



From the history of the chosen people, it is clear that God desired His people to be a blessed and holy nation. The messages of the prophets, the teachings of our Lord, and the epistle of the disciples all express the same desire of the Lord: "Leave! Separate yourselves from them!" And yet like the Israelites, we do not separate ourselves from the world but rather we want to be "like all the nations" (1 Sam 8:5). We are not of the world - we are citizens of God's kingdom. May our lives be a reflection of this in every way.

Lesson 12

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

Listed Scriptures

Hag 1, 2; Zech 1-3; Mal 3, 4

Lesson Aim

- 1) Students will study about visions and messages concerning the construction of the temple.
- 2) Students will learn of the right attitudes towards serving God.

Memory Verse

"This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts." (Zech 4:6)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Hag 1, 2; Zech 1-3; Mal 3, 4

BIBLE BACKGROUND



In the year 538 B.C., some 50,000 people returned to the promised land from Babylon to rebuild their temple. The people had quickly laid the foundation of the temple, but meeting with strong opposition from the Samaritans, the work on the temple came to a stop. During the interim of about 15 years, the people's efforts shifted to their own personal needs, while the temple lay desolate. Then in the second year of King Darius (520 B.C.), God called His prophets Haggai and Zechariah to the task of urging the people to rise up and complete the temple, which was completed during the 6th year of King Darius' reign (516 B.C.).



I Wonder

You know, Lord, how I serve You
 With great emotional fervor
 In the limelight.
 You know how eagerly I speak for You
 At the woman's club.
 You know how I effervesce when I promote
 A fellowship group.
 You know my genuine enthusiasm
 At a Bible study.
 But how would I react, I wonder,
 If you pointed to a basin of water
 And asked me to wash the calloused feet
 Of a bent and wrinkled old woman
 Day after day
 Month after month
 In a room where nobody saw
 And nobody knew.



Part 1

The Book of Haggai

The last three books of the Old Testament are known as post-exilic prophetic books. They were written after the Jews returned from the seventy years captivity in Babylon. Prior to the captivity, the prophets from Hosea to Zephaniah all preached a common message – turn from idolatry and evil ways before it is too late, before the Lord sends them into captivity. In the books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi there is a shift in message and tone. The people have returned from captivity. They have learned a difficult lesson. The prophets no longer speak of departing from Baal worship or doom. Rather, their message pertains to the rebuilding of the temple and the revival of faith.



A. Overview

a. Author

The author of this book is the prophet Haggai whose name means “festive.” Besides what is written in this book and two references to him in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14, little else is known of Haggai’s personal history. Haggai was a prophet who returned from Babylon after the 70 years captivity and was the first prophet to prophecy after the captivity. He began his ministry in 520 B.C., the second year of King Darius of Persia. He worked from the 1st day of the 6th month to the 24th day of the 9th month. Although their ministry lasted less than four months, Haggai and Zechariah were successful in mobilizing the people to complete the work on the temple.

b. Date

All five messages of Haggai are precisely dated in the year 520 B.C., the second year of the reign of Darius I, King of Persia.

c. Theme

The basic theme of this book is the importance for the remnants to reorder their priorities and complete the temple before they can expect the blessings of God. Haggai also prophesies that the glory of the temple in the latter days will be greater than the former.



B. Teachings from the Book of Haggai

The book of Haggai is divided into 5 sections based on the messages that Haggai received.

a. First message (Hag 1:1-11)

In 586 B.C., the armies of Babylon had destroyed the temple in Jerusalem and taken the people into captivity. But in 538 B.C. King Cyrus of Persia decreed that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. After they began the work, opposition from the enemies brought the work to a standstill. Over a period of 15 years, the temple laid in ruins and the people had forgotten about their purpose and had lost sight of their priorities. And so, on the 1st day of the 6th month, God spoke to Haggai the prophet to rebuke the people for not completing the work on the temple. The people replied that the time had not yet come to rebuild the house of God (Hag 1:2). In actuality, the time had come a long time ago. While the temple laid incomplete, the people had shifted their attention to building paneled houses for themselves. Because of

their misplaced priorities, Haggai urged the remnants to examine themselves and give careful thought to their ways.

