

Detailed Summary of Bible Study

“The Glory of God’s Purpose: Lessons from Haggai”

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This Bible study develops the theme of New Covenant Church’s 44th ministry anniversary: “**The Glory of God’s Purpose.**” The primary text is **Haggai 2:1–9**, with important background drawn from **Haggai 1**. The central message is that the glory of God is not ultimately measured by buildings, numbers, material resources, or comparisons with the past. **God’s glory is revealed when His purpose is fulfilled through a people who trust His presence, obey His Word, and continue His work.** Pasted markdown

1. Ministry exists for God’s purpose beyond ourselves

The lesson begins by placing the anniversary theme within the larger calling of the church. The church is not merely called to strengthen its own members but to function as **salt and light in the world**. New Covenant Church’s longstanding emphasis on “loving God, loving people, and serving the world” is presented as part of its core mission.

Therefore, the glory of God’s purpose is not confined to what happens inside a church building. It includes the church’s impact upon its community, the body of Christ, the Kingdom of God, and the larger world. Pasted markdown

2. Haggai 2 addresses people who were doing God’s work but had become discouraged

Haggai 2 begins with God speaking through the prophet to Zerubbabel, Joshua the high priest, and the remnant of the people. Some among them had seen Solomon’s magnificent temple before its destruction. Now they were looking at the rebuilt temple and recognizing how unimpressive it seemed in comparison.

God directly addressed their disappointment:

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

“How do you see it now?”

“Is this not in your eyes as nothing?”

Yet God did not tell them to abandon the project. Instead, He commanded them repeatedly:

“Be strong ... be strong ... be strong ... and work, for I am with you.”

The central issue was not the appearance of the new temple but **the presence of God among His people**. Pasted markdown

3. God redirects attention from what people see to what He has promised

A major theme of the study is the contrast between **human perception and divine promise**.

The returning Jews could see that the second temple did not compare outwardly with Solomon’s temple. Solomon’s structure had featured gold, silver, cedar, elaborate furnishings, and extraordinary craftsmanship. By comparison, the rebuilt temple appeared insignificant.

But God deliberately challenged their evaluation by saying that it was insignificant **“in your eyes.”**

That phrase becomes an important teaching point. Human beings naturally judge by:

- size,
- appearance,
- resources,
- numbers,
- visible success,
- and comparison with what existed previously.

But what something looks like to us is not necessarily how God sees it.

The lesson emphasizes that something may appear smaller while actually carrying **greater purpose for the future**. Instead of saying, “Look at what we lost,” believers should learn to ask, **“What is God building now?”** Pasted markdown

4. The danger of romanticizing the past

The lesson applies Haggai’s situation directly to New Covenant Church after 44 years of ministry.

There were seasons when the church was larger and held two services. In that sense, a former period might appear comparable to the grandeur of Solomon's temple. The present ministry may be smaller in attendance, but that does not mean it possesses less purpose or less glory.

The past is valuable because it provides memories, lessons, and a foundation. But believers must not become fixated on recreating something that no longer exists.

The lesson warns against romanticizing previous seasons as though they were automatically more glorious than the present. In Christ, God continually makes things new. Therefore, the proper posture is not to live backward but to carry lessons from the past forward into God's present purpose. Pasted markdown

5. "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former"

This statement from Haggai becomes one of the study's most important principles.

Physically, the latter temple did not appear more glorious. It had fewer resources and less grandeur. Yet God still declared that its latter glory would exceed the former glory.

The explanation offered in the study is that **God is not principally evaluating structures, size, or material magnificence. He is looking at purpose.**

That is the essence of the anniversary theme:

The glory is in God's purpose being fulfilled.

A ministry can have fewer people and still possess greater spiritual purpose. A person can have fewer resources and still experience a greater manifestation of God's will.

The decisive question is not, "How impressive is this?" but rather:

"Is God present, and is His purpose being fulfilled?" Pasted markdown

6. "Be strong and work, for I am with you"

God's response to discouragement was not merely emotional reassurance. It included a command to act:

Be strong and work.

Strength here is understood not as human self-reliance but as being **strong in the Lord**.

The lesson connects this principle with David's instruction to Solomon to "be strong and of good courage." Courage is then defined practically:

Courage is not the absence of concern or fear; courage is doing what is right even when concern or fear is present.

God's presence becomes the basis for confidence. The people were able to continue because God told them:

"I am with you."

