



**Root Cause Analysis
Why No Blessing? Did you Forget Me?
Haggai 1:1-15**

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As we begin this new book, some will think I planned it, I did not. This just happens to be the next book in line.

The Holy Spirit planned it though. He knew we would be in the middle of launching Calvary Chapel Martin County and all of us would need the encouragement of Haggai.

Haggai, as led by the Lord, will conduct an analysis of what has been happening the last 16 years or so since the people returned from Babylon. He distills things down to the basics.

We all have chores at home to do don't we. The trash must go out, the lawn must be mowed, trees trimmed, and shrubs cut. Then there are those special projects we all seem to have, pressure wash the porch, fix the sink, or sinks in my case, upgrade the fans and lighting, get the storm windows all done. The list seems to go on and on. The problem though, is by the time you get an item done, a couple of more show up and there are those tasks that move to the bottom as we triage what is important versus urgent vs commanded by, she who must be obeyed. But do you ever find that some things just seem to always slip?

For those returning to Jerusalem after the exile, they had received support from Cyrus to rebuild the Temple as well as all the implements from the Temple that had been removed by Nebuchadnezzar.



The intent was to rebuild and re-establish Jerusalem as the place where Jews and Gentiles could go to worship YAHWEH.

But life, enemies, the enemy, and other things got in the way. Things began to slip.

Soon though, the interest in getting things done, well they became distracted by other things in their day-to-day life and became disinterested in the original reason for coming back...rebuilding the Temple. They were being lied to by others, and even the government stopped them for a short time.

They had the same thing happen to them that we see happen today. Have you ever noticed that when anyone wants to start a new work, launching a church for example, that everyone seems to come out of the woodwork in order to make sure it is not in my backyard.

I find this book rather prophetic to our current situation as we are in the process of launching a new church in Martin County and one of the things, we have encountered is that the community is all for it, just not in my shopping center. Not on my street. Not in my community center. Suddenly discovering that there is no available space for a church when there is tons of commercial space available. Welcome to the enemy's playbook – discouragement central.

When the nation returned to Jerusalem, they did so to rebuild the Temple where it had stood before, and they encountered opposition from the neighbors as well.

Ezra 4:4–5

“Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and **made them afraid to build and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose**, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.” (ESV)

The people of Jerusalem were actively lied to, gas lighted and discouraged by the enemy, and Satan used folks in the local community to do this. As we have discovered since announcing and starting a new church in Martin County; Satan's playbook has not really changed all that much over the centuries.

Here is the thing, if Satan can keep the doors closed long enough, he knows that those who were originally supporting it, will eventually lose interest. All he has to do is delay, delay, delay. Real estate agents not returning phone calls and ghosting us, and some who do get back to you, asserting positions that are, per the law, illegal to even give voice to yet they have no problem putting it into writing.

Welcome to Jerusalem post exile. Welcome to any new work or work where the Lord is doing something new and growing a church or ministry.

We have arrived at the book of Haggai, the second shortest book in the Bible behind Obadiah, third if you count only the 600 Hebrew words in it. It is also our first minor prophet post exile that we have run into as well. The landscape has changed rather dramatically.

The nation has endured many dead at the hands of Babylon as well as 70 years of exile. Babylon is no more, having been defeated by Cyrus the Great, king of Persia. As the result of a decree from Cyrus (Ezra 1:2-4), a group left Babylon and returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and reinstate offerings for the Lord (Ezra 1:1-11).

On the positive side, they no longer have an idolatry problem. Those who are there, wanted to be there. It was not a large number that initially went with Ezra back to Jerusalem, “The whole assembly together was 42,360, besides their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337, and they had 200 male and female singers. Their horses were 736, their mules were 245, their camels were 435, and their donkeys were 6,720.” (Ezra 2:64–67, ESV)



Others may have followed over the past 16 years; we are not told.

As they returned and began the work, the enemy attacked through discouragement, lies, and gas lighting.

They were already stepping out in faith simply in coming back. The intent was to rebuild the Temple, so discouraging them became the central strategy for Satan.

As we study this book, we will discover the things thrown at them are the same being thrown at us as we work towards making Calvary Chapel Martin County a reality. The enemy will marshal his forces to end the incursion into his territory, which means we must pray because he has already lost the war per Jesus.

