

Haggai: Rebuilding For Greater Glory

La Crescent Evangelical Free Church

October 1, 2023

READING OF GOD'S WORD

Haggai 2:6-9

For thus says the Lord of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. 7 And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts. 9 The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts.”

Let's Pray

Warm Up

Good morning, my name is Eric Mattie I want to thank the elders for inviting me, to share God's Word this morning. I'm a member here at LEFC I serve as an occasional preacher and teacher and serve with my wife on the prayer ministry.

Introduction

As we just read, we are in the book Haggai. You might be wonder since we are this deep into the Prophets and as we are tracing the redemptive thread through the 66 books of the Bible what does this book of the twelve minor prophets hold for us.

As we have been reading it can feel like there is a cycle and recycling of the same message. Truth is there is!

Keep in mind the book of the twelve is one unified book. It was all one scroll in Jesus' bible. For us to be in Haggai, means that in sense we are in chapter 10 of a 12 chapter book.

Each message of the 12 prophets have three themes that are repeated over and over again for God's people to hear: They cover the same message over an estimated 300 year span (770-450 bc) They all have themes about Sin, Judgement and Restoration.

The Twelve: One Unified Book

Book Sequence	
Sin	Hosea (I)
	Joel (J)
	Amos (I)
	Obadiah (J)
	Jonah (I)
	Micah (J)

But as we study the Twelve closer, the initial 6 books(Hosea through Micah) have a greater emphasis on Sin and warning Israel about the seriousness of her sin.

- The Lord even gives his people the word picture of their sin against Him is like an adulterous harlot. He is not mincing words.

The Twelve: One Unified Book

Book Sequence	
Sin	Hosea (I)
	Joel (J)
	Amos (I)
	Obadiah (J)
	Jonah (I)
	Micah (J)
Judgment	Nahum (J)
	Habakkuk (J)
	Zephaniah (J)

Then the next 3 prophets (Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah) their messages have a greater emphasis on judgement and how God is bringing it to them

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Judgment	Nahum (J)
	Habakkuk (J)
	Zephaniah (J)
Restoration	Haggai (J)
	Zechariah (J)
	Malachi (J)

Then the last 3 prophets (Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi) have in their messages a greater emphasis of restoring the People of God for His glory.

Now, we know through 1 Peter 1:10-11 that the prophets knew that their words were serving not necessarily themselves and their immediate audience, but principally us in the New Testament era.

So here in the second shortest book of the OT (38 verses) what God has for us as New Testament Christians is truth and wisdom for us to understand and discern. Haggai delivers a perspective that is to affect our worldview, our worship and even our work.

The Title of my message this morning is **Haggai: Rebuilding for a Greater Hope and Glory.**

:10 second context-

Let me give you the ten second context where Haggai starts

After the new foreign policy of the Persians allowed God's people to return and rebuild their temple, opposition and laziness has cause them to stop for 16 years.

As we open Haggai you will remember the banishment, or exile, is being lifted. 50,000 people come back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. But then the work stalls. But we see in Haggai God moving in the redemptive story. Moving to rebuild the temple for a purpose for a greater glory and hope.

God's actions make up my key thoughts for today. (Notes)

We see God is

1. Stirring the hearts of His people
2. Strengthening the people's work

3. Sanctifying the work for His glory
4. Signaling a greater glory to come.

In Haggai we see God is...

1. Stirring the Hearts of His People.

When God stirs the heart of people he is awakening and arousing, convicting and prompting. In this case with his people, **God is stirring His people to repent and rebuild the temple.** And he does this stirring through his Spoken Word and through His Spirit's work

A. Through His Spoken Word:

We see starting in Verse 2:

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

Haggai 1:2-4

The Lord is revealing their sin of disobedience.

Nobody was refuting the building of the temple. It was important! In fact in Ezra, we see they rebuilt the altar. That is all they got done. Then the Samaritan neighbors simply complain to the authorities. Apply a little Pressure. The building of the temple stopped.

{slowly}

Then somewhere in that 16 years they feared Samaritans more than they feared God, They worshipped their comfort more that they worshipped Lord and were living lives of self-preservation.

