

Haggai

“Build God’s house”

July 11, 2021 Background and introduction of key characters (1:1)
July 18, 2021 First message: Put first things first (1:2-15)
July 25, 2021 Second message: Find strength in God’s promises (2:1-9)
August 1, 2021 Third and fourth messages: Trust in God for blessings (2:10-23)

Opening prayer: Lord God, already in Eden you asked us to be stewards of your creation. But we have loved and served the created, not you, our Creator. Forgive us for keeping that which belongs to you. Move us by your love to put you first in all we do, that your name may be glorified. Amen.

As we study the book of Haggai, we will see that the theme is “Build God’s house.” Certainly there is an aspect of God’s desire for the people to build up the physical temple in Jerusalem.

1. What is the significance of the temple in Jerusalem? (See also 2 Samuel 7:11-16; 1 Kings 6:12,13; 1 Kings 9:3).
2. Explain: you can tell a lot about a group of believers if you look at their house of worship.

Haggai 1:1 *Key characters*

3. This verse introduces us to most of the principal characters in the book of Haggai. Who are they and what were their occupations?
D _____ was _____ of Persia.
H _____ was a _____.
Z _____ was the _____ of Judah.
J _____ was the _____. Jehozadak, his father, was taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar. (See 1 Chronicles 6:15.)
4. Look up Matthew 1:12 and Luke 3:27. What do you notice about Zerubbabel?
5. What does that teach us about God?

Haggai 1:2-11 *A pierced purse*

6. What was God's complaint against his people?

7. Keeping in mind the historical context of Haggai, Haggai 1:2-11 and Ezra 4:1-5, write some excuses the people of Haggai's day may have given for *not* building up God's house.

8. Were such concerns legitimate?

9. What had life been like for the people of Haggai's day because they had not put God's work first?

10. Table talk – Agree or disagree: Whenever we have financial difficulty, it is because we have failed to put God first in our life of stewardship.

11. Think about our country and the blessings we have received. Write down some excuses we may give for not building up God's house.

12. Are those concerns legitimate?

13. Explain with help from this section of God's Word: An "I'll do it later" attitude is dangerous when applied to Christian stewardship.

14. Evaluate: Although God commanded his Old Testament people to build a temple, he hasn't given us New Testament Christians that charge. So while building a beautiful church or Ministry and Education Center for our congregation would be nice, it is not necessary.

Haggai 1:12-15 *A miraculous response*

15. What was the miraculous response to Haggai's message?

16. Why did the people and their leaders respond to Haggai's message the way they did?

17. What encouragement and comfort does this section of God's Word give to our congregation as we are in the midst of a building project?

18. Explain: The building project God had in mind for the people of Haggai's day was about more than bricks and mortar.

Summary: God can't stand being second in our lives. He wants us to put him before our homes, our cars, our schooling, our careers, and even first before our family. God also wants us to put him first today, and not "later." God empowers us to do this by telling us that he, the Lord of hosts, is with us.

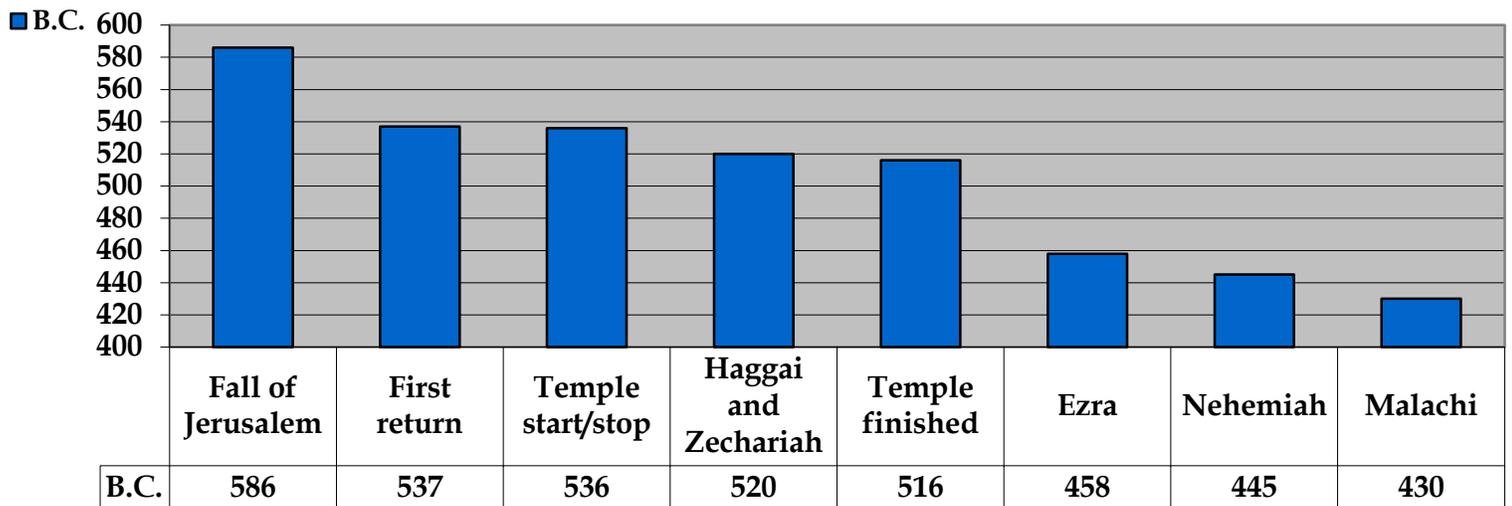
For the next lesson (July 25)

Second message: Find strength in God's promises (2:1-9)

Kings of Persia¹

Cyrus (the Great)	538-530 B.C.
Cambyses	529-522
Darius I	521-486
Xerxes	485-465
Artaxerxes I	464-424
Darius II	423-405
Artaxerxes II	404-359
Artaxerxes III	358-338
Arses	337-336
Darius III	335-331

Key dates and events surrounding the Babylonian captivity



Events in Ezra during the Reign of Cyrus²

538	Cyrus' decree (Ezra 1)
533 (Summer?)	Arrival in Jerusalem (Ezra 2:68)
533 (Fall?)	Altar built (Ezra 3:2)
533 (September 20)	First sacrifices on new altar (Ezra 3:6)
532	Second temple begun (Ezra 3:8)
531	Work on temple halted (Ezra 4:4,5)

Prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah in 520 B.C.³

Haggai 1:1-13	Tuesday, August 29
Haggai 1:14-16	Thursday, September 21
Haggai 2:1-9	Tuesday, October 17
Zechariah 1:1-6	October/November
Haggai 2:10-19	Monday, December 18
Haggai 2:20-23	Monday, December 18

¹ "From Abraham to Paul" by Andrew E. Steinmann

² Ibid

³ Ibid