For Haggai, the first problem to attack is the loss of interest by the leadership and the people. Disinterest is the theme attacked in chapter 1. The next page in the enemy's book is discouragement; that must be removed by the Lord and that is attacked in chapter 2:1-9.

Haggai will propose a two-pronged attack starting in Haggai 2:10. The immediate problem must be dealt with, and the solution provided is a long-term solution because the work is for the Lord.

For the people Haggai is talking to, they have been sitting on their hands for over 16 years now, don't expect a few months of work to solve the problem. God's blessings are not earned. They are not the results of brilliantly doing all the work, but they are grace gifts from God. Just be faithful.

The good news, as we will discover in our study, the nation will hear what he has to say and will indeed take up the work to finish the Temple.

Persia rules the world, or at least it did as Haggai begins his prophetic work. This will only cover 4 months.

Haggai is the first book in the minor prophets that comes after the 70-year exile of Judah in Babylon. We do not know if he is one of the returnees from Babylon or if he is a descendant of the poor who were left by Nebuchadnezzar.

"He is not mentioned in the list of homecomers in Ezra 2/Nehemiah 7, and he does not utter a single word suggesting any recollection of the exile (as Zechariah does, e.g., 1:14ff.; 2:6ff.; 6:15). On the other hand, he does show a lively interest in farming problems in his home country (1:6, 10f.; 2:16, 19). All this could suggest that he belonged to the country people who had remained at home, and that it was as such that he addressed Zerubbabel and Joshua, the governor and the high priest, who were the leaders of the people who had returned from exile." (Wolff 1988, 17)

Based on what we see in this book, his prophetic ministry lasts no more than 4 months. We also don't know his age at the time of his ministry, but he does say some things that make us wonder if he is over 70 years of age as he makes comments about the first temple as if he was an eyewitness to it.

Haggai was apparently born on a festival day since his name means "Festival of the LORD; festal; born of a festival day; (root = to keep a feast, with the idea of dancing; to dance; to leap with joy; to reel to and fro). My solemn feast." (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 92)

We are going to learn that Haggai is an encourager and motivator par excellence. Encouragement is one of those things that can be hard to do.

There are those times where all we need is a word of encouragement and a pat on the back to hang in there. Jesus exercised this when He washed His disciple's feet showing them how to lead and how to minister. He encouraged them this way.



Our problem is we tend to get frustrated at times and want the encouragement to instead be a swift kick in the pants, and there are times where that is appropriate, just ask Peter (Matthew 16:23). Haggai will give us a lesson on how encouragement and motivation is done, God's way. He will be brutally honest, and they truly need to hear what he says.

Fifteen years before, in 537 B.C., the exiles had celebrated their return by keeping a feast of Tabernacles in the ruins of the burntout Temple and had begun to rebuild it, but opposition and apathy soon halted any progress (Ezra 3:2–4:5). (Cundall 1974, 481)

The daily sacrifice had been restored; incense was being burned as required and the work had indeed begun to rebuild the Temple, but they had stopped. Ministry was taking place next to an incomplete shell.

In the years since the work had stopped, some things had taken place in the community. There had been crop failures, economic reversals and really bad weather and now Haggai shows up to tell them why that is the case. The intent they had expressed when they left Babylon, and with Persian support to boot, was to rebuild the Temple. God is reminding them of that.

We see a note about the ministry of Haggai and Zechariah in Ezra.

Ezra 5:1–2

“Now the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God that is in Jerusalem, and the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.” (ESV)

Ezra knew about their ministry. Thanks to Haggai, we know the exact date of his prophecy.

Haggai 1:1–2

“In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, “This is what the LORD of armies says: ‘This people says, “The time has not come, the time for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt.” ’ ” (NASB 2020)

It is the time of the gentiles. Dating is no longer geared to Jewish Kings or calendars. It is September of 520 BC.

The king to whom reference is here made is Darius Hystaspes, who reigned from 521 until 486 B.C. Therefore his second year is 520 B.C. (Verhoef 1987, 48)

The dating by Haggai is intentional. There was a promise that was made by Jeremiah, God is behind that dating and the prophecy.

