

THE BOOK OF HAGGAI – AN INTRODUCTION

“Is it a time for you...to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins...Consider your ways.” Haggai 1:4-5

Author: Haggai “my feast or my festival” (1:1) (from the Hebrew word חַג which means feast)

- Haggai makes reference to God speaking to and through him no less than 25 times in these two chapters.
- Haggai was a contemporary of the prophet Zechariah and ministered during the days of Ezra.
- Haggai is the second shortest Old Testament book. Only Obadiah is shorter.

Date: 520_{BC}

- This postexilic prophet is one of the easiest books to date in the Bible.
- The first message was delivered on **August 29, 520_{BC}** (1 Elul) in the second year of Darius, King of Persia (1:1).
- The second message was on **October 17, 520_{BC}** and the third and fourth fall on **December 18, 520_{BC}**.

Audience: the restored remnant of Israel who returned to Judea after 70 years of exile in Babylon

- The 1st message was primarily aimed at Israel’s leaders **Zerubbabel** (governor of Judah) and **Joshua** (the high priest).
- The 2nd message was to Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the remnant of the people.
- The 3rd message was to Israel’s priests and the 4th message was to Zerubbabel.

Purpose: To call the nation to repent of their apathy and finish rebuilding His temple.

- By restoring the remnant and rebuilding the temple, God showed He was renewing His covenant with His people (2:4-5).
- Ezra confirms that God used the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to spur on the building of the temple (Ezra 5:1, 6:14).

Background:

- **605-586_{BC}** – Judah taken to captivity in 3 waves by Babylon King Nebuchadnezzar; temple destroyed (2 Chron. 36:17-21)
- **539_{BC}** – King Cyrus of Persia defeated the Babylonian King and took over his vast empire (Dan. 5:30-31)
- **538_{BC}** – King Cyrus issued a decree freeing Jewish exiles to return to their ancestral home (2 Chron. 36:22, Ezra 1:1)
- **537_{BC}** – 1st group of 49,897 exiles (Ezra 2:64-65) returned to Jerusalem (Ezra 1-6) led by Zerubbabel, Sheshbazzar and Jeshua
- **536_{BC}** – The temple began to be rebuilt until pressure from Samaritan and Persian opponents led Israel to stop working.
- **536-520_{BC}** – Spiritual apathy and misplaced priorities led the people to use their freedom to build their own homes.
- **521-486_{BC}** – Darius I (Darius the Great) ruled as the 3rd King of the Persian Empire
- **August 29, 520_{BC}** – Haggai’s first message called the nation to repent and get back to work (Haggai 1:1-11; Ezra 5:1)
- **September 21, 520_{BC}** – After 23 days, Israel repented and resumed building the temple (Haggai 1:12-15; Ezra 5:2)
- **October 17, 520_{BC}** – Haggai’s second message assured them of future glory (Haggai 2:1-9)
- **October-November 520_{BC}** – Zechariah’s ministry began (Zechariah 1:1-6)
- **December 18, 520_{BC}** – Haggai’s third and fourth message called them to wait upon Messiah in holiness (Haggai 2:10-23)
- **March 12, 515_{BC}** – Temple was completed and dedicated in Jerusalem (Ezra 6:16-18)
- **485-464_{BC}** – Events in the book of Esther took place in Persia to recount God’s faithfulness to the Jews who remained there
- **458_{BC}** – Ezra led a 2nd smaller wave of a few thousand Jewish exiles out of Babylon and back to Jerusalem (Ezra ch. 7-10).
- **446/444_{BC}** – Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem with 3rd small group of exiles (Neh. 2:11) and rebuilds the wall (Neh. 6:15).

AN OUTLINE OF HAGGAI: CONSIDER YOUR WAYS

(1:1-15) Message #1—Consider Your Ways: A Problem with Priorities

(1:1-11) The people are called to repent and rebuild the temple

(1:12-15) The people obey the call to repent and rebuild the temple

(2:1-9) Message #2—Coming Glory: God Promises a House of Peace

(2:10-19) Message #3—Consider Holiness: God Wants Holy Laborers

(2:20-23) Message #4—Coming Hope: God's Chosen Servant

AN OUTLINE OF HAGGAI: WORK IN HOPE, I AM WITH YOU

(1:1-15) Message #1—God is Worthy, So Don't Get Distracted

(2:1-9) Message #2—God is With us, So Don't Become Discouraged

(2:10-19) Message #3—God Wants our Heart, So Don't Remain Defiled

(2:20-23) Message #4—God is Coming Again, So Don't Grow Disillusioned