

**“A Bag with Holes”**  
**Haggai 1:6**

Introduction: The Prophets Haggai and Zechariah were probably among the nearly 50,000 Jewish exiles who left Babylon for Judah in 537 BC, encouraged by the edict of King Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4; 5:1-2; 6:14). Their main goal was the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. Haggai had seen Solomon’s temple before it was destroyed and therefore was an old man (Haggai 2:3), while Zechariah is called a young man. These two prophets belonged to different generations, but this didn’t hinder them from working together to get the temple rebuilt. When the work on the temple had been stopped for sixteen years (536–520), Haggai and Zechariah suddenly began to preach and to encourage the people to put God first and get back to work. Haggai’s book consists of four messages he gave over a period of five months in the year 520 BC. He called the people to consider and realize what it was costing them to neglect God’s house. He was reminding them of God’s covenant promises recorded in Deuteronomy 28. But he also encouraged them by assuring them that God was with them in their work (Hag. 1:13; 2:4). The temple was completed in 515 BC, so Haggai and Zechariah didn’t minister in vain.

1. A short chronology of the book of Haggai can be seen in the following:
  - a. 536 B.C.: 50,000 Jews under Zerubbabel return to Jerusalem.
  - b. 536 B.C.: seventh month, they build the altar and offer sacrifice.
  - c. 535 B.C.: second month, work on the Temple begins, and is stopped.
  - d. 520 B.C.: sixth month (September), first day, Haggai’s call to build.
  - e. 516 B.C.: twelfth month (March), third day, the Temple is completed.
  - f. 455 B.C.: Ezra comes to Jerusalem and makes certain reforms.
  - g. 445 B.C.: Nehemiah rebuilds the wall. Period of Malachi.
2. The key theme of Haggai is to complete the work that you have begun and the key verse is 1:8.
3. Haggai preaches four messages to Judah which were:
  - a. A Message of Conviction 1:1-15
    - (1) The people had just about given up concerning the building of their Temple. After fifteen years it remained unfinished.
    - (2) Haggai’s message to them was to stop making excuses, to consider their ways, and begin to serve the Lord.
  - b. A Message of Comparison 2:1-9
    - (1) Haggai compared discouragement with encouragement.
    - (2) He tried to stir up the people and let them know to be strong and fear not because the glory will come and God will provide.
  - c. A Message of Contamination 2:10-19
    - (1) God asked Judah two questions: The answer to 2:12 was no. The answer to 2:13 was yes.
    - (2) The point God was making was that whatever righteousness the nation Israel might have once possessed was not automatically transferred upon them at this time. But their own unrighteousness was affecting both them and their children.

d. A Message of Coronation 2:20-23

- (1) Someday God would destroy all those Gentile nations which had afflicted Israel throughout the years.
- (2) One day Zerubbabel would be elevated. Some believe that Zerubbabel will be God's prime minister during the millennium.

Body: The prophet Haggai bequeathed to posterity a text worthy of consideration (1:6). *"He that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."* The labor pictured is not only fruitless, but wearisome and vexing. They were putting their money in a bag filled with holes, working hard and getting nowhere. Treasures lost in this manner may never return. It is better to repair the bag than to suffer immeasurable loss. It is not difficult to discover in the Scriptures people who had holes in their bags.

I. The Bag of Affections Colossians 3:2- *"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*

- Affection means to set your mind toward or keep on thinking about.
- It does matter what we think and we are responsible for our thoughts. Paul does not mean that we should never think upon the things of the earth, but that these should not be our aim, our goal, our master. The Christian has to keep his feet upon the earth, but his head in the heavens. He must be heavenly-minded here on earth and so help to make earth like heaven.
- There are times when our bag of affections has holes in them. Notice David:
  - A. David's Desire I Samuel 13:13-14, Psalms 27:4
  - B. David's Description II Samuel 23:1-4
  - C. David's Distraction II Samuel 11
    1. David Lingered v. 1
    2. David Looked v. 2
    3. David Lusted v. 3
    4. David Laid v. 4
    5. David Lost II Samuel 12:7
    6. His love for the Lord, the service rendered to God's cause, and the serenity of his immortal Psalms fell through holes in the bag of his soul. He was very wealthy and yet was too poor to purchase a moment of happiness.
    7. David's son was given great wisdom by God, but unfortunately he forgot to mend the hole in his bag and became extremely foolish. I Kings 11:1-10
  - D. David's Direction I Chronicles 29:1-3

II. The Bag of Attractions I John 2:15-17

- A. The Service of Demas Philemon 1:24- *"Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers."*
- B. The Salutation of Demas Colossians 4:14- *"Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you."*
- C. The Straying of Demas
  1. Titus 2:11-12- *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly*

*lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”*

2. II Timothy 4:10- *“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.”*
3. This world is very attractive with all of its adultery, fornication, pornography, beaches, television, internet, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, amusements, cussing, video games, music, amusement parks, gambling, lottery, casinos, dress, fashions, adornments, careers, sports, movies, dancing, bars, clubs, and the night life.
4. However, this world has holes in its bag.

### III. The Bag of Adoration Revelation 2:1-7

#### A. The Assessment of the Ephesians v. 2

1. They were Faithful in their Toiling- *“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience”*
2. They were Faithful in their Taking- *“and how thou canst not bear them which are evil”*
3. They were Faithful in their Trial- *“and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars”*

#### B. The Advancement of the Ephesians v. 3

1. They Advanced in Service- *“And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured”*
2. They Advanced in Strength- *“and hast not fainted”*

#### C. The Abandonment of the Ephesians v. 4

1. “The word for love is the deepest and most meaningful word for love found in the Greek language.” (Walvoord)
2. “Though they had not departed completely from love for God, their love no longer had the fervency, depth, or meaning it once had had in the church.” (Walvoord)
3. “The furnace was still there, but the fire had gone out.” (Phillips)
4. “Labor is no substitute for love; neither is purity a substitute for passion.”
5. “It is only as we love Christ fervently that we can serve Him faithfully.”
6. Luke 10:38-42
7. “All too often those who have forgotten how to love specialize in hating error.” (Phillips)

#### D. The Answer for the Ephesians v. 5

1. “Religious activity without love is a sin that calls for repentance!”
2. “America is filled with ‘Ecclesiastical corpses in beautiful caskets’.”
3. “The church that loses its love will soon lose its light, no matter how doctrinally sound it may be.” (Wiersbe)

Conclusion: Neglect can be dangerous. Apathy is always the enemy of enthusiasm. Procrastination is always the thief of time. We daily live our lives without a moment’s thought of the holes in our bag—working hard and getting nowhere. It would be tragic to stand in the presence of the Lord and be reminded of the holes in our bag.