

Four Short Sermons

Haggai

Four Short Sermons Introduction

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- Have you ever started a project and then failed to finish it?

Four Short Sermons Introduction

- Have you ever started a project and then failed to finish it?
- Haggai is a book about **good intentions**.

Four Short Sermons Introduction

- It's a book about unfinished business.
- It's a book about those things we do for God – but that we do half-heartedly.

Four Short Sermons Introduction

- Haggai is the prophet for those of us who occasionally need a pat on the back and/or a kick in the backside.
- Haggai is good at giving both.

Background on Haggai

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- Haggai is the first of the **post-exilic prophets** – those to write after the Jewish exile in Babylon.
- The others are **Zechariah** and **Malachi**.

Background on Haggai

- Bible Trivia:
- **Haggai** is the only book of the Bible that has two chapters.

Background on Haggai

- In 536 B.C. the Persian **King Cyrus** issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to their land and rebuild the Temple.
- When they got there and began the work, opposition arose immediately from non-Jewish neighbors.
- (See **Ezra & Nehemiah.**)

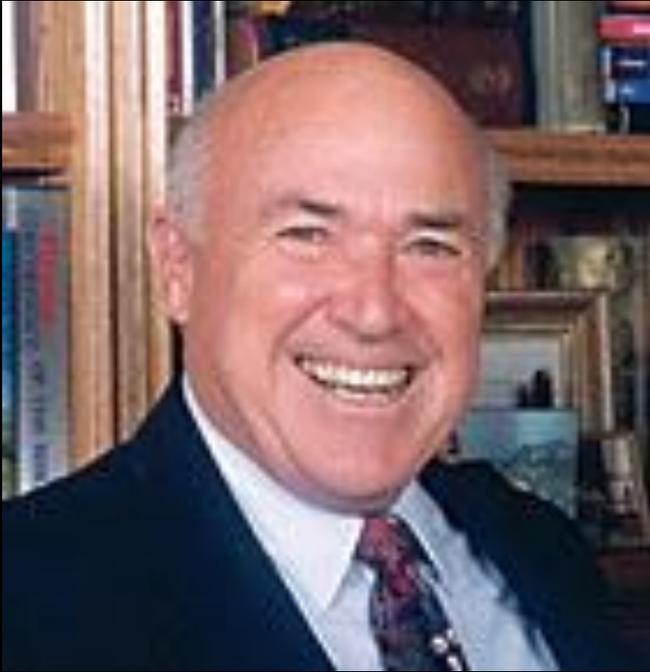
Background on Haggai

- It is now 14 years later: 520 B.C.
- The Temple still lies in ruins with only an altar for sacrifice and the foundation being completed.
- The people had failed to follow through on their commitments.

Background on Haggai

- Haggai is also one of the few books in the Bible that gives us specific dates.
- From the dates that are recorded, we can gather that the entire recorded ministry of Haggai lasted approximately four months.

Background on Haggai



Haggai challenged the people to get back to work and to finish building the house of the Lord. He called them to task for their sinful neglect of the things of the Lord and reminded them of the importance of God's word and of keeping the Lord in the center of their lives. Haggai's exhortation helped, because the people did get back to work and finished the temple.

– Chuck Smith (1927-2013)

Two Main Characters

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1. **Zerubbabel** the governor of Judah.

- He first appeared in the book of **Ezra** as he led a group of captives back to their native land.
- He was a descendant of David.
- You can find him in the genealogies of Christ in both **Matthew 1** and **Luke 3**.

Main Characters

2. Joshua the high priest. He is called *Jeshua* in Ezra & Nehemiah.

- Zerubbabel was a political leader under the Persian king
- Joshua was a spiritual leader as a descendant of Aaron.
- Together they led the people in obedience.

Sermon 1: Haggai 1:1-15

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- Deep down, these people were committed.
- They returned from Babylon and Persia, but their zeal was now fading.
- That changes when they listen to Haggai and finally get back to work.

