

The Book of Haggai

Passage: Haggai 1-2

Title: It's Time to Get Back to the Things of the Lord

Summary: Because of resistance and hardship, the Children of Israel had left the Temple to lie in ruin, and turned their focus on their own needs personally. But God sends the prophet Haggai, and says it is time to get back to the things of the Lord. Maybe you were once excited about the things of God, excited about serving the Lord but have since grown weary by the squabbling of God's people or the attacks of the enemy. So you have decided to concentrate on your own life instead, tending to your own little world. This book is for you—for no matter how long it's been, we see in these pages that it's never too late to get going again.

Introduction

Haggai preached four sermons over four months in the fall of 520 BC. His book is the transcripts of his four sermons with a few editorial comments inserted.

- Haggai's first sermon, 1:1-11, was delivered on August 29... (It's Time!)
- His second sermon, 2:1-9, was preached 49 days later, on October 17... (Be Strong!)
- His third sermon, 2:10-19, came on December 18... (Be Holy!)
- And the Prophet's last sermon, 2:20-23, was spoken on that same day. (He's Worth It!)

Consisting of only 1,131 words in thirty-eight verses in two chapters, Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament (Obadiah being the shortest at 21 verses). Haggai may not have been very effusive—but he was surely effective, for he was able to mobilize and motivate a mass of directionless people to resume the undertaking of a great project.

You see, approximately sixteen years earlier, they had been freed from captivity in Babylon. Led by their political leader, Zerubbabel, and Joshua, the high priest, these people of God had traveled several hundred miles back to Jerusalem and immediately set about doing what the Lord had commissioned them to do. They began to build the temple—the place where God's name could be praised, the place they could assemble to honor His name. They began to lay the foundation, but became intimidated by their enemies and divided by internal contention. So for sixteen years, the work sat idle. Weeds began to grow on the foundation as the people gave up on the project and instead turned to the construction of their own houses.

Maybe you were once excited about the things of God, excited about serving the Lord but have since grown weary by the squabbling of God's people or the attacks of the enemy. So you have decided to concentrate on your own life instead, tending to your own little world. This book is for you—for no matter how long it's been, we see in these pages that it's never too late to get going again.

Haggai's first sermon, 1:1-11, was delivered on August 29... (It's Time!)

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

There will be 4 specific messages given to Haggai, which we will see with exact days they were given to him.

Christian God speaks.....

God speaks to His people.

He who has an ear, let him hear (Revelation 2&3 to the 7 churches). Those words are an invitation from the Lord, for intimacy, for communion, for direction, from the Lord Himself to every person.

Revelation 2:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." "

Christianity is a speaking relationship, a communing with our Creator relationship, God will speak to you, and today, is a good day, to say, "Lord what do you want to say to me today".

I personally journal, and I encourage you to do the same, for several reasons but here are a few:

- I sit with open bible, in my prayer closet, with pen and paper, because every day I expect God to speak to me. I have pen in hand because I am going to write it down so I can look back on it later. But it is "faith", I believe God will speak to me, and I prove by having a pen and paper ready. I can say this with all fact, I have never "not" written something down. It may be I am simply writing down a verse that spoke to my heart, a Word for Today, or a specific promise, or direction, or just writing down a specific burden that was on my heart saying, "Lord please do a work in _____ (fill in the blank). But I have pen and paper ready to journal because I expect God to speak to me specifically, not just the "prophets" of the Bible, but he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says.

Haggai 1:2 "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built." ' "

We can all fall prey to this, we say it is not time to get involved in being set apart, dedicated, focusing, on the things of the Lord because first I have to build my house, I have to excel in youth sports to get a scholarship, to work on this relationship, to finish my schooling, to establish my career, and the years go by, slowly but ever so surely, as time waits for no one. The Lord says to seek first the kingdom, and the things of the Lord, and He will take care of those other things

Matthew 6:31-34 (NKJV) ³¹ "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Haggai 1:3 Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

Haggai 1:4 "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"

Haggai 1:5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways!"

