

Haggai- by Tommy Lee

Chapter 1

God has now brought his people back from Babylonian exile (see Ezra 1-4 for the background). In 536 BC these returned exiles begin rebuilding the temple, which had been destroyed back when Jerusalem fell, in 587 BC. However, their neighbors deeply oppose this rebuilding project (see Ezra 4.1-5,24), so everything stalls for a long time. But—prompted by the word of the Lord through the prophet Haggai—they finally start building again, in 520 BC (see Haggai 1.14-15). The project is completed in the year 516 BC, 70 years after the obliteration of the first temple. And that is one of the main themes of this book: godly obedience. God's Word comes to his people, and they act in faithful response (James 1.22-25). And through their faithfulness the word of the Lord achieved its purpose (Isaiah 55.10-11). In verses 1-4, God asks his people a pointed question. In verses 5-11, he challenges his people to open their eyes and consider their ways. In verses 12-15, the people accept the word of the Lord and act upon it. Take note of God's blessing in verses 13 & 14.

Chapter 2

COVENANT RENEWED (vs.1-9), BLESSING RENEWED (vs.10-19), LEADERSHIP RENEWED (vs.20-23): that outline might be of some help here. COVENANT: the recent exile may have some thinking that God's covenant with his people is over; their sin ruined their standing with God and now they've forfeited precious relationship with him altogether. Not so. God graciously references his covenant with them in v.5. They can be strong, for God is with them (v.4); they need not fear, for God's Spirit remains in their midst (v.5). BLESSING: verses 10-14 remind us of how the uncleanness and defilement worked in the Old Testament. The spreading curse has contaminated all that they've done, and several evidences of the curse are ticked off in verses 15-19a. But then, in v.19b, blessing finally breaks through. What made the change? See v.18. The day the foundation stone of the Lord's temple was laid. That was the turning point. LEADERSHIP: God also gives a reassuring word of approval and affirmation to the governor. In his faithfulness he will be like God's signet ring (v.23), representing God's own seal of authority. Our thoughts race on to the Greater Zerubbabel... the Messiah.

Reflecting on Haggai –

Before moving on to our next book of the Bible, take some time today to reflect on what we've read in Haggai. Perhaps re-visit a favorite chapter or an especially meaningful passage. Or read the beginning chapter(s) again, now that you've read the whole. Or go back to a part of the book that struck you as curious and see if it makes more sense now. Or speed-read the whole thing again, seeking to reinforce its main themes. Or... perhaps you need a catch-up day to finish Haggai before we move forward?