

After the people returned from captivity, work began in rebuilding Israel. The people quickly laid the foundation of the temple, but the work stagnated. The people were distracted with rebuilding their own homes and efforts to produce a living. Over time they became apathetic. For 16 years nothing happened. The prophet Haggai arose at this point to stir up the people. All of their community effort and sacrifices didn't make them holy because of their sins and uncleanness. Spiritual corruption can cause the holy to become unholy. Such is the case here.

Haggai 2:15-19 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD: (16) Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. (17) I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD. (18) Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider it. (19) Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.

“Is the seed still in the barn?” It is a rhetorical question. The answer to this question would be “NO” because of the time of year. It is mid-December. It is in the end of the planting season in Israel. Seed would be in the ground and not in the barn. The rainy season is about to begin. God has been punishing them with damaged harvests trying to get people to wake up and return, but they had ignored God's message. But now finally they have returned to building the temple. Despite the past difficulties, they still committed their grain to the fields. It is too soon to tell what the results will be. The rains haven't started yet. The trees and vines are still dormant. Yet there is a reason they put out their grain in advance. They had hopes of a good crop. God is saying they don't have to guess. God is going to bless them because they have finally put Him first. Their sacrifices were going to make them holy. Their obedience demonstrates that they are holy. Seed is used frequently in the New Testament as a metaphor. For the next few minutes we will be considering some of those metaphors.

The Incorruptible Seed. 1 Peter 1:22-23 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: (23) Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

Each of us was conceived of corruptible seed. We were born into this world as mortal beings. We grow, but all too soon we begin to age, grow old, and then one day die. In short, people are born to die. But Christians are born again of the water and Spirit - John 3:5 Brought forth by the word of God as 1 Peter 1:23 so states. James 1:18 calls it "*the word of truth.*" **James 1:21** *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.* An implanted word (image of seed) is able to save souls. Incorruptible seed, the word of God, can produce immortal people. For 2000 years the gospel has brought new life to sinful, dying people. It hasn't change. It endures and it changes people in whom it is planted.

Parables of Seed. In the parable of the sower, we learn that a seed can produce different results. How? The results depend on the soil in which it is planted. In Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23 we see the same seed planted in four different types of hearts. One was a hard heart, the other a stony heart, the third was a thorny heart and the fourth was a receptive heart. Only in the fourth heart did the seed flourish. The seed is good, but there are obstacles in the same field that can keep the seed from maturing. The seed is good and germinate and grow into something marvelous if given the chance. But consider the question from Haggai. What if the seed is left in the barn? Can it produce? Would it help or hinder the work of Satan? Satan wants the seed to stay in the barn.

That Seed Is Christ *Galatians 3:16* *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.* God fulfilled his promise to Abraham, to bless the whole world through his descendants (i.e seed). The eternal one, Christ our Lord, produced a bumper crop. The Jews alone were not saved, but salvation reached the Gentiles. All Christians are born again and become Abraham's seed. *Galatians 3:26-29* *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (27) For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (29) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Many in the world are like tares that don't want the seed to flourish. If Christians exercise their faith, they want it out of sight

where it won't cause offense. That is why religious expressions are being battled. No prayers in schools. No indications of religious faith in the work place. Keep it hidden in the churches and homes. Keep it in the barns.

ARE WE KEEPING THE SEED IN THE BARN? So to the question Haggai asked. Are we keeping the seed in the barn?

A. Has It Taken Root In Our Heart? When God asked through Haggai, "*Is the seed still in the barn?*" the answer was "no." It had been invested in the soil of Judea. God held its fate, and He promised a good return if they did as He asked. Have we taken the seed from the barn and planted in our heart and are we letting it take root in our own lives? I want to go back to that passage in James 1. *James 1:21-25 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. (22) But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. (23) For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: (24) For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. (25) But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.* The seed has no effect if it is not used. Look at your life. Do you see an the word growing and flourishing or do you see overgrown weed patch?

Show evidence that God's word is growing in you. *1 Peter 2:1-2 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, (2) As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

B. Are You Sowing It In Other Fields? The seed is sown when we share it with those around us. *Galatians 6:7-8 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (8) For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* Seeds of kindness, seeds of joy, seed of doing good -- these help our neighbors; but nothing compares to sowing seeds of the gospel in the hearts of our neighbors. Do you recall the parable of the sower? The seed was richly scattered over a variety of soils. The sower wasn't selective nor should we be selective. Spread the word. Let it fall where it may. *Galatians 6:9-10 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (10) As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men,*

especially unto them who are of the household of faith. The sprouting depends on the people receiving the word, not the sower. It can and will make an impact because God tells us that the power is in the gospel (Rom 1:16)

C. Are You Ready To Sow. It is unfortunate that some act ashamed of the gospel. We are timid with it. We aren't prepared for the opportunities. There is a sobering verse - 1 Peter 3:15 but I want you to noticed the verses preceding it. *1 Peter 3:13-15 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? (14) But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; (15) But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:* How do you prepare yourself to give a ready answer – study. This is exactly what Paul would say in 1 Timothy 4:13 and 2 Timothy 2:15.

D. Are You Sowing The Wrong Seed? Back in the parables of Matthew 13, there were two kinds of seed sown – wheat and tares. Tares were basically weeds that looked a lot like wheat. By way of spiritual application, are you sowing the right seed? Are you teaching truth or are you teach a doctrine that has been influenced by man. Has there been a change in your life? Some think they become children of God, but they continue to plant seeds of destruction. In such cases how will the word of God ever take root?

Imagine putting in a new lawn and sowing it with dandelions and crabgrass. Even a mixture of good and bad seed would be ridiculous. So why do people approach Christianity part way? *Romans 13:11-14 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. (13) Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (14) But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

IF ETERNAL LIFE REALLY MATTERS TO US, THEN WHY IS THE SEED STILL IN THE BARN?