

# DO WHAT IS REQUIRED Sunday School- June 1, 2014

## Unifying Topic: OBEY THE LORD

### Lesson Text

**I. God's House Lies In Ruin (Haggai 1:1-4)**

**II. Consider Your Ways (Haggai 1:5-7)**

**III. God's House Must Be Rebuilt (Haggai 1:8-11)**

**The Main Thought:** Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? (Haggai 1:3-4), KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** Sometimes personal needs and desires prevent Christians from giving priority to that which is most important in their lives. How can Christians identify and give priority to what is important? God spoke through Haggai saying that the people's first priority should be rebuilding God's house and not their own houses.

**Lesson Aim:** To show the students that God is not pleased when we allow personal priorities to replace His priorities.

**Life Aim:** To give God and the will of God first priority in our prayers, thoughts, and actions as we strive to live pleasing to God.

- 1:1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,
- 1:2 Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.
- 1:3 Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,
- 1:4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?
- 1:5 Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.
- 1:6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.
- 1:7 Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.
- 1:8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.
- 1:9 Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.
- 1:10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.
- 1:11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

### **HISTORY:**

The three books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther cover about 100 yrs. (538-432 B.C.). They tell the story of the Jews return from Babylon, of the rebuilding of the Temple and Jerusalem, and of the reestablishment of the Jews national life in their homeland. The last three of the Old Testament prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi lived and worked during this same period of return and restoration. With the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 B.C., the people of God entered a new phase of their history. The period from 586 to 538 B.C. is called the Exile period or the Babylonian captivity. By exile it means that a large number of Israelites and Judeans now were living outside of the Promised Land, in foreign countries.

The book of Haggai was written by the prophet Haggai to the people in Jerusalem and those who had returned from exile. Judah had been conquered, Jerusalem burned, the temple demolished, and the people carried away to Babylon (605-586 B.C. as told in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 24-25). After 70 years of captivity, about 50,000 Jews had returned to their own land, by decree of King Cyrus (538 B.C.), and had begun to rebuild the temple. But soon after they laid the foundation, the work was stopped by their enemy neighbors. Haggai was the first prophet to Israel following the return from the Babylonian captivity. Haggai and Zechariah were used to prophesy to the people about the same time in rebuilding the Temple.

### **Haggai 1:1-4 God's House Lies In Ruin**

**1:1** In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,— In the seventh month of the first year of the people's return the Israelites built the altar, offered burnt offerings, and kept the Feast of Tabernacles (Ezra 3). Ezra was the priest of that time. When Nehemiah went to Jerusalem, Ezra had been there for 14 years. But Ezra was a priest teaching religion to the people. Nehemiah came as civil governor, with

authority from the king of Persia to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem to make the city fortified again. He had opposition; however, the walls were rebuilt and dedicated under Nehemiah (Nehemiah). Now in the second year Darius was king in the sixth month. Haggai was the prophet sent by God to Zerubbabel the governor of Judah (political leader), and Joshua the high priest (religious leader). And at this particular time after the Jews had returned, the temple still lay unfinished. It had laid waste for over 15 years when the word of the Lord came by Haggai.

**1:2 Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.** The Lord of hosts addresses His people as this people because they were disobedient and unconcerned. They now give the excuse that it's not time to build. Mind you, King Cyrus had freed them from exile to build the Temple; he had also generously given the money to enable them to do it. It was already prophesized in Isaiah 45:1-13. By stopping the work, the Jews were admitting that they had no faith in God's Word or in His power to perform it. They had laid the foundation before hostile opposition from neighbors came and caused discouragement. They presumptuously claimed to know better than God, so they left the Temple in waste and let it lie unfinished.

**1:3 Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,**— To the leaders of these unconcerned people the Lord sends Haggai with his first of four messages. The first message was to Zerubbabel and Joshua (Hag.1:1); the second message was to Zerubbabel, Joshua and the residue of people (Hag.2:1-2); the third message was to the priests (Hag.2:10), and the fourth message was to Zerubbabel (Hag.2:20). Each time they were addressed with a question except the fourth time.

**1:4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?**— The people had not passed the time in absolute idleness, for they had taken time to build for themselves luxurious ceiled houses; houses that were paneled not only on the walls, but also on the ceilings with fine wood. In contrast the Lord's house lay in waste (discarded). Since the people had said that it wasn't time to build the Lord's house (v.2), the question is directed in a challenge to them: "*Is it time for you to dwell in your ceiled houses and the Lord's house lie in waste?*" The problem was not that the people had built such fine houses for themselves, but rather they had done so to the neglect of the house of the Lord. They had gotten their priorities out of order. They had put their own self-interests above the Lord's.

