

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Haggai 1:4-8.**
- B. The OT book of Haggai is a very short one. It has but one central theme--build the temple!
- C. The Israelites had been released from captivity but had procrastinated in the building of the temple. Haggai is speaking to the leaders of the people to encourage them to get started again.
- D. We, as members of the Lord's church, are also in the "temple building business." We can learn from Haggai's words.

I. MATERIAL PROSPERITY IS A SIN IF GOD'S WORK IS LEFT UNDONE.

- A. The lifestyle of the Jews is revealed by Haggai (1:2-9):
 - 1. They had their priorities turned around (1:2).
"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'This people says, "The time has not come, even the time for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt."'"
 - 2. They lived in paneled houses while, the temple was desolate (1:3-4).
Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet saying, **4** "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?"
 - 3. They were greedy, materialistic, and never satisfied (1:5-6).
Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways! **6** You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes."
 - 4. Their worldly prosperity was small and did not last (1:7-9).
Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways! **8** Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified," says the LORD. **9** You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?" declares the LORD of hosts, "Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house."
- B. It should be noted that God is not upset with their material wealth per se, but is upset with it because they have gone after material things at the expense of the temple.
- C. Faithfulness is the key to all things. Not only does it guarantee the Lord's approval in spiritual things, but it also guarantees financial security as well (Mt. 6:33).
"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."
- D. We must ask ourselves, in the midst of a country that has a very high standard of living, are we guilty of living in paneled houses while the Lord's church lies in ruins?

II. THE LORD'S TEMPLE (THE CHURCH) HAS GREAT GLORY.

- A. As they started to build it, the old men cried and the young men cheered. But the prophet addressed this problem.
- B. The old men, knowing of the greatness of Solomon's temple cried at the very small temple now being built. On the other hand, the young men not knowing of Solomon's temple could be enthusiastic about the new one.
- C. Haggai comforts the old men by telling them that the glory of the latter will be greater than the former (2:3-9).
"Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison? **4** 'But now take courage, Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD, 'take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,' declares the LORD, 'and work; for I am with you,' says the LORD of hosts. **5** 'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!' **6** "For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. **7** 'And I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations; and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. **8** 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' declares the LORD of hosts."

9 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and in this place I shall give peace,' declares the LORD of hosts."

- D. God's Spirit is with them, they need not fear.
- E. The prophecy is obviously about the church. And even though at times it may seem small, troubled, and stagnant as long as we will continue to build, it God's glory can be seen in the church.

III. THE REAL REASON TO BUILD THE TEMPLE.

- A. The Israelites had overlooked one very big problem. They had confused the material with the spiritual. They lived well, financially, and materially, but were spiritually unclean.
- B. The priests could not perform their duties. They were still unclean because there was no temple in which to offer sacrifice.
- C. As we read the text, we see that God had placed a curse on them because they were unclean (2:11-19).

13 Then Haggai said, "If one who is unclean from a corpse touches any of these, will the latter become unclean?" And the priests answered and said, "It will become unclean." 14 Then Haggai answered and said, "'So is this people. And so is this nation before Me,' declares the LORD, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.

- D. People today, in the USA live better than any other people on the planet. But if they are not right with God, they are unclean with sin.
- E. We, as members of the church, need to continue to build the temple so that more people might be right with God.
- F. The promise of 2:19 is that God will bless. If God's people will do God's work God will bless and many souls will be saved.

'Is the seed still in the barn? Even including the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree, it has not borne fruit. Yet from this day on I will bless you.'"

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. The conclusion is obvious, let's get busy building the temple!
- B. Let us resolve to, build the temple to:
 - 1. Get our own priorities right.
 - 2. Show forth the glory of God.
 - 3. Receive the forgiveness of God.
- C. There is no forgiveness outside the church, outside of X.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.