

Now is the Time—This is the Place—We are the People

Haggai 1:1-8

BACKGROUND: In 606 BC the Babylonians destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and took the Jews captive.

70 years passed and King Cyrus allowed about 40 - 50 thousand Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple, under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest. (The book of Ezra).

1. After the foundation of the temple was finished, the Jews zeal began to wane. The excitement wore off. Priorities shifted to building their own houses. [Common experience in church building programs.]
2. 15 years past without any work being done on rebuilding the temple.
3. So God raised up prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Zerubbabel, to stir up the people to get their priorities in order and get back to rebuilding the temple.

➡ Neglect of God's Temple equaled the neglect of God Himself (READ TEXT).

Just as the Jews in Haggai's day had the job to do, Freedom Baptist Church in Smithfield has a work to do. Like those Jews rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem—We are also in the "Temple building business." I'm not talking about Temples of wood and stone. God does not dwell in Temples made with hands today. I'm talking about the lives of individual believers who are temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 3:9; 6:19).

Times haven't changed much since Haggai's day— I still hear the same excuses why people won't get involved in the work of God: #1—NOT NOW; #2—NOT HERE; #3—NOT ME! If God's work is to continue to get done, we must come to the conviction that **NOW is the time; THIS is the place; and WE are the people!**

- I. **NOW is the TIME** (Hag. 1:2—*"The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built"*).

➤Dt. 28:67—*“In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! And at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!”*

A. We live in PERILOUS times (ISIS; North Korea; Ukraine, Russia, getting chummy with Syria and Iran; Ebola epidemics—pestilence).

➤The rapture of the church is imminent.

B. Jesus said, *“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work!”* (John 9:4).

C. We must not waste a single minute as souls all about us are perishing without Jesus. The song writer wrote—*“Give every flying minute, Something to keep in store; Work for the night is coming, When man works no more!”*

➤ We are commanded to REDEEM THE TIME, because the days are evil (Eph. 5:16). We must “buy-up” every moment for Christ.

D. NO ONE IS GUARANTEED ANOTHER 24 HOURS (Prov. 27:1—*“Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”*).

1. Now is the time **to get saved** —*“Now is the accepted time; behold now is the DAY OF SALVATION”* (2 Cor. 6:2).

2. Now is the time to **get right** with God and repent.

3. Now is the time to **get involved** serving the Lord (Josh. 24:15; 1 Chron. 29:5—*“Who then is willing to consecrate his service THIS DAY unto the Lord?”*)

4. Now is the time **to witness** to your friends, neighbors and relatives.

5. Now is the time to **start tithing**.

6. Now is the time to **put off bitterness** from your life.

7. Now is the time to **quit making excuses**. Excuses are like armpits—Everyone's got a couple, and they usually stink!

➤What do you have to gain by delay? **NOW IS THE TIME...**

II. THIS is the PLACE (Hag. 1:2—*“...the Lord's house...”*).

➡ God has always had an appointed place—In the O.T. it was the tabernacle / Temple (Dt. 12:11). In the N.T. it is the local church. God planted this church in Smithfield as His ordained agency for carrying out His plan for today.

- A. This is the place to SERVE THE LORD. You are needed.
- B. This is the place to GROW IN THE LORD. You'll be nourished.
- C. This is the place to RAISE YOUR FAMILY for the Lord.
- D. This is the place to BRING YOUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS to the Lord. They will hear the Gospel here.

➡ God wants to use you where you're at NOW! Changing locations won't make it easier to live for God. Chances are if you won't serve the Lord in the place you're at now, you won't serve Him anywhere.

NOW is the time... THIS is the place...

III. WE are the PEOPLE (Hag. 1:2—*"This people say..."* is a reference to God's people).

- A. God does His work through His people.
 - ➡ E.M. Bounds wrote in "Power Through Prayer" - "Man is looking for better methods, God is looking for better men."
- B. We cannot depend on anyone else to do what God has put us here to do!

Fred Somebody, Tom Everybody, Peter Anybody, and Joe Nobody were neighbors. They all belonged to the same church, but you would not have enjoyed worshipping with them.

Everybody went fishing on Sunday or stayed home to watch T.V. or work around the yard.

Anybody wanted to attend church but was afraid Somebody wouldn't speak to him. So guess who went to church - uh, huh - NOBODY.

Really, Nobody was the only decent one of the four. Nobody did the visitation. Nobody worked on the church building.

Once the church needed a Sunday School teacher. Everybody thought Anybody would do, and Anybody thought Somebody would do it. Do you know who did it? That's right – NOBODY!

It happened that an unbeliever moved into their area. Everybody thought Somebody should try to win him for Christ. Anybody could have made an effort. You probably guessed who finally won him to Christ: NOBODY!

SUMMATION: 1 Peter 4:17.

- NOW IS THE TIME— “*The time is come that judgment must begin...*”
- THIS IS THE PLACE— “*...judgment must begin at the house of God...*”
- WE ARE THE PEOPLE— “*...and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God.*”

➡ **Now is the time** for salvation, service, soul winning... **This is the place** to get involved... **We are the people** God will hold responsible.

Gerhard De Toit of the Canadian Revival Fellowship tells of a missionary who was witnessing to a cancer patient at the hospital in Japan. This missionary would come everyday and plead with him to receive Christ. But the patient continually rejected the Gospel.

After going everyday for a week the missionary got discouraged and decided he wouldn't go to the hospital that day. However, the next day he decided he would try one more time to win the patient to Christ.

When he went to the patient's hospital room, the room was empty and the bed neatly made. He asked a nurse where the patient was. The nurse said, “Oh, he died night. Did you know him?” The missionary said he had been visiting him recently. The nurse said, “The only thing he left was this little diary. Would you like it?” The missionary took the diary and began to read some of the entries.

The dying man wrote about the missionary who visited him everyday and told him about Jesus. The last entry in the diary read: “I am looking forward to the missionary coming today. When the missionary comes today I will receive Christ.” But the missionary never came that day.

NOW IS THE TIME to witness to someone who needs Jesus.