

Haggai's Message

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[0 : 00] Next week, we're going to be going to the book of Zechariah, but this week we're going to not abandon his people. I don't know about you, but there's been times I've wondered about that in my life, and other times I wish that, you know, if this is God's attention, perhaps he could share that with someone else, but God has not, nor will he ever abandon us. To get started, today I'm going to give you a little bit of background on what's going on. We're talking a little bit about Cyrus the Great. Wouldn't it be awesome if that was your name, you know, Todd the Great, you know, and all through history they knew you as the great, you know, like, what is his name, the great man, you know, whatever. Cyrus the Great, he was king, and he ordered that the temple be rebuilt in the year 538 BC, and he died. I know that that's how most stories end, and he died, but he died. And do you know what happened after he died? Ta-da! His son, the son of Cyrus the Great, this dude, he ruled.

And he actually did a fairly good job of taking care of the empire that his dad, Cyrus the Great, had established, and he was expanding it. And this depicts him on one of his trips into Egypt, where he was expanding the frontier. As he was on his military expansion tour, he got word that things were not right back home, and so he turned around and headed back. And he died, okay? And which brought up his son, kind of. You see, while he was on his expansion tour, his son was murdered. And the people who murdered him had somebody that looked like him, then they put him on the throne thinking, man, we can just pull this off because they look alike, right? And it worked for a month or so.

And then Darius the Great shows up. Darius was a general who rose to power by a coup, by disposing a usurper to the throne, okay? Interesting story involving political intrigue, riding horses at sunrise and waiting for the first one to nay. There was a bunch of generals, I think it was seven of them that got together and got rid of the usurper through the throne, and they didn't know who should rule. One of the guys said, I'm not doing it. But the others were like, oh, I want to be king. King sounds good. And so they said, I know what we'll do. We'll all get on our horse. We'll all be here. And the first horse to nay after the rising of the sun will have been ordained by the gods to be the king. Darius cheated and won. Just throwing it out there, just a little historical. But the thing is, if we take a look at Cyrus the Great, in 538, he ordered that the kingdom, that the temple in Jerusalem be rebuilt.

In 520, Darius the Great was ruling the Persian Empire and the temple had yet to be rebuilt. The people had been in the land, the people had begun building their own homes, and they had not really done much for the temple of Jehovah. That's the basic background for the book of Haggai.

[4 : 21] And so we're going to take a look at...it's an incredibly long book, all of two chapters. And we're not going to read all of it, but we really could. It's a very specific book, though, and you'll see as we go into this. So here we go. Let's start with this. Do what's right.

Consider your ways. Let's take a look at Haggai chapter 1, beginning in verse 1. In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, and if you'll notice, I've got a first day of the sixth month, and we're going to go all of these, all of this book, all of this prophecy happens in the year 520, during the reign of Darius.

So just so you know, in the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai, the prophet of Zerubbabel to the son of governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of the high priest.

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 time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now therefore consider, 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 in a bag with holes. Thus, says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house that I may take pleasure in it, that I may be glorified, says the Lord. You looked for much and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. And the whole point here is you need to stop doing this and start taking a look at what it is that you are doing. Consider your ways.

Now, correct me if I'm wrong. Show of hands here. How many people like to get paid for what they do?

[7 : 17] I'm looking for people to mow my lawn, so if you didn't raise your hand, you'll be getting a phone call. People are like, no. We all like that. I'm reading through this.

There's no promise that things are going to change from the Lord right now. Verse, let's see. Verse three.

The word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet. Is it time for you to dwell in your houses, in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. You've sown much and harvested little. All God is doing is pointing out that you've got a nice home, I've got nothing, and you're not making any profits. There's no, if you change your ways, this is what I'm going to do. It's just, look, you're living nice, I have nothing, and therefore, you're really not getting very much ahead, are you?

That's what it is. That's what it says. But then take a look. Let's read a little bit further. Verse 12. Then Zerubbabel, the son of, and Joshua, the son of 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. Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke to the people with the Lord's message. I am with you, declares the Lord. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of 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, on the 24th day of the month, in the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king. So on the first day of the sixth month, God challenges them all, hey, think about what you're doing. And the people are starting to, you know, do something. And God then on the 24th day, I think that's just over three weeks, isn't it? About three weeks later, God says, hey, look, you're starting to do things. I'm with you. That's it. That's the promise.

Oh, but look what happens as we read on. Speak now. Let's see. Oh yeah. In the seventh month, on the 21st day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai, the prophet.

[9 : 59] Speak now to Zerubbabel and to Joshua. And who is left among you who saw the house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes? We read in the Chronicles that when the people came back from the captive Babylonians and they laid the temple foundation, all the people who remembered the former temple cried because what had been was so much more glorious. And what they were seeing now was just like, okay. How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?

In your eyes? Yet now be strong. Oh, Zerubbabel declares the Lord. Be strong. Oh, Joshua, son of 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 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, and I will shake all the nations so that all the treasures of the nation shall come in, and I shall fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine and the gold is mine, declared the Lord of hosts.

Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho. Now, I just want to start off with this. The message started off with, hey, think about what you're doing. All right? You're taking care of yourself. You're not doing what you need to be doing. And how's that working out for you? People start to think about it, and they start to get motivated. God's like, I'm with you. People start putting things together, and God says, by the way, in just a little bit, I'm going to shake the four corners of the earth so that the wealth falls out and falls in and fills this temple. I don't know about you. I wasn't too thrilled if I was an Israelite here in the first one. I'd feel a lot better here in the second one. But here in the third one, I think of the cartoons of my childhood with the dollar signs rolling around in the eyes, you know, ching, ching, ching, ching, ching. I think that they were like, wait a minute, there's a reward for doing what's right? I'm on it. Just saying, this is what it says.

You know we're not Israelites, right? You know this isn't our prophecy, right? I mean, don't get me wrong. I'd love it if it was, but we're not Jews. We're not Israelites. And so he doesn't promise to

shake the corners of the earth to fill Cascade Mountain Bible Church with wealth. Darn it. But there's still a couple of things we can learn here. All right. Number two, a legal question pops up. I don't know about you, not really thrilled about legal questions, but it's in here. We're going to pick it up in verse, what is it? 10.

[13 : 15] Turn the page. On the 24th day of the ninth month in the second year of Darius, we're still in the second year, the whole book's in the second year. The word of the Lord came to Haggai the prophet.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, ask the priests about the law. If someone carries holy meat, in the fold of his garment and touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy? Okay. Okay. Okay.

They had ceremonial laws and certain types of food, especially for the priests were considered holy. Food that had been offered for sacrifice in the priestly portion. That's a holy portion.

It is special. It is only for the priests and they're carrying it in their pouch. I don't know why that's just, I don't know why they didn't go down and get an igloo, maybe, you know, and stick it in the cooler and carry it home, but they carried it. They were just made a fold in there. But the thing is they'd be walking along and if it brushed up against something, did the holiness from this impact that? That's the question. Did, you know, it's like rubbing the little suit. Could you rub on it and get some holiness from it? That's the question. If someone, let's see, let's see.

If it touches any kind of food, does it become holy? And the priest answered him and said, no, the holiness does not transfer. Then Haggai said, if someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean? And the priest answered and said, oh yeah, it does become unclean. So, so, so here's the thing. Question. If you take something that's holy and you rub something with it, does the holiness transfer? No. But if you've got something, I don't know, dead carcass that you're trying to clear out of your field, right? And you rub it on something, does that transfer the uncleanness? And the answer is, duh. Yeah. Okay. So that's the legal question.

[15 : 53] Then Haggai answered and said, so it is with this people and with the nation before me, declares the Lord. Here's the problem. And this is a problem for everybody. Sin spreads.

Righteousness doesn't spread that way. See, the uncleanness multiplies and multiplies and multiplies. And it does so just by contact. I mean, the idea of just rubbing up against something and it suddenly becomes unclean versus holiness casual, it is not multiplied casually. Unrighteousness, unfilthiness, sin, multiplies just, I mean, it never needs to have fertilizer. It multiplies on its own versus holiness takes work. And here's the problem.

Verse 14. So it is with this people and with this nation before me, declares the Lord, so that with every work of their hands and what they offer, there is unclean.

The sin and uncleanness is multiplying because they did not have a temple to get ceremonially clean. There was a right way to get things clean and it required a temple with the sacrifices and the offerings and the priests doing their job. And because they had built a temple, there was no way for them to get clean, which meant all they are doing is increasing the filth. All they're doing is making things worse.

Let's read on. Now then, consider from this day onward, the day that they were beginning to build the temple, the day they were getting on and doing what they're supposed to be doing. Consider from this day onward.

Before the stone was placed upon a stone in the temple of the Lord, how did you fare? When one came to a heap of 20 measures, there was but 10. When one came to the wine vat to draw 50 measures, there were 20. I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail, yet you did not turn to me, declares the Lord. But consider from this day onward, from the 24th day of the ninth month, since the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider, is there seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig, the pomegranate, and the olive oil has yielded nothing. But from this day onward, I will bless you.

[19 : 04] How cool is that? He's like, look, stop and take a think about what you've been doing. You've been trying to build yourself up and ignore me, and how's that working out for you?

But now that you have laid the foundation, from this day forward, I will bless you. Pretty cool, right? Nice.

Again, it's not about us, it's about them. But then there's one more thing that I just... Take a look at this last little bit.

Verse 20. The word of the Lord came a second time on the 24th day of the month. Speak to Zerubbabel, the governor, saying, I'm about to shake the heavens and the earth, and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms.

I'm about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and the riders. And the horses and the riders shall go down, everyone by the sword of his brother.

[20 : 07] On that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of... declares the Lord. And I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, declares the Lord.

Okay, so God's about to act. And he has chosen the king as a signet ring. All of this is directed specifically to the Israelites who returned from the captivity, who were living, trying to serve themselves, trying to build up their own personal wealth, trying to take care of their business, but ignoring the business of God.

And so Haggai comes and delivers these challenges, these words, and things change, and things got better.

