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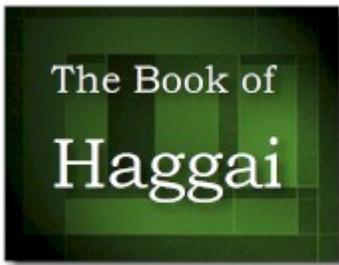
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The Book of Haggai

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Transcribed and edited by David Sielaff, March 2014

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for March 2014](#)



No portion of scripture has been so misunderstood as the Book of Haggai, the tenth of the “Minor Prophets.” Haggai figures significantly in the end-time period we are approaching. Haggai lived in the last part of the 6th century BC. The geography he mentions is that of Jerusalem in the time of Zerubbabel (who was of Davidic stock) and Joshua the high priest (both mentioned in the Books of Haggai and Zechariah). The historical environment of Haggai is of the period after the Babylonian captivity around 520 BC in the chronology normally used today.

The time after the Babylonian captivity was very important for the Jews, those of Israel returning from a Babylonian captivity of 70 years. They came to re-establish themselves in Palestine, to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, and to re-establish the Temple and its services again begun by King Solomon some 400 years before and destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. They came back, around 50,000 of them, as you can read in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. A number of problems arose. They read the prophecies of the Old Testament regarding their return to the Holy Land, and what would emerge on earth once they came back and put the Temple in Jerusalem back into operation. Those prophecies were not happening as they should — according to their understanding.

Centrality of Jerusalem and the Temple

Anything that happens to Israel will have ramifications for the whole world because the world is involved in things dealing with Israel at the end of the age. We are talking about Jerusalem. We are talking about the land of Israel. We are talking about the Middle East. We are talking about the people who live there now and are presently fighting and squabbling over the land to determine who gets this site and who gets that spot.

The central region of it all is Jerusalem, the city of peace. Jerusalem is anything but the city of peace. It never really had the peace that the name signifies. It has been a city of war and people have been fighting

¹ This article is transcribed from a taped presentation originally titled “Haggai and Modern Times.” DWS

over Jerusalem and are doing so at this very moment.

Jerusalem will come to that peaceful existence when the Messiah returns to this earth. That Messiah is none other than Jesus Christ who was revealed some 2000 years ago to mankind. He is soon coming back to this earth to establish a reign of peace for 1000 years on this earth. Before that happens, a number of events must take place in Israel and most especially in Jerusalem. The messages of the Book of Haggai figure significantly in this end time period which we are approaching.

Zerubbabel

The Jews returned from Babylon under the leadership of Zerubbabel, a prince descended from David.² He was given a special name. He was not a king because kingship was taken from the Jews. The name Zerubbabel means “sown in Babylon” or “born in Babylon” and he was indeed born in Babylon and not in Palestine, the Holy Land. He is mentioned in both genealogies of Jesus Christ, in Matthew and Luke, and he has an important part to play in the end time prophecies, though he lived in the 6th century BC.

The short prophecy of Haggai is very important on the prophetic scene. It is about rebuilding Jerusalem and why it was important for the Jews to rebuild the Temple. There are also chronological prophecies in the Book of Haggai which dovetail with chronological prophecies in the following Book of Zechariah.

Haggai notes the foundation stone was set down at a particular time. He shows how important it was on that very day that the foundation stone was re-established. That day will have a significance in the future that you and I need to look forward to, because Haggai’s prophecy was not only for the time back then, but also for the time in which we live today.

Though Haggai’s prophecy has its origin in the 6th century BC, its conclusions will come in our age today, just in advance of us. Now some may say, “How do you know that, Ernest Martin?” Almost all of these scriptures put together in our Bibles that we have today, have relevance for the end time just prior to the Second Advent of Jesus Christ back to this earth. I am talking about the political prophecies. I am talking about the prophecies that deal with Palestine, with Jerusalem, with the overcoming of this Babylonian system that the Book of Revelation talks about by the establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth under the auspices of the King descended from David who is none other than Jesus Christ.

This gives you a general overview of the historical environment in which Haggai the prophet gives his short prophecy. It may be very short, but it is very powerful. It has a chronological basis to it that many prophecies do not have. We do find other chronological prophecies in the Bible, primarily in the Book of Daniel and in the New Testament in the Book of Revelation.