The true reason why the house of God was incomplete was not because of financial insufficiency, a lack of ability or the obstruction of the enemies, but because the people looked to the matters of the world rather than to the matters of God. They focused primarily on their physical needs while ignoring their spiritual lives and their relationship with God. Like the remnants we may have strayed away from God; we may have neglected the work of God or have minded our own affairs above the needs of God or the brothers and sisters. Maybe our jobs, studies, loved ones, vacations, leisure activities rank higher on our list of importance than God. Like the people, we provide all kinds of excuses to push aside the holy work or defend our motives. Do not be deceived: do not give ourselves excuses which come from a lukewarm faith.

The people were told to examine their lives. To consider how “you have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes” (Hag 1:6). Spiritual decline can influence our physical lives. There may be times where we have striven hard, yet all our efforts have become futile and fruitless. We may have invested much time studying to the point of forgoing services and doing holy work, yet the grades we receive are not up to par. We encounter such difficulties because our spiritual temple still lies in ruins and God has withheld His blessings. At such times, we need to go up to the mountain to obtain wood so that we can rebuild our spiritual temple (Hag 1:8). This means that we have to turn back to God and amend our relationship with Him and in so doing He will bless the fruit of our labor and the work of our hands (Cf. Judg 6:1ff).

b. Second message (Hag 1:12-15)

After hearing Haggai’s first message, the leaders and the people obeyed and feared the Lord. Just 23 days later, they began to rebuild the temple. On the 24th day of the 6th month, God told them through Haggai, that He would be with them and bless them. Having been apathetic for 15 years, the people were quick to respond to God’s calling and were stirred by just one message. When we are moved by God’s words, do not quench the Spirit’s movement. Rather, we should quickly put God’s words into practice.

c. Third message (Hag 2:1-9)

On the 21st day of the 7th month, the word of God again came to Haggai. By this time the new foundation of the temple was laid. However, upon witnessing it, many were discouraged because the rebuilt temple was inferior to King Solomon’s. Many of the older people could remember the incredible beauty of Solomon’s temple and when they saw the new one, they wept with a loud voice so that the joyful shouts and the people’s weeping could not be distinguished. But Haggai told them to take courage because the glory of the new temple will surpass the glory of the former temple. Although the new temple lacked the luster and splendor of Solomon’s temple (Mal 3:12-13), but because the people departed from the sins of their forefathers and served God faithfully, the glory of the temple was in fact greater than the first. This also tells us that the true church of the end times will be more glorious than the apostolic church. As the last day approaches, the true church will become more perfect, like a bride ready for her Husband.

d. Fourth message (Hag 2:10-19)

On the 24th day of the 9th month, God used two questions to demonstrate to the priests that their service in the temple will not remove sin and wickedness. When the priests harbor wrong attitudes and sins, their service to God will be tainted. When a nation sins, whatever they touch or offer will become unclean. Their offerings or worship will not be accepted or blessed. God asked them to consider why everything went wrong in their lives. When they expected a twenty-bushel crop, there were only ten. When they came to draw fifty gallons from the olive press, there were only twenty.

