

Title: **HAGGAI**
“The desire of all nations shall come.”
Text: Haggai 2:6-9
Subject: *Encouragement in the Work God Gives*
Date: Tuesday Evening—January 6, 2004
Tape # X-98b
Readings: *Bobbie Estes & Larry Brown*
Introduction:

As we look at the Book of Haggai tonight, I will be working my way to the heart of his message, found in chapter 2 (vv. 6-9). So let's begin there.

(Hag 2:6-9) "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."

THE PROPHET

Haggai was an exemplary prophet. His name means, “festive” or “festival of the Lord.” He was sent of God, along with Zechariah and Malachi, to minister to his people after they returned from the 70 years of Babylonian captivity.

As I said, Haggai was exemplary as a prophet of God. He spent no time at all talking about himself. He came as God's messenger to his people. His singular authority was, "*Thus saith the LORD.*" His singular desire was the glory of God. The objects of his care were the people of God. He had to rebuke; but his rebuke was full of encouragement. He had to correct; but his correction was full of comfort. He was distinctively sent of God to stir up his people, to rouse their hearts, to inspire in them devotion and consecration to their God, his glory, and his worship.

THE BACKGROUND

The Jews had been captives in Babylon for 70 years, just as Jeremiah had prophesied. What a sad time those seventy years of exile and bondage were for those among the Jews who truly worshipped God.

After the 70 years were fulfilled, Daniel, who prophesied in Babylon, tells us that God graciously delivered his people from Babylon and began bringing them back into their land.

They came first under Zerubbabel, who is mentioned in the opening verse of Haggai. Zerubbabel, was the captain of the remnant that came back from Babylon. He was appointed Governor of Judah. When they came to Jerusalem, they found the city in ruins. The walls were broken down and the temple was utterly destroyed.

The Lord had sent them back specifically to rebuild the temple, to rebuild the city, and to re-establish true worship, the worship of God in the land. They began the work immediately. The first order of business was to rebuild the temple, the house of God, in Jerusalem.

At this time, they were still under Babylonian rule. But God had given them favor with the king and they were granted permission to do the work. So they started working. I can imagine the enthusiasm with which they commenced. Soon, the foundation of the temple was laid. It was much smaller than the original temple Solomon had built; but the work went rapidly. In a short time, they had a row or two of stones laid on the foundation.

But something happened. They quit the work. These Jews who had returned with Ezra, some 50,000 of them, specifically to build the house of God, just quit. They did nothing for more than fifteen years.

This is where Haggai comes in. He was sent of God, along with Zechariah and Malachi, to speak for God to his people (Ezra 5:1-2).

(Ezra 5:1-2) "Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that *were* in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, *even* unto them. {2} Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and

began to build the house of God which *is* at Jerusalem: and with them *were* the prophets of God helping them."

FOUR MESSAGES

Haggai delivered four messages to Judah. These four messages are specifically dated by him. They cover a period of about eighteen months. But everything Haggai says in these four messages is written for our learning and admonition today (Rom. 15:4). His messages call for us to "*consider*" some things. He uses that word, "*consider*," four times.

- In Haggai 1:5, he says, "*Consider your ways*," telling Judah and us to give serious thought to the way we live.
- In verse 7, he repeats that admonition, "*Consider your ways*." But here, he is calling for us to seriously think about our present circumstances in the providence of God, showing clearly that there is a connection between the way we live, in reference to God, and the things we experience in the providence of God.
- Then, in chapter 2 (v. 15), the prophet calls for us to consider the house of God (the worship of God), in connection with the great barrenness we have experienced.
- In verse 18 of chapter 2, he again calls for us to consider the house of God (the worship of God), and the blessedness he promises in connection with it.

Tonight, I want us to look at Haggai's messages to us, as they are given in these two chapters, praying that God the Holy Spirit will inscribe upon our hearts the lessons he here teaches us.