The difficulty of life provides the excuse to put our resources and needs first and foremost. Therefore centering our lives on our selves

- They had talked themselves into a lifestyle of “Just not right now”. Postponing obedience
- **However, Postponed obedience is disobedience**

He is even calling out the radical disparity of their comfort verses the temple that lies in ruin. He is revealing their sins of living first for themselves.

But The Lord's stirring is not done

The Lord is reminding them of the terms of the covenant.

Remember Dt 28:15:

“But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.”

“The LORD will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in all that you undertake to do...”

Deuteronomy 28:15, 20a

- God is stirring by connecting the dots of his loving, disciplining, work through the curses --with their struggle in life.

Haggai 1:5

Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. You 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.

Down to v 11

And 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 labors.

Haggai 1: 5,6,11

The lack of satisfied drink, lack of quality cloth, the lack of wage saving, the agricultural challenges and drought on their own land and the lack of the blessing of hard work is all God reminding them of the terms of His covenant with them. That these struggles come from the Lord Himself as form of discipline

God is not done stirring with his Spoken Word. v.7,8

The Lord is recommencing the work of rebuilding the temple.

Consider your ways. Go 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.”

Haggai 1:7,8

Before this moment, God sovereignly used King Cyrus to send the initial 50,000 to come back to the homeland and build the temple. But this time he is stating it through His own prophet Haggai.in His own words.

The stirring the Lord does here, is calling them to put aside their own pleasures and seek first God's pleasure so that in the end God maybe glorified.

The People of God are created and purposed to demonstrate something gloriously larger than their good achievements. We are called to live for something bigger than themselves.

Now..

This Spoken Word that stirs through revealing sin, reminding covenant terms and recommences the building of the temple produces the rarest result.- the people listened!

v.12

“Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, 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.”

Haggai 1:12

The people respond to the preaching of God’s word- immediately. They are convicted of their sin immediately. And their hearts rightfully feared the Lord.

- When God is stirring our hearts and connecting the dots of His word to our lives, when we consider our ways, **may we be quick to obey** the voice of God and have the result of our spirits and emotions to rightfully and reverently fear the Lord.
- Godly sorrow should always result in renewed obedience.

When God is stirring our heart to return to Him, we can rest assured that he will meet us
Look at what happens. v.13

“Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke to the people with the Lord's message, “I am with you, declares the Lord.””

Haggai 1:13

- This declaration of His presence reminds them that through the 70 year banishment from their land and even now in this return and delayed obedience , the Lord has disciplined then yet has never forsaken them.

Where ever and whenever we read God saying, “I am with you” it is an assurance and a promise.

- It is the assurance of God’s merciful guiding presence
- It is the promise of God’s personal presence, support and blessing to come.

With our own insecure and doubting hearts this assurance and promise builds in us who the Lord loves, a trust and a consolation..

That is the Stirring through the Spoken word:

B. Through His Spirit’s Work:

In this narrative we get a unique look into God’s work. We just read and saw the Lord stirring by His spoken word. But then we get to see the Spirit’s internal work in the lives of His people: v13

“And 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,”

Haggai 1:13-14

Haggai is faithful to put forward the word of God and the people respond in the positive. They repent and they begin to repair. Behind the willing response is the silent working of the Lord creating a willing attitude by the Holy Spirit’s work. He the Holy Spirit set in motion a courage in the mind, disposition and temperament of the remnant

PREACH {SLOW}

This insight of the Spirit's internal work from Haggai's account, should consult our worshipping hearts to be even more thankfully aware, and fully trust the he who begins a good work in you will finish it.

- No matter your insecurities
- No matter your life crisis
- No matter your limitations
- And no matter your faults, he the Lord God, makes us more than conquerors through Christ who loved us.

That is the 1st work we see God doing. He is stirring the hearts of his People.

In Haggai we see God is...

2. Strengthening His People's Work

The second message of Haggai comes a month and a half later. Due to the precise detail Haggai gives we know that this message is given on the last day of the Festival of Booths (or the Tabernacle.)