Sermon 1: Haggai 1:1-15

What a blessing it is when faithful testimony is thus received! Sometimes it happens that people get angry, and hate the preacher who too plainly rebukes them for their sins; but when the Spirit of God works within them, they take heed to what is said, and receive the preacher's message as from God himself.

– Charles Spurgeon (1834 – 1892)



Sermon 1: Haggai 1:1-15

- **Weakness:** Putting self before God.
- The kick in the backside: **1:7-11**
- The pat on the back: **1:12-13**

Sermon 2: Haggai 2:1-9

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- Some of the people were discouraged.
- Solomon's Temple was so much greater than this.

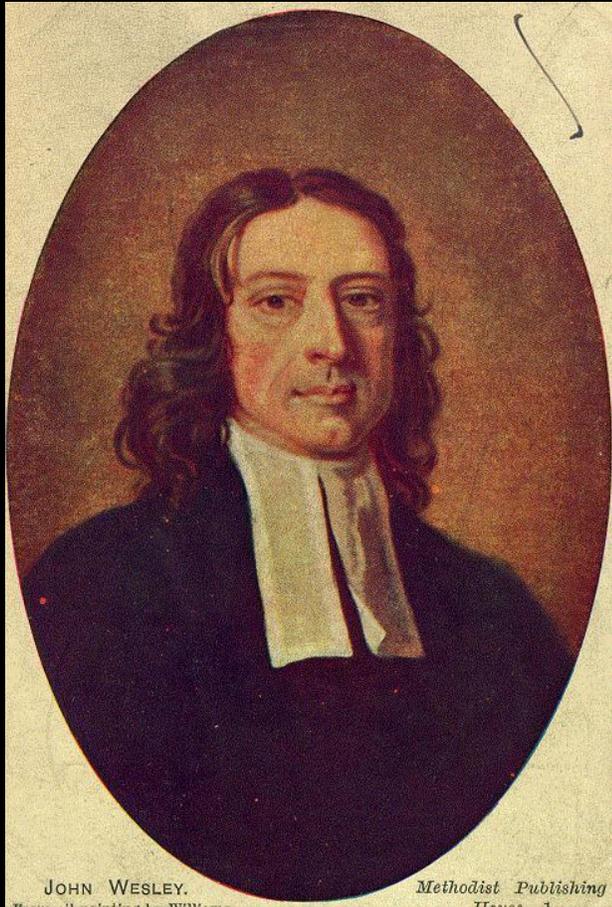
Sermon 2: Haggai 2:1-9

- **2:3** Sometimes we can feel like what we are doing is small.
- **Weakness:** Focusing on what we can do rather than what God can do.

Sermon 2: Haggai 2:1-9

- **2:8** God reminds the people that the resources – the silver and gold – all belong to him.
- **2:9** This temple would not be destroyed like Solomon's – at least not before the arrival of Jesus Christ.

Sermon 2: Haggai 2:1-9



The first temple had a glory in its magnificent structure, rich ornaments, and costly sacrifices; but this was a worldly glory; that which is here promised, is a heavenly glory from the presence of Christ in it. He that was the brightness of his father's glory, who is the glory of the church, appeared in this second temple.

– John Wesley (1703 – 1791)

Sermon 3: Haggai 2:10-19

Sermon 3: Haggai 2:10-19

- Holiness and health do not pass from one person to another.
- Unfortunately, uncleanness and sickness easily do.

Sermon 3: Haggai 2:10-19

- When hearts are wrong, nothing we do for God is truly acceptable to him.
- This is the state the people were in before this point, but the Lord still promises blessing, starting now.

Sermon 3: Haggai 2:10-19

Haggai taught the people that because of their past sin their present obedience could not immediately result in material prosperity. Yet the final word of this third message is a promise of blessing, "From this day will I bless you."

