



User Friendly Guide to

# Haggai

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FE and Sixth Form Initiative

Christian Support for Students & Staff



**No. 7**  
**The Ultimate Ruler**

**Key Verse: 2 v 23**

*"I will make you like my signet ring for I have chosen you"*

**Way In:**

Imagine you were a commander of a small army surrounded by larger armies who wanted your head. What would you want?

**Read:** Haggai 2 v 20-23

**Questions to answer:**

The language used here is similar to session 4. So you should know what it means for God to "shake the heavens"...! We saw that there was a partial fulfilment in Haggai's day – there had to be otherwise why preach to encourage the people? - and that it will happen in the future. There is an immediate and future fulfilment here too.

**Immediate**

1. Do you think everyone in the Middle East was pleased the temple was being rebuilt? (read Ezra 4 v 1-7)
2. What did God say he would do, and how would that encourage them v22?
3. What does God say about Zerubbabel, and how would that encourage him v 23?  
*Signet rings were worn by kings/rulers as a sign of their power & authority.*

**Reflection and Action:**

**Future**

1. Is the world happy today when we build the temple - when we preach the gospel?
2. Zerubbabel was God's appointed ruler 2500 years ago. Who is God's appointed ruler today (Col 1 v 15-18)? And what is his relationship to Zerubbabel (Matt 1 v 12-16)?
3. Are we building God's temple in our college? If not, why not?

We need not be afraid, because God is on the throne. Thank Him that He is able to do great things, and that He has put you in college at this time so that you can see Him at work. Ask Him what you as a CU should do?

**User Friendly Guide to Haggai**

OK – so you've not heard of Haggai before. Don't despair too much – he did write the second shortest book in the Old Testament. But his message is so relevant to CUs in colleges today – we think you'll be surprised!

**Welcome to the adventure that is to be found in the book of Haggai.....**God sent him to speak to His people in Jerusalem in 520BC with a very specific message. He challenged and encouraged the people who had returned from exile to rebuild the temple.

So how does that apply to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Once we have read this book should we think about opening a construction company to rebuild some of our closed churches? No. You but should be challenged about what you give to God and what you keep for yourself! We have included a look at the New Testament first to set the whole book in the context of the life of Christians today. Looking up cross references can be a bit tedious but we really do recommend you do it!

**This guide is written especially for CU groups that**

- Want not just to read God's word but live it.
- Want to get stuck into an Old Testament prophet.
- Have only an hour or less for their meeting, which is normally at lunch time.
- Have few people able to lead the study so need ready to use material.

You should not need to adapt this. However that doesn't mean you don't need someone in the group to take the initiative and read it over beforehand and lead the time you spend together. You may decide that it would be great if everyone had a copy of the studies - please feel free to photocopy them.

You will find extra information in the Crossway Bible Guide – Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi by John James.

Remember - hearing God speak through His word is exciting, so take time to acknowledge His presence and ask for His help (generally called prayer).

If you want any assistance at all please email us at [email@uccf.org.uk](mailto:email@uccf.org.uk)

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**No. 1**  
**The Temple Today**

**Key Verse: Ephesians 2 v 22**

"In Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his spirit"

**Way In:**

Where does God live?.....

**Read:** Ephesians 2 v 11-22 (especially v19-22)

**Questions to answer:**

1. The word "consequently" in v.19 suggests that what Paul is about to write about is dependent on v.11-18. So, what makes us members of God's household?
2. Now look through v.19-22 and pick out all the words that have something to do with building or buildings. (we count approx 10, although some are not so obvious!). Explain in your own words what each means.
3. What is the "Holy Temple" today? / What are the bricks?  
At the centre of the temple in Jerusalem was a room called the "Holy of Holies". This was the place where God symbolically lived among his people. Return to our "Way In" question: Where does God live?  
Is this new temple finished?  
What verse in this section relates to this idea?

**Reflection and Action:**

1. For a building project you need bricks. Where and how do we get bricks for this new temple?
2. For a good building you also need strong bricks – how do we ensure that we are good strong bricks that can support ourselves and others in the church?
3. CUs are all about "Making disciples of Jesus in the student world". Can you begin to see how relevant the book of Haggai is to a CU that is serious about getting on with this job?

**No.6**  
**You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours**

**Key Verse: 2 v 19**

"From this day on I will bless you."

**Way In:**

"There's no such thing as a free lunch", "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours"  
"Return the favour". What do these phrases mean?  
Do you think you can do things to get God to do something for you?

**Read:** Haggai 2 v 10-19

**Questions to answer:**

1. v15-17. How were things going for the people in Jerusalem? Were they prospering? (see also 1 v 6,9-11)  
Why was God not blessing them? v17 (Read Deuteronomy 28 v 15,22,64)
2. Look at the dates in 1 v 15 and 2 v 10. When the people started building the temple (obeying God) did God start to bless them?  
So God's blessing of his people is not conditional on them doing things for God.
3. Re-read v.10-14.
  - Does being in contact with evil make you unclean?
  - Does being around goodness make you good?
  - What does God say about the apparently good things the people were doing? v.14. Why do you think God said this? (This is what Paul is talking about in Romai 3 v 23))

**Reflection and Action:**

1. We so easily think that by doing what God wants he is obliged to bless us. Can you think of examples of where we see this in the lives of Christians and non-Christians?
2. God blesses because it is in His nature to bless. This is GRACE that a perfect God gives good things to an imperfect people.  
Praise God for his GRACE in blessing us when we don't deserve it.

