

**OVERVIEW OF BOOK OF HAGGAI – SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD –
GODLY INVESTMENT STRATEGIES**

INTRODUCTION --

THE PROPHETS IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE EXILE

605BC ————— 536BC		
Before the Exile	During the Exile	After the Exile
Obadiah Joel Jonah Amos Hosea Isaiah Micah Nahum Zephaniah Habakkak	Jeremiah-Lamentations Daniel Ezekiel	Haggai Zechariah Malachi

The short book of Haggai (the second shortest book in the OT – just 2 chapters containing the 4 sermons delivered by the prophet) is all about **spiritual investment strategies**. You need to consider this morning: What type of investments are you making for eternity with your life, with your resources, with your spiritual giftedness?

As I reflect back on my life, I must confess that I am a horrible investor when it comes to **financial matters**. It started back when I was a teenager earning big bucks on my paper route for the evening newspaper the Philadelphia Bulletin. I took an interest early on in the stock market. It seemed attractive – you analyze some companies, pick a couple of winners and presto you wind up making easy cash returns. What could be simpler. No labor involved, no sweat equity – I love it. So I came up with my investment strategy – the one thing that is obvious about the stock market is that the values for each company go up and down. So I will focus on a couple of companies that have gone down the most in the past year and it will be their turn to head back up. Sounded fool-proof to me and very easy to research! Actually it turned out to be a foolish strategy. My choice of BF Goodrich and some other company continued to spiral downward despite my hefty investment of several hundred dollars. Well that fiasco squelched my interest in the stock market – probably the Lord’s way of protecting me against using my future Princeton education as the launching point for some career in the financial world.

But had I learned my lesson about how to invest wisely? Not by a long shot. Decades later, when I had more capital to invest I received a hot tip from the Vice President at my work – the Caterpillar dealership here in MD. I respected his judgment; he seemed to be on the leading

edge of technological advancements. In fact it was he who first interested me in the internet back in its infancy days. He was touting the potential of a new company FutureLink – an Applications Service Provider. Without any research on my own, I dumped a significant amount of money into their stock . . . and worse than that . . . encouraged my young children to invest as well. Well you can anticipate the outcome. The company went belly-up (Launched 1995; filed for Chapter 11 in August 2001). Fortunately my children are gracious and continue to love me . . . although the painful subject is brought up from time to time.

I come by this investing deficiency naturally. Everything my Dad selected seemed to sour. I remember the day we drove to a land development in West Virginia and my Dad (with me cheering him on) bought the sales pitch and became the proud owner of a large wooded lot with plans for lakes and golf courses and tremendous amenities down the road. I think he ended up donating the land years later to his alma mater Georgia Tech. Then there was the land he bought down in Florida that ended up under water. Fortunately my Mom came from a different blood line – she had investments from her Mom who was extremely shrewd and she was an expert at picking blue chip stocks that soared in value. Too bad Dad didn't take her advice and invest in property on Cape Cod way back in the day.

Anyway, all that to say that when it comes to investing, there are good choices and there are foolish choices. The returns will reveal which is which. By God's grace I can testify that when it comes to spiritual investments I believe that the Lord has given me a good measure of discernment so I am confident in what I will now attempt to expound from **God's authoritative investment guide** = the book of Haggai.

OVERVIEW:

Haggai comes on the scene after the rebuilding of the temple had already started when the exiles had returned from the Babylonian Captivity. About 50,000 people came back to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel. They put rebuilding the temple at the top of their priority list and worked hard on the project at the beginning. Then they faced multiple forms of opposition both from external and internal sources. The people were continuing to offer sacrifices on the foundation of the temple, but the progress on the project had stopped for a period of about 16 years. The people were now more concerned with their own comfort and their own properties and their own priorities. They had become distracted. They needed the challenge from God's prophet to stir their hearts to "Seek first the Kingdom of God."

BIG IDEA:

Four Messages Challenging the People of God to Wholeheartedly Commit Themselves to the Work of God

Haggai 1:14 *"and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God"*

Thomas Constable: Haggai delivered four messages to the restoration community, and he dated all of them in the second year of King Darius I (Hystaspes) of Persia (i.e., **520 B.C.**). His

ministry, as this book records it, spanned less than four months, from the first day of the sixth month (1:1) to the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month (2:20). In the modern calendar this would have been between August 29 and December 18, 520 B.C. This means that Haggai was the first prophet to address the returned Israelites. Zechariah began prophesying to the returnees in the eighth month of that same year (Zech. 1:1). Haggai was the most precise of the prophets in dating his messages. . .