“More pressingly, though, the date reminds us that from the perspective of the faithful among the Judean returnees, the clock was ticking on the seventy-year period Jeremiah had prophesied for the exile (Jer. 25:11–12).” Satan knows that which is why he is driving towards delaying the work. Paul will later identify this enemy for us. (Duguid 2010, 28)

Ephesians 6:12

“For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age.” (GNB)

We must never forget that even though it seems like it is a person or group who is blocking the work, they are being motivated by the unseen realm. The battle is supernatural which is why our best means of attack and success, is prayer.



Since Haggai is post-exile, we need to revisit the listing of the Minor Prophets.

Minor Prophets

- Hosea – Israel 748 – 686 BC
- Joel – Judah 835 – 796 BC
- Amos – Israel 786 – 746 BC
- Obadiah – Edom 848 – 841 BC
- Jonah – Assyria 771 – 754 BC
- Micah – Judah 750 – 686 BC
- Nahum – Assyria 661 BC
- Habakkuk – Judah 625 – 597 BC
- Zephaniah – Judah 640 – 608 BC
- **Haggai – Judah 520 BC**
- Zechariah – Judah 520 – 480 BC
- Malachi – Judah 455 – 432 BC

At the site of the Temple, on the first day of the month, it would be a new moon, a day of rest and celebration. The expectation would be for the people to be there to celebrate and that the leadership, Zerubbabel the civil governor and Joshua the High Priest, would be there.

It is on that festive day and location that Haggai makes his proclamation. He is speaking on behalf of the Lord and as he begins, he brings the word of the Lord as the prophet of God and he brings it to Zerubbabel and Joshua, personally.

The audience is the remnant. “These people were not at all like those who had lived in Israel and Judah previously. True, they were neglecting to build the temple, and this was serious in God’s sight. It was an indication that their spiritual priorities were not right. They were living for themselves rather than for God’s glory. But they were still the right people, living in the right place, wanting to do the right work for the right reasons.” (Boice 2002, 465)

Here is the picture for us. The Governor is with the High Priest in worship and celebration. Picture this, you and your family are at the Temple Mount celebrating the new month with your friends and neighbors. There is at least a space by the altar that has been cleared off for worship. Everything changes though when this older gentleman from out-of-town walks right up to you and the High Priest and says words that have not been heard for a while, “This is what the Lord of armies says.”

They both get it. This is not anything like pre-exile Judah.

Leading up to this, the Lord had been using economic hardship as an illustration of displeasure over the conduct of rebuilding. He also used drought as well as a means of communicating His message to the people. They need to get back to work.

Theologically the message is the fulfillment of the prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, and Isaiah concerning the restoration of Jerusalem. The message represents the reality of the restoration, including rebuilding during the circumstances of the Persian Empire and consequent to the persistent ideology of Jerusalem’s exalted status and God’s universal reign from Jerusalem. (Jacobs 2017, 28)

We get a list of the major players in verse 1.

Darius = A restrainer; governor. A possessor by succession. He that informs himself; a king. Investigation; the dwelling will be full of heaviness. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 58)



Haggai, we have already met.

Zerubbabel = An offspring of Babel; born at Babylon; dispersed or begotten in Babylon; scattered in Babylon; the dispersed in Babylon; (root = to sow seed). Melted by Babylon. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 251)

Shealtiel = I have asked of God. Same as Salathiel = I have asked for from God; I have asked God; ark or loan of God; (roots = [1] asked; [2] God). (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 216)

Judah = Praised; the LORD be praised; object of praise; praise of the LORD. He shall be praised. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 151)

Jeshua or rather Joshua = Jehovah is salvation; the LORD (is his) salvation; LORD of salvation; the LORD saves. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 150)

Jehozadak = The LORD has made just; Jehovah is just. (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 127)

There is a message of encouragement just in how the Holy Spirit had Haggai address everyone. Unpacking this we get:

In the second year of the restrainer, the word of the Lord came by the festival day to the offspring of Babylon, the Son asked for from God, the object of praise, the Lord saves. The Son the Lord has made, the High Priest. We get a picture of the coming king and His work. Echoed in Hebrews 7.

