

Title:           **WHEN GOD SPEAKS**  
Text:           Haggai 1:1-6  
Date:           Sunday Evening — January 6, 2008  
Tape #           Haggai 2  
Readings:     *Ron Wood and Bobbie Estes*  
Introduction:

(Haggai 1:1-6) “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 ceiled 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.”

In verse 2, the prophet of God says, “*Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts.*” I am interested in that. Aren’t you? If God the Holy Spirit will give me grace and power to do so, I want to show you something about the way God speaks to men by his servants. The title of my message is **When God Speaks**.

**Illustration:** Spurgeon once told of a young boy in his congregation who began to sit on the very front row in front of the preacher with his hands cupped behind his ears.

## **NOT ALWAYS**

Let me begin my reminding you of a fact we tend to forget. — God does not always speak. I am confident that God will never leave himself without a witness. He always has his servants. And faithful men always proclaim his Word faithfully. In that sense, the Lord God always speaks by his Word. But God does not always speak through his servants, even when his servants faithfully preach his Word. And God often speaks to one and not to another, though both hear the same human voice. We would be wise to pray

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that the Lord God might speak to us by his Word, every time we assemble in his house (Psalm 28:1-2; 35:22-23; 83:1-3).

(Psalms 35:22-23) “*This* thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence: O LORD, be not far from me. (23) Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, *even* unto my cause, my God and my Lord.”

(Psalms 28:1-2) “Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, *if* thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. (2) Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.”

(Psalms 83:1-3) “Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. (2) For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. (3) They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.”

Having said that, we see in the Scriptures that the Lord **God often speaks at unexpected times**. That was certainly the case in our text. The band of exiles who returned to Judah and Jerusalem by Cyrus’s decree (Ezra 1:3), had not heard the voice of a prophet for at least 15 or 16 years! 50,000 people came from Babylon to Jerusalem to (Ezra 2:64, 65) to rebuild the temple and the ancient city of Jerusalem; but God had not spoken to them in more than 15 years!

They had not heard from heaven since they heard God speak by the voice of his servant Daniel’s in Babylon 15 years earlier. What a message that was (Daniel 9:1-3, 23-27). — It was a prophecy of their deliverance that reached all the way to the coming of Christ, the accomplishment of redemption by him, and the final overthrow of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

(Daniel 9:1-3) “In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; (2) In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. (3) And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:”

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(Daniel 9:23-27) “At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show *thee*; for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. (24) Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. (25) Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. (26) And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. (27) And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

That was in the first year of Darius’ reign. Then, in the second year of Darius the king of Persia (Ezra 4:24), God spoke again by his servant Haggai. The interval of silence terminated, and the lips of a new prophet were opened, after more than 15 years of divine silence.

What folly it is for us to presume that God will always speak, or that he will speak any time we want him to speak, or that he is obligated to speak! The Lord God and he alone determines “*the times and seasons*” of his special, supernatural interventions in the affairs of men. He speaks when he is pleased to speak. And he often speaks when we least expect him to speak.

**But God always speaks at the appropriate time.** The clock of heaven always keeps perfect time. We often speak when we should keep silent, and remain silent when we ought to speak. — Not God! And when the hour comes for God to speak, so does the man by whom he will speak. When Haggai stood forth among the Jews who had returned from Babylon, they were in desperate need of a messenger from heaven. Sixteen years at home

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in their own land, for a year and a half they had been disheartened about the building of their temple, and had even discontinued work. Most had lost all interest in the work. They had decided, “*The time is not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built*” (v. 2).

- They needed to be roused from their indolence.
- They needed someone to rebuke their unbelief.
- They needed someone to comfort their disheartened, sad and heavy hearts.
- They needed someone to strengthen their knees, lift up their weak hands and cheer their downcast souls.
- They needed a man in their midst with a message from God, a man who came to them fresh from the throne of God, a man sent from God.
- Haggai was just the man needed. He had a message from God, the message none wanted to hear, but the message all needed to hear.

God’s messengers, and the message they bring, are never redundant!

- Noah, Moses & Samuel
- Nathan, Elijah & Elisha
- Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi
- John the Baptist, Peter & Paul
- Martin Luther, John Calvin & John Knox
- John Gill, George Whitefield & Jonathan Edwards
- Rolfe Barnard, Arthur Pink & Henry Mahan

### **BY A MAN**

God does not always speak. But, and I have already hinted at this, when God does speak to men he always speaks by a man. God always uses a man to speak to men (1 Corinthians 1:18-29; 2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2; Romans 10:9-17).

- Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch
- Paul and Lydia

(Romans 10:9-17) “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (11) For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (12) For there is no difference between

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the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. (13) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (14) How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (15) And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (16) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? (17) So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

(1 Corinthians 1:18-29) “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (19) For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. (20) Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (21) For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (22) For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: (23) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: (27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: (29) That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

(2 Corinthians 5:17-21) “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the

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world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

(2 Corinthians 6:1-2) "We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (2) (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)"

**Usually the men God uses to deliver his Word are the men we would least expect him to use.** Only once did Divine revelation come by a man who was worthy to be a spokesman for God, and that Man was the God-man, Christ Jesus (John 1:18). In all other instances the instruments selected by Jehovah to be his messengers have been and are far less than we might expect. And they all acknowledge that fact.

- Moses — A Stranger in Midian
- David — "*Who am I?*"
- Elisha — The Hey-seed Plowboy
- Amos — The Herdsman of Tekoa
- Habakkuk — Of whom we know nothing!
- John the Baptist — "*A voice!*"
- Paul — "*Less than the least of all saints!*" — "Chief of sinners!"
- Peter
- Augustine

Yet, the men by whom God speaks to men are precisely the men needed. They are men just like those to whom they speak, fallen, sinful, depraved, needy sinners, each fitted by his own experience of grace to carry God's message to the people to whom he is sent. **Haggai was just the man needed for the hour.**

- He probably more than eighty years old.
- He had spent most of his life in Babylon, in captivity.
- He had heard God's Word by Daniel and believed it.
- He knew, by experience, what it is to be delivered from bondage by the hand of God.

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- He had seen the first temple in its glory (Haggai 2:3).
- Standing on the edge of eternity, that old man knew the vanity of earthly greatness, the insignificance of earthly treasures, and the poverty of earthly riches.
- Haggai's name means "Festive One."

He was just the man needed in Jerusalem at the hour God sent him to his people to encourage the despondent with the message of Divine help and the assurance of God's faithfulness.

**The messenger God sends is always the right one to accomplish the purpose of his ministry.** When his message was delivered, Zerubbabel and Joshua, the governor and the priest were revived, led the people in obeying the voice of the Lord and went to work on the house of God (vv. 12-14).

These two men (Zerubbabel and Joshua) were both great types of our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Governor and Priest of his people, who by his resurrection raised again the true temple of God, his body, after it had been destroyed. Zerubbabel not only typified the Savior, he is named in our Lord's genealogy in Luke 3:27. — **Haggai's message, like the message of all God's prophets in every age was the very message he had heard from God's prophet Daniel 16 years earlier.** — **Redemption Accomplished by Christ!**

**PERSONAL MESSAGE**

The third thing I want you to see is this. When God sends a man to preach, when God speaks to men by his servants, the message is always personal, very personal. Look at Haggai's prophecy. God asked his people seven personal, pressing questions by his prophet (Haggai 1:4, 9; 2:3, 12, 23, 19). — God's message is never a theoretical discussion. It is always intensely personal.

(Haggai 1:4) **(1.)** "*Is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house *lie* waste?"

(Haggai 1:9) "Ye looked for much, and, lo, *it came* to little; and when ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it. **(2.)** Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that *is* waste, and ye run every man unto his own house."

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(Haggai 2:3) **(3.)** “Who *is* left among you that saw this house in her first glory? **(4.)** and how do ye see it now? **(5.)** *is it* not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?”

(Haggai 2:12) **(6.)** “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.”

(Haggai 2:19) **(7.)** “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*.”

(Haggai 2:23) “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.”

**A VERDICT**

Fourth, when God speaks he always calls for a verdict, pressing the issue of rebellion and unbelief. — Five times God spoke to the children of Israel by his prophet, calling for them to consider, to focus their hearts upon something (Haggai 1:5, 7; 2:15, 18, 19).

(Haggai 1:5) “Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Consider your ways.**”

(Haggai 1:7) “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Consider your ways.**”

(Haggai 2:15) “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:”

(Haggai 2:18-19) “**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.**”



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Now, let me take you back to the message Haggai had to have had on his mind, as he delivered his message to Israel and urge you to “*consider the vision*” (Daniel 9:23-24; 2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2).

(Daniel 9:23-24) “At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show *thee*; for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. (24) Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.”

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Amen.