

# HAGGAI: PT 12 – GOD ORDERS THE WORK TO BE DONE

(#3)!

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*“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. 3 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying 4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? 5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.”*

## Haggai 1:2 - 5

This morning we return to our studies in the book of Haggai. This will be part 12 in our studies and this morning we continue on the subject of: God Orders His Work to be Done. As a reminder again; after their 70 year captivity to the Babylonians and the Medes and Persians, the Jews return as King Cyrus gave the decree to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The excitement was felt by the people of God, there was joy, excitement and a corporate willingness to begin the building process. In our introduction we spent much time in the book of Ezra regarding this. If you read Ezra it will give you the history of what transpired before God raised up Haggai the prophet.

When the decree was given by King Cyrus in 538 BC to rebuilt the Temple at Jerusalem there was such excitement and joy in their midst after being in captivity for so long, now they are able to worship God freely. By 536 after there being unity and joy and working hard they stopped and now the year is 520 BC it's been 16 years and nothing has been done.

Therefore, the LORD of HOSTS, JEHOVAH SABAOTH raises the prophet Haggai to stir up the people to rekindle their hearts and finish the project or in other words: God raises up HAGGAI and now GOD Orders the WORK to be DONE! This is where we find ourselves in the book of Haggai again. In very simple words, 18 years have come and gone since the decree of King Cyrus to build the temple and these people have gotten cold, lazy and lethargic and seemed to be oblivious to the work of God. The work just STOPPED COMPLETELY. They totally deserted the house of God, they probably intended to build God's house, not now they wanted to wait for a more convenient time. Surely God understands right? Isn't that the mindset of those who desert the house of God or if you wish desert His church, one day, one day I'll get things right, I mean sure God understands that I'm busy. No, God doesn't understand that you have time for everything else except for Him and His house. Amazing how we can deceive ourselves into believing our own excuses, believe our own lies as a matter of fact Isaiah puts it this way in the second part of Isaiah 28:15, *“...for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.”*

Therefore the LORD of HOSTS thunders from heaven as Jehovah-Sabaoth says: CONSIDER YOUR WAYS! He who has universal dominion in heaven and earth, He who is the KING of the Armies above and below whom all should REVERENCE, He who is OMNIPOTENT says with SOVEREIGN POWER: "CONSIDER YOUR WAYS!"

No doubt that the people procrastinated and procrastinated in putting off the rebuilding of GOD'S HOUSE! Their procrastination was justified by their foolish and fleshly excuses. They thought that they could escape their responsibility to God by merely saying in verse 2 "...The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built." They were more interested in their own selves. Perhaps they wanted to be prosperous in their businesses and personal endeavors by seeking to earn more money. Perhaps it was taking care of the family, spending time with friends socializing, perhaps it was recreation and fun. Whatever EXCUSE they gave was just that; AN EXCUSE! Now, we don't doubt that some of these issues and matters were legitimate and some of them necessary, but the point is very clear that they were GUILTY of NEGLECTING their very first PRIORITY which was LIVING for the LORD and HONORING the LORD! How many of us are guilty of the same things today? Everything comes first, then when WE HAVE TIME, we'll give it to God. This includes, work, family, recreation, sports and or hobbies, like fishing, golfing etc.

We put too much stock on things that are temporary in contrast to things that are eternal! Even if the wretched Redskins were to play in the Alamodome on any given Sunday and I was given free tickets, I would still be HERE in GOD'S HOUSE and that includes the SPURS! In you name the name of Christ what is priority? In case you have forgotten, I'll answer for you, listen to the words of the LORD Jesus Christ, He who is Jehovah Sabaoth, the LORD OF HOSTS; "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*" Matt. 6:33. But modern day Christianity seeks these things first and then when they have some time, the kingdom of God. It seems that we are not much different than those in Haggai's time. Now, brethren don't go to the extreme as to what I am saying, again, do not misconstrue my words, I'm not saying we can't better ourselves with a good job, or spending time and having fun with the family, having fun with recreation or sports or whatever your hobby is, there is nothing wrong with these things in general but if we treasure these things more than the things of God especially when the doors of the church are open for service then, yes we are very wrong and guilty of neglecting the HOUSE of God. You have heard me say often that there are providential hindrances that can keep us from the house of God, sickness, those who have employment on Sundays, like doctors, nurses, police-personnel and military and such like, being out of town, going on vacation, things like these are understandable, but when we willingly for our fleshly appetite miss church then Jehovah Sabaoth has some words for you: CONSIDER YOU WAYS! Not only were they procrastinating, but sadly they were also showing their sinful indifference to the clear COMMANDS of God. Not only were they indifferent, but also ignoring God's WORD! This then is what sinfully laid in their hearts. But what also contributed to their head strong stubbornness was that they were very guilty of selfishness and covetousness this is why God questions their wrong intentions in verses 4 & 5, "*Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? 5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your*