Hebrews 7:23–28

“There is another difference: there were many of those other priests, because they died and could not continue their work. But Jesus lives on for ever, and his work as priest does not pass on to someone else. And so he is able, now and always, to save those who come to God through him, because he lives for ever to plead with God for them. Jesus, then, is the High Priest that meets our needs. He is holy; he has no fault or sin in him; he has been set apart from sinners and raised above the heavens. He is not like other high priests; he does not need to offer sacrifices every day for his own sins first and then for the sins of the people. He offered one sacrifice, once and for all, when he offered himself. The Law of Moses appoints men who are imperfect to be high priests; but God’s promise made with the vow, which came later than the Law, appoints the Son, who has been made perfect for ever.” (GNB)

Before addressing the rebuilding of the Temple, in the names, Haggai has pointed to the one who is coming, who will make the Temple unnecessary. But for now, as you are returning, even though you knew God was indeed with you in Babylon, at present, because you have not done as you said, He is disciplining you so He can once again be with you.

As New Testament believers, we get this. We give our life to Jesus Christ and begin to enjoy sweet communion with Him through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we study His word, we learn there is something in our life that must be pruned back or removed entirely. If we say yes to that, fellowship continues, if we say no, we are still believers, but we have intentionally broken fellowship with Him by our sin of disobedience.

Here is something simple to remember, if you feel far away from the Lord and it is quiet, what was the last thing He said to do that you did not do?

James 4:13–17

“Look here, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.” How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it’s here a little while, then it’s gone. What you ought to say is, “If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.” Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious



plans, and all such boasting is evil. **Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.**" (NLT)

1 John 1: 9 is there for us. Repent, return and do. Just as we will see Haggai say.

Haggai continues with God's word to the Governor and the High Priest as he is now in the face of both of them.

Haggai 1:2-6

““This is what the LORD of armies says: ‘This people says, “The time has not come, the time for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt.” ’ ” Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, “Is it time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses while this house remains desolate?” Now then, the LORD of armies says this: “Consider your ways! You have sown much, only to harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but there is not enough for anyone to get warm; and the one who earns, earns wages to put into a money bag full of holes.”” (NASB 2020)

As Haggai begins to speak, he would be pointing to all the people gathered there on the Temple Mount to worship and celebrate as he relates what it is they are saying which has been heard by the Lord. They have been saying, since they now believe the narrative being spun by the enemy's servants in the surrounding communities, “the time to rebuild the Temple is not right now.”

One other thing, normally God would say my people, but He does not do that here. They are in disobedience, and worse, they are using a pious sounding excuse, ‘well right now is not a good time.’ When we listen to the enemy, it never will be.

This is one of the tactics of the enemy, keep repeating a lie to the point that it begins to sound like the truth. Meanwhile, lie to those wanting to do the work about their capability to even do so. Encourage them to questions their capabilities. “The time to rebuild is not now” is the result.

Many probably really do believe that. It simply is not God's will right now.

Have you ever heard, or even been the one saying, that it may not be the Lord's will? My hand is raised there with you.

Saying that it is the Lord's will to do this or not to do that is a Christian cliché that covers a multitude of sins. It is so easy, when things get hard and rough, to turn in a report to everyone that says, “The Lord wanted me to do something else.” (McGee 1997, 884)

Over the years, I have heard that way more than I want to. In the past I have prayed with and for ministries and those in them, absolutely convinced that the Holy Spirit was moving, yet when push comes to shove, what do you hear from them?

That may indeed be the case, it may not have been what the Lord wants; but then again how many have handed off things to others because “it was hard.” I know that I have prayed over this church and continually ask for confirmation about moving forward. He keeps confirming and we keep moving forward. He provides new dreams and visions, and we keep moving forward.

But when we begin to see the problem and cease believing what we have been promised, then we delay, or even try to give God a hand, like Abram did after being promised a son. Abram's way is still a problem for God's people even today. Our goal, wait on the Lord.

Micah 7:7

“Therefore I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me.” (NKJV)



How many times do we get sucked into the lie of the enemy and turn away from what He wants us to do?

We need a Haggai in our life. What Haggai will say is a bit like pulling tape off your arm suddenly. It has to come off, but it might just be a bit uncomfortable to do.

Haggai points out the problem, since returning, they have built real nice homes for themselves. Not only comfortable, but wood paneled to boot. How could you do that if it was as bad as you are saying?

Having paneling in your home was a sign of luxury. This is no longer a subsistence culture as it was at the very beginning, it is one that is established and becoming comfortable.

