

NAME

The word “Haggai” means “my feast” or “festal.”

Mitchell:

Some feel that such a name means that the prophet was so named because he was born on a certain feast day. Others speculate that it indicates the joyous character of his predictions.

It is possible that Haggai was born during one of the three pilgrimage feasts (Unleavened Bread, Pentecost or Weeks, and Booths [Deuteronomy 16:16]). Of course, his parents could have simply been celebrating his birth - a joyous occasion.

AUTHOR

Mitchell:

Haggai is mentioned in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14, along with Zechariah, as the prophet who encouraged the remnant, who returned after the Babylonian captivity, to rebuild the temple when they were beset on every hand by difficulties. As his prophecy reveals, he was evidently a very practical man.

God seems to have given Haggai the job of “encourager.”

Haggai was probably born in Babylonian captivity and returned with Zerubbabel in 536 B.C. Zerubbabel returned to rebuild the Temple. Haggai was a contemporary with Zechariah (520-518 B.C.) and perhaps Malachi (450-400 B.C.). Although Malachi was probably associated more with Nehemiah who returned in 457 B.C. Haggai is the first voice from God after the exile.

Mitchell:

His limited vocabulary and plain writing style have caused many to speculate that he was from the working class of people. Yet this plain practical man was used of God to rebuild the Temple.

Based on Haggai 2:3, it is possible that Haggai may have witnessed the destruction of Solomon’s temple. If so, he could have been in his early 70’s during his ministry.

DATE

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are referred to as “post-exilic” prophets - the period of history after the Jews returned from their captivity. The history of this period is given in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

Because his prophecies are dated, it can easily be determined that his ministry lasted approximately four months: August 29 (2nd year of King Darius / 1st day of the 6th month [Elul - Hebrew sacred calendar] to December 18, 520 B.C. (24th day of the 9th month [Kislev - Hebrew sacred calendar]).

- August 29, 520 Haggai’s first message
- September 21, 520 Resumption of the building of the Temple
- October 17, 520 Haggai’s second message
- December 18, 520 Haggai’s third message
- December 18, 520 Haggai’s fourth message

(see also chart: Halley, page 438)

THEME

Halley (page 44): *"Rebuilding The Temple"*

Mitchell: *"Put God first in all things."*

Carl: "Build it and He will come."

Mitchell:

The people had returned in 536 B.C. specifically to rebuild the Temple. By and large they were the more zealous among the Jews, and they immediately began work on the temple project. However, the building program had been side tracked and now sixteen years later, the temple remained unfinished. Haggai went around with a message as plain and simple as $2+2=4$. He told them to get off the dime, put God first and rebuild the temple. This little book is the gospel of work - the evangel of do - the philosophy of action.

NASB - Introduction to Haggai:

Next to Obadiah, Haggai is the shortest book in the Old Testament - short yet long on importance. Haggai clearly shows the consequences of disobedience (1:6,11; 2:16,17) and obedience (2:7-9:19). The construction of the temple is the balance point between the two. When the people give priority to God and His house, they are blessed rather than cursed. Obedience brings the encouragement and strength of the Spirit of God (2:4,5).

Key Word (Nelson's): The Reconstruction of the Temple - Haggai's basic theme is clear: The remnant must reorder its priorities and complete the temple before it can expect the blessing of God upon its efforts.

Key Verses (Nelson's):

"Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord" (Haggai 1:7,8).

"And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, declares the Lord of hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:7-9).

Key Chapter (Nelson's): 2 - Verses 6-9 record some of the most startling prophecies in Scripture: *"I will shake heaven and earth and the sea and the dry land"* (the Tribulation) and *"so that the treasures of all the nations shall come in"* and *"in this place I will give peace"* (the second coming of the Messiah).

Outline:

- I. The Message of Rebuke 1
A call to rebuild the temple. God calls His people to consider their priorities - all their work goes into satisfying themselves. What obedience they had was because they were afraid of God.
- II. The Message of Encouragement 2:1-9
They were discouraged because the temple was not as good as the one before. God's encouragement is forget what the Temple looks like and to look at themselves. It's God's glory that dwells in the Temple. Your responsibility is obedience. The problem is that their lives are unclean before God.
- III. The Message of Blessing 2:10-19
Consider that God will bless you. But, you need to labor well whether there is immediate blessing or not.
- IV. The Message of Hope 2:20-23

RECIPIENTS

The remnant who had returned after the Babylonian captivity who were to rebuild the Temple while struggling against numerous difficulties. And us...

CONTRIBUTION TO CANON

Prophecy concerning the Tribulation and second coming of the Messiah (Haggai 2:7-9)

Some lessons to be learned:

1. Haggai reveals to us that our duty is faithful obedience regardless of what we see going on around us.
2. Do not neglect obedience to the obvious commands of God.
3. Beware of expecting immediate results.
4. Beware of discontent with our place in God's program.

RESOURCES

Gromacki, Robert C. *New Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1978

Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House

Horton, David, General Editor. *The Portable Seminary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany House Publishers, 2006

Nelson's Quick Reference - Bible Maps And Charts, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1994

As general resources I've relied on my class notes from various professors at Biola University (especially those of Dr. Curtis Mitchell), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (WCBS), and Talbot Seminary as well as notes shared with me by Annie Kartoizian.

Additional reference material has come from the study Bibles of the English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, and The New Living Translation.

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