The people didn't say it should be built, just not right now, it wasn't the priority. God said to them, "consider your ways". He will say "consider", search your hearts, five times in this short book.

Oh sweet praise, God says "Consider your ways", as Beloved of God He is always calling us back to Himself..... because He is a speaking God, and the very fact that He speaks is proof-positive that we are in a relationship with Him.

You may take this passage as a rebuke, and yes He is correcting them, but don't miss..... it is a passage of a relationship. It is not only that God speaks, but that He draws near to us, and..... not only that, listen Beloved.....that He "wants us near to Him".

No matter how long it has been, nor how far away, He is always calling, He is always saying "come"

Bunyan is most famous for The Pilgrim's Progress, which is, besides the Bible, history's best-selling book. But he also authored fiftyseven other books. One of the loveliest is Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ, written in 1678. The warmth of the title is representative of the entire treatise. In typical Puritan style, Bunyan took a single verse and wrote a whole book on it, reflecting on it at length. That verse, for Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ, was John 6:37. In the course of pronouncing himself the bread of life given to the spiritually hungry (John 6:32-40), Jesus declares:

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

It was one of Bunyan's favorite verses, as evident from how often he cites it throughout his writings. But in this particular book he takes the text and zeroes in on it, looking at it from every angle, wringing it dry. There is a mountain of consoling theology packed into this single verse. Consider what Jesus says:

- "All ...," not "most." Once the Father sets his loving gaze on a wandering sinner, that sinner's rescue is certain.
- "... the Father ..." Our redemption is not a matter of a gracious Son trying to calm down an uncontrollably angry Father. The Father himself ordains our deliverance. He takes the loving initiative (note v. 38).
- "... gives ...," not "haggles over." It is the Father's deep delight to freely entrust recalcitrant rebels into the gracious care of his Son.
- "... will come ..." God's saving purpose for a sinner is never thwarted. He is never frustrated. He never runs out of resources. If the Father calls us, we will come to Christ.
- "... and whoever comes ..." Yet we are not robots. While the Father is clearly the sovereign overseer of our redemption, we are not dragged kicking and screaming into Christ against our will. Divine grace is so radical that it reaches down and turns around our very desires. Our eyes are opened. Christ becomes beautiful. We come to him. And anyone—"whoever"—is welcome. Come and welcome to Jesus Christ.
- "... comes to me ..." We do not come to a set of doctrines. We do not come to a church. We do not even come to the gospel. All these are vital. But most truly, we come to a person, to Christ himself.

[Ortlund, D. \(2020\). Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers \(pp. 59–61\). Crossway.](#)

Bunyan draws out all this and more. The book is worth reading in full. But it is the final words of the verse that he dwells longest on, that meant most to him. At the center of his book he confronts our innate suspicions of Christ's deepest heart. Using his KJV rendering ("Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"), Bunyan writes:

They that are coming to Jesus Christ, are often times heartily afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive them.

This observation is implied in the text. I gather it from the largeness and openness of the promise: "I will in no wise cast out." For had there not been a proneness in us to "fear casting out," Christ needed not to have waylaid our fear, as he does by this great and strange expression, "In no wise."

There needed not, as I may say, such a promise to be invented by the wisdom of heaven, and worded at such a rate, as it were on purpose to dash in pieces at one blow all the objections of coming sinners, if they were not prone to admit of such objections, to the discouraging of their own souls.

For this word, "in no wise," cuts the throat of all objections; and it was dropped by the Lord Jesus for that very end; and to help the faith that is mixed with unbelief. And it is, as it were, the sum of all promises; neither can any objection be made upon the unworthiness that you find in yourself, that this promise will not assail.