So the People in repentant obedience begin repairing the temple. In just over a month of doing this, they need to stop for week and observe this festival for seven days

- For this remnant of people, this festival of remembering God's faithfulness in the exodus and wilderness- in light of their own recent exodus from Babylon and return to a broken Jerusalem capital and rubble of a temple - was undoubtedly a sad and but moving portion of this time.
- Pile on top of that they just learned that their meager harvest was caused by their own continued unfaithfulness as God was disciplining them. Undoubtedly discouraging.
- Pile on top of that, on this full day of sober assembly years earlier, Solomon dedicated the finished temple that was in full and magnificent beauty and treasures that reflected a place of worship worthy of the living true God's glory. Now they are called to rebuild it? Undoubtedly, as the weeks have passed and taking the time now to reflect, this was becoming, disheartening.

We all at time can understand such a hole is despair.

So this second message from the Lord leans into this setting By God asking:

"Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?"
Haggai 2:3

- This group of people only know of the splendor of Solomon's temple because memories was everyone's heritage. 400 years have passed since that dedication. The nation had split into two and the temple had suffered from raids and plundering over the years before they were exiled. If any on the senior citizen of this group heard this, they remember that plundered and skeleton of a temple. But it was better than this.

Illustration: Have you ever heard of children growing up under the shadow of highly successful and gifted parents? To be known as "so and so" kid and to have an expectation of repeating their glorious accomplishment can be discouraging, disheartening. So why even try?

- That is where this group may have been at in their motivation. Losing hope. This temple was going to be much less than the first. So why try?

But God doesn't empathize and coddle them and say don't worry about the temple I'll get some one else.

Rather God emphasizes the greater meaning of the Festival of Booths:

"Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts, according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not"

Haggai 2:4,5.

- This is a threefold repetition to be strong. Be strong national leader, be strong religious leader, be strong all the people!
- The Festival of Booth was to inspire hope in the Lord's faithfulness.
- We remember that in the cross of Jesus Christ his body broken, his blood poured out for us, may we remember at the Lord's table that we are to be inspired by hope in the Lord's faithfulness to us.

PREACH:

Once again God is assuring and promising His presence. The same power and presence at the Exodus is in the present situation.

While there is no Pillar of Cloud assuring them visual that God is with them, He is watering their faith to take Him at his word that He is there and will strengthen their work.

That step away from visual assurance is part of the redemption story we are reading about here. He is enabling their faith to trust in His word only.

Yet, we today as New Testament Christians are not to lose the fact that God, whose presence dwelled in the temple at one time, is saying in the midst of the rubble and vandalized temple, still revealing and declaring "Fear not I'm still here. In the midst of this destruction. I have not forsaken you. I am with you"

- People who feel the rubble of their lives around their feet- take hope God has not forsaken you.
- In Haggai: This is not an irony, it is a weaning. It is a weaning for the sake of His relationship with his people.
- Because God is with his people His Glory is actually there. So the glory of the temple is not about an impressive building with precious treasures adorning it

The temple is not the priority. The priority of God's relationship with his people is. His presence is with them. So- yes he strengthens them to do the work to rebuild the temple which is the symbol of His presence. He enables them with His presence and even a promise that He will furnish what they need to rebuild by bringing treasures from the nations and the all the silver and gold are at His disposal.

But like the wise heavenly Father He is, the Lord encourages His children knowing the future as He does by saying

“The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts.”

Haggai 2:9

Preach: We know historically that this very temple that we are talking about here is gone and all that is left is the outer western wall today. But There is a coming day -a day of better hope and greater glory and intimate presence with God that will not be found in a temple in New Jerusalem.

“And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.”

Revelation 21:22

The Lord is rebuilding hope in the hearts of his people not to be found in this temple but within Himself. When the Lord builds hope, he is strengthening His people work.

That's the 2nd action we see God doing. God is strengthening His people's work.

In Haggai we see God is...

3. Sanctifying the work for His glory.

The 3rd thing we see God doing is to sanctify the work of rebuilding the temple.

Haggai engages a warning dialogue of question and answers with the priest of the day to help them learn from their answers more than they knew. The lesson and application was simple:

While they are doing the work of rebuilding the temple and while they have been offering sacrifices on the rebuilt altar, God says through Haggai conversation, **you defile everything you touch**. Even the right religious work and sacrifices are defiled to the highest degree and does not make you holy

Remember these words:

We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.”