INDIFFERENCE

Haggai's first message (1:1-15) is a stern word of rebuke regarding indifference to the things of God. The house of God had laid in ruins for 15 years.

Of course, the people had a very good, theologically sound reason for doing nothing. The 70 years Jeremiah had spoken of were not quite finished. The predestined date of deliverance and restoration had not yet come, and some of the Jews were still in Babylon. These fine men did not want to interfere with the sovereign purpose of God. I'm not stretching this a bit. Read verse 2.

(Hag 1:2) "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."

But being the faithful prophet he was, Haggai was not about to let them off the hook. Instead of saying, "Oh, I understand that. I had not thought of that. I see what you're saying; and we certainly don't want anyone to think we're a bunch of Arminians." No. Haggai sticks his finger right on the sore spot and pushes hard (v. 4).

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

In other words, the prophet says, "The real problem here is not that you are waiting on the Lord; but that you have other things that are of such consuming concern to you that you are indifferent to the things of God. Your love of the world has made you lukewarm toward Christ."

He appeals to our sense of shame. God's house was in ruins while they lived in comfortable homes. They had shamefully neglected the house of the Lord. Our Master addresses this very issue in Matthew 6:33.

(Mat 6:33) "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Now, let us learn the lesson. — It is impossible to ignore Christ and the interests of his kingdom and glory, it is impossible to live in indifference to the things of God and prosper. We will suffer the consequences of such behavior. Ask Bro. Jonah. The Jews sowed much and reaped little, though they looked for and expected much. They ate, but they were not filled. They drank, but they were not satisfied. They put on clothes, but they were not warm. They received wages for their labor, but they had holes in their pockets. They gathered wood, but God's breath of judgment was upon everything. Everything they did came to nothing, because they were serving themselves, not God (1:6, 11).

(Hag 1:6) "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."

(Hag 1:11) "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."

They made God, his worship, and his glory secondary to their own pleasure, comfort, and earthly concerns.

Haggai's message had its desired effect, and the house of God was built (1:14).

(Hag 1:14) "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,"

DISCOURAGEMENT

A month later, the work stopped again. So Haggai steps up to deliver his second message (2:1-9). The people had worked hard on the temple and finished it. But the

restored temple appeared to be nothing compared to the great edifice Solomon built. Some of the people remembered the former temple, and said, “This is nice, but it is not nearly as great and glorious as Solomon’s temple.” They compared the present to the past, and said to themselves, “We cannot reproduce what our fathers did, so let’s just do nothing (2:3; Ezra 3:12).

(Ezra 3:12) "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:"

(Hag 2:3) "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?"

Haggai had a message from God for the complainers, and it had four parts:

1. The Lord said, “**I am with you**” (v.4).

(Hag 2:4) "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. **Then he assured them of the Lord’s presence and his steadfast covenant** (v.5).

(Hag 2:5) "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not."

3. **Then the prophet spoke of greater things than their natural eyes could see, promising the coming of Christ and the glory that would fill his house** (vv. 6-7, 9).

(Hag 2:6-7) "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."

(Hag 2:9) "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."

Certainly, this prophecy was fulfilled when Christ came into the temple at Jerusalem as an infant. But the ultimate fulfillment referred not to the physical temple, but the church and temple of God that that temple represented. The glory spoken of here is the glory that shall be revealed and shall be ours in the last day, when we are made partakers of his glory (Heb. 12:25-29).

(Heb 12:25-29) "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that

spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven: {26} Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. {27} And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. {28} Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: {29} For our God *is* a consuming fire."

Note: In verse 28 the apostle declares that we are presently receiving this kingdom and glory of which Haggai spoke.

- **Christ is the Desire of all nations.** — He is that One who alone is the embodiment of all those things every human heart desires (Gen. 49:10; Mal. 3:1).

(Gen 49:10) "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*."

(Mal 3:1) "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."

It is only in Christ (crucified, raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and accepted) that sinners find righteousness with God, forgiveness of all sin, and that peace of conscience that flows from a well-grounded assurance of eternal life.