– G. Campbell Morgan (1863 – 1945)



Sermon 3: Haggai 2:10-19

- **Weakness:** Lack of holiness or unrepentant sin.
- The kick in the backside: **2:14**
- The pat on the back: **2:19**

Sermon 4: Haggai 2:20-23

Sermon 4: Haggai 2:20-23

- Jerusalem was still surrounded by great empires.
- The people had barely begun to rebuild.
- How could Zerubbabel ever really know that what he was doing was going to last?

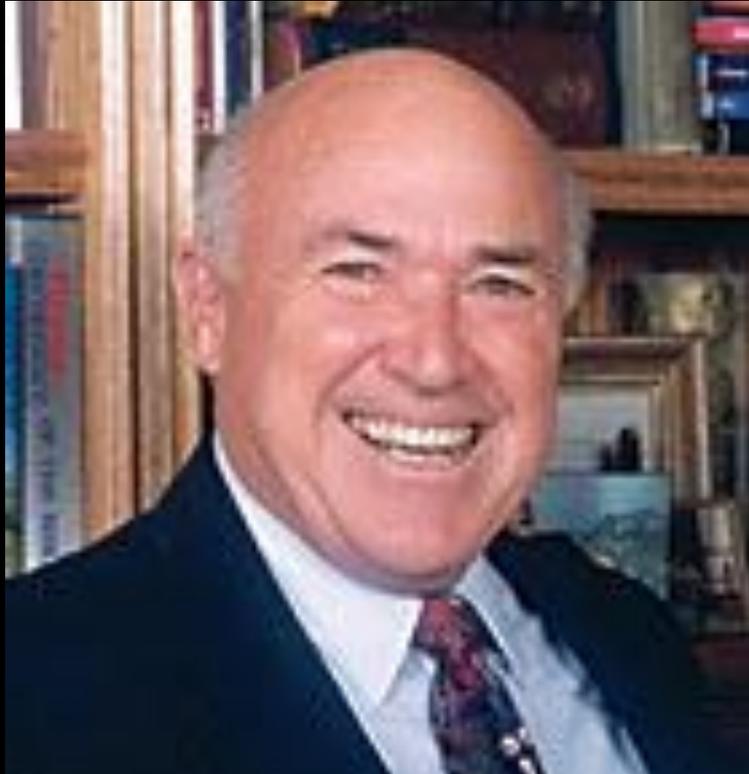
Sermon 4: Haggai 2:20-23

- It took somewhat more faith than Zerubbabel had to keep the people motivated.
- Satan loves to attack leaders to demotivate them.
- **Weakness:** Wavering faith.

Sermon 4: Haggai 2:20-23

- The final words of this book may be the most encouraging words of all.
- “For I have chosen you declares the Lord of Hosts.”

Sermon 4: Haggai 2:20-23



So it appears the entire ministry of Haggai took place in less than four months. Some guys have all the breaks. Here I am, ministering for almost sixty years, while Haggai said more in four months than I have in my entire ministry. Oh, well.

– Chuck Smith (1927 – 2013)

Four Short Sermons

Conclusions

Four Short Sermons Conclusions

- Potential problems:
 - Unfinished business with God.
 - Looking at our own abilities rather than God's ability – and so failing to see what God can do through us.
 - Unconfessed or unrepentant sin.
 - Wavering faith.

Four Short Sermons Conclusions

- Possible solutions:
 - Just get back to work.
 - Keep looking at God's abilities and trust him for ultimate outcomes.
 - Acknowledge your sin to God and turn from it.
 - When your faith wavers, just keep going. Remember that God has chosen you for a specific task.

Four Short Sermons Conclusions

- As a parallel to building the temple.

Matthew 16:18 (ESV)

... I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Four Short Sermons Conclusions

- Jesus builds the church, but he does that by commanding us to go and disciple the nations.
- What we do to help build the church is really Christ working through us.

Four Short Sermons Conclusions

- As an encouragement regarding God's continuing work in your life.

Philippians 1:6 (ESV)

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

- Are you willing to let him continually work in you?