However, since the people began to return to God, things began to change. From the 24th day of the 9th month onwards, when the people had laid the temple foundation, when they had merely taken the first few steps towards obeying God, God immediately blessed them. God was very eager to bless His people; He did not wait for the entire project to be completed before sending down blessings. Thus, the very day when we forsake our evil ways, our bad habits, and when we begin to rebuild the temple, God will shower down His blessings; that day will be to us the 24th day of the 9th month.

e. Fifth message (Hag 2:20-23)

That very same day, a fifth message came to Haggai, which was directed to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah. God assured Zerubbabel that He would abide with him, and he would be victorious in the work of rebuilding the temple. Zerubbabel was also chosen to be the signet ring of God. A signet ring

was worn by monarchs and served as the king's signature or as a seal of approval. The signet would represent the king himself. Similarly, Zerubbabel was chosen to represent God. He had the power, authority and selection of God to complete the task. Today, God has made each of us His signet ring and He has given us the Holy Spirit as a seal (Eph 1:13; 4:30). Since this is the case, we need to value our noble status. In Jeremiah 22:24, Coniah king of Judah was the signet ring in God's right hand, but because he transgressed against God, God tore this ring from his finger. Let us faithfully reflect the image of Christ in all that we say and do.



Part 2 *The Book of Zechariah*

A. Overview

a. Author

The author of this book is Zechariah, whose name means, "Jehovah is renowned" or "Yahweh remembers." The name "Zechariah" was a popular one in the Old Testament, being shared by no fewer than twenty-nine Old Testament characters. Zechariah is described in Zechariah 1:1 as "the son of Berechiah" and in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14 as "the son of Iddo." Iddo was in fact Zechariah's grandfather, who had been among the priests and Levites who returned to Palestine with Zerubbabel from Babylon (Neh 12:1-7,16). Zechariah was called to be a prophet during the 2nd year of King Darius (520 B.C.), the same year that his contemporary, Haggai was called. While Haggai began to work in the 6th month, Zechariah was called in the 8th month and he worked till the 9th month of the 4th year of King Darius (Zech 7:1).

b. Date

The book of Zechariah consists of two distinct parts. The first section from chapters 1-8 was written from 520 to 518 B.C. The second section from chapters 9-14 was written 40 years later around 480 B.C.

c. Theme

Zechariah is one of the three post-exilic prophets, along with Haggai and Malachi, who ministered to the small remnant of Jews who had returned to Judah to rebuild the temple and their nation. Like Haggai, he encouraged

them to finish rebuilding the temple but his message went far beyond those physical walls and contemporary issues. In a series of eight visions, four messages, and two oracles, Zechariah portrays God's future plans for His covenant people. The first eight chapters were written to encourage the remnant while they were rebuilding the temple. The last six chapters were written after the completion of the temple to anticipate Israel's coming Messiah. The last six chapters are not clearly tied to a specific historical situation in the life of the prophet but look forward to the events leading up to and including the coming Messianic age.



B. *Teachings from the book of Zechariah - Zechariah's eight visions*

a. The horses among the myrtle trees

In this first vision, Zechariah sees a man riding a red horse standing among the myrtle trees in the glen (Zech 1:8-11). Also in the scene were red, sorrel, and white colored horses that were sent out to patrol the earth. When they returned, they announced to the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees that the earth was at peace and that there was no more war. During this time, the people had endured the 70 years of captivity and had returned to build the temple. The work came to a halt for 15 years, during which their attentions turned to their own affairs. In this vision, God comforted and assured his people that He was still in their midst. Through the report of the messengers, God reminded the Israelites that this was an opportune time to restart work on the temple while they had the protection of King Cyrus of Persia and while the land enjoyed peace and rest. The Lord Jesus also reminds us that we should work while it is day, while we have the chance, because when night comes, no one can work (Jn 9:4).

b. Four animal horns and four craftsmen

In this vision Zechariah sees four animal horns, which were later taken hold of by four craftsmen (Zech 1:18-21). In the Bible, horns represent power and authority (1 Kgs 22:11; Ps 75:4-5, 10; Dan 7:24; Lk 1:69). These horns had scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. The four world powers (four horns) that oppressed and scattered the people of Judah and Israel, were Assyria (Jer 50:17), Babylon, Medes and Persia, and Greece. However, after the horns came four craftsmen who would pound and cast down these horns. These craftsmen refer to the world powers that arose to destroy those who preceded them, namely Babylon, Medes and Persia, Greece and Rome (Dan 2:36-41).

