

A Study Outline of Haggai

The book immediately dates itself to about 520 BC (1:1).

Haggai is listed as one of those who returned to Jerusalem after Babylonian captivity (5:1).

There are many important dates to be familiar with around this time in Israel's history:

- 606, 597, 586 - Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon come up against Jerusalem taking captives and destroying the city (Dan. 1:1-2; 2 Kg. 24-25; Eze. 1).
- 539 BC - Babylon falls to Medo-Persia (Dan. 5).
- 536 BC - Cyrus, king of Persia, decrees that Jews may return to and rebuild Jerusalem (Jer. 29:10-14). 49,897 return (2 Chr. 36:22-23; Ezra 1-2).
- 516 BC - The temple is completed (Ezra 6:15).
- 457 BC - A second group returns during the reign of Artaxerxes (Ezra 8).
- 444 BC - Nehemiah returns with another group (Neh. 2).

The message of Haggai is to the people who returned from captivity to rebuild the temple.

- 1:1-11 - Consider your ways!

Verses 1-4 show that the people had spent much time and money fixing their own houses while the temple was incomplete. Verse 6 shows the result of their wrong priorities.

He repeats the challenge in verse 7. They are instructed to take care of the most important things first (v. 8).

Verses 9-11 shows that they were suffering some physical consequences as a direct result of not finishing the temple.

- 1:12-15 - The people obey God.

Ezra 5:1-2 records these events as well. The work began 23 days after the sermon (1:1, 15).

- 2:1-5 - The new temple is not as great as Solomon's, but the Lord was with them.

Ezra 3:12-13 records the reaction of the people to the laying of the foundation. The most important thing for the people to remember was that the Lord was with them according to the promise he made many years before - Exodus 29:45-46.

- 2:6-9 - A promise of glory and peace for the new temple.

In the rebuilding of the temple gifts were given by different people: Cyrus (Ezra 1:7-11), Darius (Ezra 6:9-13), and Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:12-26).

The promise of the greater glory in verse 9 could only be fulfilled in the building of the church by Christ (Eph. 2:19-22). Peace comes through Christ (Eph. 2:14-15).

- 2:10-14 - Israel needs to be cleansed.

God asks two questions to make the point that Israel had become defiled and needed to be cleansed. (1) Can an unholy object be cleansed simply by contact with a holy object? No (Lev. 10:8-10). (2) Can a holy object be made unclean simply by contacting an unholy object? Yes (Num. 19:11, 22).

- 2:15-19 - Israel is told to consider the fact that from the time before the construction of the temple they had suffered. They are promised "from this day forward" that God would bless their efforts.

- 2:20-23 - God will overthrow the nations and make Zerubbabel His "signet ring."

These promises would ultimately be fulfilled in Christ (Matt. 1:12).