

## Lesson 9 God Raises Up Haggai the Prophet

### Key Themes in the Book of Ezra

- Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness and man's covenantal unfaithfulness
- Yahweh sovereignly and providentially works out his redemptive purpose in history despite human evil.
- Yahweh's intention for Israel for purity in worship and obedience to the law
- Yahweh's grace and mercy exceed his anger
- Sinful man's need for a changed heart

### Background:

**Haggai:** A postexilic prophet whom God used to rouse the people of Judah to finish rebuilding His Temple.

**Prophet:** A prophet is a spokesperson for God who speaks in God's name and by His authority.

**paneled houses:** The word "paneled" in Hebrew can mean covered, roofed or paneled. Whichever the meaning, it represents the finishing touches.

### Key Words and phrases:

**consider:** (a combination of 3 different Hebrew words) **1) Strong's H7760 "sum or sim"** to put, place or set; **2) Strong's H3824 "lebab"** inner man: the mind, will, heart **3) Strong's "H5921 "al"** a preposition which can be translated using the word "upon". Here in verse 5 it literally means "set your course or way of life".

**desolate: Strong's H2720 "hareb"** an adjective meaning dry or desolated: wasted. The word is used in Haggai 1:4 to indicate that God's temple is lying desolate or in ruins. It is used again in Haggai 1:11 to mean a dryness. (God would bring a dryness or drought upon the land).

### Time line for the Rebuilding of God's Temple

**536 BC ..... Temple Begun**

**534 BC..... Work on Temple stopped**

**520 BC..... Work on Temple resumed**

**515 BC..... Temple completed**

### Read Ezra 4:1-5;24 Ezra 5:1-2 and Haggai 1:1-15

Around 536 BC the exiles had begun the work of rebuilding God's temple. They soon ran into opposition from their neighbors. and then according to Ezra 4:24 the work on the temple ceased. It was stopped until the second year of Darius, the king of Persia, which was 520 BC. At that time God raised up the prophet Haggai as well as the prophet Zechariah to preach to the people the need to complete the construction. In this lesson we will focus on the first chapter in the Book of Haggai.

1. Haggai spoke to the exile leaders, Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, the word of the Lord. According to Haggai 1:2-4 what did the Lord point out to the people of Judah about the condition of His house? What did He say was the reason for it? What excuse did the people make in 1:2 for not rebuilding the Lord's house?

2. Through Haggai the Lord told the people to "Consider your ways"! According to Haggai 1:6;9-11 what specifically were their "ways"? What negative consequences did they experience as a direct result of their "ways"? Please describe any parallels you see between what they experienced and what we experience in our society today. Have you ever experienced a "spiritual drought" in your life as a result of neglecting the Lord, His Kingdom and the work He has called you to do? If yes, please describe.

3. We see in verse 7 that once again the Lord told the people through Haggai to "Consider your ways"! What did the Lord command the people to do in verse 8? What reason or purpose did the Lord give for rebuilding the Temple? Why is it important for us to always keep that reason in mind as we serve the Lord and live out our daily lives on the earth?

4. According to Haggai 1:12-15 and Ezra 5:1-2 ,how did the leaders and the people respond to the word of the Lord? What does their response reveal about their hearts towards the Lord? What does their response say about their willingness to repent of their sin and change their priorities? When they responded in obedience and humility what encouragement and promise did God immediately give to them in verse 13? Do you think we should expect the same kind of help and encouragement from the Lord as we step out in faith and obedience to Him and His word? Why? Provide scriptural support for your answer.

**Application:** What excuses have you made, or are you presently making for not putting God and His kingdom first in your life? Are there some areas you put God first and other areas you don't? Why? How often do you genuinely seek the Lord and ask Him to help you set the right priorities in your life? How willing are to make course changes as He leads? When you find that your priorities are out of order or wrong how willing are you to repent?

**Application:** Do you ever put your own personal prosperity over God's kingdom? What do the decisions that you regularly make concerning your finances, your possessions, your home, your family, your career, your lifestyle and your use of time, say about your real priorities in life?

