

Title: Our God Restores, Part 2

Text: Haggai 2:1-9

Date: Jan 24, 2021 at FBCW

INTRO.

Last week I shared with you the historical backdrop of the book of Haggai.

- God had a special nation of covenant – the nation was called Israel.
- God gave them His Word, called the Ten Commandments.

No other gods...Make no idols...Don't take the Lord's name in vain...Remember the Sabbath...Honor your parents...Do not murder...Do not commit adultery...Do not steal...Do not lie...Do not covet.

This Law (the Ten Commandments) was to make Israel a special, holy, different nation than all of the other nations around them.

- If you obey these Ten, you will be blessed.
- If you disobey these Ten, you will regret it.

But sadly, the story of the Old Testament is largely about the Israelites inability to wholly keep the Law/Word of God.

- The only pattern was their inconsistency (way up, or way down).
- They failed often: idols, intermarrying, failed Sabbath-keeping.

God sent prophets to warn the people...but the people didn't always listen.

The bottom line: Israel broke their commitment of covenant to God...however...though Israel failed, God refused to break covenant with Israel.

Israel: inconsistent...often cold...distracted...easily lured away by false gods.

God: holy...fervent in his love...committed...focused on doing whatever it takes to restore His people to the covenant!

2 Tim 2:11-13, This saying is trustworthy: For if we died with him, we will also live with him...if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.

Rom 5:20-21, But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign...through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So who is our God? Who is the God of the Bible? He is good...gracious...faithful...his mercy and love never ends!

- People might say: God is mean to allow punishment to come upon us!

- No! This is wrong thinking!
- God's discipline is not retributive, it is restorative.

God cares for us...God cares for us enough to discipline us (good/wise parents know this!)

Prov 3:12, *For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, just as a father disciplines the son in whom he delights.*

God had warned his people for years through the prophets! → *Repent...turn back to the Lord.*

But after many warnings, God allowed the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar to come in and conquer Israel...and to take Israel as their prisoners for 70 years.

- This was perhaps the lowest point in Israelite history.
- But still...God had not forgotten Israel...and God was still working!

After 70 years, a new power rose in the land → the Persians under King Cyrus. The Persians conquered the Babylonians and let the Israelites go free, to return to their homeland and to restore Temple worship in Jerusalem.

Prior to the Book of Haggai, the Israelites had been back home in Jerusalem for less than 20 years. Originally the work on the Temple was going well.

- They laid the foundation of the Temple.
- But then construction stalled...other nations opposed them and made progress halt.

So the Israelites (and their worship) grew stale.

The lack of progress on restoring the Temple was reflective of their poor spiritual condition.

- The Temple wasn't active...because their hearts weren't close to the Lord!

From Haggai 1

- Revival and restoration begin with leadership (1:1). *Shealtiel and Joshua.*
- God says twice, "*Consider your ways.*" (1:5) (1:7). God wants us to truly think about how we are living. God wants us to consider our spiritual condition.
 - 1:2, If it's not time to get serious about God now, then when will we?
 - 1:4, Is it okay for my house to materially prosper while my spiritual condition suffers?
- We will never obtain contentment until God is our top priority.
 - 1:6, we've worked so hard...but gotten nowhere!
 - 1:10, God says: I control the skies, land, crops, and herds.
 - God controls economies, governments, etc.
 - "You just put your eyes on me!"

Today, from Haggai 2

2:1, On the 21st day of the seventh month → Oct 17, 520BC.

- It was about 40 days after Haggai's first message to the people...calling on them to consider their ways.

This was also the final day of the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles). It was a good time to speak to the crowded community.

- They were celebrating the fall harvest.
- They were remembering their ancestors who journeyed in tents under Moses.

