

Haggai 1-2

Good evening, Church, it is a joy to be here with you all.

Tonight, we are going to continue our study through the Old Testament.

We have come to the Prophet Haggai's writings.

Please turn to Haggai chapter 1.

Let's pray, and we will get into it...

When I was young, they didn't call it ADHD, but I was diagnosed as Hyper Activity...

Today, we have a more proper diagnosis... ADHD... My son Freedom is funny, he is all over the place... and I will be like, "Dude, just focus, just sit down and eat your dinner..." and he will be bouncing, and it is like it is painful for him to sit in one place...

And he will say, "It is my ADHD dad..."

I had a boss once who definitely had Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, which impacts a person's focus, controls their impulses, and energy levels.

He could not finish one task before he moved on to the next...

He was building his dream home for his beautiful family, pouring the foundation, framing the structure, and starting the roof...

Then he would get busy on another project, since he was a contractor, and he would leave his dream home sitting for months.

Then when he would come back to it, he would pick up where he left off, he would start on the landscaping irrigation, then he would see a pool somewhere, and start digging a hole in the back yard for a pool.

When his office space got too expensive, he thought it would be nice to have the office in this new home, so he started making a huge garage in the back, with an office upstairs...

But the main house, the very reason he bought the land for his family – it remained unfinished...

Years went by... his wife died when Jess and I lived in Havasu... and he just kept building on this dream house of his...

A few years back, Jess and I went back to teach in Havasu, and we drove by that house, and it was still under construction, his kids were adults now, moved out...

But he was still designing that house for his kids and family... he took us back by the unfinished pool, and showed us how the kids would come in a play, and I looked at the aged framing, the weathered wood on the home, and the added projects all over the property, and I said, “Man, you have been busy all these years, but you have not been building what matters most.”

All of his efforts had gone into secondary things, while the primary thing was neglected.

We had the kind of relationship, since I had worked for him since I was a kid, I could talk to him pretty frankly, I said, “Man, this project is the picture of ADHD.”

We all laughed... then we got sad... he missed his whole life with his family and kids trying to build something wonderful for them, but his focus was shifted from what mattered.

This is exactly where the people of God were in Haggai...

They had returned from exile with this clear mission...

They were to rebuild the house of the Lord.

But over time, they shifted focus and they began to build their own lives, their own homes, and they decided to take care of themselves first.

They will declare, “It is not time to rebuild the house of the Lord.”

God’s response will be “Consider your ways.”

You're busy, sure, but are you building the right thing?

God will speak through the prophet and remind the people that when they put Him first again, He will be with them, and He promises a future glory greater than the past.

It is possible for people to very active in their lives, but misaligned in their priorities, and neglecting what matters most to God.

Haggai was a prophet that God would use to mobilize and encourage a group of people who had lost focus.

The Jews had already done their seventy years in Babylon, in captivity.

50,000 had decided to take a step of faith and follow the Governor Zerubbabel and the High Priest Joshua back to the Land of Promise.

They were so optimistic at first.

Yet, when they arrived there in the Holy Land, at the Temple Mount, what many of them remembered as children was long gone.

When the Babylonians came in as God's instrument of judgment, they defeated the Jews in battle, and then destroyed the city of Jerusalem, and completely demolished the Temple.

On the journey back, the people were pumped to rebuild, but the reality of that task once they arrived was daunting.

They had bitten off more than they could chew, so they thought.

When they arrived at first, it was to collect an offering.

We read in

Ezra 2:68-69 *Some of the heads of the fathers' houses, when they came to the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God, to erect it in its place: 69 According to their ability, they gave to the treasury for the work sixty-one thousand gold drachmas, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priestly garments.*

This is estimated at about \$60,000-\$70,000 today, which is a great start for a building fund.

So, in the seventh month of 536 BC, they used the funds to first build an altar and offer a sacrifice for the Feast of Tabernacles.

Then, over the next seven months, they would hire masons and carpenters to build with material brought down from Lebanon to the port of Joppa.

