

## HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH & MALACHI

### INTRODUCTION

- **586 BC BABYLON DESTROYED JERUSALEM, THE TEMPLE AND EXILED THE PEOPLE.**
- The loss of the temple was a blow<sup>1</sup>
- **538 CYRUS' EDICT & PROVISION FOR THE RETURN TO JERUSALEM** and rebuilding of the temple.<sup>2</sup>  
**ALL THREE OF THESE PROPHETS FOCUS LARGELY ON THE TEMPLE PROJECT** (Haggai & Zechariah) or the temple /Law relationship (Malachi).
- They build the altar around 7 months after they reached Jerusalem.
- They began the foundation of the temple 26 months after they reached Jerusalem.
- **AS THE TEMPLE FOUNDATION WAS LAID, THERE WERE AS MANY WEeping AS REJOICING.**<sup>3</sup>
- **FIRST LOCAL THEN PERSIAN OPPOSITION DEVELOPED.**<sup>4</sup>  
People relocated to Palestine by the Babylonians & indigenous people began to oppose it.  
They elicited and got support from their Persian overlords ∴ cessation of the building

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<sup>1</sup> Solomon urged them to direct their prayers to Jerusalem & the temple even when far from home (1Ki.8:48; Jonah 2:7) the way Islamic people direct their prayers to Mecca today.

<sup>2</sup> Cyrus was the king of Persia. A Medo-Persian coalition destroyed Babylon.  
Cyrus was prophesied to be the ruler that would release the Jews to return home (Isa.44:28-45:13, 2Chron.36:22; Ezra 1:8; 5:13-6:14).

In the so-called, 'Cyrus cylinder' the king writes, *I returned to these sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris, the sanctuaries of which have been ruins for a long time, the images which used to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I also gathered all their former inhabitants and returned them to their habitations.* ANET pp.305-307

<sup>3</sup> Ezra 3:12-13; There are hints in this passage and in Haggai that the weeping was due to the fact the new temple was going to be inferior to the old temple (Hag.2:3-9) (see p.3 footnote 17 viz. the Solomon Temple) or that they saw the work as beyond their human capacity.

<sup>4</sup> Josephus indicates that Cambyses was the king successfully recruited to stop the temple building.  
Ezra indicates the rebuilding was forcibly stopped but his history of opposition from Artaxerxes concerns the city, not the temple. ***It isn't clear how the two sentences are related read Ezra for clues***

## HAGGAI - BUILD MY HOUSE!

- **AFTER 15 YEARS GOD RAISED UP HAGGAI<sup>5</sup> & Zechariah TO PERSUADE THEM TO GET BACK TO WORK.<sup>6</sup>**
- Darius<sup>7</sup> honored Cyrus' decree by providing support and impalement to opponents.<sup>8</sup>
- Haggai describes a 4 month period, from the sixth<sup>9</sup> to the ninth month of 520 BC. Haggai's ministry preceded Zechariah's by two months.

### **DATING AUGUST 29, 520 - DECEMBER 18, 520<sup>10</sup>**

Through the historical references in Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Babylonian texts and correlation with astronomical data, we can date this time precisely.

### **AUTHORSHIP ISSUES**

Haggai's messages are distinct from those other parts of the book that set up the situation in which the messages were uttered.

In those parts of the book Haggai is referred to in third person.<sup>11</sup>

This suggests to some that someone other than Haggai recorded the ministry of Haggai.

This may be true and certainly the use of a secretary is common enough amongst biblical authors.

This makes the question of the date of the book somewhat open but the details of the prophecy are such that the book could not have been compiled long after the messages were uttered and there's no reason to doubt they were compiled as the messages were given.

Because this issue is open, we will date the book to the events it describes rather than to an authorship date.

### **MESSAGE**

#### **1:1 ON AUGUST 29, 520 BC HAGGAI DELIVERED A PROPHETIC MESSAGE.**

Zerubbabel<sup>12</sup> was the governor

Joshua<sup>13</sup> was the high priest.

#### **1:1-15 1<sup>ST</sup> PROPHECY - AUGUST 29, 520**

They say, "the time has not come to finish God's house."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Pronounced 'Haggay' which means 'festal one' or 'my feast'; perhaps he was born on a festival day; the Latin equivalent is 'Festus' and the Greek equivalent is 'Hilary.'

<sup>6</sup> The work began about a month after Haggai prophesied on September 21, 520 ± 1 day, all dates are from Baldwin, J. G. in Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, IN: Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, D. J. Wiseman, General Editor, p. 29.

These charts are based on over 100 Babylonian texts and new moon charts calculated from astronomical data.

<sup>7</sup> This was Darius Hystaspes, the third king of Persia not Darius the Mede. Darius I reigned from 521-486 BC.

<sup>8</sup> See Ezra 5-6

<sup>9</sup> August 29, 520 to December 18, 520 BC ± 1 day; op.cit. Baldwin, J.G.

<sup>10</sup> ±1 day; this date is based on correlating over 100 Babylonian texts + new moon tables calculated from astronomical data with our Julian calendar.

