

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 10-28-12 PM NOTES
HAGGAI
#39 in Series, "The Glory of God in the Old Testament"

1050 BC	Saul is anointed as Israel's first king
1010 BC	David becomes the king of Israel
970 BC	Solomon becomes the last king of a united Israel
931 BC	The nation is divided into the northern and southern kingdoms
722 BC	The northern kingdom (called Israel) falls to Assyria
606 BC	Babylon begins invading and deporting people from the southern kingdom (called Judah)
587 BC*	The southern kingdom falls to Babylon and the temple is destroyed
539 BC	Babylon falls to Cyrus and the Media-Persian Empire begins
538 BC	Cyrus permits the Jews to return to Judah and about 50,000 return under Zerubbabel
535 BC	The Jews begin to rebuild the temple, but trouble causes the work to stop
520 BC	The work on the temple begins again
515 BC	The temple is completed and dedicated
476 BC	Esther becomes Queen of Persia
458 BC	Ezra returns to Judah with about 2,000 people
445 BC	Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls around the city

*Some date the final fall of Jerusalem at 586 BC

I. God's Work Is Hindered by Wrong Priorities (1:1-15)

1 Kings 6:11-13 (NKJV) "Then the word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying: ¹² 'Concerning this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David. ¹³ And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel.'"

A. The Rebuke (1:2-4)

Hebrews 4:12-13 (NKJV) "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account."

1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV) "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

B. The Results (1:5-11)

C. The Response (1:12-15)

II. God's Work Is Hindered by a Lack of Vision (2:1-9)

A. Discouragement (2:1-3)

Philippians 3:13b (NKJV) "...forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead."

B. Encouragement (2:4-9)

III. God's Work Is Hindered by Unconfessed Sin (2:10-19)

IV. God's Work Is Hindered by Unbelief (2:20-23)

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The last three books of the Old Testament are in a larger category called "The Minor Prophets", but they also make up a group themselves called "The Post-exilic Prophets". That simply means that these three books were written after Judah had come back to their land after having been taken captive into Babylon in 587 BC. To better understand the context of Haggai (and also Zechariah and Malachi) we need to see where these books fit in Jewish history. Let's revisit a timeline that we looked at way back in February in our study of the book of Ezra. Instead of going all the way back to Abraham, we will start with the anointing of the first king of Israel, Saul.

1050 BC	Saul is anointed as Israel's first King
1010 BC	David becomes the King of Israel
970 BC	Solomon becomes the last King of a united Israel
931 BC	The nation is divided into the northern and southern kingdoms
<i>Because of the unwise decisions of Solomon's son, there was civil war resulting in a divided Israel all the way until the time that the Persians allowed a remnant to come back into the land to rebuild the temple.</i>	
722 BC	The northern kingdom (called Israel) falls to Assyria
606 BC	Babylon begins invading and deporting people from the southern kingdom (called Judah)
587 BC*	The southern kingdom falls to Babylon and the temple is destroyed
539 BC	Babylon falls to Cyrus and the Media-Persian Empire begins
538 BC	Cyrus permits the Jews to return to Judah and about 50,000 return under Zerubbabel
535 BC	The Jews begin to rebuild the temple, but trouble causes the work to stop
<i>This is where Haggai comes into the picture.</i>	
520 BC	The work on the temple begins again
515 BC	The temple is completed and dedicated
476 BC	Esther becomes Queen of Persia
458 BC	Ezra returns to Judah with about 2,000 people
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Hopefully that helps you to place the book of Haggai historically.

Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament (Obadiah being the shortest) but it is not short on content! This is one of the easiest applied to our day books in all the Old Testament. Since Haggai gives us dates, we know that the messages in this book were spoken in a four month period between late August and December of 520 BC.

In 536 BC about 50,000 Jews under the leadership of their governor Zerubbabel finished the long trek from Babylon (begun in 538 BC) to Jerusalem. A few months later they began their priority task of rebuilding the temple that the Babylonians had destroyed in 586 BC. They laid the foundation, but then the trouble began. The Samaritans opposed them (as they later they would Nehemiah as he rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem). With some changes in the Persian government, there started to be some opposition by the government that had already given them permission to rebuild the temple. When this opposition started, the Jews quit rebuilding the temple. As we see from the text in a moment, it was at that time that they began to focus on their own selfish projects to make their own life more comfortable. It was after 15 years in that state of rebellion that God sent His prophet Haggai to deliver a very blunt, to the point prophesy to these discouraged but self centered people. The theme of the book is: "Get busy and build God's house!" Haggai's purpose was to awaken a complacent, self-centered, unmotivated, discouraged people, and to encourage them to complete what they started in their obedience to the Lord.

