

Book 37: Haggai

Setting Appropriate Priorities

Haggai is the first of the *post-exilic* prophets – those to write after the Jewish exile in Babylon. The others are Zechariah and Malachi.
It is the only book of the Bible that has two Chapters.

Haggai: Background

In 536 B.C. the Persian King Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to their land and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.
When they got there and began the work, opposition arose immediately from their non-Jewish neighbors. (See Ezra & Nehemiah.)

It is now 16 years later: 520 B.C.

The Temple still lies in ruins with only an altar for sacrifice and the foundation being completed.

The people had failed to follow through on their commitments.

The primary focus of Haggai is to encourage them to finish the work.

Haggai: Main Characters

Zerubbabel the governor of Judah. He first appeared in the book of Ezra as he led a group of captives back to their native land.

He was a descendant of David.

You can find him in the genealogies of Christ in both Matthew 1 and Luke 3.

Joshua the high priest. He is called Jeshua in Ezra & Nehemiah.

While Zerubbabel held the political authority under the Persian king, Joshua held the spiritual authority as a direct descendant of Aaron.

Together they led the people in obeying the voice of the Lord.

Haggai: Outline

The Book of Haggai consists of four messages, each with a given date:

1:1-15 August 29, 520 B.C.

2:1-9 October 17, 520 B.C.

2:10-19 December 18, 520 B.C.

2:20-23 December 18, 520 B.C.

Haggai: Discussion

The rectangle below represents a foundation – an unfulfilled commitment.



1. Based on what you see in the book of Haggai, discuss how and why the people failed to follow through.
2. Now try to sum up the Lord's word to the people to get their priorities straight. Take note that it is not a simply a message that says, "Get to work."

Haggai: Application



Foundation

3. How can we be similar to the people of Jerusalem in our lack of follow through? Think of concrete examples.
What do you think the Lord would have say to us through Haggai?