

Seeing Jesus in the Minor Prophets

Haggai

Background

1. Author

- Haggai was simply known and referred to as "the prophet" (Hag 1:1; Ezra 5:1, 6:14).
- Derived from the Hebrew *hag*, (festival), the name Haggai means "festal," or "my feast" (Latin "Festus", Greek "Hilary" – where we get "hilarious") (Baldwin, 1972) p 28 promotes the conjecture that his birth occurred during a festival of Israel, or perhaps links his name with his message, anticipating the restoration of Israel's great feasts within a restored temple.
- No patronym, so father may have been forgotten-- nothing is known of his genealogy-- or "the prophet" was sufficient for this small community. (Baldwin, 1972) p27
- He was well known: dated introductions (1:1; 2:1,10, 20), the narrative (1:12), and abbreviated introductions (2:13,14) refer to Haggai in the third person, suggesting someone else compiled the book, and not long after 520 B.C. (Baldwin, 1972) p29-30
- According to Jewish tradition he had lived the greater part of his life in Babylon. (Cashdan, 1948) p254. It's unlikely he would have seen the Temple as a child before its destruction—more on this later.

2. Historical

- The historical setting of the book is in the sixth century B.C. among the returned exiles from the Babylonian captivity. The Persian ruler Cyrus the Great (559–530 B.C.) captured Babylon in 539 B.C. His edict in 538 B.C. permitted the return of Jews to Jerusalem so that they might rebuild the temple (Ezra 1–2).
- The events within the book of Haggai take place during the reign of Darius I Hystapes (522–486 B.C.), a general who rose to power following the death of Cyrus's son Cambyses (530–522). The specific mention of the "second year of Darius" (Hag. 1:1) places the book firmly in the year 520 B.C.
- Timeline Review: (admin, 2012)
 - Jonah – 820-804 BC – spoke to the Assyrians
 - Amos – 810-785 BC – spoke to the northern kingdom
 - Joel – 800 BC – spoke to the southern kingdom
 - Hosea – 785-725 BC – spoke to the northern kingdom
 - Micah – 749-722 BC – spoke to the northern kingdom
 - Isaiah – 740-681 BC – spoke to the southern kingdom
 - 722 BC – Northern Kingdom of Israel destroyed by the Assyrians**
 - Nahum – 661-612 BC – spoke to the Assyrians
 - Zephaniah – 630 BC – spoke to the southern kingdom
 - Habakkuk – 610-599 BC – spoke to the southern kingdom

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Jeremiah – 625-582 BC – spoke to the southern kingdom

605, 597, 586 BC – Jerusalem is attacked in three waves and ultimately destroyed by the Babylonians

Daniel – 605-534 BC – spoke to captives in Babylon

Ezekiel – 592-570 BC – spoke to captives in Israel

Obadiah – 585 BC – spoke to the Edomites

539 BC – Babylon is conquered by Cyrus, Jews allowed to return to Jerusalem

Haggai – 520 BC – spoke to the returned exiles of Babylon

Zechariah 518 BC – spoke to the returned exiles of Babylon

Malachi – 430-400 BC - spoke to the returned exiles of Babylon

Book Overview

The First Message	1st day of 6th month (Aug. 29, 520 BC) (ref 1.1)
The Second Message	24th day of 6th month (Sept. 21, 520 BC) (ref 1:15)
The Third Message	21st day of 7th month (Oct. 17, 520 BC) (ref 2:1)
The Fourth Message	24th day of 9th month (Dec. 18, 520 BC) Part 1 (ref 2:10) and Part 2 (ref 2:20)

1. The First Message – The 1st day of 6th Month (Aug. 29, 520 BC) (1:1-12)

a. Introduction: Reluctant Rebuilders (1:1–2)

1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest:2 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord.” (ESV)

