



# BUILD YOUR KINGDOM **HERE**

Small Group Notes - 'Build your Kingdom Here  
St Mary's and Sale West  
May 2025



# BUILD YOUR KINGDOM HERE

God has always involved his people in the process of building his kingdom. In the time of Haggai this was through the outworkings of worship in the temple and his people going into the world; today it is through the outworkings of his church, which is the people, not a building, going out into the world.

As we read Haggai there is a clear similarity between what God was saying to his people in 520BC and what he is saying to his people in 2025AD about building his church, his kingdom. Our choices matter and God has chosen to work out his purposes through the faithfulness and obedience of his people. Haggai challenged a generation then, will you be faithful to God and build his kingdom, and he encouraged them that God is with them. The same book challenges us today in a different generation, will we be faithful to God and build his kingdom? And it encourages us that God is with us.

## CONTEXT OF HAGGAI *(taken from the Bible Project)*

While Haggai is one of the smaller prophetic books in the Bible, it is crucially important in the overall story of the Hebrew Bible. For centuries, the Hebrew prophets had been accusing Israel of breaking their covenant with God through idolatry and injustice. They warned that God would send the great empire of Babylon to take out Jerusalem, destroy the temple, and haul the people off into exile. And this is what happened in the year 587 B.C.E. (2 Kgs. 24-25), but it wasn't the end of the story. The prophets had a deep conviction that God would bring back a transformed remnant of Israel to live in a new Jerusalem, where God's Presence would live in their midst.

When we turn to Haggai, the date is 520 B.C.E., nearly 70 years after the exile. Babylon's empire has recently collapsed, and the world is now ruled by the Persians, who allowed the return of any exiled Israelites who wanted to go back to Jerusalem. Under the leadership of a high priest named Joshua and Zerubbabel, an heir from the line of David, a group of exiles returned and began to rebuild the city and their lives (Ezra 1-6). So you can imagine that the people's hopes are high and the future seems bright! But not from Haggai's point of view.

**You might also want to watch the Bible Projects overview video on YouTube. Search "Bible Project Haggai" on Youtube or use this link:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juPvv\\_xcX-U&t=206s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juPvv_xcX-U&t=206s)



# **BUILD YOUR KINGDOM HERE**

Build My Church

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Haggai begins by accusing the people of misplaced priorities. Sure, they've come back to Jerusalem, but they're spending all their time and resources rebuilding their own fancy houses while the temple still lies in ruins from its destruction nearly 70 years ago. Haggai asks, "Are your own houses really more important than your allegiance to God?" (Hag. 1:4). We're told that Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the remnant of Israel were provoked by Haggai's message and were motivated to start rebuilding the temple.

Can you think of a story where the main character gets a dramatic wakeup call which radically alters their priorities, motivations, and actions, for the better?

Has there been a time in your life when something or someone reignited your dreams, shook you awake, or stirred up your passion in a fresh way? (it doesn't have to be dramatic like in books or films!)

## **READ**

Read Haggai 1:1-15 then retell the passage in your own words

## **DISCUSS**

1. God's people have been in exile and without a temple to worship in for 70 years. The temple was at the heart of their worship, while in exile they longed to be able to worship God in the temple again. Why do you think their attitude changed when they returned to the land and were able to rebuild? Why do you think they were saying that the time had not yet come to rebuild the Lord's house? Do their own personal endeavours leave them satisfied?
2. Look up 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:21-22 and discuss what they tell us about the New Testament understanding of the temple.
3. Why do you think we, God's people, struggle to prioritise building God's kingdom today? What typically distracts you from the work of building God's church/kingdom in our town and communities?
4. We are not (most of the time) to build a physical building like the temple, so

what does building God's kingdom look like for us, for you? What does it involve?

5. Twice God warns the people to give careful thoughts to their ways, what is God warning them about. How often do you take time to give careful thought to your own ways? Sometimes it is good to do it in community like this small group, other times with someone close to you or on your own. If it isn't already a part of the rhythm of your life, how will you build in times to assess the priorities in your life and whether your diary, finances, energy etc. reflect them?
6. God asks the people to make sacrifices for him. It is not just the work they would do in getting resources and building the temple but it would also mean not using their time, energy, resources etc on themselves and their families. God doesn't need us to get things done for His Kingdom on Earth - and yet He chooses to include us in the building project. What does this tell us about God, and how He feels about us? How would you help someone who might feel resentment towards the sacrifices we make for God and the building of his kingdom?
7. What was the response to the people upon hearing the reminder that God was with them? Why did that motivate them and how can that reality motivate us in our work of building God's kingdom.

## **PRAY TOGETHER**

Now is as good a time as any to heed the wake-up call of our loving Heavenly Father: 'Give careful thought to your ways.' Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you if you've let the frenetic pace and scattered pursuits of life distract you from following Him. Allow God to stir up your devotion to Him and His ways once again. As you move through your days, mindful that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit, allow Him to refresh your passion for His glory in the knowledge that he is with you. Haggai draws from earlier Isaiah and Micah, saying that the new Jerusalem will be the place from which God will redeem the world and that all nations will come and participate in God's Kingdom, resulting in peace for all (Isa. 9; Isa. 60-62; Mic. 4-5). So the temple plays a key role in God's plans for the future, and Haggai calls on the people to work in hope and not give up.

# **BUILD YOUR KINGDOM HERE**

Don't Give Up

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Haggai follows up one month later and addresses a problem of shattered expectations among the people. The temple they are rebuilding is unimpressive. It's nothing compared to the glory of the temple Solomon built some 500 years earlier. As you can imagine, morale was pretty low for finishing the project. Haggai reminds the people of the great prophetic promises of the future Kingdom of God and his temple.

