

Paneled Houses: Message of Haggai

Historical details of Haggai:

- Haggai takes place after the 70 years exile in Babylon
- The Neo Babylonians conquered Judah in 597 BCE and 587 BCE:
- In 597 BCE: Nebuchadnezzar's army laid siege to Jerusalem and captured the city.
- Nebuchadnezzar took the king, Jeconiah, and other prominent citizens captive and returned them to Babylon. He also installed his own puppet king, Zedekiah, in place of Jeconiah.
- Nebuchadnezzar did not completely destroy the city yet but took some of the Judeans captive (see the Prophet Ezekiel).
- In 587 BCE: Jerusalem was destroyed by Babylonian forces. Solomon's Temple was destroyed and the city brought to ruins.
- The captivity ended in 538 BC when Cyrus the Great, the Persian king and conqueror of Babylon, permitted the Jews to return to their ancestral land.
- King Cyrus decrees that the Jewish remnant can rebuild their holy temple.
- Zerubbabel (descendent of King David/ancestor of Christ Jesus) led the first group of returning Jewish captives from Babylon to Jerusalem.
- This was a remnant and very modest number of Jewish people returning. They immediately set up an altar and resumed the Old Testament sacrificial system.
- The temple foundation was laid around 536 BC. This means that it took about two years for them to get them to return and lay just the foundation.
- Haggai comes in the year 520 BC with a message from God to His people. This was 16 years since they laid the foundation for the new temple, and 18 years since they had the decree to return.

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Application Questions:

1. Is there something you're building that is distracting you from focusing on the kingdom of God?
2. What circumstances has God allowed in your life that He is using to get your attention?
3. What is hindering you from putting God first in your life?
4. How will you obey and prioritize building the things of God first and trusting in Him to help you with the rest?
5. What is something you can change in your daily life, to focus on spending time in prayer and reading the Word of God?