

# **Haggai 1 - God Calls the People to Rebuild the Temple; Reasons for Punishment; The People's Response**

## I. First message: call to rebuild Temple (Haggai 1:1-15)

### (1) Introductory information (1:1)

(A) Date: first day, sixth month, second-year of Darius (8/29/520) (1:1a)

(B) Author: Haggai (1:1b)

(C) Recipients (1:1c-d)

(a) Zerubbabel: Governor of Judah (1:1c)

(b) Joshua: high priest (1:1d)

### (2) Prophetic rebuke (1:2-15)

(A) Peoples' excuse recited (1:2)

(B) Haggai rebukes the people for building their own homes and not the Lord's (1:3-4)

(C) Curses on Israel for not rebuilding the Temple (1:5-6)

(a) Plea to consider their ways (1:5)

(b) Covenant curses (1:6a-e)

(i) Harvest (1:6a)

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(iii) Drink (1:6c)

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(a) Plea to consider their ways (1:7)

(b) Plea to rebuild the Temple (1:8)

(c) Covenant curses (1:9-11)

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- (c) Resumption of building Temple (1:14-15)
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  - (ii) Date: 24 day, sixth month, second-year (9/21/520) (1:15)

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  - (B) Author: Haggai (1:1b)
  - (C) Recipients (1:1c-d)
    - (a) Zerubbabel: Governor of Judah (1:1c)
    - (b) Joshua: high priest (1:1d)

**1** In the **second year of Darius the king**, on the **first day** of the **sixthmonth**, the word of the **LORD came** by the prophet **Haggai** to **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to **Joshua** the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying,

**1** In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying,

**1** On the first day of the sixth month of the second year of the reign of King Darius, this message from the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Shealtiel's son Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, and to Jehozadak's son Joshua, the high priest:

**1** In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

- "...second year of Darius the king" - Darius Hystaspes; the second year of his reign was 520 BC

- "...first day" - corresponds with the New Moon festival. The Jewish calendar is based on the lunar calendar. The exact date on the modern calendar was August 29, 520 BC.

— According to the Mosaic Law, the New Moon Festival was observed on the first day of every month (Cf. Lev 23:23-25; Num 10:10; 28:11-15; 1 Sam 20:5,18,24,27; 2 Kings 4:23; 1 Chr 23:31; 2 Chr 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; Ps 81:3; Is 1:13-14; 66:23; Ezek 45:17; 46:1,3,6-8; Amos 8:5).

- "...sixth month" - the month of Elul on the Jewish calendar; corresponds with September on our modern calendar

- "...the word of the LORD came" - at this point, Haggai was officially called into his prophetic office because he received direct revelation from God

- Four times during a three to four month period in 520 BC, the word of the LORD came to Haggai, beginning in September, through December (ninth month). The four messages were:
  - 1st message: Haggai 1:1-15
  - 2nd message: Haggai 2:1-9
  - 3rd message: Haggai 2:10-19
  - 4th message: Haggai 2:20-23
- His four messages were directed to two leaders: Zerubbabel and Joshua
  - "...Haggai" - "the festive one"; from the same Hebrew root for "festival" or "feast"
  - "...Zerubbabel" - "seed of Babylon"; he was the civil leader, who served as governor under Medo-Persian authority
  - "...Joshua" - the religious leader, who was high priest at the time

(2) Prophetic rebuke (1:2-15)

(A) Peoples' excuse recited (1:2)

- 2 "This is what the LORD of armies says: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt.''"
- 2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'This people says, "The time has not come, even the time for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt.''"
- 2 "This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'These people keep saying, "No, the right time for rebuilding the LORD's Temple has not yet come.''"
- 2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.
  - In God's first words to Haggai, He deals with the sin issue of the Israelites
  - In order to avoid finishing construction of the temple, the people used the excuse that "it was not yet the right time to rebuild the temple." This was mainly because of the opposition that they were receiving.
  - God is going to use both Haggai and Zechariah to reveal His will to the Israelites—He wanted the temple rebuilt. This would negate the excuse that the Jews were using.
  - Many believers, with full knowledge of what God's will is, will come up with a similar excuse..."I need to pray about it" or "I don't feel 'led' by the Lord to do that." But once God has revealed His will, no special further leading is necessary. God's revealed will is sufficient to move forward immediately, without delay.
  - God will not lead in a special way to do something He has already commanded. The very command is the leading, and we need to be sensitive to hearing it, then acting on it, without delay.

