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## Haggai

The book of Haggai is a short book in the Old Testament of the Christian Bible, consisting of only two chapters. It is named after the prophet Haggai, who was called by God to encourage the people of Judah to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. The book is set during the time when the exiled Jews had returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, but the temple lay in ruins. Haggai's message to the people was that they needed to put God first and prioritize the rebuilding of the temple, rather than focusing on their own desires and material possessions. Haggai's message was initially met with resistance, but the people eventually heeded his words and began work on the temple. Through Haggai's prophetic words, God promised to bless the people and bring prosperity to the land once they had completed the temple. The book of Haggai is considered to be an important message about obedience and putting God first. It is also a reminder that God is faithful and will keep his promises to his people. In summary, the book of Haggai is a short but powerful message about the importance of putting God first and being obedient to his will. It is a reminder that God is faithful and will bless his people when they prioritize their relationship with him.

Here is a brief description of each chapter in the book of Haggai:

Chapter 1: The Call to Rebuild the Temple In this chapter, Haggai is sent by God to speak to the governor of Judah, Zerubbabel, and the high priest, Joshua, to urge them to rebuild the temple. Haggai rebukes the people for putting their own desires and priorities ahead of God's, and calls on them to put God first by rebuilding the temple.

Chapter 2: The Promise of Future Glory In this chapter, Haggai encourages the people to persevere in rebuilding the temple despite the opposition they face. He reassures them that God is with them and promises that the glory of the new temple will be greater than the glory of the old temple. Haggai also speaks of a future time when God will shake the heavens and the earth, and promises that God will bless the people who are faithful to him.

Overall, the book of Haggai emphasizes the importance of putting God first and being obedient to his will, and promises that God will bless his people when they prioritize their relationship with him.

## Haggai 1

### New International Version

#### A Call to Build the House of the Lord

1 In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jozadak,<sup>[a]</sup> the high priest:

2 This is what the Lord Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord’s house.’”

3 Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: 4 “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”

5 Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. 6 You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.”

7 This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. 8 Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the Lord. 9 “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?” declares the Lord Almighty. “Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house. 10 Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. 11 I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the olive oil and everything else the ground produces, on people and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.”

12 Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord.

13 Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: “I am with you,” declares the Lord. 14 So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.

#### The Promised Glory of the New House

In the second year of King Darius,

## Footnotes

Haggai 1:1 Hebrew Jehozadak, a variant of Jozadak; also in verses 12 and 14

Chapter 1 of Haggai begins with the word of the Lord coming through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the high priest. The message is a rebuke to the people for not rebuilding the temple, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians about 70 years earlier. Instead of rebuilding the temple, the people had been focused on their own houses and crops.

The Lord speaks through Haggai, saying, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?" (verse 4). The Lord reminds the people that they have been sowing much but reaping little, and that they are not prospering as they should because they have neglected the rebuilding of the temple.

Haggai goes on to urge the people to consider their ways and to go up to the mountains to bring wood to rebuild the temple. He reminds them that the Lord is with them, and that they should not fear. The people respond to Haggai's message and begin the work of rebuilding the temple.

The chapter ends with a message from the Lord to the people, encouraging them to be strong and to work, for He is with them. The Lord promises to fill the temple with His glory once it is rebuilt.

In summary, chapter 1 of Haggai is a call to the people of Judah to prioritize the rebuilding of the temple over their own personal pursuits. The Lord rebukes them for neglecting the temple, and Haggai urges them to consider their ways and to begin the work of rebuilding. The chapter ends with a promise from the Lord to bless the people once the temple is rebuilt.

Here are some important verses from chapter 1 of the book of Haggai, along with a brief explanation and the chapter 1 verse reference:

1. "Thus says the Lord of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord" (verse 2). This verse sets up the context for the rest of chapter 1, which is a rebuke from the Lord to the people for neglecting the rebuilding of the temple.
2. "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?" (verse 4). This verse highlights the Lord's displeasure with the people's priorities, as they have been more focused on building their own houses than on rebuilding the temple.
3. "Consider your ways. You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes" (verses 5-6). This verse highlights the consequences of the people's neglect of the temple, as they are not prospering as they should be.
4. "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord" (verses 7-8). This verse is a call to action, urging the people to prioritize the rebuilding of the temple.

5. "I am with you, declares the Lord" (verse 13). This verse is a message of reassurance from the Lord to the people, assuring them that He is with them as they begin the work of rebuilding the temple.

