

## ***READ Haggai chapter 1***

**What** – Haggai was one of three minor prophets (remember minor prophets are called “minor” because they wrote short books) to write after the Jews returned to Jerusalem after their exile to Babylon. In 586 BC the last of the Israelites (the southern kingdom of Judah) was overtaken by the Babylonian army. Israel was not a nation again for almost 2500 years until the end of World War II saw a new Israel formed. Haggai wrote to the Jews and relayed a message from God that even though He had shown them grace by allowing them to return from captivity; they were not flourishing because their priorities were not in order. Immediately upon return, the Jews set to work restoring the temple of God. Quickly, however, that work halted so that they could work on their own homes. God says, “You expected much, but it turned out to be little because my house remains in ruins.”

**Why** – This book is an overlooked gem in the Old Testament. Few people have studied it, but few books so directly depict today’s culture like the timeless message of mixed up priorities. God pinpointed a problem in the hearts of the Israelites that caused them to stray from Him in the first place. That same attitude caused them to fail upon their return and that same attitude causes us to miss God’s plans and work in our life today. As a people, God’s church still does not have Godly priorities.

**WOW** – God tells us here how to solve the problem. Twice in this short chapter God said, “Give careful thought to your ways.” If we read on, in chapter two, He repeated that phrase twice again, but this time He was talking about taking note of all the blessings that He has showered on us in the past, that He is giving us now, and that He has planned for our future. When we think about our ways, we must also think about His ways, and how His ways are perfect. Our thoughts should be from a heavenly perspective. Then our priorities would be right. The end of this chapter, however, was most amazing. After telling the people of their sin, God said to them, “I am with you.” Then God Himself “stirred up” the Spirit of the leaders to move the people to action. God wants to help you. He knows, even before you start on the task assigned, that you will fall short. He is seeking hearts that eagerly do His will. God is not looking for perfection since only He can fulfill that requirement in us, He is seeking passion. Are your priorities Godly? Are you seeking after the things of God as your first priority? Don’t be fooled by the world. God will not judge you on the result of your efforts, He will judge you by the condition of your heart. My prayer is that all of us begin to look at the world through His lens and make our goals, dreams, and priorities the ones He has laid out for each and every one of us.