Haggai’s Name and Importance

Haggai introduces the books of the last three Minor Prophets, which deal with the post-exile period. Haggai’s name is significant; it means “holy festival.”³ It is applied repeatedly to the Festival of Taber-

Table 1: Structure of the Twelve Prophets

1	<i>Assyrian Period</i>	}	Hosea
2			Joel
3			Amos
4			Obadiah
5			Jonah
6			Micah
7			Nahum
8	<i>Babylonian Period</i>	}	Habakkuk
9			Zephaniah
10	<i>Post-Babylonian Period</i>	}	HAGGAI
11			Zechariah
12			Malachi

² Zerubbabel is mentioned in Ezra 3:2, 8; 5:2; Nehemiah 12:1; Haggai 1:1, 12; 1 Chronicles 3:17–19; Matthew 1:12; and Luke 3:27. He was not a king but he was the grandson of Jeconiah (also called Jehoiachin), King of Judah, the last reigning heir to the Davidic crown. Jeconiah was carried captive to Babylon at age 8 and treated well by Nebuchadnezzar and his successors. *DWS*

³ In the Scriptures, most all Biblical names have meaning to them. In the Book of Isaiah, God gave Isaiah and his sons their names as prophetic signs to the nation of Israel. The names helped to identify, enumerate, and illustrate his prophecies that he was giving at the time. It is the same thing with Haggai. *ELM*

nacles, the autumn time festival in which Israel would have gathered all the fruit of the land and enjoy themselves in a type of millennial existence. “Haggai” means then, “I will talk to you about a future time period, which my name symbolizes.” It is a time when the Kingdom of God will be here on this earth. Before that Kingdom of God arrives these prophecies of Haggai will transpire.

History is important. History is made up not only of events in the past, history is made up of chronology, the time or times in which certain events took place, as well as “where” events took place which comes from geography. Confusion has come over understanding the prophecies, most deal with chronological problems, and Haggai is a central chronological prophecy.⁴

We must straighten out problems of chronology and geography. That is what the Book Haggai is all about; it essentially deals with chronological problems. The events Haggai mentions must be put into a proper chronological framework to comprehend exactly what they mean. Though they are given in the environment of the latter part of the 6th century BC, they have ramifications that reach into our future.

There are prophecies concerning Zerubbabel, that he will have a signet, a type of medallion, or a type of an authority of Zerubbabel’s handed down to someone in the future who will have the same powers as this Zerubbabel. He will accomplish the very things Zerubbabel was told that he would accomplish in the 6th century BC, but it will be done at the end of the age.

These things are well known to anyone that understands prophetic teaching. When John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea and baptized people in the river Jordan, Jesus said that he was the Elijah to come. He was not Elijah. Elijah lived some 900 years before. But John came in the spirit of Elijah. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 17 that there will be an Elijah to come, a person who will have the signet of Elijah.⁵

There will come also a person who will have the signet of Zerubbabel, a son of David, born in Babylon, not in Palestine, who will have a significant role in the development of, the putting of a foundation stone, and construction of a new Temple to be built in Jerusalem. That is what this Book of Haggai is all about.

The central problem that has arisen in understanding this prophecy is that of chronology. Ernest Martin is not smart enough to figure out at this present time [1998] all the chronological problems. I have figured out several of them, but not all of the chronological problems. These chronological prophecies shall fit into place and they will be clear as we proceed in time nearer their fulfillment. Recall what Daniel said:

“But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and [then] knowledge shall be increased.’ ...

And he said, ‘Go your way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.’”

• Daniel 12:4, 9

We are in that very time now when knowledge is increasing. He said the same thing a few verses later,

⁴ Chronological problems give people many difficulties. Suppose you are reading about the discovery of the new world by Columbus. When his three ships finally came to the new world, they looked up and here was a great big sign they saw, “Vote for President Roosevelt of the United States of America.” You would say Columbus seeing such a thing is ridiculous. My illustration is meant to be so. The point is, they are 500 years out of phase. Yet people have placed chronological prophecies into time periods which are just as wrong in some cases. It is time we get the chronology straight.

It happens with geography as well. Imagine trying to find the Golden Gate Bridge if you think it was in Seattle, Washington. The Golden Gate Bridge, everyone knows, is in San Francisco. There are prophecies in Scripture dealing with geography in the Middle East which have been just as badly identified. Some apply prophecies to the wrong areas. That is exactly what is happening with our Jewish and Arab friends in Jerusalem. They are fighting over areas which have no relevance whatsoever to Biblical teachings. They will find out they are as wrong on geography as they are wrong on chronology. *ELM*

⁵ Someone is prophesied in the future to come in the spirit of Elijah. He will not be the original Elijah. He is dead and in his grave waiting for the resurrection of the dead. It would not be the original John the Baptist either. Remember, he had his head chopped off. John is dead in his grave waiting the resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ. *ELM* See Dr. Martin’s article, “[The Elijah to Come](#).” *DWS*

“Go your way Daniel,” the chronology will be known as we approach the time of the end, **“for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end”** (Daniel 12:9). **“... But go you your way till the end be: for you shall rest, and stand in your lot at the end of the days”** (Daniel 12:13).

Jesus Christ our Elder Brother, after His resurrection from the dead, spent some 40 days from time to time in the presence of the Apostles. He appeared amongst them and gave them teaching. They clearly knew by this time who He was. He was the resurrected Son of God. He was not the son of Mary and Joseph in their view any longer. He was the Son of the Living God because He had been resurrected from the dead.

