

## The Book of Haggai

Dear Kids,

Have you ever begun working on a project only to become discouraged with your progress? Maybe you packed everything up and put it all on a shelf thinking you would come back to it at another time. But as often happens years pass and the forgotten project dies a slow death collecting dust on a forsaken shelf.

Every once in a while you kids like to brave the depths of my bedroom closet in search of the Creative Memory photo albums I started for each of you many years ago. The operative word is "started!" With enthusiasm I purchased all the necessary tools including acid free stickers, colorful paper strips, bright pens, cutting boards, and more. With gusto I began to tackle this right-brained project by sorting through hundreds of pictures and making appropriate piles for each child.

I had only completed about two pages for each album when I began to feel overwhelmed. How was I ever going to finish five of these things? Each page took so much work. There were so many years worth of pictures to catch up on and with every day that passed we snapped more pictures.

Finally, with the excuse that we needed the dining room table back, I packed up all the supplies, stashed them in storage, and tucked the partly finished albums on the floor under my bathrobes in my closet. Twenty years later that is where they still remain with only the first few years of each child's life recorded. If only I had had some encouragement and help perhaps I could have completed this monstrous project!

The book of Haggai is a message of encouragement for God's children to complete a task they had started sixteen years before. The nation of Israel had forsaken God and had entered into exile because of their sin. Many years later God kept a promise of restoration and brought a group back to the homeland. In the book of Ezra it is recorded that the returned people began to rebuild the Temple, the center of their worship, but soon became very discouraged. Enemies and unsympathetic neighbors began to cause trouble for them and eventually the builders shut the project down.

Through the prophet Haggai God sent a message of correction, encouragement, and hope to a group of people who had forgotten the center and purpose of their nation. God had called them to be His people and to shine the light of His presence to the

world, but they had again abandoned him. Instead they became focused only on themselves and their everyday affairs, leaving God out of their lives. But God in His mercy again reached out to them. The nation listened to the message and picked up the forgotten project of building the Temple and restoring worship to the center of their lives. Through their obedience God blessed them.

Maybe you have also become so busy with your everyday life that you have forgotten to make God the center. Or maybe you have begun a ministry of helping others see their need for God and His salvation through Jesus Christ but have become discouraged. If so, the book of Haggai is for you! In these pages you will meet a God who never gives up on His people, who gives encouragement when needed, who promises His presence, and gives hope for the future. Read on, seek to apply these truths to your own life, and just maybe this simple message within a small book of the Bible will become one of your very favorites.

Love,  
Mama

## The Study of Haggai

Haggai is one of the minor prophets. Within this small book there are a number of important messages for God's people. Read the whole book through at least three times to familiarize yourself with the big picture. Then mark all the places in your Bible where it states that the word of the Lord came to Haggai. These are the spots we will use as divisions for our study.

### Message #1 & Message #2

Haggai 1:1-12

1. To whom was the first message spoken? \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. What is the main conflict? \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What was so significant about the Temple and what was the underlying attitude of those who built their own houses first?  
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\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. In verses 5-7 God twice called the people to consider their ways. What attitude needed to be confronted and what changes needed to be made?  
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\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What were the consequences of the workers' getting their focus off of God and only working for personal gain?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. What turning point occurs in verse 12? What two actions reveal a change of heart?  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. What are the areas of your life for which you need to "consider your ways" and make some changes? In what specific ways could you obey and reverence the Lord today? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Message #3**

Haggai 1:13-15

1. What encouragement does God give to the people in response to their obedience? Why would this be such a blessing for them?

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2. What does God do in response to the people's obedience and what was the end result? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Message #4**

Haggai 2:1-9

1. What specific discouragement does God address in this message?

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2. Read the following verses and record reasons why the Temple was so significant in Israelite culture.

1 Kings 6:11-14 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Kings 8:10-11 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Kings 8:28-30 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Kings 8:33-34 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Kings 8:64 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 56:6-7 \_\_\_\_\_

The Temple was meant to be the center of Israelite worship. It represented God's dwelling place on earth. The ornate building housed the Ark of the Covenant where God caused His glory to reside. It was the place where sacrifices were made for sin and where people could communicate with God through prayer. Even when the children of Israel were in bondage they would direct their prayers facing towards the Temple. This building was the also the center of Israelite community and a tangible reminder of God's holiness and the need for God's people to be separate from the world. It symbolized peace and rest and ultimately pointed to Jesus Christ as the One who would one day completely restore man's relationship with God.

3. Why could these despondent people take courage despite any disappointment in their building project? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What promise did God give in verse 9? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Since it was likely that the actual Temple building would not be as grand as Solomon's Temple what might the greater "latter glory" be referring to? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How does the promise of God's presence give you courage and peace in your present circumstances? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

**Message #5**

Haggai 2:10-19

1. Restate in your own words the principle Haggai is trying to express in 2:12-14. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. For what purpose did God allow hardships into the lives of His people? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Has there ever been a time in your life when hardship drew you back to God? Despite the difficulty what were the benefits of seeking the Lord and what lessons did you learn? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The Israelites had not been faithful to God, yet they responded obediently to Haggai's message. What comfort do you gain from God's response to them in verse 19? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Message #6**

Haggai 2:20-23

This last message is a prophecy of the future. The Lord speaks of a time "on that day" when He will shake the heavens and the earth, overthrow all kingdoms destroying the power of all nations, the chariots, riders, and horses.

1. What comfort do you receive in your own personal circumstances when you consider the power and sovereignty of the Lord as shown in this passage? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Who was Zerubbabel? See Haggai 1:1 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who would come from Zerubbabel's ancestry line? See Matthew 1:12-13, Luke 3:27 \_\_\_\_\_

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In vs. 23 the Lord of Hosts declares He has chosen Zerubbabel and will make him like a signet ring. A ruling sovereign wore a signet ring to use as a seal on important documents and decrees.

This final message of Haggai points to the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, the ultimate ruler who will overcome the world.

As we conclude our study of Haggai read back over the book as a whole. Have you heard God's voice calling you into deeper relationship with Him? If so, determine to consider your ways and make the changes necessary to put the Lord at the center of your life.

Express your thoughts and desires in a prayer to our merciful God who never gives up on His children, promises His presence for those who obey, longs to encourage, and promises hope for the future: \_\_\_\_\_

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I hope you have enjoyed the study of this small book tucked into the Old Testament pages, and have considered renewing your relationship with the Lord making it the highest priority of your life. May God bless you and change you through His Word!

Love,  
Mama