

Haggai

Summary

God speaks through the prophet Haggai and commands the Israelites to rebuild the house of the Lord - the temple in Jerusalem. He challenges them because they have rebuilt comfortable dwellings for themselves while simultaneously neglecting the rebuilding of the Lord's house. Israel responds to the prophet's message from God, and God paves the way for the temple to be rebuilt. As a result of their obedience to God's call, He promises to bless the people if they continue to follow Him and not defile themselves with the things that He has forbidden.

Author

The prophet Haggai authored this book, with little dispute among scholars. Haggai is also mentioned as a prophet of Israel in the book of Ezra, which contains highly accurate historical data, further confirming his influence upon the Israelite nation.

Date

Specific dates are given as to when God spoke through the prophet Haggai. Each of these dates refers to the rule of King Darius (522-486 B.C.). The final date refers to the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, which puts the latest likely date of authorship to be around 520 B.C.

Primary Characters

Haggai (1-2)

Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel (1-2)

Joshua, son of Jozadak (1-2)

Historical Moments

The post-exilic Israelites begin to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (538 B.C.)

Major Theological Themes

The Importance of the House of the Lord - The house of the Lord, or the temple of the Lord, was of great significance to the relationship between God and His people. It was both a symbol of God's presence among the Israelites and a structure that would help future generations to remember God and what He has done. A common theme throughout the Old Testament is the relationship between God and His people. We find that God desires to be close to His people, worshiped, remembered, and honored in a manner only He deserves. Rebuilding His temple must take priority over the dwellings of His people. When the task is completed, He will take care of the needs of His people.

Lessons Learned from Haggai

God Desires that His People Trust Him with Every Aspect of Their Lives - When we trust God, He is faithful to provide all that is necessary to accomplish His will for our lives. We must seek God and His will, trust and pursue His ways, and rely on Him to pave the way for us, much like He did for the Israelites as they rebuilt the house of the Lord.

In All that We Do, We Must Strive for Obedience - God has set clear standards for us through His Word, and just as He provided for the Israelites through their obedience to His will, He will be faithful in carrying us through each day as we pursue Him.

Honor Is of Utmost Importance to God - It is not simply the rote actions of the daily Christian life that spur the heart of God to walk alongside us, but rather, it is the position of our hearts that matters. In Haggai, the Israelites heard the Word of God, and their hearts sought to obey the prophecy that they had been given. So too must be the position of our hearts; hearing the truth and being stirred to honor the desires of God's heart. When we pursue each of these things, God is faithful to stand by our side much as He stood by Israel in their obedience.