

STUDIES IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

HAGGAI

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

Title: The Prophet and his commission, 1:1

- I. First message - Rebuke for religious indifference and admonition to build the temple, Chapter 1.
 - . The message, vv. 2-11.
 - 1. The people's selfishness and unconcern, vv. 2-6.
 - a. Their selfishness, vv. 2-4.
 - b. Their ways and the result: curse, vv.5,6.
 - 2. The divine displeasure and exhortation to resume the building operation, vv. 7-11.
 - a. Consider your ways- get busy, vv.7,8
 - b. The visitation from God, vv. 9-11.
 - . The people respond, vv. 12-15
- II. Second message - Consolation to those in despair: the glory of the new temple, 2:1-9.
 - . Jehovah's presence with the builders, vv. 1-5.
 - . The temple's future glory, vv. 6-9.
- III. Third Message - Completion of the temple a guarantee of blessings of nature, 2:10-19.
 - . The people's uncleanness a result of their own conduct, vv. 10-14.
 - 1. Their punishment the result of their own uncleanness impressed by two questions, vv. 10-13.
 - a. Question One - Communication of holiness by holy objects on contact, vv. 10-12.
 - b. Question Two - Communication of legal defilement by contact, v.13.
 - 2. Application to Israel - the cause of their uncleanness, v.14.
 - . Indifference has produced calamity; zeal will restore prosperity, vv. 15-19
- IV. The Fourth message - Renewal of the promise of salvation: exaltation of Zerubbabel, 2:20-23.
 - . Overthrow of the nations, vv. 20-22.
 - B. Messianic hope preserved in Zerubbabel, v.23

INFORMATION ON THE BOOK

DATE WRITTEN

The prophet clearly dates the book by the statement in 1:1. What is the date? _____
_____. All four of the messages contained in the book bear the same date as far as the year goes.

THE MAN

The name Haggai means _____. This may be a shortened form of Haggai, which means "festival of Jehovah." Our knowledge of the man is limited to this book and two other places in the Old Testament. What are they? _____. The Lord needed a prophet who could take a message to the people, and get results. Haggai proved to be the man for the job. Some have concluded that he may have seen the temple of Solomon in all of its splendor before the destruction of Jerusalem, but this cannot be proven. Whether he lived to see the temple rebuilt or not, we are not told.

All we know about the home and occupation of Haggai is that he returned from Babylon with the remnant under Zerubbabel in 536 B.C.. It is assumed that he lived in Jerusalem, but we have no idea what his occupation was other than being a prophet of God.

MAIN THEME

This can be summarized in the statement: "If you want to be restored to a blessed relationship with the Lord, put first things first in your life. For example, resume the work on the Lord's Temple." Another has said that Haggai's message was - BUILD THE TEMPLE! Their hope of receiving God's blessings hinged upon their accomplishment of the work in rebuilding the temple. In this message, Haggai also revived the Messianic hope, pointing out that the house would be filled with glory that would surpass anything ever seen before. He also pointed to Zerubbabel as God's assurance that this hope would be realized.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To fully appreciate the situation as it existed in the time of Haggai, we need to review the sequence of events which transpired just prior to this time.

- 586 B.C.** Babylonian invaders destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, just as God had prophesied.
- 539 B.C.** Babylon falls. The Persian Empire, ruled by King Cyrus, becomes the world power. The Jews in exile are now subject to Cyrus.
- 538 B.C.** God moves Cyrus to issue a decree permitting and encouraging the Jews to return to their homeland (Ezra 1:1-4).
- 536 B.C.** First return of Jews under Zerubbabel. Read Ezra 1:5 - 2:70 and Nehemiah 12. The total number of returnees: about 50,000. (See also Ezra 2:64-67.)
- 536-535 B.C.** Altar of burnt offerings is built at Jerusalem on the site of the Temple ruins. Feast of Tabernacles kept. Sacrifices observed (Ezra 3:1-6). Foundations of the Temple are laid (Ezra 3:7-13).
- 535-534 B.C.** Opposition to the Temple project by the neighboring Samaritans (Ezra 4:1-5).

- 534 B.C.** Work on the Temple ceases (Ezra 4:24).
- 536-520 B.C.** Israel's ruler is Governor Zerubbabel, who represents the king of Persia. Joshua the high priest is their religious leader.
- 520 B.C.** Haggai and Zechariah begin to preach to the Jews in "Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel" (Ezra 5:1; Haggai 1:1). Temple project is resumed (Ezra 5:2; haggai 1:14,15). For how many years had the people neglected work?
- 516 B.C.** Temple project is finished (Ezra 6:14,15).

The temple was important to the Jews who returned to Jerusalem because it stood as a physical reminder to them that God was a REAL, LIVING GOD, dwelling in Zion (Joel 3:21), and that He wanted to have fellowship with His people, Israel. We remember these words recorded in Exodus 25:8, where God said: "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them."