<sup>11</sup> 1:1,12; 2:1,10,13,14,20

<sup>12</sup> 'begotten in Babylon', 'seed of Babylon' or 'shoot of Babylon'; he was the grandson of Jehoiachin and was thus heir to the throne of David; he is called Sheshbazzar in Ezra (1:8; 5:14,16)

<sup>13</sup> 'Yahu' (shortened form of Yahweh) 'is salvation'; Zechariah refers to him in a vision; he was the son of Jehozadak, the high priest at the time of the exile.

<sup>14</sup> Perhaps they were waiting for a time of less opposition.

Regardless of the justification for saying the timing was wrong God indicates the real reason - they were busy pursuing personal priorities – the time was right for their goals just not God's goals.

v.2 *s<sup>e</sup>baot*, 'The Lord of Hosts' is a term used almost 300 times in the Torah and almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the time by the three post-exilic prophets. It appears to refer to God's power as the head of his heavenly forces.

- **PANELED HOUSES - THE TIME SEEMS RIGHT FOR YOU.** <sup>15</sup>
  - **DO YOU NOTICE THERE'S NEVER ENOUGH?**<sup>16</sup>
  - **REBUILD TO PLEASE AND HONOR ME.**
- THEY REPENTED.<sup>17</sup> ON SEPTEMBER 21, 520 BC THEY BEGAN**

#### 2:1-9 2<sup>ND</sup> PROPHECY - OCTOBER 17, 520

- Takes place at the feast of the Tabernacles (Lev.23:39-44).
- **DISCOURAGED BY COMPARISONS WITH THE FORMER TEMPLE.** <sup>18</sup>
- Forgot - working for God in his power
- God's response...be strong because I am with you <sup>19</sup>

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Maybe they hoped for a time when more people had returned.

If the 70 years captivity is dated from the destruction of the temple (586) then the return wouldn't be expected until 516.

Very few priests responded to Cyrus' decree, of the 24 orders of priests, only representatives of 4 returned (74 Levites and later, at Ezra's urging 37 more) (Ezra 2:36ff; 8:15f).

Perhaps they waited for a time when their personal situations improved; a time when more money was available . Perhaps they expected a miraculous rebuilding of the temple along the specifications of Ezekiel's vision (c.f. Ez.40-43).

<sup>15</sup> This can mean paneled or 'roofed in.' Thus, he could be saying...it's apparently the right time for you to complete your own housing;

v.9 the expression 'each of you *runs* to his own house indicates how zealous they were for their own goals.

<sup>16</sup> Perhaps they had forgotten Hosea 2:8f, that unfaithful Israel did not acknowledge God as the source of their wealth & their deprivation; at the time of this prophecy (August/September) heavy dew was important to keep crops healthy through harvest.

<sup>17</sup> *The people feared before the Lord*, they were startled wide-awake by God through the first prophet since the exile.

Perhaps God's words in v. 13 reminded them of the same words God used in Isaiah to predict their return, *Do not be afraid, for I am with you, I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west...* Isa.43:5.

<sup>18</sup> This happened when the foundation was laid ~17 years earlier as the old folks demeaned the new work (Ezra 3:12) with their tears. It's not hard to imagine such comparisons being made.

The interior of the old temple, its furniture and decorations were all covered with gold. In fact, some estimate that over 20 million dollars worth of gold covered just the holy of holies.

The bronze pillars, sea, stands and decorations contained so much bronze as to be immeasurable and there were many utensils of silver, bronze & gold (1Ki.6, 7:13-51).

Additionally, Solomon conscripted labor and hired the best artisans from the Near East.

If the material scope of the building was the sole basis for comparison, then Zerubbabel's temple was pretty lame indeed.

<sup>19</sup> The Hebrew participle conveys continuous action. Thus the idea that God has, is and will ever be with them.

This fulfills the promise made to Shem (Father of the Shemites → Semites) that he would dwell amongst them (Gen.9:26).

Verse 5a indicates, not the promise to Shem, but another promise made after the people left Egypt, perhaps the conditional promise of the Mosaic covenant.

- **GOD WILL BRING IN THE GLORY** (Zech.4:6-10).
  - He brings in the wealth of nations<sup>20</sup>
  - The latter glory greater than the former glory.<sup>21</sup>
    - Some believe it is the temple that will be greater (from Zerubbabel ☞ Herod's temple).<sup>22</sup>
    - Some think it refers to the millennial temple.<sup>23</sup>
    - Others believe that the glory is that which will be greater from Christ → the church → the church triumphant<sup>24</sup>

## 2:10-19 3<sup>RD</sup> PROPHECY - DECEMBER 18, 520

### V.11, HAGGAI ASKS FOR A TORA,<sup>25</sup> A LEGAL DECISION:

- **ARE THE COMMON THINGS MADE HOLY BY THE HOLY THINGS?** Holiness is not transferable.
  - For e.g. Is a pair of scissors made sterile by resting on a sterile cloth?
  - Is the sterile cloth made unsterile by the scissors?
- **ARE THE HOLY THINGS MADE UNCLEAN BY UNCLEAN THINGS?** Uncleaness is transferable.

Unclean Israel can not make itself holy. (Zech.3:1-5).

The point of this exchange was that Israel once holy became defiled she could never make herself holy again. After all, she would defile every sacrifice she made.

Given this, how could they hope to build a holy temple?

