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Article 37: Haggai at a Glance

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HAGGAI AT A GLANCE

This book records three short messages by Haggai, all delivered to exhort the return of the Jewish remnant following the Babylonian captivity who had been reluctant to rebuild their temple which was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar some 70 years back.

BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION

YOUR HOUSES ARE NOT BEING BLESSED BECAUSE GOD'S HOUSE IS NOT BEING BUILT.

A talk about some temples is the theme of Haggai, the second shortest Old Testament book. The people said: We can't afford to build the second temple (1:2). The prophet said: You can't afford not to (1:5-11). The people said: We're sad. The second temple is much smaller than the first temple (2:3). The prophet said: Be glad. The final temple will be larger than both combined (2:9).

FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK

1. Who? **Haggai**. This prophet led his people in the completion of the second temple (Hag. 1:2-8), and described the glories of the millennial temple (Hag. 2:6-9).
2. What? The **Book of Haggai**.
3. When and where? 520 B.C., from Jerusalem.
4. Why? To encourage the rebuilding of the Temple.
5. To whom? The returning Jewish remnant.

KEY EVENTS

1. A summary overview of (1) Solomon's temple, (2) the small temple in Haggai's day, and (3) the magnificent millennial temple

KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **Haggai**: Old Testament prophet who led his people in the completion of the second temple following their return from Persia to Jerusalem
2. **Zerubbabel**: political leader of the first return of the Jews to Jerusalem following the Babylonian captivity who was greatly encouraged by both Haggai and Zechariah

KEY PLACES

1. **Second temple**: located on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem, which building, destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, was now to be rebuilt, as urged by Haggai

UNIQUE FEATURES

1. Haggai was the first prophetic voice to be heard after the Babylonian Captivity.

2. His writings are the most precisely dated ones in the Old Testament (1:1; 2:1, 10, 20).
3. Like Nehemiah (who came much later to Jerusalem), Haggai was a man of action. In just 23 days Haggai inspired the people back to work on the temple, after a delay of 14 years.
4. In just 52 days Nehemiah would finish building the walls around Jerusalem (Neh. 6:15).
5. Haggai refers to Christ as "the desire of all nations" (2:7).
6. Haggai is notable for his frequent use of the phrase "*thus saith the Lord of hosts*" and similar phrases (some 25 occurrences), emphasizing the seriousness of his message and the fact that God was still speaking to his people in the postexilic era.
7. In essence, both Haggai and his partner Zechariah can be described as two spiritual spokesmen in the construction of the second Temple (1:13-14).
8. His book is the only one to mention three of scripture's four temples:
 - The temple of Solomon (2:3a)
 - The temple of the Return (2:3b)
 - The tribulational temple – not referred to by Haggai (see 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 11:1).
 - The millennial temple (2:9)
9. Two New Testament passages aptly summarize the book of Haggai. "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Mt. 6:33). "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*" (1 Cor. 15:58).

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

Ezekiel:

- Both speak of the millennial Temple (2:9; Ezek. 40-42).
- Both speak of a "shaking" of the land of Israel (2:6; Ezek. 38:19).

Jeremiah:

- Both include significant prophecies involving a signet ring, the symbol of royal authority:
 - a. Jeremiah spoke of King Jehoiachin as a signet ring that God would cast away (Jer. 22:24), symbolizing the end of the Davidic kings.
 - b. In Haggai, the signet ring was taken up again and put back on the Lord's hand, signifying that the Messiah ("Zerubbabel") will be the last and greatest Davidic king (2:23).

TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS

1. The Lord of Hosts (1:2)
2. The Desire of all Nations (2:7)