

Haggai-Post Exile Prophet

Haggai's messages were given over a period of four months. They are dated during the second year of Darius King of Persia in 520 BC.

1. First Message: The Call to Rebuild the Temple August 29 (1:1-11)
2. The Response of Zerubbabel and the People (1:12-15) Sept 29
3. Second Message: The Temple to Be filled with Glory (2:1-9) Oct 17
4. Third Message: A Defiled People Purified and blessed (2:10-19) Dec 18
5. Fourth Message: The Promise to Zerubbabel (2:20-23) Dec 18

I. Background Information

1. A. Ezra 4:1-5-Opposition from Enemies (536 BC)

Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the LORD, the God of Israel, ² they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of fathers' houses and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria who brought us here." ³ But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of fathers' houses in Israel said to them, "You have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the LORD, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us." ⁴ Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build ⁵ and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

1 B. Ezra 4:11-16- Letter proclaiming that Israel was a threat to the empire.

¹¹ (This is a copy of the letter that they sent.) "To Artaxerxes the king: Your servants, the men of the province Beyond the River, send greeting. And now ¹² be it known to the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city. They are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations. ¹³ Now be it known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom, or toll, and the royal revenue will be impaired. ¹⁴ Now because we eat the salt of the palace[□] and it is not fitting for us to witness the king's dishonor, therefore we send and inform the king, ¹⁵ in order that search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers. You will find in the book of the records and learn that this city is a rebellious city, hurtful to kings and provinces, and that sedition was stirred up in it from of old. That was why this city was laid waste. ¹⁶ We make known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls finished, you will then have no possession in the province Beyond the River."

1.C. Ezra 4:18-24-Response by King Artaxerxes

¹⁸ the letter that you sent to us has been plainly read before me. ¹⁹ And I made a decree, and search has been made, and it has been found that this city from of old has risen

against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made in it. ²⁰ And mighty kings have been over Jerusalem, who ruled over the whole province Beyond the River, to whom tribute, custom, and toll were paid. ²¹ Therefore make a decree that these men be made to cease, and that this city be not rebuilt, until a decree is made by me. ²² And take care not to be slack in this matter. Why should damage grow to the hurt of the king?" ²³ Then, when the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum and Shimshai the scribe and their associates, they went in haste to the Jews at Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease. ²⁴ Then the work on the house of God that is in Jerusalem stopped, and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

First Message: The Call to Rebuild the Temple - August 29, 520 BC

1. D.READ Haggai 1:1-11

1. What were some of the events which contributed to the delay of rebuilding the temple?
2. Who were the two specific men singled out in Haggai's message at the beginning of the chapter? Why do you think the message was directed to them first? (vs.1)
3. What was the message Haggai relayed to these two men? (vs. 2)
4. What were the priorities of people at that time? (v3-4)

5. Read Deuteronomy 28:38-45

⁴⁵ "All these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you till you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that he commanded you. ⁴⁶ They shall be a sign and a wonder against you and your offspring forever. ⁴⁷ **Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things,** ⁴⁸ therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and lacking everything. And he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you. ⁴⁹ The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the end of the earth, swooping down like the eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand

5. What happened to the exiled people because of their misplaced priorities? (vs.5-6)
6. What reason did God give for the poverty and poor outcomes they were experiencing? (vs. 8-11)
7. What concrete directions did God give to the people in order to build His temple? (vs.7)

II. The Response of Zerubbaabel and the People-September 29, 520BC

8. READ Haggai 1:12-15

8. What was the response of the people? (v.12)
9. From the text, what motivated the people after hearing Haggai's message to change their priorities? (13-15)

III. The Second Message: The Temple to be filled with Glory –October 17, 520BC

10. READ: Haggai 2:1-9

10. Why was it discouraging for the people to be building this second temple? (vs. 1-3)
11. What three commands does the Lord give to the people as he speaks through Haggai? (vs. 4-5)
12. In verses 6-9, Haggai shifts the focus of his message from the current rebuilding project. What will happen when the Lord "shakes the nations" ?

12. READ Ephesians 1:9-10,

⁹ making known[□] to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan **for the fullness of time**, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

13. How would Gentiles be involved in the future glory of God's House?

13. READ: Ephesians 2:11-16

¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

IV. Third Message: A Defiled People Purified and blessed Dec 18, 520 BC

14. READ: Haggai 2:10-19

14. Haggai compares the sin of the people to contamination of being unclean. What is God actually looking for in his people? (vs. 10-17)
15. What happened when the people obeyed the Lord? (vs. 18-19)

V. Fourth Message: The Promise to Zerubbabel-December 18, 520 BC

16.READ: Haggai 2:20-23

16. The final message was targeted for Zerubbabel. How is Zerubbabel blessed through this message? (vs 20-23)

16 A. READ: Matt. 1:12

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.....

¹² And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel,^[d] and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³ and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud

17. What is the significance of the signet ring? (v23)

18 A.Ezra 6:6-12 Response to a letter to Tattenai by King Darius

⁶ "Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the province Beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai, and your^[d] associates the governors who are in the province Beyond the River, keep away. ⁷ Let the work on this house of God alone. Let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its site. ⁸ Moreover, I make a decree regarding what you shall do for these elders of the Jews for the rebuilding of this house of God. The cost is to be paid to these men in full and without delay from the royal revenue, the tribute of the province from Beyond the River. ⁹ And whatever is needed—bulls, rams, or sheep for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, or oil, as the priests at Jerusalem require—let that be given to them day by day without fail, ¹⁰ that they may offer pleasing sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his sons. ¹¹ Also I make a decree that if anyone alters this edict, a beam shall be pulled out of his house, and he shall be impaled on it, and his house shall be made a dunghill. ¹² May the God who has caused his name to dwell there overthrow any king or people who shall put out a hand to alter this, or to destroy this house of God that is in Jerusalem. I Darius make a decree; let it be done with all diligence."

18 B.Ezra 6:13-15

¹³ Then, according to the word sent by Darius the king, Tattenai, the governor of the province Beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai, and their associates did with all diligence what Darius the king had ordered. ¹⁴ And the elders of the Jews built and prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They finished their building by decree of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes king of Persia; ¹⁵ and this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. (March 12, 516 BC) The Jews celebrated Passover on (April 21, 516 BC)..

Haggai's message was straight forward:

1. Set our priorities in line with the first commandment
2. Trust God. Don't worry, God is with us.
3. Knowing that God is with us should motivate us to ACT with the help of the Holy Spirit
4. He has chosen us as his tools to build his kingdom
5. God promises to bless us when we have the proper motives.