ways.” But the end result was that when they tried to work the fields and the harvest, God was against them because of their stubborn disobedience. You see the Israelites were doomed in all their labor because of their actions and no matter how hard they worked and how often they planted their crops and tended to their fields they still failed. It seemed as though everything was against them and as long as they ignored and neglected God’s commandment to rebuild they labored in vain and had no gain to show whatsoever, they even had holes in their pockets and they didn’t even know it. Notice again the words of God to these people in verses 5 & 6, *“Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 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.”* In verses 9-11 we have the same thing, *“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. 10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. 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.”*

They were so selfish and self-centered as they were working hard to take care of themselves while at the same time showing indifference to God. They were so unconcerned about God while they were diligent working hard for their own needs. They busied in lavishing themselves with many things while they neglected and disobeyed God. So the work ended and 16 years later they still had an indifferent heart, this was a sad bitter indictment against the people, that instead of coveting the things of God they were coveting worldly things. If we are not careful, we can fall into the same spiritual quicksand. This is implied I believe in verses 4 & 5 again, *“Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? 5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.”*

I can understand that there was trouble and some persecution and so they stopped the process, but 16 years have come and gone and they are at ease in Zion, in simple terms there was no excuse whatsoever for what had transpired so JEHOVAH SABAOTH says, THE TIME HAS COME verse 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.”* I’m sure God could have said it in a harsher way, but He says it in a tender compassion way, I just love the way it is phrase in verse 8 and can’t wait to preach on verse 8, anyway the message went out to them, thus saith the LORD of HOSTS Consider your WAYS: but sadly they continued to make excuses, of the many we said that there were at least 5 excuses:

1. Opposition Came.
2. The Cost was too great.
3. The People had grown weary in the work.
4. They had become discouraged,

5. They were too busy.

Before I continue, let me address those of you without Christ, those of you lost in your sins; what excuses do you make for not serving God? What excuses do you make for not being a Christian? What excuses do you make for not following the Lord Jesus Christ? Those who profess to be Christians and followers of Christ, I ask what excuses do you make for not being at God's House when the doors are open? The doors are not just opened Sunday morning, they are opened Sunday night and Wednesday nights. If you are a member of this church when was the last time you came to observe and partake of the Lord's Table? Maybe you think, well as long as I come Sunday morning at least I'm doing God a favor. Well Jehovah-Sabaoth also has 3 words for you: CONSIDER YOUR WAYS!

Notice the words of verse 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 people say, the time is not come, perhaps you are saying that this morning, but Pastor Joe the time has not come. Let's turn the table on you, let's say you get real sick, or you're going through a trial or it could be one of your loved ones, your spouse, your children maybe you're about to lost your house, your job and now we want God to hear us, now we want God to help us. I'll call this God in the Box, you know the Jack in the Box mindset. Ever had one of those Jack in the box, you know where you turn and turn the handle and there's music and then pop's Jack out of his box and we laugh and we do it again and again. Well some have this concept with God also they thing they can keep God in their box as they are so busy have no time for God and then tragedy strikes and all of sudden we want God to come out of our box and we cry out for Him, please, please God, I promise I'll do this, I promise I'll be faithful, I promise to give, I promise to go church every Sunday, I promise and the list goes on and on: Then things get better and smoother and then we put God in our box again until we need Him next time: So sad that some are so deceived to believe that this is what Christianity is all about, God is just some big Santa Claus: Or how would you like for God to answer you when going through such difficult times: "*I'm sorry but the time has not come...*" I'm always amazed at all the excuses people make and then follow up by saying: God will understand. No, if I may speak for God, God doesn't understand that He has blessed us so much and yet we cry, the TIME HAS NOT COME. Those in Haggai's day were no different, they thought they could go on in the merry ways and put God in a back burner, God said CONSIDER YOUR WAYS!

**1.** The first excuse they gave why the work should not be done was: OPPOSITION CAME!

We saw this last time as this opposition came from the people that were already in the land. Those who opposed the work first came in subtlety, seeking to help them in the work, but their true colors were exposed that when they were shun in Ezra 4:3, "*But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, **Ye have nothing to do with us to***

**build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.**” Again, I love the conviction of Ezra, when he answers that God’s people were going to build God’s house. Then they went all out against the Jews to prohibit them from building the Temple.