What's a time when you started a project or task and then felt like it wasn't worth continuing? What kept you going (or caused you to stop)?

## **READ**

Read Haggai 2:1-9

## **DISCUSS**

1. In verse 3, God addresses the comparison between the current temple and the former one. Why do you think this comparison was so discouraging for the people?
2. How has comparison stopped you from pursuing the call of God on your life? Do you tend to compare yourself to others and what they are currently doing or achieving, or do you tend to compare your current efforts to your past accomplishments?
3. What does God remind the people of in verses 4-5 to encourage them to keep going and not give up?
4. The Israelites didn't yet have a temple—and yet they had God's presence. They didn't need the bling of a new building to attract the power, presence and purposes of God. He had already declared them to be His own precious people, and He was already with them. The same is true for us today. We can look back on culture and the position of the church in the past and be discouraged that perhaps it doesn't have the same 'glory' that it once did. What can we take encouragement from in these verses to keep going and give ourselves anew to the building of the church/the kingdom of God today?

5. Read Hebrews 13:5-6 and Matthew 28:18-20 in The Message translation. How can these verses encourage us when we feel like giving up, slowing down, being apathetic to building the church today?

## **PRAY TOGETHER**

Pray for the courage and commitment required to keep on keeping on, in the work God has called you to in this season. Thank God that He is able to use you, a limited human with limited strength, for His unlimited Kingdom and glory.



# BUILD YOUR KINGDOM HERE

Faithfulness

---

## INTRODUCTION

It's not what you do it's the way that you do it. Two months on from the last section the people are building the temple, they have prioritised it but it seems that they are doing it out of duty or a sense of piety. They might be physically rebuilding God's temple but their hearts are not in it, they are not faithful to God with the way in which they live. Haggai is speaking God's message and calling the people to faithfulness to God. As we read today's passage we will see how Haggai takes an example from the law about uncleanness and turns that into a parable saying it's the same with the people of Israel and what they're putting their hands to as they rebuild the temple. If the current generation doesn't humble themselves and turn from injustice and apathy, then whatever they build with their hands, including the new temple, will be impure.

He is calling them to true repentance, it's only by true repentance and faithfulness that their building efforts will result in God bringing his Kingdom and blessing. So in one sense, their future is in their hands, and God is waiting for his people to be faithful.

If two people are up for it and can do it without hurting themselves (if you can't do it safely then just imagine the scenario and discuss what would happen), get one person to stand on a chair or stool and the other person to be on the floor. Ask the person on the chair to pull the person up off the ground and stand on the chair with you. Once you have given that a go, get the person on the floor to pull the person on the chair down to the ground with them. Which scenario is easier to achieve?

## READ

Read Haggai 2:10-19

## DISCUSS

1. What does this passage tell us about God? What does this passage tell us about people?
2. Do you relate to the people Haggai is talking to in this passage? We too can easily take pride in work we do to build God's church and believe that the work makes us holier or better. How do we overcome this attitude?

3. How much do you think building God's kingdom is down to us and how much is God? What does this passage imply about how the building of his kingdom works?
4. Look up these passages Matthew 6:1–5; Luke 18:10–14, Psalm 51:16–17. They are verses that could apply to the people Haggai is talking to and of course to us. What do these verses tell us about what God asks of us as we build his church.
5. A fundamental question which is behind this is, do we want to see God's kingdom come? If so, what are we doing to help that, what are we doing that hinders it?

## **PRAY TOGETHER**

Thank God for His unimaginable love: calling you holy and blameless before you'd done a single good thing. Repent of pride, if you've believed the lie that your work to build the church is what makes you acceptable to God. Ask for his help to faithful to him, not just with what we do but the way in which we do it.

# **BUILD YOUR KINGDOM HERE**

No More Fear

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

God's people were a comparatively weak minority that feared the mighty Persian empire. They felt tremendous cultural and political pressure. They wanted to keep their heads down so as not to anger their oppressors. The book concludes with Haggai's summary of the future hope in God's Kingdom. God will make the new Jerusalem the centre of his glorious international Kingdom. Just as he defeated Pharaoh long ago, God will again confront and defeat evil among the nations and fulfil his promise.

The book concludes with the choice of a bright future just hanging there. Will Haggai's generation be faithful to God and bold and experience the fulfilment of the promises or will they not respond and continue to hide in fear?

What is your biggest fear?

## **READ**

Read Haggai 2:20-23

## **DISCUSS**

1. Why is God going to shake everything? Does this sound like a good thing or a bad thing? Is this meant to bring comfort or fear?
2. There are probably hundreds of reasons why we don't devote ourselves to building God's church, but fear is probably the biggest reason of all. Do you agree? If so, what are your specific fears around throwing your weight behind God's work in your community?
3. As a follower of Jesus, what cultural and political pressures do you face? Who do you fear offending? What are the possible consequences of standing up for your faith?
4. Fear kept God's people from building the temple, and we can be crippled by fear too. How does 1 John 4:18 speak directly to the fear that can stop us from building God's church?
5. Right now, Jesus is on the throne, His Kingdom is growing and nothing and no one can stop it. What's stopping you?

## **PRAY TOGETHER**

Read Isaiah 41:10, 2 Timothy 1:7, Psalm 34:4, Joshua 1:9, Psalm 56:3-4, Philippians 4:6, Deuteronomy 31:6. Then pray together surrendering your fears to God, and ask Him for faith, wisdom and courage to take the next step towards building His church.

