

## Study Guide: Haggai 1:1-15<sup>1</sup>

*instructions in  
footnote below*

### Start Talking...

1. Would you rather eat dog food for breakfast or baby food (the kind in a jar that mixes stuff like broccoli and beef and peas)?

### Reflect Back...

2. What was “the takeaway” (the most important point) from Sunday’s sermon and/or the sermon text, in your opinion?
3. What insight from Sunday’s sermon did you find most helpful, or eye-opening, or troubling (pick any or all of the above)? [Note: also use this space to record your questions from the sermon or the remainder of the study guide]

### The Take Away(s)...

4. Can you think of a time when you have experienced the enabling, energizing, or empowering presence of God personally? Elaborate.
5. *Hear—fear—work*: Is there perhaps an area of your life where you—*like Haggai’s audience*—need to “hear” and “fear” God more appropriately? Identify this area, and then write out one S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-specific) goal for you to begin to “work” on it this week. Share this with your small group and end with prayer for each other directed along these lines.

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<sup>1</sup> This first page contains the questions to be discussed at the small group meeting. Each is important in its own way, so be sure to give adequate time to each in your discussion. In the following pages, you will find opportunities to dig more deeply “Into the Bible” than the first page permits. This section is divided up by days (1–5) in case you’d like to use it as a tool to develop the habit of a daily time of *devotion to* and *study of* God’s Word. Of course, you should also feel the freedom to complete this section all at once, if you wish. It’s there for you, in other words. Note also that the “Into the Bible” portion is not required for the weekly meeting, though it will no doubt enhance and enrich your small group experience if completed by that time. **Enjoy!**

### Into the Bible...

- Day One: According to J. A. Motyer, Haggai's first two sermons (1:1-2, 3-11) can be arranged concentrically.<sup>2</sup> He suggests the following structure for the sermons:

a: Divine word exposing failure (1:1-2)

b: False priority: the fact (1:3-4)

c: First call to thoughtfulness: the situation appraised (1:5-6)

c': Second call to thoughtfulness: the remedy prescribed (1:7-8)

b': False priority: the consequences (1:9)

a': Divine action chastening failure (1:10-11)

*Another footnote!  
Watch out for these!*

*"Consider your ways"  
occurs 2x*

Do you see what he's getting at? Spend some time in the passage and use the space above to record any key topics, themes, ideas, key words, or anything else you might find, that demonstrate how *a* and *a'* relate, *b* and *b'*, and *c* and *c'*. [For an example, see the red text above on the *c* and *c'* sections]

- Day Two: The sermons Haggai preached in 1:12-15 and 2:1-9 are separated by about 7 weeks, which helps us make more sense of the second sermon's content. Read the sermons and then discuss how the 7 week gap helps us appreciate 2:1-9 more.

*Can you think of a part of your life where you need similar encouragement from God? Explain?*

- Day Three: YHWH's promise of "I am with you" is central to the book of Haggai (Again, Motyer suggests a concentric arrangement (*A-B-B'-A'*), this time for the whole book<sup>3</sup>).

*A: A pair of sermons: negative consequences of the unbuilt house (1:1-11)*

*a: Zerubbabel and Joshua addressed: popular refusal to build house (1:1-2)*

*b: the people addressed: neglected house the cause of trouble ("consider your ways" 2x) (1:3-11)*

*B: "I am with you": the Lord's presence energizing the present work (1:12-15)*

- 3 elements in section

- Word of divine assurance in the middle ("I am with you")

*B': "I am with you": the Lord's presence guaranteeing the coming glory (2:1-9)*

- 3 elements in section

- Word of divine assurance in the middle ("I am with you")

*A' (2:10-23) — A pair of sermons: blessed consequences of restored house*

*b': the people addressed: restored house the cause of blessing ("consider your ways" 2x) (2:10-19)*

*a': Zerubbabel addressed: the Lord will restore David's house (2:20-23)*

<sup>2</sup> He calls this a "stylishly shaped presentation of truth." J. A. Motyer, "Haggai," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary* (ed. T. E. McComiskey; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 973.

<sup>3</sup> Motyer, "Haggai," 968.

*Sometimes I'll give you info on some good tools in case you want to study further on your own*

Do you see how the *A* and *A'* panels correspond (even to the *a* and *b* sub-levels!)? How about the *B* and *B'* panels? [Note that in concentric structuring, the middle portions (here the *B* and *B'* sections) are crucial in some way, whether as a hinge or a climactic conclusion]

With that in mind, explore other occurrences of “I am with you” throughout the Bible (*quick - scan these references!* Gen 28:15, 39:2, 21; Ex 3:12; Josh 1:5; 2 Sam 7:9; Jer 1:8; Ps 46:7, 11; Matt 1:23). Note the contexts of these other passages, and why God would offer this comforting promise to these folks. Then, come up with a sermon tagline for this over-arching message by completing the following sentence: *God’s enabling presence is with his people when...*

- Day Four: Compare Haggai 1:1-11 with Jesus’ teaching in Matt 6:19-34. *How are they similar? How are they different?*
  
- Day Five: Compare Haggai 1:1-15 (esp. 1:12-14) with James 2:14-26 and Phil 2:12-13. *Does Haggai serve as a real-life example of what James and Paul are saying (in James and Phil, respectively)? If so, how?*
  
- Suggested closing prayer exercise<sup>4</sup>: Looking back over these exercises (and passages), do you find something especially troubling, convicting, or perhaps encouraging? *Talk to God about it.* Thinking of your own life, is there some way that you need to be reminded that God is present with his people? *Spend some time thanking God for his presence, and basking in it prayerfully.* Is there perhaps some area of your life where you’re not properly living as God’s people should? Some area where you need to “hear... fear... and work”? *Ask God for the courage to respond appropriately, and also for the enabling Spirit to help you to return to him.* Next, *spend some time thanking God for his Words to us, specifically for Haggai, which is indeed “useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work” [2 Tim 3:16-17].* Finally, *spend time praying for others in your small group, and also the church, that they would also grow in their “hearing... fearing... working.”*

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<sup>4</sup> This is for you, if you like, to direct you in prayerful reflection on the portions of Scripture that we study.