

July 2nd 2006: O.T.Review: Haggai. Unfinished Projects

In the early 1900's several business men in Cincinnati, Ohio came up with a fantastic idea. Running through the centre of the city were two canals that were no longer used. They realised that what their city needed was an underground railway system, and that these canals, once drained, could so easily be transformed into tunnels through which such a system could run.

\$6 million dollars was set aside for the work and construction began in 1920. By 1927 however, the money ran out. 7 miles of subway had been dug, three underground stations had been built, but no track had been laid.

Today those tunnels and stations are still there beneath the city...Early in 2006 the local paper reported that the city is still looking into the feasibility of using the tunnels and stations in a modern rapid transit system, but still nothing happens...

The project stays there –uncompleted

- **Now that particular Unfinished** Project has not really had a huge impact on the people of Cincinnati. It cost them 6 million.....but most don't even know that the subway is there
- **But the Unfinished project**That is the Major concern.....book of Haggai Was hurting God's people in a huge way.....materially and spiritually..... and was immensely affecting the way God could bless & work thro them

BUT THEY JUST COULDN'T SEE IT

THAT UNFINISHED PROJECT.....Was the rebuilding ofThe Temple
That place where God chose to meet with.....and where they could meet with God

- **The history behind.....easy to explain**

The nation of Judah....and its capital.....been destroyed by the Babylonian....586 BC
Solomon's Temple.....been raised to the ground
Her people.....been exiled to Babylon

Then in 539 BC the King of Persia captured Babylon

In 538 the miracle happened.....Ezra 1:1—3.....

In 536 50,000 Jews under Zerubbabel return to Jerusalem (*kingly line of David*)

In the seventh month of that year...in Jerusalem.....they built an altar on foundation

In 535 work on the Temple rebuilding began.....Opposition arose from the Samaritans

Later on that same year.....the Persian authorities arrive.....command them to stop

For the next 15 years... Nothing happens.... as far as the Temple

The people themselves get nicely established...They make money...build houses

The pressure from their enemies fade

And the ruins of the Temple stood...an unfinished project

..so dishonouring to God.

God's people...back in their own land by the miracle of God's intervention
Allowing the centrepact of their religion.....The Key to their relationship with God

To stand a crumbling wreck ::::: Unvisited.....Unused

• **And God.....it seems.....is saddened & bemused by this**

And He speaks about it to ...by His prophet Haggai...through a sermon that Haggai preaches.....on the 2nd year of King Darius.....1st day of the 6th.....or.... Sept 1st 520BC

It is this sermon.....that we find in Haggai chapter 1

In v2 Haggai tells us what the Lord Almighty is concerned about:→

The Lord knows that His people.....(calls them—these people)

have been saying---→*The time has not yet come for the Lord's house to be built*

And God's response to that is very direct.....v4.....

He is obviously hurt.....by the way they have put their own comfort....
before the necessity of having a place to meet with their God

But also.....He is astounded....that they haven't realised.....that their failure to give
Has resulted in them missing out on God's blessings.....Materially & Spiritually

Look what God goes on to say in 1:6....then in v9—11.....

I can think of 3 reasons.....why they had not finished the Temple Project
Fear
Time Restraints.....and Cost

But with the Lord Almighty alongside.....none of these excuses hold water

• **After hearing God's Word, a wonderful thing happens:→**

After 15 years inaction..... the leaders and the people obeyed God's call
They committed themselves to doing what God wanted....To finishing.....

The People put the Lord first....The Lord declared that He was with& stirred up

In the power of God they faced their fear.....and when their enemies tried to close..
They appealed to the new King of Persia.....and he.....

Look at what this King of Persia declared.....Ezra 6:7—8....

So they got permission.....and funds to do the work....made it easy 2 give time

The book of Haggai contains 3 more sermons

On Oct 21st he preached....found in 2:1-9.....**Some** were discouraged.....Patience

In it we also find a reference to the coming glory of the Messiah

On 24th Dec 520Haggai preached....found in 2:10—19..

In this sermon God talks about their need to practice holy living.....and assures them...
.that because they have obeyed Him in re-building.....**He will be with and bless them**

On the same day Haggai preached his fourth.....found in 2:20—23

→ a promise of a future day when God will bring His justice on this world
And Zerubbabel here is seen as symbolic....of the Messiah...come in power and glory

But the greatest challenge of the book.....relates to those projects....

Within our lives.....within our fellowship.....**that God sees as unfinished...**
...put off....long forgotten

I think of our building.....a gift from God.....Doing more to remove loan
As a member....I know that there are some practical things.....putting off doing

But the real challengefor us this morning....is a personal one
Is there something in my life....that the Lord wants me to prioritize...but I haven't

Am I allowing fear to stop me.....Or the expected cost in time or money

You may well ask yourself the same thing.....

Is there a step of obedience.... U keep putting off.....Like baptism
Or giving full tithes to the Lord

A promise to study His word.....To serve Him more fully.....
Yet such a promise remains.....as an Unfinished project in your life

God says to us.....I so want to bless you.....but while you put off doing....
You rob yourself of so much blessing.....

Put me first.....and enjoy all the bounteous gifts.....that I want to pour out on you

