

## Haggai – Notes 1

### [A] SIGNIFICANT YEARS OF VISIBLE ADVANCE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- the really significant individual years of your life?
- Kingdom of God – post exile - second year of King Darius. **Hag 1:1**: 2/6/2D; **1:15**: 24/6/2D; **2:1**: 21/7; **2:10**: 24/9/2D; **2:20**: ditto. [Whole recorded ministry of Haggai - within a 3.5/ 4 month period.] **Zech 1:1**: x/8/2D; **1:7**: 24/11/2D [including Zech 1-6].
- a year of the Lord's particular favour; an 'appointed time' (**Hab 2:2**); **Ps 102:13**
- our prayer and longing?
- Communicant membership Barvas CofS in 20<sup>th</sup> century – graph: 4 significant spikes: (i) c 1908; (ii) 1922-25; (iii) 1939; (iv) the sharpest/ highest spike 1950 – periods of revival.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> yr of King Darius - year of new beginnings; fresh spiritual vitality; temple-building became a priority after a gap of 16/17 years (due to fierce opposition – see Ezra 4)

### [B] THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **Habakkuk** ministered in decades prior to fall of Jerusalem 587 BC; **Obadiah** ministered in immediate aftermath of fall and exile; return from exile - 538 BC; **Haggai** - 520 BC.
- **Ezra** (1-2) end of the exile; return to Promised Land; **Ezra 3**: (i) **built the altar**, restoring worship/ communion/ forgiveness; (ii) **started rebuilding temple** (v 10). **But fierce opposition** halted the work (**Ezra 4:24**) 'until 2<sup>nd</sup> yr of Darius, king of Persia.'
- **Persia – where has Babylon gone?** Remember **Hab 1:5f**; also **Hab 3:16** – happened in **539 BC**. Cyrus, king of Persia, conquered Babylonians; released exiled peoples incl Jews.

### [1] HAGGAI'S CALL TO GOD'S PEOPLE TO ADJUST THEIR PRIORITIES

- **1:2** 'time has **not yet** come for the Lord's house to be built'; 16-17 yrs of other priorities
- **1:8**: 'Build the house'/ my temple. Time for decision and action!
- What of ourselves? A problem for Christians in modern society? **Matt 6:33**: 'seek first [the] kingdom [of the Father] and his righteousness. Do we need to adjust our priorities?'

### [2] PEOPLE'S RESPONSE – A TRUE HEARING OF THAT CALL/WORD (v 12)

- V 12: 'Then ... [they] ... obeyed (**heard**/ listened to) the voice of the Lord their God

- **death** entered when Adam stopped hearing the voice of God; death reigns wherever humans listen to the voice of the father of lies; while **life** comes through that great revolution of hearing that takes place (Is 55:3): ‘Hear me and your soul shall live!’
- **Galatians 3:2-3** - we receive the Spirit through believing what we hear of the gospel. Why preaching of the word so important.
- True of every stage of our Christian life, but our spiritual hearing can become clogged up with ‘wax’ of our plans/ traditions/ unbelief/ theology; etc. Are we hearing the voice of the Lord our God through the message of the prophet Haggai?

### [3] **TRUE HEARING of Word ACCOMPANIED BY a SPIRITUAL AWAKENING**

- V 14: ‘The Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel ... and ... of Jehozadak ... and ... of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began work on the house ...’
- stirring up - done by God, not by Haggai, etc. So today. Phil 2:13.
- God had always been with them. 1:13; 2:4; further explanation in 2:5: ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt’ ... ‘my Spirit remains among you.’
- So today. **But** God’s presence among his people can be a **chastening presence**
  - For 16-17 years - a busy, hard-working people: (1:6) ‘planted much’. But never seemed to have enough: (1:6) they ‘harvested little ...’ - modern western society?
  - the reason? – judgement of God (1:9): ‘... I blew away ... (1:11) I called for a drought ... (2:17) I struck all the work of your hands, yet you did not turn to me, declares the Lord.’ Judgements of mercy, to bring them to repentance. So today.
- most wonderfully, eventually he doesn’t wait for us to turn/ repent – he just turns from his anger and moves towards us in grace and mercy again – being true to his character.
- when he turns towards us in blessing, gives us ears to hear; when he stirs up our spirits to become doers of the word and not hearers only, then the future for his people is one of glory, peace and blessing – see 2:7, 9, 19.