- Significance of the date? According to Torah the first of every month was a time for special offerings to the Lord (cf. Num 28:11–15). As such it was to be a time of celebration and rejoicing (Num 10:10). But with the temple lying in ruins, there was no way properly to observe these festive occasions as had been done less than a century before. (Richard A. Taylor, 2004)
- Word of the Lord by the hand of Haggai – authority—this is a message from God, you best listen.
- Haggai is addressing Zerubbabel, the governor – the leader responsible for civic issues, and Joshua, the high priest—the leader for spiritual issues. God starts with the leadership to bring correction.
- Notice the Lord says “these people”, not “my people”. God’s people are obedient. Ouch! So what’s the problem? They claimed this was not the right time to restore the temple because they were in the sixty-eighth year of the seventy-year captivity predicted by Jeremiah (chapter 25). Except that:
 - o Cyrus had returned the articles needed to restore the temple (2nd Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 4:6) taken by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, during the 3 waves of attacks in 605, 597, and

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586 B.C. And the neighbors of the Jews were ordered to support their return to Judah and Jerusalem with silver, gold, goods, and cattle, and a freewill offering (Ezra 1:5).

- Zerubbabel, Joshua, and men from all the cities in Judah had already restored the altar, priests were making sacrifices, the leaders had appointed overseers for the restoration of the temple and by 535 B.C. had laid the foundation. (Ezra)
- They kept working, at first, even though the Samaritans began a series of organized, planned actions against the restoration of the temple, including an injunction that was issued by Artaxerxes (Ezra 4:7-23). Then Darius came to the throne of Persia in 522 B.C. he confirmed Cyrus' decree and overturned the injunction.
- They weren't captives of Babylon anymore.

- Were they discouraged? Apathetic? Selfish? Let's see.

b. Consider Your Ways: Fruitless Prosperity (1:3–12)

3 Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, 4 "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? 5 Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. 6 You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes. (ESV)

- The people's excuse is not that they won't do it, it's just not time yet. However, they are certainly trying to take care of their own selfish desires. "Paneled" could be refer to internal paneling and to overhead coverings such as a ceiling. The peoples were more comfortable residences, while the Lord's was a desolation.
- The Lord of hosts (King of kings, Lord of lords, and Commander of the armies of the heavenly host) says, "Consider your ways!" What is your motivation? Self sufficiency or reliance on and obedience to God? Is your joy in the Lord so deep, so rock solid, that you can stand against anything the world throws at you?
- Look at verse 6. How's this plan working out for them? If that plan is yours, how's it working out for you?

7 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. 8 Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. (ESV)

- Once again the Lord of hosts says, "Consider your ways!" There's a direct correlation to their lack of obedience and their empty results. The implication is that proper reflection on their past course of action should lead to a change of behavior for the future. And unlike the past, their neighbors won't be providing the materials—the now returned exiles have that task.
- "take pleasure in" (rāṣâ) is often used to signify the Lord's acceptance of persons or sacrificial offerings, while "appear in one's glory" (kābēd), the context suggests that the Lord will be pleased once again to manifest himself within the temple, or to appear in his glory, once the construction has been completed. (Richard A. Taylor, 2004)

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9 You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house. 10 Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. 11 And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors.” 12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord. (ESV)

- Haggai focuses on two things: first, there is the painful reminder of unrealized expectations on the part of the people, and second, what little they did bring home, God himself blew it away! It vividly pictures the Lord's disciplinary interference with the vain attempts of his people at personal gain while the work of God suffered decline due to their inattention. (Crossway, 2013)
- The good news is Zerubbabel, Joshua and the remnant obeyed the Lord and repented. We need to repent of our focus on building our own houses, not the Lord's. We need to pour our energies into building God's house --pursuing His purposes.
- **Seeing Jesus:** the visible symbol of God's presence in the midst of his people is no longer a building but Jesus Christ himself

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John 2:19

As Immanuel, Jesus physically represented God's presence among his people. When he cleansed the temple (John 2), Jesus showed the true zeal for God's house that we often lack, and at the cross he took upon himself the punishment we deserve for our self-centered focus on our own "houses". Now that Jesus has ascended back to heaven, God's presence in the world is represented by his people. As the body of Christ, the church is now the new temple (Crossway, 2013)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:19–22)

