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# Haggai

"Festival"

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF HAGGAI  
by Davic Malick

I. TITLE OF THE BOOK:

- A. Hebrew: In Hebrew the book is titled *ygj* after the name of the prophet which probably meant "my feast"
- B. Greek: In Greek the book is titled AGGAIOS, a transliteration from the Hebrew, from which we get our English spelling of Haggai

II. AUTHOR: Probably Haggai himself

- A. He is given no introduction other than "the prophet" (cf. 1:1; Ezra 5:1; 6:14)
- B. He may have been a returnee from Babylon
- C. He may have been a priest
- D. Even though the book was written in the third person (e.g., about Haggai) it is possible that Haggai did this to give the impression of objectivity

III. DATE: August 29 to December 18, 520 B.C.

- A. Haggai preached his sermons during the second year of Darius I (521-486 B.C.)

IV. Haggai's messages were preached within a fifteen week period August 29 to December 18 520 B.C. This is determined from the dates given in Haggai; the biblical dates from Haggai and Zechariah, and Julian calendar dates are provided below in the following chart:

Reference Year of Darius	Month	Date of New Moon	Day	Equivalent Date, BC
Hag. 1:1 second	sixth	29 Aug.	1st	29 Aug. 520
Hag. 1:15 "	"	"	24th	21 Sept. 520
Hag. 2:1 "	seventh	27 Sept.	21st	17 Oct. 520
Zec. 1:1 "	eighth	27 Oct.	-----	-----
Hag. " 2:10,20	ninth	25 Nov.	24th	18 Dec. 520
Zec. 1:7 "	eleventh	23 Jan.	24th	15 Feb. 519
Zec. 7:1 fourth	ninth	4 Dec.	4th	7 Dec. 518

- B. It is unknown what happened to Haggai after his last message on 18 December 520. Baldwin writes, "Once Temple building began in earnest he had fulfilled his mission, and, having in Zechariah a successor to continue the work, he withdrew from the scene"
- C. The message in 1:13 does not have a certain date. Chisholm offers the following solution:

"Since the other messages in the book can be dated, the chronological notation of 1:1 may apply to this message as well. However, since the people's positive response to the message came on September 21, 520 B.C. (the sixth month, twenty fourth day; cf. 1:14-15), it could have been delivered any time between August 29 and that date"

## V. HISTORICAL SETTING:

- A. First Return: The first return from Babylonian exile was under Zerubbabel in 538 B.C. when Cyrus was King (539-530) (Ezra 1--6)
- i. Return of Haggai: This was probably when Haggai returned to Jerusalem
  - ii. Temple Rebuilt: Haggai and Zechariah prophesy and the Temple was completed under Darius I (521-486)
    - a) Levitical sacrifices were reinstated on an altar built for burnt offerings (Ezra 3:1-6)
    - b) The foundation for the temple was laid in the second year of the return (536 B.C.; cf. Ezra 3:8-13; 5:16)
    - c) Samaritan and Persian resistance ended the rebuilding of the temple for 16 years (until 520 B.C.; cf. Ezra 4:4-5)
    - d) Haggai and Zechariah prophesy from 520-518 B.C. Encouraging the nation to rebuild the temple
    - e) The Temple was completed in 515 B.C. (Ezra 5--6)
- B. Second Return: The second return from Babylonian exile was under Ezra in 457 B.C. while Artaxerxes I Longimanus was King (Ezra 7--10)
- i. Ezra 7:1 affirms that Ezra arrived in Jerusalem during the reign of Artaxerxes the king of Persia
  - ii. Ezra 7:8 affirms that Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king (Artaxerxes)
    - a) There is some question as to whether this was in the reign of Artaxerxes I Longimanus (464-423 B.C.) or Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404-359 B.C.)
    - b) The evidence seems to be that this was during the reign of Artaxerxes I Longimanus; therefore, the seventh year of his reign would have been 457 B.C.
      - i) Nehemiah 8:2 identifies Ezra as Nehemiah's contemporary
      - ii) The Elephantine Papyri<sup>11</sup> [c. 400 B.C.] mentions Johanan (the grandson of Eliashib [Neh 3:1, 20])
- C. Third Return: The third return from Babylonian exile was under Nehemiah in 445/444 B.C. also while Artaxerxes I Longimanus was king (Neh 1--13).
- i. Nehemiah I: Nehemiah's first arrival in Jerusalem was probably in 444 B.C.
    - a) Nehemiah 1:2 and 2:1 affirm that the events of Nehemiah occurred in the twentieth year of king Artaxerxes
    - b) Nehemiah arrived the first time in Jerusalem twelve-thirteen years after Ezra arrived
  - ii. Nehemiah II: Nehemiah's second arrival in Jerusalem was probably in 433/432-420 B.C.
    - a) Nehemiah 13:6-7 reads, "But during all this time I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had gone to the king. After some time, however, I asked leave from the king, and I came to Jerusalem and learned about the evil ...."
    - b) Nehemiah left Jerusalem in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes
    - c) Nehemiah may also have returned to Jerusalem in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes (this is not certain since the text reads, "After some time, ..."

