

# **OBSERVATIONS OF THE BOOK OF HAGGAI**

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### Macro Observations

1. Haggai addresses the post-exilic period from August 29 to December 18 of the second year of King Darius, 520 B.C. (1:12:24).<sup>1</sup>
2. Haggai contains six major sections (1:1-2, 3-11, 12-15; 2:1-9, 10-19, 20-23).
3. The first section is an introduction which establishes the overall setting, the originator of the messages within Haggai, the conveyor of the messages, and the recipients of the messages (1:1-2).
4. The second section is a message of rebuke concerning disobedience in rebuilding the house of the Lord (1:3-11).
5. The third section describes the response of obedience to the preceding message of rebuke (1:12-15).
6. The fourth section is God's message of encouragement to the people, and a reminder that God keeps his covenants (2:1-9).
7. The fifth section is another message of rebuke and concerns defilement (2:10-19).
8. The sixth section is another message of encouragement and is prophetic in that it describes God's sovereignty over the nations "in that day" (2:20-23).

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<sup>1</sup> New Living Translation Bible. A number of dates in Haggai can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Persian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. These messages were given in the year 520 B.C.

9. God points out to the people that it is not merely the building itself that is important but their obedience to him that will keep their offerings from becoming defiled (2:11-17).

10. The phrases “the Lord Almighty says,” and “declares the Lord Almighty,” occur nineteen times (1:2, 5, 7, 9, 13; 2:4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 17, 23).

11. God purposely withheld prosperity from the exiles during the time when the people placed more importance on meeting their physical needs than on rebuilding the Lord Almighty’s house (1:5-6, 9-11).

12. God repeatedly encouraged the people, and reminded them that he is a covenant-keeping God (1:13; 2:4, 5, 19, 23).

13. After the exiles decided to obey the Lord Almighty he stirred up the spirit in all of them (1:12-14).

14. The people set unacceptable standards for the construction of the rebuilt house of the Lord (1:7-9).

15. God’s sovereignty is described throughout this book as he reminded the people that he owns everything on the earth, and controls nations (1:9-11; 2:6-9, 17, 22-23).

16. God alluded to a future day when he will overthrow the authority of nations, and make “Zerubbabel” like a signet ring (2:21-23).

#### Micro Observations

1. The writer uses specific months and days relative to the reign of King Darius (1:1, 1:15, 2:1, 2:10, 2:18,2:20).

2. The writer makes it clear that the message is from the Lord Almighty (1:2, 5, 7, 9, 13; 2:1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 17, 23).

3. The Lord Almighty chose to deliver his messages to the Jews, through the prophet Haggai (1:1; 2:1, 10).

4. God communicated his messages through the prophet Haggai (1:1, 3; 2:1, 10, 20).

5. God conveyed three individual messages (1:2-11; 2:1-9; 2:10-23).

6. Two of the three messages were directed to Zerubabel, and Joshua (1:1; 2:1).

7. The first message begins with the Lord Almighty quoting a statement of the people who said it was not yet time to build the Lord's house (1:2).

8. Each of the three messages from the Lord Almighty begins with a question (1:3; 2:3,4,11).

9. The first message from the Lord Almighty makes four contrasts: a) the paneled houses of the people, and the Lord's house which remains a ruin, b) the planting of much, but the harvesting of little, c) eating, but never having enough, c) putting on clothes, but never being warm, and d) earning wages, but putting them in a purse with holes in it (1:3-6).

10. The Lord said that he will take pleasure and be honored if they followed his instructions (1:8).

11. God withheld the dew from the heavens and the earth from yielding its crops because of the people's perspective of the Lord's house compared to their own well-being. He also called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grains, the new wine, the oil, and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of their hands (1:10,11).

12. Zerubabel, Joshua, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai because the Lord their God sent them (1:12).

13. The Lord encouraged the people by declaring to them that he was with them (1:13).

14. After the people obeyed the Lord he stirred up the spirit of Zerubabbel, the governor of Judah, and Joshua, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people (1:14).

15. In the second message from the Lord Almighty, asks if they had seen the Lord's house in its former glory, and how the rebuilt house looks to them (2:3).

16. One of the three messages was directed to the priests in the form of a question about the Law (2:11, 12).

17. God used principles from the Mosaic Law, such as becoming defiled by touching a dead body<sup>2</sup>, to get the people to understand how disobedience also causes defilement (2:13).

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<sup>2</sup> Leviticus 23:39-44.

Translations Used

New International Version, Life Application Bible, Zondervan Publishing House and Tyndale House Publishers, 1988.

New Living Translation, Tyndale House Publishers, 1996.

New Scofield Reference Edition, Oxford University Press, 1967.