

Haggai

The name Haggai means "pilgrimage" or "festival." Haggai was apparently well known, needing no introduction. Cf. 1:1. He is also mentioned by Ezra in 5:1 & 6:14 where he is called "the prophet." It is possible, because of the meaning of his name, that he was born on a feast day, thus being named "my feast."

Nothing is known of his life. Christian tradition says he was a priest and was buried with honor in the sepulchers of the priests. Cf. ICC p. 26. Some Psalms in the Septuagint (LXX) Version are attributed to him: Psalms 138; 146-149.

Haggai proclaimed his message during a 15 week period in the second year of the reign of Darius I. (521 - 486 BCE.) Four messages have been recorded along with minimal editorial framework. The compiler seems very anxious to be most exacting in detail and dating. Haggai, like his predecessor, proclaimed his oracles in the form of poetry, making these oracles as vivid and memorable as possible. He was very forthright and uncompromising.

A few questions have been raised concerning the original order of the verses. Cf. NEB or MFT. The Kittel edition presents Haggai as a prose work whereas the Stuttgartensis text constructs much of Haggai's message as poetry.

The Scroll of the Twelve from the Dead Sea Scrolls contains about two thirds of the book: 1:12 - 2:10; 2:12 - 23. The evidence is very supportive, in the main, of the MT.

Was Haggai ever in Babylon? He is not mentioned by Nehemiah. Possibly he was a child and thus would not have been mentioned.

Haggai was a man with a single message comprising three parts.

1. God is consistent in his dealings.
2. People ignore God.
3. God will bring about a transformation.

Haggai disappears from the scene as suddenly as he first appeared, leaving the conclusion of his work, i.e. the rebuilding of the temple, to Zechariah.

Haggai

<CHAPTER 1>

I. Appeal to rebuild the Temple 1:1 - 14

A Objections and reply 1:1 - 11

¹ In the second year of king Darius ¹ on the first day of the sixth month, ² the word of the Lord was conveyed to Zerubbabel, ³ the son of Shealtiel, ⁴ governor of Judah ⁵ and Joshua ⁶ the high priest, the son of Jehozadak, ⁷ through the prophet Haggai.

² "This is what the Lord of Hosts declares:

Those people say,

"The time has not yet come ⁸

(or, this isn't the right time)

for rebuilding the house of the Lord.' "

³ Then the word of the Lord again was declared by Haggai the prophet:

⁴ "Is this the time for you, yourselves,

to reside in [your] ⁹ paneled houses, ¹⁰

while this house lies in ruins *(or, desolate)?*" "

⁵ "Now therefore, this is what the Lord declares:

Think about ¹¹ your situation!

⁶ You have sown much

and harvested ¹² little!

You have eaten without being satisfied;

you have drunk, without getting your fill *(or, not becoming drunk);*

clothed yourselves, but not getting warm!

Whoever is busy earning wages

puts them into a bag with holes *(or, a leaky purse)!*" "

⁷ "This is what the Lord of Hosts declares:

Seriously consider ¹³ your situation!

1 Darius means "possessing the soul." Cf. Introduction for dating his reign.

2 I. e. very likely August / September 520 BCE.

3 The name means "seed (or, begotten) of Babylon."

4 The name means: "I have asked God."

5 The name means: "let God be praised." JB translates: "high commissioner" instead of "governor."

6 The name means: "the Lord is salvation."

7 The name means: "the Lord has justified."

8 Literally: "it is not time for the coming of the time." Cyrus had ordered the work to be done about 16 years prior to Haggai's message.

9 Omitted by LXX.

10 Literally: "your houses being paneled." Hebrew: ~[wfs ~kymb LXX: κοιλοσταθμοις α δε οικος ουτης εξηρημωται. "Paneled" might possibly be translated as "roofed."

11 Literally: "set your heart on."

12 Literally: "brought in."

13 NIT "Give careful thought." Literally: "set our heart on it."

8 Go up to the hills ---
bring¹⁴ back timber
and build the house!
Then I will look upon it with favor (*or, that will be acceptable to me*),
and I will reveal my glory,¹⁵
declares the Lord.

9 "You have expected much but it amounted to little.
When you brought it home, I blew it away.¹⁶
Why?
asks the Lord of hosts.

