

REBUILD

Date: 10.13.24 | Title: Build God's House! | Scripture: Haggai

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

Middle School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.

God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

God wants us to live for His glory.

God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.

Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.

High School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.

God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

God wants us to live for His glory.

God is a righteous judge.

God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.

Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.

Jesus gave His life for us on the cross and He is the only way for salvation.



MEMORY
VERSE

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." Lamentations 3:22-24

REBUILD

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Judah was taken into captivity in Babylon in three stages, culminating in the destruction of the city and its holy temple, with most of the people exiled (2 Kings 25:1-12). In 539 BC, Cyrus the Great of Persia conquered Babylon and adopted a more lenient policy, allowing exiled captives to return to their homelands. A year later, in 538 BC, Cyrus issued a decree permitting the people of Judah to return to Israel and rebuild their temple (Ezra 1:4; 6:2-5). After 70 years in captivity, approximately 50,000 Judeans returned to their homeland shortly after the decree (Ezra 2:64-65). Once again, God sent prophets to guide them. The last three minor prophets—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—are known as postexilic prophets because they ministered after the people's return from exile. In the seventh month of their first year back, the returnees restored the altar and resumed offering sacrifices (Ezra 3:1-3). The following year, they laid the foundation of the temple and began its reconstruction (Ezra 3:8-13). However, opposition from foreign settlers who had come to the land during the exile discouraged the people, causing them to abandon the project. The book of Haggai picks up at this point.

The nation had endured the covenant curse of exile but also received the Lord's mercy, allowing them to return to their land, but would Israel would remain faithful to the Lord of the covenant? Haggai and Zechariah ministered in Jerusalem around 520 BC, about eighteen years after the first wave of exiles returned from Babylon. Haggai urged the people to rebuild the temple, emphasizing that Judah needed to renew their relationship with the Lord through worship and purity. Israel was called to confront their spiritual indifference and recommit to God in order to once again receive His blessings. Haggai called upon the Jewish people to abandon their past spiritual failures so that God would grant them success. Haggai challenged them to put the worship of God back at the center of their lives and to resume rebuilding the temple. Unlike the preexilic period, the people in Jerusalem listened to Haggai and obeyed his message.

REBUILD

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Haggai's first message urged the people to prioritize God by rebuilding the temple (1:1-11) and offered encouragement in response to their obedience (1:12-15). This is a clear example of divine prompting and human response: the Spirit of the Lord stirred the people, and they acted. They began with great enthusiasm, clearing the debris from the ruined temple courts, building an altar, and offering animal sacrifices. However, after a few years, having only laid the temple's foundation, the work stalled. As time passed and external pressures mounted, the first wave of exiles abandoned the idea of rebuilding the temple, pushing the worship of God to the background. When the work slowed and challenges arose, Haggai and others reminded the people of the importance of completing the temple. Yet the people turned away from God's work to focus on their own interests and personal affairs, a decision made easier by the opposition they faced from local inhabitants. They struggled to gain personal prosperity while neglecting the Lord's house. In response, God frustrated their efforts, showing them that His house must be their priority and that building it would bring Him glory.

Haggai pointed out the reasons why the people of Israel had lost their enthusiasm. The first reason they stopped building God's temple was selfishness—they prioritized their own interests over the Lord's. Haggai made it clear that God was aware of this attitude: "This people says, 'The time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built'" (Haggai 1:2). Sixteen years had passed since they had laid the foundation, yet they still insisted, "No, this isn't the time." Haggai challenged them, saying, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this temple lies in ruins?" (v. 4).

The people seemed to have forgotten that God had promised Judah would be in exile for seventy years and, after that time, against all odds, He would bring them back to the land of their ancestors—the land He had promised long ago to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That time had come, yet they were saying, "No, I don't feel led to build God's house—maybe after I'm done building mine." Haggai confronted them, saying: "Consider your ways! You have sown much and bring in little; you eat but do not have enough; you drink but are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves but no one is warm" (Haggai 1:5-6). In other words, when you invest in yourself and neglect to honor God, what you have is less satisfying and amounts to little compared to the blessings He wants to give you. Selfishness kills satisfaction.