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE BOOK

Haggai, like Nahum, was a man of a single idea: build the temple! He confined his work to this single theme, and anything else he said was built around this theme. God raised him up and empowered him with His Spirit, the spirit of prophecy, for the purpose of arousing the people to action. The temple must be built!

The writing of Haggai, is unlike that of his predecessors. We do not find the rhythm of Nahum, the poetry of Habakkuk, or the fire of Amos. Instead, his work is somewhat subdued. But he was completely successful in the work God sent him to do. Within three weeks and a few days of his first address, the people resumed work on the Temple. The most outstanding feature of this message is the repeated appeal to God as the source of his words. In some form, he uses the appeal "saith the Lord," "the word of the Lord of Hosts," and such like twenty-six times in the four short addresses of thirty-eight verses. This appeal to the divine origin of what he said, stirred the people, moved their hearts, and got them into action.

QUESTIONS ON HAGGAI

Title: The Prophet and his commission, 1:1

I. First message - Rebuke for religious indifference and admonition to build the temple, Chapter 1.

. The message, vv. 2-11.

1. The people's selfishness and unconcern, vv. 2-6.

a. Their selfishness, vv. 2-4.

1. To whom was Haggai to deliver this prophecy? 1:1 _____

2. Of what sin were the people guilty in not rebuilding the temple? 1:2 _____

3. What comparison does God make in 1:4, and how might this compare with the situation of God's people today? _____

a. Their ways and the result: curse, vv.5,6.

4. Explain the meaning of the phrase, "Consider your ways" in 1:5. _____

5. Was the circumstance of the people in 1:6 the *result* of not rebuilding the Temple, or the *cause*? _

2. The divine displeasure and exhortation to resume the building operation, vv. 7-11.

a. Consider your ways- get busy, vv.7,8

6. What was the "cure" for their problems according to 1:8? _____

b. The visitation from God, vv. 9-11.

7. Does 1:9 indicate whether the economic situation was the *cause* or the *effect* of the people's neglect of the Temple? _____

8. What did God cause to come upon them as a consequence of their disobedience? 1:10,11 _____

. The people respond, vv. 12-15

9. How did the people react to this first message? 1:12 _____

10. In what way is *fear* related to the *obedience* herein recorded? _____

11. How did the Lord stir up the spirit of the rulers and the people? 1:14 _____

12. When did these things happen? 1:15 (Compare this with 1:1) _____

II. Second message - Consolation to those in despair: the glory of the new temple, 2:1-9.

. Jehovah's presence with the builders, vv. 1-5.

13. How much time had elapsed from the first time the Lord came to Haggai and the second message, according to 2:1? _____

14. What comparison does the Lord make in 2:3, and what is the purpose of this comparison? _____

15. What counsel does God give them and what assurances does He afford then again in 2:4,5? _____

. The temple's future glory, vv. 6-9.

16. The Talmud contains a passage written by un-inspired men which says that there were five things lacking in the rebuilt Temple that were in Solomon's Temple: 1) the Shekinah glory, 2) the holy fire, 3) the Ark of the Covenant, 4) the Urim and Thummim, and 5) the spirit of prophecy. Of what did the people of Israel need to be reminded concerning the real destiny of the Temple? 2:6-9 _____

17. Please explain the phrases "I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations." 2:6,7 _____

18. What would the Lord give in the Temple? 2:9 _____

III. Third Message - Completion of the temple a guarantee of blessings of nature, 2:10-19.

. The people's uncleanness a result of their own conduct, vv. 10-14.

1. Their punishment the result of their own uncleanness impressed by two questions, vv. 10-13.

a. Question One - Communication of holiness by holy objects on contact, vv. 10- 12.

19. How much time had elapsed since the Lord first came to the prophet in 1:1? 2:10 _____

20. To whom was this and the following question addressed from God? 2:11 _____
_____ Why was it addressed
to them? _____

21. In your own words, what was the first question God asked them and how did they answer? 2:12 __

b. Question Two - Communication of legal defilement by contact, v.13.

22. What was the subject of the second question, and what was their response? 2:13 _____

2. Application to Israel - the cause of their uncleanness, v.14.

23. How did God apply these two questions and their responses to the situation with His people? 2:14

. Indifference has produced calamity; zeal will restore prosperity, vv. 15-19

24. What is the DAY they are to consider? 2:15,18 _____

25. What is described in 2:16? _____

26. Why had God caused these things to happen to them? 2:17 _____

27. How was God going to treat them now that the work was resumed on the Temple? 2:19 _____

IV. The Fourth message - Renewal of the promise of salvation: exaltation of Zerubbabel, 2:20-23.
. Overthrow of the nations, vv. 20-22.

28. To whom did God address 2:20-22? _____

29. What did God say He was going to do? 2:21,22 _____

B. Messianic hope preserved in Zerubbabel, v.23

30. In what way are the words of 2:23 related to the coming of Messiah? _____

