

HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH & MALACHI

INTRODUCTION

- In Jerusalem was overrun 586 BCE
- In 538 BCE Cyrus released the captive Jews to return to Jerusalem.¹
- All three of these prophets focus largely on the temple project.
- As the temple foundation was laid, there were as many people weeping as rejoicing.²
- Local opposition led to Persian opposition and the building was stopped.

HAGGAI - Build my house!

After 15 years leaving the temple project undone, God raised up Haggai to persuade them to get back to work.³

DATING August 29, 520 - December 18, 520

AUTHORSHIP ISSUES

MESSAGE

1:1 On August 29, 520 BC Haggai delivered a prophetic message.

1:1-15 1st Prophecy - August 29, 520 BC

- You have paneled houses while my house lies in ruins.
- Do you notice there's never enough? I've held back from you.
- Rebuild the temple to please and honor me.

The people repented. On September 21, 520 BC they began to work on the temple.

2:1-9 2nd Prophecy - October 17

The prophecy suggests that the people were discouraged as they began to make comparisons between this and the former temple.⁴

God will bring in the glory (v. 5-6).

¹ 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)

² 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) or that they saw the work as beyond their human capacity.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

2:10-19 3rd Prophecy - December 18

Verse 11, Haggai asks for a *tora*, a short instruction about a matter of law:

- Are the common things made holy by the holy things?
- Are the holy things made unclean by unclean things?

2:20-23 4th Prophecy - December 18

He tells Zerubbabel that he is God's signet ring.

The bad news is that the messiah cannot descend from Zerubbabel because of Jehoiachin.⁵

In 516, 22 years after the foundation was first laid and 4 years after this series of prophecies, the temple was finished.⁶

APPLICATIONS

Prioritize God's goals over your own.

God will attend to your needs

⁵ God swore that none of Jehoiachin's seed would sit on David's throne in Jer.22:30 because of Jehoiachin's sins.

⁶ 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.

ZECHARIAH - Return to me and I will return to you.

Zechariah was a Levite (Neh.12:16).

Dating 520 - ? BC

Authorship

Message Return to me and I will return to you.

1:1-6 Introduction

v.1 October, 520 BC God spoke to Zechariah.

1:7-6:8 Eight night visions

- Horsemen amongst the myrtle
1:7-17; February 15, 519

- Four horns/four craftsmen
1:18-20 God will destroy Israel's opponents

- A man with the measuring line
2:1-13 God will enlarge & protect Jerusalem and reconcile Jews and Gentiles into one people.

- Joshua and Branch
3:1-10 God will take care of Israel's sin.

v.1-2 *w^hassatan...^fsitno*, 'and Satan...to accuse him' could read, 'and the accuser...to accuse him'

v.3 the word *soim*, translated filthy is the strongest expression for filth in the Hebrew language.

v.8 The Branch believed by Targum Jonathan to be the messiah.⁷

v.9 a promise of blessing and forgiveness to Israel.
- The lampstand and two trees
4:1-14 God is behind the temple project
The Lord will work through Zerubbabel to finish the temple.

v.10 is a rebuke of those who demeaned the rebuilding by comparing it with Solomon's temple.

⁷ Isa.4:2; Jer.23:3-5; 33:14-26; Zech.3:8

v.14 The two trees are the two who were anointed to serve God.

- A flying scroll
5:1-4 God will purge sinners from Israel
- A woman in an ephah basket
5:5-11 God will purge sin from Israel
- Four chariots
6:1-8 God will judge the nations of the world

6:9-15 Branch is priest and king.

In the 4th vision Joshua was priest, here Branch is priest (v.13).

In the 5th vision Zerubbabel was the ruler, here Branch is ruler (v.13).

In the 5th vision Zerubbabel was to build the temple, here Branch will do it (v.12).

In the 5th vision Joshua and Zerubbabel's offices were separate; here they coalesce in the Branch (v.13).

7-8 Concerning Fasting

The first temple was destroyed on the 9th of Ab (5th month; June/July) and so a commemoration occurred then.

Some fasted in the fourth month to commemorate the day the Babylonians breached the wall (the 9th of Tammuz).

Some fasted in the seventh month because of Yom Kippur or because of the assassination of Gedaliah governor after the fall (3rd of Tishri; Jer.41:2)

Some fasted in the tenth month because that's when the siege of Jerusalem began (10th of Tebeth).

Should we continue fasting now that we're being restored?

7:1-14 Fasting & feasting for your own sake is useless.

8:1-23 I will re-gather my people. Festivals will replace fasts.

9-11 1st Burden

9:1-8 God's judgment of Israel's enemies:

9:7c Oppressors will be removed but a remnant will be retained.

9:8 This was true of the Greek invaders but not true in an ultimate sense because Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD.

9:9 Israel rejoices because her king is coming on a donkey foal bringing peace & dominion.⁸

9:12 God's bringing a double restoration

⁸ At the city of Mari 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.

10:4 A messianic prophecy

11:1-4 An abrupt shift from the restoration prophecy to the destruction of Israel.

11:4 The flock will be slaughtered.

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 2nd Burden

One period is being described from 12 through 14 - the 70th week of Daniel.

12:2 Jerusalem will become a cup of reeling for all nations.

12:10-14 Spiritual revival will take place.

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

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.⁹

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.

Applications

The only real power is the power of God (4:6)

God does what he promises

- Regathers Israel
- Dwells with Israel
- Purges, Cleanses & Redeems Israel

MALACHI - Give God your best.

Malachi is structured into six arguments

Dating c. 515-424?

Most scholars put Malachi after the temple rebuilding (516).

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.¹⁰

⁹ 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.* Syntactically & grammatically this doesn't make sense, however.

Most date Malachi to around 460 BC before Ezra (458 BC) and Nehemiah's reforms (445 BC)

Authorship

Message

1:1-5 I loved you by choosing you.

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).

2:10-16 You have dwelt treacherously with your wives.

I hate divorce.

I hate wife abuse.¹¹

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.

3:6-12 You have robbed me.

v.8 How have we robbed the Lord?

v. 10 Not to give is to steal.

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.

4:1-6 I will come as a judge and redeemer

Remember the law of Moses.

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 the 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)

¹⁰ 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).

¹¹ This verse is unclear. The Hebrew does not include 'himself' or 'his wife' these words are inserted to make sense of the verse but the image of a man wearing violence like a garment in this context suggests domestic violence.