REBUILD

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Haggai rebuked the people for lavishing attention on their own houses while neglecting to rebuild the temple (1:9-11, 2:16-19). Because they disregarded the temple, their harvests of food and drink were meager (1:6, 9), and they faced some of the covenant curses (Lev. 26:26). Haggai's words stirred both the leaders and the people to action, motivating them to resume work on the temple (1:12-17). He addressed the small remnant of Judah who had returned, rebuilt their homes, but failed to rebuild the temple, neglecting their true purpose in returning (Ezra 1:2).

The phrase “consider your ways” appears four times in the book, serving as Haggai's call for self-evaluation. It challenged each individual to assess their priorities and weigh the cost of their choices. They were taking one step forward and two steps back, pursuing their own agendas while neglecting God's work.

God used Haggai's words to glorify Himself among His people and stir up the spirits of Zerubbabel and Joshua. Together, they reignited the people's passion to get back on task. You don't work for God to save you; you work for Him because He has saved you, and when you obey His call, He provides the energy and vision to succeed (Phil. 2:12-13).

While Haggai's first message corrected the disordered priorities of those who returned, his second address dealt with their discouraged perspective rooted in memories of the first temple. Seeing that the rebuilt temple would be inferior to Solomon's, the people might have abandoned the reconstruction. In response, the Lord gave Haggai a message of encouragement to persist in the work (2:1-9). Financed by David and Solomon, the original temple reflected the wealth and glory of Israel's unified kingdom—the high point in their history. In comparison, the second temple was a much humbler structure, and nostalgia paralyzed many of the older generation. Some of those who had seen Solomon's temple wept at the sight of the new one, feeling it was like a mere shadow of the former.

The third message, given three months after the temple reconstruction began, addressed the spiritual condition of the people before the work started. It affirmed the need for genuine internal spiritual transformation, not just outward ritual conformity (Haggai 2:10-19). A few months later, another reason for halting the work became clear: unconfessed sin. Haggai revealed this by questioning the priests about the law (Haggai 2:14), illustrating how impurity is more easily transmitted than purity. Just as a healthy person is more likely to get sick when touching an ill child than to make the child healthy, the people's unconfessed sin was contaminating their efforts. They were merely going through the motions in rebuilding the temple and offering sacrifices, and God called them out on it.

REBUILD

The final reason the Jews stopped the work was simple unbelief. Haggai's fourth and final message was directed at Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, as a word of encouragement. Israel had been crushed by one mighty empire, and now another had risen. How could they hope to stand against their powerful neighbors again? Moreover, the task itself seemed overwhelming—clearing the wreckage and rebuilding the city walls and the temple felt impossible. Yet Haggai's message was meant to restore their faith and hope in God's promises.

Zerubbabel had only a few thousand people to complete the work, and their enthusiasm had already waned. Haggai encouraged the governor to look toward the future—toward what God would accomplish through this humble restart (Haggai 2:21-23). Zerubbabel would become a symbol of God's authority and favor, His "signet ring." As a descendant of David, through whom the royal line would continue, Zerubbabel would be an ancestor of Jesus. These small beginnings and faithful steps would ultimately lead to everlasting hope! The greatness of the coming kingdom, when Jesus will return to conquer His enemies and establish His reign on earth, was assured.

The book of Haggai ends with this promise, reminding the faithful remnant of Israel that God would fulfill His unbreakable covenant with David by sending the future Son of David to establish His house, kingdom, and throne forever. God promises blessings to those who commit to His work—not necessarily granting everything we desire, but transforming our desires to align with His. When we delight in Him, spend time in prayer, and serve His people, He shapes our hearts to long for what He wants (Ps. 37:4).

REBUILD

LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY



Tell the story: Use the Background Info for Leaders to help tell today's story

Re-tell the Bible Story: Have students re-tell the story as best they can.