In like manner we don’t want the world or the government coming to tell us how to run the church, no the Bible clearly show us how to do that. Of course we have to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and I have no problem with that, but when we are told what we are to preach and not preach or when churches bring in the concepts of the world to help grow in numbers, regardless what it is, as long as it brings in the numbers. This is mere pragmatism. So sad that in many churches they have succumbed to this mindset that they have brought in the philosophies of the world into the church and now most churches are but a social gathering. Now, regardless what kind of opposition comes we must press on, it is not an excuse to stop the work of God. We see the subtlety of the people in the land when they said they wanted to help the work in verses 4 & 5 of Ezra 4, “*Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.*” Just because their hands were weakened is no excuse to totally stop the work.

Again, my dear ones, the purpose of Haggai is to exhort the remnant that regardless of the circumstances whether they were social, political, poverty, persecution and even providential hindrances, it was not an excuse to stop the work. Now, regardless of the cost we need to be found faithful in the things of God. God also wants you to see where you heart is. No Christianity is not a bed of roses, there will always be some opposition, but God says: CONSIDER YOUR WAYS:

**2.** The second excuse we saw was they gave why the work should not be done was: THE COST IS TOO GREAT!

Let’s see what did it cost God for the salvation of the souls of man? His only begotten Son and some would have the audacity to say that the COST TO SERVE GOD IS TOO GREAT: It might cost me my spouse, my children, my job, my friends, my promotion... Now, God does not deceive anyone when He calls us to salvation, it is plain on paper in the Bible that there is cost in following Him, God deceives no one in Luke 14:25-35 it is quite clear and we saw this also last time, “*And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, 26 **If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.** 27 And whosoever **doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.** 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and **counteth the cost.** (This is the whole point of His teaching, to count the cost if you really want to be a Christian.) whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the*

foundation, and **is not able to finish it**, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, **and was not able to finish**. (Again, the point of Christ is that so many professing Christians begin to follow Christ and will not be able to finish, because they did not count the HARD and EXPENSIVE SACRIFICIAL COST) 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33 **So likewise**, (What part of this so likewise do you not understand? In like manner; or in the SAME WAY) whosoever he be of you **that forsaketh not all** (NOT SOME, BUT, God does not want 50% of your heart; 75% of your heart, 90% or 99% of your heart: HE WANTS 100% of YOUR HEART) **that he hath**, he cannot be my disciple. 34 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. **He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.**"

How can any professing Christian ever proclaim: THE COST IS TOO GREAT? No doubt that the work of God in the church and in the lives of His people is seasoned with difficulties, discouragements, disappointment, burdens, trials, but the sad thing is that many are not prepared to make sacrifices to see the work of God prosper and make progress. Sometimes the work of God is hindered because the hearts of HIS PEOPLE are not fully set upon the things of God. Sometimes things are done halfheartedly because we are more concern and consumed with our problems and issues and it affects our loyalty to God. Remember God rebukes them for being so concern about their houses cieled with costly wood while God's house lies waste. Are you so concern and consumed with yourself, with your house, with your job, with your family that God's work always come 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, fourth and fifth. It can be recreation, it can be sports, it can be your own fleshly family it can be many things, but what an examination of the heart: Consider your ways? I preach to myself as I preach to you also, as I look to my own heart and ask consider my ways? Thus, the work of God is hindered because people are not faithful in their church attendance and in their tithes and offering. There is much here to ponder on in regards to counting the cost but we must press on.

**3.** The third excuse we saw that they gave why the work should not be done was: THE PEOPLE HAD GROWN WEARY!

Remember when the work first started there was joy and shouting then opposition came and then they said the cost was too great and know they have grown weary. The temple has not been touch in 14 years because they had lost their love for God's house. As we have mentioned before there is a correlation with the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2:4 and here, it says in Revelation, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Those in the Ephesus church has lost their first love because they lost eye contact with the Shepherd the Lord Jesus Christ and it affected their hearts and their actions. Basically the same thing had happened to those in Haggai's day, they also had lost

eye contact with the Shepherd and they stopped the work and now they have become weary. Look at the difference of what happened in Nehemiah's days. Didn't he have opposition also as they tried to build the wall of Jerusalem? Of course he did, but he continued the work with a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other and the work continued. The work didn't stop because of the opposition or weariness, no it continued, they persevered in the work. We saw last in the lives of Nehemiah and Job that in all their hardships and weariness they didn't give up and throw in the white towel, no they persevered to the end.

This is the essence of our Christian walk, we must persevere, we must continue, there will always be oppositions, setbacks, trials, problems and circumstances, hardships and sadder still the death of love ones, but we must press on in the work of God. Everyone gets tired, exasperated and weary, but this is no excuse to stop serving the Lord. The Bible teaches us that even in weariness we must faint not. So sad that those in Haggai did not practice this, they got weary and the work stopped for 16 years.