One of the last things that Jesus ever said to the Apostles is a teaching for all of us to recognize:

“He [Jesus] said unto them [His intimate apostles] it is not for you [you apostles] to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power. But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses of Me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the utter most part of the earth.”

• Acts 1:7–8

“Unto the utter most part of the earth” means to the North Pole, South Pole, all Asia, Africa, South America, North America, Europe — everywhere. It is interesting though, that most of the Apostles never left Palestine. The Apostle Paul, who came along later, went into Europe, Greece, and particularly southern Spain. There the Mystery of God was revealed to him, the final revelation, in Cadiz, Spain. He took this message about as far in the 1st century as you could get. Even the Apostle Paul took it no further. Peter took it no further. But there was a commission given to those Apostles, to take it into the utter most parts of the earth. So how should this be understood?

They have left their writings to us. We are in that very generation that will take it to the utmost parts of the earth. That is what our responsibility happens to be as members of the Family of God. We need to take up the mantel. We have the knowledge. All we need to do is spread that knowledge. It is not because we have a commission. It is because we know who we are.⁶

The Future Fulfillment of Haggai’s Prophecies

You needed this introduction to understand the prophecy of Haggai. The terminology of Haggai is anchored in the 6th century BC, but so too are the Books of Zechariah and Malachi. Furthermore, all three prophecies have relevance for us, when in the future there will be a “Zerubbabel” and a “Joshua,” the High Priest, who will have signets of authority to bring these prophecies of Haggai to complete fulfillment.

Haggai’s name means “a grand festival of God.” It signifies that once this prophecy is concluded and the holy Temple re-established in Jerusalem, there will be a great festival, a great time of rejoicing, like a perennial Feast of Tabernacles enjoyed by the people of Israel. It will ramify out to all people of the world.

This Book of Haggai is just two chapters long. It has as its basis the re-establishment of the Temple in Jerusalem. The Jews and Israelites who returned from Babylon almost 18 years before had established an altar, but they had not started to rebuild the Temple. They had not even set the foundation stone for it. They had reasons why they had not done so yet, and they lingered and lingered. From a human point of view, their reasons were highly understandable. If you were living at that time, you would have approached the whole situation in the same way the Jews did in the time of Haggai.

⁶ I am **not** saying we are commissioned like the Apostles. There is no commission in the Bible that Ernest Martin has to do anything. But I know who I am. Do you know who you are? You are the child of the living God. If the Holy Spirit of God is within you — and it is — look in the mirror and say, “I am a member of the Family of God,” you do not need any commissions to do the job. Just do it! Take the message to every one you can. You do not need a commission. (Anyone given a commission to do something had better do it exactly!) You have no commission to do anything — except — to read the scriptures that God’s message will be taken to the ends of the earth. If you do not do it, an angel could do it. If an angel does not do it, Christ says the very stones will cry out saying who He is (Luke 19:40). My book, [*Essentials of New Testament Doctrine*](#), explains in detail just who you are, why you are here, where you are going, and the responsibility that God the Father and Christ has given to you. ELM

God came to Haggai and told him he was angry with these people, because they had been there for some 18 years, had already put up an altar to me, but they built their own houses, tried to live their own lives, and they had not taken one stone to make a foundation for My house in Jerusalem. He wanted His house rebuilt.

Once established here on earth, then God would sit down, symbolically speaking, on the Mercy Seat, which was His throne, and He would have a presence on earth, if His house were here on earth and fully functioning.⁷ He wanted that house of His, a replica of His house in heaven, to be rebuilt, and the Jews were putting it off. They had every excuse in the world for doing so, and their excuses were good from a human point of view. They could point out prophecies that allowed them to say, “God, we have done our part but you have not done yours yet.” They were waiting for God to do His part. God looked at it differently. He said, “You start to do what I tell you to do, and I then will respond in the time that I please.” Chronology was the major point of contention. Recognize that point in order to understand this prophecy of Haggai.

Analysis of the Book of Haggai

The Book of Haggai starts by indicating a particular day in history. A future particular day will also have significance for a time future to us.⁸ As we get closer to the end these prophecies will become much clearer. Soon we will be able to understand almost every detail of Haggai and where it fits in to the overall prophetic scenario dealing with the time of the end, leading to the second coming of Christ.

A problem arose amongst the Jews who returned from Babylon under the leadership of Zerubbabel and the high priest Joshua. These two were leaders of the 50,000 Jews who returned to Jerusalem. They were rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, little by little. They wanted to rebuild the Temple of God. In fact, they had a prophecy that the Temple of God would be rebuilt. I will show how they interpreted the prophecy.

However, some 18 years after being back in the land of Palestine events were not proceeding as they thought the prophecy should be occurring. The first chapter of Haggai informs the Jews that they have not performed certain things that God wanted them to do. They were waiting on God to perform His prophecies. It looked like He was not doing the job. They were sitting back and not performing their obligations.

