

Haggai

Background

- Haggai means “Festal one” and most likely indicates he was born on a feast day.
- Haggai is the first of the post-exilic prophets, and was the contemporary of Zechariah.
- Haggai’s prophesies were given over about a four month period, from August 29,520 BC to December 18, 520 BC.
- Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament. (Obadiah is shorter).

Brief Timeline of Relevant Events

Event	Date	Scripture Reference
Return under Zerubbabel and Joshua	538 BC	Ezra 1-3:7
Rebuilding the Temple begins & stops	536 BC	Ezra 3:8-4:5
Haggai and Zechariah prophesy to resume	520 BC	Ezra 5-6:12
Temple Dedicated	516 BC	Ezra 6:13-22

Study

1. Why did the Building Stop? **Read Ezra 4:4-5**. Why did it take 16 years and two prophets to get the people going again? Reference Haggai 1:1-5. What were the consequences? Reference Haggai 1:6-11. What does verse 6 say in particular? **Read Deuteronomy 28:36-45**. How do they compare? What does it mean that they lived in paneled houses (v.4) and that they ran to their own houses (v.9)? How is it consistent that they had meager returns but great houses? **Read Ecclesiastes 4:4-8**. How can the building of the temple bring glory to God? **Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 & Ezra 1:3-5**. What did the failure of the Jews to build the temple say of their respect for God’s glory? **Read Matthew 6:31-34**. How are we like the Jews? What was their response?
2. **Read Haggai 2:1-3**. Why does God have Haggai ask this? **Read Ezra 3:12**. What is significant about the date being October 17, 520BC. **Read Leviticus 23:41-43**. It was the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. What event was being celebrated? What was it to remind them of? Reference Deuteronomy 8:1-5. (Note that this was also the time when Solomon’s Temple was dedicated - 1 Kings 8:2) What does God tell the people in Haggai 2:4-5? How is it similar to **Joshua 1:8-9**? What is the content of verses 6-9? Haggai is quoted only once in the New Testament, so **Read Hebrews 12:25-29**. What is the context of Hebrews 12? There is controversy over the identity of the temple and the Desire of All Nations. As all of last week was dedicated to examining different eschatological constructs, I will not repeat the discussion at this time.
3. **Read Haggai 2:10-14**. What is the point? I think Calvin explains it the best in the Institutes (Book 3, Chapter 14, section 7):

I wish these sentiments could obtain full credit with us, and be deeply fixed on our memories. For there is no man, however flagitious the whole tenor of his life may be, who will allow himself to be convinced of what the Lord here so clearly declares. As soon as any person, even the most wicked, has performed some one duty of the law, he hesitates not to impute it to himself for righteousness; but the Lord declares that no degree of holiness is thereby acquired, unless the heart has previously been made pure. And not contented with this, he declares that all the works performed by sinners are contaminated by impurity of heart. Let us cease then to give the name of righteousness to works which the mouth of the Lord condemns as polluted. How well is this shown by that elegant similitude? It might be objected, that what the Lord has commanded is inviolably holy. But he, on the contrary, replies, that it is not strange that those things which are sanctified in the law are contaminated by the impurity of the wicked, the unclean hand profaning that which is sacred by handling it.

Reference Haggai 2:15-19. How does the third prophesy compare with the first?

4. How does the fourth prophesy (v. 20-23) compare with the second? Compare **Haggai 2:23** with **Jeremiah 22:24,30**. **Read Matthew 1:12, Luke 3:27**. How might this connect?
5. What is the general message?