(B) Haggai rebukes the people for building their own homes and not the Lord's  
(1:3-4)

- 3 Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying,
- 3 Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying,
- 3 Then this message from the LORD came by Haggai the prophet:
- 3 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,
  
- 4 "Is it time for you yourselves to live in your **paneled houses** while this house *remains* desolate?"
- 4 "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house *lies* desolate?"
- 4 "Is it the right time for all of you to live in your own paneled houses while this house remains in ruins?"
- 4 *Is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house *lie* waste?
  - "...paneled houses" - homes that were paneled with expensive wood. But this reference means much more than this...
    - It is interesting to note that this is the same Hebrew word used in connection with the building of the First Temple (1 Kings 6:9,15; 7:3,7). The only time it is not used of the Temple elsewhere in the OT is in the building of King Jehoiakim's palace in Jer 22:14.
    - In other words, the fact that this word is used primarily in conjunction with the first temple shows that the wood that was intended to be used to rebuild the second temple 15 years earlier had been taken by the people and used for the building of their private homes.
    - Most homes in the OT were not paneled because this was something only rich people could afford. Most houses were simply blocks of stone with some kind of plaster on the inside. Apparently, there was a lot of wood lying around the Temple Mount that was originally intended to be used to rebuild the temple. Since the Temple was not going up, the people had taken this wood and used it to improve their own homes.

(C) Curses on Israel for not rebuilding the Temple (1:5-6)

(a) Plea to consider their ways (1:5)

- 5 Now then, the LORD of armies says this: "**Consider your ways!**"
- 5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways!"
- 5 "Now this is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, says: 'Carefully consider your ways:
- 5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.
  - "...Consider your ways!" - literally means "place your heart and meditate on this"
  - God wants them to look back on the previous 15 years while temple construction had stalled, and carefully consider what had happened

(b) Covenant curses (1:6a-e)

- (i) Harvest (1:6a)
- (ii) Food (1:6b)
- (iii) Drink (1:6c)
- (iv) Clothing (1:6d)
- (v) Money (1:6e)

6 You have sown much, *only to harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but there is not enough for anyone to get warm; and the one who earns, earns wages to put into a money bag full of holes.*"

6 You have sown much, but harvest little; *you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes.*"

6 You have sowed much but have reaped little. You have eaten but don't have enough to become satisfied. You have drunk but don't have enough to become intoxicated. You have clothed yourself but don't have enough to keep warm. And the hired laborer deposits his salary in a bag full of holes!"

6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages [to put it] into a bag with holes.

- God now reminds them of the past 15 years...it was a time for them of lack of productivity, a lack of clothing, and insufficient wages

- "...the one who earns, earns wages to put into a money bag full of holes" - this idiomatic expression emphasizes that inflation was so bad that no matter how much they gained in wages, the wages left as quickly as they gained them.

— All three of these consequences, lack of food, clothing, and insufficient wages, was something the Mosaic Law said would happen when the people disobeyed (Cf. Deut 28:38-40)

Deut 28:38-40:

**38** "You will bring out a great amount of seed to the field, but you will gather in little, because the locust will devour it.

39 You will plant and cultivate vineyards, but you will neither drink of the wine nor bring in *the harvest*, because the worm will eat it.

40 You will have olive trees throughout your territory but you will not anoint yourself with the oil, because your olives will drop off *prematurely*.

(D) More curses on Israel for not rebuilding (1:7-11)

(a) Plea to consider their ways (1:7)

7 The LORD of armies says this: **"Consider your ways!"**

7 Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways!"

7 "This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'Carefully consider your ways:

7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

- "...Consider your ways!" - "think about it"; think about your spiritual state in light of what has been happening over the past 15 years.

(b) Plea to rebuild the Temple (1:8)

8 Go up to the mountains, bring wood, and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be honored," says the LORD.

8 Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified," says the LORD.

8 Go up into the mountains, bring timber, and reconstruct my house. Then I will be pleased with it and I will be honored,' says the LORD.

8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.

- Once they thought about it and got their mind right, God gives them three simple instructions:

1. Go up to the mountains
2. Bring wood
3. Rebuild the temple

- Life is not complicated when you put God *first*. Three simple instructions to fulfill God's will and bring blessing upon themselves and their families. The Holy Spirit never blesses laziness.