It's going to be easier to understand the book if we are introduced to the four main characters in the book. First, let me introduce Haggai a little more in detail. We actually know very little about Haggai. His name means "My festival" which probably indicated that he was born on one of the Jewish festival days. He is mentioned briefly in the book of Ezra, and other than that we don't know anything about him. Like all of God's prophets, he was a very bold man who was willing to proclaim an unpopular message. The second main character is Zerubbabel. He had been appointed governor of those returning to Jerusalem by Darius, the Persian King. Zerubbabel was a descendent of David and was in the lineage of the Lord Jesus Christ. Third, we meet Joshua. He was the High Priest of Israel. He was the grandson of the High Priest when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. The fourth key character is King Darius. He was the king of the Medo-Persian Empire (who had defeated the Babylonians while the Israelites were captive there). He is the king who signed the edict to let the Jews go back to Jerusalem.

Haggai is organized around a collection of four sermons Haggai preached among the people as to why God's work was being hindered and what they needed to do about it.

I. God's Work Is Hindered by Wrong Priorities (1:1-15)

As I have already stated, the people's problem was that they had not finished what they started. Let's be clear that this was no "rag tag" bunch of Jews who couldn't cut it in Babylon and just wanted an adventure. These people started well. They were a group of pioneers who had a love and zeal for God. Most of the Jews had grown comfortable in Babylon and didn't want to leave. These hearty pioneers had made the long journey to Jerusalem, probably just put up makeshift housing (tents?) and went to work laying the foundation for the temple. Things undoubtedly went well with the work until the opposition arose that I spoke of earlier. The people got discouraged and stopped the work.

Why was it so important to the Lord that they prioritized the building of the temple? From God's standpoint, the temple was a visible sign of the covenant that bound God and His people together. The temple was a visible reminder to the people that Jehovah was indeed their God and uniquely dwelt with them. In addition to being the designated place to worship God (not the only place), the temple was the symbol of God living among His people, blessing them and not abandoning them. **1 Kings 6:11-13 (NKJV)** "Then the word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying: ¹²'Concerning this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David. ¹³ And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel.'" The temple was a reminder of God's presence and His promise to never abandon them as long as they kept their part of the covenant. When God's people abandoned Him and served idols, God's glory moved out of the temple and then He allowed the Babylonians to destroy it. Now, God has sovereignly re-gathered His people and told them to rebuild this temple where worship could be restored and that they could be reminded of His presence and His promise to not leave them if they would keep their covenant with Him. [As a side note, why don't we have a temple under the New Covenant? It is because God's people are the temple (1 Corinthians 6:19). God dwells in us in the person of the Holy Spirit and God has given those who are His through the new birth an unconditional promise that He will never leave or forsake them]. Because of the importance of the temple under the old covenant, these people were in real rebellion against God and needed to get with it!

A. The Rebuke (1:2-4)

In a land where wood is in short supply, a paneled house was living in luxury and extravagance. There is some sanctified sarcasm in these verses The Lord is saying, "It's not time to build my house, but it's time for you to live in luxury? What's wrong with this picture?" We are not studying the book of Habakkuk to just get a history lesson. The Word of God examines us when we examine it! **Hebrews 4:12-13 (NKJV)** "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must* give account." Let's let this Word of God do its work on us.

In the area of how we spend our money, have you invested in luxury so much you cannot even obey God in minimum giving – the tithe? Are you sacrificially giving to that which is close to God's heart – Missions? Are you saying, "The time's just not right; as soon as I pay off some debts..." or "as soon as my business starts doing a little better", or "I'll do better when my company starts giving out bonuses again". That's exactly what these people were saying and God didn't accept their excuses.

Another area is the area of ministry. God's instructions are that you use the spiritual gift that He has given you, **1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)** "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." What are you offering up as an excuse as to why you are not involved in ministry? "As soon as things let up at work, I'm going to get involved in a ministry". "My kids are really involved in a lot of sports, but as soon as they are over, I might get involved, but the timing is just not right to do it now". The Lord's rebuke goes further than these pioneers who had gone back to Jerusalem and put their own desires above what God told them to do – "build my temple!"

Years ago I heard a parable about the demons getting together to come up with a plan to sidetrack God's people. One demon said, "Let's tell them there is no Heaven." Another demon answered, "That won't work because preachers have preached too much about Heaven." Another demon suggested, "Let's tell them that there is no Hell". Another demon answered, "That won't work; God has put within them a sense of justice and they innately know that there is a Hell." Finally the brightest demon said, "They won't believe us if we tell them there is no Heaven or no Hell; let's just tell them there's no hurry". That is the strategy they adopted and they are still using it.

B. The Results (1:5-11)

What great word pictures! Two times He tells them "consider your ways!" He is making a connection between their disobedience and the circumstances they find themselves in. Let me give you a summary statement of this section of Haggai. There are consequences to misplaced priorities. Sadly, some people never make the connection. Haggai makes the connection for them. The common theme is that when our priorities are not in line with God's priorities, there will never be real fulfillment

and the stuff you replace obedience to God with will never bring fulfillment. Nothing works right when our priorities are wrong. In verse 6, the point is that there is never enough when you substitute anything for God's priorities. You eat and don't get full; you drink, but your thirst is not slaked. You put on clothes but can't get warm. You earn wages, but it's like putting them in a bag with holes in it – the money just seems to disappear. What great word pictures! God will not truly prosper a person who has wrong priorities. When I speak of prospering, I don't mean what the "health, wealth, and prosperity" false teachers mean. Prosperity is having all that you need and the ability to enjoy it. God says to the remnant that has returned to Jerusalem that because they have turned away from His priority and focused on their personal comfort that nothing is working right. The crops aren't producing, their hunger and thirst isn't being filled; they can't put on enough clothes to get warm, their wages are gone and they can't figure out they went. That is a picture of not prospering. In verses 7-11, God exhorts them to rearrange their priorities to agree with His priorities or else there will be more of the same.