Haggai's purpose was simple and clear. It was to motivate the Jews to build the temple. To do this he also fulfilled a secondary purpose: he confronted the people with their misplaced priorities. They were building their own houses but had neglected God's house. It was important to finish building the temple because only then could the people fully resume Levitical worship as the Lord had specified. They had gone into captivity for covenant unfaithfulness. Thus they needed to return to full obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. Furthermore, in the ancient Near East the glory of a nation's temple(s) reflected the glory of the people's god(s). So to finish the temple meant to glorify Yahweh. . .

STRUCTURE

- I. (1:1-15) MESSAGE #1 – CHECK OUT YOUR INVESTMENT STRATEGIES AND COMMIT TO THE WORK OF THE LORD**
- II. (2:1-9) MESSAGE #2 – COUNT ON GOD’S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PROMISES AS YOU BOLDLY LABOR FOR HIM – DON’T GET DISCOURAGED**
- III. (2:10-19) MESSAGE #3 – CONSECRATE YOURSELF AND GOD WILL BLESS YOUR INVESTMENTS IN HIS SERVICE**
- IV. (2:20-23) MESSAGE #4 – CROWN THE SERVANT OF THE LORD THE VICTORIOUS MESSIAH**

- I. (1:1-15) MESSAGE #1 – CHECK OUT YOUR INVESTMENT STRATEGIES AND COMMIT TO THE WORK OF THE LORD –**
THE WORK OF THE LORD AND HIS GLORY MUST BE OUR #1 PRIORITY
- A. (:1-11) Challenge: Check Out Your Investment Strategies**
 - 1. (:1-2) Complacency and Excuses Regarding the Work of the Lord -- Setting**
 - a. (:1A) Date Stamp for Message 1**
“In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month”

R. Hanko: This first mention of Darius is a reminder that the Jews, at the time of Haggai’s prophecy, were no longer an independent nation, but under the dominion of foreign and

heathen kings. They even dated events now by the reigns of these strange kings who ruled from far-off Persia. The fact that this king is not the same king who sent them back to Judah is a reminder that many years had passed and the work of the temple was not yet finished. It was Cyrus who had sent them back, and now another king named Darius was on the throne of Persia. It was also a reminder that circumstances had changed once again and that they could no longer use the hostility of former kings as an excuse for their neglect of God's house, for neglect it was, as Haggai points out in verse two.

b. (:1B) Delivery of the Message

1) The Lord's Message – Powerful

“the word of the Lord”

2) The Lord's Messenger – Faithful

“came by the prophet Haggai”

Name means *“festal one”*

3) The Lord's Target Audience = the Main National Leaders of Judah – Responsible for motivating the people to obey the Lord

a) Political Leader

“to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah,”

b) Religious Leader

“and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest”

c. (:2) Denunciation of Complacency and Excuses Regarding the Work of the Lord

“saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, This people says, The time has not come, even the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt.’”

What types of **excuses** do we see people hiding behind?

- **Mat. 8:21** *“permit me first to go and bury my father”* – putting family ahead of the Lord; waiting around to collect the security of one's inheritance

- **Luke 9:61** *“but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home”* – No place for emotional distractions or double-minded types of commitment

- **Luke 14:18-20**

The issue is one of priorities and whole-hearted commitment

2. (:3-6) Consider Your Ways = Nothing to Show for All Your Hard Work – Why?

a. (:3) Prophetic Message Introduced

“Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying”

b. (:4) Problem Exposed: No Priority Given to the Work of the Lord

“Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?”

c. (:5) Probing Encouraged: Call to Check Out Your Priorities

*“Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘**Consider your ways!**’”*

Last Sunday I apologized for not bringing a Christmas oriented message as we studied the Day of the Lord from the book of Zephaniah. Well today I came thru. This is a perfect message for

the beginning of a New Year. What a great time to take stock and consider our ways and make commitments for the future.

d. (:6) Proof Detailed: Life of Futility

1) Reversal of the Harvest Principle – Frustration of Expectations

“You have sown much, but harvest little”

2) Frustration at the Very Base Level of Existence – the very 3 things needed for contentment – the very things God has promised to provide so that we need not be anxious like the Gentiles

a) Food

“You eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied;”

b) Drink

“You drink, but there is not enough to become drunk;”

c) Clothing

“You put on clothing, but no one is warm enough;”

3) Futility of All Work – no way to recover – no hope

“And he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes.”