If they themselves lived comfortably in wainscoted houses, their civil and political condition could not be so oppressive, that they could find in that a sufficient excuse for neglecting to build the temple. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 475)

A new man is on the throne, the political issues of the past are simply that, the past. Why not rebuild? Those issues you have believed were real blocks, simply aren't. Can we say the h word – hypocrites. Ouch.

Haggai is not done asking questions yet.

Haggai engages a bit with the people. He asks them to look at their own life today, how is it going these days? Have you noticed that the crop yields keep going down. It seems like the ground just isn't like it used to be, and have you seen the cost of food in the supermarket?

You have nice homes, but no one is truly food secure these days. Wine still seems to be short and there never seemed to be enough wool to make anything anymore. Since everything seems to cost more, have wages kept up with inflation?

God is disciplining His people.

As all these various problems began to show up in the culture, did anyone put two and two together to produce the simple fact that God was trying to lovingly get their attention? "All their efforts at farming and wage-earning availed nothing because they had not put the Lord first." (Lindsey 1985, 1539)

What about our culture today? How are things going in those areas of our nation that have been celebrating sin this past month?

Leviticus 26:18–20

"And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins, and I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit." (ESV)

The Lord was disciplining His people, and Haggai is there to remind them and encourage them to go back to what they intended to do originally, rebuild the Temple.

The house was the outward form of the real presence of the Lord among his people. To refuse to build the house was at best saying that it did not matter whether the Lord was present with them. At worst it was presuming on divine grace, that the Lord would live with his people even though they willfully refused to fulfill the condition of his indwelling that he had laid down. It amounted to seeking grace but refusing the means of grace. Not to build the house was not to want the Lord as and for himself. (Motyer 2009, 974)



Haggai 1:7–11

“The LORD of armies says this: “Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains, bring wood, and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be honored,” says the LORD. “You start an ambitious project, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?” declares the LORD of armies. “It is because of My house which remains desolate, while each of you runs to his own house. Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. And I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on mankind, on cattle, and on all the products of the labor of your hands.”” (NASB 2020)

Haggai is not done talking to the people yet. Since returning to Jerusalem, they have been engaged in many different projects to restore the city. He encourages teams to go to the mountains and harvest wood to rebuild the Temple.

The Lord is trying to help them understand why they have been having some of the crop problems and economic problems. Here He asks them to reflect on their situation, connecting the thoughts with what He has said previously. They do already have some lumber for the job that Cyrus helped to provide for.

Ezra 3:7

“So they gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the Sidonians and the Tyrians to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the grant that they had from King Cyrus of Persia.” (NRSVue)

As Haggai is talking to them, he may be pointing to the lumber sitting there ready to be used, but nothing has been done to build the necessary scaffolding, ramps, ladders and other materials needed for construction to start.

God’s heart is to bless the people, but obedience must be part of the equation. He ties it together, “rebuild the temple that I might be pleased with it and be honored.”

In short, Haggai is saying, “Give God the supreme place in your life.” God would then be honored in the worship of His people. A heart attitude of obedience would have shown worship and gratitude on their part, thus glorifying God. God made it quite plain just how He could be glorified. The Babylonian Talmud indicated that five things were lacking in the Temple of Zerubbabel which were present in the Temple of Solomon: (1) the Ark of the Covenant; (2) the holy fire; (3) the Shekinah glory; (4) the spirit of prophecy (the Holy Spirit); and (5) the Urim and Thummim. Whatever may have been lacking, God promises His blessing will be present. (Feinberg 1990, 240)

In today’s vernacular we would hear, the building materials have all been delivered, now repent and then get down to Home Depot or Ace or Lowes or wherever your source ladders, lifts scaffolds and construction tools from and get started.

Because that has not happened, let’s review some of the latest issues you have seen.

All those new projects in town never seem to be finished on time, do they? And worse, they all seem to blow away in the very next storm that comes through.

Why is that? Now the Lord drops both shoes at once...”it is because My house which remains desolate.”

Why is there a drought, why is agricultural production down, why is there not enough, simple, because you have not finished what you promised. In other words, you are now in the world of Leviticus 26:18-20.

Zerubbabel and Joshua have been listening to all this very carefully.



The analysis has drilled down to the root cause of the problem, faithlessness.

The root cause is the people believed a lie and made it their own. Now they have all been reminded about why it is they made the trip from Babylon 16 years ago in the first place.