There was no remedy for this dilemma in the Law. The blessing of v.19 implies that God would solve the dilemma by making them holy himself. Such is made quite explicit in Zechariah's vision (Zech.3:1-5).

At this time of year the fall rains would have finished and the seed for the new growing season planted.

What would happen at the next harvest? God would bless them with abundance. Zechariah (1:1) began his ministry a few weeks earlier.

## 2:20-23 4<sup>TH</sup> PROPHECY - DECEMBER 18, 520

- **ZERUBBABEL IS SIGNET RING** (the mark of God's authority)
  - God's use of this term is His deliberate reminder of their dilemma.
  - This is good because the messiah must arise from David's lineage to fulfill the Davidic covenant<sup>26</sup>
  - Zerubbabel is in David's line and this lineage gave rise to Joseph the father of Jesus (Mt.1:1-11).
- **BUT...CHRIST CANNOT ARISE FROM ZERUBBABEL**<sup>27</sup>

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However, verse 5a is thought to be an editorial addition because it interrupts the flow of thought between 4 & 5b.

<sup>20</sup> Many believe 1:7 is messianic, this accords with older Jewish and Christian traditions.

The problem is a feminine singular noun, *hemda*, is apparently coupled with a plural verb translated 'come,' giving the sense of 'the desired things of the nations' rather than 'the desire of nations.'

Some argue that 'come' refers to 'glory' not to 'desire' and thus they retain the idea that it is messianic - that the nations yearn for the coming messiah.

<sup>21</sup> After they began to rebuild opponents wrote to Darius. Darius responded by requiring the officials of trans-Euphrates to foot the bill (Ezra 6:8-10);

<sup>22</sup> Later Herod further elaborated upon the temple until it was quite impressive (Mk.13:1) and then one greater than the temple arrived (Mt.12:6).

<sup>23</sup> In the millennium the temple will be truly astounding (Ez.40-48).

<sup>24</sup> ...when a temple is no longer needed because of direct access to God in heaven; Heb.9, esp.vv.11,24

<sup>25</sup> This is the original meaning of the word. It later came to mean the Pentateuch.

<sup>26</sup> An unconditional covenant toward David (2 Samuel 7:4-16, Psalm 89:3f; 26ff & Psalm 132:11-18 ) but conditional toward Solomon (1Ki.9:4-7).

- Genetically Jesus came through Mary and thus through the line of David via David's son Nathan. BUT, he wasn't genetically through the kingly line running from Solomon.
- Joseph was from the kingly line that ran from Solomon but b/c this line ran through Jehoiachin, Jesus could not be Jehoiachin's seed. However, Jesus was in this line, not genetically but through adoption.

**IN 516, 22 YEARS AFTER THE FOUNDATION WAS FIRST LAID AND 4 YEARS AFTER THIS SERIES OF PROPHECIES, THE TEMPLE WAS FINISHED.<sup>28</sup>**

### **APPLICATIONS**

#### **PRIORITIZE GOD'S GOALS OVER YOUR OWN.**

The body, the church, is temple of the Lord.<sup>29</sup>

We're called to build it up with the gifts God gives us (Rom.12; 1Cor.12; Eph.4).

We're called to prioritize it (Mt.6:19-34; 28:19;)

Self-absorbed dreams are dissatisfying and unrealizable aren't they?

You want influence, affluence, pleasure and comfort but they seem to escape you. When you get them they slip away.

*Think on this, Haggai says, isn't it because you have failed to put God first?*

When God occupies his rightful place we find our old goals fall away to be replaced by better goals for others and ourselves.

The outworking of these goals is satisfying and lasting.

Until you are broken of your addiction to yourself you will not give your life away in love. You will wait for the right people in the right community – you will never find them. In the end, you will be like Judas, making only a partial commitment to others and finding your true identity in your rebellion from them.<sup>30</sup>

By self addiction I mean self-focus; self-will & self-trust. The opposite of fear of the Lord.

Remember for whom you work

Part of building up God's temple is remembering that God completes the work he begins (Phil.1:6; 2:13; Prov.21:1; Isa.43:13; 55:11; Eph.1:11) and

The power of God is always at the disposal of the one serving him (Rom.8:37; 2Chron.16:9; Eph.3:16; Col.1:11; Phil.4:12-13; Isa.40:28-31; Eph.1:19-22).

#### **GOD WILL ATTEND TO YOUR NEEDS**

Mt.6:19-34 makes it clear that God will supply all our needs as we focus on his mission (Phil.4:19; 2Cor.9:8).

### **ZECHARIAH - RETURN TO ME AND I WILL RETURN TO YOU.**

- Zechariah is the longest of the twelve Minor Prophets and the most cited by New Testament authors, particularly by John in Revelation.
- it consists of 7 visions; 2 answers & 2 burdens
- **ZECHARIAH WAS A LEVITE (NEH.12:16).**
- He was a young man at this time. He was gifted with visions. Some visions are contemporaneous and some are futuristic.
- Ministry started November 520.

This book describes that part of his ministry starting a few months after Haggai  
Darius I was the Persian king at this time and, as we saw in Haggai,

<sup>27</sup> God swore that none of Jehoiachin's seed would sit on David's throne in Jer.22:30 because of Jehoiachin's sins. Interestingly enough, God says that if Jehoiachin were his **signet ring** He would tear it from his hand.

