

Haggai 1

Verse 1

In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying,

Darius the king (Darius the Great of Persia) (Darius Hystaspes), reigned over the Medo-Persian Empire from 521-486 B.C.

See chart 105

Kings of Persia - 559 to 330 BC	
King	Reign
Cyrus	559 - 529
Cyrus captured Babylon	539
Cambyses	529-522
Smerdis (Bardiya)	522 BC
Darius I (Hystaspes)	521-486
Xerxes I (Ahashuerus)	485-465
Artaxerxes (Longimanus)	465-424
Xerxes II	424
Sogdianus of Persia	424 – 423 BC
Darius II (Nothus)	423-405
Artaxerxes (Mnemon)	404-359
Artaxerxes III of Persia Ochus	358 – 338 BC
Arses of Persia (Artaxerxes IV)	338 – 336 BC
Darius III of Persia Codomannus	336 – 331 BC

The first message from the Lord to Haggai came on 6-1-520 BC. We know this was a critical time because the work on the temple had been delayed by 15 years.

See chart 110

Ezra Time Line

Chapter	Events		Year
1 - 2	Cyrus releases Jews	1st Return	539
3	Second temple begun		538 - 536
4:1-5 & 24	Work stopped	15 years	536 - 520
5	Work begins again		520
6	Second temple dedicated		516

It is interesting that the word of the Lord came to the Governor and the High Priest. From this we can see that Judah no longer had a king that had full control as it was during the time of the kings. The High Priest now had a position of authority and ruled in concert with the Governor. This was continued throughout the subsequent history of Judah and during the time of Christ, Caiaphas, appears as one of near-equal authority with the governor, Pontius Pilate.

As the high priest, Caiaphas headed the Sanhedrin, managed the temple treasury, and commanded temple guards, giving him near-total autonomy over day-to-day civil and religious life for local Jews. Pilate, served as the Roman prefect (procurator), which commanded occupation troops and held the exclusive legal right to authorize a capital sentence.

Before we move on to the next verse there is one small matter to address. In this verse Zerubbabel is said to be the son of Shealtiel but in 1st Chronicles it says he was the son of Pedaiah

See 1 Chronicles 3:19

¹⁹ The sons of Pedaiah were Zerubbabel and Shimei. And the sons of Zerubbabel were Meshullam and Hananiah, and Shelomith was their sister; ²⁰ and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-hesed, five.

However, Zerubbabel is listed as the "son of Shealtiel" in two N.T. genealogies, one of which is provided below.

See Matthew 1:12

¹² After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah fathered Shealtiel, and Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel.

Most likely "Salathiel" is another form of the name Pedaiah.

1st Message

Verse 2

² “This is what the Lord of armies says: ‘This people says, “The time has not come, the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt.”’”

Some commentators try to put all of the blame on the people of Judah but that was not the case in this situation. The Samaritans offered to help build the temple, but the Jewish leaders rejected their offer so the Samaritans sought to discourage the people of Judah by making them afraid to continue, and bribed Persian government officials to frustrate their plans. The political intervention caused the work to be forcibly suspended until the reign of King Darius of Persia. As we will see part of the blame did fall on the people but there were some legitimate reasons for the initial delay.

See Ezra 4:4 - 5

⁴ Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah, and frightened them from building, ⁵ and bribed advisers against them to frustrate their advice all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Verses 3 - 4

³ Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, ⁴ “Is it time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses while this house *remains* desolate?”

The people of Judah had been forced to stop working on the temple but that was 15 years ago. Had they tried to restart the work on the temple to see if there would still be opposition, had they come before God as a group and asked for His help in this matter? If they had, we can assume God would not be scolding them for caring more about their own homes than the House of the Lord. There was a legitimate reason for curtailing the work 15 years ago but during that time the people had become complacent and lost sight of the work that needed to be completed on the temple. Therefore, God sent a prophet to reawaken the people to their responsibility to finish building the temple.