True enough they were back in the Holy Land and they had established an altar in Jerusalem at the former spot of the altar of Solomon. The altar was standing out in the open with the rain, wind, and snow coming down on that altar. It was not in a house that God had designed for it and God was angry with them.

The first message through Haggai is given in the second year of Darius the Persian king.⁹

“In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month [in the summertime], in the first day of the month ...”

• *Haggai 1:1*

The 6th month is Elul in the Hebrew calendar. It always occurred somewhere in the month of August. On **“the first day of the month,”** indicates a new moon day. This would have been one month before Tishri, one month before the Day of Trumpets.

“... came the word of YHWH by Haggai the prophet [1] unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and [2] to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest.”

• *Haggai 1:1*

⁷ This was to be a fully functioning apparatus, with His attendants (His servants the priests), His people around Him (the Israelites), and the Gentiles farther away, but all of them gathered around Him in a family type of environment here on earth. *ELM*

⁸ The difficulty for many interpreters in understanding the prophecies of Haggai is a chronological one. I can understand why. It is not easy to understand on the surface exactly what the prophecies mean. *ELM*

⁹ The Jews returned in the reign of Cyrus the first Persian king. Cyrus was of Median/Persian stock, but technically, he was the first king of the Persians. His son Cambyses followed him. Then we have the next Persian king called Darius, whose second year is some 18 years after the people returned to Palestine. *ELM*

So here is a prophecy given to these two men who were the leaders of the 50,000 Jews in the land of Palestine. The prophecy starts in verse 2 by saying: **“Thus speaks YHWH of hosts.”** The phrase, **“YHWH of hosts”** simply means “YHWH of Armies,” which refers to all the angelic forces, plus all that He controlled in heaven, plus the sons of God.

“Thus speaks YHWH of hosts, saying, ‘This people say, ‘The time is not come, the time that YHWH’s house should be built.’”

• *Haggai 1:2*

Note the chronological matter here. The time has not come. They were saying to Zerubbabel, “Let us not build the house of YHWH.” They were saying to Joshua the high priest, “It is not time to start to build the house of YHWH.”

“Then came the word of YHWH by Haggai the prophet saying [addressed to the people], ‘It is time for you, O you who dwell in your ceiled houses [houses with beautiful roofs and ceilings], and this house lie waste?’”

• *Haggai 1:3–4*

What house? The house of YHWH, the Temple. It was not being rebuilt. They were building their own houses but not His house, God’s house.

“Now therefore thus says YHWH of hosts; ‘Consider your ways.

You have sown much and bring in little;

you eat, but you have not enough;

you drink, but you are not filled with drink;

you clothe you, but there is none warm;

he that earns wages earns wages to put them into a bag full of holes.’”

• *Haggai 1:5–6*

They were in very difficult circumstances, which was one reason they said it was not time to build a house of YHWH. They said, we live in our own homes, but we do not have enough money to help ourselves. We are in a difficult period.

In fact, it was a difficult time because God was sending the difficult time upon them. **“Thus says YHWH of hosts”** repeating verse 5:

“‘Consider your ways [not “My ways,” but “your ways”]. **Go up to the mountain [the Lebanese mountains], **bring wood** [timber], **and build the house** [for the Jerusalem Temple]. **And I will take pleasure in it and I will be glorified,’** said YHWH.**

‘You looked for much and lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I did blow upon it [with pestilence]. Why?’ says YHWH of hosts. **‘Because of my house that is waste [you built your homes before mine], and you run every man unto his own house.’”**

• *Haggai 1:7–9*

You do not run to my house, or get timber for My house, you are not building up My house. I sent you there to build up My house, and it is laying waste.

“‘Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought [1] upon the land, and [2] upon the mountains, [3] upon the corn [wheat], [4] upon the new wine, and [5] upon the oil, and [6] upon that which the ground brings forth, and [7] upon men, and [8] upon cattle, and [9] upon all the labor of the hands.’”

• *Haggai 1:10–11*

They were in serious trouble, yet they were saying it was not time to build the house of YHWH. God sent all of these problems for 18 solid years and they still were saying “it is not time.” Why? Because they

were expecting much and have not received it. Remember verse 9, **“You looked for much ...”** You have read the prophecies they were looking at. They were looking **“for much.”** Let me tell you what they were doing.

Go to Ezra chapter 1, the first three verses. It speaks about the time at the beginning of the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia. A command was given to go down and build the house of God, and the city of Jerusalem.

Specifically, Zerubbabel and Joshua led 50,000 Jews down to that area, to do what? To build the house of God. That was their first task, but they built their own houses first.

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of YHWH by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, YHWH stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

‘thus says Cyrus king of Persia, YHWH God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up¹⁰ to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of YHWH God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.’”

