

Haggai 1:7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Consider your ways!'"

### **Course Text: Haggai**

The prophet Haggai is well known to us and his work and ministry is a beautiful work showing the loving hand of God. The Jewish people have been taken into captivity and reduced to a remnant. They are now allowed to return to their land by King Cyrus. They have returned and begun a vigorous rebuilding of their homes. However, they have not been enthusiastic about rebuilding the Temple or their worship to God. The prophet Haggai begins to speak to them in 520 B.C. about their need to rebuild the temple, and be faithful to God.

### **Rebuild the Temple**



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### **Suggested methodology:**

1. Let the students have a copy of the lesson well before the class meets. (Perhaps the previous meeting)
2. The students read the Bible book and answer the questions in this lesson before the group meets.
3. At the class meeting allow time for greetings and fellowship. (Save most of this for the end)
4. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
5. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
6. Discuss the questions on page 7. Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers, when provided, are just one opinion; you may have a better answer. It might be good to establish the norm that only those who have actually read the book should discuss it aloud.
7. Discuss whatever other questions people have on their mind about the Haggai.
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, this class is expected to take about two hours.

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## Haggai Discourses 1 & 2

Rather than study this book by chapter we are going to study it by the four times mentioned in the book.

**In the first discourse** (chapter 1) the Lord challenges the people to think carefully about their relationship with God, and their lack of blessings since they have returned from captivity. They are told to go to work constructing the Temple of the Lord, and are told that the reason for their lack of success is their own lack of faithfulness to God. Please read Haggai 1:1-15 and answer the following questions:

[1A] What season of the year was it when this happened? \_\_\_\_\_

[1B] What happens to their earnings? \_\_\_\_\_

[1C] What do they need to consider? \_\_\_\_\_

[1D] What is the result expected from a completed temple? \_\_\_\_\_

[1E] What has the sky withheld? \_\_\_\_\_

[1F] Who called a drought on the land? \_\_\_\_\_



### **You have sown much, but harvest little**

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**In the second discourse** the prophet speaks to the governor and high priest about the temple and the poor appearance of what used to be such an impressive structure. In fact the Lord says "does it seem to you like nothing." He goes on to say, "The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house." The text certainly raises the issue of whether glory is in the eyes of God or in the eyes of men. Please read Haggai 2:1-9 and answer the following questions:

[2A] What season of the year was it when this happened? \_\_\_\_\_

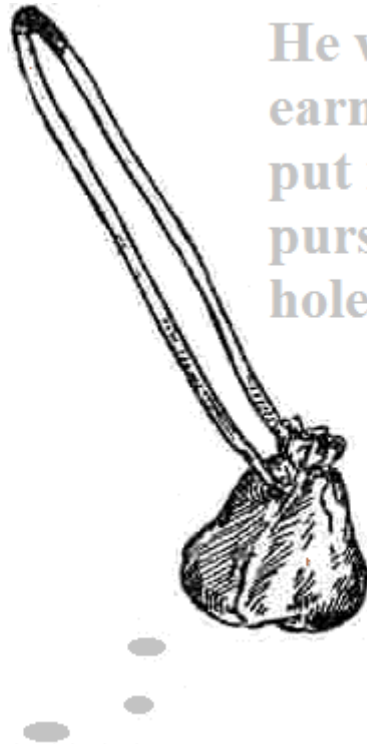
[2B] Who was the governor of Judah? \_\_\_\_\_

[2C] Who was the high priest? \_\_\_\_\_

[2D] Of what two things does the Lord of Hosts declare "these are mine." ? \_\_\_\_\_

----- ANSWERS -----

- [1A] What season of the year was it when this happened? Late summer Hg 1:1 and Hg 1:15 make it the 6<sup>th</sup> month which is the last of August and first of September. (See chart on page 6.)
- [1B] What happens to their earnings? They are put in a leaky purse and are lost. Hg 1:6
- [1C] What do they need to consider? Their ways Hg 1:5 and 7
- [1D] What is the result expected from a completed temple? God is pleased and glorified Hg 1:8
- [1E] What has the sky withheld? Its dew Hg 1:10
- [1F] Who called a drought on the land? The Lord Hg 1:11



He who earns,  
earns wages to  
put into a  
purse with  
holes.

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- [2A] What season of the year was it when this happened? Early Fall Hg 2:1 make it late in the 7<sup>th</sup> month which is October. (See chart on first page.)
- [2B] Who was the governor of Judah? Zerubbabel Hg 2:2
- [2C] Who was the high priest? Joshua son of Jehozadek Hg 2:2 & 2:4
- [2D] Of what two things does the Lord of Hosts declare "these are mine." Gold and silver Hg 2:8

## Haggai Discourses 3 & 4

**In the third discourse** he addresses the worship and sacrifice of the remnant who have returned and explains that man can expect failure when he seeks to give God second best or to put God in second place. The final line is promise to those who would put God first. Please read Haggai 2:10-19 and answer the following questions:

- [3A] What season of the year was it when this happened? \_\_\_\_\_
- [3B] True or False A holy thing touching something will make it holy. Hg 2:12 \_\_\_\_\_
- [3C] True or False An unclean thing touching something will make it unclean. Hg 2:13 \_\_\_\_\_
- [3D] What does God promise to do from this day on? \_\_\_\_\_



**“If one who is unclean from a corpse touches any of these, will the latter become unclean?” And the priests answered, “It will become unclean.”**  
**Haggai 2:13**

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**The final discourse** speaks of the Lord shaking the heavens and the earth to accomplish his purpose. The Lord has a plan that involves Zerubbabel and he speaks a little of that plan. This is a wonderful little book and the messages ring of man's need to be faithful to the Lord in all our ways. The blessings that the Lord provides to his faithful are wonderful. Please read Haggai 2:20-23 and answer the following questions:

