

Old Testament Survey – *Haggai*

Date: May 1, 2022; Teacher: Rev. David Senters
New Covenant Presbyterian Church, Richmond Hill, GA

Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. 37. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?*

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness,^a and do immediately pass into glory;^b and their bodies, being still united to Christ,^c do rest in their graves, till the resurrection.^d

Thomas Watson, “Hope is a Christian’s anchor, which he casts within the veil.... The best of a saint’s comfort begins when his life ends; but the wicked have all their heaven here.”^e

Theological Significance: Upon their death, a Christian will end their struggle with the remaining corruption of sin, immediately enjoy the glory of heaven, and their bodies will rest in the grave, waiting the resurrection, and the full redemption and glorification.



Photo: Rembrandt’s *Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 1630.

^aHeb 12:23

^bLuke 23:43; 2 Cor 5:6, 8; Phil 1:23

^c1 Thess 4:14

^dDan 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15

^eThomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity* (East Peoria, IL: Versa Press, 2021), 295.

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DQ: Was the Babylonian Exile a sign to the unfaithful in Judah that God was ending his covenant with them? Why or why not?

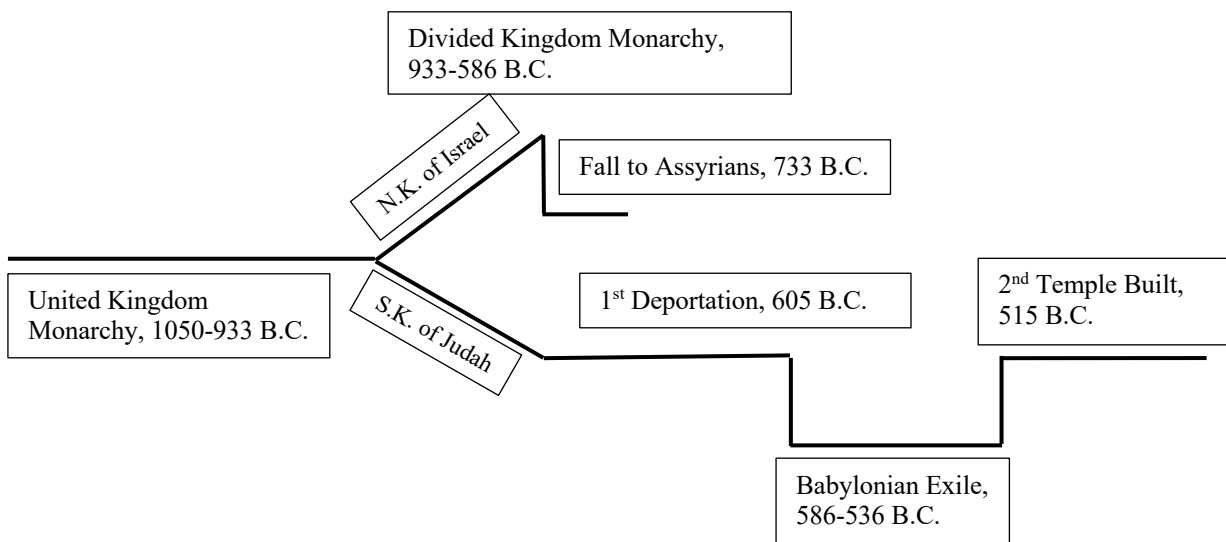
Context, Authorship, Date for Haggai

1. Authorship and Date

- Haggai the Prophet and Messenger of the Lord (1:12-13).
- Haggai's name means "festival" or "feast."
- 520 B.C. Haggai's ministry took place during the time of Ezra and the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra 5:1; 6:14).

2. Historical Context of Haggai – Postexilic Prophet

a. Timeline



b. Historical Background

- Jerusalem Destroyed by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:17-21).
- The Persian King Cyrus, allowed the exiles to return to Jerusalem and he commissioned Jerusalem to be rebuilt, including the walls (under the leadership of Nehemiah) and the Temple (under the leadership of Ezra) (2 Chronicles 36:22-23).
- The Jews received opposition and the rebuilding of the Temple was delayed. "Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia (Ezra 4:4-5)."
- Inquiry was made, and Darius discovered the commission from Cyrus to rebuild the Temple. "A record. In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king issued a decree: Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the house be rebuilt, the place where sacrifices were offered, and let its foundations be retained.... Let the cost be paid from the royal treasury (Ezra 6:2b-3, 4b)."

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- v. From the preaching ministry of the postexilic prophets, and of course God's providence (even from the pagan nation Persia!), the Temple was rebuilt. "And the elders of the Jews built and prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They finished their building by the decree of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes king of Persia; and this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king (Ezra 6:14-15)."

Purpose of Haggai – "Haggai's mission was to enlist and motivate by every legitimate means at his disposal and at times even to embarrass, humiliate, and cajole those who had returned from the exile to complete the important task that lay before them."^f

Content of Haggai – Four Oracles/Sermons – Get to Work Rebuilding the Temple!