• **Ezra 1:1–3**

This is what Haggai is saying 18 years later. Haggai says, **“You looked for much”** (Haggai 1:9). Yes, they had a right to look for much, because there was a prophecy about this Cyrus in the Bible who was to raise up this Temple.

Go to Isaiah 44:21. They had this prophecy of Isaiah in their midst, and they expected it to be fulfilled. It was a chronological problem and Haggai talked about that subject. It is also a chronological problem for us. Here is what Isaiah said would occur when Cyrus gives the command to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem:

“Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for you are my servant: I have formed you; you are my servant: O Israel, you shall not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed you. Sing, O you heavens.”

• **Isaiah 44:21–23**

He finally comes down to verse 26. He speaks here about YHWH their Redeemer who will rescue them.

“That say [1] to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be inhabited’; and [2] to the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built,’ and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That say [3] to the deep [the ocean], ‘Be dry,’ and I will dry up your rivers.”

• **Isaiah 44:26–27**

God is saying, if I must dry up the ocean or the rivers to get you down to Jerusalem, then I will do it. Then look at verse 28, where it has a future relevance to our day today.

“That say of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, You shall be built; and to the temple, Your foundation shall be laid.”

• **Isaiah 44:28**

Isaiah wrote the prophecy almost 200 years before Cyrus came along. The Jews had that prophecy with them in Babylon. They were going down under Cyrus’ command as King of Persia to rebuild the Temple. But that does not end it. In the Hebrew text, the next chapter continues about Cyrus with no chapter break:

¹⁰ The last two verses of the Old Testament in the correct Hebrew order repeat Cyrus’ statement in 2 Chronicles 36:22–23. The Books of First and Second Chronicles were written by Ezra the Prophet on a single scroll. Ezra’s repetition of the two verses in Chronicles has one major difference. A statement is added that Jeremiah’s prophecy was fulfilled by the decree of Cyrus. The last words of the Hebrew Bible are: **“YHWH his God be with him, and let him go up”** (2 Chronicles 36:23, repeated from Ezra 1:3).
DWS

“Thus says YHWH to his anointed [to his messiah], to Cyrus [this Gentile],¹¹ whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut.”

• *Isaiah 45:1*

In other words, the gates of Babylon were to be opened up and the captives be allowed to return and to build up Jerusalem, and God’s Temple. That is what He will do. Go down to verse 17:

“Israel shall be saved in YHWH [at this time] with an everlasting [age-lasting] salvation: you shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end [for future ages]. For thus says YHWH that created the heavens;

God himself that formed the earth and made it; he has established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited:

I am YHWH; and there is none else.

I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth:

I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek you me in vain:

I YHWH speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.”

• *Isaiah 45:17–19*

They expected much. They expected the Kingdom of God to come on the earth. But you know what they were getting? Not the Kingdom of God. But Cyrus sent them there to do one specific thing, to rebuild the Temple of God, but they built their own houses first.

So Haggai says, consider your ways, because they are not considering my ways (God’s ways). Because of their ways, God was not coming along with the “much,” that they expected. When you take the whole prophecy of Isaiah chapters 44 and 45 into account, you find that even it applies to the end time in its complete fulfillment. The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:11: that these things happened to those in the past, for us that live at the end of the age for our understanding that all the prophets have prophesied.¹²

God gave them a command to start building His house. That was the specific reason for going up to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:3). They were putting it off, and God said, **“Consider your ways.”**

Now when that prophecy was given to Zerubbabel and Joshua, suddenly they began to blink their eyes. Let us see what happened.

“Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people [in Jerusalem], obeyed the voice of YHWH their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as YHWH their God had sent him, and the people did fear before YHWH [they began to change their minds and do the job].

Then spoke Haggai YHWH’s messenger in YHWH’s message unto the people, saying, ‘I am with you, says YHWH.’ And YHWH 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 YHWH of hosts, their God, In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.”

• *Haggai 1:12–15*

In other words, 24 days after the first prophecy, they made up their minds to get the timber from Lebanon and the stones and lay the foundation stone of the Temple.

¹¹ The term “messiah” means “anointed.” All kings were anointed. All priests who served in the Temple were anointed. Some prophets were anointed. *DWS*

¹² Even the apostle Paul thought Christ’s coming would be in his day. He was as wrong as were the people in Haggai’s time. Read 1 Corinthians 10:11 which says that time is still future to us:

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [eons, ages] are come.”

Haggai Chapter 2

Now we come to chapter 2 in the King James Version. **“In the seventh month, in the one and the twentieth day of the month”** (verse 1:1). For those of you that know about the festivals of God, this is the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Haggai’s name means “festival of the Lord,” indicating a festival period like the Feast of Tabernacles.

“... came the word of YHWH by the prophet Haggai, saying, Speak now [1] to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and [2] to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and [3] to the residue of the people, saying,

‘Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do you see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? [It was much smaller and less ornate.]

Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, says YHWH; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land, says YHWH, and work: for I am with you, says YHWH of hosts: According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my spirit remains among you: fear you not.’