The Book of Haggai is one of the shorter books in the Old Testament, consisting of only two chapters. It is a prophetic book attributed to the prophet Haggai and is believed to have been written during the time when the Jewish exiles were returning from Babylon to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Let's explore the theological thought and influence found in Haggai chapter 1:

### 1. Theological Thought:

a. Priority of God's House: In Haggai chapter 1, the prophet addresses the people's neglect of rebuilding the temple. He emphasizes that they have been focused on their own houses and well-being while neglecting the house of God. This highlights the theological thought that God's house and worship should be a top priority for believers. It underscores the importance of honoring God through collective worship and devotion.

b. God's Displeasure: Haggai conveys God's displeasure with the people's neglect of the temple. He points out that because of their priorities, they are experiencing difficulties and hardships in their lives. This reflects the theological concept that disobedience or neglect of God's commands can lead to divine judgment and consequences.

c. Call to Repentance: The prophet calls the people to consider their ways and to repent by turning their attention back to rebuilding the temple. This reflects the theological idea that repentance and returning to God's ways can lead to restoration and blessings.

### 2. Theological Influence:

a. Rebuilding the Temple: Haggai's message had a direct influence on the Jewish community at that time. It motivated them to resume the construction of the temple in Jerusalem, which had been halted due to opposition and apathy. The book of Ezra records that the people responded to Haggai's message by restarting the work on the temple (Ezra 5:1-2).

b. Teaching on Priorities: The theological thought in Haggai about prioritizing God's house and worship has had a lasting influence on religious communities. It reminds believers to prioritize their relationship with God and the corporate worship of God over material pursuits.

c. Theological Understanding of God's Displeasure and Blessings: Haggai's message contributes to the broader theological understanding in the Bible that God cares about the hearts and actions of His people. It underscores the idea that obedience and devotion to God lead to His blessings, while neglect and disobedience can lead to difficulties.

In summary, Haggai chapter 1 emphasizes the importance of prioritizing God's house and worship, highlights God's displeasure with neglect, and calls for repentance and obedience. Its influence can be seen in how it motivated the rebuilding of the temple and continues to shape theological understandings of priorities and God's response to human actions.

#### Haggai 2 New International Version

2 1 On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: 2 “Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jozadak,<sup>[a]</sup> the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, 3 ‘Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? 4 But now be strong, Zerubbabel,’ declares the Lord. ‘Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the Lord, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the Lord Almighty. 5 ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’

6 “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. 7 I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord Almighty. 8 ‘The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the Lord Almighty. 9 ‘The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the Lord Almighty.”

#### Blessings for a Defiled People

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Haggai: 11 “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Ask the priests what the law says: 12 If someone carries consecrated meat in the fold of their garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, olive oil or other food, does it become consecrated?’”

The priests answered, “No.”

13 Then Haggai said, “If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?”

“Yes,” the priests replied, “it becomes defiled.”

14 Then Haggai said, “‘So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,’ declares the Lord. ‘Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled.

15 “‘Now give careful thought to this from this day on<sup>[b]</sup>—consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the Lord’s temple. 16 When anyone came to a heap of twenty measures, there were only ten. When anyone went to a wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were only twenty. 17 I struck all the work of your hands with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not return to me,’ declares the Lord. 18 ‘From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, give careful thought to the day when the

foundation of the Lord's temple was laid. Give careful thought: 19 Is there yet any seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit.

“From this day on I will bless you.”

#### Zerubbabel the Lord's Signet Ring

20 The word of the Lord came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month: 21 “Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. 22 I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother.

23 “‘On that day,’ declares the Lord Almighty, ‘I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,’ declares the Lord Almighty.”

#### Footnotes

Haggai 2:2 Hebrew Jehozadak, a variant of Jozadak; also in verse 4

Haggai 2:15 Or to the days past

Chapter 2 of Haggai begins with the prophet Haggai speaking to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the high priest. He asks them if the new temple that they are rebuilding will be as glorious as the old temple that Solomon built. Haggai then gives them a message from the Lord, assuring them that the glory of the new temple will surpass that of the old, because the Lord is with them and will bless their efforts.

Haggai then encourages the people to be strong and to continue working on the temple, despite any opposition or difficulties they may face. He tells them that the Lord is with them and will help them. Haggai also reminds the people that the silver and gold belong to the Lord, and that He will provide for them in all things.