God revealed this vision to inform the Israelites that no matter how strong these empires may seem, they will be destroyed eventually for God is in control of human history.

c. The man with the measuring line

In this third vision, a man with a measuring line informs Zechariah that he is going to measure Jerusalem (Zech 2:1-5). A measuring line is an instrument used in construction. Through this vision God told the Israelites that He was going to rebuild and restore Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be a city blessed with innumerable people, it will be a city without walls. In actuality Jerusalem then was only a tiny community of about 40,000 people who had returned from Babylon (Neh 7:4). But God promised them that if they continued in His words, He will cause the inhabitants to prosper and thrive. Peace, freedom and glory will prevail and God will be a wall of fire to protect the city. This proclamation also served as an invitation to the captives who had decided to remain in Babylon. God wanted them to see the future of Jerusalem and to invite them to return and participate in the work of rebuilding the temple. This vision also refers to the abidance and blessings of God upon the true church in the last days. God will open the door of grace and many will flock to it.

d. Joshua the high priest

In this vision, Joshua the high priest is accused by Satan of wearing filthy garments (Zech 3:1-5). Joshua the high priest was a man who returned to Israel with Zerubbabel during the first return (Ez 2:2; 3:2). During the captivity in Babylon, the priesthood had become unneeded, but upon returning to Israel, the priesthood and religious worship would be reinstated. In this vision, Joshua wears filthy garments instead of the high priest's holy garments. Garments in the Bible represent our conduct and deeds (Is 64:6; Rev 19:8). Since Joshua the high priest symbolized the Israelite nation, God used the vision to remind the people that they still wore filthy garments, which were their sins. While we serve God, Satan uses every opportunity to accuse and oppose us. As God's chosen race and royal priests, our conduct needs to be holy. We need to take off our filthy garments and put on the rich apparel and clean turban (Zech 3:1-6), which is Christ Himself (Gal 3:27). We need to serve God with a clean conscience and to be watchful so as not to give Satan a foothold (Eph 4:27).

e. The golden lampstand and the olive trees

In this vision, Zechariah sees a lampstand made of pure gold with a bowl on top of it (Zech 4:1-14). On top of the bowl were seven lamps with seven pipes on each of the lamps. In the Old Testament the lampstand represents the

Israelites, and the fact that they are made of pure gold suggests that they are most precious in the sight of God. By each side of the bowl are two olive trees which refer to the two anointed of God; namely, Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest. These men were appointed by God to be in charge of rebuilding the temple. This vision however, was addressed specifically to Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah in the days of Zechariah, and he was given the responsibility of administering to the rebuilding of the temple. God's message to Zerubbabel was that he had to rely not on might nor on power but on the Spirit of God.

When King Solomon built the first temple, he utilized large work forces; he conscripted 30,000 workers; 70,000 burden-bearers; 80,000 hewers of stone and 3,300 foremen. He employed in total 180,000 men for the work on the temple. In contrast to this, Zerubbabel had only 50,000 people, which included the elderly and infants. Despite financial insufficiencies, lack of manpower, and enemy attacks, God promised to work with them. Even if obstacles were as great as a mountain, God would cause it to become a plain before them. Similarly, despite the lack of people of wealth, high education or power in our church today, the work has prospered nonetheless. God reminds us that we should not rely upon our own ambitions, leadership or organizational plans to establish the church but upon the Holy Spirit, which is given without measure.

f. The flying scroll

In this sixth vision, Zechariah sees a scroll flying through the air (Zech 5:1-4). The scroll is 20 cubits long (30 ft) and 10 cubits wide (15 ft). The scroll represents God's judgment and curse. The fact that the scroll is flying suggests that God's judgment will come swiftly upon the sinners. The size of the scroll is larger than ordinary scrolls and suggests that many have committed sin (Rev 14:6-7). The scroll will enter into the houses of those who steal and have sworn falsely. Those who steal refer to those who have sinned through their actions, and those who have lied are those who sin through speech. During the construction of the temple, the people had to examine their behaviors, otherwise their sins will affect the work of their hands, and rather than receiving God's blessings they will incur His wrath.