For thus says YHWH of hosts; ‘Yet once, it is a little while,¹³ and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.’”

• **Haggai 2:1–6**

Once, like I did it in the past, I shall do it in the future. He does not tell them the time He will do it, but it would not be long as far as they are concerned.

“And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house [My house] with glory,

says YHWH of hosts.

‘The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,’

says YHWH of hosts.

‘The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former,’

says YHWH of hosts:

‘and in this place [where they will establish it in Jerusalem] will I give peace,’

says YHWH of hosts.”

• **Haggai 2:7–9**

That was on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. They had all the material ready to go to start the foundation of the Temple. That is where verse 10 comes in, because a particular day is now picked, in which the foundation stone was placed for that Temple back then. When you read this, you get the feeling that what is going to occur in the future will be that particular Temple with those stones. But he does say it will come once again, **“a little while,”** but He does not tell when. The chronological problem is the difficulty here.

They thought it was for their time. They even thought the glory was to go to their Temple. Every house of God that has ever been built, starting with the Garden of Eden, then the tabernacle in the wilderness, the sanctuary at Shiloh, Solomon’s temple, this one here in Haggai, the one enlarged by Simon the Hasmonean, and the one enlarged again by Herod that our Lord said was **“My Father’s house”** (John 2:16, 14:2), every one of those different Temples still represented what? They represented the one House of God in heaven. That is what he is talking about. Any replica here on earth can be considered as fulfilling the prophecy.

Then what happens?

“In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of YHWH by Haggai the prophet, saying, ...”

• **Haggai 2:10**

¹³ There is a grammatical problem here as far as the commentators are concerned. They do not know if this is “once” or “once again,” but let us go on. *ELM*

“In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month.” That is the month of Kislev, near our December. They established the foundation stone in that Temple on the 24th day of the ninth month of Kislev. They were starting to do the job that God said for them to do. It was in the second year of Darius, and at that time YHWH gave a prophecy to Haggai:

“Thus says YHWH of hosts; ‘Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy?’

And the priests answered and said, ‘No.’ [They were talking about common food.]

Then said Haggai, ‘If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean?’ [A dead body gave uncleanness.]

And the priests answered and said, ‘It shall be unclean.’

Then answered Haggai, and said, ‘So is this people [even though you have laid the foundation stone], **and so is this nation before me, says YHWH; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.’”**

• **Haggai 2:11–14**

Unclean. Though the foundation stone was made by these people, he considered the people and nation to be unclean. The prophecy would have to be done in the future by another group. The Temple was established. Go on down, you will find that He says, verse 18:

“Consider now from this day [the 24th of the 9th month] **and upward, ... even from the day that the foundation of YHWH’s temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, has not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.”**

• **Haggai 2:18–19**

Up until that time they had nothing but drought, nothing but problems. Now he says, **“from this very day will I bless you.”**

Relation to Hanukkah

I point this out to you because we are coming to a period of time when you had better pay attention to this 9th month and the 24th day of the month. Do you know what this 24th day of the 9th month signifies? Later, with this same Temple which was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanies in 168 BC, it was restarted again by Simon the Hasmonean. In fact, the altar was first cleaned up by his brother Judas Maccabaeus. They started the festival of Hanukkah, the “Feast of Dedication” mentioned in the New Testament (John 10:22). Hanukkah starts on the 9th month, the 25th of the month, the day after this 24th of Kislev.

Hanukkah has something to do with the re-establishment of a Temple, but a Temple made by clean people, a Temple that God will vouchsafe to be proper and right before the second coming of Christ.

The Future Zerubbabel

God says, **“from this very day,”** meaning a time in the future which he did not identify. When you read through the text, you feel that it meant their time. But in the Book of Malachi, written about a hundred years later, you find they were still in drought, still in difficulty and still having problems. This verse had to do with a future time.

“In that day, says YHWH of hosts, will I take you, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, says YHWH, and will make you as a signet: for I have chosen you,’ says YHWH of hosts.”

• **Haggai 2:23**

This means that his signet, his power of authority, would be handed down to someone in the future who would have the same name as he has. Just like John the Baptist had the office of Elijah, an Elijah is to come in the future.¹⁴ There also will be a future Zerubbabel, a prince of Israel, a prince of David, who will be born in Babylon. He will not be born in Palestine, but he will be in Palestine eventually.¹⁵ This person will raise up a new Temple. The foundation stone will be laid in the 9th month on the 24th day of the month. From that very day, God will bless this new people, not the people in the time of Haggai who He said were unclean. God said this was not the time for it.

The time will come when He will make a people in the future that will have their hands clean — clean of idolatry, clean of false teaching, a people who will accomplish this task. You must go to the next book, Zechariah, to find out who the people will be. God will send **“the spirit of grace and of supplications”** upon Jerusalem and on the people. And they will return to the one **“whom they have pierced”** (Zechariah 12:10).