3. (:7-11) Consider Your Ways = The Providential Hand of the Lord Is against You --

Explanation

a. (:7) Probing Encouraged Again

“Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Consider your ways!’”

b. (:8) Pleasing God Must Be #1 = Go and Rebuild the Temple

“‘Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,’ says the Lord.”

Opposite of selfishness and pleasing self

Requires initiative and hard work; must set aside other distractions; must be willing to suffer hardship

Glory of God at stake

c. (:9) Problem Reiterated: No Priority Given to the Work of the Lord

“You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why? Declares the Lord of hosts, Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.”

d. (:10-11) Providence Opposed You

“Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce. I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands.”

This lack of productivity; this futility should have been no surprise to the Israelites. It was totally consistent with God’s warnings thru His prophet Moses in **Deuteronomy 28:15, 24, 38-40, 45**; The rest of Scripture echoes this same message as well: **Is. 17:11; Jer. 2:13; Rev. 3:19**

B. (:12-15) Response: Change Your Investment Priorities -- Commit to the Work of the Lord –

The Lord Is with Those Who Obediently Commit to Perform His Work for His Glory

1. (:12) The Proper Response to the Authoritative, Commanding Word of God

a. Unified Response – on the part of all the key leaders and all the people

1) On the Part of the Key Leaders

a) Zerubbabel – Political Leader

“Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel”

b) Joshua – Religious Leader

“and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest”

2) On the Part of All the People

“with all the remnant of the people”

b. Obedient Response – Revelation Demands a Response of Obedience

1) Revelation Demands a Response of Obedience Because of Its Divine Source

“obeyed the voice of the Lord their God”

God’s Word is

- Authoritative – Not human, but Divine in its Origin

- Commanding – Calls for submissive action

- Clear – Perspicuity of Scriptures

2) Revelation Demands a Response of Obedience as it is Faithfully Communicated by God’s Appointed Messenger

“and the words of Haggai the prophet,

as the Lord their God had sent him”

How do we respond to God’s appointed messengers?

How do we distinguish between those genuine prophets whom God has sent vs those self-appointed false prophets who run on their own?

c. Reverent Response

“And the people showed reverence for the Lord.”

How did they show reverence? How do we show reverence?

2. (:13) The Personal Reassurance of the Lord’s Presence = His Protection and Providential Provision

a. The Messenger of the Word of Reassurance

“Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord,”

b. The Authority of the Word of Reassurance

“spoke by the commission of the Lord to the people”

Not giving false hope or false promises of peace and provision

c. The Significance of the Word of Reassurance

“saying, ‘I am with you,’ declares the Lord.”

- Divine Protection

- Providential Provision

3. (:14-15) The People’s Resolve to Perform the Lofty Work of the Lord
 - a. Energized by the Spirit of God
 - 1) The Lord Stirred Up the Key Leaders
 - a) Zerubbabel – Political Leader

“So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah”
 - b) Joshua – Religious Leader

“and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest”
 - 2) The Lord Stirred Up the People

“and the spirit of all the remnant of the people”

Righteous living is our responsibility. We will be held accountable. We make the decisions. But ultimately God must take the initiative to work in our hearts and stir us up to repentance and faith that leads to obedience. We live by grace and by faith as well as by exercising our will and taking action.

- b. Committed to Engage the Lofty Task and Work Hard for God’s Glory
 - 1) Overcoming the Inertia to Get Started

“and they came”
 - 2) Working Hard for God’s Glory

“and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God”

Obedience is not just a determination to do the right thing; it involves carrying out the action itself – good intentions are not enough
- c. Date Stamp

“on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.”

Application: If someone wants to know your priorities, they don’t need your mission statement—they need your **calendar** and your **bank account**. How are you spending your time? How are you investing your resources? It’s time to **Consider your ways**.