<sup>28</sup> Ezra 15 indicates that in 516, the temple was finished.

According to the Babylonian Talmud five things were absent from Zerubbabel's temple: the ark of the covenant; the holy fire; the Shekinah glory; the spirit of prophecy and the Urim/Thummim.

<sup>29</sup> 1Cor.3:5-17; 2Cor.6:16

<sup>30</sup> This idea comes from "A Distant Grief" by F. Kefa Sempangi

Darius I discovered and supported his predecessor's decree to rebuild the temple. Just over a month prior to the start of this book the project was taken up again after lying fallow for 15 years.

God raised up Haggai and Zechariah to urge Israel to put God and his goals first.

- Do you want to repeat history?  
Zechariah urged the people to not be like their ancestors who had a chance to listen to God but didn't. He asks them if they want to repeat history?

### **DATING 520 - ? BC**

Chs.1-8 easily dated - Chs.9-14 are more difficult to date

### **AUTHORSHIP**

The only real question about Zechariah concerns chapters 9-14 which some question because of alleged changes in vocabulary and style.

However, these differences can as easily be accounted for because of changes in topic and the author's age.<sup>31</sup>

### **MESSAGE RETURN TO ME AND I WILL RETURN TO YOU.**

#### **1:1-6 INTRODUCTION**

##### **V.1 OCTOBER, 520 BC GOD SPOKE TO ZECHARIAH.**

'Yahweh remembers,' 'Yahweh blesses,' 'At the appointed time' (i.e. respectively the meanings of the names of Zechariah, Berekiah & Iddo<sup>32</sup>) and the theme of this book.

Remember your recent history? Do ya wanna repeat it?

God wants the people to not be like their ancestors who disregarded his commands and warnings.

God points out that his words outlasted his audience.

#### **1:7-6:8 EIGHT NIGHT VISIONS<sup>33</sup>**

- **1<sup>ST</sup> VISION - HORSEMEN AMONGST THE MYRTLE<sup>34</sup>**

**1:7-17; FEBRUARY 15, 519** - God will restore Israel.

Israel is troubled whilst the oppressing nations are comfortable. When will this change?

Though Israel has not yet attained her restoration, God promises that he will judge the oppressors and restore her.

v.14 jealous means an intolerance of rivalry or infidelity; zeal

- **FOUR HORNS/FOUR CRAFTSMEN**

**1:18-20 GOD WILL DESTROY ISRAEL'S OPPONENTS**

The horns are the scatterers of Israel - Egypt, Aram, Assyria, Babylon. They are symbols of God's judgment.

The craftsmen are scatterers of the scatterers. They are symbols of God's protection.

- **A MAN WITH THE MEASURING LINE**

**2:1-13 GOD WILL ENLARGE & PROTECT JERUSALEM AND RECONCILE JEWS AND GENTILES INTO ONE PEOPLE.**

This measuring activity would mark out the boundaries of the city for restoration.

v.4 most translators believe the young man is Zechariah, not the surveyor.

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<sup>31</sup> "There is no mode of reasoning so treacherous as that from language and style," G. L. Robinson;  
See K. L. Barker's comments in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Daniel, Minor Prophets, F. E. Gaebelien  
general editor, pp.596-597.

<sup>32</sup> Iddo was one of the priests who returned to the land with Zerubbabel & Joshua. Thus, Zechariah was also a priest.

<sup>33</sup> These happened on the same night. How do we know? Each vision is followed by, in Hebrew, the conjunctions "and then"...what's referred to as 'waw' conjunctions (pron. 'vav').

<sup>34</sup> Myrtle is an evergreen associated with the manufacture of booths during the feast of booths (Neh.8:15) and with the blessings of God's kingdom (Isa.41:19; 55:13).

There's also a lot of it outside Jerusalem.

Since this has not happened (i.e. it was not the mission of Nehemiah who did rebuild the walls), then this passage must be referring to a time yet in the future.

v.7 is probably a poke at those who had not yet returned from captivity; the 'me' in verses 7-11 is thought by some to be Zechariah but by many to be the messiah. He will:

- Fight against the nations that plundered Israel v. 9
- Live amongst the people vv.10, 11b - Shem<sup>35</sup>
- Reconcile Jews & Gentiles together into one people v. 11a - Abraham<sup>36</sup>

- **JOSHUA AND BRANCH**

- **3:1-10 GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF ISRAEL'S SIN.**

- Joshua, representative of Israel<sup>37</sup>, stands before God with filthy garments - Israel is sinful and must be cleansed.

- Satan stands alongside to accuse him. Joshua is filthy but his clothes are changed in an act of gracious redemption.

- **V.1-2 *W<sup>E</sup>HASSATAN...L<sup>E</sup>SITNO*, 'AND SATAN...TO ACCUSE HIM' COULD READ, 'AND THE ACCUSER...TO ACCUSE HIM';**

- The noun translated Satan might not be a proper noun at all, and the context doesn't help.

- **V.3 THE WORD *SOIM*, TRANSLATED FILTHY IS THE STRONGEST EXPRESSION FOR FILTH IN THE HEBREW LANGUAGE.**

- Many believe it means he was covered with excrement.