- If they did this, God would: 1. take pleasure in it, and 2. be glorified (honored) by it.

(c) Covenant curses (1:9-11)

(i) Harvest (1:9)

9 "You start an ambitious project, but behold, *it comes* to little; when you bring *it* home, I blow it away. Why?" declares the LORD of armies. "*It is* because of My house which *remains* desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.

9 "You look for much, but behold, *it comes* to little; when you bring *it* home, I blow it away. Why?" declares the LORD of hosts, "Because of My house which *lies* desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.

9 'You turned away in pursuit of abundance, but look at how little you found! What you did manage to bring home, I blew away! And why?' declares the LORD of the Heavenly Armies. 'It's because of my house! It lies in ruins while each of you runs off to his own house!'

9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, *it came* to little; and when ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that *is* waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.

- God reminds them of three punishments they have suffered in the past because of their failure to rebuild the temple:

1. What the land produced was burned up because the temple was lying in waste while the people lived in houses. This is in keeping with Deut 28:24:

Deut 28:24: The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

#### (ii) Drought (1:10-11)

10 Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew, and the earth has withheld its produce.

10 Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce.

10 That is why the heavens keep withholding dew from you, and the earth withholds her fruit.

10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit.

2. Lack of rain. This was in keeping with Deut 28:33:

Deut 28:33: A people whom you do not know will eat the produce of your ground and every product of your labor, and you will never be anything but oppressed and mistreated continually.

11 And I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on mankind, on cattle, and on all the products of the labor of your hands."

11 I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands."

11 I sent a drought on the land, on the mountains, on your grain, on your new wines, on your oil—on everything the ground produces—on men, on livestock, and on everything you do!"

11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

3. Drought in every area of life. This was in keeping with Deut 28:51:

— Famine in the Scriptures is often an instrument of God's wrath (2 Kings 8:1; Ps 105:16)

Deut 28:51: Furthermore, it will eat the offspring of your herd and the produce of your ground until you are destroyed; *a nation* that will leave you no grain, new wine, or oil, nor the newborn of your cattle or the young of your flock, until they have eliminated you.

Their sin was the failure to finish the temple; their punishment was a lack of productivity in every area of life; the remedy was to get the temple finished.

(E) People's response (1:12-15)

- (a) Those who obeyed (1:12)
  - (i) Zerubbabel (1:12a)
  - (ii) Joshua (1:12b)
  - (iii) Remnant (1:12c)

**12** Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the **remnant** of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, just as the LORD their God had sent him. And the people showed reverence for the LORD.

**12** Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him. And the people showed reverence for the LORD.

**12** Then Shealtiel's son Zerubbabel, Jehozadak's son Joshua the high priest, and all the rest of the people obeyed the LORD their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, because the LORD their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD.

**12** Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD.

- The people's response: they obeyed the voice of the LORD and the words of Haggai  
- "...remnant" - Haggai uses "remnant" to describe the minority of Jews who returned to the Land from Babylon. Not all of them were necessarily believers.

(b) God promises His presence (1:13)

**13** Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke by the commission of the LORD to the people, saying, "I am with you," declares the LORD."

**13** Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke by the commission of the LORD to the people saying, "I am with you," declares the LORD."

13 Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with a special commission from the LORD: "I am with you," declares the LORD."

13 Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, I *am* with you, saith the LORD.

- As the people began to obey, God encouraged and promised them His support

(c) Resumption of building Temple (1:14-15)

(i) Participants (1:14)

14 So the LORD **stirred up the spirit** of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of armies, their God,

14 So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,

14 Then the LORD revitalized the spirit of Shealtiel's son Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, the spirit of Jehozadak's son Joshua the high priest, and the spirit of all the rest of the people, so they came and began to work on the house of their God, the LORD of the Heavenly Armies.

14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,

- They began rebuilding the temple on the foundation that was laid 15 years earlier

- "...stirred up the spirit" - the work began because God "stirred the spirit" of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the remnant of the people

(ii) Date: 24 day, sixth month, second-year (9/21/520) (1:15)

15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.

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15 This took place on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month of the second year of the reign of King Darius.

15 In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

- September 20, 520 BC. Work on the temple began 23 days after Haggai's first prophetic message.