"Because of my house! It is in ruins,
while you, yourselves, hurry about with your own affairs.¹⁷
10 That is why the heavens above you¹⁸
have withheld the¹⁹ (*or, their*) dew
and the earth has withheld its yield (*or, produce*).
11 I have summoned a drought²⁰ on the land;
on the hills, on the new grass;
the new vineyards, the olive trees,
what the ground produces;
on people and cattle;
and on the results of their labors."

B. The people's response 1:12 - 14

12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel²¹ and Joshua the high priest, the son of Jehozadak, along with the entire remnant of the people obeyed²² (*or, heeded*) the voice (*or, command*) of the Lord their God, and the message of the prophet Haggai which the Lord their God sent them.²³ The people were in awe²⁴ (*or, filled with respect*) before the Lord. 13 Then Haggai the Lord's messenger spoke, giving the Lord's message:²⁵ "I am with you declares the Lord."

14 So: LXX.

15 Some scholars emend to read: "and I will glorify it." Possibly "be honored" would be appropriate. Some scholars feel verses 7 & 8 should follow verse. 11.

16 Possibly the meaning should be "I cast a curse on it."

17 Literally: "houses."

18 Literally: "therefore, on your behalf, because of you." The Peshitta omitted the phrase which also was partially omitted by the LXX. The Targum adds "because of your sin."

19 Originally it was no doubt "their dew (*or, moisture*)."
A slight emendation could have the line read "rain. So: in the Targums. *mnr* for *mml*."

20 LXX & Peshitta incorrectly translate "sword." There is a possible play on words between v. 9 and v. 11. The Hebrew word *hrbis* used in both verses.

21 Here literally: "Shaltiel." Also in 2:2.

22 Literally: "listened."

23 So: LXX. *προς αυτους*.

24 Literally: "feared."

25 Literally: "according to the commission of the Lord." Some scholars feel verses 14 & 15 are a later insertion intended to clarify.

Then the Lord roused the spirit (*or, inspired*) the people and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah and inspired Joshua the high priest, the son of Jehozadak and the spirit of the entire remnant of the people; and they came and began working on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God. ¹⁵ This occurred on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month. ²⁶

<CHAPTER 2>

II The glory of the temple 2:1 - 9

¹ On the twenty first day of the seventh month ²⁷ the word of the Lord came to the prophet Haggai. ² "Speak to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, ²⁸ governor of Judah and Josiah, the high priest, the son of Jehozadak, and to all ²⁹ the remnant of the people of Israel, and say,

³ Who is there that is left ³⁰ among you
who saw the temple in its former splendor?

How ³¹ does it look to you now?

Doesn't it seem to you to be like nothing?

(*or, You think nothing of it, do you!*)

⁴ But take courage ³² O high priest Joshua, son of Jehozadak,
take courage all you people of the land

declares the Lord.

"Be strong for I am with you

declares the Lord of hosts.

⁵ ("Remember the promise ³³ that I made to you
when you came out of Egypt.) ³⁴

My spirit abides in your midst; ³⁵

Do not fear! ³⁶

⁶ "The Lord of hosts declares:

In a little while ³⁷

I will shake the heavens and the earth,
the sea and the dry land:

⁷ I will shake all the nations,
the precious treasures of all nations will arrive,
and I will fill this house with glory (*or, splendor*).

26 Possibly mid September 520 BCE, about 3 weeks after the first appeal.

27 Ca. October / November. Later called Tishri.

28 Cf. footnote 21.

29 So: LXX. Omitted in the Hebrew text.

30 Literally: "is there one who is left."

31 Literally: "according to which."

32 Literally: "be strong."

33 Literally: "word."

34 Omitted by LXX. In the earliest fragment of Haggai, the Murabba'at manuscript, there is a break in the manuscript but the space would be long enough for the 29 letters of this verse to be inserted. Hence the brackets. Some scholars feel this is a later insertion.

35 The Targum gives the additional explanation: "My prophet leads."

36 LXX: "Have courage."

37 Vulgate: "adhuc unum modicum est."

declares the Lord of hosts."

8 "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine
declares the Lord of hosts."

9 "The splendor³⁸ of this house will surpass the previous one,
declares the Lord of hosts.

"In this place I will give prosperity (*or, peace*),³⁹
[*And peace of soul as a possession
for all who build,
to erect this temple.*]⁴⁰
declares the Lord of hosts."

