

Haggai 1:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.

Analysis

Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little (פָּנוּחַ אֶל-הַרְבֵּה וְהָיָה לְמֵעָט/panoh el-harbeh vehineh lim'at)—God exposes the gap between expectation and reality. They worked hard, planted extensively, anticipated abundance, yet harvested scarcity. **And when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it** (וַהֲבֵאתֶם הַבַּיִת וְנָפַחְתִּי בּוֹ/vahavetem habayit venafachti vo)—the verb נָפַח (nafach) means to blow, breathe upon, scatter. God personally acted to dissipate their meager harvest, preventing even small gains from providing satisfaction.

Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house (וְעַתָּה יָנֵעַן בֵּיתִי אֲשֶׁר-הוּא חָרֵב וְאַתֶּם רָצִים אִישׁ לְבֵיתוֹ/ya'an beiti asher-hu charev ve'atem ratzim ish leveito)—God Himself answers the "why" question. Their futility had a direct cause: His house lay in ruins (חָרֵב/charev, desolate, destroyed) while they each "ran" (רָצִים/ratzim, actively hurrying) to their own houses. The contrast is devastating: God's house—waste; their houses—priority. God's work—neglected; their work—pursued with energy.

This verse establishes a crucial biblical principle: God will not bless self-centered living. When His people chronically marginalize Him, He withdraws blessing not vindictively but correctively. The futility was meant to prompt self-examination (v.5, 7) and repentance. Malachi 3:8-12 later reiterates this pattern with tithes—robbing God brings curse; honoring Him brings blessing.

Historical Context

For sixteen years, the people experienced this frustrating pattern. Archaeology confirms that post-exilic Judah struggled economically. Populations were small, agriculture was difficult, and prosperity was limited. Yet Haggai identifies the root cause: not merely circumstances but spiritual priorities. They had time and resources to panel their houses (v.4) but claimed they couldn't afford to rebuild the temple. God's discipline exposed that rationalization.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. In what areas of life do you experience chronic dissatisfaction despite hard work and reasonable effort—and might God be exposing misplaced priorities?
2. How does the image of "running to your own house" while God's purposes languish describe patterns of self-focus in your life?
3. What would change if you truly believed that prioritizing God's kingdom leads to blessing while self-focus inevitably leads to futility (Matthew 6:33)?

Interlinear Text

פָּנָה	אֶל	הַרְבֵּה	וְהֵנָּה	לְמַעַט	וְהֵבִאתָ		
Ye looked	H413	for much	H2009	and lo it came to little	and when ye brought		
H6437		H7235		H4592	H935		
לְבֵיתוֹ:	וְנִפַּחְתִּי	בּוֹ	עַל	מָה	נֵאֻם		
it home	I did blow	H0	Because	H4100	upon it Why saith		
H1004	H5301		H3282		H5002		
					the LORD		
					H3068		
צָבָא וְ	עַל	לְבֵיתוֹ:	אֲשֶׁר	הָיָא	חֵרֵב	וְאַתָּה	רָצָה יָמִים
of hosts	Because	it home	H834	H1931	that is waste	H859	and ye run
H6635	H3282	H1004			H2720		H7323
אֵשׁ	לְבֵיתוֹ:						
every man	it home						
H376	H1004						

Additional Cross-References

Haggai 1:4 (Parallel theme): Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?

Revelation 3:19 (Parallel theme): As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Isaiah 40:7 (References Lord): The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

Malachi 2:2 (References Lord): If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.

Haggai 1:6 (Parallel theme): Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