They will return to Jesus Christ. Those are people who will rid Palestine of idolatry before the Second Coming of Christ, a people who will lay a foundation stone at a new Temple in Jerusalem. That new Temple is the one discussed in Haggai. That new Temple will have the foundation stone set in the near future.

Keep your eyes open. The month of Kislev is near our December, the day before Hanukkah starts: **“from that day forward I will bless you.”**

Ernest L. Martin, 1997
David Sielaff, March 2014

Addendum by David Sielaff

The Book of Haggai is the first of the last three “post-exilic” prophetic books of the Twelve Minor Prophets (see the chart on page 2). The last three books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, were written after the Jews were allowed to return to Judea from Babylon. Many commentators have noted a close connection between the Books of Haggai and Zechariah chapters 1–8.¹⁶

Ezra the priest makes the same connection in the Book of Ezra:

“Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God [Haggai and Zechariah] helping them.”

• *Ezra 5:1–2*

Once the foundation stone of the Temple was laid, and final permission received from the Persian King Darius, construction was completed speedily (Ezra 6:13):

“And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy, ...”

• *Ezra 6:14–16*

¹⁴ See Dr. Martin’s article [“The Elijah to Come.”](#) *DWS*

¹⁵ In this year of 2014, there are very few Jews (Israelites) left in the land around Babylon. Perhaps Jews will return to Babylon for this individual to come from here in the future. *DWS*

¹⁶ Dr. Martin shows in [“The Expansion and Portability of Zion”](#) that Jeremiah was the original author of prophecies attached to chapters 9–14 to the Book of Zechariah. This attachment was done by some unidentified editor, likely Ezra the Priest. *DWS*

Here is the chronology of the rebuilding of the Temple after the return from Babylon. The construction of the Temple was completed in four and a half years:

Event	Date
God's message came to Haggai on the	1 st day of the 6 th month, in the second year of Darius (Haggai 1:1)
Construction began on the	24 th day of the 6 th month, in the second year of Darius (Haggai 1:14–15)
Construction was completed on the	3 rd day of the 12 th month (Adar), ¹⁷ in the sixth year of Darius (Ezra 6:15)

Some argue there is a discrepancy regarding the laying of the foundation when one considers Ezra 3:6–10 and Ezra 5:16 and compares those verses with the description in Haggai 1:14–15. But Ezra himself tells us that the work was halted. Then he informs us when the work was resumed: **“Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto [until] the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia”** (Ezra 4:24). In reality, no problem exists.¹⁸

Laying the foundation means more than just laying a foundation stone and erecting a structure. They needed to level the platform and prepare the ground for all the structures related to the Temple, such as

1. the outer sanctuary walls;
2. the structures immediately inside the walls, such as storerooms, treasure rooms, sleeping rooms;
3. protecting and providing the water conduit from the Gihon Springs underneath the Temple; and
4. the stone structure of the Temple proper: the Holy Place and Holy of Holies.

All this requires more preparation than simply laying the foundation stone of the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. Apparently, steps 1, 2, and 3 had been done, yet 4 was not done because the people were delaying. God criticized them for not finishing the job He commanded them to perform as a condition of their return to the Holy Land.¹⁹

While the two Ezra passages mention laying the foundation, there is no mention of stones being laid in that foundation process. The first stone to be laid is the foundation stone, yet we are told by Haggai that no stones had been laid thus far, though the foundation had been previously prepared as Ezra told us.

“And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of YHWH: ...

Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of YHWH's temple was laid, consider it.”

• **Haggai 2:15, 18**

David Dorsey, The Literary Structure of the Old Testament

The outline structure of the Book of Haggai by author David Dorsey is a straightforward listing of four messages and one report, presented in chronological order. There is no symmetry to the whole, but rather it is a simple chronological compilation of the messages. Quote:

¹⁷ The month of Adar corresponds to March or April in our calendar. *DWS*

¹⁸ James Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve: Micah–Malachi* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2011), p. 762. See also my short commentary “[Haggai and the Temple](#)” and Dr. Ernest Martin’s article “[The Rebuilding of the Temple](#),” which analyzes the Book of Haggai specifically with regard to the rebuilding of the Temple. *DWS*

¹⁹ He wanted to take pleasure in their work. He would bless them in return, Haggai 1:8: **“Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, says YHWH.”** Remember, Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest already constructed the altar on the site (Ezra 3:2–3) before the Temple structure was built. Finally, keep in mind that Joshua’s name is “Jesus” in Greek (Ἰησοῦς). *DWS*

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- a **message of rebuke** and exhortation to rebuild the temple (1:2–11)
 - date: sixth month, first day
 - b **report of people’s response** and new message: **temple begun** (1:12–15)
 - date: sixth month, twenty-fourth day
 - c **message of encouragement** about temple now being built (2:1–9)
 - date: seventh month, twenty-first day
 - d **message of promise:** YHWH will now bless the people (2:10–19)
 - date: ninth month, twenty-fourth day
 - e **message about Zerubbabel’s significance** (2:20–23)
 - date: ninth month, twenty-fourth day²⁰
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James Nogalski’s Analysis

