

HAGGAI

The name Haggai means 'festive', and he prophesied in approximately 520 BC, which means he was the first of the post-exilic prophets (... the prophets who accompanied the people after they had left their captivity in Babylon and returned to Jerusalem ... the other two post-exilic prophets Zechariah, Haggai's contemporary [cf. Ezra 5:1; 6:14], and also Malachi, who lived about one hundred years later).

His prophecies span from the second year of King Darius of the Medes (cf. Ezra chs. 5-6; Neh. 12:22; Dan. Chs. 5,6,9), during the sixth month, on the first day to within four months later in the ninth month, on the twenty-fourth day. ... Fifty years earlier, in 586 BC, Solomon's temple had been destroyed and the Jews had been taken into captivity to Babylon. In 538 though, Cyrus the Persian king declared a proclamation allowing any of the Jews who wanted to, to return home under the leadership of Zerubbabel (II Chron. 36:22,23; Ezra 1), who was the head of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of King David, and in the direct line of the ancestry of Jesus (Mt. 1:12; Lk. 3:27).

In 536 BC, an enthusiastic number availed themselves of this opportunity and started to build the second temple, **Ezra 3:8** Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. **9** Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. **10** And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. **11** And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. **12** But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: **13** So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

However, after working on the foundations for the first two years, the excitement turned into disappointment and the building project came to a

standstill for seventeen years (536-520 BC). The eagerness of the people had fallen foul of the enormity of the task, - they had lost their zeal for building the house of the Lord and had become - increasingly apathetic *plus* the opposition coming from the Samaritans was frustratingly disruptive, **Ezra 4:1** Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel; **2** Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither. **3** But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us. **4** Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, **5** And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. **6** And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. ... **24** Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia ...

During this period when the building of the temple had been halted, the people began to build their own houses, - much to the displeasure of God, **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. **3** Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, **4** Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled [*specialy-panelled, 'top of the range'*] houses, and this house [*God's house, the temple*] lie waste? So, God judged them, **5** Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. **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. ... Your work is coming to nothing!

In 520 BC, however, they *did* begin to listen, through Haggai and Zechariah for they brought God's message to Zerubbabel (the head of the tribe of Judah, the governor) and to Joshua (the high priest), and the building work recommenced (Ezra 5:1,2), **Haggai 1:7** Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. **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.

The temple was completed four years later, around 515 BC and dedicated, (Ezra 6:19), **Haggai 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. ¹³ Then spake Haggai the LORD'S messenger in the LORD'S message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith 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 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, ¹⁵ In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

Haggai's prophecy then began to relate to a future age, ^{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. ... He had not abandoned them, and He promised He never would, ... 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 [*a time of judgment on the nations*]; ⁷ And I will shake all nations, and *the desire of all nations* shall come ... The 'desire of all nations' has two prophetic applications. ...

Firstly, we are familiar with Charles Wesley's carol "Hark the herald angels sing", in which he includes this title, with reference to Jesus Christ as the coming Messiah, "Come, Desire of nations, come! Fix in us Thy humble home".

A second application centres on the Hebrew word *chemdah* which means 'desire', 'that which is desirable' ... it is also translated elsewhere as 'pleasant', 'beloved', 'goodly', 'precious'. It is what is known as a collective singular, meaning the idea expressed is plural (e.g. a word such as 'multitude' is singular, but it expresses a great number, plural). Hence, *the desire of all nations* is in relation to v.8, *The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.* ... In other words, it is looking ahead to a day, says God, when My silver and My gold, - My wealth, My riches, the treasures of Heaven, - will be brought into the temple ... God is foretelling His Messianic reign from Jerusalem ... ⁷ ... and I will fill this house [*the temple*] with glory [*the temple for the Messiah*], saith the LORD of hosts. ⁸ *The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.* Jesus the Messiah will come to His temple in Jerusalem and reign, surrounded with all His glory. ... That is the picture Ezekiel also describes, **Ezek. 43:1** *Afterward he [i.e. the man in 40:3] brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: ² And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. ... ⁴ And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. ⁵ So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house. ... The same as Haggai also prophesies!*

And through Haggai, the Lord also encouraged His people with the promise of an *real* peace, **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 [*shalom*], saith the LORD of hosts. ... It's the same promise repeated throughout the Messianic psalms, **Ps. 29:11** The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace ... **Ps. 37:11** But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace ... **Ps. 46:9** He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire ... **Ps. 72:7** In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. ... When He establishes His Kingdom from Jerusalem He will bring His people *shalom*. ... And He also promises them prosperity, **Haggai 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 ... **Ps. 65:4** Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

And then Haggai prophesied *another* shaking, **20** And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, **21** Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; **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. **23** In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD ... Mt. 1:12 and Lk. 3:27 tells us Zerubbabel is an ancestor of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, - he is a foreshadowing, a 'type' of the Saviour, - ... and Haggai 2:23 is prophesying ahead to when Christ comes to this earth for the second time, during His one thousand year reign, **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 [*a seal*]: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

Today the world derides God's people, but He will overthrow their kingdoms, and destroy their strength ... *That* is His promise! And He will establish *His* Kingdom, as Isaiah describes, **Is. 24:23** when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients [*the Jews*] gloriously. ... The world forecasts all types of doom and gloom ... but for the people of God, **Haggai 2:23** In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee ... saith the Lord, and [*I*] will make thee as a signet [*a seal, a guarantee of Sovereign grace*]: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts. ... What a promise! ... "Standing on the promises of God my Saviour, Standing on the promises that cannot fail!"

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

- I. The First Message: The Rebuke for Disobedience (1:1–11) ... **CONVICTION**
Year 2, Month 6, Day 1
- i. Stop making excuses (1:1-4)
 - ii. Start considering your ways (1:5-11)
 - iii. Serve the Lord (1:12-15)
 The Remnant Responds and Rebuilds (1:12-15) *Year 2, Month 6, Day 24*
- II. The Second Message: The Return of God’s Glory (2:1–9) ... **COMPARISON**
Year 2, Month 7, Day 21
- i. Discouragement (2:1-3)
 - ii. Encouragement (2:4-9)
 - Be strong (2:4)
 - Be fearless (2:5)
 - Be confident (2:6,7)
 - Be expecting (2:8,9)
- III. The Third Message: The Religious Issues (2:10–19) ... **CONTAMINATION**
Year 2, Month 9, Day 24
- i. The question of defilement (2:10-13)
 - ii. The assurance of blessing (2:14-19)
- IV. The Fourth Message: The Reign of the Lord (2:20–23) ... **CORONATION**
Year 2, Month 9, Day 24
- i. The coming judgment (2:20-22)
 - ii. The promised Messiah (2:23)