Cedar was shipped down the coast.

The foundation was laid, and then the project was left, and I am sure they had every intention to get back to it.

But some enemies had moved into the region, Samaritans, who were not full Jews, and the Samaritans created havoc for the resettling Jews.

They would try to infiltrate the work... and then agitate from the outside...

When that did not succeed, they would try to intimidate... then ultimately they would try to use the law to stop the work.

The Persian rulers would ultimately step in and block the work from continuing.

And all of this exhausted the Jews, the work of the Lord was taxing on them, and a huge cost to their way of life.

They just wanted to live a little, build a nice little home, enjoy some finer things, get a little “me” time with the misses.

“We will get back to the work of the Lord another time.”

Again, good intentions... but for fifteen years the work of rebuilding the Temple was neglected.

This grieved the heart of the prophet Haggai and even Zechariah... and the Lord would use these two men to revive the people.

There was still work to be done here... there is no time for rest in this spiritual work...

Haggai would preach for four months, we get four of his sermons.

They each speak to a unique problem facing the work of building the Temple.

These are the same issues that hinder you and I...

That can get in the way of us accomplishing the work God has put before us.

Haggai will confront self-centeredness.

He will deal with being short-sighted.

He will confront something the Jews seem to always deal with: self-righteousness.

Then he will address the problem of second-guessing.

Look now at verse 1...

The Command to Build God's House

(Ezra 5:1)

1:1 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, **2** "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.'""

It is something here to note, that God does not address "My People," here, but "This people."

He is definitely angry with them...

When Jess gets mad at one of the boys, she will tell me when I get home, "Do you know what one of your sons did today?"

Well, I thought they were ours... but what?

The Jews were making excuses here.... "The time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built."

In the beginning, they had their ministry applications in early, they were so excited, showing up early to serve...

But when the opposition started to come... discouragement started to set in, and they found more joy in this preoccupation with their own homes.

They began procrastinating, the very reason they were inspired to come back to Jerusalem.

Someone today might say, "Once I get my business established, I will be more available."

When I get married, I will be able to be more attentive.

When we retire, we will be able to do more for the Lord.

Once the kids are older, we can be more available for ministry.

And often, our motivation gives way to our procrastination.

But what many don't understand is that the best way to serve the devil is to do nothing...

Part of the curse on this world is the weeds and thistles, and when we let our gardens go without care, and we do nothing, the devil's way is for weeds to grow.

This is the great scheme of the devil over the Church today, he lulls the Church into comfort, into a sleepy, resty, good place....

Maybe lots of Bible study, goodness, we go from one to the next, some people are Bible study every night of the week...

Then back off to that recliner chair to watch the latest Survivor episode or to keep up on the News...

There is so much to be done in the Kingdom of God...

But the great thought in the Church today is "They" will do it...

This mysterious "They" in everyone's head... we need more children's ministry teachers... "They" will do it...

We need more Foster Homes. "They" will do it...

We need more servants to clean up, help out, reach out, live out, go on missions, and in everyone's mind, "They" will do it...

But the great reality of God's Word is that every believer is supposed to see themselves as "They."

We are the ones, and if we don't step up, there is no other "They."

When you see a need, and the thought comes into your head, "Man, 'They' really need to handle that in this Church," start prayerfully considering God might be calling you to be the 'They' you are hoping stands up to do it...

Look at verse 3...

3 Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, **4** *"Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"*

God's people were saying, "The time has not come that the Lord's house should be built..." but they had time to build their own houses and lives.

And they were not building just normal homes; they were building these custom-built houses, paneled homes.

Remember, they were shipping cedar from Lebanon down to furnish the Temple fifteen years prior.

But that siding, oh, you know, it would go bad just sitting there in the hot sun... we can't just leave it sitting around...

Since the work at the Lord's house is difficult... you know what... goodness... maybe... I mean, how could this be a coincidence? No, this has to be providence... turns out, last night I was designing my living room, and I had in my head a space designed with that color exactly in it...

