

Haggai

MEANING: “Festival” or “Festive”

AUTHOR: Haggai

TIME WRITTEN: According to **Haggai 1:1** - September 24, 520 B.C. is when “the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel.”

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 37th Book in the Bible
- 37th book in the Old Testament
- 15th of 17 books of Prophecy
- 10th of 12 Minor Prophet Books
- 36 have preceded it. 29 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 2

VERSES: 38

WORDS: 1,131

KEY WORD: The Reconstruction of the Temple

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **Haggai 1:7-8** - “Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD.”
2. **Haggai 2:7-9** - “And I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts.”

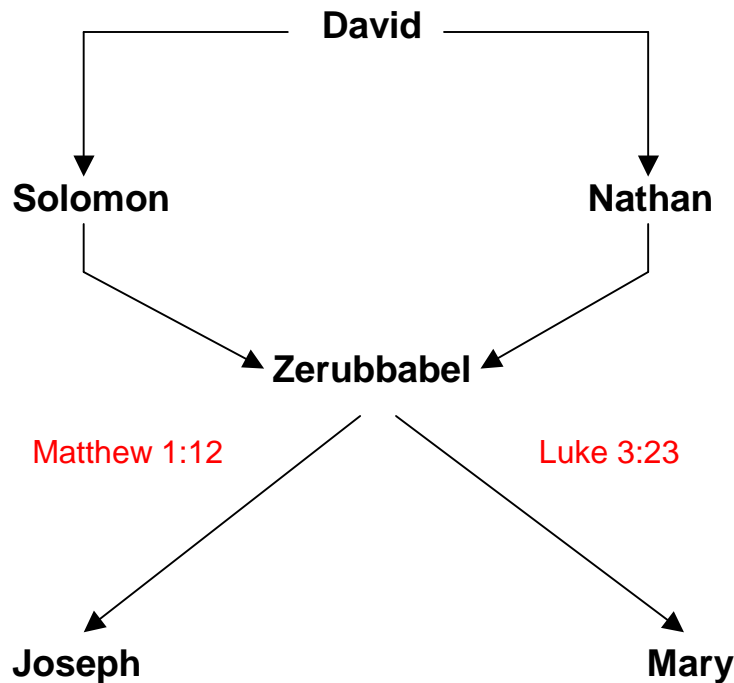
KEY CHAPTER: Haggai 2

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT HAGGAI:

1. With the Babylonian exile in the past and a newly returned group of Jews back to the land, the work of rebuilding the temple can begin.
 - a. The rebuilding of the temple.
 1. The rebuilding of the temple began in 536 B.C., then after two years of work was discontinued in 534 B.C.
 2. The work was resumed in 520 B.C. and completed four years later in 516 B.C.
 3. Six years of actual work done over a twenty-year period.
 - b. However, at the time of the book of Haggai, sixteen years after the process is begin, the people have yet to finish the project, for personal affairs have interfered with God's business.
 - c. Haggai preaches a fiery series of sermonettes designed to stir up he nation to finish the temple.
 - d. He calls the builders:
 1. To renewed courage in the Lord.
 2. To renewed holiness of life.
 3. To renewed faith in God who controls the future.
2. Haggai's name is mentioned nine times in the book (1:1, 3, 12, 13: 2:1, 10, 13, 14, 20)
3. Haggai is know only from this book and from two other references to him, both in the book of Ezra.

- a. Ezra 5:1
- b. Ezra 6:14
4. Haggai returned from Babylon with the remnant under Zerubbabel and evidently lived in Jerusalem.
5. The historical time frame of Haggai.
 - a. In 538 B.C. Cyrus of Persia issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to their land and rebuild their temple.
 - b. The first return was led by Zerubbabel, and in 536 B.C. the work on the temple began.
 - c. Ezra 4-6 gives the background to the Book of Haggai and describes how the Samaritans hindered the building of the temple and wrote a letter to the Persian king.
 1. This opposition only added to the growing discouragement of the Jewish remnant. Their initial optimism upon returning to their homeland was dampened by:
 - a. The desolation of the land
 - b. Crop failure
 - c. Hard work
 - d. Hostility
 - e. Other hardships
 2. They gave up the relative comfort of Babylonian culture to pioneer in a land that seemed unproductive and full of enemies.
 3. Finding it easier to stop building than to fight their neighbors, the work on the temple ceased in 534 B.C.
 4. The pessimism of the people led to spiritual lethargy, and they became preoccupied with their own building projects.
 - a. They used political opposition and a theory that the temple was not to be rebuilt until some later time (perhaps after Jerusalem was rebuilt) as excuses for neglecting the house of the Lord.
 - b. "When you don't want to loan your goat, any excuse will do."
 - d. It was in this context that God called His prophets Haggai and Zechariah to the same task of urging the people to complete the temple.
 1. Both books are precisely dated.
 - a. Haggai 1:1 — September 1, 520 B.C.
 - b. Haggai 1:15 — September 24, 520 B.C.
 - c. Haggai 2:1 — October 21, 520 B.C.
 - d. Zechariah 1:1 — November, 520 B.C.
 - e. Haggai 2:10, 20 — December 24, 520 B.C.
 - f. Zechariah 1:7 — February 24, 519 B.C.
 - g. Zechariah 7:1 — December 4, 518 B.C.
 2. Zechariah's prophecy commenced between Haggai's second and third messages.
 3. Thus, after fourteen years of neglect, work on the temple was resumed in 520 B.C. and was completed four years later in 516 B.C. (Ezra 6:15)
 4. The Talmud indicates that the ark of the covenant, the Shekinah glory, and the Urim and Thummim were not in the rebuilt temple.
 5. Darius I (521-486 B.C.) was king of Persia during the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah. He was a strong ruler who consolidated his kingdom by defeating a number of revolting nations.
 6. **Haggai 2:9** - "The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former," says the LORD of hosts. "And in this place I will give peace," says the LORD of hosts."

