

# ***The Only Way to Truly Prosper***

*International Bible Lesson*

**Haggai 1:1-15**

**Sunday, June 1, 2014**

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*“Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes” (Haggai 1:5-6—KJV).*

*“Now therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and you that earn wages earn wages to put them into a bag with holes” (Haggai 1:5-6—NRSV).*

For many years after the Israelites returned from exile in Babylon, the farmers worked hard but they never harvested enough to meet their needs. Those who worked for wages could never save for the future; something always happened that took away their savings. Through the prophet Haggai, God told them, “You have looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away” (Haggai 1:9). No matter how much they acquired in a short period of time, they suffered loss because they disregarded God’s will, put themselves first or put God last in their lives. God would not allow them to substitute praying to God for obedience to God. Asking God to meet their needs could not substitute for loving the Lord their God with all of their heart, soul, and might (Deuteronomy 6:5). Some unbelievers might appear to never suffer any loss, but God disciplines His children so they will not lose the everlasting inheritance He has planned for them. After God’s Spirit stirred them to do the right thing, many Israelites put God first and began to obey the words of God in the Scriptures; then, God promised to be with them and gave them courage. They rebuilt the temple of the Lord, so everyone could see how they sincerely loved God and wanted to honor Him; then, they began to prosper.

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## **Thinking Further**

1. What three leadership roles do the three leaders in Haggai 1:1 fulfill? Which of these roles did Jesus fulfill?
2. What name, title, or description of God does the Book of Haggai use the most? What does this title tell us about God?
3. How is Haggai described?
4. How is Haggai’s message described?
5. Why did God send Haggai to the leaders and people in Jerusalem?