I am just going to say it, Jehovah Jireh, God has provided, I am blessed and highly favored... that cedar

paneling right there, it was meant for me... How could it be otherwise...

They procrastinated on the Lord's work they were called to, and moved right into self-centeredness.

Listen, this happens all the time. Serving the Lord is hard; it comes at a great cost. There is a spiritual adversary that wreaks havoc on our lives...

And when you are called to be a servant, you really know what type of servant you are when people treat you like one.

It can get draining when people hurt you... Or you feel used and taken advantage of...

Serving the Lord in Ministry is not always a source of personal fulfillment, there are seasons it is that... when fruit is coming, but think of your fruit trees, that it is a short time of the year...

The bulk of the time is pretty rough for those trees.

Serving feels like... well... it feels like serving...

And when people realize it is not glamorous or you are not celebrated or recognized, they typically bail... they forget whose eyes they are really doing it for.

They withdraw into self-absorption and self-protection, even self-preservation.

You ask them to help or pitch in, and they have the art of excuses mastered.

Today, if the weather is too good on Sunday, they feel like they can't waste the day serving at the Church, there is something better they can do, but if the weather is just a little too bad, a rain cloud in the sky, they can't risk going in, it is too dangerous....

But to see their favorite band and sports team, they will risk Hurricanes and Tornadoes, endure the cold, drive for miles, and incur great costs for their families.

Shoot, they would rather work in their yards on a beautiful day or invest in their retirement than go to Church...

I read about a pastor who received this letter...

"Dear Pastor, We know you stress regular church attendance, but we think every member should be excused for the following reasons and for the number of times indicated... Christmas (Sunday before or after) 1 - New Year's Day (party lasted too long) 1 - Easter (spring break for the kids) 1 - July 4th (national holiday) 1 - Labor Day (getaway) 1 - Memorial Day (visit hometown) 1 - School closing (Kids need a break) 1 - School opens (last fling) 1 - Family reunions (mine and the wife's) 2 - Sleep late (late Saturday night activities) 4 - Deaths in the family 2 - Sickness (one for each family member) 5 - Anniversary 1 - Business trips (got a make a living) 4 - Vacation 3 - Bad weather (ice, snow, rain, fog) 5 - Little league games 6 - Unexpected company (can't walk out) 3 - Time changes (Spring ahead, Fall back) 2 - TV Specials (Super Bowl, etc.) 5. Pastor, that leaves us two Sundays per year. So you can count on us to be in church on the fourth Sunday in February and the third Sunday in August unless providentially hindered. Sincerely, Faithful Member."¹

That is funny... but a little sad...

¹ <https://www.sandyadams.org/sermon/haggai-1-2/>

I had a personal crisis over Spring Break... We had a beach trip planned... And I was hearing the kids all tell me all the different things they wanted to do... the crazy things they thought were owed to them...

Knotts Berry Farm... but this one wanted Disneyland... and this one wanted something else...

I thought our culture was wild... then, as parents, we feel guilty if we don't give these kids what they demand, because little Johnny from school is going to those places...

I canceled the beach trip, the hotel, and I took them to Mexico, the orphanage my wife and Pastor Josh found last year...

We stayed with the Pastor we support in La Mision, and just did ministry...

I refuse to succumb to the pressure to spoil our kids so they have a good childhood...

It was interesting on the way home; all the kids did was talk about how they couldn't wait to go back down to Mexico...

What do you mean? Serving the Lord is as fun as filling them full of sugar, riding rides all day, and watching them throw tantrums when they don't get their way?

I think it was actually... they said the adventure was fun...

So, I did the experiment for you... You can be a good parent... serve the Lord with your kids in tow... and they will actually have fun...

Thank my midlife crisis... I did not even do it as a good man... it was more breakdown in life... seeing what was going on in my family... it was a kind of, "Let's see what happens here moment."

To build the Temple or a Church, we need people who can be dependable and counted on... who show up when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient...

Who are as serious about their giving to the work of God as they are about the bills in their lives...