2. The Second Message – The 24th day of 6th Month (Sept. 21, 520 BC) (1:13-15)

The Lord's Promise and Progress

13 Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke to the people with the Lord's message, "I am with you, declares the Lord." 14 And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king. (ESV)

- Haggai conveyed to the people the reassuring promise that the Lord's presence would be with them in their endeavors. "I am with you" call to mind similar promises found elsewhere in the Bible: Joseph's

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success in Egypt was attributed to the fact that "the LORD was with him" in all he undertook (Gen 39:2, 21, 23). Moses heard similar words at the burning bush (Exod 3:12). So too did Joshua, Moses' successor, as he assumed the mantle of leadership upon the death of Moses (Josh 1:5), as did Gideon when he faced the Midianites (Judg 6:16), just to name a few. (Richard A. Taylor, 2004)

- **Seeing Jesus:** the New Testament messianic expectations and hopes are foreshadowed and ultimately fulfilled in one who was called "Emanuel, God with us" (Matt 1:23).
- The people obeyed the voice of the Lord (v. 12) because the Lord stirred up their spirits (v. 14). God builds his new temple by stirring our spirits to work through the indwelling power of his Spirit.
- We are thereby called and empowered to glorify God with our bodies

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. 1 Cor. 6:19–20 (ESV) (Crossway, 2013)

3. The Third Message – The 21st day of 7th month (Oct. 17, 520 BC) (2:1-9)

The Former and Latter Glory of This House

1 In the seventh month, on the twenty- first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, 2 "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, 3 'Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes? 4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts, 5 according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

- This oracle in Haggai was delivered during the Feast of Tabernacles, in the seventh month, a time to look back to God's past deliverance and forward to anticipate the fulfillment of God's promises.
- **Seeing Jesus:** Whenever we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we look back to the cross where God accomplished our salvation and forward to the time when God will bring all of history to its consummation at Christ's return (1 Cor. 11:26).
- Haggai begins this message by tackling the source of the people's discouragement, the unimpressive condition of the present temple as compared to the wonder of Solomon's temple. The section makes two main points. First, the prophet acknowledges that the present temple is in an unenviable condition. Second, the prophet indicates that the antidote to discouragement lies in reflection on the Lord's continued presence, as shown in his prior salvific deeds in behalf of his people—I mentioned a few at the end of chapter 1, but here God mentions the covenant He made with Moses and the people.
- There were probably not many of those still living who fell into the category of having seen the temple in its former glory, since destruction of the Solomonic temple occurred sixty- six years earlier. There is no reason to think that Haggai includes himself in this group of individuals who in their childhood had seen that earlier temple. The fact that he asks "Who among you?" rather than "Who among us?" hints

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at the prophet's exclusion of himself from the pool of potential candidates. But there were at least some of whom this was true, or the question loses its relevance. (Crossway, 2013)

6 For thus says the Lord of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. 7 And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts. 9 The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts. ” (ESV)

- While the rebuilding of the temple beginning with the time of Haggai and Zechariah and culminating at the time of Herod will physically surpass the size and wealth of Solomon's temple, the passage here is speaking about the coming of Jesus Christ and the great harvest of believers-- the treasures of all nations from every tribe and tongue—his bride the church.
- **Seeing Jesus:** At Jesus' birth, angels sang of God's glory bringing peace on earth (Luke 2:13). When the infant Jesus made his first trip to the temple, Simeon recognized him as the Promised One and declared that the glory of God had now returned to the temple (Luke 2:32). (Crossway, 2013)