## Haggai 1:5-7 Consider Your Ways

**1:5 Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.**— Haggai's first message revealed the low spiritual conditions of the day, for the Lord of hosts through the prophet Haggai is saying, the answer to the above question is for you to give sincere thought to; be careful what you say next. "*Consider your ways.*" This command is issued five times throughout the course of this prophesy (vv.5, 7; 2:15, 18 (twice)). It's a plea on the part of God for the leaders of the people to take note of what they are doing at this time, compare it to what they should be doing, and mend their ways accordingly. They had been diverting all their attention to themselves, and have been diverting all their wealth to their own pleasure, especially the acquiring of fine houses and none to the house of God!

**1:6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.**— The people had sown bountiful crops, but they had reaped sparingly; they ate food, but didn't have enough; they drank, but were never satisfied; they had clothing, but it was never adequate; they earned money, but could never get ahead. They suffered from inflation (their money did not buy as much as it had done); bad crops; bad weather; God was angry with them. They were so content about achieving their own ends that they completely forgot about God. All they did was futile. It was like holes in a bag draining out because they left God out. They didn't realize their blessings were from God; not their fine homes they had built. In their disobedience came no Temple and no Blessings.

**1:7 Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.** He reiterates again, "*Consider your ways.*" <sup>1</sup>In all of life there is a time to talk and a time to act; a time to consider and a time to stop talking and start doing. This was a time to act because they had not honored God. Every area of life was suffering. The only remedy was to stop making excuses and start doing what God had told them to do 15 years earlier. It was a time to repent.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1997-05-18-Does-Your-Bag-Have-Holes/>  
<http://pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

## Haggai 1:8-11 God's House Must Be Rebuilt

**1:8** Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Haggai urges them with three imperatives: 1) go up to the mountain, 2) bring wood and 3) resume building the house of the Lord. Hills around Jerusalem may have been covered with ample woods. They were to use the wood to rebuild the house of the Lord and therein these imperatives would cause a chain reaction from God. He would take pleasure in it and He would be glorified. By putting God first, God would then be honored in their worship and they would be blessed in the secondary matters of life.

**1:9** Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Even when in ruins, the temple was still called the "house of God." Showing them how misplaced priorities work, God's words revealed that when they looked for much from Him, they got little when they brought it home to store. He "blew on it" signifying His rejection; it quickly disappeared; dissipated rapidly like chaff. Why? - Because the people had neglected the Temple's rebuilding work. God talked about a storehouse (when they brought their goods home), His house (that laid in waste), and their house (that they ran back to).

**1:10** Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. Because the Jews returned to the land in obedience to the Lord, they thought He would give them special blessings because of their sacrifices, but they were disappointed. To get their attention, He had to speak in language that they could understand. Therefore, He stopped the heavens from giving dew, and stopped the earth from producing fruit.

**1:11** And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands. The Lord called for a drought and withheld both the dew and rain. It affected the crops of corn, vineyards, cattle, and all that man and cattle could produce. He took away His blessing from the men who labored in the fields, vineyards, and orchards.

### SUMMARY:

The Jews had returned from Babylon in 538 B.C. to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem but were not able to finish because they were hindered by their enemies. Opposition put a halt to the progress of the Temple, and no further work had been done for 15 years. The prophet Haggai delivers a message from the Lord, to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah and Joshua, the high priest at the time. Zerubbabel was the political leader and Joshua was the religious leader. The people had said this was not the time to build the Lord's house (temple). The Lord sends the question through Haggai to them "Is it time for you to live in luxurious homes, when the Temple lies in ruins? (vv.1-4).

The Lord wanted the people to consider their ways; look at the results: planted, harvested little; not enough to eat or drink; not enough clothes to keep warm; their income disappears. Again Haggai says consider your ways; think it over. There has not been enough no matter what they had done. The harder the people worked for themselves, the less they had, because of their selfishness. Their priorities were messed up (vv.5-7).

The only way the Lord would be pleased and glorified would be if they went to the mountain, brought the wood and started to build. He went back and explained it again. Their problem was that they hoped for much and got little. And the little they brought home, the Lord blew on it and it disappeared like chaff. Their concerns were their fine homes; their unconcern was the Temple that was laid in ruins. That's why the Lord really held back the heaven from giving the dew and the earth from yielding fruit. A drought came upon the land, the mountains, the corn, the vineyards, the olives, the cattle, and all that man and cattle could produce to get their attention. Once again nature and animals suffer because of man's sin (vv.8-11).

### APPLICATION:

If we quit putting off for tomorrow and be sensitive to the Spirit of God, and obey Him, it wouldn't be as hard as we think it is, because God's Spirit knows how to lead us better than we do ourselves.