Who are as serious about their morning devo as they are about their morning exercise routine...

People who care about reaching the Lost, the Great Commission, more than their own personal interests...

Look at verse 5...

5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts:
"Consider your ways!"

6 "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."

7 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways!"

Haggai sees the self-centeredness, and it is all too much.

They are more preoccupied with their own interests.

It is interesting here; it looks like their own interests have gotten them nowhere.

They have come to a place where they just cannot be truly content and satisfied...

They served themselves... and that self-monster always wants more...

They have nothing to show for it...

He who earns, earns wages to put into a bag with holes...

He makes a lot, but has nothing to show for his labor.

Selfishness walks into a store and feels it deserves what it sees, regardless of what it can afford...

Credit card companies build their empires on the selfishness within every human heart... counting on us to feel as though we deserve it all.

God's command here is simple, look at verse 8 now...

8 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. **9** "*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. **10** Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. **11** 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."

It is simple, really: stop talking about what you have done for God, or stop talking about what you are going to do in the future... because you never come through.

Talk is so cheap among the people of God... Obedience is how we bring Glory to God.

God desires obedience... He tells them plainly, "Go up to the mountains and bring wood."

He doesn't even tell them to place another order with the Lebanese.

He tells them to get busy with what they have, right now, start where they are.

He doesn't give them a reason to make another excuse, use the Judean trees.

They will wait forever for the better quality stuff to come...

They looked for much, but it came to little, and when they brought it home, it blew away.

They brought the material that was meant for God home, and God made sure they could not enjoy it.

He would not let them enjoy their home while they left His house in ruins.

Because they neglected the Temple, He cut off their abundance.

He sent lean times on them to call attention to the inequity in the camp.

Then verse 12...

The People's Obedience

12 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 . **13** Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, spoke the LORD's message to the people, saying, "*I am* with you, says the LORD ." **14** 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, **15** on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

Now, this is pretty remarkable...

God's people hear the Lord... then they fear Him... which in turn makes way for them to obey Him...

The last part is after obedience, they worshipped the Lord.

This is very important... the Lord is not going to call you to anything that He Himself is not going to equip you for.

Also, where the Lord guides, He also provides.

Once the Governor and the people set out to obey God's Word, God assures them that He is with them.

God will come alongside them in the work.

The people will go to work for the Lord, but He will be in it with them.

Once they obeyed, then God's Spirit would stir them up...

Think about this... maybe you are afraid to step out into the work, because you feel ill-equipped... and maybe you are... that is okay...

We are shown that once we step out and get into the work, God gets to work in us...

He meets us in our step of faith... it really is something to experience...

First step out... and then experience His strength and power... and then He gets all the Glory...

Look now at verse 1 of Chapter 2....

The Coming Glory of God's House

2:1 In the seventh *month*, on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying: **2** "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: **3** 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, *is this* not in your eyes as nothing?

So, Haggai began preaching this second sermon a little over three weeks into construction.

But it was a slow go, as three Jewish Feasts held operations up.

There would have been Rosh Hashanah, the Feast of Trumpets; Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement; and the Feast of Tabernacles, called Sukkot.

They were not optional feast days, but mandatory...

So, this, of course, impeded progress.

Fifteen years earlier, when the foundation was laid, many of the older men, who were around when the former glory of Solomon's Temple was in their midst, saw what was happening, Ezra records...

Ezra 3:12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' *houses*, older men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. This was like throwing water on the worker's zeal.

Oh, this is one of Satan's greatest strategies...

The generational grippers... don't get me wrong... Many older people love to see God move in the younger generation...

But some think if it was not birthed in a tent with hippies, and done a certain way with certain songs, then it could not be of the Lord.

They are always looking back... never looking forward... or being present... they won't be a part of what God is doing now... because they want to protect the past...

And there at the new foundation of the Temple, the Elders cried, and all they could do was focus on what once was...

This was so discouraging... the workers wondered, "Why bother?" If our resources are so limited, and we are giving all our might to this ministry, well, we might as well just shut it down, if all they are going to do is complain about how it used to be."

