

Haggai Pt 2 I Am With You

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Haggai / Haggai 1:12–15

Introduction: The Rarest Moment in Scripture

Haggai 1:12–15 BSB

¹² Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, as well as all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the words of the prophet Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent him. So the people feared the LORD.

¹³ Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, delivered the message of the LORD to the people: “I am with you,” declares the LORD.

¹⁴ So the LORD stirred the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, as well as the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and began the work on the house of the LORD of Hosts, their God,

¹⁵ on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the

second year of King Darius.

If you've read much of the Old Testament, you know how this usually goes. A prophet shows up with a hard word from God. The people reject him. Sometimes they mock him. Sometimes they throw him in a pit. And judgment falls.

But Haggai is different.

After God confronts the people about their drift, something shocking happens. They listen. Not just a few people. The whole community responds. The leadership responds. Everyone gets on the same page and moves in the same direction.

This is rare in Scripture. So rare that when it happens, you should stop and pay attention.

Part 1: Who Responds

The Leadership Hears First

Haggai 1:12 begins:

Haggai 1:12 BSB

¹² Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, as well as all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the

words of the prophet Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent him. So the people feared the LORD.

Notice who responds first: Zerubbabel and Joshua.

Zerubbabel is the governor. He comes from the line of David. He's the political leader of this returned community. Joshua is the high priest. He's the spiritual leader. Together, they represent both civil and religious authority.

And they both respond. They both say yes.

This matters because leadership sets the tone. When the top leaders of a community admit they've gotten off track and commit to change, it opens the door for everyone else to do the same. If Zerubbabel and Joshua had dug in and defended themselves, the whole community would have gone nowhere. But they didn't.

Then it says "all the remnant of the people" obeyed too.

Not most of them. All of them.

They Obeyed and They Feared

The text says they "obeyed the voice of the LORD their God." They didn't just hear the words. They acted on them.

But notice something else. The text also says they "feared

the LORD."

Fear here doesn't mean terror. It means reverence. Awe. A serious recognition that God is real and that His word matters. These people understood that what Haggai said came from God, and they treated it accordingly.

Part 2: God's Response to Obedience

The First Word: Presence

When the people respond, what's the first thing God says to them?

Haggai 1:13 BSB

¹³ Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, delivered the message of the LORD to the people: "I am with you," declares the LORD.

This is stunning. God doesn't say, "Great, now work harder." He doesn't say, "Finally you got it right."

He says, "I am with you."

That's the first promise. Before the work accelerates. Before the results show up. God assures them of His presence.

They're about to take on a massive project. The temple has been in ruins for 70 years. The work will be hard. There will be opposition. Resources will be tight. Doubts will creep in.

So God meets them with the most important promise: you're not doing this alone. I am with you.

The Spirit Stirs Them

Then something happens internally:

Haggai 1:14 BSB

¹⁴ So the LORD stirred the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, as well as the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and began the work on the house of the LORD of Hosts, their God,

The people had already chosen to obey. But God doesn't stop at their choice. He goes deeper. He stirs their spirits. He moves in their hearts to give them the motivation and courage they need to actually carry through.

This is the partnership between God's action and human choice. The people decide to obey. God responds by stirring their hearts to enable that obedience.

It's not that the people sat passively and God did all the

work. And it's not that God stood back and let the people do it on their own strength. Both are true at the same time. The people's choice and God's empowerment work together.

A Dated Turning Point

Then comes a specific date:

Haggai 1:15 BSB

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

This exact date marks a turning point. It's not vague. It's not "sometime soon." It's a specific day when the people came and began working on the house of the LORD.

For the returned community, this became a remembered moment. The day everything shifted. The day they stopped drifting and started building. The day they put God back at the center.

Part 3: What Made This Possible?

Why They Listened

You might wonder: why did Haggai's audience respond when so many other prophetic audiences didn't?

Part of it was timing. These were people who had already been broken by exile. They had lost everything once. They had been carried away from their land. They had seen their city destroyed. Many of them had died in captivity without ever seeing home again.

The survivors who made it back knew what it cost. They understood the weight of their choices. When God spoke through Haggai, they weren't in denial about their condition anymore.

But there's something else. Haggai's message was specific and doable. He didn't give them a complex theological puzzle to solve. He said: your life isn't working because you've made the wrong thing central. Here's what you need to do. Go rebuild the temple.

The people could see the truth in that. They could feel it in their daily frustration. And they could see a clear path forward.

The Power of United Response

What's remarkable about this moment is that it wasn't just

one person changing. It was the whole community moving together.

That's powerful. When leadership commits to change, and then everyone else sees that leadership is serious, it creates momentum. People start believing that this is actually going to happen. Cynicism breaks down. Hope starts building.

A single person repenting is beautiful. A whole community repenting together is transformative.

Part 4: The Mirror: Corporate Obedience

What Would It Look Like?

Imagine your church experiencing something like this. Imagine if:

Your leadership stood up and said, "We've drifted. We've let things become central that should be peripheral. We're going to change."

And then it wasn't just talk. Within days, the whole community started moving in a new direction together.

Maybe it's a shift toward generosity. Maybe it's a

commitment to prayer and seeking God before making decisions. Maybe it's a decision to prioritize reconciliation and unity. Maybe it's a renewed focus on mission and reaching people far from God.

And it doesn't happen because someone guilt-tripped you. It happens because leadership is honest about where you've gotten off track, and people see the truth of it and respond.

That's Haggai-like obedience.

Why We Hesitate

We're more used to a different pattern. Leadership talks, people ignore it. Or leadership talks, people listen for a while, then drift back. Or people listen, but they do it half-heartedly, with resentment.

Full-hearted, united, swift obedience is rare. Why?

Sometimes it's because we're not really convinced of the need to change. We know intellectually that our priorities are off, but we don't feel it yet.

Sometimes it's because we're waiting to see if leadership is really serious. If we've seen leaders back down before or change their minds, why commit?

Sometimes it's just inertia. We're tired. We're busy. Change

takes effort. It's easier to keep doing what we're doing.

But Haggai's people moved past all of that. They didn't wait for perfect conditions. They didn't wait to feel like it. They obeyed.

Part 5: The Promise for the Obedient

God Meets Obedience With Presence

Here's what we see in Haggai 1:12–15: when God's people respond to His word, His first gift is not success or prosperity. It's presence.

"I am with you."

That's the promise the obedient receive.

It doesn't mean life becomes easy. It doesn't mean opposition disappears. It doesn't mean the work becomes simple.

But it means you're not doing it alone. God shows up. He's in it with you.

The Stirring of the Spirit

The second thing that happens is God stirs their spirits internally. He gives them the motivation and courage they need to keep going.

This is what enables sustained obedience. It's not willpower. It's not gritting your teeth and pushing through. It's the Spirit of God moving in your heart to give you joy in the work and confidence in the promise.

Part 6: The Question for You

Haggai 1:12–15 invites a question: what would it take for us to respond like this?

Not to pretend to respond. Not to respond in our heads while our calendar and spending stay the same. But to actually pivot your life around what God is asking.

What's holding you back? Is it doubt that the change is necessary? Is it doubt that God will really be with you? Is it just inertia?

The people of Haggai's day found that when they obeyed, God met them. He stirred their spirits. He moved in their hearts.

The promise stands for you too.