- **V.8 THE BRANCH - TARGUM JONATHAN, MESSIAH.<sup>38</sup>**

- **V.9 A PROMISE OF BLESSING AND FORGIVENESS TO ISRAEL.**

- What's the stone?

- Some ID the stone as Israel but it makes the translation awkward B/C he's introduced the Branch W/O any comment.

- What are the 7 eyes?

- Speculative....thus unreliable (c.f. 4:10b).

- Some believe the passage could be translated, 'On one stone are seven springs and I will open seven springs to wash over the people.'

- **THE LAMPSTAND AND TWO TREES**

- **4:1-14 GOD IS BEHIND THE TEMPLE PROJECT**

- **THE LORD WILL WORK THROUGH ZERUBBABEL TO FINISH THE TEMPLE.**

- Not by might (by great men of valor),

- Not by strength (great physical capacity) but

- Rather, because God's Spirit brings it to pass. God is against those who diminish the efforts to rebuild the temple.

- The vision itself is difficult to interpret.

- **V.10 IS A REBUKE OF THOSE WHO Demeaned THE REBUILDING BY COMPARING IT WITH SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.**

- Our meager abilities are plenty when we give them to God.

- v.10b the interpreter explains the seven lights are the eyes of God ranging throughout the earth (c.f. 3:9).

- **V.14 THE TWO TREES ARE THE TWO WHO WERE ANOINTED TO SERVE GOD.**

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<sup>35</sup> Genesis 9:26; a role associated with the messiah Isa.7:14

<sup>36</sup> Genesis 12:1f; 18:18; 22:17-18; 26:3-4 and 28:13-14; a ministry associated with the servant Isa.42:1,6; 49:5-8; 52:13-53:12;

Thus, Zechariah here and elsewhere brings the servant & messiah prophecies together in one person.

<sup>37</sup> Verse 8 calls him and his colleagues, 'men of a sign'; men who represent something.

<sup>38</sup> Isa.4:2; Jer.23:3-5; 33:14-26; Zech.3:8

Most interpreters take them to represent Zerubbabel & Joshua. However, if this is true it doesn't help us interpret the vision.<sup>39</sup>

- **A FLYING SCROLL**

- **5:1-4 GOD WILL PURGE SINNERS FROM ISRAEL**

- A scroll 30 feet long & 15 feet wide must already be unrolled.

- To steal is to wrong your neighbor. To swear falsely is to wrong God.

- **A WOMAN IN AN EPHAH BASKET**

- **5:5-11 GOD WILL PURGE SIN ITSELF FROM ISRAEL**

- v. 6 an ephah basket is used to measure grain; it's a bit smaller than a bushel basket.

- v. 7 the woman represents evil;

- That she is sealed within the basket implies sin's power has been restrained;

- She's taken to Babylonia<sup>40</sup> where a house will be built for her.

- It's not clear what this part of the vision means

- **FOUR CHARIOTS**

- **6:1-8 GOD WILL JUDGE THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD**

- v. 1 the bronze mountains and chariots seem to represent God's judgment of the nations

- B/C chariots are implements of war; they arise from and are directed by God and

- B/C bronze is symbolic of judgment in the Bible.

- The two mountains may refer to Mts. Zion and Olives with the Kidron Valley between or they could refer to the split Mount of Olives at the advent of the messiah (14:4).

- v.8 If 'my spirit' refers to the charioteer, then the passage could mean the work to the north was finished.

- If it is a reference to God then it could mean that God's spirit (his anger) was appeased.

**6:9-15 BRANCH IS PRIEST AND KING.**

- **IN THE 4<sup>TH</sup> VISION JOSHUA WAS PRIEST, HERE BRANCH IS PRIEST (V.13).**<sup>41</sup>

- **IN THE 5<sup>TH</sup> VISION ZERUBBABEL WAS THE RULER, HERE BRANCH IS RULER (V.13).**<sup>42</sup>

- **IN THE 5<sup>TH</sup> VISION ZERUBBABEL WAS TO BUILD THE TEMPLE, HERE BRANCH WILL DO IT (V.12).**<sup>43</sup>

- **IN THE 5<sup>TH</sup> VISION JOSHUA AND ZERUBBABEL'S OFFICES WERE SEPARATE, HERE THEY COALESCE IN THE BRANCH (V.13).**

- v.14 most hold that Hen is a nickname for Josiah...it means "gracious one."

- v.15 most hold that "me" refers to the messiah

**7-8 CONCERNING FASTING**

- **THE FIRST TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED ON THE 9<sup>TH</sup> OF AB (5<sup>TH</sup> MONTH; JUNE/JULY) ∴ A COMMEMORATION**

- **FASTED FOURTH MONTH TO COMMEMORATE THE DAY THE BABYLONIANS BREACHED THE WALL (THE 9<sup>TH</sup> OF TAMMUZ).**

- **FASTED IN THE SEVENTH MONTH BECAUSE OF YOM KIPPUR<sup>44</sup> OR BECAUSE OF THE ASSASSINATION OF GEDALIAH GOVERNOR AFTER THE FALL (3<sup>RD</sup> OF TISHRI; JER.41:2)**

- **SOME FASTED IN THE TENTH MONTH BECAUSE THAT'S WHEN THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM BEGAN (10<sup>TH</sup> OF TEBETH).**

- **SHOULD WE CONTINUE FASTING NOW THAT WE'RE BEING RESTORED?**

**7:1-14 FASTING & FEASTING FOR YOUR OWN SAKE IS USELESS.**

- Pursue love justice, mercy, compassion, care for the powerless and love for one another.