This leads to a central principle of the Bible study:

"Little is much if God is in it."

Material abundance, large crowds, money, or resources cannot substitute for the presence of God. Pasted markdown

7. Covenant faithfulness gives confidence during changing circumstances

God reminded the people that He was the same God who had covenanted with Israel when He brought them out of Egypt.

Their circumstances had dramatically changed:

- the kingdom had fallen,
- Jerusalem had been devastated,
- the temple had been destroyed,
- generations had changed,
- and the people had experienced exile.

But God's covenant faithfulness had not changed.

Therefore, believers should not allow present circumstances to determine what they believe about God.

One of the lesson's memorable statements is essentially:

Do not ask your circumstances what you should believe. Ask yourself what you believe based upon the promises of God.

Confidence does not come from favorable appearances. It comes from continuing in the awareness of **God's presence and faithfulness**. Pasted markdown

8. God's Kingdom cannot be shaken

Haggai prophesied that God would "shake heaven and earth" and "shake all nations." The study connects this language with Hebrews, where believers are described as receiving **"a kingdom which cannot be shaken."**

The "shaking" represents times when institutions, cultures, societies, governments, and even aspects of "church world" experience instability.

The lesson interprets this spiritually:

- what is unstable can be shaken loose,
- what is not rooted in God may fall away,
- but what belongs to God's purpose remains.

Therefore, believers should not panic because of societal or institutional shaking. **God's purposes cannot be shaken.**

The response should be to stand firmly in the Kingdom of God rather than placing confidence in changing earthly conditions. Pasted markdown

9. "The Desire of All Nations"

Haggai 2:7 says:

"I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations."

The study acknowledges two interpretations of this passage.

One interpretation sees **"the Desire of All Nations" as the Messiah, Jesus Christ.**

Another interpretation understands the phrase as referring to the **treasures or wealth of the nations** coming in.

The study emphasizes the Christ-centered interpretation as spiritually primary. The church's ultimate objective is not acquiring the world's wealth but receiving and presenting **Jesus Christ**, who is what the nations ultimately need.

The church must therefore remain:

- a people of promise,
- a people of purpose,
- and a people centered upon Christ. Pasted markdown

10. God's true temple is His people

When God says, **"I will fill this temple with glory,"** the study moves from Haggai's physical temple to the New Testament understanding of the people of God.

The Apostle Paul teaches that believers are the temple of God individually and collectively.

Therefore, although churches may possess:

- buildings,
- land,
- facilities,
- sanctuaries,
- and physical resources,

God's ultimate dwelling place is not the architecture. **God dwells within His people.**

This becomes crucial to understanding the anniversary theme. The glory of God's purpose is not primarily about maintaining an impressive facility. It is about **God fulfilling His purpose in and through His people.**

The promise, **"In this place I will give peace,"** is similarly applied beyond a physical location. The "place" becomes a people living within the purpose of God. Pasted markdown

Haggai Chapter 1: The Problem of Misplaced Priorities

11. The people had stopped building God's house

The study then returns to Haggai 1 to explain how the people arrived at the situation described in chapter 2.

The people said:

“The time has not come ... that the Lord’s house should be built.”

Meanwhile, they were investing energy in their own homes.

God confronted them:

“Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple lie in ruins?”

The problem was not that owning or improving a home was sinful. The problem was **priority**.

Their personal interests had become more important than God’s interests. Pasted markdown

12. Physical behavior can expose a spiritual condition

The neglected temple served as visible evidence of an invisible spiritual problem.

God sometimes uses physical actions to reveal the state of a person’s heart.

The Bible study applies this principle to giving. God does not need money in the human sense. But giving tithes and offerings can reveal whether believers are committed to His priorities.

Similarly, rebuilding the temple was not merely a construction project. The condition of the temple reflected the condition of the people’s devotion.

Therefore:

The physical often exposes the spiritual. Pasted markdown

13. Opposition can become an excuse for delayed obedience

The temple rebuilding had initially begun after Cyrus permitted the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem.

However, opposition, discouragement, and competing interests caused the work to stall.

Eventually the people rationalized their inactivity by saying:

“It is not time yet.”

This produces another major lesson:

Do not allow difficulty to become an excuse for postponing obedience.

Circumstances may be difficult. Opposition may be real. Resources may be limited. But believers should be careful not to reinterpret resistance as permission to stop doing what God has commanded. Pasted markdown

14. Postponed obedience is still disobedience

The people were essentially saying:

“We will obey God later.”