Yet the comparison was not just... how could those elders even compare what Solomon started with what Zerubbabel started with?

He only had maybe \$70,000 if he was lucky.

I put in ChatGPT all the material David left Solomon, and it gave a rough estimate of \$300 Billion... one of the most expensive building efforts in history.

Yet here is Zerubbabel with what he has, and he is obeying, even as the old-timers complain and whine about it all.

God, through Haggai, tells him, “You are bringing pleasure to God, please don’t call that nothing!”

What those old timers are calling worthless and irrelevant, God is calling very significant and important.

We cannot compare... Comparison is a death trap to our Joy...

Haggai believed here that even if their Temple was smaller, their obedience was greater, bringing great pleasure and glory to God.

That should be all that matters... we should be doing all that we do for God’s eyes alone...

Church, don't listen to the critics and pessimists in your ear.

There seem to be in every circle those who want to tell you that you will never make it, that it cannot be done, that you are doing it all wrong... what if it all falls apart...

Try to see your life through faith... with eyes of faith... What if God is in this... what if God is going to do great things here... what if God is going to use this little that I have, and do something wonderful with it?

Haggai continues preaching in verse 4...

4 Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the LORD; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the LORD, 'and work; for I *am* with you,' says the LORD of hosts. **5** 'According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!'

We see here three times they are told to be strong,

When people are trying to compare you to others, make you feel small, or belittle you, we see the cure for your heart here... conviction...

Be strong and work... Just keep working...

Keep doing what God has called you to do... keep those hands to the plow and keep moving forward.

Stay at it... It is sad to see someone give up, drop out, or surrender when things get hard, or they become discouraged...

The remedy I have found is to keep moving...

I laugh sometimes, because I wondered if, one Sunday, I didn't show up to the pulpit, everyone sitting there in their seats, and maybe I had a headache or didn't sleep, or got sunburnt at the beach, or whatever, and just said, I am not going today.

Or those church people, they are mean sometimes, I am going to get pancakes at Denny's today instead...

And there are days when I have thought about hanging it all up; I have gotten bummed out over the lack of tangible results, and thought about hanging it up...

But I have found the best cure for discouragement is to keep moving forward.

It also helps that when I go to my wife for sympathy, and I will say, “Babe, it is hard, I just don’t know if I can do it...” and I am looking for a little pity or something...

Jess will say, “Stop being a baby, pull up your big boy pants, get your study done, and preach your sermon.”

And I remember I married an outlaw saved by Grace, not a homeschool church-raised Christian girl.

But it is the work that keeps us on the right path...

Notice in verse 5, they are to keep working because God’s Spirit is at work in them.

God references a 900-year-old promise made to Israel when they were rescued from Egypt.

But it was still in place, because God's promise to the Jews stood the test of time.

And when God's Spirit is among us, within us, around us, no matter what we have done up to this point, the best is still to come...

We can always say, "Greater things are yet to come."

Verse 6 now...

6 "For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it *is* a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; **7** and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. **8** 'The silver *is* Mine, and the gold *is* Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. **9** 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts."

This is a pretty remarkable promise.

The Jewish old timers were so focused on the past and what once was.

But God tells Zerubbabel and Joshua to look ahead...

Hey, right now, things might look dismal compared to Solomon's Temple, but God tells him that what he is building will surpass the glory of anything that was before.

He tells them not to be so short-sighted... God is not even close to done.

Here is something to think about...

Solomon's Temple had incredible articles that Zerubbabel's did not, like the Ark of the Covenant, the Holy Fire on the sacrificial altar, the Shekinah Glory, which was God's visible presence... and the Urim and the Thummim, as far as we know, the special stones the priest used to understand God's Will.

So, with these important things not present in the second Temple, how in the world could it be more glorious?

Well, that phrase, “The Desire of All Nations,” is a Messianic phrase.

And it would be in this Temple being built right here that Baby Jesus would be dedicated, that He would come to the feast each year to celebrate, and that, in His own ministry, He would debate the religious establishment.