But I am a great sinner, say you.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I am an old sinner, say you.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I am a hard-hearted sinner, say you.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I am a backsliding sinner, say you.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I have served Satan all my days, say you.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I have sinned against light, say you.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I have sinned against mercy, say you.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I have no good thing to bring with me, say you.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

This promise was provided to answer all objections, and does answer them.
[Ortlund, D. \(2020\). Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers \(pp. 61–62\). Crossway.](#)

Haggai 1:6 “You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes.”

The people were working hard but they were neither satisfied nor getting ahead because no matter how hard they worked, they still felt empty within. That’s always the way it is. The very process of trying to live for ourselves is counterproductive because everything we think we gain goes into a bag with holes in it. On the other hand, when we seek first the kingdom, everything else we need will be added unto us (Matthew 6:33).

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) ³³ *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

Haggai 1:7 Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Consider your ways!

Haggai 1:8 Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the LORD.

Haggai 1:9 “You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?” says the LORD of hosts. “Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.

Haggai 1:10 Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit.

Haggai 1:11 For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.”

This happened literally to these we read of, but it happens to us spiritually, as the world leaves us empty, barren, dry, and cold. For it cannot satisfy as He can and does.

Come to me He says:

Matthew 11:28–30 (NKJV) ²⁸ *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*”

John 7:37–39 (NKJV) ³⁷ *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

John 4:9–14 (NKJV) ⁹ *Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” ¹¹ The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? ¹² Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” ¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”*

How beautiful I see continually through the scriptures, the weaving of God’s heart as reflected at water (whether springs or wells). We see Hagar at the well, and she says after all her encounter with the Lord Himself, not only God sees me, but the God who sees me, I see Him.

Genesis 16:7 (NKJV) ⁷ *Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.*

Genesis 16:13 (NKJV) ¹³ *Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, “Have I also here seen Him who sees me?”*

And how we read of two men whose brides, were found at wells (Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Rachael).

Genesis 24:42–45 (NKJV) ⁴² *“And this day I came to the well and said, ‘O LORD God of my master Abraham, if You will now prosper the way in which I go, ⁴³ behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass that when the virgin comes out to draw water, and I say to her, “Please give me a little water from your pitcher to drink,” ⁴⁴ and she says to me, “Drink, and I will draw for your camels also,”—let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master’s son.’ ⁴⁵ “But before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah, coming out with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well and drew water. And I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’*”

Genesis 29:9-12 (NKJV) ⁹ Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. ¹⁰ And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. ¹¹ Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. ¹² And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her father.

But John, and John 4, it is Jesus finding His bride, at a well. The woman at the well, a picture of us all. Jesus desiring a bride, looking for a bride, finding His bride..... At a well, receiving her and taking her as she was, but then turning her into the beautiful bride, washed white as snow, and adorned in white.

For that is what He will do, and this Book is more than a historical account of the rebuilding of the Temple, but a picture of us, His Bride, for we are His Temple, that He can and will make beautiful.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Revelation 22:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Beloved, this Book of Haggai is more than a calling to get to work on the things of God (like ministry), but a beautiful calling, that He wants to finish the work He started in you personally:

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV) ⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Haggai 1:12 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 presence of the LORD.

Haggai 1:13 Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, spoke the LORD's message to the people, saying, "I am with you, says the LORD."

Haggai 1:14 So 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,

So my prayer today in this study, that God would stir (just one Zerubbabel), to step forth and do great things for the Lord, step put and do hard things for the Lord, to be stirred to pick up the work of the Lord, to rebuild that which has been laying in ruin for quite some time, for far too long of a time. And then when God stirs that one Zerubbabel today, that He would stir another and another, in my prayer that every last person in this room, online, and radio, would be stirred to do great things.

Haggai 1:15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

And I pray you write it in your journal, with today's date, of what the Lord has stirred in your heart.

According to verse 1, the message came on the first day of the month. Here, we see that on the twenty-fourth day of the month, the people were at work. This means that within twenty-three days, the people heard the word, gathered their materials, got organized, and continued that which they had begun sixteen years ago

His second sermon, 2:1-9, was preached 49 days later, on October 17... (Be Strong!)