III A call to holiness and a promise 2:10 - 19

A Holiness and uncleanness 2:10 - 14

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month,⁴¹ in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came by through prophet Haggai.

11 "This is what the Lord declares:

Ask the priests for a ruling on the law.⁴²

12 If a person carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment
and then touches bread or stew,
or wine or oil or any kind of food
with the fold of his garment,
does this then cause what is touched to be consecrated?
The priests replied, 'No.'

13 Then Haggai went on to ask,

"If one who is defiled through contact with a corpse⁴³
but touches any of these items -- do these become defiled?'
The priests replied 'Yes they become defiled.'"⁴⁴

14 Thereupon Haggai responded:

"In my view
that is how the people and the nation are!
declares the Lord."

"They are defiled(*or, unclean*) in everything they do:

38 Possibly it could be translated "wealth."

39 The Peshitta has "my salvation."

40 Added by the LXX.

41 Ca. November / December. Later called Kislev.

42 Literally: "ask the priests for a torah."

43 Hebrew: *vpm*. Cf. Leviticus 22:4.

44 Thus the priests in effect are saying: "Holiness is not infectious." and "Unholiness (*if there is such a word*) is infectious."

and what they offer is also defiled (*or, unclean*).
(*And whatsoever will approach them will become defiled.*)⁴⁵
[*because of their early burdens;*
they will be pained because of their toils;
and you will have hated him that reproved in the gate."]

B Promise of better times 2:15 - 19

15 "Consider⁴⁶ what will take place and its future significance!⁴⁷
Prior to laying one stone upon another in the Lord's temple,
how did you fare?⁴⁸

(*or, What sort of people will you be after this takes place?*)

16 If a person came to a heap of grain,⁴⁹ expecting twenty measures,
it would only yield ten.

If a person came to a vine vat expecting to draw fifty measures,⁵⁰
it would only yield twenty.

17 In the past I struck all the results of your labor

(*or, all the works of your hands*)

with blight, mildew and hail,
yet you did not return to me,⁵¹

declares the Lord."

18 "Take note of the day and its future significance!
From the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month⁵²
namely the day that is the day
the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid.
Consider this carefully!

19 "Is there still any seed in your granary?

Will⁵³ the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree
still⁵⁴ yield no fruit?

From this day on I will bless you!"

45 So: LXX which is a rephrasing of the Hebrew. Additional lines are in the LXX. These have been bracketed []. Possibly this addition stems from Amos or from an early interpretation.

46 Literally: "put your heart on it."

47 Literally: "from this day forward."

48 Hebrew unclear. Literally: "since they were." LXX: "What sort of people were you?" NEB "What was your plight?"

49 Literally: "to a heap of twenty." LXX supplied a measure: σατον which would be equal to about a peck and a half or 12 quarts.

50 Hebrew uncertain. Hebrew adds: "the press would yield" However the Hebrew word *hrWP* is a word that would better be translated as descriptive of the collecting unit, rather than the press itself.

51 Hebrew obscure. Literally: "There was not with you to me." LXX: και ουκ επεστρεψατε. "You did not turn toward me." Ehrlich translates: "yet you were barbaric."

52 Some scholars question the accuracy of the date, preferring the sixth month.

53 So: LXX.

54 Literally: "and until."

IV Zerubbabel as the Lord's servant 2:20 - 23

20 The word of the Lord came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month.

22 "Tell Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah,
the following:

I am about to shake the heavens and the earth,⁵⁵

22 and overthrow the throne of kingdoms (*or, those who rule*);⁵⁶

I am about to shatter the might of the kingdoms of the nations,

[*and I will overturn your entire might*

and I will erase your boundaries

and I will strengthen my chosen ones,]⁵⁷

and overthrow the chariots and their charioteers;

and the horses and their riders will fall --

each one on the sword of his compatriot.

23 On that day,

declares the Lord of hosts."

"I will make you my servant, Zerubbabel,
the son of Shealtiel,

declares the Lord."

"I will make you be like a signet ring (*or, a seal*)⁵⁸

for I have chosen you,

declares the Lord of hosts."

55 LXX adds: *και την θαλασσαν και ηεν ξηραν.* "the sea and the dry land."

56 Recent Hebrew studies seem to suggest the Hebrew word means "to rule."

57 Added by LXX. Possibly dittography along with a gloss.

58 I. e. act as the ruler.