According to James Nogalski, the last three verses of Zephaniah 3:18–20 flow perfectly with the opening of the Book of Haggai 1:2–6. Hebrew catchwords used in both passages. Here is one example:

Zephaniah 3:19–20

Haggai 1:2–4

<p>“Behold, at that TIME I will undo all that afflict you: and I will save ... and gather her that was driven out; ... At that TIME will I bring you again, even in the TIME that I gather you: when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, says YHWH.”</p>	<p>“Thus speaks YHWH of hosts, saying, This people say, The TIME is not come, the TIME that YHWH’s house should be built ... Is it TIME for you, O you, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?”</p>
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What God promised in Zephaniah has happened for the people, although they did not realize it. The people have returned, been gathered, but they have not prospered.

Haggai’s Place in the Twelve

Nogalski comments on Haggai’s place in the entire compiled Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets. He also connects Haggai with the next book, Zechariah, and the final book, Malachi:

“The reconstruction of the temple appears for the first time [in the Minor Prophets] in Haggai, and the organization of the temple is [also] a significant focus of Zechariah [chapters] 1–8. In both instances, the temple reconstruction is a much-anticipated positive sign. By contrast, Malachi complicates this motif with its condemnation of the priests and the people for the way they take temple worship for granted ...”

• *Nogalski, Book of the Twelve, Micah–Malachi, p. 763.*

If the people of Judah do not do what God requires of them (both as a condition of the Mosaic Covenant with Him and as a condition of their return to the land), God promises not to give them prosperity, but rather He would do what was promised in the prophecies of Amos some two hundred years earlier:

Amos 4:9

Haggai 2:17

<p>“I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the</p>	<p>“I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labors of your hands;</p>
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²⁰ David Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, quoting from “Chapter 33: Haggai: Rebuild the Temple,” section “36.1 The Book of Haggai,” p. 316. *DWS*

palmerworm devoured them: yet have you not returned unto me, says YHWH.”	yet you turned not to me, says YHWH.”
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God gave to Moses these same predictions of punishment for Israel’s disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:22), repeated later when Solomon prayed for Israel (1 Kings 8:37; 2 Chronicles 6:28). The people of Judah were not ignorant. They knew what God required. They did not care what God wanted. At this moment in time, God said, obey and prosper, disobey and suffer. They believed, yet prosperity was delayed. As Nogalski writes, mostly agreeing with Dr. Martin’s analysis:

“The problematic nature of this paradigm must be born in mind, as books like Job and Ecclesiastes point out the limitations of this theology. ... Haggai fully expects that the people’s change of heart and change of behavior will result in God’s removal of the drought and a return to agricultural prosperity. Twice Haggai tells the people that things will be different from this day forward (2:15, 19). The book of Haggai, however, does not report whether this change indeed occurred, but an improvement in the situation can be detected in Zechariah [chapter] 8, which draws on the images of Haggai and suggests these changes were underway two years later (see Zechariah 7:1), although perhaps not to the extent Haggai anticipated (see discussion of Zechariah 8:9–12).”

• *Nogalski, Book of the Twelve, Micah–Malachi, p. 763*

Later Prosperity

As Dr. Martin points out, the people did not prosper immediately after laying the stones and completing the Temple. However, over the decades prosperity did find its way to Jerusalem and its environs. The traveler from Egypt called Aristeas, described an infrastructure and water system that supported the Temple and its functions. Read his description in [“The Letter of Aristeas,”](#) Thackeray translation, sections 83–120. What is described indicates some wealth in the operations of the Temple structure and facilities.

“When we reached the district, we beheld the city set in the center of the whole of Judea upon a mountain which rose to a great height. Upon its crest stood the temple in splendor, with its three enclosing walls, more than seventy cubits high, and of a breadth and length matching the structure of the edifice. The whole was built with a magnificence and prodigality beyond all precedent. It was obvious that no expense had been spared on the great doorway and the fastening which held it to the door-posts and the stability of the lintel. ...”

• *The Letter of Aristeas, sections 83–85*

Aristeas goes on to describe the altar, which may have been the same altar constructed by Zerubbabel and Joshua. He describes how the altar caught the blood and transferred the fluid from the altar to below the raised floor of the Temple so the priests would not walk in flowing blood from the sacrifices. However, this relative prosperity occurred hundreds of years after Ezra and Malachi were written, and lasted until the next expansion and beautification of the Temple by King Herod so it would have a wondrous appearance in the time of Christ until its destruction in 70 AD.

In spite of His punishments, God has not forgotten His people. He wishes them well but He does require them to obey Him. These actions are for our example (1 Corinthians 10:11). Learn from them.

David Sielaff