

# MESSAGE MINDER

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Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke by the commission of the Lord to the people saying, “I am with you,” declares the Lord.” So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel...and the spirit of all the remnant of the people and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God.

Haggai 1:13-14



## Haggai: Recapturing the Dream

By Jonathan Stone

All of us have hopes and dreams. They may be hopes for our children, dreams for our career, or plans for our future. There are few things as energizing as being around someone who is believing that one of their greatest dreams is about to come true.

However, time has a way of delaying our dreams. Circumstances arise that are unexpected. Obstacles steal our focus. Disappointments cause us to lose our way. One day we suddenly realize that the dream is lost. We wonder if it is even possible to ever recover the dream. Having lost all of the enthusiasm and energy that fueled our dream in the beginning we fear that we no longer have the strength to try either way. This is a hard place, a restless place, a place where we want to give up.

In the book of Haggai the remnant of exiles that had returned to Jerusalem had lost their way. Can we blame them? They had lived as exiles in a foreign land. They returned to a city of ruins and utter desolation. They were working hard to try to make it. And in the midst of these conditions they had lost their way.

The first message spoken by the prophet Haggai was a challenging word to move beyond their dejection, self-absorption and complacency. It was a challenging word that got their attention. The second message was different. It was a word that brought about renewed energy and focus. It mobilized the people to push forward and start working on the dream anew. Amazingly the word was effective and the results were immediate. What was this word that mobilized the people in such striking fashion? It was

the promise from the Lord, “I am with you” (1:13). It is the realization that God is with us, both in our dream and in our circumstances, that energizes us to get back to work on the dream.

It was the same revelation that once fueled the patriarch Jacob to continue his journey. In the desert (a lonely place) with a rock for a pillow (a hard place) God revealed that He was with Jacob, and in his dream. Likewise, in Haggai the people are stirred to action by the same simple message, that God is with them. Haggai repeats the promise again (2:4) and tells the people three separate times to be strengthened by the knowledge that He is with them. Consider your lost dreams and ask God if He is there. You may be surprised to hear Him reply, “Yes, and I am with you too.”

**The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.**

Psalm 46:7

## A Unified Response

The majority of the prophets in the Old Testament found that the words they spoke were met with fierce resistance. In some cases their lives were threatened because of the messages God gave them to declare. What is striking about the book of Haggai is the overwhelming acceptance of his message, which was marked by a swift, single-minded response from the people. Once the people knew that God was with them it was like a shockwave of resolve swept through the whole group.

The Lord “stirred up the spirit” of the people and they immediately responded. It started with the prophet Haggai, went through the governor Zerubbabel, continued with the high priest Joshua, and made its way into the spirits of all of the people. There is a oneness of spirit demonstrated in their response, a collective unity. It was a unity that allowed the stirring up to run through the entire congregation.

## A Stirring Prayer

I confess that I have lost my way. The distractions of life have stolen the dream that you placed in my heart. But I hear your voice O God, and hold onto your promises-- that you are with me, that you grant me peace, that I shall not fear, that you will bless me. Stir my spirit to respond with resolve, to begin the work on the dreams that you have placed within my heart. And may your glory shine from it I pray. Amen.

**The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former...and this place I will give peace.**

Haggai 2:9

**Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, coming down upon the edge of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon coming down upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing--life forever.**

Psalm 133

