

Haggai

- **Our knowledge of Haggai is limited to his prophetic book and a few passages in the book of Ezra.**

Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14-16

When the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them, ² then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them supporting them.

¹⁴ And the elders of the Jews were successful in building through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they finished building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. ¹⁵ This temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar; it was the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. ¹⁶ And the sons of Israel, the priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy.

- Haggai is a book with a single central idea: Rebuild the temple!

Historical Context

- **In 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian armies had destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and carried Judah away into exile.**
 - Following Nebuchadnezzar's death in 562 B.C. Babylon had a series of weak and ineffective rulers.
- **In 539 B.C. Cyrus, a Persian king of the Medes and Persians defeated Babylon taking it from Belshazzar.**
 - Cyrus demonstrated a benevolent spirit and reversed the practices of the Assyrians and Babylonians by empowering his displaced subjects to return to their own land.
 - Cyrus's decree was issued sometime in 538 B.C. and the first group of exiles returned with Zerubbabel in 536 B.C.

2 Chronicles 36:22-23

²² Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia—in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah—the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying, ²³ “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up!’”

Ezra 1:1-4

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it in* writing, saying: ²“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. ³Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. ⁴Every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.’”

- It is important to note that Isaiah prophesied 150 years before that one named Cyrus would arise and allow the remnant to return home.

Isaiah 44:24-45:7

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb,

“I, the Lord, am the maker of all things,
Stretching out the heavens by Myself
And spreading out the earth all alone,
²⁵Causing the omens of boasters to fail,
Making fools out of diviners,
Causing wise men to draw back
And turning their knowledge into foolishness,
²⁶Confirming the word of His servant
And performing the purpose of His messengers.
It is I who says of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be inhabited!’

And of the cities of Judah, ‘They shall be built.’
And I will raise up her ruins *again*.

²⁷“*It is I* who says to the depth of the sea, ‘Be dried up!’

And I will make your rivers dry.

²⁸“*It is I* who says of Cyrus, ‘*He is My shepherd!*

And he will perform all My desire.’

And he declares of Jerusalem, ‘She will be built,’

And of the temple, ‘Your foundation will be laid.’”

Thus says the Lord to Cyrus His anointed,
Whom I have taken by the right hand,
To subdue nations before him
And to loose the loins of kings;
To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:

²“I will go before you and make the rough places smooth;

I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through their iron bars.

³“I will give you the treasures of darkness
And hidden wealth of secret places,
So that you may know that it is I,
The Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.

⁴“For the sake of Jacob My servant,
And Israel My chosen *one*,

I have also called you by your name;
I have given you a title of honor
Though you have not known Me.

⁵“I am the Lord, and there is no other;
Besides Me there is no God.

I will gird you, though you have not known Me;
⁶That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun

That there is no one besides Me.

I am the Lord, and there is no other,

⁷The One forming light and creating darkness,
Causing well-being and creating calamity;
I am the Lord who does all these.

- 536 B.C. marks the initial return of the Jews to rebuild their Temple where they succeeded in laying the foundation and the altar of sacrifices, but had ceased work on the temple (**Ezra 3:2-9**). It was not until the second year of Darius I when Haggai and Zechariah were called to rouse the Jews to finish what they had started 16 years earlier.
 - The conditions were wretched and miserable for the returning exiles.
 - The former temple had been completely destroyed (**2 Kings 25:9**).
 - The cities and houses lay in rubble.
 - Food was scarce.
 - Neighboring peoples were both unfriendly and threatening (**Ezra 4:4-5**).
 - This is the discouraging context in which Haggai shares his message.

Structure & Outline

MESSAGE 1 (1:1-15)	Call to Rebuild the Temple and the People's Positive Response
MESSAGE 2 (2:1-9)	The Promise of the Future Glory of the Temple
MESSAGE 3 (2:10-19)	The Promise of Future Blessing to Replace Defilement
MESSAGE 4 (2:20-23)	The Promise to Zerubbabel and the Restoration of the Davidic Rule: Messianic Hope Renewed

Major Themes, Message, & Application

1. God's Kingdom and Agenda Are Priority Over All Else in Life (1:1-15)

- Echoed in Jesus' Teachings

Matthew 6:31-33

Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' ³² For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

- God Rewards Obedience and Disciplines Disobedience In His Children (**Gen. 4:6-7; Heb. 11:6; 12:5-13**)

2. Remembering God's Faithfulness in the Past

- In these dire circumstances, Haggai uses language reminiscent of God's faithfulness in the past (Deut. 1:21, 29; 31:6; Joshua 1:6-7, 9,18; Exodus 3:12).

(2:4-5) But now take courage, Zerubbabel,' declares the Lord, 'take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,' declares the Lord, 'and work; for I am with you,' declares the Lord of hosts. ⁵ 'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!'

- What effect do these past references have on the hearers and why?

3. Messianic Hope Renewed (2:20-23)

(2:20-23) Then the word of the Lord came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, ²¹ "Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, 'I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. ²² I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and the horses and their riders will go down, everyone by the sword of another.' ²³ 'On that day,' declares the Lord of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, My servant,' declares the Lord, 'and I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you,'" declares the Lord of hosts.

- Yahweh says three significant things about Zerubbabel in this passage:
 - His is "My servant"
 - "I will make you like a signet ring"
 - "I have chosen you"
- Now compare these to:

Psalm 89:3-4

"I have made a covenant with My chosen;
I have sworn to David My servant,
⁴ I will establish your seed forever
And build up your throne to all generations."

Jeremiah 22:24-26

²⁴ "As I live," declares the Lord, "even though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet ring on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; ²⁵ and I will give you over into the hand of those who are seeking your life, yes, into the hand of those whom you dread, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. ²⁶ I will hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. ²⁷ But as for the land to which they desire to return, they will not return to it."

4. Things That Cannot Be Shaken (2:6-9; 21-23)

(2:6-9) For thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. ⁷ I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the Lord of hosts. ⁸ 'The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the Lord of hosts. ⁹ 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the Lord of hosts, 'and in this place I will give peace,' declares the Lord of hosts."

- **The Latter Temple's Glory is Greater Than the Former Temple**

See John 1:14

See John 2:19-22

See Acts 17:24-28

Ephesians 2:17-22

¹⁷And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, ²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

(2:21-23) ²¹ "Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, 'I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. ²² I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and the horses and their riders will go down, everyone by the sword of another.' ²³ 'On that day,' declares the Lord of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, My servant,' declares the Lord, 'and I will make you like a signet *ring*, for I have chosen you,'" declares the Lord of hosts.

Compare to:

Hebrews 12:26-27

²⁶ And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven." ²⁷ This *expression*, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

What is the meaning of Haggai's prophecy in light of the New Testament writers' commentary and interpretation?