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LIFE-STUDY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS MESSAGE THIRTY-ONE ON HAGGAI

THE BUILDING OF THE HOUSE OF JEHOVAH IN RELATION TO ISRAEL'S WELFARE AND MESSIAH'S COMING

Scripture Reading: Hag. 1—2

In this message we will cover the book of Haggai, a book that is concerned with the building of the house of Jehovah in relation to Israel's welfare and Messiah's coming.

I. THE INTRODUCTORY WORD

Haggai 1:1 is the introductory word.

A. The Meaning of the Name Haggai

The name Haggai in Hebrew means "My feast" or "the feast of Jehovah," signifying that Haggai the prophet, who had been born in captivity in Babylon, expected earnestly to return from the captivity that the feasts of Jehovah might be restored.

B. The Time of Haggai's Ministry

The time of Haggai's ministry was 520 B.C., at the time of Zechariah (Ezra 5:1).

C. The Place of His Ministry

The place of his ministry was Jerusalem.

D. The Object of His Ministry

The object of his ministry was the returned Israelites.

E. The Subject

The subject of the prophecy of Haggai is Jehovah's dealing with the returned captives for the building of His house.

F. The Central Thought

The central thought of the book of Haggai is that the building of the house of Jehovah is related to the welfare of God's people today and to the coming of the millennial kingdom with its Messiah in the age of restoration. In the Old Testament the house of God, or the temple, was a type first of Christ as the house of God individually, and then of the church, the Body, the enlarged Christ, as God's house corporately. Thus, we should consider that Haggai refers to us, since we are the reality of the type. Jehovah's dealing with the returned captives signifies His dealing with us in the recovery.

G. The Revelation concerning Christ

The revelation concerning Christ in the book of Haggai covers two matters.

1. Christ's Being the Desire of All the Nations

First, this book reveals Christ in His being the Desire of all the nations (2:7).

2. Christ's Coming as the Messiah in the Coming Age

Second, this book reveals Christ in His coming as the Messiah (typified by Zerubbabel the governor) in the coming age (2:23).

H. The Sections

Haggai has three sections: the introductory word (1:1); Jehovah's rebuke and charge concerning the delay of the building of His house (1:2-15); and the prophecy concerning the house of Jehovah in the millennium and the promise of Messiah in the coming kingdom (2:1-23).

II. JEHOVAH'S REBUKE AND CHARGE CONCERNING THE DELAY OF THE BUILDING OF HIS HOUSE

A. Jehovah's Rebuke

In 1:2-6, 9-11 we have Jehovah's rebuke.

1. The People's Excuse

"Thus says Jehovah of hosts, saying, This people says, The time has not come, the time for the house of Jehovah to be built" (v. 2). Here we have the people's excuse for delaying to rebuild the house of Jehovah. Their excuse was the time had not yet come for the house of Jehovah to be built.

2. Jehovah's Question

The people's excuse is followed by Jehovah's question. "Then the word of Jehovah came through Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled up houses, while this house lies waste?" (vv. 3-4). They were taking care of their houses but not Jehovah's house, so He came in to ask them concerning His house.

3. Jehovah's Dealing with the Self-caring and God-neglecting Returned Captives

In verses 5, 6, and 9 through 11 we have Jehovah's dealing with the self-caring and God-neglecting returned captives.

a. Charging Them to Consider Their Ways

In His dealing, the first thing Jehovah did was to charge the people to consider their ways (v. 5).

b. Telling Them That They Had Sown Much but Had Brought in Little

Jehovah pointed out that the returned captives had sown much but had brought in little; that they had

eaten and drunk but without satisfaction; that they had clothed themselves but without being warmed; and that they had earned wages to put them into a bag with holes (v. 6). This tells us that if we do not have the heart to take care of God's house for His satisfaction, no matter how much we eat or drink or how well we dress ourselves, there will be no satisfaction. If we neglect the church, we will have no real enjoyment or satisfaction.

c. **Saying That They Looked for Much and It Amounted to Little**

In verse 9 Jehovah went on to say that they looked for much, and it amounted to little. When they brought it home, He blew on it because of His house which lay waste, and they each ran to their own house.

Therefore, over them the heavens withheld their dew, and the earth withheld its yield (v. 10). Indeed, Jehovah had called for a drought upon the land, upon the mountains, upon the grain, upon the new wine, upon the fresh oil, upon that which the ground brings forth, and upon man, beast, and all the toil of the hands (v. 11).

The word "run" in verse 9 indicates that the people were busy caring for their own houses. Today some saints are so busy caring for their own houses that they have no time to attend the meetings. As we consider this, we need to realize that in the entire universe there is no such thing as neutrality. We must be absolute. We must either take care of our houses first or take care of the Lord's house first. My point here is that we need to learn to save some time for the Lord's interests. How many sinners are waiting for our visitation? How many saints, especially younger ones, are waiting for our cherishing and nourishing? We may excuse ourselves today, but we need to consider how we will answer the Lord Jesus when He comes. We may have many relatives who are unsaved. Their being unsaved may be our fault, not theirs. If so, when the Lord comes to settle accounts with us (Matt. 25:19), He will surely rebuke us. It has been difficult for us to get the increase, not mainly because of our environment but because of our excuses.

B. **Jehovah's Charge**

In His charge Jehovah told the people to consider their ways and to go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house, and He would take pleasure in it and would be glorified (Hag. 1:7-8). Today our gospel preaching is our gathering of material for the building of God's house.

C. **The People's Response**

Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest and all the remnant of the people responded to Jehovah by listening to the voice of Jehovah their God and to the words of Haggai the prophet, and they were in fear before Jehovah (v. 12). Then Haggai, Jehovah's messenger, encouraged the people with Jehovah's declaration, "I am with you" (v. 13). Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the spirit of Joshua, and the spirit of all the people, and they came and did work in the house of Jehovah of hosts (vv. 14-15). What a wonderful response!

I hope that all the dear saints will be busy in going out to visit people and in contacting their relatives, classmates, and colleagues for the gospel. All the saints should be occupied by the Lord Jesus in preaching the gospel, feeding the new believers, and taking care of others. I hope that concerning this the whole atmosphere and environment among us will be revolutionized.

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Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for the English-speaking testimony and gospel preaching on West Valley College campus.
- Pray for the burden of raising up next generation for building up of the body of Christ.
- Pray for YP that they will be companions with one another to pursue the Lord together.
- For GOW training: Vital groups be raised up, attending prayer meeting, prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth.

Announcement

- Morning Revival: 2012 Summer Training Msg #10.
- Bible Reading Schedule, Nahum, M. Ch.1 T. Ch.2 W. Ch.3, Haggai Th. Ch.1, F. Ch.2, S. Ch.3.
- Tuesday (11/13) prayer meeting at meeting hall.
- Thanksgiving gospel meeting 11/21/ Wed. 6 ~ 9:30pm at meeting hall.
- 11/17 GOW training 8:45am ~ 1:30pm at Cupertino meeting hall (10051 Pasadena Ave., Cupertino, CA 95014).

The summer video training schedule is as follows:

Message	Date	Notes
#11 and #12	11/24/2012	Combine