Verses 5 - 6

⁵ Now then, the Lord of armies says this: “Consider your ways! ⁶ You have sown much, *only to harvest little*; you eat, but there is not *enough* to be satisfied; *you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk*; you put on clothing, but there is not enough for anyone to get warm; and the one who earns, *earns wages to put into a money bag full of holes.*”

Before God sent Haggai with His message to begin the work on the temple He tried to get their attention by making their everyday life more difficult. Unfortunately, the people didn't perceive (spiritually understand) the connection between the temple sitting idle and their lack of comfort. It seems that God expected the people to see these non-verbal clues, but when they didn't connect the dots, He sent a man of God that could deliver the message in a way they could easily understand.

Some have wondered how they could be living in nice homes but be wanting in every day necessities. The nice houses were most likely built shortly after the work on the temple was stopped but over time God began to put some stress on the other amenities because they did not attempt to finish the temple. It should be remembered that the Jews had a contract (covenant) with God in which they were promised good things if they kept the law but bad things if they ignored the law. Therefore, they should have been more sensitive to their responsibility to God as their quality of life grew worse.

It is also interesting that David, a man after God's own heart, saw it to be wrong to be living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remained in a tent but the people of Haggai's time had to be reminded of their obligation.

See 2 Samuel 7:1 - 2

Now it came about, when the king lived in his house, and the Lord had given him rest on every side from all his enemies, ² that the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I live in a house of cedar, but the ark of God remains within the tent.”

Verses 7 - 8

⁷ The Lord of armies says this: “Consider your ways! ⁸ Go up to the mountains, bring wood, and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be honored,” says the Lord.

Since the foundation of the temple had already been laid before the work was stopped the next step was to build the main structure.

The main structure of the Second Temple was mostly stone, but the large stone blocks that remained from the 1st temple were reused for the second temple after some repair. Stonemasons had to re-dress the surfaces, re-cut the block edges, and smooth the faces before they could be used again. The very large limestone blocks formed the walls, but wood was needed for the structural beams and internal coverings on the stone walls.

The reconstruction of the Temple was part of God's will and a way to glorify the Lord. However, it is fascinating that when David first considered building a temple to the Lord it was not what God wanted.

See 2 Samuel 7:4 - 7

⁴ But in the same night, the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, ⁵ “Go and say to My servant David, ‘This is what the Lord says: “Should you build Me a house for My dwelling? ⁶ For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; rather, I have been moving about in a tent, that is, in a dwelling place. ⁷ Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’””

Verses 9 - 11

⁹ “You start an ambitious project, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?” declares the Lord of armies. “*It is* because of My house which *remains* desolate, while each of you runs to his own house. ¹⁰ Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. ¹¹ And I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on mankind, on cattle, and on all the products of the labor of your hands.”

After telling the people of Judah to get back to work on the temple, God reminds the people that the blessings they desired were dependent on them obeying His word and commands. This was not a new revelation, because this covenant relationship was agreed to in the wilderness and the terms of that agreement were part of the Law in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

As noted in the Book of Job we should not take this principle too far and assume that any bad that comes upon a person is a judgment from God. Also the Book of Ecclesiastes teaches us that bad things happen to good people because of time and chance.

Verse 12

¹² Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, just as the Lord their God had sent him. And the people showed reverence for the Lord.

The remnant at that time were the 50,000 who came to Jerusalem around 538 BC. There would be two more groups to make the journey but the 2nd group didn't arrive until 80 years later in 458 BC and the 3rd group about 15 years after that in 445 BC. This group, the 50,000 who first came to Jerusalem, recognized Haggai's message as being from the Lord and responded in a positive way.

Verse 13

¹³ Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke by the commission of the Lord to the people, saying, "I am with you," declares the Lord.

As soon as the people made the decision to do the work of the Lord, in this case to finish the Temple, the Lord sent Haggai to the people to let them know that He was with them. Anyone that has prayed to the Lord and gotten an immediate answer knows how the people must have felt.

Verse 14 - 15

¹⁴ So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of armies, their God, ¹⁵ on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.

This chapter began on 6-1-520 BC with God scolding the people for not working on the temple and it ends on 6-24-520 BC with the people beginning the work.

Before Jesus left this world, he commissioned the church to seek and save the lost. How are we doing in obeying the word of God?