In fact, in less than five years, the temple was finished. They'd been over a decade with it just sitting there. And after Haggai, in less than five years, the temple was finished.

Okay? Okay? So what? Let's be honest.

[21 : 29] It's not written to me. It's not written to you. It's not written about us. So why are we reading this? Because it's the next book in the... No, no, no. No, no, no. All Scripture is given by God.

And it is useful for correction and instruction, teaching and righteousness, that we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. That means that as we read this, there are principles, there are things that we can take from this.

And I've got to be honest. As I read this really short book, one of my all-time favorite Bible historically accurate accounts came to mind. And we're going to talk about that in a minute.

But there's some application that we can make from this. All right? There's some things that, even though this book wasn't written to us, there are some things that we can sit on the sideline and learn from.

Number one, do the work of God. Do the work of God.

[22 : 39] I'll be honest with you. We're really good at focusing at our own stuff. We're really focusing at taking care of this. And maybe even taking care of this. But every now and then we need to be reminded to do the work of God.

Ephesians 2, verse 8 and 9. For by grace you have been saved through faith. That is not of yourselves. It is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. A lot of people know that. Verse 10 seems to fly underneath the radar.

For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which He before ordained that we should work.

That was terribly misquoted. Please don't fire me. We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do the work of God.

Do the work of God. God, you're sitting at home and you're flipping through the channels and you're thinking, what can I do? You can stop and you can say a prayer.

[23 : 46] And not just a prayer, but you can actually take time and pray for this church, for me, for the people here, and for our impact in our community.

We live in a godless society. Or an ungodly society. We live in a world that has turned its back on our heritage. We live in a world that is hell-bent and hell-bound.

We are on the front lines. Pray that as we live our lives for God, that people will see that and respond. Pray that we will have wisdom in how to share the gospel.

And that people will receive it in love and in grace. Pray that we will receive it in love and in love and in love and in love and in love and in love. Call somebody. Pick up the telephone and call somebody.

When you're out driving around doing your business, doing whatever, live for the Lord. We've got some first-time visitors here, some people that are unfamiliar with me.

[24 : 56] I apologize greatly. But look around. I think we've got plenty of room for more people to join us.

Can I get an amen? And then look around. Are there people that need to be here? Amen.

Let us do the work of God. Also in the book of Ephesians. And if you haven't, turn to Ephesians. I want you to read this one so that you can see it for yourself. Ephesians 1, verse 4. This is written about us.

This is written to us. This is a verse that applies to us. And in Ephesians 1, verse 4, we write, Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

[26 : 00] Do you understand that God knew that you would be born? God knew that you would live. God knew that you would suffer the torment of listening to Pastor James preach on the 26th of April, 2026.

God knew that was going to happen. He chose you in Him before the very foundation of the world to know Him. You're not random.

You're not here accidentally. You're not just here because you've got a flat tire, though you may be. You may be here for whatever reason.

But it's not accidental. Before God created anything, He had a plan for you. Now, if you'll notice, I did the first point and I did the third point.

I skipped over the second point. Anybody notice that? Do you notice it now? Hopefully you notice that. Because the second point is my favorite.

[27 : 11] There is something happening there that's just awesome. You remember, the second point was a legal question.

If something that is holy rubs up against something, does it transfer holiness? And what was the answer? No. If something was not clean and it rubbed up against something, did it make that other thing unclean?

The answer was absolutely. Turn in your Bibles to the Gospel of Mark. I don't have this written down in my notes.

Is it on the board? It's on the board. Yeah. Mark chapter 5. Mark 5.

Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. There it is.

[28 : 13] We're going to be picking it up in verse 21. Here's the story. Jesus has begun his earthly ministry. He's got his disciples. And he's going around the region of Galilee. And he's teaching.

And he's doing miracles. And all this stuff is going on. And there's this guy who's got a sick kid. And Jesus is going to go heal the sick kid. Right? Basic outline. Here we go. Verse 21.

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him. And he was beside the sea.

Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name. And seeing him, fell at his feet and implored him earnestly, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death.

Come lay your hands on her so that she may be well and live. And he went with him. So you got it? But Jesus is traveling around the Sea of Galilee. Shows up.

[29 : 07] All these people are like, Look, it's Jesus. And this religious leader whose daughter is sick comes up and begs Jesus to go heal. Right? And Jesus said, No, I don't got time for you.

Starbucks is special going on. No, he's going to go do it. Right? And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him.

What does that mean? What does it mean that the great crowd was thronging about him? You ever seen that?

You ever seen a great crowd of people thronging around someone? They want to touch. They want to see. I touched him. I saw him. He was right there.

And the people are getting in his way so that he's got to go around them. People are like, All over Jesus, you know. It's an exciting thing for them to be near the man.

[30 : 07] And there was a woman who'd had a discharge of blood for 12 years.

By the way, that means she was ceremonially unclean. That means that every person she touched in that crowd was ceremonially unclean.

That means for 12 years she could not participate in the religious services. She was an outcast. She was pariah. She had to let everybody know that she was ceremonially unclean because uncleanness transfers.

You've got to think about this. This woman was ostracized. And everybody knew about it because she'd gone to every doctor she could find.

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