Jesus would walk in it and teach His world-changing teachings on its steps.

Whatever this Temple lacked in earthly estimates, God’s Son would make up for; Jesus would give it greater glory.

And this is something I am always assessing about our Church... not so much the numbers, the size, the number of programs, or other tangible qualities...

I want to know if Jesus shows up here on Sunday and when the doors are open for ministry.

We can draw a crowd to all kinds of things... we can do things to get people in this place... but the greater glory is having Jesus here...

Verse 10 begins...

The People Are Defiled

10 On the twenty-fourth *day* of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, **11** "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests *concerning the law*, saying, **12** "If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?'"

Then the priests answered and said, "No."

We see clearly here, from this exchange, that just hanging around holy things or people will not make you holy.

Some people, when you share the Lord with them, will say something like, "Well, my Grandma was very religious."

Or “My kids love going to Church.”

We cannot get it from someone else.

We cannot shower in Holy Water and become holy.

We cannot even build a Church or Temple, something set apart to God, and think we are more holy than others.

A title like "pastor" or "elder" does not automatically make us holy.

It is God who makes us Holy when we surrender ourselves to Him.

So Haggai has another question...

13 And Haggai said, "If *one who is* unclean *because* of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?"

So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

Now, this is the crazy reality: evil is transferable.

We inherited sin from Adam.

And I warn my kids all the time, hanging around evil people will impact you...

Evil is more contagious...

I used to demonstrate this with the youth kids, by putting them up on something, a table or something similar, and I would say, "Is it easier to be pulled off that table or to pull someone up with you on that table?"

Our nature is bent on evil... so if we hang around places and people we ought not to, we will eventually fall.

We need to be around the people of God...

Look now at verse 14...

14 Then Haggai answered and said, "'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the LORD, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.

The good work that they were performing with their hands didn't take away the evil in their hearts.

They were not becoming more holy by doing this work.

This is the danger of serving or working in the Church...

Just being around the Church or in ministry does not make you holier...

For some, it makes them proud and self-righteous...

It is true the work you are doing brings pleasure to the Lord, but when you are trying to go beyond His eyes, and get people to look at you... self-righteousness becomes a problem... it is not smiled upon from heaven...

Verse 15 now...

Promised Blessing

15 'And now, carefully consider from this day forward: from before stone was laid upon stone in

the temple of the LORD — **16** since those *days*, when *one* came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were *but* ten; when *one* came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were *but* twenty. **17** I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not *turn* to Me,' says the LORD. **18** 'Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid — consider it: **19** Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded *fruit*. *But* from this day I will bless *you*.'"

God is here promising to reverse their recent failures and to bless their obedience.

Their priorities are now in the correct order... God first, themselves second... and God will never be outdone...

Verse 20...

Zerubbabel Chosen as a Signet

20 And again the word of the LORD CAME to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, **21** "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying:

'I will shake heaven and earth.

22 I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms;
I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms.
I will overthrow the chariots
And those who ride in them;
The horses and their riders shall come down,
Every one by the sword of his brother.

23 'In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the LORD, 'and will make you like a signet *ring*; for I have chosen you,' says the LORD of hosts."

Zerubbabel is promised here that, in the future, he will be made a strong leader and will no longer have to second-guess his decisions.

God will trust him to make decisions as His representative.

He was not naturally a confident man, but we see God is developing him as a leader.

On that day, he will be given a signet ring.

Jesus, in our daily manna reading today, told His listeners to look at the signs of the times, and not to get so caught up in them that we miss our duty.

He said in

Luke 12:43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.

We have work to do today... it is not for later, or for after we take care of our own life, or when things are more convenient for us...

Jesus is coming soon... and there is a great work we are called to of reaching the Lost for His Glory...

Like those in Haggai's day, we are called to be strong in this work, committed, to keep working, because God is with us. Don't second-guess your calling, Church...

Greater things are yet to come... **Let's pray...**