EDIFIED EDITION

Haggai

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

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Chapter 1

Haggai 1 records the word of the LORD that came through Haggai in Darius's second year to Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest. The people were saying that the time had not come to rebuild the LORD's house, yet they lived in panelled houses while His house lay in ruins. The LORD tells them to consider their ways: they sow much and harvest little, eat and are never full, and earn wages to put into a purse with holes. He has withheld dew and crops because His house lies desolate while each of them busies himself with his own. They are to go up into the hills, bring timber and build the house, so that He may take pleasure in it and be glorified. Zerubbabel, Joshua and the whole remnant of the people obeyed and feared the LORD. Haggai, the LORD's messenger, told them, "I am with you, declares the LORD," and the LORD stirred up their spirits, and they began work on the house of their God.

[1] In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the LORD came through Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest:[1]

[2] "This is what the LORD of Armies says: These people say, 'The time has not yet come, the time for the LORD's house to be rebuilt.'"

[3] Then the word of the LORD came through Haggai the prophet:

[4] "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this house lies in ruins?[2]

[5] Now this is what the LORD of Armies says: Consider your ways carefully.

[6] You have sown much but brought in little. You eat, but never have enough; you drink, but never have your fill; you put on clothes, but no one is warm. And the wage earner earns wages only to put them into a purse with holes in it.

[7] This is what the LORD of Armies says: Consider your ways carefully.

[8] Go up into the hill country, bring timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified, says the LORD.

[9] You hoped for plenty, but look how little it came to; and what you carried home, I scattered with a breath. And why? declares the LORD of Armies. Because My house stands in ruins, while every one of you hurries about his own house.

10 That is why the heavens above you have held back their dew and the earth has held back its produce.

11 I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine and the olive oil, on whatever the ground produces, on people and animals, and on all the labour of your hands.”[3]

12 Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, with everyone left of the people, listened to what the LORD their God said and to Haggai the prophet’s words, for the LORD their God had sent him; and the people stood in fear before the LORD.

13 Then Haggai, the LORD’s messenger, gave the LORD’s message to the people: “I am with you, declares the LORD.”

14 And the LORD roused the spirit of Judah’s governor Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the spirit of the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and the spirit of everyone left of the people. They came and set to work on the house of their God, the LORD of Armies,

15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

1 29 August 520 BC. The exiles had returned in 538 BC, but work on the temple had stopped soon after the foundation was laid (Ezra 4:24–5:2).

2 ‘Panelled’ may also mean ‘roofed’; either way their own homes were finished.

3 ‘Drought’ (horeb) sounds like ‘in ruins’ (hareb) in verses 4 and 9: as the house lay waste, so did their land.

Chapter 2

Haggai 2 brings three more messages. A month later the LORD asks who remembers the former temple in its glory, for this one seems like nothing; yet He tells Zerubbabel, Joshua and the people to be strong and work, for He is with them and His Spirit remains among them. Once more, in a little while, He will shake heaven and earth and all nations, and the treasures of the nations will come; the glory of this house will be greater than the former, and in this place He will give peace. In the ninth month Haggai asks the priests whether holy meat makes other food holy (it does not) and whether touching a corpse makes things unclean (it does); so the people and their offerings have been unclean. They are to consider how before the foundation was laid their harvests failed, but from this day on He will bless them. Finally the LORD tells Zerubbabel that He will shake the heavens and overthrow the thrones of kingdoms, and on that day He will make him like a signet ring, for He has chosen him.

1 On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came through Haggai the prophet:[1]

2 “Say this to Judah’s governor Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, to the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and to everyone left of the people:

3 Who among 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 at all?

4 But now be strong, Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD, and work, for I am with you, declares the LORD of Armies.

5 This is the promise I made with you when you came out of Egypt, and My Spirit remains among you. Do not be afraid.

6 For this is what the LORD of Armies says: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land.[2]

7 I will shake all the nations, and the treasures of all the nations will come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of Armies.[3]

8 All silver belongs to Me, and all gold is Mine, declares the LORD of Armies.

9 The glory of this latter house will be greater than that of the former, says the LORD of Armies. And in this place I will grant peace, declares the LORD of Armies.”

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Haggai the prophet:

11 “This is what the LORD of Armies says: Ask the priests for a ruling:

12 If someone carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and the fold touches bread or stew, wine, oil or any other food, does it become holy?” The priests answered, “No.”

13 Then Haggai said, “If someone who is unclean from contact with a dead body touches any of

these, does it become unclean?" The priests answered, "It does."[4]

14 Then Haggai said, "So it is with this people and this nation before Me, declares the LORD, and with all the work of their hands: whatever they offer there is unclean.

15 Now consider carefully from this day onward. 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 the 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 turn to Me, declares the LORD.

18 Consider carefully from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid; consider it:

19 Is there still any seed left in the barn? Until now the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on I will bless you."[5]

20 The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month:

21 "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah: I am going to shake the heavens and the earth.

22 I will overturn the thrones of kingdoms and shatter the power of the kingdoms of the nations. I will overturn chariots and their riders; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother.

23 On that day, declares the LORD of Armies, I will take you, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, My servant, declares the LORD, and make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, declares the LORD of Armies."[6]

1 17 October 520 BC, the last day of the Feast of Shelters, when Solomon's temple had been dedicated (1 Kings 8:2).

2 Hebrews 12:26 quotes this verse: 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.'

3 'The treasures' (hemdat) is singular in form, 'the desire of all nations', and has often been read of the Messiah; but the verb 'will come' is plural, and verse 8 speaks of silver and gold.

4 Holiness does not pass on by contact, but uncleanness does (Leviticus 22:4–6; Numbers 19:11–22).

5 18 December 520 BC, at the time of winter sowing, before any new crop could be seen.

6 The signet ring sealed a king's authority. The LORD had cast off Zerubbabel's grandfather Jehoiachin as a signet ring (Jeremiah 22:24); now the line of David is taken up again. Zerubbabel appears in the genealogies of Jesus (Matthew 1:12; Luke 3:27).