- a. The promise of this passage points ahead to a crucial role the second temple is to have in God's redemptive plan.
 - b. Herod the Great later spend a fortune on the project of enlarging the temple, and it was, if you please, filled with the glory of God incarnate every time Christ came to Jerusalem.
7. **Haggai 2:23** - "In that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel, says the LORD, and will make you as a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the LORD of hosts."
- a. Zerubbabel becomes the center of the messianic line and like a signet ring, sealing both branches together.



8. A great lesson is seen in Haggai's basic theme.
- a. Haggai's basic theme is clear: the remnant must reorder its priorities and complete the temple before it can expect the blessing of God to rest upon its efforts.
 - b. Because of spiritual indifference the people fail to try to respond to God's attempts to get their attention.
 - c. In their despondency they do not realize that their hardships are divinely given symptoms of their spiritual disease.
 - d. Haggai brings them to an understanding that circumstances become difficult when people place their own selfish interests before God's.
 - e. When they put God first and seek to do his will, He will bring His people joy and prosperity.

SUMMARY OF HAGGAI

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Haggai is second only to Odadiah in brevity among Old Testament books, but this strong and series of four terse sermons accomplishes its intended effect.

1. The work on the temple has ceased, and the people have become more concerned with the beautification of their own houses than with the building of the central sanctuary of God.
 2. Because of their misplaced priorities, their labor is no longer blessed by God.
 3. Only when the people put the Lord first by completing the task he has set before them will His hand of blessing once again be upon them.
 4. Haggai acts as God's man in God's hour.
- B. There are four major divisions in the book:
1. The Completion of the Latter temple. (1:1-15)
 2. The Glory of the Latter Temple. (2:1-9)
 3. The Present Blessings of Obedience. (2:10-19)
 4. The Future Blessings of Promise. (2:20-23)

THE COMPLETION OF THE LATTER TEMPLE. (1:1-15))

- A. When the remnant returns from Babylon under Zerubbabel, they begin to rebuild the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem.
1. However, the work soon stops and the people find excuses to ignore it as the years pass.
 2. They have no problem building "paneled houses" (1:4) for themselves while they claim in Haggai 1:2 that the time for building the temple has not come. Remember, "When you don't want to loan your goat, any excuse will do."
 3. God withdraws His blessing and they sink into an economic depression.
 4. However, because of their indifference to God and indulgence of self, they do not recognize what is happening, so God communicates directly to the remnant through His prophet Haggai.
 5. Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the high priest, and all the people respond, and twenty-three days later they again begin to work on the temple.

THE GLORY OF THE LATTER TEMPLE. (2:1-9)

- A. In a few short weeks, the enthusiasm of the people sours into discouragement.
1. The elders remember the glory of Solomon's temple and bemoan the puniness of the present temple. (Ezra 3:8-13)
 2. Haggai's prophetic word of encouragement reminds the people of two things:
 - a. God's covenant promises in the past (2:4-5).
 - b. And of His confident plans for the future (2:6-9). Verse 9 - The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former" (**2:9**)

THE PRESENT BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE. (2:10-19)

- A. Haggai's message to the priests illustrates the concept of contamination (2:11-13) and applies it to the nation (2:14-19).
1. The Lord requires holiness and obedience, and the contamination of sin blocks the blessing of God.
 2. Because the people have obeyed God in building the temple, they will be blessed from that day forward.

THE FUTURE BLESSINGS OF PROMISE. (2:20-23)

- A. On the same day that Haggai addresses the priests, he gives a second message to Zerubbabel.

1. God will move in judgment, and in his power will overthrow the nations of the earth (2:21-22).
2. At the same time, Zerubbabel, a symbol of the Messiah to come, will be honored.