g. The woman in the ephah

In the seventh vision, Zechariah sees a woman sitting in an ephah which is sealed with a leaden cover (Zech 5:5-11). Zechariah goes on to see two women with wings like storks take the ephah to the land of Shinar, where they build a house for it and set it down. An ephah is a unit of measurement for phys-

ical elements such as grain. But here, the ephah was used to measure the “iniquity in all the land.” The woman sitting in the ephah represents all the wickedness and sins of Israel. A heavy lead cover is clamped down over the woman, which means that sin will no longer prevail because God is to execute judgment. The two women with wings like storks represent two wicked nations. In the Old Testament, storks were considered unclean animals (Lev 11:19) and so these two women represent Assyria and Babylon, both gentile and wicked countries. Both Assyria and Babylon took Israel and Judah to Babylon where they dwelt for 70 years. Through this vision, God reminded the Israelites that the captivity served to purge the people of their rebelliousness. Having returned to the holy land, they had to put their old ways behind them, live a holy life and complete the construction of the temple.

h. Four horses and chariots

In the eighth and final vision, Zechariah witnessed four chariots come out from between two bronze mountains (Zech 6:1-8). The first chariot was pulled by red horses, the second by black horses, the third by white horses and the fourth by dappled gray horses. Bronze in the Bible represents power, authority and judgment (cf. Rev 1:15; 2:18; Ps 60:12; Lk 10:19). Mountains represent something that is immovable and unchangeable. The brass mountain refers to God’s unshakable will and judgment. As the horses appear, they travel in certain directions. The chariot with the black horses was to go to the north country, the white horses followed after them, and the dappled ones to the south country. The four different colored horses represent the messengers of God sent to carry out His will in history. They are in fact the world powers that ruled in history. At this juncture, the red horses are no longer mentioned. This is because by Zechariah’s time, the nation of Babylon (red horses) had been defeated by the Persians, and had ceased to exist. The black horses and the white horses (Medes followed by Persia) go northwards which means that they are heading to Babylon. From history we learn that Babylon did receive their rebuke in the hands of the Medes and Persians. The dappled horses headed to the south country (Egypt) and they were to patrol the earth. The dappled horses represent the Grecian empire under Alexander the Great. In the vision, God says that those who go to the north have set my spirit at rest (Zech 6:8). Why is it that Medes and Persia has comforted the heart of God? It is because King Cyrus and King Darius have allowed their captives, the Israelites, to return home and rebuild the temple.



Part 3

The Book of Malachi



A. Overview

a. Author

The author of this book is the prophet Malachi, whose name means, “My messenger” or “angel.” Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets and the writer of the last book of the Old Testament. Nothing is known of him beyond what is contained in his book of prophecies.

b. Date

It is believed that Malachi worked as a prophet some 50 years after the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, between the years of 434 and 415 B.C. He may have been a contemporary of Nehemiah working during the religious reformation.

c. Theme

Under the encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah, the people arose to complete the construction of the temple. Following that there was a period of renewed faith and worship. Prosperity as well as independence had returned. But almost a century had gone by, since then the new generation of Jews had seen a decline in zeal and fear of God. With blessing had come a peculiar reaction; the sense of need for God had receded. God was ignored, even despised. Many of the sins that had brought the downfall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., which Nehemiah strove to reform, were still being practiced in Judah; there was hypocrisy, infidelity, mixed marriages, divorce, and failure to observe the Sabbath and offer tithes. Malachi confronted the hypocrites with their sin by portraying a graphic dialogue between a righteous God and His hardened people.



B. Teachings from the Book of Malachi -

A Dialogue between God and His people

Using a series of questions, Malachi directed God’s message of judgment and warning to the Jews.

