

Just Checking In
JCI #193 March 2018
Haggai: Consider Your Ways

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Haggai – Consider Your Ways – Time to Rebuild

It's a small book. Please read it through before you read what follows.

Haggai and Zechariah both preached to the remnant that returned from Babylon to rebuild the temple at the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC. About 42,000 Jews left Babylon and returned to Israel under the leadership of Zerubbabel (in the royal line of David) and Joshua the High Priest. They arrived back in Israel in September 537 BC, began work on the foundation of the temple in April of 536 BC, and were stopped immediately by opposition from the local pagan political leaders and the decree of the new king in Persia. The temple sat idle for the next 15 years. During this time, the people concentrated more and more on their own houses, herds and croplands. As time went on, they got comfortable with life, and lost interest in the temple project. God then sent drought and repeated crop losses for multiple years to bring the people back to a place of dependence and repentance for their spiritual apathy. It did not work. Therefore, God sent Haggai to rebuke them with his signal cry: "Consider your ways..." Another way of saying, "Look at what you're doing and what's happening because of it!" The people, all the people, responded with united repentance and God blessed them with a revival of heart and a renewed focus on His glory, His temple, and worshipping Him. In spite of opposition and no legal reversal of the order to stop building, they stepped out in faith and began to clear the foundation and start the rebuilding process once again. God immediately responded to their obedience by promising them "I am with you!"

The following is a historical chart that helps you see the events and timing of the return and how Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi fit together.

HAGGAI – BACKGROUND NOTES 538 BC – 433 BC

Stage: Repossession 100 years from first return to completion of both temple and repair of Jerusalem's walls.

Books: Ezra, Esther, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

538-536BC Return, Rebuild of Temple Starts, Opposition Stops It

520-515BC Rebuild of Temple Restarted & Completed

445-433BC Rebuild of Walls and City of Jerusalem & Related Events

Ezra 1:1 **538 BC** Decree to Return & Restore the Temple

Ezra 3:1-6 **537 BC September** Altar rebuilt, Tabernacles celebrated

Ezra 3:8 **536 BC April** Temple rebuilding begins

Ezra 4:1 **536 BC** Opposition mounts

Ezra 4:23-24 **536 BC** Temple rebuilding stopped by decree

Ezra 5:1-2 **520 BC Haggai, Zechariah renew call to Rebuild Temple**

Haggai **Aug 29, 520 BC – Dec 18, 520 BC**

Zechariah **Oct 520 BC – Dec 7, 518 BC**

Ezra 6:13-15 **520 BC to March 12, 515 BC Temple Rebuilding Completed**

Esther **480-473 BC** Between Ezra 6-7 and before Nehemiah's return

Ezra 7:8 **August 4, 458 BC Ezra arrives in Jerusalem**

Ezra 9-10 **Sept 19, 458 BC** Repentance for rejecting God's law

Ezra 10:9 **Dec 19, 458 BC** Discipline against offenders

Nehemiah 1 **November 446 BC Nehemiah's sorrow** about the walls

Nehemiah 2 **April 445 BC Nehemiah's Request** of the King

Nehemiah 6:15 **Oct 2, 445 BC Jerusalem's Wall completed**

Nehemiah 8 **Oct 8, 445 BC Ezra reads the Law, Feast of Tabernacles**

Nehemiah 9-12 **Oct 31, 445 BC People renew the covenant of Moses**

Nehemiah 13 after **433 BC Nehemiah returns** to find backsliding again

Malachi after **433 BC Sometime near Neh 13 rebuke to priests**

The return to Jerusalem begins with Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest in 538BC

Haggai & Zechariah preach 520-518 BC

Temple Completed 515BC

Esther's events 480-473BC

Ezra comes to Jerusalem in 458BC

Nehemiah comes to Jerusalem and completes the city wall in 445BC

Haggai's Four Messages and Big Truths for Us to Embrace

#1 August 29th, 520 BC Rebuke... Restoration...Revival...Rebuilding

Rebuke for Apathy "I blew it away... I called for a drought!"

"This people says the time has not yet come to rebuild" 1:2

"How come you have time to build excessively nice houses for yourselves when my house lies in ruins? 1:4

"Consider your ways... everything is going badly for you" 1:5-7

Discipline for Disobedience

"I blew it away" 1:8-10

"I called for a drought" 1:11

Repentance

"everyone listened & obeyed and feared the Lord"

Restoration "I am with you!"