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<sup>39</sup> What would it mean to say that the olive oil flows from the trees (Joshua/Zerubbabel) to the lampstand (God's omniscience)?

<sup>40</sup> *Sinar* corresponds to both Sumer and Akkad and thus to the region of Babylon.

<sup>41</sup> Ps.110:4

<sup>42</sup> 2Sam.7:12-16

<sup>43</sup> Isa.2:2-4; Ezek.40-42; Mic.4:1-5; Hag.2:7-9)

<sup>44</sup> The Day of Atonement

**8:1-23 I WILL RE-GATHER MY PEOPLE. FESTIVALS WILL REPLACE FASTS.**

Speak the truth, be just, love others, love truth and peace. You will be a light to the Gentiles.

**9-11 1<sup>ST</sup> BURDEN**

**9:1-8 GOD'S JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL'S ENEMIES**

Syria (Aram), Phoenicia (Tyre & Sidon) & the Philistines (Ekron).

When Alexander the Great defeated the Persians (333 BC) he moved toward Egypt through Syria and along the Mediterranean coast destroying cities along the way but spared Jerusalem.

**9:7C OPPRESSORS WILL BE REMOVED BUT A REMNANT WILL BE RETAINED.**

I will take away their violent ways and make them part of the blessing of God.

**9:8 TRUE OF THE GREEK INVADERS BUT NOT TRUE IN AN ULTIMATE SENSE BECAUSE ROME DESTROYED JERUSALEM IN 70 AD.**

Thus the complete fulfillment of this verse must occur when messiah reigns (perhaps it's true from May 1948 onward).

**9:9 ISRAEL REJOICES BECAUSE HER KING IS COMING ON A DONKEY FOAL BRINGING PEACE & DOMINION.<sup>45</sup>**

**9:12 GOD'S BRINGING A DOUBLE RESTORATION<sup>46</sup>**

9:13 God will deliver Israel

Perhaps a reference to Maccabean (175-165 BC) period when Greece (Seleucid dynasty) tried & failed to bring Israel culturally to heel.

10:3 The bad shepherds will be destroyed but the people will be victorious.

**10:4 TARGUM & MANY OTHER SCHOLARS VIEW THIS AS MESSIANIC**

The messiah will arise from Judah (Gen.49:10; Jer.30:21),

The messiah is the cornerstone (3:9; Ps.118:22; Isa.28:16) and

Rulers up to the messiah arise from Judah.

The other references would also fit the messiah since the tent peg conveys the idea of support (Isa.22:23f) and the bow refers to God as a warrior (Rev.19:11-16; Ps.45:5).

10:10 Assyria and Egypt will return the exiles.

**11:1-4 AN ABRUPT SHIFT FROM THE RESTORATION PROPHECY of the previous chapter TO THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL.**

Some see this as a historical look at Israel's plight under God's judgment when both leaders & populace abandoned God.<sup>47</sup>

Others see this as a prophecy of Israel's destruction under Rome as God's judgment for rejecting Jesus as messiah.<sup>48</sup>

It could possibly refer to near total destruction just prior to the advent of messiah.

**11:4 THE FLOCK WILL BE SLAUGHTERED.**

The shepherds see the sheep as money on the hoof not as a trust from God. Who are the three shepherds<sup>49</sup> (v.8)?

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<sup>45</sup> At the city of Mari (1000 yrs. prior to this), a governor writes to his king saying the king should ride a donkey as befitting his royal position);

When David wanted to honor Solomon as the future king he had him ride his mule 1Ki.1; Mt.21:5; Jn.12:15.

This had fallen out of fashion in Christ's day...kings rode horses.

<sup>46</sup> The prophets don't always try to describe the future chronologically...they sometimes simply list future events like a bulleted list and it's up to us to make sense of the chronology.

<sup>47</sup> Verse 14 seems especially germane because the brotherhood between Judah & Israel would be difficult to break after the exile.

<sup>48</sup> The good shepherd is rejected just like the servant was rejected (Isa.42; 49; 50; 53)

<sup>49</sup> Barker (i.e. in Gaebelien, Daniel & the Minor Prophets) indicates there are 40 distinct interpretations of this verse. One view identifies them as Eleazar, John & Simon, leaders of three Jewish factions at the time of the rebellion suppressed by Titus under Vespasian.

Another view sees them referring to prophets, priest & leaders (Feinberg).

11:4-16 is thought by some to be a literal account of Zechariah taking over a sheep herd. A worthless shepherd will precede the good shepherd. Who would this be? It's hard to say. During the Maccabean period many could have fulfilled this prophecy because they were buying and selling the priesthood.