- 1. Oracle #1: Rebuild the Temple (1:1-11)
 - a. Excuse: It's not the right time to build (v. 2).
 - b. Reply: Is it time for you to live in a house, while God's house lies in ruins (v. 5)?
 - c. In vv. 6, 10-11, because the Temple is not being rebuilt, the covenant curses (Deut 28:15-68) have come upon the Jews.

DQ: What were some of the covenant curses? What were their purpose?

- 2. The People's Response (1:12-15)
 - a. The people respond in obedience and fear of the LORD (v. 12).
 - b. In response to their obedience, the covenant curses are reversed, and the covenant blessing of God's presence is promised (v. 13).
- 3. Oracle #2: The Latter Glory Will Be Greater Than the Former (2:1-9)
 - a. Excuse: This rebuilt Temple won't be like the glory of Solomon's Temple (v. 3). Let's read Ezra 3:11-13.
 - b. Let's read Josh 1:6-9. What is God reaffirming for Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the remnant people?
 - c. Did the latter glory exceed the former (v. 9)? Is this a blessing only to be realized in the eschaton? What do the shaking of the heavens, the earth, and all the nations have to do with this (vv. 6-8)?
- 4. Oracle #3: I Will Bless You (2:10-19)
 - a. Holiness is not contagious, but unholiness is (vv. 10-14).
 - i. Will what is holy make the common holy when it touches it? No (v. 12).
 - ii. Will what is unclean/unholy make what is holy unclean/unholy when it touches it? Yes (v. 13).

^fRichard A. Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, vol. 21A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 67.

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- iii. The Point: The people are not made holy simply because they are building the Temple (v. 14). They won't become holy by osmosis.
- b. Covenant Curses to Stir Up Repentance (vv. 15-19).
 - i. Excuse: I don't have time to build because of my crops.
 - ii. If they prioritize the rebuilding of God's house, God is more than able to bless their house (v. 19).

DQ: What does this principle teach us about our observance of the Sabbath day?

- 5. Oracle #4: Zerubbabel Chosen as A Signet Ring (2:20-23)
 - a. Jer 22:24-25, "As I live, declares the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the **signet ring** on my right hand, yet I would tear you off and give you into the hand of those who seek your life, into the hand of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans."
 - b. What are the implications for Zerubbabel to be like a signet ring (v. 23)?

The Features of Haggai

- 1. Precise Dating of His Oracles (Hag 1:1a, 15; 2:1, 10, 18a, 20)
 - a. Haggai is notifying Judah that the 70 years are reaching their end.
 - b. Jer 29:10-12, "For thus says the LORD: 'When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.'"
- 2. Main Characters
 - a. Haggai the Prophet
 - b. Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah
 - c. Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest
 - d. The Remnant of the People
 - e. Darius the Persian King
- 3. Deuteronomistic Curses of Agriculture
 - a. 1:6, 10-11; 2:16-17, 19
 - b. Deut 28:18, 22-23, 38-40, 51
- 4. Repetition
 - a. The divine origin of the message^g
 - i. "The word of the LORD came through (or to)" the prophet Haggai (1:1, 3; 2:1, 10, 20)."
 - ii. "This is what the LORD Almighty says (1:2, 5, 7; 2:6, 11)."

^gRichard A. Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen, [*Haggai, Malachi*](#), vol. 21A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 68.

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- iii. “Declares the LORD Almighty (1:9; 2:4, 7, 8, 9, 23).”
 - iv. “Says the LORD (1:8; 2:4, 14, 17, 23).”
 - v. “The voice of the LORD their God (1:12).”
 - vi. “This message of the LORD (1:13).”
 - b. Call for careful obedience. “Give careful thought” or “give careful thought to your ways (1:5, 7; 2:15, 18[2x]).”^h
 - c. Family connection and official positions of Zerubbabel and Joshua (1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4, 21, 23).ⁱ
5. Rhetorical Questions^j
- a. 1:4, “Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies in ruins?”
 - b. 1:9, “You looked for much, and behold it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the LORD of hosts.”
 - c. 2:3, “Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?”
 - d. 2:12-13 contain rhetorical questions for the priest.
 - e. 2:19, “Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day I will bless you.”

Important Theology from Haggai

- 1. The Temple
 - Rev 21:22, “And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.”
- 2. Holiness for Worship
 - 1 Pet 2:4-5, “As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
- 3. Prophetic Word as Divine Revelation
 - 2 Pet 1:21, “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”
- 4. God’s Unchanging Covenant Faithfulness
 - Rom 8:33, 35, “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”
- 5. Davidic Covenant and the Messiah, and Eschatology
 - Messiah exalted Son of David (Phil 2:9-11).
 - God shakes what is shaken so that what remains is an unshakeable kingdom (Heb 12:18-29).

^hIbid.

ⁱIbid.

^jIbid, 69.