- a. **First Question**—*“I have loved you,’ says the Lord. But you say, ‘How hast thou loved us?’” (Mal 1:2-5)*

Throughout the history of the chosen people, God had unceasingly manifested His love to them. He led them out of the land of slavery, He gave them the promised land as an inheritance, He raised up judges and prophets to discipline and warn them when they went astray, and even when they were led away to captivity, God brought them back to their homeland. Despite all this, the people asked God, “How have You loved us?” God answered that His love is manifested in His selection. Instead of choosing Esau, the firstborn and the rightful heir, God chose Jacob to be the one through whom the nation of Israel and the Messiah would come. God also revealed the fate of those whom God has not chosen: “Their hill country will be laid waste and their heritage left to jackals of the desert.” God’s wrath will be upon them because of their sins. In times when we doubt God’s love and ask, “How have You loved us, God?” recall the words of 1 John: “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God” (1 Jn 3:1; 4:9,10).

- b. **Second Question**—*“A son honors his father, and a servant his master... Where is my honor?... to you, O priests, who despise my name.’ You say, ‘How have we despised thy name?’” (Mal 1:6-14)*

Although worship in the temple had been reinstated, the prophet now turns his accusations to the priests. The duties of the priests were to offer sacrifices, teach the laws of God and bless the people. According to the laws of sacrifices, animals with defects were not acceptable as sacrifices (Lev 22:17-33), but the priests were guilty of offering up lame, blind and sick animals to God. They did not filter the animals brought in by the people. Instead, they accepted whatever was offered. God therefore rebuked the priests and the people saying that even the gentiles have exalted God’s name and given Him the best, but the Israelites have given to God things that were cheap, convenient and rejects. God had no pleasure in them. This is a good reminder to us that we must give God our best. If we give God only our leftover time, money and energy, we repeat the same sin as these worshipers.

- c. **Third Question**—*“You cover the Lord’s altar with tears because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor at your hand’. You ask, ‘Why does He not?’” (Mal 2:13-16)*

In those days, the men questioned why God refused their offerings. God told them that it was because they had married gentile women, abused their wives, and divorced them. They had ignored the bond between a husband and a wife and God’s purpose for them, which was to raise godly children. Through

God’s answer, we are reminded that problems in a marriage cannot be resolved in a worldly manner, but we need to honor the sanctity and permanence of marriage.

- d. **Fourth Question**—*“You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, ‘How have we wearied Him?’” (Mal 2:17)*

Due to suffering and oppression, the people’s faith in God weakened especially when they could not see God’s justice or deliverance. They began to twist God’s truth by falsely asserting that God delights in those who do evil. They questioned God’s justice when they observed how the wicked were not punished but blessed. God was tired of the people’s ignorance and their failure to understand Him. In times when God appears to be silent, we need to wait for God and believe that He can never go against His own nature.

- e. **Fifth Question**—*“Return to me, and I will return to you,’ says the Lord of hosts. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How are we robbing thee?’” (Mal 3:6-12)*

Malachi urged the people to stop holding back their tithes. The system of offering a tenth of one’s land and possessions was one that began during the time of Moses. The tithes were used to support the Levites who dedicated their lives for the service of the Lord. Sadly, during Malachi’s day, the people withheld their tithes and the Levites were forced to work to earn a living. God pointed out that by withholding tithes, the people were robbing God of what belonged to Him (Lev 27:30-34; Num 18:21; Deut 14:27) and as a result, God had cursed the land and its people with locusts (Mal 3:11). But if the people were to return to God by offering tithes, He will open the windows of heaven and pour down an overflowing blessing. This promise holds true for us when we offer God the first part of our income and supply the needs of the church.

