

(a) Description of the crop failures (Hag. 2:16b,c)

- i. When a person threshed a heap of sheaves at the threshing floor, he expected it to yield twenty measures of grain, but it only yielded ten measures of grain, half as much as he expected (Hag. 2:16b).
- ii. When a person drew juice from the wine vat into which the juice flowed when it was pressed out of the grapes in the upper vat, he expected that from one filling of the wine press with grapes he would be able to draw fifty buckets of juice but he was only able to draw twenty buckets of juice, two-fifths as much as he expected (Hag. 2:16c)

(b) Reason for the crop failures (Hag. 2:17)

The Lord brought two diseases - blight, a disease of plants that results in withering, cessation of growth, and death of parts of the plants, like leaves, without rotting and mildew, a disease of the grain caused by a fungus that keeps it from ripening properly - upon the grain (cf. Deut. 28:22) and an adverse weather condition - and ahil - upon the vines and fruit trees (cf. Psa. 78:47a). The Lord used these two diseases - blight and mildew - and this adverse weather condition - hail - to cause the crops of His people to fail, and He did it in order to chasten them because they neglected to do the work He wanted them to do, namely, to rebuild the temple.

(4) Purpose of the chastisement (Hag. 2:17b)

It was to get the Lord's people to repent and do the work He wanted them to do, namely, to rebuild the temple. But they refused to do it, and as long as they refused to do it, the chastisement continued.

- c. The Lord exhorted His people to once again consider (lay to heart) their past from the present day (the 24th day of Kislev, i.e., Dec. 18, 520 B.C.) back to the time they ceased to do the work He wanted them to do (when the foundation of the temple was completed in the month of Iyar, 535 B.C.) and the chastisement He brought upon them during that interval of time because of their moral uncleanness, and then He pointed out that the effects of that chastisement ~~were~~ were still apparent even though they had resumed the work He wanted them to do and promised because they had resumed that work, namely, the rebuilding of the temple that from that day forward He would bless them with material prosperity (Hag. 2:18,19).

Note: The reason the Lord's people didn't have any grain in their barns nor fruit on their vines or fruit trees is that the Lord had ruined their crops by disease and adverse weather conditions before they had agreed to resume the work He wanted them to do, namely, the rebuilding of the temple. Therefore, their last harvest was a scanty one and they hadn't had a harvest since that time (Hag. 2:19).