- **Let us never despise the day of small things.** — The Lord our God has promised that our labor is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58).

(1 Cor 15:51-58) "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, {52} In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. {53} For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. {54} So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. {55} O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? {56} The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. {57} But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. {58} Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

We can never measure, by carnal means, the success of our labors in the kingdom of our God, and should never

try to do so. WE should never pine for former days, as if they were more desirable for us than the present. The day in which we live and serve our God and Savior is the very best day for us to do so. We ought to say, regarding the day in which the Lord has placed us, “*This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it*” (Ps. 118:24).

We cannot do what others do, and are not responsible to do what they do. We cannot do what our forefathers did, and are not responsible for that. We can and must do what the Lord our God has given us the means and opportunity to do; and for that we are responsible. As we put our hands to the work, our God will both sustain us in it and enable us to accomplish it.

This fact ought to cheer the hearts of all those men who labor for Christ in obscure places, with little apparent success, and those small assemblies of God’s saints scattered across the globe who are scorned by the world as meaningless and insignificant. No child of God and no assembly of God’s saints faithfully doing what they can for Christ ever has reason for discouragement. If like that redeemed sinner described in Mark 14, we do what we can for him, like her we shall be honored by him.

4. In verse 8 **the Lord God assures us that he has in his hand everything we need to do what he would have us to do.**

(Hag 2:8) "The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts."

Our God owns all things, and rules all things. He is both the possessor of all things and the omnipotent "*LORD of hosts.*" If only we (both individual believers and local churches) used what the Lord God has put in our hands as stewards in his house (time, talents, possessions, and opportunities) for the furtherance of the gospel, the building of his kingdom, and the glory of his name, rather than for our own gratification, we would never lack the means to do his work.

UNCLEANNES

Haggai's third message describes our utter inability to do anything acceptable to God because of our uncleanness (2:10-19). Apparently, many who worked feverishly in restoring the house and worship of God got the idea that they were making themselves holy by their contact with the temple. So Haggai takes us back to the law of Moses to show us that we cannot be accepted of God and cannot serve him acceptably, cannot do anything acceptable in his sight, except we be made clean (2:11-14).

(Hag 2:11-14) "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 their hands; and that which they offer there *is* unclean."

In verses 15-17, the prophet tells us to consider the temple itself, from its very foundation. Our cleanness and acceptance with God is to be found in the person and work of Christ that was portrayed in all the sacrifices and priesthood connected with the temple.

(Hag 2:15-17) "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."

As the building of the temple was God's work alone, so our salvation, our righteousness, is God's work alone.

Again, he calls for us to consider all that was typically symbolized in the temple at Jerusalem, and keep our hearts focused on that, focused on Christ and his glory,

and be assured of the blessedness found in and flowing to us from him (2:18-19).

There is “a time to sow and a time to reap.” Here, we are, as it were, just planting the seed. While the seed is in the ground, no one looks for the harvest. The harvest time is future. This is our sowing time. So let us sow. Soon, we shall reap.

COMING BLESSEDNESS

Haggai's last message was about the coming blessedness that awaits God's people (vv. 20-23). He spanned the ages of time and speaks of Christ even more fully.

(Hag 2:20-23) "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."

Zerubbabel is set before us here as great a type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- He is the Governor of Judah.
- He shakes heaven and earth.
- He overthrows and subdues kingdoms.
- He is Jehovah's Servant.
- He is the Signet, "*the express image*" (Heb. 1:1-3), of the Father.
- He is Jehovah's chosen One.
- He is the One who builds his house.

The words of **Psalm 2** and **Zechariah 4** are echoed at the conclusion of Haggai's prophecy:

(Psa 2:6-8) "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. {7} I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. {8} Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession."

(Zec 4:6-10) "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. {7} Who *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace unto it. {8} Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, {9} The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the

LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. {10} For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven; they *are* the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth."

