

**“What Really Is Important?”  
Haggai 1:1-15**

The book of Haggai contains four prophetic messages, each of which contains an important spiritual principle. The first message emphasizes the principle of priorities, and is a call to personal examination. The prophet exhorts God’s people to get on with the work of God, and does so by giving them three important reminders.

- I. **Reminder #1: Obedience to God is to be our number one priority (vvs. 1-5).**
  
- II. **Reminder #2: Establishing the wrong priorities, however worthwhile they may be, opens the door to God’s chastening (vvs. 6-7, 9-11).**
  
- III. **Reminder #3: Obedience to God renews our relationship with Him and energizes our service for Him (vvs. 8, 12-15).**

**Historical Perspective of Haggai**

1. **605 B.C., 597 B.C., and 586 B.C.: Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire take the Jewish nation into captivity. Jerusalem is destroyed, along with its temple.**
2. **While the Jews are in exile, the Babylonian Empire falls and the Persian Empire becomes the world power (see Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2, Daniel’s interpretation of the handwriting on the wall in Daniel 5). King Cyrus becomes the world ruler.**
3. **God stirs Cyrus to issue a proclamation that permits and encourages the Jews to return to their homeland to “rebuild the house of the LORD” (Ezra 1:1-4, esp. v. 3).**
  - a. **About 50,000 Jews return under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 2).**
  - b. **Religious feasts are reinstated and the foundation of the temple is laid (Ezra 3).  
The year is 536 B.C.**
  - c. **Work on the temple stops (Ezra 4) due to opposition and national indifference.**
4. **After sixteen years of procrastination, God raises up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to challenge the people to finish the temple and get their priorities in order (Ezra 5).**
5. **The temple is completed four years later (Ezra 6:14-15).**

**The Outline of Haggai**

The book of Haggai contains four significant prophetic passages. They are progressive in thought, like four stanzas of a hymn. Each message begins with the phrase, “the word of the LORD came” (1:3; 2:1, 10, 20).

- I. **First Message of Rebuke: A Call for Personal Examination (1:1-15)**
- II. **Second Message of Encouragement: A Call to Rebuild the House of God (2:1-9)**
- III. **Third Message of Blessing: A Call to Consider the Conditions for Blessing (2:10-19)**
- IV. **Fourth Message of Promise: A Call to Consider God’s Future Blessing (2:20-23).**