- f. **Sixth Question**—*“Your words have been stout against me, says the Lord. Yet you say, ‘How have we spoken against thee?’” (Mal 3:13-15)*

These few verses reveal the people’s attitude toward God. When they see the evildoers prosper and the arrogant blessed, they question, “What good does it do to worship God?” What is the point of being so serious about our faith? The Lord reminded the people that there is no need to envy the wicked because on the Day of Judgment, God will remember and save those who have feared and served Him.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING



1

What is the necessary attitude we should have while doing God's work?

2

Why had the Israelites experienced loss in their lives despite much effort?

3

Have we seen "famines" or fruitlessness in our lives despite our efforts?

LIFE APPLICATION



Labor for Jesus

Although Haggai served the shortest time of all the prophets (3 months and 24 days), he was successful in his work. Haggai walked the streets and alleys of Jerusalem urging the people to reorder their priorities and get back to doing God's work. His faithfulness and zeal was a catalyst for the people to complete the work on the temple. While Haggai was a faithful worker, the chosen people were content with beautifying their own homes and had neglected the work of God. These two parties can represent the two different attitudes in doing church work. In the following activity, look up the listed Bible verses, then discuss and examine our own attitudes towards doing God's work.

1. Read Haggai 1:2-4

The prophet Haggai rebuked the people for excusing themselves by saying that the time had not yet come for rebuilding the temple of God. What attitude do we have towards church work? What is our immediate response when asked to help?

2. Read Haggai 1:6-9

The people hoped for more, but they received less. What can Christians do to be blessed?

3. Read Haggai 2:4

The Lord encouraged the people to be courageous and complete the work.

God promised that He would be with them and nothing will be too hard for them. Share your experiences in this area.

4. Read Haggai 2:9

The glory of the latter temple will be greater than the former temple. Reflect on the situation of the church today compared with the promise of God. What are your thoughts?

Answers for teacher reference:

1. The people focused their energies on building their own homes and orchards. They used many excuses to push aside the work of rebuilding the temple of God. We should be cautious of creating excuses saying, "The time has not yet come" for doing God's work. Because we focus on "building our own houses," the temple of God still lies in ruins. May God help us overcome our selfishness and enable us to understand that our labor for the Lord is not in vain (1 Cor 15:58).
2. The people lacked a heart of zeal for doing God's work. On the surface it appears that they were able to enjoy many pleasures but in fact they had suffered great loss. Matthew 6:33 remind us that we should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. If we look to God's matters and obey His commands, God will bless us.
3. Psalm 127:1 reminds us that those who build and those who watch over the city can only do so if God abides with them. When Elisha's servant saw the armies of Syria surrounding them, he was afraid. But when he perceived how the mountains were surrounded by the armies and chariots of God, his fear subsided because he saw the abidance of God. Today, we need only be strong in the power of God while we serve Him as God will work with us (2 Tim 1:6).
4. Today, when people see the situation of the church they lose hope. When people lose hope they lose the determination, the faith and even courage to continue in God's work. This in turn will affect the holy work. Instead, we should ask God for a peaceful heart, to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to be renewed in strength and courage. We need only do our part and leave the rest to God.



As we do holy work, let us continuously examine our inner selves, so that our works will be accepted by Him. Let us also look to the Lord for guidance and strength as we complete His work.

Lesson 13

Review

Lesson Aim

- 1) To enable students to gain an overview of the major and minor prophets.
- 2) To understand the role of the prophets in the history of the Israelite nation.
- 3) To realize the great task that each prophet shouldered in declaring God's words to a resistant people.

R E V I E W

Spin the Wheel

Making the Wheel:

1. Use a large piece of cardboard.
2. Draw a large circle. You may wish to cut out Styrofoam and attach it to the cardboard to strengthen it.
3. Divide the circle into the following categories, like a pie. Color each category in a different color.

Categories:

- a. Spin Again
- b. Miss A Turn
- c. Who Am I
- d. Famous Sayings
- e. Meaning of Names
- f. Lessons 1-12

4. Cut out a large arrow with the remaining cardboard. This should be stiff so that it can spin easily.