

Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Haggai 1.

(2014)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

Haggai 1.

Topics.

- It is time to build the House of the LORD.
- God's House lies in ruins.
- Haggai first message, consider your ways.
- Israel is told to rebuild the LORD'S House.
- God controls the blessing of Israel.
- The people obey Haggai's message.
- Haggai second message, I am with you.
- Work began on the House of the LORD.

INTRODUCTION: to the book of Haggai when the first wave of Jewish exiles returned from Babylon to Jerusalem in 538 B.C., they began to rebuild the Temple but soon gave up. Inspired by the prophetic ministries of Haggai and Zechariah, they finally completed the task in 515. Haggai rebuked the people for living in "panelled houses" while the house of God remained in ruins (1:3). He warned that, despite their best efforts, their wealth would never suffice, because the LORD was not pleased with their neglect of his Temple (see Lev. 26:2-20).

He called them to repent and renew their covenant with the God of their fathers. He assured them that God would conquer the nations and restore Israel. The rebuilding of the Temple symbolized God's restored presence among his people, unique among the nations of the earth. Haggai's message was one of rebuke and encouragement. Instead of addressing the people at large, Haggai went straight to headquarters, i.e., to Zerubbabel the prince and to Joshua the high priest and the whole situation changed from defeat and discouragement to victory.

The following is a summary of Haggai's five messages: -

1st message: consider your ways.

2nd message: I am with you.

3rd message: the silver is mine, and the gold is mine.

4th message: holiness is not contagious, but evil is.

5th message: a shaking of the nations.

Haggai's five messages are all dated, they cover a period of three months and twenty-three days (Hag 2:10) in these few weeks the whole situation changed from defeat and discouragement into victory.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

It is time to Build the House of the LORD.

Haggai 1:1 ----- ¹In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest:

The first time God's word came to Haggai was on the 1st day of the 6th month (v1).

Shealtiel: means I have asked God, he was the father of Zerubbabel.

Darius: was a common name for Medo Persian rulers, according to tradition Cyrus had selected Darius his descendant to succeed him. Between the reign of Cyrus and his descendant Darius the Jews had been mistreated and work on rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple had stopped (Ezra 4:1-6). An appeal was made to Darius and he made search and discovered the original decree of Cyrus favouring the Jews, under his lenient reign the Jews restored the walls of the city and rebuilt the Temple (Ezra 6:1-15).

Zerubbabel: when Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem he appointed Zerubbabel governor of the colony. They began rebuilding the Temple, but opposition arose and the work stopped. The work was resumed in 520 B.C., and completed four years later and a great celebration was held at the dedication of the new Temple. Zerubbabel was heir to the throne of Judah and is listed in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Chron. 3:17-19) (Matt. 1:13) (Luke 3:27).

Judah: (means praised) Judah is the name of the Hebrew tribe descended from the man Judah and King David was a member of the tribe of Judah. Both David and Solomon succeeded in unifying the Hebrew tribes, but when Solomon died, all of this came to an end. Ten tribes broke away from the Kingdom and became known as the Northern Kingdom called Israel while two tribes known as the Southern Kingdom called Judah remained at Jerusalem. It is difficult to isolate Judah and Israel because the accounts of Israel and Judah are intertwined with Israel (the ten tribes) predominating.

Jehozadak: (means, Jehovah is righteous) his father, Seraiah was slain by the Babylonians and Jehozadak was taken into captivity. He was the high priest of Israel through most of the Babylonian captivity.

God's House Lies in Ruins.

Haggai 1:2-4 ----- ²"Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD." ³Then the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, ⁴"Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?

During the Old Testament era the House of the LORD (God's Temple) was a symbol of God's Glory and God's presence being with the nation of Israel, in a limited sense it was the outward manifestation of Israel's God as Christ is the manifestation of God to the New Testament Christians. Israel was called by God to be a nation that would bring light to the world. Had they obeyed God would have made them the head nation of all nations. The Temple was to be the centre of the nation, it was were God communicated with the priests, so to be indifferent to God's House was the same as being indifferent to God Himself. It was not as though the people did not have the money or the time, because they were building majestic houses for themselves.

The First Message

Consider Your Ways.

Haggai 1:5-6 ----- ⁵Now, therefore, thus says the LORD: "*Consider your ways.*" ⁶You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

The people of Israel: -

- Abundantly sow their fields, but harvested little.
- Eat, but do not have enough water to drink.

- Are never satisfied.
- Clothe themselves, but are always cold.
- Earn wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

Israel is lacking prosperity because they are indifferent to the LORD their God.

Israel is told Rebuild the LORD'S House.

Haggai 1:7-8 ----- 7"Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways." 8Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the LORD.

God takes pleasure in His House being rebuilt, because it shows an outward expression of Israel's devotion to their LORD and manifests the people's desire to put the interests of God and his commands before their own comfort and pleasures.

God Controls the Blessing of Israel.

Haggai 1:9-11 ----- 9You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house. 10Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. 11And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labours."