The study strongly challenges that mentality.

Everything believers possess exists because of God’s goodness and grace. Therefore, delaying obedience because of inconvenience represents a failure to properly recognize God’s covenant and lordship.

The unfinished temple was an emblem of the deeper spiritual condition of the people.

The application is that what believers do—or refuse to do—in response to Scripture often reveals deeper issues of:

devotion,

priority,

faith,

gratitude,

and obedience. Pasted markdown

“Consider Your Ways”

15. God commanded the people to examine their lives

Twice in Haggai 1 God says:

“Consider your ways.”

The phrase is explained as examining the entire course of one's life:

choices,
priorities,
habits,
direction,
decisions,
conditions,
and outcomes.

Spiritual renewal therefore begins with honest self-examination.

The question is not simply, “Am I busy?” but:

“Is my life aligned with God's purpose?” Pasted markdown

16. Activity is not the same thing as progress

The people were not lazy. They were working.

Yet their activity was producing frustration:

they sowed much but harvested little,
they ate but were not satisfied,
they drank but were not filled,
they earned wages but it was like putting money into a bag with holes.

The lesson uses the image of a treadmill: a person can work hard, sweat, and expend tremendous energy while remaining in essentially the same place.

Therefore:

Activity does not necessarily equal progress.

When life becomes disconnected from the purposes of God, even abundance can become unsatisfying. Pasted markdown

17. God instructed them: “Go, bring, and build”

God did not only rebuke the people. He gave them specific instructions:

Go up to the mountain.

Bring wood.

Build the house.

The study summarizes the command as:

“Go, bring, and build.”

These physical actions were designed to produce spiritual reorientation.

As they physically rebuilt God's house, they were simultaneously rebuilding proper priorities in their hearts.

The lesson compares this with Communion. Believers do physical things that carry spiritual significance. Communion does not crucify Christ again; it physically expresses remembrance of what Christ accomplished.

Likewise, rebuilding the temple was not ultimately about construction. It was about **obedience**. Pasted markdown

The Central Principle: God is glorified through obedience to His purpose

One of the strongest conclusions of the study is:

God is not glorified merely because we build something. God is glorified when we obey Him.

Buildings, ministries, families, resources, and accomplishments are meaningful when they become expressions of dedication to God.

Therefore, whether someone possesses much or little, the fundamental question remains:

Do you have the presence of God, and are you fulfilling His purpose?

The glory is not found merely in possessions, structures, numbers, or visible success.

The glory is found in purpose. Pasted markdown

Application to New Covenant Church

The study makes a direct application to New Covenant Church at its 44th anniversary.

The church has changed. Some former seasons were larger and outwardly more impressive. Yet the congregation should not measure its present significance by comparing itself with its past.

Instead, the church is called to recognize what God is presently doing.

The proper perspective is:

- thank God for the past,
- honor the people who contributed to it,
- remember the lessons,
- appreciate the grace,
- but do not live looking backward.

The church must **move forward into God's present and future purpose.**

The calling remains larger than simply gathering for church services. Believers are called to be **world changers**, functioning as salt and light and bringing the influence of God's Kingdom into the world. Pasted markdown

Major Themes of the Study

God's presence matters more than outward appearance.

Purpose is a better measure of glory than size, numbers, or material resources.

Believers must not become trapped in comparisons with the past.

The latter season can carry greater glory because God can accomplish greater purpose through it.

Discouragement must be answered with strength, courage, work, and confidence in God's presence.

God's covenant faithfulness remains constant even when circumstances change.

God's Kingdom cannot be shaken even when nations and institutions are shaken.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate desire and need of the nations.

God's true dwelling place is His people, not merely physical buildings.

Misplaced priorities lead to spiritual frustration and unfulfillment.

Delayed obedience is still disobedience.

Activity should never be confused with genuine spiritual progress.

"Consider your ways" means honestly examining the direction and priorities of life.

Obedience often involves practical actions that realign the heart with God.

God is glorified when His purpose is fulfilled through obedient people.

Central takeaway

The message of Haggai for both the returning remnant and the church today is:

Do not measure what God is doing merely by what you see. Do not allow nostalgia, comparison, discouragement, limited resources, or changing circumstances to cause you to lose confidence in God's purpose. Be strong, continue the work, reorder your priorities, and remain conscious of God's presence.