

Important context: In Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile. Having begun rebuilding the temple in 536 BC, the Israelites have stopped working for 11 years.

Lord of Armies = Yahweh Saba
• Yahweh = God's covenant name
• Saba = host or army

He is the Lord who commands the hosts/armies of heaven, and is thus sovereign over all things.

See the juxtaposition:

- 1) A God who is Lord over all things, with invincible might and the hosts of heaven at His command.
- 2) A people who are passive, apathetic, indifferent toward Him.

The Point? He is worthy of all our attention, praise, and obedience.

Command to Rebuild the Temple

Aug. 29, 520 BC

¹ In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest:

² "The LORD of Armies says this: These people say: The time has not come for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt."

³ The word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: "Is it a time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses while this house lies in ruins?" ⁵ Now, the LORD of Armies says this: "Think carefully about your ways:

⁶ You have planted much but harvested little.
You eat but never have enough to be satisfied.
You drink but never have enough to be happy.
You put on clothes but never have enough to get warm.
The wage earner puts his wages into a bag with a hole in it."

→ This call for the people to "think carefully" appears four times in Haggai. It carries with it the call to adjust action in response to reflection.

⁷ The LORD of Armies says this: "Think carefully about your ways. ⁸ Go up into the hills, bring down lumber, and build the house and I will be pleased with it and be glorified," says the LORD. ⁹ "You expected much, but then it amounted to little. When you brought the harvest to your house I ruined it. Why?" This is the declaration of the LORD of Armies: "Because my house still lies in ruins, while each of you is busy with his own house"

¹⁰ So on your account, the skies have withheld the dew and the land its crops.

¹¹ I have summoned a drought on the fields and the hills, on the grain, new wine, fresh oil, and whatever the ground yields, on man and animal, and on all that your hands produce."

Even nature obeys the Lord, as His chosen people choose not to.

The People's Response

¹² Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and the entire remnant of the people obeyed the LORD their God and the words of the prophet Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent him. So the people feared the LORD.

The word "house" is used seven times in 11 verses.

- Four times about the temple.
- Three times about Israelite homes

↓
Mark Dever: "The Lord is not condemning their comfortable living. He is condemning that it has come at the expense of their devotion."

→ Obedience is simple: Do the thing the Lord commands and He will be pleased & glorified.

Obedience to the Lord begins with a reverence/fear before Him. No reverence? No obedience.

The Lord is present with His people, rousing them to action and obedience.

*The Lord was present with us in Christ and is now present with us in the Spirit, who rouses us to obedience.

The Lord is Strong:

- 1) To fill His house (vs. 1)
- 2) To adorn His house (vs. 2)
- 3) To be the glory of His house (vs. 9)

We work on His behalf because He is strong to accomplish His will (see Jesus on the cross) and He is with us (in the Holy Spirit).

Holiness Parable (vs. 11-14)

- 1) Holiness does not rub off (vs. 12)
- 2) Sin stains everything it touches (vs. 13-14)

The point? An insincere heart stains a "religious" act.

¹³ Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, delivered the LORD's message to the people: "I am with you—this is the LORD's declaration."

¹⁴ The LORD roused the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, the spirit of the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. They began work on the house of the LORD of Armies, their God, ¹⁵ on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius.

→ Sept. 21, 520 BC

Encouragement and Promise

→ Oct. 17, 520 BC

2 On the twenty-first day of the seventh month the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: ² "Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and to the remnant of the people: ³ 'Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Doesn't it seem to you like nothing by comparison?' ⁴ Even so, be strong, Zerubbabel — this is the LORD's declaration. Be strong, Joshua son of Jehozadak, high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land — this is the LORD's declaration. Work! For I am with you — the declaration of the LORD of Armies. ⁵ This is the promise I made to you when you came out of Egypt, and my Spirit is present among you; don't be afraid."

⁶ For the LORD of Armies says this: "Once more, in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. ⁷ I will shake all the nations so that the treasures of all the nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory," says the LORD of Armies. ⁸ "The silver and gold belong to me" — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies. ⁹ "The final glory of this house will be greater than the first," says the LORD of Armies. ¹⁰ "I will provide peace in this place" — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies.

From Deprivation to Blessing

→ Dec. 18, 520 BC

¹⁰ On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Haggai: ¹¹ "This is what the LORD of Armies says: Ask the priests for a ruling. ¹² If a man is carrying consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and it touches bread, stew, wine, oil, or any other food, does it become holy?"

The priests answered, "No."

¹³ Then Haggai asked, "If someone defiled by contact with a corpse touches any of these, does it become defiled?"

The priests answered, "It becomes defiled."

¹⁴ Then Haggai replied, "So is this people, and so is this nation before me — this is the LORD's declaration. And so is every work of their hands; even what they offer there is defiled."

¹⁵ "Now from this day on, think carefully: Before one stone was placed on another in the LORD's temple, ¹⁶ what state were you in? When someone came to a grain heap of twenty measures, it only amounted to ten; when one came to the winepress to dip fifty measures from the vat, it only amounted to twenty. ¹⁷ I struck you — all the work of your hands—with blight, mildew, and hail, but you didn't turn to me — this is the LORD's declaration. ¹⁸ "From this day on, think carefully; from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth

Roused = agitated, awakened

→ Repentance is evidenced by a change in outward action

This date matters!

- Festival of Booths - people are living in tents for a week in remembrance of their ancestors during the wilderness wanderings. (see Lev. 23:39-43)
- On this day, years before, Solomon dedicated the original temple. (see 1 Kings 8)

In our disobedience, humanity does not flourish. Not b/c of a prosperity gospel framework, but b/c of the reality that God has hardwired into the created order a right way to live that naturally leads to flourishing.

Signet Ring Imagery (vs. 23)

- Kings used a seal to stamp and validate a decree/order.
- They protected that seal by often wearing it as a ring.
- They could grant authority to another by giving them a seal.
- In Jeremiah 22, the Lord tells a former king of Judah that he is going to "tear you from [my hand]," removing them as a signet ring. He did so and the people went into exile in Babylon.
- Now, Zerubbabel, the current leader, is told that ~~he~~ he will be made like a signet ring... once again placed on the Lord's finger and given authority.
- This authority is ultimately to Jesus, born of Zerubbabel's (and David's) line and → (see Matt. 1) eternally ruling w/authority.

month, from the day the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid; think carefully. ¹⁹ Is there still seed left in the granary? The vine, the fig, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yet produced. But from this day on I will bless you."

Promise to Zerubbabel

²⁰ The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month: ²¹ "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah: I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. ²² I will overturn royal thrones and destroy the power of the Gentile kingdoms. I will overturn chariots and their riders. Horses and their riders will fall, each by his brother's sword. ²³ On that day"—this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies—"I will take you, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, my servant"—this is the LORD's declaration—"and make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you." This is the declaration of the LORD of Armies.

* Jesus provides humanity's stamp of approval!!

→ The Lord blesses... and His Chief Blessing is person of Jesus Christ.



Because of this blessing, we can and are delighted to walk in a grace-driven, whole-hearted obedience.