## No.5

“It’s happened before…… it’ll happen again”

**Key Verse: 2 v 6**

“I will once more shake the heavens and the earth”

### Way In:

How can you tell when fruit is ripe?

How can you tell when [teacher, president, parent] comes in to a room?

**Read:** Haggai 2 v 1-9 (again)

### Questions to answer:

*For these questions be careful to imagine what the message would sound like to Haggai’s first hearers.*

1. In v6 God says that “Once more I will shake the heavens and the earth” implying that He has done this before. So check out Exodus 19v16-19, and discover what the first shaking was all about?
2. In v7 God says “I will fill this house with glory…… Check out 1 Chronicles 5 v 14 to see when that happened before.
3. What else will happen when God dwells among his people?
  - v7 \_\_\_\_\_ & v9 \_\_\_\_\_Can you explain what these things might mean?

**Hint:** The “Desired of all nations” refers to all of God’s people who live in the various countries of the world.

### Reflection and Action:

1. God said that He would bring glory to the temple, his people from the world would dwell in the temple, and there would be peace. Have these promises been perfectly fulfilled? Why not?  
When do you think they will be?

Read Hebrews 12 v 25-29. (Notice Haggai 2 v 6 is quoted in Hebrews 12 v 26)

2. How does this language suggest God will judge the world when he shakes it one last time?
3. If only the “desired of all nations” will be in heaven (Rev 7 v 9-14) what will then become of your non-Christian friends?  
Are you building the temple?

Pray for Your non Christian friends now!

## No. 2

Taking Care of Number One

**Key Verse: 1 v18**

“Build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured”

### Way In:

Take a few moments to think how you spend your time during an average day. What are your priorities in life? What are the most important things to you?

**Read:** Haggai v 1:1-11

### Questions to answer:

1. What are the Israelites doing? v.3-4 (Care to comment on the type of houses they are living in??)  
What should they be doing? (Not sure look at Ezra 1:1-4)  
What does this say about their priorities?
2. What was the result of not putting God as their top priority? v.5-8  
Were these “misfortunes” an accident? v.9a+11
3. Why was God not pleased and therefore withholding his blessing from his people?  
v.9b-10  
What is the most important thing to God? v.8

This is what God wants his people to understand. It’s why he says: “Give careful thought to your ways!”

### Reflection and Action:

1. God through Haggai says: “**rebuild my temple**”. But the people had a “take-care-of-number-one (me)” mentality. In what ways do **we** put our own interests and comforts, before serving God? Be specific as you think about evangelism, and prayer, Bible Study and church etc.
2. When we put ourselves first…
  - Are we truly satisfied?
  - Is God honoured / Can God take pleasure in what we do?Can we expect God to bless us? (we will return to this in session 6)

### No. 3

#### Wanted – Christian Builders. Your CU Needs You!

##### Key Verse: 1 v 12

“The whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God”

##### Way In:

*“Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months in complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful”*

How would you respond to this (true) advert by Ernest Shackleton as he recruited men to go to the South Pole? What would put you off?

Read: Haggai 1 v 12-15

##### Questions to answer:

Haggai preached the Word of the Lord (1 v 1-11). Recap- what was the problem, and what was his message from God?

1. How would you have expected people to respond to his call to hard work?  
How did they v12? Does this surprise you?
2. The people start work, and God speaks again through Haggai. What does He say to encourage them, and why would it work?  
Can you think of another occasion what God said similar words in the New Testament? (If you're struggling try Matthew 28 v 19-20)
3. What does God then do? v14a  
What is the result of this injection of fresh enthusiasm? v14b

##### Reflection and Action:

1. God's call to us is to build the temple today. (Who are the bricks?). This is a tough call. Why will it be hard to grow as a CU in strength and numbers?
2. In what ways can we overcome the problems we listed in the previous question?

Make a start – get praying!!

### No.4

#### Things 'aint what they used to be!

##### Key Verse: 2 v 7

“I will fill this house with glory”

##### Way In:

Have you ever seen someone do something spectacular, clever, or impressive, and when you try to do it yourself it doesn't quite turn out the same..... in sports, cookery, art etc.....?? How did it make you feel?

Read: Haggai 2 v 1-9

##### Questions to answer:

Haggai has preached to the people, and they have started work on the temple. We're now approximately 1 month into the building project.

1. How are the people feeling v1-3?  
Why? [check out 1 Kings 6 v 14-15, 19-22, 29-30]  
Why do you think this was a potentially serious problem?
2. What will make the temple glorious v6-9?  
So why shouldn't the people feel discouraged at their efforts?
3. What 2 commands does God give in v4, and why?

##### Reflection and Action:

1. When you look at your CU meetings / outreach events, do you think they're pretty poor compared to something your church, or a larger university CU is doing?
  - Are you working hard for God?
  - If you are, and still feel that you're not achieving anything, don't feel downcast. This is sinful – why?
2. Praise God for the assurance of His involvement in what you are doing. (He says in v7 that “He will”, not “He might” do things)

