

=BOOKS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 37

Haggai

Objects to have:

The sign for today's Bible book: HAGGAI

Rebuilding

Pictures of the following: a boy about five years of age, an old man, some soldiers

A rolled-up piece of paper to represent blueprints

Chalk and chalkboard

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Say all the books of the Old Testament learned thus far.) We are really learning a lot about what is in the Bible. Do you remember who wrote down the words that are in the Bible? Yes, men wrote them down. Who told the men what to write? Yes, God the Holy Spirit told the men what to write. How many books are in the Bible? Yes, 66. The Bible is divided into two parts. What is the first part called? Yes, the Old Testament. What is the last part called? Yes, the New Testament. We have learned about many books of the Old Testament. In fact, we are almost finished hearing about the books of the Old Testament. Of course, we have not heard all that is in every one of these books. The Bible is such a wonderful book that it will always seem new to us all of our lives.

In the Old Testament are many books that are called the books of the prophets. Prophets were men of God—preachers—who could tell the people what God said was going to happen in days and years to come. Let us say the names of the books of the prophets. (Say with the children the names of the books from Isaiah through Zephaniah; do this because the children need to say them the second time in order to get them better fixed in mind.)

The name of the book for today is the name of another man—another prophet. His name was Haggai. Say that name with me: “Haggai.”

Telling the story:

(Hold up the picture of the boy.) There are not actual pictures of anybody that is told about in the Bible. People imagine what Bible characters looked like; there were no cameras in the days of the Bible stories, so we do not know what the people looked like. Pictures that are called pictures of Jesus are not pictures of Jesus. That's just what someone thinks He looked like. Most of the pictures are wrong, though; Jesus would not have had long hair.

Let's pretend, however, that this is a picture of someone from the Bible. Let us pretend that this is a picture of Haggai. Let us pretend that this is a picture of Haggai when he was a boy. Haggai was five years old.

I'm going to draw a map. (Turn to the chalkboard and draw a simple line drawing of Israel, showing the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, the Dead Sea, a dot for the city of Jerusalem; leave room to put a dot at about the location of Babylon. Say the following while drawing your map.) This is the Mediterranean Sea; this is the Sea of Galilee; this is the Jordan River; this is the Dead Sea. Here is Jerusalem. This whole country is the country of Israel. People who lived there were called Israelites or Jews. The people who lived in the city called Jerusalem lived close to the temple, that huge, beautiful stone building that had gold and silver on the walls and pretty pictures sewed into the heavy curtains.

Haggai lived in Israel. (Tape the picture of the boy to the “map” at or near the location of Jerusalem.) Haggai lived in a home with his family just as you live someplace with your family.

One day Haggai heard a terrible noise. The noise sounded like marching feet and shouting men. (Hold up your picture of the soldiers.) Instead of guns, the noise sounded like sword clashing against sword and spears hitting shields. They did not have guns then. There were screaming noises and shouting noises. There was the sound of people crying. There was the smell of buildings burning.

Somebody shouted, "The temple has been destroyed! The enemy army has stolen all the gold-covered furniture and the other gold and silver out of the temple. They have used a big machine-like thing to break up the walls of the temple so that not one stone is still on top of another. Now they have set fire to the temple!" How sad! That was Haggai's church the enemy army was doing all that to!

Then Haggai saw enemy soldiers coming toward his house. As the soldiers marched along, they were killing. Five-year-old Haggai was frightened. He saw that his entire family was frightened. They did not know what to do. They did not know where to run.

Then the army of the Israelites called out, "Surrender, surrender. The enemy army is bigger than we are."

The fighting stopped. The people came to the enemy soldiers, and they held up their arms to show that they were not going to use any weapons. Haggai and his family went outside, too. The enemy army did not kill them; they just made people go with them; the soldiers took the Israelites captive.

The enemy soldiers said, "Come with us, you Israelites. You are our prisoners." The soldiers then began a long journey with the prisoners whom they had taken. They traveled from Jerusalem all the way over to here. (Indicate on the map the approximate location of Babylon.) They took the prisoners to a place called Babylon.

The little boy Haggai had to learn to live in a country (take off the picture of the five-year-old from Jerusalem and tape it to Babylon) that was completely strange to him. Haggai could not understand the Babylonians when they talked. They spoke a different language from the Israelites. Perhaps the homes of the people in Babylon looked different and their clothing might have been different. Haggai probably wondered how long he would live there in that strange land that was not his home.

Haggai grew and grew and grew. He was 6 years old, then 7 years old. Then after a few more years he was 12 years old, then 16, then past 20 years old. He was a man who was over 40 years of age! Then he got to be 50 and 60 and 70 years old! Still Haggai lived in Babylon, this country that was away from his own home. Haggai was 75 years old. (Put in the place of the little boy the picture of the old man.)

See this old man Haggai in Babylon. When Haggai was a little boy, he had been taught about God. He had been taught that God made everything. He had been taught that God loves everybody. He had been taught that Jesus would die for his sins. Haggai trusted God. I wonder if Haggai was still trusting God when he was 75 years old. Let's look at the book of Haggai. (Open your Bible to Haggai 1:1.) This is the book of Haggai. The very first words of the book tell us that Haggai still loved God. Because he loved God, God could talk to him, and Haggai listened.

God gave Haggai a message. God said, "It is time now, Haggai, that the Israelites go back to their own country. The enemy will let them go. My house, the temple, is all broken down. Nobody can go to church in the temple. It is just a pile of stones and dirt and dust. Weeds and even trees have grown up in the midst of the ruins of the temple. "Haggai, go back," God told him. "Tell the people to go back. Tell them to rebuild the temple."

Haggai was very, very excited thinking about the temple's being rebuilt. He could remember what it looked like because he had been there as a boy in Jerusalem before the temple was destroyed by the enemy.

Haggai called a meeting of the people who had been in Jerusalem. When they all sat down at the meeting, Haggai asked, "Can any of you remember what the temple looked like? I can remember. Let's see if we remember the same things." The men with Haggai talked with Haggai, and as they all talked, they drew a picture. (Bring out

your “blueprint.”) They drew a picture of how they remembered the temple. Haggai said, “Now, let’s get workers together. Let’s collect money. Let’s buy the materials that we will need to build the temple.”

That’s just what they did. People went back from Babylon to Jerusalem (move the old man from Babylon to Jerusalem). Bricks and wood were bought. The workmen started to work with the hammers and their trowels. The temple was being rebuilt. Can you imagine how Haggai felt? How happy Haggai must have been to see this temple being rebuilt! Haggai had been so sad as a little boy when he saw the temple torn down and also when he saw houses burned. He had been so sad to be taken prisoner to Babylon, and now, the happiest day of his life since then was taking place. The temple was being rebuilt!

Haggai was living in his own country again! Soon he would be able to go to church again in Jerusalem. What a happy ending to the book of Haggai!

The sadness would not have had to come to the Israelites, however, if they had always loved God. God had to punish them because they stopped loving Him; they stopped doing right. Then the enemy soldiers came. Then the people were taken to Babylon. They had to stay there for 70 years.

Then the punishment from God ended; they got to go back home to Israel. Then they got to do the big job of rebuilding the beautiful temple.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Haggai 2:7, “...I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.” (This was talking about the temple.)