) in the year 520 B.C., God was going to bless His people. Why? Because they had responded to His word and they had started to finish the work on the Temple. In short, the people had repented. They had changed their mind and they had changed their conduct.

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.**

2:22 A great truth is communicated. When we change, God changes. Though we change slowly, God changes rapidly. For 18 years the people rebelled again the Lord and therefore knew only His judgment (2:16-18). Then came the word of truth and finally, the people started to listen and seek afresh a relationship with God. In only three months God was ready to bless the people. He had only been waiting and watching and looking for the people to want His word, listen to His ministers, and work together for a common good and for His glory! The work on the Temple sent signals to heaven that the people wanted a renewed relationship with he Living God. That is the same signal God is wanting for today. Heaven is watching and waiting. When God finds the heart of a people turned back to Him then He is ready to move against their enemies and destroy their power over his people. Let the church pray. *Oh Lord, come to your people, not in judgment but in grace and power. Come and destroy the chains of sin that holds us in our addictions. Come and destroy the strength of those that would hinder the building of your kingdom. Come, Lord in power. We want you. We need you. We fear and love you. Come Lord. Come quickly!*

Then let the church sing.

*“Onward, Christian soldiers,
marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
going on before.*

*Christ, the royal Master,
leads against the foe;
Forward into battle
see His banners go!*

*Onward, Christian soldiers,
marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
going on before.*

*At the sign of triumph
Satan's host doth flee;
On then, Christian soldiers,
on to victory!*

*Hell's foundations quiver
at the shout of praise;
Brothers lift your voices,
loud your anthems raise.*

*Like a mighty army moves
the church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
where the saints have trod.*

*We are not divided, all one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
one in charity.*

*What the saints established
that I hold for true.
What the saints believèd,
that I believe too.*

*Long as earth endureth,
men the faith will hold,
Kingdoms, nations, empires,
in destruction rolled.*

*Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane,
But the church of Jesus
constant will remain.*

*Gates of hell can never
against that church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise,
and that cannot fail.*

*Onward then, ye people,
join our happy throng,
Blend with ours your voices in the triumph song.*

*Glory, laud and honor
unto Christ the King,
This through countless ages
men and angels sing."*

Sabine Baring-Gould

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.

2:23 **Signet.** The name of an owner was engraved on a seal which was of great value (Jer. 22:24). God promised His servant Zerubbabel that He would preserve His people and be faithful to them during days of turmoil (note Matt. 28:20; Mark 16:16, 17).

Important Dates in Haggai
c. 520 BC

Reign of Darius the Mede

Ruler of the Persian Empire
522 - 485 BC

The First Message

Sixth month Day 1
Elul / August - September

Forty-nine days latter came

The Second Message

Seventh month Day 20
Tishri / September- October

Sixty four days latter came

The Third Message

Ninth month Day 24
Chislev / November-December

Latter on the same day came

The Fourth Message

Ninth month Day 24
Chislev / November-December

Leaders Study Guide

Questions on Haggai 2

1. What had to happen before work could be renewed on the holy temple?

Answer.

In order for the work to be done, God had to silence those who were again opposing the work of reconstruction.

2. What is meant by the desire of all nations (Hag. 2:7)?

Answer.

Haggai 2:7 has been properly applied to the Messiah personally. Another understanding is that the wealth which the people delight in shall come as an offering to Jehovah (cf. Isa. 60:5; 61:6).

3. What two great promises did God make to His people and how are they realized?

Answer.

God made two great promises. First, The Lord promised to be with the people (2:4). Second God promised to give peace (2:9). The greatest peace is to have peace with God. This involves the salvation and surrender, a dying to self and sin resulting in personal holiness or sanctification and finally a voluntary slavery to Christ.

4. What two questions were posed to Israel that could be answered by the priests? What did the questions indicate?

Answer.

The two questions simply asked if some unholy could come out something holy and conversely, if something unholy come out of something holy. The point is that Israel was both profane and holy.

5. Draw a chart listing the four messages that came to Haggai. Give the dates each message came.

- Chart of important dates when the messages of God came.

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Personal Application and Reflections

1. Do you believe God makes “*unconditional*” covenants with men or are there always conditions to be met by both God and man for the covenant conditions to be honored? Defend your answer with a biblical illustration.
2. Can you testify to the strength of sin in some manner by way of an illustration, personal or otherwise?
3. Have you ever been part of a spiritual renewal where people repented of sin, turned from it and learned to fear God? Have you heard of a revival-taking place in your lifetime?
4. Would you agree there is danger in not making an issue of sin and calling it by name? If not, why not?
5. What should be the response of the church to those who believe many people really are seeking God and so everything should be done to make these sensitive seeking people feel comfortable and accepted? In other words, why relevance does the prophet message of Haggai have for this generation?