Haggai was successful in his mission. He not only spoke the truth to those who needed to hear it, their hearts were soft, and they did indeed hear him. They repented from their faithlessness, and they turned back to the work. They, the remnant, fully recognized God's justice in judging them for their faithlessness.

Haggai 1:12–15

“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, just as the LORD their God had sent him. And the people showed reverence for the LORD. Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke by the commission of the LORD to the people, saying, ‘I am with you,’ declares the LORD.” 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 armies, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.” (NASB 2020)

Those who are listening to Haggai, the Governor, the High Priest and the people, all were listening. Again, this is the remnant, this group of people wanted to be back in the land, they wanted to rebuild the Temple. They have all been reminded of the way it was when they first determined to follow the Lord in the work and become part of the group with Ezra to trust the Lord and even reject military support.

The people clearly hear the voice of YAHWEH in what it was Haggai said. “They recognized the voice of God in Haggai, listened to him as a messenger from Him, and moved by a holy fear, immediately resumed the long suspended work of the temple.” (Moore 1856, 63-64)

The people did two things. They obeyed God. No discussion, no thinking about, they heard God's word and obeyed. In doing so, in their repentance, they were fearing God, or rather showing Him the reverence, He is due.

Or to put it more clearly, they obeyed and offered sacrifices of repentance and moved forward to putting together a detailed work plan. The first to obey, were the leadership of the nation, and the people followed the examples of their leadership. We need people like that today. William “Gladstone, the great English jurist, was asked what was the mark of a great statesman. He gave this answer: “A great statesman is a man who knows the direction God is moving for the next fifty years.”” (McGee, Love, Liberation & the Law: The Ten Commandments 1995, 31)

In verse 13, because the message had been received from the Prophet, we see a different title now for Haggai in verse...messenger of the Lord. Because God's people have responded in obedience and turned their hearts toward the Lord, Haggai has good news for them. YAHWEH is turning back towards them as well.

The terms being used about Haggai also reflect that he has been with God in the Divine Council, just like the prophets before had been. He is God's messenger and the message he is bringing them now is good news. God is with them. The support they need to do the work and now received assurance from YAHWEH.

The thing is, they had His assurance before. The people listened to and believed the lies they were told and became disillusioned, but that has now been set right. God is with them in this task.



Now we see the transformation that is brought about by a renewed faith in God. The perspective of the leadership and the people have shifted from being their own based on what they could see and hear, to that of God. It is now His view they are seeking to fulfill. God expected them to do this. Does God need them to do this, not really, He could us anyone.

The same goes for us as we serve Him every day. Could God use someone else, yes, but He has called you to do things only you can do. I find that amazing to stop and mediate on, God gives each of us tasks to do as we follow Him, He then enables us to do those tasks and they are individualized by God, just for you and me.

Jonah learned about that the hard way. God say go to Nineveh and he said no, find someone else. God had a job specifically for Jonah and only Jonah. Jonah resisted but wound-up obeying and going.

We see something similar here. The difference is, they began with the job on their hearts at the beginning, but Satan distracted them.

We do the same, not always, but it continues to be something we deal with. Some of us flat say no and then God “persuades” us through discipline and we yield to Him. Some of us say yes, but then get distracted by other things. Life gets in the way of ministry and soon we are sitting on the sideline wondering what happened.

If you are sitting on the sideline right now, the solution is simple, just do what the remnant did.

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (NKJV)

Confess the unbelief or disobedience to the Lord, repent, and then, get moving.

Haggai 1:14–15

“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 armies, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.” (NASB 2020)

The whole community, the leaders and all the remnant of the people change perspective from their own to Yahweh’s (cf. Hag 1:12). Second, the community’s transformation consists of responding to Yahweh’s expectation to build the temple—the house of Yahweh of hosts their God (bəbêt-yhwh šəbā’ôt ’ēlōhêhem; cf. Hag 1:2, 4, 8, 9). This section then portrays the success of Yahweh’s effort versus the people’s effort to resist. (Jacobs 2017, 66)

23 days have gone by. In a little over 3 weeks, the people have put together the plan, set up the work teams, supervision and the logistics required to get the job done, and they have now started.

So much for the delays, disinterest and discouragement. Things changed and did so quickly. God is with them, He always was, but now Haggai has encouraged them of that.



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