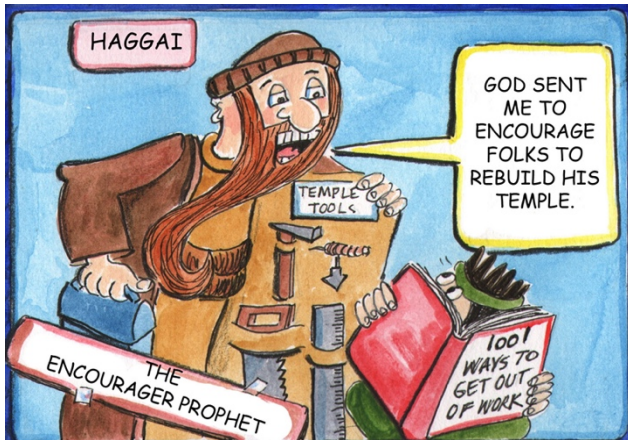


HAGGAI

STUDY GUIDE

AUTHOR & DATE



Like several other prophets, we know very little about **Haggai**, whose name likely means "festive." While Jewish tradition holds he was a prophet during the exile in Babylon, there is nothing in Scripture to support that. Haggai prophesied after the exile.

Instead, based on the dates Haggai provides within the text for his four messages, we can safely assume the book came about **approximately 520 B.C.** Further supporting this date is that the finished temple is not mentioned, which occurred in 515 B.C.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Considered post-exilic prophecy, Haggai ministers to those who returned to Jerusalem following years of exile in Babylon. Pre-exilic prophets had to deal with people lacking a true relationship with God and dependent upon religious tradition. Post-exilic prophets, on the other hand, dealt with discouraged people who didn't think their religious traditions mattered, a Persian influence which considered all religions equal. Therefore, there was little incentive to rebuild the temple and restore the distinctive Jewish religious life among the nations. Haggai, and his contemporary, Zechariah, encourage the people to set themselves apart to God through obedience and establishing once again the Mosaic Law. **Read Ezra 4:24-6:22 to remind yourself of what was happening during the time of Haggai.**

And though the spirit that animated their first enterprise, and the enthusiasm that accompanied a great national movement, excited them to commence the work with earnestness and ardour, their hearts were not sufficiently engaged in its prosecution to enable them to rise superior to inward distraction and outward opposition; and so they grew less interested in the completion of the undertaking, and they acquiesced with stolid complacency in its enforced cessation. They learned to look on the ruins of their holy house with a certain desponding equanimity, and turned to the furtherance of their own personal concerns, contentedly leaving the restoration of the temple to other times and stronger hands than theirs.

-- H.D.M. Spence, *The Pulpit Commentary: Haggai*

- What in your life receives more time and attention than the things of God? How will you make changes to realign to Godly priorities?

- The people in Haggai's time were basically reflecting on past "glory days." In what way do you live and look upon the past "glory days" related to your relationship with the Lord? How does your thinking need to shift so you don't miss out on what God is doing now?

- How will God provide for the materials to rebuild the temple? What do you learn from this?

- What is the direct reward of the people's obedience? What in your life needs to shift from disobedience to obedience so you also can experience this direct reward?

- The people had to withstand negative external pressure in order to do God's will. What in your life is getting "heat" from others, and how will you stand against it?

KEY WORD:

KEY VERSE:

KEY CHAPTER:

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