- [4A] How much time has elapsed since the beginning of the book? \_\_\_\_\_
- [4B] What did God tell Zerubbabel he was going to shake? \_\_\_\_\_

----- ANSWERS -----

- [3A] What season of the year was it when this happened? Late Fall Hg 2:10 & 18 makes it late in the 9<sup>th</sup> month which is early December. (See chart on page 6)
- [3B] False A holy thing touching something will make it holy. Hg 2:12
- [3C] True An unclean thing touching something will make it unclean. Hg 2:13
- [3D] What does God promise to do from this day on? Bless them Hg 2:19
  
- [4A] How much time has elapsed since the beginning of the book? Almost 4 months or about 16 weeks or if you want to be more exact, 112 or 113 days. Hg 1:1 is on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month. Hg 2:20 is the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the ninth month. 29 days in the 6<sup>th</sup> month + 30 days in the 7<sup>th</sup> month + 29 or 30 days in the 8<sup>th</sup> month + 24 days in the ninth month all in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius. That adds up to about 112 or 113 days. (See chart below.)
- [4B] What did God tell Zerubbabel he was going to shake? The heavens and the earth Hg 2:21

**Months of the Jewish Year**

The "first month" of the Jewish calendar is the month of Nissan, in the spring, when Passover occurs. However, the Jewish New Year is in Tishri, the seventh month, and that is when the year number is increased. This concept of different starting points for a year is not as strange as it might seem at first glance. The American "new year" starts in January, but the new "school year" starts in September, and many businesses have "fiscal years" that start at various times of the year. Similarly, the Jewish calendar has different starting points for different purposes.

The names of the months of the Jewish calendar were adopted during the time of Ezra, after the return from the Babylonian exile. The names are actually Babylonian month names, brought back to Israel by the returning exiles. This is why most of the Bible refers to months by number, not by name.

The Jewish calendar has the following months:

Name	Number	Length	English Equivalent
Nissan	1	30 days	March-April
Iyar	2	29 days	April-May
Sivan	3	30 days	May-June
Tammuz	4	29 days	June-July
Av	5	30 days	July-August
Elul	6	29 days	August-September
Tishri	7	30 days	September-October
Cheshvan	8	29 or 30 days	October-November
Kislev	9	30 or 29 days	November-December
Tevet	10	29 days	December-January
Shevat	11	30 days	January-February
Adar	12	30 days	February-March
Adar Beit (Leap years only)	13	29 days	February-March

If you add up all the days in the months it is only 354 days in the year when there are really 365 and 1/4 days in a year. So, just like we have a leap year every four years with an extra day in February to account for the extra 1/4 day they have a leap year every four years with an extra month to account for the extra ten days or so each year. (I say "or so" because with Cheshvan and Kislev changing in length every year it is really a little more complicated than that. The length of Cheshvan and Kislev are determined by complex calculations involving the time of day of the full moon of the following year's Tishri and the day of the week that Tishri would occur in the following year.

(1) In Haggai 1:5-11 it is made clear that the poor circumstances they found themselves in were a result of disobedience to God. What is your first reaction to poor circumstances? Do you blame someone? Do you shrug it off as bad luck that could happen to anyone? Or do you consider your ways as it says in Hg 1:5 and 1:7? Why?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(2) Haggai 2:8 tells them to build the temple so that the Lord will be pleased and glorified. What do you do to try to please and glorify the Lord?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(3) There is an old proverb (not in the Bible) that says, "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder." The idea is that what looks good and what does not look good is all a matter of opinion. However, in Haggai chapter 2 it talks about how good the temple doesn't look, and how good it will look. That seems to imply that how good something looks is a matter of God's opinion, not ours. If God thinks so, it is so. Does that mean that beauty is a real quality that a person or thing can have apart from the opinion of those who are looking? Why?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(4) If someone asked you what Haggai was about what would you say?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(5) How can the lessons of Haggai be applied to our own life?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions about Haggai, now is the time to discuss them with your classmates.

----- ANSWERS -----

(1) **BLAME GAME - HAGGAI 1:5-11:** My initial reaction is almost always a feeling and anger towards anyone and everybody who is near by, or might have had anything to do with it, and a desire to say curse words. I used to indulge these feelings freely. This usually resulted in broken or strained relationships, and never helped the circumstances at all. Usually it made the circumstances worse. I am pleased to report that although my feelings and desires have not changed at all, I seldom give in to them anymore. God has helped me tremendously in this area. I am still working on remembering to pray and examine myself. I have hope of additional improvement in myself as I surrender more to the Holy Spirit.

(2) **PLEASE & GLORIFY GOD - HAGGAI 1:8:** I try to obey Him more and disobey Him less. Worship, prayer, and study of His word are all pleasing to Him. It seems to me loving each other is something He really likes to see us do a lot.

(3) **BEAUTY - HAGGAI 2:3-9:** In 1 Peter 3:3-4 the Bible says "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight." It seems to me true beauty comes from being of worth to God, not how we look to others. That means it is not a matter of our opinion, but of His. We need to learn to look at things through His eyes. Only then will we be able to enjoy the real beauty in His creation.

(4) **Haggai Summary** The Jewish people were taken into captivity, reduced to a remnant, and then allowed to return to their land. When Haggai opens they have returned and begun a vigorous rebuilding of their homes. However, they have not been enthusiastic about rebuilding the Temple or their worship to God. The prophet Haggai speaks to them about their need to rebuild the temple, and be faithful to God.

(5) **Haggai Life Application** To me the two most important points from Haggai are that God's Spirit will never abandon us, and that we should show our gratitude to Him with worship and obedience.



The Jewish people were taken into captivity and then allowed to return to their land.

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