

## Minor Prophets #10 HAGGAI

**HOSEA** took a faithless wife And spoke of judgement, love and life  
**JOEL** told of locust plagues The Spirit and the end of the age  
**AMOS** left his flocks and trees To call the nation to its knees  
**OBADIAH** prophesied of Edom and its foolish pride  
**JONAH** tried to run away, but lived to preach another day  
**MICAH** spoke of God's great plan to change the world by changing man.  
**NAHUM** showed that God is great And prophesied Assyria's fate  
**HABAKKUK** thought the Lord unfair But found the truth through faith and prayer  
**ZEPHANIAH** made it clear The great day of the Lord was near  
**HAGGAI** saw the people's need To put God's house before their greed

Read: Haggai 2:1-9

### Background

- Babylonian captivity
- 586 BC – People of Judah taken into exile in Babylon for 70 years
- 536 BC – 50 000 return by the decree of Cyrus
- 536 BC – Attempt to rebuild the temple is stopped (Ezra 4)
- 520 BC – Haggai and Zechariah inspire the rebuilding to begin again (Ezra 6:14)...

### Important dates

- 29 August 520: First message
- 21 September 520: Work begins
- 17 October 520: Second message
- 18 December 520: Third message
- 18 December 520: Fourth message
- 06 June 516: Temple finished

### **1. God's house is our priority**

Read Haggai 1:4

- The temple represents the church
- Haggai's question: How can we be concerned with our own well-being if the church is in trouble?
- When we put ourselves first we are actually worse off (1:5-6)
- When we put ourselves first life lacks meaning (1:5-6)
- See Matthew 6:33. When we put
- Four times – 'consider your ways' (NIV = 'give careful thought') in 1:5; 1:7; 2:15; 2:18. God asks us to think about these things.

What do we contribute?

It is easy to think only of monetary contribution. How much do we contribute in...

- Being friendly to new people?
- Punctuality?
- Prayer?
- Worship?
- Serving?
- Fellowship?

*What if we could measure these things in monetary terms? What would they be worth?*

What should we do? (1:12-14)

- Zerubbabel (prince) = management
- Joshua (priest) = ministry
- People = congregation.

The people –

- Obeyed the word (1:12)
- Feared the Lord (1:12)
- Came (1:14)
- Worked (1:14)

What is God saying to us? (1:13, 14)

- God promised to be with them
- When they obeyed his word, the Lord stirred their spirits
- Are we ‘stirred’ in spirit?
- Act 18:25; Rom 12:11
- Eg Corporate worship at the beginning of the service stirs our spirits

**2. God’s house is our glory**

- Read 2:3
- Haggai himself may have seen Solomon’s magnificent temple (2 Chron chs.3-4)
- Now they were rebuilding it with timber (1:7)
- It seemed deficient in glory

The new temple would be more glorious than the old

- Haggai gives an astonishing promise
- The glory of Solomon’s temple (2 Chronicles 5:14) will be surpassed!
- The ‘desire of all nations’ will come and FILL it with glory

That glory is Christ!

- We have seen His glory (John 1:14)
- He is the everlasting glory of God (Heb 1:3)
- His glory is seen in His Church (Eph 3:21; 5:27)

Greater glory

In OT days God's glory was seen rarely: today we behold it continually in the face of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:6). Which would we rather have?

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
SHORT-LIVED Hours or days	LASTING
PHYSICAL	SPIRITUAL
RARE Two or three times over thousands of years	CONTINUAL

*The glory of God is seen in Christ in his person and his power – ie in changed lives, transformed communities, renewed relationships, in faith, in hope, in love, in signs and wonders.*

Two factors in success

- Be strong... be strong... be strong... (2:4). It takes strength and courage to build
- The Spirit remains among us (2:5). Only by the Spirit can the work be done

God's sovereign choice (2:23)

God's signet ring—

- His treasured possession (Isaiah 43:4)
- Marked with his seal of approval (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13)

The glory of God in the local church

- What are your hopes and dreams for our church?
- Our longing is to see once again the glory of God in our local church

**SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT**

**Remember:** You don't have to answer all the questions. Choose those that seem most relevant at this time.

**Text:** Haggai

Biblical

1. What title does Haggai give God? (1:2) How often does he use this title in this book?
2. What do you think is the biblical significance of this title?
3. What agricultural problems were the people of Judah experiencing? (1:10-11)
4. What does Haggai say was the reason for these problems? (9)
5. Four times Haggai tells the people to 'give careful thought' (NIV) or to 'consider their ways' (ESV). Briefly summarise what he is asking them to think about/consider each time.
6. What is the principle behind 2:10-14?

Personal and practical

7. In what ways do you think today's Church might also be described as being in ruins (1:9)? Be as specific as you can. (If you can find statistics of church attendance etc they could be helpful here. But you need to look primarily at spiritual aspects.)
8. What former glories (2:3) do you remember from earlier days in your experience, both personally and in the church?
9. If things were to be more glorious (2:9) in the future for (a) you, or (b) your church, how would they be different?
10. Haggai warns us that it is much easier to be contaminated by the world than it is to make the world holy (2:10-14). What dangers of spiritual 'contamination' are there for you in your life and situation? Be specific.
11. What would be the equivalent of 2:20-22 for you personally? In other words, what spiritual thrones and kingdoms in or around you would you like to see thrown down and why?
12. What can you do personally to see the glory of God shine in your local church?

Memorise: Haggai 2:7

## About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

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