1:2 The Apocryphal book of Baruch 6:2 records how Baruch changes the prophecy of Jer. 29:10, that Israel were to be 70 years in Babylon and then return: “When you reach Babylon you will be there many years, a period seven generations long, after which I will bring you back”. The 70 years are turned into seven generations. This was precisely the mindset spoken against in Haggai 1:2, whereby the Jews reasoned that the time had not yet come to rebuild the temple. “The time” referred to the time spoken of by Jeremiah- but Baruch had re-interpreted the 70 years as meaning seven generations. And yet all this was done with a surface-level reverence for God’s word- the exiles considered themselves blessed because they had God’s law (Baruch 4:4). Indeed, much of Baruch is a condemnation of idols and a demand to worship Yahweh. Human nature seeks to defer serving God until later- we’re quick to find excuses. But the Bible stresses how God’s true servants rise up and serve Him immediately.

1:9 *Looked for much*- The Jews in Babylon for the most part chose to remain there rather than return to rebuild God’s land and house. Many of those who did return did so, it seems, motivated by the hope of personal gain. They were more interested in building houses for themselves than in restoring God’s house, and therefore God sent famine- they didn’t get the “much” benefit and blessing for themselves which they had expected. We too can leave ‘Babylon’, the world, and sign up to God’s work from the motive of personal benefit, rather than a genuine desire to see God’s glory and His work and cause progressed.

1:14 *The spirit*- God can work directly on the human mind [spirit] and strengthen us in the attitudes we adopt.

2:5 *My Spirit*- God dwelt amongst Israel after they left Egypt through an Angel; He makes His Angels Spirits (Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:7). One way God’s Spirit works amongst us His people is through the unseen ministry of Angels.

2:12,13 Unholiness spreads easier than holiness does. In spiritual things, it’s easier to slip into a downward spiral than into an upward spiral. The Jews thought that mere vague association with holy things would somehow make them holy. Our attendance at meetings, identification on a social level with God’s people, breaking bread etc. will not of itself make us holy.

2:17 One of the saddest things to observe is people suffering from situations which God uses to try to bring them back to Him, and them refusing to return to Him. So much tragic human suffering is in vain because people won’t perceive the spiritual intention behind it.