II. (2:1-9) MESSAGE #2 – COUNT ON GOD’S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PROMISES AS YOU BOLDLY LABOR FOR HIM – DON’T GET DISCOURAGED –

EVALUATE PRESENT REALITIES NOT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PAST PERFORMANCE BUT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FUTURE PROMISES OF MILLENNIAL GLORY AND BLESSING

(:1-2) CONTEXT: MESSAGE #2 FROM GOD TO HIS LOYAL WORKERS

1. Date Stamp

“On the twenty-first of the seventh month,”

2. Prophetic Message #2

“the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet saying”

3. Same Audience

“speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people saying”

A. (:3-5) PAST FAILURES MUST NOT DISTRACT US FROM BOLDLY FULFILLING OUR PRESENT MINISTRY IN RELIANCE UPON THE ALLSUFFICIENT RESOURCE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

1. (:3) The Reminders of Blown Opportunities in the Past Can Discourage Us

3 Rhetorical Questions Exposing Potential for Discouragement

a. Longing for the Good Old Days

“Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory?”

The glory days of the reign of Solomon and the magnificence of the former temple were lost on account of the rebellion and idolatry of God’s people.

b. Looking at Every Flaw

“And how do you see it now?”

c. Letting Discouragement Overwhelm You

“Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison?”

Danger: don’t ever belittle or minimize the value of obedience.

2. (:4-5) The Reassurance of the Presence of God Motivates Bold Ministry

2 Simple Responsibilities Coupled with 1 All Sufficient Divine Provision

Note the **chiastic structure** of these 2 verses

1A. 2 Simple Responsibilities

“take courage”

“work”

1B. 1 All Sufficient Divine Provision = Promise of the Lord’s Presence
Alongside

“‘For I am with you.’ declares the Lord of hosts”

1B. 1 All Sufficient Divine Provision = Promise of the Spirit’s Presence
Within

“As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst ”

1A. 2 Simple Responsibilities

“Do not fear!”

Implied: Work!

Application: Once the people respond:

- **God stirs their spirit**

- God restores their courage
- God reaffirms His presence

B. (:6-9) FUTURE PROMISES OF MILLENNIAL BLESSING AND GLORY GIVE HOPE TO THE LORD’S LABORERS --

3 ASPECTS OF ESTABLISHING THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF THE MESSIAH

1. (:6-7a) Judgmental Preparation = **Shaking the Universe** with Cataclysmic Phenomena

“For thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations’”

The Lord is not finished yet with working out His plan to introduce His kingdom of righteousness and peace on this earth. He has more left in his arsenal. He has not yet fired all of His bullets. We are already in the last days and His preparatory judgment is coming soon. The nations may seem arrogant and independent of His rule right now; but they will soon be shaken.

2. (:7b-8) Sovereign Glorification – **Filling the Temple** with Glory and Prosperity

“and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,’ declares the Lord of hosts.”

Charles Ryrie: The well-known translation “*the desire of all nations*” (KJV) makes this a reference to Messiah and is in accord with Jewish tradition. However, many feel that the phrase is more properly translated, as here, *the wealth* (precious things) *of all nations*, referring to the offerings the nations will bring to the millennial Temple. The *glory* may refer to the splendor of the Temple or to the presence of the Lord in it. All that is of value belongs to the Lord anyway. The nations boast in their wealth and prosperity . . . but they will end up laying everything at the feet of the Master of the Universe.

3. (:9) Supreme Dominion – **Reigning in Glory** and Administering Peace

a. Proper Perspective of Comparison = Supreme Glory

“‘The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of hosts,”

Go ahead and make comparison now to Solomon’s temple. No comparison!

b. Peaceful Administration

“and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the Lord of hosts.”

Trace all of the OT references to the peace that will be instituted in the reign of the Messiah in the millennial kingdom.

