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# Haggai

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## Author

Haggai was a prophet who returned to Judah from Babylonian exile. The name Haggai means festive.

## Book Background

In 539BC, the Persians began to allow exiles to return to their homelands. About 50,000 Israelites chose to return to Jerusalem. Zerubbabel was the political leader who led them back. Joshua was the religious leader. They rebuilt the altar, and laid the temple foundation around 536BC ([Ezra 6:3-5](#)). Most of those that returned were priests, Levites, and the poor among the people. Once the foundation was in place, the work halted. God used Haggai and Zechariah as prophets to encourage the people to press on in their relationship with God.

## Outline

<a href="#">[Hag 1:1-15]</a> Rebuke	call to rebuild the temple
<a href="#">[Hag 2:1-9]</a> Call to Keep Believing	glory of the second temple
<a href="#">[Hag 2:10-19]</a> Assurance to the People	purification and blessing of the defiled people
<a href="#">[Hag 2:20-23]</a> Assurance to the Leader	message to Zerubbabel

## Key Verses

*Haggai 1:8 Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the Lord. (NKJV)*

*Haggai 2:4 Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the Lord; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the Lord, 'and work; for I am with you,' says the Lord of hosts. (NKJV)*

*Haggai 2:19 Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.'" (NKJV)*

*Haggai 2:23 'In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the Lord, 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the Lord of hosts.'" (NKJV)*

## Compare the Prophets

<i>Haggai</i>	<i>Zechariah</i>
older	younger
spoke first, August 520BC	spoke second, October 520BC
practical	poetic
msg = restart the rebuilding project	msg = look ahead as you rebuild

## Book Highlights

The book of Haggai preserves a divinely inspired 4-part message that Haggai gave between August and December of 520BC. The people who had returned from Babylonian captivity were not enthused about their primary duty of re-establishing true worship of God. Haggai urged the Jews to finish rebuilding the Temple after 14 years of idleness.

Though the people weren't being actively evil, they were passive and lethargic about their relationship with God. They were focused on their own physical concerns ([Hag 1:9-11](#)).

When Haggai proclaimed God's command to rebuild the temple and God's promise that

the glory of the second temple would exceed that of the first, the people obeyed ([Hag 1:12-14](#)). This made Haggai one of the few prophets that the people obeyed. According to [Ezra 6:14](#), Haggai did get to see the completion of the temple.

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## Personal Reflection and Application

Do you err as the Israelites did and say, "the time is not come" ([Hag 1:2](#))? Do you fail to redeem the time that you have?

Do you allow yourself to be paralyzed by the thought that things are only going to get worse until Christ returns? To be faithful, you must work while you wait.

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## Small Group Conversation Guide

Sometimes we get sidetracked or discouraged in our walk with God. God has given us His Word and His people to challenge and encourage us to move forward in faith.

- Consider that as a believer, your body serves as God's temple ([1Cor 6:19](#)). What are you doing to build and maintain that temple ([Hag 1:8](#))?

- In what way can God's Word help you move forward in your faith? What reading plan are you using to remind you to be in God's Word regularly?
- In what way can the people in your church encourage and challenge you in your faith?

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## Leadership Principles from Haggai

### Leaders Get Discouraged

Leaders get discouraged too. Look at how God encouraged the leader Zerubbabel ([Hag 2:23](#)). You may find it helpful to keep a list of Bible verses that you find encouraging. Read those regularly. Try memorizing some of them. Look around you for other leaders that need encouragement. Share your favorite verses with them. Nurture relationships with those who challenge and encourage you.

### Don't Forget

When people forget to love God, He begins to withdraw His blessings. Notice what happened to the people when they failed to make God their first priority ([Hag 1:3-9](#)).

- Their actions contradicted their claim to love God.
- They worked hard but saw few results.
- They spent much but got little in return.
- They were dissatisfied with their lives.
- God was dissatisfied with their behavior.

As a leader, what do you do to be sure your love for God is strong and visible to others?

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## Something to Find in Each Chapter

As you read through the book, it may help to have something to find in each chapter. Try these:

01. What people were doing instead of rebuilding the temple	02. How God planned to bless and use the rebuilt temple
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