

BOOK OF EZRA
HAGGAI'S PROPHECY TO JUDAH
EZRA 5:1; 6:14; HAGGAI 1:1-15

INTRODUCTION

We see that the book of Ezra mentions the prophesying of two prophets who had a great impact on the people of Judah and Jerusalem with regard to their restarting and completing the construction of the Temple!—Haggai and Zechariah!

I want us to look briefly at what these two Minor Prophets said that affected these folks in such a positive way!

I want to remind you that the Minor Prophets are called that because of the **length of the books** that bear their names, **not because they are any less important** than other prophets!

The only references to the Prophet Haggai outside of his book are Ezra 5:1 and 6:14. Haggai is one of the last three Old Testament prophets, the other two being Zechariah (whose ministry overlapped Haggai's) and Malachi (who came along about 100 years later). Haggai, was the first prophet God used for these returned exiles and he preached so that people would be encouraged to get back to rebuilding the temple!

We've seen thus far in the Book of Ezra how that the remnant that returned started the work and actually finished laying the foundation of the temple, but due to opposition they slacked off on the actual building!

That brings us to Ezra 5 which is some 15 to 18 years later when after the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah they started back working on it and then five years later it was finished.

Understand that the work should have been finished long before it was! What was the problem? Well their were several things—procrastination, wrong priorities, wrong values!

I. THE EXCUSE OF THE PEOPLE. (1:2)

A. They Said The Time Was Not Right.

1. What They Did Not Say.

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a. **They Did Not Say That It Wasn't Something That Was Needed!**

b. **They Did Not Say That It Wasn't The Right Thing To Do!**

c. **They Did Not Say That It Was Something They Never Intended To Do!**

2. **What They Did Say Was "Not Right Now."**
(i.e. It wasn't a priority! Other things were a priority to them!)

B. Could I Tell You That Many Folks Today Fail To Realize Their Full Potential For Christ Because They Say, "Not Right Now!"

Consequently, a great work that COULD BE done for Christ is left undone!
(Again, the problem is **procrastination, wrong priorities and wrong values.**)

If you just take the basics of Faithfulness, Tithing, Witnessing, and Service for the LORD:

1. Most Folks Know It Is Something That Is Needed!
2. They Know It Is The Right Thing To Do!
3. Most Intend On Doing It "One Day."
4. But, So Many Say "Not Right Now!"

THE EXCUSE OF THE PEOPLE...

II. THE EXAMINATION BY THE PROPHET. (1:3-5)

In verse 5 and verse 7 the LORD wanted the people to consider their ways.

A. Their Real Problem Was The Sin Of Selfishness!
Selfishness is where one thinks of SELF FIRST!

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We live in a world that is filled with selfishness!
Selfishness prevails in our society and SHOULD NOT
overflow into the Church, but it does!

The Jews that Haggai wrote to did not see themselves as being
selfish, but their selfishness had delayed the building of God's
house!

They justified the delay claiming the time had not yet come to
build.

Selfish people generally do not see themselves as being
selfish. They plan to do something for the LORD, but the
time just has not come yet!

Unfortunately, things haven't changed too much in this area
since Haggai's day!

1. Every week there are people who belong to Churches
across our land who take God's money (the tithe) and
selfishly spend it on themselves.

They do not see themselves as being selfish.
Some of them may even plan to start tithing some day.
(Excuses range from: their house, their car, their kids)
Its just not convenient right now!

2. There are also many folks who have been on the
receiving end of the Gospel and are saved by God's
grace, but who never offer that salvation they have to
others. They never witness in any way!
3. There are also many folks who are not faithful to the
assembly. Their attendance could be described as hit
and miss. And at times the misses outnumber the hits.

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4. There are also many folks who do not serve God or if
they do, they don't serve Him faithfully!

By the way, these usually are some of the main ones
that complain about the Church's lack of growth or
lack of ministries.

**B. Note Here How These Folks In Haggai's Day Found The
Resources To Do The Things They Really Wanted To Do!**

Haggai brought to their attention that they seem to have had
the time to build nice luxurious homes for themselves and
dwell in them!

Selfish people have **money** to buy nice homes, cars, and
clothes, and anything else they really want to, but they do not
have money for the things of God!

Selfish people have **time** for everything they want to do
except serving God!

We seem to both **have** the money and **make** the time for the
things that are important to us!

The problem is in what we **value** and what our **priorities** are!

**C. The Folks In Haggai's Day May Have Been Deceiving
Themselves, But They Were Not Deceiving God!**

*Hebrews 4:13—“Neither is there any creature that is not
manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened
unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”*

D. God Could Not Bless Their Selfishness! (1:5-6)

Haggai begins here by letting them know that the LORD
wanted them to “*consider their ways.*”

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1. They were working hard but couldn't make ends meet!
2. They were eating, drinking, and generally carrying on with life, but they were not satisfied!
3. They were trying to get ahead and prepare for the future by saving all they could, but they were unsuccessful!
"Get all you can, can all you get, and sit on the can!"

They were living their lives selfishly, only to discover the bags they had selfishly stuffed have holes in them!
4. Their selfishness brought this condition. **(1:9-11)**

E. Haggai Pointed Out That God Will Bless A Life Of Obedience! (1:7-8, 12-13)

When the people who had selfishly put their wants ahead of God, obeyed Him, then, and only then, could they receive the LORD's help and blessing!

The greatest life spent on this earth is a life empty of self and filled with God and others!

Conclusion

Is the LORD "with you" in your pursuits?
Not if your pursuits leave Him and His will out!

The Jews meant well, but that wasn't enough!
We may mean well, but that isn't enough!

We can live our entire life selfishly—meaning well, but only when we change and obey God, and His priorities become our priorities, will we find the blessing of the LORD!

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God must be first in our lives!

Matthew 6:33—"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

When is the right time for obedience to what the LORD would have us do?
Right now, because it is the only time we have!

Now is the right time for salvation!

2 Corinthians 6:2—"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

Now is the right time for service!

John 4:35—"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

Now is the right time for soberness!

Romans 13:11-14—"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."