III. (2:10-19) MESSAGE #3 – CONSECRATE YOURSELF AND GOD WILL BLESS YOUR INVESTMENTS IN HIS SERVICE

HOLINESS IS A PREREQUISITE TO ACCEPTABLE SERVICE AND THE BLESSING OF GOD

(:10) SETTING

1. Date Stamp

“On the twenty-fourth of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius”

2. Prophetic Message #3

“the word of the Lord came to Haggai the prophet, saying”

Simple Outline:

- I. Object Lesson
- II. Historical Example

A. (:11-14) THE OBJECT LESSON POINTS TO THE PREREQUISITE OF HOLINESS BEFORE ANY SERVICE CAN BE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD

1. (:11) Object Lesson Introduced

“Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Ask now the priests for a ruling:”

2. (:12-13) Object Lesson Illustrated Via 2 Contrasting Questions

a. (:12) Question #1 -- Is Holiness Contagious (Communicable)? NO

“If a man carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and touches bread with this fold, or cooked food, wine, oil, or any other food, will it become holy?’ And the priests answered, ‘No.”

b. (:13) Question #2 – Is Uncleanness Contagious (Communicable)? YES

“The Haggai said, ‘If one who is unclean from a corpse touches any of these, will the latter become unclean?’ And the priests answered, ‘It will become unclean.”

What happens if we immerse ourselves so deeply in the culture that we are the ones changed? Don’t deceive yourself; you cannot take fire into your bosom without being burned.

3. (:14) Object Lesson Applied – Unholy Sacrifices Are Worthless to God-- God’s People Must Put a Priority on Consecration

“Then Haggai said, ‘So is this people. And so is this nation before Me,’ declares the Lord, ‘and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.”

Charles Ryrie: The point of these two questions is this: Sanctification or cleanness cannot be transferred, but defilement can (just as health is not contagious, but disease can be). The disobedience of the people was like a dead thing in their midst, contaminating all of them (v. 14).

B. (:15-19) THE HISTORICAL EXAMPLE REINFORCES THE OBJECT

LESSON – HOLINESS IS A PREREQUISITE TO ACCEPTABLE SERVICE AND THE BLESSING OF GOD

1. (:15-17) Sin Brings Discipline to Motivate Repentance

a. (:15) Reflect

“But now, do consider from this day onward; before one stone was placed on another in the temple of the Lord”

b. (:16) Recount the Frustration of Past Discipline

“from that time when one came to a grain heap of twenty measures, there would be only ten; and when one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there would be only twenty.”

Expectations constantly frustrated

Charles Feinberg: Even though the people had been neglecting the work of the Temple, they had been offering sacrifices on an improvised altar at Jerusalem (**Ezr 3:3**). These offerings had not been pleasing to the Lord; therefore God had withheld his blessing from the people, as is clearly seen in chapter 1.

c. (:17) Respond in Repentance to the Discipline of the Lord

“I smote you and every work of your hands with blasting wind, mildew and hail; yet you did not come back to Me,’ declares the Lord.”

F. Duane Lindsey: *Blight* (crop disease) and *mildew* are linked in several passages that deal with divine judgment for disobedience (cf. Deut. 28:22; 1 Kings 8:37; 2 Chron. 6:28; Amos 4:9). *Hail* also occurs in many judgment passages (Ex. 9:25; Isa. 28:2; 30:30). For an agricultural society such punishments were catastrophic to the economy and to survival.

Richard Taylor: All these misfortunes had befallen the people of Judah. None of them could be adequately explained as mere coincidence. In v. 17 the Lord takes credit for all of these problems, attributing them to initiatives that he himself had taken.

2. (:18-19) Obedience Brings Blessing to Motivate Abundant Service

a. (:18) Reflect

“Do consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month; from the day when the temple of the Lord was founded, consider:”

b. (:19a) Recount the Harvest Law

“Is the seed still in the barn? Even including the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree, it has not borne fruit.”

Go to the barn and check out the situation – what type of harvest had been gathered in previous years?

F. Duane Lindsey: The drought of divine judgment had already affected the year’s harvest so that their barns were already emptied of the sparse harvest. They had neither staples (seed, or grapes, or olives) nor luxuries (figs and pomegranates).

c. (:19b) Respond in Obedience to Benefit from God's Promised Blessing
"Yet from this day on I will bless you."

IV. (2:20-23) MESSAGE #4 – CROWN THE SERVANT OF THE LORD THE VICTORIOUS MESSIAH –

THE SOVEREIGN GOD WILL EXALT HIS CHOSEN KING TO RULE OVER ALL NATIONS AND KINGDOMS

(:20-21a) SETTING FOR MESSAGE #4

1. Prophetic Message #4

"Then the word of the Lord came a second time to Haggai . . . saying"

2. Date Stamp

"On the twenty-fourth day of the month"

John Mackay: This introduction parallels that of 2:10, both messages being given on 18th December 520 B.C., the day when there was a formal ceremony in the Temple ruins to mark the resumption of the restoration work.