Isaiah 64:6

What about Jesus words:

On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ 23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Matthew 7:22, 23

Or even this word to the church in Sardis:

“I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.”

The mere production and presentation of a rebuilt temple, will not make the people holy.

Haggai is making that case and says:

“So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, declares the Lord, and so with every work of their hands. And what they offer there is unclean”

Haggai 2:14b

But through unmerited mercy, the Lord declares:

“But from this day on I will bless you.”

Haggai 2:19c

Only the powerful touch and merciful decision from God, can sanctify this work of rebuilding the temple. God radically changed their status from defiled to clean. This was a decisive symbolic turning point for God’s people in Haggai’s day.

This act of grace reveals that God is the same in the Old Testament, to New Testament to today to eternity. The Good news is that a Holy God is graciously merciful to a defiled sinful people because its His to **choice** to do so.

Why? Because it glorifies him!

And God cares that His glory is known by His People
and when His glory is known by His people
the byproduct for us is our joy in his glory,
our satisfaction in His praise
our hope is fulfilled in Him.

That’s 3rd action we see God doing, God sanctifies the work for His glory.

But then again on that same day in December the 4th message from the Lord comes.

In Haggai we see God is...

4. Signaling a greater hope and glory to come

The final message is specifically presented to Zerubbabel the governor of Judah. Yet Haggai allowed the people of God who were tempted to despair and lose hope to over hear it.

V 23

“On that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, declares the Lord, and make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, declares the Lord of hosts.”

Haggai 2:23

Zerubbabel in the world’s eyes had little significance.

Iain Duguid Commentator: says: "He was appointed as a minor government official in a backwater province of the empire, a career killing move if ever there was one."

However, he was a descendent of David. Though the sins of the Davidic kings brought an end to their dynasties, God is renewing a promise here.

If you are comfortable circle the words, "my servant" "signet ring" and "chosen". These three words heighten hope for God's people

- My Servant: Like his ancestor David, Zerubbabel is called my servant, God's chosen representative to accomplish his work- which we will read more about in Zechariah.
 - This small reference ignites the thoughts of David and foreshadows Jesus the Greater Servant.
- Signet Ring: The signet ring is a symbol of authority. The last Davidic king was rejected with an image of the signet ring being torn off the Lord's right hand. Now Zerubbabel being declared the signet ring, reverses that rejection and is itself a sign of a larger hope. The hope that God's purposes to bring salvation to the world through this family line, is alive and a commitment not forgotten by God.
 - We see this fulfillment in Matthew where as Jesus is Zerubbabels 9th great grandfather through Joseph.
- Chosen: The Lord choosing someone in the line of David, represents the renewal of God's commitment to once again take the line of David as his own.

This message and these three words signal to God's people that greater hope and glory is coming,

While Haggai, only give us glimpses of the redemptive thread. They are significant.

It is significant that God is calling his people to seek first kingdom initiatives. We could be part of the small redemption thread in other people's lives. We stand today with our priorities to love God and man, to live bigger than for ourselves, to not waste our lives to evangelize the lost. Yet are we doing them? Are we in disobedience in them? And how are we doing them? Are doing them in the hopes that we can be saved or sanctified? The Lord calls us today to repent if needed and embrace wholeheartedly

It is significant that God says "I am with you" It is God's glorious presence in the midst of God's people, that makes Israel different than all the other nations. So it is with us! Today, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, he dwells and stirs and strengthen and speak and sanctifies we are to reflect, represent and resemble Christ and live in a manner that our actions, words, thoughts, and beliefs honor God's name and show His greatness and worth.

It is significant that God said to Zerubbabel that he would make him like a signet ring and chose him. The temporary rejection of the Davidic line proved to have a deeper unbreakable commitment to us the family in the redeeming of the world

It is significant that God said, "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former.'" That latter glory speaks of the Lord Jesus in whom all deity dwells bodily. Jesus said of himself: Something

greater than the temple is here. We are to rejoice in this as recognize right her and now God's presence is here and we are called to worship him.

So let's do that.

Let's pray: