

HAGGAI

The last three prophets of the Old Testament belong to the period after the Exile. Haggai "was the first prophet of the newly established Jewish colony which returned to Jerusalem from Babylon in 536 B.C." (Robinson, 137).

Between Zephaniah and Haggai we have the ministries of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and a time lapse of ~~about 90 years~~ a little over 100 years.

Haggai is only mentioned in this prophecy, and in the book of Ezra. Cf. Hag. 1:1, 3, 12, 13; 2:1, 13, 14, 20; Ezra 5:1; 6:14.

His prophecy is dated two months before that of Zechariah. The fact that Haggai is mentioned before Zechariah in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14 has led to the supposition that Haggai was the older of the two. Some feel from Hag. 2:3 (cf. Ezra 3:12, 13) that Haggai may have lived through the Captivity, and therefore could have been 70 to 80 years of age.

Theme: "The rebuilding of the temple is the center of interest around which all that Haggai preached revolves. For it was his supreme mission to arouse the Jews of Jerusalem to rise up and rebuild the temple of Solomon, which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed in 586 B.C. No prophet ever preached more directly or earnestly to his own contemporaries, and no prophet was ever more successful" (Robinson, p. 138).

For the historical background, read Ezra 1:1-4:5; 4:24-6:15.

Dates to keep in mind:

- 1) 536 B.C. - the year when 42,360 returned to Israel following the proclamation by Cyrus, king of Persia. Cf. Ezra 1:1-4; 2:64.
- 2) Seven months later the Jews were offering sacrifices on the altar of burnt offering. Cf. Ezra 3:6.
- 3) In the second year and second month after the return the foundation of the Temple was laid. Cf. Ezra 3:8-13. Then the work stopped for almost 15 years!
- 4) 520 B.C. - generally considered to be "the second year of Darius, the king," the year during which Haggai ministered as a prophet. Cf. Hag. 1:1, 15; 2:10.

The explanation as to why the work stopped is given by Ezra in Ezra 4. The Samaritans troubled and discouraged the people after Zerubbabel and Joshua refused to let them help with the building.

The importance of the Temple: Cf. Ezra 1:1-4; Ex. 25:8, 22; 29:42-46. Since the Temple was to be rebuilt even before the walls of Jerusalem is an indication that the blessing of God (including His protection of His people) was more through their fellowship with Him than through walls and armies and weapons of warfare!

The Outline: ^{N.B.} No prophecy is dated more thoroughly than Haggai's.

- 2 YR 6 MO 1 DAY I. Haggai's first message (1:1-11). ^{one of rebuke} Note that it is directed particularly to Zerubbabel and Joshua, but intended, obviously, for "the remnant of the people" (cf. 1:1, 120).
- 2 YR 6 MO 24 DAY II. The Obedience of Zeru., Joshua, and the people ~~(1:12-15)~~ (1:12-15).
- 2 YR 7 MO 21 DAY III. Haggai's Second Message--one of encouragement (2:1-9). Although it did not compare with the past, yet Israel's most glorious day was still ahead.
- 3 YR 9 MO 24 DAY IV. Haggai's Third Message--one of instruction (2:10-19). Here he emphasizes with the priests what had been revealed in the Law (the Word) about that which is clean and unclean. Then he goes on to show that material blessing will be restored if the people will live lives that are clean in God's sight.
- SAME AS FOR MESSAGE #3 V. Haggai's Fourth Message--one of reassurance (2:20-23). We understand the meaning of this message if we read Matt. 1:12, 13. Zerubbabel was in the Messianic line, and the Lord reassures him that the purpose of God to Abraham and David has not changed, but will be fulfilled.
- ALL IN LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS

Special features of interest in Haggai's prophecy:

- 1) The emphasis upon the word of God:
 - a) "Came the word of the Lord" (1:1, 3; 2:1, 10, 20).
 - b) "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts" (1:2).
 - c) "Thus saith the Lord of hosts" (1:5, 7; 2:6, 11).
 - d) "Saith the Lord" (1:8, 13; 2:4, 14, 17, 23).
 - e) "Saith the Lord of hosts" (1:9; 2:4, 7, 8, 9, 23-2x).
 - f) "The voice of the Lord, their God" (1:12).

Note: 24 times in all; 3 times in 2:23.

- 2) The fact that the messages are directed primarily to the leaders: Zerubbabel and Joshua.
- 3) Five times we have the word, "consider" (1:5, 7; 2:15, 18-2x). It means to set one's heart on something.
- 4) The work of God - 1:14. Cf. Phil. 2:13.
- 5) The members of the Godhead. See 2:5, 7 (the latter being a prophecy of the Messiah).
- 6) The names of God that are used in the prophecy, 10, 14, 15, 17, 20, 23).
 - a) "The Lord" (1:1, 3, 8, 12, 13, 14; 2:1, 4^(2x)), "The Lord's house" (1:2
 - b) "The Lord of hosts" (1:2, 5, 7, 9; 2:4, 6, "The Lord's messenger" (1:13
 - c) "The Lord, their God" (1:12 7, "The Lord's message" (1:13
 - d) "The Lord of hosts, their God" (1:14 8, "The Lord's temple" (2:18
 - e) "My Spirit" (2:5 9 (2x), 11, 23-2x).