

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Haggai 2:1-9

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, June 8, 2014

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, June 8, 2014**, is from **Haggai 2:1-9**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is usually posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Haggai 2:1-9

(Haggai 2:1) **In the second year of King Darius, in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai, saying:**

Some have placed this date as October 17, 520 B.C. Because Haggai gave exact dates, the Hebrew lunar calendar and other calendars can be compared so almost exact dates can be given to Bible students today. In Haggai 1, the dates were August 29, 520 B.C. and 21 days after August 29, 520 B.C. The sixth month on the Jewish calendar is Elul (with days in both August and September). The seventh month is Tishri (with days in September and October). The Roman year 520 B.C. is the Hebrew year 3242. The word of the LORD came to the people through the prophet Haggai, and the word of the LORD is recorded in the Bible, written by prophets of God and others: see 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

(Haggai 2:2) **Speak now to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, and say,**

As in Haggai 1, Haggai went directly to the political and religious leaders and the people so the leaders could exercise their God-given responsibilities as political and religious leaders working together to achieve God's purposes. God told Haggai which leaders and people He wanted him to speak to, and God gave Haggai the words He wanted him to say to them. Haggai obeyed the LORD exactly, and the leaders and people followed his example of immediate obedience when they began to rebuild the temple. God also spoke to them through Haggai to encourage them as they obeyed Him and worked together.

(Haggai 2:3) Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Is it not in your sight as nothing?

Some think Haggai and a few others were old enough to have seen King Solomon's temple more than 70 years earlier, before God allowed the Babylonians to destroy the temple in 587 B.C. By comparison, their finished and rebuilt temple would look inferior to what King Solomon had built. They had to use recycled building stones from the old temple that would have been damaged during the temple's destruction, so it could not look as beautiful as the original finished stones of skilled craftsmen.

(Haggai 2:4) Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the LORD; work, for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts,

Even though their rebuilt temple would not look as beautiful as King Solomon's temple, God encouraged the people by telling them that He was still with them. God was with them and could encourage them because they obeyed Him according to His word. Approval by God did not depend on their rebuilding the temple as beautiful as the original temple, God encouraged them because they used what they had and did what they could to honor and obey God as He said when they began rebuilding the temple.

(Haggai 2:5) according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit abides among you; do not fear.

God told them that the promise that He gave to their ancestors remained valid. His promise applied to them, even as it had applied to Moses and to those who left Egypt with Moses. God promised to "abide" (which means remain, always be present) among them. Since God was among them, He was with each person personally at all times wherever they were; so, they had no reason to fear their enemies or fear that they would fail in the tasks that He had set before them to complete. Everything they needed to rebuild the temple was on the old temple's grounds or in the wooded hills. Whatever else they might need to do His will, God would supply in various ways.

(Haggai 2:6) For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land;

"In a little while" might seem a long time to His people, but God would be with them to meet their immediate needs as they rebuilt the temple. In the days of King Herod, though King Herod did not love and obey God, the LORD would use Herod to beautify His temple once again, because "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will" (Proverbs 21:1). One way God would meet their needs was by "shaking" all He had created. God has all the world's resources available to Him that He can give to His people as they are needed by His people to do His will.

(Haggai 2:7) and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the LORD of hosts.

God shook the nations around Jerusalem when King Darius commanded their enemies to pay taxes to help rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. God shook the nations around Jerusalem again for silver and gold when King Herod rebuilt the temple in order to gain favor with the Jews. In the time of Jesus, and even before, people came from a variety of nations to Jerusalem and gave offerings in the temple. For this reason, Jews and those who feared God went to money changers in the temple to have their foreign coins exchanged for approved temple coins to offer to God in the temple. We have ample evidence from the Old and New Testaments and secular history that God fulfilled Haggai's prophecy.

(Haggai 2:8) The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts.

The silver and gold is the LORD's because He created all of the silver and the gold. People with silver and gold are only custodians of what God owns, and they are only custodians for a short lifetime when compared to eternity. Some people love gold more than they love God, and these words of Jesus stand as a warning to all, "What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?" (Luke 9:25). God can and does move unbelievers with unholy motives, such as King Herod, to use silver and gold for His purposes: to beautify places of worship, to preach and teach the good news of Jesus around the world, to meet the needs of any of His people, to help the poor and the distressed. God shows believers how best to use the gifts He has given them for His purposes. Those who follow Jesus can freely, lovingly, and joyfully offer their silver and gold to God for His purposes and not lose or forfeit themselves.

(Haggai 2:9) The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts.

The rebuilt temple would be desecrated again by unbelievers, such as Antiochus IV, but God fulfilled this prophecy of Haggai. About 500 years after Haggai preached, King Herod rebuilt the temple and made it more beautiful than the former temple. King Herod's beautiful temple would also be desecrated by temple money changers and others, and later the temple would be destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. (as Jesus predicted and as a consequence of a revolt by the Jews). Jesus told His disciples what would happen as they admired Herod's temple: "As Jesus came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!' Then Jesus asked him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down'" (Mark 13:1-2). In Jerusalem today, we have solid evidence of Jesus' truthful prediction about the temple in Jerusalem. The New Testament teaches that the bodies of believers are the temple of the LORD: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). As Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit indwells those who trust in Jesus Christ as

Lord and Savior; therefore, God abides with His people as He did with Moses. Wherever they are around the world, God dwells among His people and within His people. Those who love and obey God in Jesus Christ today are far more beautiful spiritually than any temple made with stone, wood, gold, and silver.

Question for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why might God have made certain that Haggai recorded the exact dates of when He spoke to Haggai?
2. When the people realized that they could not rebuild the temple to look as beautiful as the former temple, what did God tell them?
3. What reason did God give the leaders and people for taking courage as they obeyed Him and worked on rebuilding the temple?
4. Who owns the world's silver and gold supply? Does knowing the answer encourage or discourage you? Give a reason for your answer.
5. Where is God's beautiful temple on earth today?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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