Haggai 2:1 In the seventh month, on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying:

Haggai 2:2 "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying:

Haggai 2:3 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?

To understand why the Lord is asking this question, we need to be reminded of the historical record as seen in Ezra 3. There, we read that when the people first came to Jerusalem and laid the foundation, the

young men all shouted for joy. At the same time, however, the old men howled in grief. You see, the old men had seen the temple Solomon had erected—an ornate, impressive structure of gold and silver. They knew this new temple couldn't compare. There's always a great danger in looking back. That's why Paul said, "Forgetting those things which lie behind, I press on" (Philippians 3:13, 14)

Philippians 3:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Haggai 2:4 Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the LORD; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the LORD, 'and work; for I am with you,' says the LORD of hosts.

Fear not, for I am with You says the Lord, now go do the work, not by yourself, but by knowing that it is I who am working in you and through you.

Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Haggai 2:5 'According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!'

It's interesting, the Lord references a 900 year old promise - made at Israel's exodus from Egypt. Yet, it's still in force. God's promises stand the test of time. And when God's Spirit is among us - no matter what we've accomplished thus far - the best is yet to come.

Haggai 2:6 "For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land;

Haggai 2:7 and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts.

The "Desire of All Nations", is a Name for Jesus.

Oh my brethren, when we see Him, apart from all the trappings, and distractions, when we simply see Him, and "come" into His presence, we truly see what our hearts desire..... Him. When a person fully sees Him, then He becomes, a person's "Desire".

It is a beautiful prayer, when we pray, "Lord I desire You, You are my hearts desire"

Haggai 2:8 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts.

The Lord lacks nothing when it is His work. Remember if God has called you to do something, he will provide. Where God guides, He provides.

Philippians 4:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Haggai 2:9 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts.'

It's interesting, according to the Babylonian Talmud five items were missing from Zerubbabel's Temple that were present in Solomon's...

1. First, the Ark of the Covenant –
2. Second, the Holy Fire on the sacrificial altar –
3. Third, the Shekinah glory (God's visible presence) –
4. Fourth, the Spirit of prophecy (a prophetic gift provided by the Holy Spirit) –
5. and Fifth, the Urim And Thummim (special stones the priest used to discern God's will) –

yet despite these items the latter temple will be more glorious. How can that be? The answer is in the phrase, "the Desire of All Nations." The Jewish rabbis referred to this as a title for the Messiah. And it was to Zerubbabel's Temple that Jesus, God incarnate (in the flesh), came to visit. Jesus walked its halls, and

taught in its porticos. It was the presence of God's Son that more than made up for whatever this Temple lacked in stature and trimmings.

Jesus is what gave to it a greater glory.

And the same can be said of a church. Regardless of its size, or programs, or its other tangible qualities, what makes it important is Who visits. If Jesus shows up on Sundays - if His presence fills up every corner - who are we to call it "nothing." When Jesus is in the house, it doesn't matter what the house itself looks like.

His third sermon, 2:10-19, came on December 18... (Be Holy!)

Haggai 2:10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

Haggai 2:11 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying,

Haggai 2:12 "If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?" ' ' Then the priests answered and said, "No."

Haggai 2:13 And Haggai said, "If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?" So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

Haggai 2:14 Then Haggai answered and said, " 'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the LORD, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.

Haggai was to pose two questions to the priests. "If a piece of meat that has been offered to the Lord accidentally touches some other object, does the object it touches become holy?"

"No," the priests answered.

Second, "If someone is ceremonially unclean because he touched a dead body, can he make others ceremonially unclean by touching them?"

"Yes," the priests answered.

Simply put, holiness cannot be passed on—but corruption and pollution can be. In other words, if you hang around sin, you can't help but be affected. But simply hanging around a church doesn't make you a Christian. You've got to be obedient to the Lord personally.