"Then the Lord said, I am with you!"

Revival

"Then the Lord stirred up the spirit of all the people and they began their work on Sept 21st

#2 October 17th, 520 BC Encouraging the Discouraged "I am with you! Greater glory is coming!"

Encouraging the Discouraged 2:1-9

Discouragement: they worked for a whole month but it looks so pitiful compared to what it used to be 2:1-3

They don't even have the foundation cleared and reset. It seems so overwhelming and discouraging.

Encouragement: Be strong! I am with you! The coming glory will be even greater than Solomon's temple!

(Jesus will come in the flesh and stand in this rebuilt temple and His blood will bring final peace and reconciliation.) 2:4-9

#3 December 18th, 520 BC Blessing Replaces Shame “I will bless you!”

Blessing Replaces Shame 2:10-19

Shame: Haggai 2:10-17 As they have labored for 3 months in this overwhelming project of hand labor removing stones, burned timber, digging and leveling ground, laying foundation stones... their minds are filled with the reality that it was their sin and rebellion that brought this destruction about 70 years before. They are well aware that they are as sinful as their ancestors are and even their best efforts are tainted by sin. (See Romans 7) God fully agrees with that reality and points out how His discipline was dealt out and they still didn't listen until Haggai came.

Blessing: Haggai 2:10-19 But then God says something astounding. They have finally laid the foundation stones outlining the temple site. The first baby step of a 4 year project was complete. They stayed at it this time. And God now promises that *from that very day* His discipline was removed and His blessings would be poured out on them. Oh what joy had to fill their hearts!

#4 December 18th, 520 BC Courage in the Midst of Fear “I will honor you!”

Courage in the midst of Fear 2:20-23 Zerubbabel, the leader in Messiah's lineage, faces increasing opposition by the pagan political leaders of the region. He had reason to fear as they sent word back to Persia condemning the Jews rebuilding project. Did he expect that he might be removed and returned to Persia to face punishment? Likely so. God comes to him with a phenomenal promise (recorded also by Zechariah in Zechariah 4:6-9) that God will rearrange nations, honor him, and bring the Messiah as He promised at the right time. It is a promise of certain triumph in the midst of human insufficiency! Guaranteed success! “You will finish my temple!” Zech 4:9 “I will build my church!” Matt 16:18 This God is our God! Glory to His name!

Big Truth Take-Aways

- God** knows what we're thinking and saying and what the real truth is
cares about what we do, responds, and takes definite action to get our attention
sends His word to bring us back
disciplines us because He loves us too much to ignore our apathy
forgives immediately, revives our hearts, restores our fellowship, desires our worship
calls us to work together for His glory
knows what we are feeling and wants to strengthen us to keep moving ahead
- Man** loses priorities quickly, excuses selfishness, justifies apathy, fails to see God's hand in everyday life,
needs revival regularly, can't escape God, can be fully and immediately forgiven if he repents,
needs to worship the true God, needs to be God centered, needs to persevere in obedience
- Sin** Selfishness, spiritual apathy, spiritual ignorance, sin permeates everything we do but God accepts our efforts to serve Him thru grace alone
- Promises** I will be pleased... I will be glorified... I am with you... My Spirit remains with among you...
I will bless you... I will honor you
- Commands** Consider your ways... Go up, get timber, build my house... Be strong and work...
Do not be afraid

Self Check

- 1) Are you considering your ways? How is God active and involved in your circumstances today?
- 2) Do you need to be refocused, renewed, and revived in heart to get back on track in your walk with God?
- 3) Are God's priorities your priorities? If not, what needs to change?

For Further Study

Read the passages above under the background notes in chronological order to get the big picture of this rebuilding time in preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. Haggai is very plain language, Zechariah is very symbolic language, both preached at the same time – although Haggai's message was over only about 4 months, Zechariah began just after Haggai and continued for the next two years.

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... John 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing the Invisible,
Embracing the Unapproachable,
Declaring the Unexplainable,
Changed by the Immutable,
Running after the Irresistible
With inexhaustible joy
In our inexpressible sorrows,
Spending our time on eternity,
Owning nothing yet possessing everything
That matters and lasts.
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.
Welcome to THE JOURNEY