We are even told that we must press on even through weariness: Gal.6:7-9, "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*" Even in hard weary times we must not quit, but persevere for in due season we shall reap if we faint not, our problem is we faint too easily. Even Isaiah reminds of this, Isaiah 40:30 & 31, "*Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*" Paul would write to the Thessalonians and say in 2 Thessalonians 3:13, "*But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.*"

Sad, but true, those in Haggai's time got weary and therefore stopped altogether the work of rebuilding the temple. Then they became lazy, lethargic and finally cold. We can also become the same way if we don't guard our own hearts, this happens when we lost sight of the Glory of God and our vision becomes dim.

**4.** The fourth excuse they gave why the work should not be done was: **THEY HAD BECOMED DISCOURAGED!**

Some had started well, but now some became sluggish and not everyone was pulling their own weight. They got so discouraged that they eventually stopped altogether. The people also became disillusioned because they had not seen results quickly. Reminds me somewhat of the parable of Christ in Matthew 13:18-22, "*Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the*

way side. **20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, (THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM) and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.**” The people of Haggai’s time did not endure and so after some persecution along with the cares of this world no doubt they became unfruitful in their work. Yes they were discouraged, but this is but an excuse, we can be discouraged also but is it an excuse to quit? I’m amazed how even those small things that happens to us, we allow them to greatly discourage us. At times we get so discouraged that we don’t read the Word, we don’t pray, we even stop going to church. We at times lack the determination to press forward and become like those of Haggai’s day. Perhaps those in Haggai’s day said, we’ll rest for a while and they just completely stopped until they finally said, the time is not come to build God’s house.

Look at David in one of the most difficult times in his life, when even those who would have given their lives for him were thinking of stoning him, turn quickly to 1 Samuel 30:1-8.

Oh my dear ones let us not be as those who are easily discouraged and give up, no let us press forward regardless of the circumstances in our lives and be as those to whom Paul wrote to in Philippians 3:12-14, *“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”* My dear ones don’t live in the pass, live in the present for it makes it easier to live and face the future. Don’t get so discourage that you just give up, no let us press forward to the mark and high calling of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**5.** The fifth excuse they gave why the work should not be done was: **THAT THEY WERE TOO BUSY:** They stopped working on God’s house but they continued with everything else, with the planting, sowing and seeking to reap the harvest and gathering their food. Much time was spend in working the land. Now there is nothing wrong with this in and of itself, but the problem was that they neglected God’s house. All their energy was going to self, yes they got so busy that they neglected the work of God. Therefore God says to them in verses 6-11 of Haggai 1, *“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. 7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 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. 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.** 10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. 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.”* What a warning to all of us, not to get too busy



with the mundane things of live. Sad that we don't work harder and longer so that we can give to the Lord's work, but we work harder and longer so that we can maintain our own standard of living. I mean we get so busy, God must wait, prayer must wait, reading must wait, studying God's word must wait and last but not least attending God's house must wait. We get so busy and we neglect our basic duties to God so much so that we're too busy to go to God's house regularly or to even take part of our evangelistic outreach when we go door knocking. And it's always the same excuse all the time, the time is not right, the time has not come and so forth, but in the midst of all this they continued to build their own houses. So the LORD keeps reminding them to Consider Your Ways. No doubt that verses 5 & 7 is a message of self-examination. This self-examination was not because they were breaking the Sabbath or because they were worshipping idols or because they were offering strange fire, but because of their cold, cold lethargic hearts. Chapter 1 of Haggai is about personal negligence, carelessness, inattention and disregarding their devotion and service to God which is a CHILD of GOD's plain responsibility.

There are basically 5 words that describes and categorizes Haggai chapter 1: Reproof, Rebuke, Repentance Restoration and Revival. We'll see this as we continue, but these people in truth were not just lukewarm, they were basically plain cold. 16 years and the house of God laid waste.

Oh my dear brethren let us learn from this and give ourselves to serving of God in sincerity and TRUTH! Let us maintain a level of commitment and faithfulness to God and to God's house, if not; may the words of the LORD OF HOSTS: Jehovah-Sabaoth prick your heart and my heart:

**C-O-N-S-I-D-E-R Y-O-U-R W-A-Y-S!**

Remember these next words and may they burn and lodge in your hearts with a HOLY CONVICTION seen in TRUE SERVITUDE to JEHOVAH SABAOTH, THE LORD OF HOSTS! **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" YES! "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33).**

**Sing: Nothing Between:**