**11:12-13 HIS WAGES WERE THE PRICE OF A FEMALE (LEV.27:4) OR GORED (EX.21:32) SLAVE - 30 PIECES OF SILVER (C.F. MT.26:15).**

**11:14 THOSE HOLDING TO A ROMAN JUDGMENT ARGUE THAT THE 'UNION' STAFF REFERRED TO THE FACTIOUSNESS THAT PRECEDED AND HELPED BRING ABOUT ROME'S DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL.**

**12-14 2<sup>ND</sup> BURDEN**

**ONE PERIOD IS BEING DESCRIBED FROM 12 THROUGH 14 - THE 70<sup>TH</sup> WEEK OF DANIEL.**

Here Israel refers to the whole nation, not just the northern segment.

**12:2 JERUSALEM WILL BECOME A CUP OF REELING FOR ALL NATIONS.**

Often the cup is the cup of God's wrath (Isa.51:17,22; Jer.51:7). Jerusalem somehow becomes this.

Judah will be victorious but it will be by God's hand.

**12:10-14 SPIRITUAL REVIVAL WILL TAKE PLACE.**

v.10 The Hebrew preposition translated 'on' is normally translated 'to.'

If this is the better translation then the passage becomes faith in the messiah rather than observation of the messiah.

LXX translates the word for 'pierced' as 'grieved', however, this word is never translated this way anywhere else including the next chapter, 13:3.

**THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD IDENTIFIES THIS INDIVIDUAL AS MESSIAH BEN JOSEPH RATHER THAN MESSIAH BEN DAVID BECAUSE THE THOUGHT THAT THE DAVIDIC MESSIAH WOULD SUFFER WAS UNTHINKABLE.<sup>50</sup>**

v.11 The grief expressed may refer to the mourning following the death of Josiah (2Ki.23:29; 2Chr.35:25) the last good king of Judah.

13:1-6 God will forgive and cleanse Israel of impurity, idolatry and false prophecy.

13:7-9 How will this happen?

The shepherd will be struck and the sheep will be scattered.<sup>51</sup>

A remnant will be refined and when they are thus refined they will call on him and he will answer.

**14:1-2 SOME BELIEVE THIS IS YET UNREALIZED; IT IS AN ATTACK, SIEGE AND RANSACKING OF JERUSALEM PRECEDING THE ADVENT OF MESSIAH (C.F. REV.19).**

**14:3-15 ALL NATIONS ARE GATHERED AGAINST JERUSALEM AND AS THE CITY IS ABOUT TO FALL, THE LORD WILL INTERVENE, ARRIVING ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.**

The Mount of Olives will be split in two<sup>52</sup> and a river will flow to the Mediterranean and to the Dead Sea out of Jerusalem.

The enemies will experience a unique plague as both man and beast will disintegrate while standing on their feet.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> More recent Hebrew translations (e.g. 1988 New Jewish Society translation of the Tanakh) reads, *but I will fill the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem with a spirit of pity and compassion; and they shall lament to Me about those who are slain, wailing over them as over a favorite son...*;

One problem with this translation is that 'me' and 'him' both refer to the same person, the one who pours out the Spirit. ∴ The first-person singular pronoun requires that 'me'/'him' refer to God; Additionally, the subject of the verb 'look' and 'pierce' are also the same in Hebrew; Finally all other occurrences of the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun in chapter 12 refer to the messiah.

<sup>51</sup> This is the good shepherd that is struck by God; 'my shepherd'; 'the man who is close to me;'

'*amithi* carries the meaning of kinsman or relative...so this is a problem passage for Jews since it makes the shepherd equal with God.

<sup>52</sup> Apparently a substantial fault line runs right under the Mount of Olives.

There's not a big description of the battle because when God enters the fray the battle is over. 14:16-21 The feast of booths is mentioned. It celebrates God's provision through difficult times. All will be holy to the Lord. There will be nothing unclean.

### **APPLICATIONS**

#### **THE ONLY REAL POWER IS THE POWER OF GOD (4:6) GOD DOES WHAT HE PROMISES**

- **REGATHERS ISRAEL**
- **DWELLS WITH ISRAEL (I.E. THUS FULFILLING THE PROMISE TO SHEM)**
- **PURGES, CLEANSSES & REDEEMS ISRAEL**

If you really believed God keeps his promises, how would you live?

### **MALACHI - GIVE GOD YOUR BEST.**

**MALACHI IS STRUCTURED INTO SIX ARGUMENTS** between God and Israel concerning:

1. God's sovereign choice of Israel;
2. God's lack of honor amongst the priests;
3. Divorce;
4. God's justice;
5. Tithes and offerings and
6. Serving God.

These arguments are unilateral. Malachi lays out a charge, puts words in the mouth of the opposition and then responds to the imagined objections.

### **DATING C. 515-424?**

- Malachi always last amongst the Minor Prophets.
- **MOST SCHOLARS PUT MALACHI AFTER THE TEMPLE REBUILDING (516)...** However, it's harder to peg the near side of the range.
- **MOST LIKELY MALACHI WROTE JUST BEFORE NEHEMIAH RETURNED TO TAKE ON GOVERNORSHIP OF THE REGION BECAUSE THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MALACHI AND NEHEMIAH'S THEMES ARE SUBSTANTIAL.**<sup>54</sup>  
It is believed Malachi's ministry preceded Nehemiah's return from Persia because he is not named and such is a rather conspicuous omission.  
∴ it must have been written around 460 BC before Ezra (Ezra returned around 458 BC) and Nehemiah's (445 BC) reforms.
- Malachi's prophecy must have preceded the reforms of Ezra/Nehemiah because the effect of these reforms was so widespread it would be surprising if Israel was in decline very soon thereafter.

