

CCF Study Notes
Tuesday 7 AM Study
20 June 2006
Haggai

Before beginning to read from Haggai let's spend time in prayer, considering God's place in our lives. Let's ask God that He might:

1. **Enable** us to consider our ways, whether the fruit of the Spirit is evident in us;
2. **Show** us why He seems to stand against us;
3. **Stir** our spirits in His service;
4. **Fix** our eyes and hearts on Jesus, that we not be disturbed by lesser things;
5. **Sanctify** us, setting us apart for Himself though the work of His Holy Spirit in us;
6. **Build** us up in faith, knowing the inheritance that is ours in Christ, and
7. **Come** quickly to judge those who stand against His Chosen One!

Haggai ministered in Jerusalem after the time of the Babylonian captivity. A small band of Jews had returned to Jerusalem with orders to rebuild the temple of God there. This is recorded in the book of Ezra, where Haggai's ministry is mentioned explicitly in the fifth chapter. Outward resistance, combined with inward apathy and fear caused the work on the temple in Jerusalem to stop. Some fifteen years later Haggai came with a word from God asking that the work be continued. An order of King Artaxerxes had stopped work on the temple. The coming of God's word caused them to restart. Soon their faith would be rewarded by a letter of support from King Darius for the work of building the temple. This is a book about revival – about how God's work is restored in the hearts and lives of His people.

(Haggai 1:1-6) This word of God is directed specifically to the political and spiritual leaders of God's people. We might say, "I'm no leader; this doesn't apply to me!" Are we husbands, parents, teachers, or voters, or those who lead by example? Then we are leaders. We are all called to prayer, to go before God on behalf of others. We are priests, and this word is for us. Is it time for us to make a place for God in our lives? We often procrastinate and make excuses in this regard. Somebody tells us **not** to make too much place for God in our lives – not be too religious, too righteous, too holy or too radical in our faith. Yet we make a place for ourselves in this world. We work hard and spend ourselves on building our careers, our houses, our families, our social position and on securing these things against attack. Yet we have no time or energy to make a place for God in our lives, to build our relationship with God, to be a witness for God in this world. And we wonder why our lives become a rat race, where we never find real satisfaction, peace, security or love. God says, "Consider your ways!"

(Haggai 1:7-11) Why does God seem to be against us? We glorified ourselves by making a name for ourselves in the world. But have we glorified God in this world? We have

sought the pleasures this world has to offer. But have we sought to please God? We have put our trust in the works of our hands. But have we trusted God? In this context we would not be surprised that God withholds His blessings and causes drought and blight to come upon everything we have and do. God's presence and blessing is not with us because we have made no place for Him in our lives, individually or corporately.

(Haggai 1:12-15) How do we know if God is in our midst? God's word will be heard in our midst – and obeyed. There will be a fear and reverence and acknowledgement of God's presence by all the people. God will announce His presence clearly as we move out in obedience. God will stir up the spirits of the leaders, pouring out His Holy Spirit on them – and on all the people. They will work to make a place for God in their midst, that God may be glorified in the world and be pleased with His people. Notice how long this took: just 4 days! All this fruit comes as we abide in Christ and His word abides in us.

(Haggai 2:1-9) How can there be a place fit for God in us? The temple they were building was puny compared to Solomon's temple. We don't have the resources to build a house suitable for God to live in – nor to make a place suitable for God in our lives. God says, "You're right. Even if you made a place, it would be destroyed when I shake all of creation. So I will make a place." Here we see the greatest temple of all, the eternal temple: Jesus Christ himself is that temple! He comes to dwell in us and we abide in Him.

(Haggai 2:10-14) Can we come to God on the merits of our work? Our work is tainted by the uncleanness of sin and death. If we are to come into God's presence we must be clean and set apart for God. We can't do that work of sanctification ourselves. God must do it!

(Haggai 2:15-19) How do we come into God's presence? The people moved from blight to blessing as they laid the foundation for the temple. That foundation is Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection. When we make Him our foundation we experience God's blessing and move out of the blight of sin. (I Cor 9:8-17)

(Haggai 2:20-23) How do we receive this grace? We come to victory not by submitting to those earthly authorities – which God will overthrow and judge, but by embracing God's chosen one: Jesus Christ, who has also chosen us to glorify God and enter into the joy and pleasure of His presence. We become a sign to this world, bearing the name and mark of Jesus Christ before a Christ rejecting world. The world will be judged. We are the evidence of that coming judgment

Let's spend time in prayer. How can God be glorified in my life? Let's glorify God!

P.S. Recordings of these studies in John and the Prophets and copies of these notes are now available on a new website at <http://www.jstoker.name>. A new podcast is also available there or at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/CCF-T-Podcast>.