3. Target Audience

"Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying"

Richard Taylor: Like many other Old Testament promises, these predictions had both a near dimension and a more distant one. Haggai's promises given to Zerubbabel, while true of him in a limited way, find their ultimate expression in a greater Zerubbabel who was to come. It is not surprising that in the genealogies of Jesus provided by Matthew and Luke, Zerubbabel is mentioned as part of the messianic line.

A. (:21b-22) THE DEFEAT OF ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE NATIONS – FOUR PROMISES OF DESTRUCTION ACCOMPLISHED BY GOD HIMSELF

(Note repeated use of the first person – the Lord's personal initiative and sovereign accomplishment is in view)

1. (:21b) Rocking the Entire World

"I am going to shake the heavens and the earth."

John Mackay: But the shaking is more than a physical response to the Lord's intervention. What is referred to is the action of the Lord upsetting not so much the physical framework of the universe, but those political and social structures that seemed so oppressive to the Jews. All was under his control, and he would act to ensure that the domination exerted against them would come to an end. It is the Lord who acts on a universal scale for the sake of the house of David and for the good of his people.

2. (:22a) Overthrowing All Thrones

“I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms”

John Mackay: It is the Lord’s prerogative and power to cause kingdoms to fall (Ps. 46:6; Dan. 4:34-35; 5:26).

3. (:22b) Destroying All Power

“and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations;”

4. (:22c) Defeating All Opposition

“and I will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and the horses and their riders will go down, everyone by the sword of another.”

Charles Feinberg: The destruction begun by the Lord will be brought to a conclusion through the insanity of civil strife (see also **Ezk 38:21; Zech 14:13**). These events are to be set in the days of the War of Armageddon. By no stretch of the imagination can the events of this verse be twisted to fit into some past conflicts or political movements of once great empires. . . David’s secure throne is here contrasted with the tottering dynasties of the world.

B. (:23) THE ENTHRONEMENT OF THE MESSIAH TO RULE OVER THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH

1. Timing of the Messiah’s Enthronement

“On that day,’ declares the Lord of hosts”

2. Targeting of the Messiah’s Prefiguration

“I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, My servant,’ declares the Lord”

3. Trumpeting of the Messiah’s Majesty

“I will make you like a signet ring”

Zerubbabel is called God’s “*signet ring*”—a symbol of **future messianic hope**

- God preserves the Davidic line
- Messiah is coming
- God’s kingdom agenda is unstoppable

David Roper: But you may recall that Jeremiah had said to Jehoiachin *“I will strip you like a signet ring [the same term] from my finger, and none of your descendants will ever sit on the throne,”* because of Jehoiachin’s wickedness. But God says to Zerubbabel, who was a descendant of Jehoiachin, and who knew that he never would have power to rule, that though he would not reign over Judah (And that was true; he went back to Babylon and perished.), he would have power and authority to rule within his own life, and within the sphere of the responsibility given to him. The Jews knew that ultimately this prophecy was to be fulfilled in Messiah. All the Jewish commentaries looked to

Zerubbabel as a type of the One who was to come, the king of Israel, who would reign to the end of time, whose kingdom would never be shaken, who would always have authority. He would be like a signet ring on the Lord's hand. A signet ring is a **symbol of authority**; kings never took it off. And Haggai says, "Zerubbabel, that's what you'll be. You'll be secure, you'll be strong. Everything else will be shaken, but your kingdom won't be shaken."

Last night took my two older grandsons to see the movie David – the crowning moment was not putting a crown on David's head, but a signet ring on his finger – symbol of ultimate authority.

4. Testifying to the Messiah's Election

“for I have chosen you,” declares the Lord of hosts.”

Nobody has a problem with **election** in this context – when it involves God the Father sovereignly choosing to elevate His own Son to be the King over His kingdom on earth. Why do they have a problem with God exercising His sovereign choice in other contexts?

John Mackay: This choice is not an arbitrary act of God, but a selection determined by his good pleasure as one that will further his purposes.