### **AUTHORSHIP**

Was there really a Malachi (Malachi means 'messenger') thus the first verse may not be a proper name but a role played by an anonymous author.<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, if the author did not include his name in the first verse, it would be the exception to all the rest of the Minor Prophets.

Malachi had significant impact and it would be odd that his actual name was not recorded.

### **MESSAGE**

**1:1-5 I LOVED YOU BY CHOOSING YOU.**

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<sup>53</sup> It's hard to resist making comparisons with Hiroshima & Nagasaki but certainly God could accomplish this without resorting to human thermonuclear weapons.

<sup>54</sup> Because the themes are similar - Mixed marriages (Neh.10:30; 13:23-27; Mal.2:11); corrupt priesthood (Neh.13:4-9; Mal.1:6-2:9) and financial abuse (Neh.13:10-13; Mal.3:5-10) AND because Nehemiah's absence from the book would be unlikely if he were present

<sup>55</sup> Targum Jonathan adds 'malachi whose name was Ezra the scribe'. According to Talmudic sources the name of the messenger was Mordecai.

v. 2 How has God loved us?

vv.3-5 Consider Edom - destroyed without hope. Jacob was God's covenant choice and the covenant is a mark of God's love. I brought you back from captivity.

**1:6-2:9 YOU PRIESTS HAVE DESPISED MY NAME.**

**1:6 HOW HAVE WE DESPISED GOD'S NAME?**

**2:8 THE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN OFFERING LESS THAN THE BEST AND SHOWN PARTIALITY (V.9).**

God warns them: I will curse your blessings, the good that would come to you will become a curse;

Remember my covenant with Levi; the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge because he represents me;

You've corrupted the covenant.

**2:10-16 YOU HAVE DWELT TREACHEROUSLY WITH YOUR WIVES.**

She is your companion by covenant (c.f. God's covenant with them).

**I HATE DIVORCE** (c.f. Matt.19; the disciples thought it would be better not to marry than to give up divorce as an option).

**I HATE WIFE ABUSE.**<sup>56</sup>

**2:17-3:5 YOU HAVE WEARIED THE LORD WITH YOUR WORDS.**

**2:17 HOW HAVE WE WEARIED THE LORD?**

**2:18 YOU SAY EVERYONE WHO DOES EVIL IS GOOD & THERE IS NO GOD OF JUSTICE.**

My messenger is coming.

The Lord will come suddenly to his temple.

Who can endure the day he comes?

He will purify the sons of Levi.

When smelters refine metal they melt it and keep skimming the impurities until they can see their faces.

He will one day refine his people so that when he looks at them he sees his own reflection.

**3:6-12 YOU HAVE ROBBED ME.**

**V.8 HOW HAVE WE ROBBED THE LORD?**

**V. 10 NOT TO GIVE IS TO STEAL.**

The only thing that keeps you alive is my unwillingness to break my covenant with you.

Everything belongs to God, giving is an occupation that God provides the resources for us to do (1Chron.29:14).

Bring in the tithe and I will bless you. The one other time this expression, 'open the windows of heaven' is used is in regard to the flood. I will flood you with blessing.

He doesn't say the blessing is in kind - grain for grain; money for money...he just says it will exceed their comprehension.

**3:13-18 YOUR WORDS HAVE BEEN ARROGANT AGAINST ME.**

**3:13 HOW SO?**

**3:14 YOU'VE SAID THERE'S NO PROFIT IN SERVING GOD.**

You've said the wicked escape justice. You've called the wicked blessed. Why should I bother to serve God, you say.

There is a book of remembrance; I will spare my own on the Day of Judgment.

**4:1-6 I WILL COME AS A JUDGE AND REDEEMER**

Remember the law of Moses.

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<sup>56</sup> This verse is unclear. The Hebrew does not include 'himself' or 'his wife' these words are inserted to make sense of the verse.

The image of a man wearing violence like a garment in the context of marriage suggests domestic violence.

One wonders if the men of this time saw violence and the threat of divorce as the only means they had of influencing their wives.

If so, they forgot the lesson of Hosea; c.f. 3:6 - God keeps his covenants with grace and discipline.

Elijah will come to restore familial relationships before the Day of the Lord.

**APPLICATIONS**

**GOD SHOULD GET YOUR BEST.**

- LIBERALITY
- FIDELITY TO GOD AND FAMILY.

**GOD TAKES SIN PERSONALLY**

- TO NOT GIVE YOUR BEST IS TO SHOW CONTEMPT (1:6)
- TO NOT FOLLOW THROUGH WITH YOUR SOLEMN COMMITMENTS IS TO PROFANE HIS LAW (2:10)
- TO BELIEVE THAT GOD IS UNJUST IS TO WEARY HIM (2:17)
- TO NOT GIVE IS TO ROB GOD (3:8)
- TO REGARD SERVICE TO GOD AS USELESS IS TO SPEAK HARSHLY TO GOD (3:13-14)