Attributes of God: Determine the characteristics of God that we see in today's story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true, change the way we live in Christ?

**TELL
THE
STORY**



Share the GOSPEL:

After the exile, the Lord renewed His promises to His people, calling them to complete the rebuilding of the temple so that He could dwell with them and fulfill His promise to bless the world through them (Haggai 2:9), particularly through the Messiah from the house of David (Haggai 2:23).

Read directly from Scripture, use the message, or the summary provided in the lesson

The scarlet thread of redemption appears in Haggai through the symbol of the signet ring—the royal mark of God's approval of Zerubbabel as the temple's builder (Haggai 2:23). For God to "use" Zerubbabel like a signet ring signified two important things: First, it showed that God would be with Zerubbabel, granting him authority to rebuild the temple as Israel returned from exile. Second, it affirmed Zerubbabel's royal status and his preciousness in God's sight. As a descendant of David, Zerubbabel was part of the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:12-13; Luke 3:27). As a member of David's royal line, he symbolized the coming Messiah, who would ultimately establish His millennial kingdom on earth. In both of these roles, Zerubbabel carried God's mark of approval—the stamp of His signet ring.

Re-Tell

The Bible Story

Put the events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc...

Hebrews 12:26-28 echoes this passage, revealing God's plans for the end times. He will shake loose and remove everything rooted in the world and its ways, leaving only what belongs to His kingdom. Jesus taught His followers to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Only those who are part of the new covenant of Christ, covered by His blood shed on the cross, will be part of that unshakeable kingdom.

REBUILD

“Storying” Questions: As you ask these questions, have your students find the answers in the actual verses of scripture instead of recalling them from your re-telling of the story. We always want to encourage all of our students to go directly to God’s Word over a commentary on or summary of scripture. Use the Bible Study Bookmark Questions as well as these questions to help students understand the text:

1. Describe the setting for Haggai’s prophecies. Where are God’s people now? How long were they in captivity? What circumstances allowed their release back to the Promised Land?
2. What other two prophets are post exilic prophets?
3. What does Haggai command the people to do? Why is this important?
4. What are some of the setbacks and excuses the people give for not finishing?
5. What sin do we see in the people in 1:4?
6. What do 1:5 and 1:9-11 tell us about our dependence on Christ in all things? Can we be self-sufficient or self-reliant?
7. What encouragement does Haggai speak over the people in 1:13?
8. How do things change once God intervenes in 1:14?
9. In 2:4, what command is given 3 times?
10. Who is with the people according to 2:4-5?
11. What does God promise for the future in 2:7-9?
12. Describe a signet ring and how God shows that his plans from the beginning of the Old Testament will follow into the New through the line of David.
13. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
14. What does this story teach me about myself?
15. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
16. Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
17. How does this story help me live on mission better?

REBUILD

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

REBUILD

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.

REBUILD

PRAYER PROMPTS

God thank You for continuing Your promises for Your people even when we fall short. Over and over again we waver, but You never change! You are faithful and true! We love You! Help us to live to follow You!

IF TIME ALLOWS:

Help the students in your group practice memorizing the books of the Bible:

- Torah: Genesis-Deuteronomy
- History: Joshua-Esther
- Poetry: Job-Song of Solomon
- Major Prophets: Isaiah-Daniel
- Minor Prophets: Hosea-Malachi
- Gospels: Matthew-John
- Paul's Letters: Romans-Philemon
- General Letters: Hebrews-Revelation

MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

For the months of September and October we will be collecting money for the Connie Maxwell Children's Home. Please visit their website for pictures and descriptions of some of the services they offer that you can share with your group. A generous donor will match all of our donations. Encourage your class to collect money and donate it in the giving funnel in the upstairs lobby. Students can donate with their families as they arrive, or you can go together as a class on the way back to the Worship Center at the end of SS.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Work on memorizing this weeks verse with the students in your group. You can use the first letter of each word in the verse to help with this. For example, the unit verse would look like this:

REBUILD



Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?

REBUILD



Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?