CONCLUSION:

We all know the story of **Jim Elliot**: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

How about:

William Borden – “No Reserves, No Retreats, No Regrets”

William Borden was heir to the Borden Dairy fortune. Graduating from Yale, he had wealth, education, and influence. Instead of pursuing business success, he sensed God's call to reach Muslims in China.

In his Bible, three phrases were written at different stages of his life:

- *No Reserves* – when he surrendered his wealth
- *No Retreats* – when he left America
- *No Regrets* – shortly before his death

On his way to China, Borden contracted spinal meningitis in Egypt and died at age 25. Many called his life a tragedy. But his obituary said:

“Apart from his untimely death, he lived the fullest life possible.”

Sermon Connection

Borden did not invest in paneled houses. He invested in **God's kingdom agenda**, and though he never reached China, God used his testimony to inspire countless missionaries.

Adoniram Judson – Faithful Through Suffering

Adoniram Judson was America's first overseas missionary, sent to Burma (Myanmar). He endured:

- The death of his wife and children
- Years of imprisonment
- Physical abuse and isolation

At one point, Judson buried his wife himself and sank into deep despair. Yet he persevered, continuing to translate the Bible into Burmese.

By the end of his life:

- The Burmese Bible was complete
- Churches were planted
- The gospel had taken root in a hostile land

Sermon Connection

Judson's investment didn't produce immediate returns, but it produced **lasting fruit**. Like Haggai's builders, he trusted that God's presence—not visible success—was the true reward.

The Sunday School Teacher Who Changed History: Edward Kimball and D. L. Moody

Edward Kimball was a **quiet, faithful Sunday School teacher** in Boston in the mid-1800s. He was not a preacher, missionary, or public figure. He simply taught a class of teenage boys at the Mount Vernon Congregational Church.

One of those boys was a **rebellious, unimpressive shoe salesman** named **Dwight Lyman Moody**.

Kimball was deeply burdened for Moody's soul. After much prayer, he decided he needed to speak with him personally about Christ. Nervous and uncertain, Kimball walked into the shoe store where Moody worked. Later, Kimball said he almost turned back—but he obeyed the prompting of the Spirit.

Standing among stacks of shoes, Edward Kimball shared the gospel with one young man. That day, **D. L. Moody trusted Christ**.

The Ripple Effect of Faithful Obedience

Moody went on to become one of the most influential evangelists in history. But the story doesn't stop there.

Through Moody's ministry:

- **Wilbur Chapman** was converted
- Chapman evangelized **Billy Sunday**
- Billy Sunday influenced **Mordecai Ham**
- Mordecai Ham preached at a revival where **Billy Graham** was converted

One faithful Sunday School teacher, unknown to history, became part of a chain that influenced **millions worldwide** and helped ignite the modern missionary movement.

- Edward Kimball never preached to crowds.
 - He never traveled overseas.
 - He never wrote a book.
 - But he invested in **one soul**.
-

Why This Illustration Matters

Edward Kimball:

- Had no platform

- Worked behind the scenes
- Obeyed God in obscurity

Yet God used his **faithfulness** to raise up a man who would stir hearts for missions around the world.

Sermon Tie-In (Haggai Connection)

Haggai preached to builders whose names we don't remember—but whose obedience shaped redemptive history.

Just like Edward Kimball:

- God's work doesn't require prominence
- God honors **faithful priorities**
- Eternal impact often begins in unnoticed places

"From this day on I will bless you." (**Haggai 2:19**)

Concluding Missionary Application

Missionaries understood something Haggai taught Israel:

- Temporary comfort is a poor investment
- God's kingdom is worth everything
- Obedience today shapes eternity

The question is not: **"What will this cost me?"**

But: **"Is my life invested where God has promised eternal return?"**

WHY STUDY THIS BOOK?

- To help us reexamine our investment strategies and priorities in life.
- To help us stir up the flames of our passion for serving Christ so we don't get discouraged when things are not working out on as grand a scale as we might have hoped.
- To expose the type of excuses that distract us from giving our full attention to God's kingdom priorities.
- To reassure us of the Lord's Presence – His Protection and Providential Provision.
- To highlight holiness as a prerequisite of serving the Lord and receiving His blessing.
- To anticipate the future exaltation of the Messiah to rule over the Kingdom of God on earth.