

# Gleanings of Grace

## Haggai 1

### Lesson 42

After seventy years in exile, the people of Israel were finally allowed to return home. When the foundations of the temple were laid in Jerusalem in the year 536, the younger men shouted for joy while the older men wept. The work began with great zeal, but temporarily ceased due to opposition, until the prophets Haggai and Zechariah rose up to encourage the people to continue the work that had been dormant for years. God has much work for each of us. If there is any work in or through your life that has been neglected, may you, through this lesson, be encouraged to “get back to work”.

#### **OBSERVATION: Haggai 1**

1. Read Haggai 1 using the Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework). After reading through the chapter, what would you say to someone if they asked you what it is about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns/titles that refer to *LORD*.  
**Key Words:** *LORD* and *temple/house* (as it refers to the *house of the LORD*)
3. Note and mark the terms of conclusion *therefore* and *thus* as they are used in Haggai 1. Choose one instance of their use; record the conclusion and what it is based upon.
4. The contrasting word *but* is used four times in Haggai 1. Mark the word. Choose one instance of its use and record what is being contrasted.

## **Background:**

1. The reign of Babylon was succeeded by the reign of Persia. The LORD *stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia* (Ezra 1:1). Cyrus made a *proclamation*. According to Ezra 1:2-5, what did he *proclaim*?
  - a. How did the people respond?
  
2. Using Ezra 3:11-13, describe the reaction of the people after the *foundation of the temple was laid*.
  
3. Ezra 4 describes the beginning of the resistance to the rebuilding of the temple; a letter to the new King, Artaxerxes, opposing the work. What was the result of his decision according to Ezra 4:24?
  - a. What are some types of opposition that discourage you?
  
4. The people may have given up, but God had not. He raised up two prophets. What does Ezra 5:1,2 tell us?
  - a. Man's intentions cannot thwart God's plans. *But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations* (Psalm 33:11 NIV). What have you learned to be some of the *purposes of His heart*?
    - 1.) God's purposes are not exclusive to nations. What encouragement do you personally find in Psalm 138:8?

## **Read Haggai 1:1-6 – The Command to Build the Temple**

1. The prophecy of Haggai began in September 520 B.C. According to Haggai 1:1, on what date in September did Haggai speak the *word of the LORD*?
  - a. Who did Haggai speak to?
    - 1.) What were their titles?

2. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were taken to Babylon. Only about 50,000 returned. These were the most dedicated of the Jews. Yet, what were the *people saying*?
  - a. They were making excuses. Among their excuses were: they didn't have a lot of money (Haggai 1:6), they suffered crop failures and drought (Haggai 1:10,11), and their hostile enemies resisted their work (Ezra 4:1-5). Record the excuse of the Israelites when the spies returned from the Promised Land with news of the giants in the land. Numbers 13:31
    - 1.) Paraphrase Proverbs 26:13-16.
    - 2.) What are some examples of excuses we might have for not doing what God has called us to do?
3. What was the LORD's challenge to the people in Haggai 1:4?
  - a. It was on David's heart to build the temple for the LORD. What did he say to the prophet Nathan? 2 Samuel 7:2
  - b. How does the question in Haggai 1:4 expose the condition of the heart?
    - 1.) How does Philippians 2:21 relate to Haggai 1:4?
4. Haggai 1:5 begins with the words, *Now therefore*. Based on the previous two verses, what did the LORD call them to do?
  - a. Using your own words, explain the phrase *consider your ways*.
    - 1.) Record the words of Lamentations 3:40.
      - a.) Why should the result of *considering our ways* be *turning back to the LORD*?

5. In Haggai 1:6, the LORD calls them, as part of *considering their ways*, to *consider* that their ways were not benefiting them. Complete each of the following phrases:

*you have sown much*

*you eat*

*you drink*

*you clothe yourselves*

*he who earns wages*

- a. How should the futility of our ways wake us up to *consider* them?

### **Read Haggai 1:7-11 - Consider Your Ways**

1. The LORD repeated His instruction to *consider your ways* in Haggai 1:7. What did He tell them to do? (verse 8)
  - a. When the Babylonian army set fire to the temple, the great timbers that helped to hold the massive stonework together were destroyed. The stones were still usable, but the interior woodwork had been demolished and burned and had to be replaced. What did God say would be the effect of their efforts to secure the wood and rebuild the temple?
  
2. The people had neglected God's *temple*. The building and maintenance of the *temple* was of low priority. Believers are the *temple of the Holy Spirit* (1 Corinthians 6:19). Notice the exhortation in 1 Corinthians 6:20. What is it?
  - a. In both instances, the proper care of God's temple results in Him being *glorified*. What can we learn from this?
  
3. Using Haggai 1:9, describe the vanity of trying to accumulate things while neglecting the things of God.
  - a. Why did God say that their efforts *came to little*?
  
  - b. What is wrong with the attitude, "I must take care of me first"; if I have extra time and money, then I will give it to God?

4. Not only were their efforts to acquire material goods unprofitable, what does Haggai 1:10,11 say God would do?

- a. The phrase “an act of God” could very well be applied to the drought Israel would experience. What do the following verses say that God withholds to get His people’s attention?

Psalm 105:16

Psalm 78:46

Haggai 2:17

- 1.) What are some examples of other things God might withhold for His good purposes in our lives?

- b. *I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze* (Leviticus 26:19). Why is it important that our *pride be broken*?

- 1.) What are your thoughts as you consider that one of the ways God uses to break our pride is to withhold good things from His people?

### **Read Haggai 1:12-15 – The People’s Obedience**

1. According to Haggai 1:12, what two things did *all the remnant of the people* do?

- a. What do you think their *obedience* looked like?

- b. How would you describe their *fear of the presence of the LORD*?

- c. Consider the challenges of the LORD in the verses prior to Haggai 1:12. What would have provoked you to this kind of *obedience*?

2. Using large block letters, record the LORD’s response to their *obedience*. Haggai 1:13

- a. Considering all the opposition and hardship they would face in building the temple, what do you think those words meant to them?
  - b. God says those same words to us when we engage in His work. In what ways are they an encouragement to you?
3. Reflect upon the words, *stirred up the spirit*, used in Haggai 1:14. God *stirred up the spirits* of both leadership and the *remnant of the people*. Describe what it means for God to *stir up our spirits*.
  4. Note the day that the people began to *obey*. What date of the month was it?
    - a. How many days passed between God speaking to Zerubbabel and Joshua to the *obedience* of the people?
    - b. What are some reasons or excuses we have for not immediately obeying the LORD?

### **REVIEW: Haggai 1**

1. In what ways have you been challenged to *consider your ways*?
2. How have you been challenged to examine your priorities?
3. What did you glean from your study of Haggai that you will appropriate into your life?

*The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah*  
- Psalm 46:11

# Observation Worksheet

## Haggai 1

In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built." ' " <sup>3</sup> Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, <sup>4</sup> "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?" <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! <sup>6</sup> You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes." <sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! <sup>8</sup> Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD. <sup>9</sup> "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. <sup>10</sup> Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. <sup>11</sup> For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands." <sup>12</sup> Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, 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 presence of the LORD. <sup>13</sup> Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, spoke the LORD's message to the people, saying, "I am with you, says the LORD." <sup>14</sup> So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, 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, <sup>15</sup> on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.