

God's Wake Up Call

The Book of Haggai:

- Sandwiched between Zephaniah and Zechariah
- 2 chapters long, or 38 verses in total
- Written by Haggai - a prophet, colleague of Zechariah, contains 4 messages from God given in a space of 4 months

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The Setting:

- Jerusalem fell in 586, the temple is destroyed and people are displaced into captivity
- In 539 the Babylonian empire is overthrown by the Medo-Persian empire. (Cyrus the Great)
- In 538 Cyrus allows Israelite people to return home if they choose
- According to Ezra and Nehemiah - 50 000 return anxious to rebuild city and temple

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The Setting:

- Upon arrival, 18 months spent clearing rubble and preparing a foundation for the temple
- The work grinds to a halt with a usable altar, and the foundation for the temple laid
- Ezra 4-5 records the opposition encountered by northern neighbors
- 15 years the project lays dormant, and we arrive at 4 messages from God in 4 months to these people

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“In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son to Shealtiel, governor of Judah and to Joshua son of Jehozadak the high priest. This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘These people say the time has not yet come for the Lord’s house to be built.’ Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: ‘Is it a time for you yourselves to live in paneled houses while this house remains a ruin?’ Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much yet harvested little. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.’ This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so I may take pleasure

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“in it and be honored,’ says the Lord, ‘You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?’ declares the Lord Almighty. ‘Because of my house which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. Therefore because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle and on the labor of your hands.’”

Haggai 1:1-11

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Two Observations:

1. God Issues a Call To Consider

- confronts them about their priorities
- vs.2 - Change from my to these people
 - shift in trust, where they were looking
- “Give careful thought to your ways...” x2

Bob Paraphrase - You are a people who exist without purpose, and you are unsatisfied though you work hard. Why? Your priorities and perspective are wrong.

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1. God Issues a Call To Consider

- question - What gives fulfillment and satisfaction? What we do for God, or relationship with God?
- suggestion - temple was seen as an accomplishment, not a place for God to be with them
- Thus obstacles and opposition derailed the project, got used to 2nd best, a half done job

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- nothing is turning out as planned
 - planted – little harvest
 - eat – never enough
 - drink – never satisfies
 - clothes – not warm
 - money – purses with holes

**vs. 9 – “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home I blew away. Why, because my house remains in a ruin while each of you is busy with his own house.”*

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- consider why the work of your hands is hampered
 - 'heavens withheld'
- give careful thought
 - takes time and effort
 - takes information and truth
 - takes open willing posture
- parallel for us spiritually?
 - looking for transformed lives
 - desiring to love others – show Christ
 - employing our gifts with little result
- is it time to carefully consider if God's way is 1st?

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2. God issues a Call To Commence

- vs 8 - *“Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the Lord.*”

- God calls them to action, back to the original project, to begin to do again with a right heart.

- We see a desire by God to dwell with them, to take pleasure and be honored in their efforts, their sacrifice. To share his presence with them.

- Relationship with God determined victory, not what they accumulated for themselves

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So What

1. Call to Consider

- Consider what place God and his will has in my priorities, my time, the resources I manage?
- Is my purpose and satisfaction found in God, or in the projects I undertake?
- Is my focus on God and His desires, or on my circumstances and what I see as possible?

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So What

2. Call To Commence

- Am I prepared to take action after carefully considering this truth
- What prevents me from taking action to set right those areas I have lost my perspective in?
- Who can I make myself accountable to in taking action where God is talking to me?