NOTICE: no matter how hard the people of Israel work and how much effort they put into planting their crops, it is the LORD that controls the harvest and outcome of all that they do. The people of Israel worked hard expecting great prosperity, but God withheld water from the ground which resulted in drought so all they did came to ruin. The LORD did not prosper the work of the people of Israel because they had put the things they desired and enjoyed before Him. They were not lazy or idol people rather they kept themselves busy, but their business was spent on doing things for themselves and giving no time to God.

How true is this today, the god of this world has created a world system of abundance of pleasures, movies, DVD's, TV, mobile phones, internet, computers, holidays, travel, luxury cars, boat cruises and excessive homes with big mortgages etc., which means we all have to work twice as long to earn the extra money needed to buy these inventions and pleasures which then take up even more of our time, so that we have very little time and in many cases no time at all for God, prayer, the Bible or fellowship.

People say they have no time for God, prayer, the Bible, or fellowship, but if we are honest with ourselves, the truth is that we all have the time, but we would rather spend it in front of our TV, computer, the movies on the golf course or playing or watching sport etc. It is not a matter of time, but of priorities.

NOTE: it is not wrong to spend time enjoying non-sinful things of this world, but when they usurp every moment of a person's spare time leaving them no time for God, they then become excessive and a hindrance to knowing and having an intimate relationship with the LORD. Even those who believe in gods other than the God of the Bible know they have to spend time meditating, praying and reading books that relate to the belief they hold if they are going to get any understanding and rewarding benefit from the god they have chosen to put their faith in.

The People Obey Haggai's Message.

Haggai 1:12 ----- 12Then Zerubbabel the son of She-altiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, 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 feared the LORD.

What a tremendous excitement for Haggai, Zerubbabel, the governor of the colony and heir to the throne of Judah, Shealtiel, governor of Judah, Joshua the son of the high priest and all the people of Israel obeyed his call to rebuild the House of God.

The Second Message

I am With You.

Haggai 1:13-15 ----- ¹³Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD'S message, "*I am with you, declares the LORD.*" ¹⁴And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, ¹⁵on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

- Work began on the House of the Lord (the 24th day of the 6th month) (v14).
- Haggai tells the people that the LORD is with them (v13).

NOTICE: the LORD moved the spirit of Zerubbabel, Joshua and of all the people. In this situation the LORD touched the people of Israel's heart so that they were motivated to do His will, but that does not mean that is the only way in which God communicates His will. It is an error to restrict the LORD to communicating His will by this method only. God is far more creative than being limited to a format or a rule.

To communicate His will God may use: -

- A flash thought or and an intuition.
- A vision in the mind or a sense of that everything is right.
- Circumstances or a word from a friend, a miracle, prayer or a sermon.
- A spirit of continual peace, whenever a choice or action is brought before God in prayer.
- Then of course there are other times when we have to be like Abraham who simply lived in the present moment, not knowing where he was going, but lived his life looking forward to an eternal city whose builder is God.
- By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, *not knowing where he was going*. ⁹By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10).

No doubt there are probably many more ways and methods that the LORD uses to communicate His will that I haven't listed.

FOOTNOTE: naturally finding God's will for our personal and individual lives will be different for all, but in a wider sense God's will for all who belong to Christ's Kingdom is the same. When a scribe asked Jesus, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus said: -

- Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.' ³⁰And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:28-31).

These words of Jesus shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that while living in this mortal and corrupt world His perfect will for all who belong to His Kingdom is to love God and love our neighbour as ourselves. To, "Love your neighbour as yourself," means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself.

The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others.

It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land. The spirit behind the law is love because each law protects another human from harm. In the book of Romans Paul states: -

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

The spirit of the law is to protect the innocent from physical, financial, sexual, verbal and emotional and spiritual harm, thus those who know God aim to keep the Law because it is the right and loving thing to do and it fulfils the Ten Commandments regarding man, this is why James the brother of Jesus calls it the royal law (Jas 2:8).

Added to these it pleases God and brings a good testimony to His name and the name of, Jesus and the Christian faith. Those who belong to Christ aim to keep the law not to get saved, but because they are saved. They understand that righteousness is a free gift of God that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by self-effort.

One great scholar wrote: though the law is splendid as a guide to understanding God's will, as a means of reunion with God, the God we have sinned against, it is a hopeless failure nevertheless both law and grace go together, the law without the Gospel is diagnosis without remedy, but the Gospel without law is only the Good News of salvation for people who don't believe they need it because they have never heard the bad news of judgment, the law is not the Gospel, but the Gospel is not lawless (Rom. 3:19-20) (Eph. 2:13-22).

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the perfect will of God is for people to uphold justice, not to lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour.

Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount:

The constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This means living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing all we can do to protect people from harm and being dominated by the thought, "What action can I take or do that will help and encourage this person."

It is all about doing right to others.

This is the reason the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, "The Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt. 5). Based on the commandment, love your neighbour as yourself and the law it could be said that a wicked and evil person is one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and deliberately does harm to other humans.

For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see: -

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

End.