4. The Fourth Message – Part 1 – The 24th day of 9th Month (Dec. 18, 520 BC) (2:10-19)

Consider Your Ways: Holiness and Defilement; Repentance and Blessing

10 On the twenty- fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, 11 “Thus says the Lord of hosts: Ask the priests about the law:12 ‘If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy?’ ” The priests answered and said, “No.” 13 Then Haggai said, “If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?” The priests answered and said, “It does become unclean.” 14 Then Haggai answered and said, “So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, declares the Lord, and so with every work of their hands. And what they offer there is unclean. 15 Now then, consider from this day onward. Before stone was placed upon stone in the temple of the Lord, 16 how did you fare? When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten. When one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. 17 I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail, yet you did not turn to me, declares the Lord. 18 Consider from this day onward, from the twenty- fourth day of the ninth month. Since the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider: 19 Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on I will bless you.” (ESV)

- The holy can be profaned through contact with something defiled, yet the defiled does not become holy in the same way. Even God-ordained obedience cannot make the unclean holy, since whatever defiled hands offer is itself defiled (v. 14). Consider from this day onward! v. 15- 19 Everything we do for our own atonement comes up short! Even when a sinner does something otherwise good, he sins because he is corrupt, totally depraved. We cannot chose God. And yet from this day on I will bless you!
- **Seeing Jesus:** Our salvation must therefore necessarily come to us from outside us, through an act of God. As the reestablishment of the temple was the turning point from curse to blessing in Haggai's day,

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so the coming of Christ is the turning point from curse to blessing for the world. This is how God brings peace on earth among those on whom his favor rests (v. 9; Luke 2:14) (Crossway, 2013)

5. The Fourth Message – Part 2 – The 24th day of 9th Month (Dec. 18, 520 BC) (2:20 - 23) Zerubbabel: The Signet Ring

The word of the Lord came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, 21 "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, 22 and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms. I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their riders. And the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his brother. 23 On that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, declares the Lord, and make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, declares the Lord of hosts." (ESV)

- Haggai describes the Lord's future intervention to transform the world in the language of God's past acts to judge the wicked and deliver his people. He turns the minds of his hearers back to God's intervention in Israel's past, against the Egyptians and during the conquest, and declares that God will do it again. This future intervention is foreshadowed in the person of Zerubbabel. He seemed an insignificant government official in an obscure province, the heir of a cast-off royal line, his grandfather Jehoiachin, discarded by the Lord like an unwanted signet ring
"As I live, declares the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off 25 and give you into the hand of those who seek your life, into the hand of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. Jer. 22:24–25.
- Yet in Zerubbabel was a sign of hope for the whole community that God's choice of David and his offspring was restored. Zerubbabel was one of the ancestors of Christ (Matt. 1:12) and foreshadowed his faithful zeal to build God's house
His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." John 2:17
- **Seeing Jesus:** Jesus is the Greater Son of Zerubbabel
And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, 13 and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Matthan the father of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. (Matt. 1:12-16)

He came in a position that would grant him no respect in the world, humbling himself and taking the form of a servant, being faithful unto death (Phil. 2:5–8). On the cross, Jesus looked more like a new Jehoiachin, cast off by God, than a new Zerubbabel, God's chosen servant. But underneath God's temporary rejection of his Anointed was an eternal promise that could not be broken. Just as the sins of the Davidic kings brought exile and destruction on their subjects, so now the righteous death of this Davidic King brings life to those who trust in him. (Crossway, 2013)

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Summary

The key to understanding Haggai in a gospel-centered way is to see that the temple, like the tabernacle before it, was the visible symbol of God dwelling in the midst of his people, and therefore it foreshadows Christ, the one in whom the Word became flesh and “tabernacled” in our midst

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14.

Christ himself is the new temple in the New Testament (John 2:19). As his body, the church is also the new temple (Eph. 2:19–22). The message of this book for us as Christians is not primarily about restoring a building in Jerusalem, or about constructing a contemporary building; Haggai is all about the ongoing work of building up the people of God, a work that is primarily God’s

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matt. 16:18.

but a work in which he, by his Spirit, invites us to participate

10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

16 Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple. (1 Cor. 3:10–17).

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