2:2-3, Haggai gathers the leaders and the people and asks three rhetorical questions: *Who is left among the people that can remember Solomon's Temple in all its gold and glory? How does it look now? Doesn't today's Temple look dreadful compared to the first?*

2:4-5, Even so leaders and people → be strong (3x)! Get to work! I am with you. I was with you when you exited Egypt and rebuilt your nation...I am also with you now.

2:6-9, For the Lord God of Armies says this:

- I am going to shake all the nations. I am going to shake all of the earth.
- I am going to shake all the nations so that the treasures (desires) of the nations will trickle here into the Temple.
- The silver and the gold belong to me...I can do with it what I want.
- The future glory of this House will be superior to the original.
- I will provide peace for this place.

We might say it like this: Haggai told the people to be strong and keep working, because God's Spirit is at work in every generation.

While all the people have gathered for the festival, Haggai says:

- The older people can affirm this → today's Temple looks nothing like the glory of the original Temple.
- Nevertheless, God says to get to work! (3x).
- God promises to be with us. He was with us in the past, and He is with us now.
- And in the future...God is going to shake the world...so that the resources throughout the world flow into this House.
- The future glory of this House will be greater than the past.
- God will provide peace for this House (it will never be destroyed).

First, the backdrop of Haggai's message was the context of God's provision (2:1). The timing of when God speaks to them – at the end of the Feast of Booths. God knew Haggai would have a captive audience!

- Have I not fed you physically this past year?
- Have I not guided your ancestors spiritually for many years in the past?

Today, let us pause and look around. In what ways has God specifically provided for us?

- Phil 4:19, *My God shall supply all your needs...*
- Rom 8:32, *if God did not spare His own Son, will he not freely give us all things...*

Second, let us take a real look at what God did in the past (2:3).

Two things are referenced in this text: Solomon's glorious Temple of gold...and also the Exodus from Egypt.

- God is wanting the people to look back at His track record of faithfulness.
- Psalm 37:25, *Once I was young, and now I am old, and never have I seen the righteous forsaken, or God's people begging for bread.*

Haggai was not asking for the elderly's perspective for condemnation (look how far we've fallen)...NO...he was asking it for encouragement: look what God did then...can He do it again?

Message to older people: do not think the "good old days" are better than what God can still do!

- The work of God in your generation is not better than the work of God in this generation.
- Same God who delivered/restored your generation can do it here, now!

Message to younger people: stop listening to all the young people around you, and get around some older people (intergenerational) and ask them about the "old temple" of their lives and how God was faithful!

Third, let us remember God will supply every need for the work of this generation (2:4-5).

- God says three times: be strong! Get to work!
- God never commands us to do something without giving us the strength to do it.
- All of us were born here, now, for such a time as this (Esther 4:14) (Acts 17:26).

Fourth, recognize that our future glory, through Christ, will be greater than any glory this world has ever known. Through Jesus, better days are always coming! (2:6-9)

- God is going to arrange politically and materially for the Temple in Haggai under Zerubbabel to be restored (the Persians will fund it).

But this is also eschatological/futuristic: God has already arranged for the true Temple (his body, the church) to be restored! Christ is my salvation and my eternal hope.

The **Tabernacle** (mobile, moving).

Solomon's Temple, funded by David.

Zerubbabel's Temple, desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes.

Herod's Temple, destroyed by the Romans.

The **Present Temple**, in the heart of Christians.

The **Future Eternal Temple** (Rev 21:22)...

Rev 21:22, I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Big Idea. Believers are called to obey God, trusting Him to show His glory, however he chooses, in this generation.

1. Am I praying for revival in my nation?
 - a. Holiness is not just what we separate ourselves from, it's also what we give ourselves to.
 - b. Don't just watch the news and get disgusted.
 - c. Love your neighbor. Support your church. Evangelize the lost.
 - d. Be a part of the solution for change!

2. Am I personally being revived? Would the folks who know me best, describe me as one that the Lord is actively growing and changing?

3. Is the trajectory of my life telling this story – look what sin stole, but look what Christ is restoring?