1 Peter 1:15–16 (NKJV) ¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

Leviticus 11:45 (NKJV) ⁴⁵ For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

A speaking God will speak truth to us, even uncomfortable truths. God knows that cuddling cripples. Great works will never be done by those who won't face, nor accept, hard truths that God speaks to them in order to grow them, break them, break them free from the things that weaken and bind them.

The truth sets us free.

John 8:32 (NKJV) ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Love without truth, is not love, because it is not fully being honest.

The Book of James ends with, the calling (an epistle written to the church not just pastors), to (when needed), to speak to (in order to turn back), those who wander from the truth.

James 5:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

We see Haggai entrusted with God's Word, which is God's Heart, because Haggai would speak the "whole counsel of God", as he would not only speak words of encouragement, but also words of repentance.

Acts 20:26-27 (NKJV) ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

Paul would go on to say, savage wolves will come in to destroy the flock

Acts 20:28-31 (NKJV) ²⁸ Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. ³¹ Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Haggai 2:15 'And now, carefully consider from this day forward: from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the LORD—

Haggai 2:16 since those days, when one came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were but ten; when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were but twenty.

When they were living for themselves God saw to it their yield was reduced. They netted 50% less grain and 60% less oil.

Haggai 2:17 I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me,' says the LORD.

Haggai 2:18 'Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid—consider it:

Haggai 2:19 Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.' "

Remember Haggai is delivering this sermon in the month of December. That means they've already sowed their seed, for the harvest they're expecting in the spring. God is promising to reverse their recent failures, and bring about blessing for their obedience.

And the Prophet's last sermon, 2:20-23, was spoken on that same day.

Haggai 2:20 And again the word of the LORD came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying,

Haggai 2:21 "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying: 'I will shake heaven and earth.

On the same day, Haggai now delivers his fourth sermon. And from its contents you get the impression that Zerubbabel has been second-guessing himself. Haggai reminds the doubting leader of the glorious promises that lay ahead. Apparently, Zerubbabel was a timid leader. He had some insecurities. I'm not sure he would've finished the Temple if it hadn't been for the visions of Zechariah and Haggai's encouragement.

Haggai 2:22 I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms. I will overthrow the chariots And those who ride in them; The horses and their riders shall come down, Every one by the sword of his brother.

Haggai 2:23 'In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the LORD, 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the LORD of hosts.

"I know your heart must be heavy," the Lord said. "I know the work has not been going well these past sixteen years. But know this, Zerubbabel: I've chosen you and I know your heart is right. Therefore, you will be like a signet—in a position of great authority." Indeed he was, for in the genealogies of Jesus—Joseph's line presented by Matthew and Mary's presented by Luke—Zerubbabel's name is the only one in both lines (Matthew 1:12; Luke 3:27). Thus, his place in the lineage of Messiah is unique. In addition to this, most scholars believe that after the Lord shakes the nations in the Tribulation, Zerubbabel will hold a key position in the millennial kingdom.

Matthew 1:12 (NKJV) ¹² And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel.

Luke 3:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ *the son of Joannas, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri,*

It greatly encourages me that Haggai ends on this note, for in it the Lord seems to say, “David was prohibited from building the temple because his hands were bloody, but I counted to his credit the fact that he wanted to build it (2 Samuel 7). Zerubbabel, even though the building languished a bit, I see that your heart is right. And you will be rewarded accordingly.”

Therefore, take hope, dear friends. If it’s been sixteen years since you’ve done the work God called you to do, get going again. And know that if your heart is right, the Lord hasn’t given up on you. On the contrary, He’ll use you powerfully—just as we’ll see Him do with Zerubbabel in the Book of Zechariah.
Courson, J. (2006). Jon Courson’s application commentary: Volume two: Psalms-Malachi (p. 889). Thomas Nelson.