The rest of the chapter contains four messages from the Lord to Haggai, which he delivers to the people. In the first message, the Lord promises to be with the people as they rebuild the temple and assures them that the glory of the new temple will be greater than that of the old. In the second message, the Lord promises to bless the people and to provide for them in all things. In the third message, the Lord reminds the people that He is the one who shakes the heavens and the earth, and that He will bring about a great shaking that will overthrow the nations and establish His kingdom. In the fourth and final message, the Lord promises to bless Zerubbabel and to make him like a signet ring, a symbol of honor and authority.

In summary, chapter 2 of Haggai is a message of encouragement to the people of Judah as they work on rebuilding the temple. Haggai assures them that the Lord is with them and will bless their efforts, and he reminds them that the glory of the new temple will surpass that of the old. The chapter also contains messages from the Lord promising to bless and provide for the people, and to establish His kingdom on earth.

Here are some important verses from chapter 2 of the book of Haggai, along with a brief explanation and the chapter 2 verse reference:

1. "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts" (verse 4). This verse is a call to the people to be strong and to continue working on rebuilding the temple, with the assurance that the Lord is with them.
2. "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts" (verse 9). This verse is a promise from the Lord that the glory of the new temple will surpass that of the old, and that it will be a place of peace.
3. "I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts, according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not" (verse 5). This verse is another reassurance from the Lord that He is with the people and that they need not fear.
4. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts" (verse 8). This verse is a reminder that all material resources belong to the Lord and that He will provide for His people as they work on rebuilding the temple.
5. "For thus says the Lord of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts" (verses 6-7). This verse is a prophecy from the Lord of a coming time of great upheaval, in which He will establish His kingdom and fill the temple with His glory.

Haggai chapter 2 continues the prophetic message of Haggai to the Jewish community regarding the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. In this chapter, there are several theological thoughts and potential theological influences:

#### 1. Theological Thought:

- a. Encouragement in the Face of Discouragement: The theological thought in Haggai 2 begins with the Lord encouraging the people and their leaders who may have been discouraged by the appearance of the new temple in comparison to the grandeur of Solomon's temple. God reassures them that His presence will be with them in this temple and that He will bring peace.
- b. Blessings for Obedience: The chapter reiterates the principle that obedience to God's commands leads to blessings. God promises to bless the people and their work, even though the temple may seem less magnificent than the previous one. This underscores the theological idea that God values obedience and faithfulness over external appearances.
- c. Holiness and Defilement: Haggai 2 touches on the concepts of holiness and defilement. It emphasizes that holiness can be transmitted, but defilement cannot. This idea contributes to the theological understanding of ceremonial cleanliness and the importance of maintaining a holy and consecrated environment for worship.

d. The Coming Glory: The chapter contains a prophecy about the future glory of the temple. Haggai speaks of a future event where God will shake the heavens and the earth, signifying a time of great upheaval and divine intervention. This may be seen as a theological thought emphasizing God's sovereignty and His ability to bring about significant events in history.

## 2. Theological Influence:

a. Theological Understanding of God's Presence: Haggai 2 emphasizes the theological idea that God's presence is not necessarily tied to the grandeur or size of a physical structure but is based on faithfulness and obedience. This concept has influenced later theological thought within Judaism and Christianity, highlighting the importance of personal and corporate devotion rather than external appearances.

b. Eschatological Implications: Haggai 2's prophecy about the shaking of the heavens and the earth has eschatological implications in both Jewish and Christian theology. It has been interpreted by some as a foreshadowing of future divine intervention and the coming of the Messiah.

c. Teaching on Holiness: The discussion of holiness and defilement in Haggai 2 contributes to the broader theological understanding of purity and consecration in religious practice. These concepts have influenced rituals and practices in both Judaism and Christianity.

In summary, Haggai chapter 2 contains theological thoughts related to encouragement in the face of discouragement, blessings for obedience, holiness, defilement, and the anticipation of future glory. Its influence can be seen in shaping theological understandings of God's presence, eschatology, and the importance of holiness in worship.

## Notes:

some questions that have been debated by scholars and theologians over the years:

1. When exactly were the prophecies of Haggai fulfilled? While some argue that they were fulfilled during the time of the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem in the 5th century BC, others believe that they have a wider prophetic significance.
2. Why did the rebuilding of the temple take so long? Despite the exhortations of the prophet Haggai, the rebuilding of the temple was still delayed. Some scholars suggest that political and economic factors played a role in this delay.
3. What was the significance of the rebuilding of the temple? While it was certainly an important religious and cultural achievement for the Jewish people, some scholars suggest that the rebuilding of the temple had wider political and social



significance, such as serving as a symbol of Jewish resistance to foreign domination.

These questions do not have easy answers and are still debated by scholars and theologians today.