ED SOLOMON AND B. H. CARROLL

To me, Dr. Ed Solomon was Mr. Southern Baptist. He led in formulating the Cooperative Program, served many years as editor of the FLORIDA BAPTIST WITNESS, motivated others in building the Baptist Hospital of Jacksonville, Florida. One morning he came to my office and told me this story about the celebrated Dr., B.. H.. Carroll.

"When I was a student at Southern Seminary," Dr. Solomon began, "I enjoyed a strong friendship with Harvey Carroll, son of B. H. Carroll. Harvey was also a Southern Seminary student and pastor of a nearby rural church. He lived in the church's parsonage. I invited him to use my room for his convenience for study or rest. Our friendship grew. Many times I told Harvey of my strong desire to study under his father's instruction."

"Are you really that serious about your desire to study under my father?" Harvey asked me after several months.

"When I told him just how very serious I had become, Harvey went to the desk, wrote briefly, sealed what he had written in an envelope addressed to his father."

"Take this," Harvey told me, "and give it directly to my father. Mrs. Carroll will offer to take it to him, for she protects him in every possible way, but insist on giving the message to him in person."

"So I took the envelope, unopened, and traveled to B. H. Carroll's home in Waco."

"Responding to my knock, Mrs. Carroll graciously offered to carry the message to her husband. When I told her that Harvey had instructed me to deliver it in person, she smiled and led me into the room where Dr. Carroll was reading."

"What a distinguished figure Dr. Carroll made," Ed continued, " He was tall, broad-shouldered, erect. His white hair and full beard gave him the look of a patriarch." "He took the letter, and, having opened it, silently read its brief message. When he spoke, he said simply, 'I'm glad to receive you, Harvey.' "

"Obviously he was very deaf, so I spoke loudly in the horn he raised to his ear and explained, 'My name is not Harvey. It is Ed, Ed Solomon.' "

"Carroll smiled and replied, 'Harvey, you will stay with us, of course. Mrs. Carroll will take you to your room. Dinner will be served in a few minutes.' "

"When I came to dinner," Solomon went on to tell me," Dr. Carroll told me to sit at his right. Again he called me Harvey and only smiled when I tried to correct him. So I was, much to my surprise, established in B. H. Carroll's own home with a new name, Harvey. For no matter how I tried to explain that my name was Ed Solomon, Dr. Carroll continued to call me Harvey".

"One morning at breakfast, Dr. Carroll turned to me and said, 'Harvey, take the third book on the second shelf, the sixth on the third, the seventh on the fourth. Please bring them to class for me.' "

"This I obeyed."

"t class he lectured for a few minutes before he said, 'Harvey will you bring me the books now?'"

"When I brought them to the platform and turned to return to my seat, he drew me to his side. Standing there with his arm around my shoulder, Dr. Carroll took from his coat's inner pocket a letter. 'This letter is from my son, Harvey,' Dr. Carroll explained to the class. 'While Harvey was a student at Southern, he was pastor of a small rural church. At the seminary Ed Solomon opened his heart and his room to my son. Because Ed wanted to

come here to study, Harvey sent him bearing a letter whose contents Ed has never seen."

"Taking this letter, Dr. Carroll read, 'Dear father, the bearer of this letter is Ed Solomon. Here at Southern, Ed has taken me into his room and shared with me in every way to help me. As he earnestly desires to study under your instruction, I am sending him to you. Please receive him as you would receive me for he is a true brother. Your son, Harvey.'"

"As I listened to Dr. Carroll, I could see and hear how much even the memory moved him. "Dr. Carroll laid the letter on his desk," Ed continued. "The tears flowed from his eyes and ran down his beard as he spoke with great emotion to his class. 'One day I will stand in the presence of our Heavenly Father,' Dr. Carroll's voice radiated his joyous faith as he continued. 'And He will, because I have received His Son on earth, He will receive me into His glory even as He would receive His only begotten Son.'"