

# Survey of Haggai

David Rountree

## Introduction

1. Haggai is clearly the author; his name is mentioned nine times (1:1, 3, 12, 13; 2:1, 10, 13, 14, 20). The name *Haggai* means “My Feast” derived from the Hebrew word, *hag*, meaning “festival.”
2. Haggai is classically known as one of the “Latter Prophets,” meaning him along with Zechariah, Malachi, and Joel preached to the people of God *after* their return from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem. They are post-exilic prophets. Haggai and Zechariah are contemporaries (cf. Hag. 1:1 with Zech. 1:1). Malachi and Joel follow them.
3. In 538 B.C. Cyrus/Darius of Persia issued a decree to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple. Zerubbabel led the first return of the Jews for this construction work in 536 B.C. Haggai was in their number (Ezra 5:1, 2; 6:14, 15).
4. Ezra 4-6 provides the background for the book of Haggai, describing how the Samaritans sought to hinder the rebuilding of the temple. The Jewish remnant gives up on trying to build God’s house to focus on their own homes. Thus, Haggai’s job at this point was to restore hope and zeal for the cause of God.

## Outline

1. The Proclamation to Consider Priorities (1:1-15)
2. The Pronouncement of Encouragement (2:1-9)
3. The Promise of Coming Blessing (2:10-19)
4. The Prediction of the Coming Prince (2:20-23)

## Main Points and Application

1. The Circumstances for Building (1:1-7). “Consider your ways” (v. 5 & 7). When are the circumstances ever “right” to be involved in building up the local church? Should building God’s house on earth be as much on our agenda as building our own houses? Less so? More so? Is the reason we can’t build God’s house because we don’t have sufficient resources (v.6)?
2. The Commitment to Build (1:8-12). What is it that brings God pleasure (v.8)? Don’t miss the fact that building God’s house is an act of biblical worship (v.8)! It is building that exalts God! The people of Haggai’s day understood this (v.12). What commitment is required to please God?
3. The Comfort in Building (1:13-15). “I am with you” (v.13). God does not give this assurance out flippantly. In what times does God promise this comfort? (cf. Matt. 18:20; 28:20).
4. The Challenge to Build:
  - A. Seek a heart for God before a house for God.**  
We can still have a nice house and go to hell. God makes it clear to seek the heart first.

**B. Pray for God's will not your own will.**

We often neglect talking about God's will—we just discuss our will. In Haggai's day they said, "Lord, help me get some more paneling for my house/ Help me get a nice place going here."

**C. Demonstrate self-sacrifice not ill advice.**

Beyond the tithe, there needs to also be sacrifice. Demonstrate first self-sacrifice, not ill advice. It is easy to give advice. It is easy to give opinions. Let us demonstrate the sacrifice.

**D. Rejoice in the privilege of doing eternal work over against temporal work.**

Have you ever stopped to consider how much you have done yesterday or the day before that really gave God pleasure or glorified Him? There is a judgment day. There is a day when God is going to judge us for everything we have said and done so we really ought to rejoice in the privilege of having a specific command where God says, "This pleases me. This glorifies me. This will last with me."

**E. Live like a corporate Christian not a lone-wolf Christian.**

Did you notice that all these commands come to a people corporately? God doesn't want a lone wolf doing his own thing. He wants a corporate body.

5. The Present Blessing (2:1-9). Though the house of God may not look like much now, God is all we need for glory (v. 4-7). Though God uses man's resources, the splendor of the temple is God-given and God-produced (v.7-9). Do modest church facilities adequately reflect what pleases God in this regard?
6. The Promised Blessing (2:10-19). When we truly come to God through repentance demonstrated in our living, we can expect his blessing (v.9). Let us not think that mere engagement to holy work (i.e. building God's church) or contact with holy people, places and things will make us holy (v.12-15; cf. 2 Tim. 2:22).
7. The Prophetic Blessing (2:20-23). The prophet speaks to Zerubbabel as heir to the throne of David and link to Christ (Matt. 1:13), that with the overthrow of Judah's opponents Zerubbabel's authority of kingship (a signet ring was the official mark of supreme authority, v.23) will emerge continuing the Davidic line. The authority of the Davidic line was lost with Zerubbabel's grandfather and father but will be restored with Zerubbabel and ultimately in Christ (Jer. 22:24-23:8). The building of God's kingdom is secured by God's sovereignty – notice "I will take...I will make...I have chosen...(v. 23; cf. Zech. 4:6).