

Mini Study – Haggai (part 2 of 3)

Keep Going

KEEP GOING. That is the message of the prophet Haggai to a people who had become disheartened in their labour for the LORD and doubtful of His presence with them. And the word of the LORD to them has much to say to encourage any of us who also have become discouraged in the work of God's Kingdom and are tempted to just give up.

OBSERVE

READ Haggai 2:1-3 (Scripture text at back of study) and:

- put a clock symbol beside every *date reference*.
- circle every reference to *house (including pronouns)*.

DISCUSS

V1-2 – When did Haggai declare his *second word* from the Lord? To whom?

V3 – What do we learn from the LORD's questions about why the rebuilding of the temple was in danger of stopping or had stopped?

SEVENTH MONTH

The prophet Haggai declared his second word from the LORD on the *twenty-first day* of the *seventh month*, just under a month since the rebuilding of the temple had restarted, on the seventh day of the Feast of Booths (Sukkot) – one of three great feasts when all the people gathered in Jerusalem. A festival which began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month after the harvest had been gathered in (which would have been poor that year) and continued for seven days, during which time the LORD commanded His people to dwell in booths to remember how after redeeming them with a mighty hand out of slavery in Egypt He had provided for them as they dwelt in booths in the wilderness (Leviticus 23:33-43).

The seventh month was also when another important event in Israel's history would come to mind – the dedication of the former temple, an earth-shattering moment when the LORD filled the magnificently looking temple with His glory (1 Kings 8:1-11).

OBSERVE

READ Haggai 2:4-5 and:

- underline every *command of the LORD*.
- circle the phrases *I am with you / My Spirit remains in your midst*.

DISCUSS

V4-5 – What *three commands* does the LORD give them?

How does the LORD encourage them to do so? According to what?

What would the Spirit's presence and power in their midst guarantee (see Zechariah 4:6-10)?

OBSERVE

READ Haggai 2:6-9 and:

- underline every reference to *shake*.
- circle every reference to *house (including synonyms)*.

DISCUSS

V6-7 – What will the LORD of hosts do? Why?

What do we learn from this about the LORD of hosts?

V8 – Who provides the resources we need to abound in every good work?

V9 – What promises does the LORD make regarding His house?

SHAKING & FILLING

In Haggai 2:6-7 there is a whole lot of shaking going on – shaking that speaks of God's action on behalf of His people delivering them from their enemies and providing for them in the work He has called them to do. An immediate fulfillment of which we see in Haggai's day when King Darius of Persia provided for the rebuilding work from the royal revenue (Ezra 6:6-12), much like the Egyptians provided for God's people during their exodus from Egypt, underscoring the fact of God's sovereignty over the nations, indeed all things, and who without fail supplies the resources needed for the work of His Kingdom (Haggai 2:8).

However, as well immediate fulfilment in Haggai's day these verses also point to a future day when the LORD of hosts will shake not only the earth but the heavens at His return (Hebrews 12:25-29) – the great day of the LORD spoken of by the prophets when only those who are in God's Kingdom will be secure from His judgement and who will dwell forever with Him in a new heaven and a new earth, a place of perfect peace, where the glory will not come from a physical temple, but the LORD Himself, our temple, whom we will behold face-to-face and into whose image we will be fully and finally transformed. Oh, what a glorious day!! (Haggai 2:9; Zephaniah 1:14-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 2 Peter 3:8-13; Revelation 21:1-4,22-27; 22:1-5).

REFLECT

It's easy to get discouraged in the Christian life – isn't it? Whether that be frustration with our growth in godliness, tripped up repeatedly by the same besetting sin, or work for the LORD that seems in our eyes to be impossible or insignificant; tempted to just give up.

However, in our despair the message of Haggai 2:1-9 is an encouragement to keep going. That no labour for the LORD, however small in our eyes, is ever in vain. And as those called by God to the work of His Kingdom, He will supply what we need, indwelling and empowering us by the Spirit to live and serve Him, and whose work in and through us He will one day complete, to the praise of His glory and grace.

RESPOND

Here are just a few questions to help you further reflect and respond to the truth of God's Word you have discovered through this study:

- What is discouraging you as you seek to serve and follow Christ? Take it God in prayer, asking Him by the Spirit to encourage your heart with the truth you have learnt from His Word and the strength to live in the light of it.
- Who do you know that needs encouraged to keep going? Why not share the truth you've discovered through this study with them?

(1) Haggai 2:1-3

2 In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, ²“Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, ³“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?

(2) Haggai 2:4-5

⁴Yet 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, ⁵according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

(3) Zechariah 4:6-10

⁶Then he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts. ⁷Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’” ⁸Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ⁹“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. ¹⁰For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.

(4) Haggai 2:6-9

⁶For 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. ⁷And 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. ⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts. ⁹The 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.”