C. The Response (1:12-15)

This is the response Haggai was hoping for! God graciously granted them repentance and they began immediately obeying the Lord and His priorities became their priorities. God's response to them in verse 13 was "I am with you". This is a beautiful picture of what genuine repentance looks like. There was a change of mind that resulted in a change of action. A part of their motivation was that they had a fear of God (V12). God doesn't make them grovel in the dust, but forgives them and promises them His presence.

II. God's Work Is Hindered by a Lack of Vision (2:1-9)

When we get to chapter 2, the construction of the temple is finally underway. They face another problem however.

A. Discouragement (2:1-3)

Enough construction had taken place (about 7 weeks) to see what this second temple was going to be like. It was much smaller than the temple Solomon built and way less opulent and dazzling. Some of the people there had seen Solomon's temple. When we read about the beautiful cut stone that fit perfectly together so that no mortar was even required, it is discouraging to compare rough timbers to dressed stone. Solomon's temple was one of the wonders of the world. It glistened with precious stones and almost the whole house was overlaid with gold. Six hundred talents of gold were used just in the holy of holies in the temple. That would be about \$500,000,000 in today's dollars! Their focus turns from the task at hand, the anticipation of the temple's completion, the joy of obeying God and pleasing Him, to the past. They were comparing the temple they're building with the one that the Babylonians tore down. The result is that they were discouraged. Focusing on the past always causes discouragement. That is why we are told in **Philippians 3:13b (NKJV)** "...forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead". A part of their discouragement was the reminder that it was their sin or the sin of their parents that had caused the destruction of the first temple. When our focus is on sin that has been washed clean by the blood of Christ, we will never have a vision for the future. We will continued to be controlled by past sins.

B. Encouragement (2:4-9)

Wow! That is encouraging. "Be strong!" The word translated "strong" means to be firm, valiant, to hold fast. God promises them His presence. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we can overcome every obstacle to obedience to the Word of God. He will empower us to go where He has sent us and to do what He has called us to do. In verse 7 many interpret "The Desire of All Nations" to mean Jesus Christ. How could this temple (we have already seen all of the ways it was inferior to the original temple) be filled with glory more than the first one? How could the glory of this temple be greater than the former (V9)? It was this temple – refurbished and expanded by Herod – that was the temple when Jesus was born until 70 AD. This is the temple where Jesus appeared, where He was dedicated to the LORD, blessed by Simeon and Anna who had long been waiting for the true Messiah; it was this temple that was cleansed by Jesus when He chased out the money changers. It was this temple where Jesus preached. To house the Messiah and His veiled glory was greater than all the gold, silver, precious stones and cut stone of Solomon's temple.

As the workers were building the temple, God knew that the lack of gold for the temple was bothering them so He reminds them in **Haggai 2:8 (NKJV)** "'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the Lord of hosts." The gold is no problem for God. He has paved the streets of Heaven with gold. Set your eyes on the vision ahead. Don't look back or around and be discouraged. Be strong; obey the Lord and look to Him for His supply.

III. God's Work Is Hindered by Unconfessed Sin (2:10-19)

Their priorities were now right; their focus, their vision was now on the task and the future completion and the future glory. There was still a hindrance. There was Unconfessed sin and it was polluting everything. Harbored sin in a believer's life pollutes everything that person comes in contact with. You can't give someone else your health or holiness, but you can give them your sickness and your uncleanness from sin. Spiritually unclean people can't do a clean work. Contamination is communicable.

When you try to do God's work with Unconfessed sin, it will be adversely affected. God's work must be done with spiritually clean hands and pure hearts.

IV. God's Work Is Hindered By Unbelief (2:20-23)

This message was directed to the governor personally. Zerubbabel was discouraged and under attack. Satan points his big guns at those who are in places of leadership. God just keeps encouraging him – "I'm in control", "Do not fear". A signet ring was a precious piece of jewelry. It was a ring that evidenced power and authority. It was used to seal important documents. God is saying that Zerubbabel is valuable and God will give him the authority and power to lead God's people. He reminds Zerubbabel that he is chosen by God and God will empower him to do all that needs to be done.

CONCLUSION

The word "consider" is used 5 times in these two short chapters. God is telling us to take a long look at ourselves. Consider your priorities; consider your vision (focusing on the past or future); Consider your Unconfessed sin and all that it is polluting; consider your unbelief. Don't give in to the enemy. Stand and be strong.