

THE MINOR PROPHETS

HAGGAI – Prioritising Gods Kingdom

Hannah Johnson

“Build the House of God and I will be glorified” 1:8

The book of Haggai is one of the smaller prophetic books. It only has 2 chapters. The name Haggai means "festive" in Hebrew, from the root חָגַג (chagag).

Year: 520BC

Time: August 29 - December 18

Author: Haggai

Events leading up to Haggai's prophesies:

HAGGAI

	<p><b>First Message:</b></p> <p><b>Rebuild God’s temple</b></p> <p><u>Rebuke</u></p> <p><u>Reflection</u></p> <p><u>Divine discipline</u></p> <p><u>Repentant response</u></p> <p><u>“I am with you”</u></p> <p>CHAPTER 1</p>	<p><b>Second, Third, and Fourth Messages:</b></p> <p><b>Encouragement and Hope</b></p> <p><u>“Take courage!”</u></p> <p><u>“I will bless you!”</u></p> <p><u>“I have chosen you!”</u></p> <p>CHAPTER 2</p>
<b>Time</b>	Twenty-three days	Over two months
<b>Emphasis</b>	Practical, negative, confronting	Spiritual, positive, comforting
<b>Scope</b>	Present condition of Jerusalem temple	Future glory of God’s house
<b>Theme</b>	We must put God first in order to experience His blessings.	
<b>Key Verses</b>	1:4–5; 2:7–9	
<b>Christ in Haggai</b>	Christ’s presence in this temple, which was further expanded and adorned by Herod, is “the latter glory . . . greater than the former” (2:9). Jesus is “our peace” (Ephesians 2:14). His death on the cross has made us at peace with God now, and His future rule in His glorious kingdom will establish worldwide peace (Haggai 2:9). The righteous leader Zerubbabel is also a type of Christ and part of Jesus’s genealogy.	

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Haggai prophesied at a time when the people of Judea were extremely vulnerable. They had been humbled by their exile to Babylon, were hopeful in their return to the promised land, but they had become discouraged by opposition in their rebuilding of the Temple that they had quit (Ezra 4:24). Now, sixteen years later, Haggai blamed their lack of food, clothing and shelter on their failure to rebuild the Temple. The Jews living in Judea were ultimately receptive to his message of rebuilding the Lord's house.

The book of Haggai is split into 4 sections that summarises Haggai's message given to the people of Jerusalem over the course of 4 months.

### **Haggai 1**

He opens by accusing the people of misplaced priorities. They have come back to Jerusalem but they are spending all of their time and resources rebuilding their own fancy houses while the temple is still laid in ruins from its destruction 70 years ago. And so Haggai's challenging words are followed by the story of the people's response. We're told that Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the remnant of the people of Israel were provoked by Haggai's message and they were motivated to start rebuilding the temple. Unlike the Israelites before they **listened** and **obeyed!**

### **Haggai 2:1-9**

In the next section, Haggai follows up one month later and he starts by addressing some problems with shattered expectations among the people. The temple they are rebuilding is not that impressive when compared to the temple that had been there before. The previous temple had been magnificently built by Solomon some 500 years earlier; and so morale was really low for finishing the project and so Haggai reminds the people of the great prophetic promises of the future kingdom of God and about this temple.

### **Haggai 2:10-19**

In the 3rd section, Haggai follows up two months later with a call for covenant faithfulness. He engages some priests in a conversation about ritual purity (book of Leviticus). If the current generation doesn't humble themselves and don't change from injustice and apathy then Haggai says whatever they build with their hands including this new temple will be impure too. Haggai's challenge to them is that it is only by true repentance and covenant faithfulness that their building efforts result in God's blessing.

### **Haggai 2:20-23**

Would Haggai's generation be faithful to God? Will they experience the fulfilment of all these wonderful promises and Zerubbabel will he be faithful and from his line will come the messianic king?

*Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit. (Ephesians 2:20-22, NLT)*

The book of Ezra tells us that when the people returned to rebuild the temple, they were united in purpose. When a temple was built and functioning it was to house the presence of the Lord. There were many priests anointed and called to serve but only the High priest got to enter into the Holy of Holies. Yet every priest had a role, a purpose to fulfil in order that the Lord was glorified. The loss of the temple when the Israelites were taken into captivity and also when the work that they started on was stopped meant that the Worship of God stopped. Now our worship is on Jesus Christ and He is not confined to a building. Now that Christ has come, we have immediate access to God without the intervention of priests or the need for a sacrificial system or a Temple. The question put to us is this - are we just as devoted to making God the centre of our lives as Zerubbabel and the other Israelites were in constructing the temple? Where do your priorities lie? Three times in the book of Haggai are the words "*Consider your ways*" - Are we a vessel that can be used to house God's glory? Does God really have supremacy in our lives?

*According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it... For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.  
(1 Corinthians 3:10,11, ESV)*

Our choices really matter to God for he is looking for hearts that will be open, faithful and obedient to Him and out of the right choice to honour the Lord, walking in obedience, will the blessing of the Lord be poured out into our lives. We need to rejig misplaced priorities and give God first place.

If you build Gods house, he will build yours.