**Haggai**

*Building God’s House*

*Haggai 1*

Background

* Haggai was a contemporary of the prophet Zechariah, when Zerubbabel was governor of Judah and Darius king of the Persians.
* The Babylonians, led by King Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed the city of Jerusalem, including Solomon's temple, in 586 B.C. and took most of the Jews captive to Babylon.
* King Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon in 539 BC and allowed the Jewish exiles to return to their land in 538 B.C.
* At least three waves of returnees took advantage of this opportunity. The first of these was in 537 B.C. (Ezra 1:2-4). Haggai and Zechariah appear to have been two of these returnees, as was Joshua the high priest, though Haggai's name does not appear in the lists of returnees in the opening chapters of Ezra.
* During the year that followed, these returnees rebuilt the brazen altar in Jerusalem, resumed offering sacrifices on it, celebrated the feast of Tabernacles, and laid the foundation for the reconstruction of the (second) temple. Opposition to the rebuilding of the temple resulted in the postponement of construction for 16 years. During this long period, apathy toward temple reconstruction set in among the residents of Judah and Jerusalem. Then in 520 B.C., as a result of changes in the Persian government and the preaching of Haggai, the people resumed rebuilding the temple. They finished the project about five years later in 515 B.C. (cf. Ezra 1—6).
* His ministry, as Haggai records it, spanned less than four months, from the first day of the sixth month (1:1) to the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month (2:20). In the modern calendar this would have been between August 29 and December 18, 520 B.C.

We Always Have Excuses (v 2)

* His House is More Important Than Our Homes (v 4, 9)
* Neglecting God’s House Results in a Life of Frustration (v 6, 9-11)

1. Reversal of the Harvest Principle – Frustration of Expectations

* + - “You have sown much, but harvest little”

2. Frustration at the Very Base Level of Existence – the very 3 things needed for contentment – the very things God has promised to provide so that we need not be anxious like the Gentiles

a. Food

* + - * “You eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied;”

b. Drink

* + - * “You drink, but there is not enough to become drunk;”

c. Clothing

* + - * “You put on clothing, but no one is warm enough;”

3. Futility of All Work – no way to recover – no hope

* + - “And he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes.”

Consider Your Ways (v 5, 7)

* Building God’s House (v 8)
  + Pleases God
  + Glorifies God
* Obey God’s Voice (v 12)
* Trust that God Will Be With Us (v 13)

We Need God’s Stirring (v 14)

* Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain. (Ps 127:1)