## VI. PURPOSES:

- A. To encourage the returned remnant to move from a resigned satisfaction with their return to the land to an expression of faith by making an effort to rebuild the temple
- B. To encourage the returned remnant toward the reestablishment of temple worship as the

nation's main goal

- C.To encourage the returned remnant that Yahweh will bless them and the land as they move towards rebuilding the temple
- D.To encourage the returned remnant that Yahweh has a future place of importance for them in spite of their past rebellion

## Haggai - Lesson 1

1:1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

1:2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.

1:3 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

1:4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?

1:5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

1:6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

1:7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

1:8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.

1:9 Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts.

Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.

1:10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.

1:11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

1:12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, 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 did fear before the LORD.

1:13 Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD

1:14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,

1:15 In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

### Questions Chap. 1

1. Describe how dates were kept during the time of Haggai. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why is it significant that the Jewish people were keeping dates in the fashion of the Babylonians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who did Haggai deliver this prophecy to and what group of people did this represent? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did God know that the people were saying in vs 2? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. According to God, what was more important in the peoples mind? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 1 (Cont.)

6. Why does God tell the people to consider their ways? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What seems to be the end result of the people's efforts as indicated in vs. 6? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What will God find satisfaction in concerning the building of the temple? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What was God doing in vs. 9 and why was he doing it? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What had God kept from the people and what was the result of it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What effect did this have upon the people? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Lesson 2

2:1 In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying,

2:2 Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,

2:3 Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

2:4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts:

2:5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

2:6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

2:7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

2:8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

2:9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

### Questions Chap.2:1-9

1. How long was the time between Haggai's first prophesy and the second? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was the second prophecy directed to? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does vs. 3 tell us about the duration of their captivity. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How were the people comparing the temple of God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Why are the people encouraged to be strong? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the covenant that God made with the people when they came out of Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What does vs. 7 tell us about the duration of God's spirit toward the Israelites? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Lesson 3

2:10 In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

2:11 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,

2:12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

2:13 Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

2:14 Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.

2:15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and

upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD:

2:16 Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the winevat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty.

2:17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD.

2:18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider it.

2:19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.

### Questions Chap. 2:10-19

1. How long was the time between Haggai's second prophecy and the third? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did God tell the people to ask the priest concerning the law? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How was the garment made holy in vs 12, and what could it not do? (Lev. 6:27) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. In Haggai's second question, how is one made unclean, and can this be transferred? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the comparison that Haggai made between the questions and the people? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How far back does God tell the people to remember? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What does he remind them that they had found? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 3 (Cont.)

8. What had God done to the people and what was it's effect on them? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What time does God tell the people to look back to in vs. 18? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. How bountiful was their harvest? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Why was God going to change their lack of prosperity? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Lesson 4

2:20 And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying,

2:21 Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;

2:22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the

heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

2:23 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

### Questions

#### Chap. 2:20-23

1. How long had it been since Haggai's last prophecy? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Who was the prophecy addressed to and what was his position? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What does it mean to "shake the heavens and the earth"? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What was God going to do to the kingdoms of the world? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. When do you think this overthrowing would happen? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is indicated by "everyone by the sword of his brother"? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does God call Zerubbabel? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is a signet? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Why was Zerubbabel chosen? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_