



DAILY
B I B L E G U I D E

The Book of Haggai

Day 273 of a Yearly Bible Reading Program

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Daily Bible Reading Plan

Day	Passage	☒
Day 273	Haggai 1-2	☐

Welcome to the Book of Haggai!

The primary purpose of this book is to spur the Jews to finish rebuilding the Temple after their return from the Babylonian Captivity. The original Temple built by Solomon had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. In Ezra chapters 3 and 4 we read that the exiles that had returned to Jerusalem began work on the Temple in 535 B.C., but it was stopped after opposition from the Samaritans. Work began again on the Temple after Haggai's preaching, and it was dedicated in 516 B.C.

A few quick facts about Haggai:

- The author is Haggai ("festive")
- This book was written around 520 B.C.
- The key verse is 2:7 – "And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts."
- A brief outline:
 - Appeal to Rebuild the Temple – 1:1-11
 - Encouragement to Rebuild the Temple – 1:12-15
 - Glory of the Temple in the Millennial Kingdom – 2:1-9
 - Blessings of Rebuilding the Temple – 2:10-19
 - Commending the Rebuilding of the Temple – 2:20-23

Chapter 1 Notes

In this chapter God stirs the people to finish the Temple.

vs. 1 – There is much information given about the timing and setting of this book. Darius I, also called Darius the Great, ruled over the Persian Empire from 522-486 B.C. It was the first day of the month Elul, which would correlate basically into our August. The first day of the month would be a feast day for the new moon (Numbers 28:11-15). Zerubbabel is the governor over the province of Judah and Joshua is the high priest.

vs. 2-11 – Work had begun on the Temple about 15 years prior but had ceased after opposition (Ezra chapters 3-4). The people had built their own homes but not finished the house of God. God had been trying to get them to finish the Temple through removing His blessing from their land. He even promises in vs. 8 to be pleased by what they build. It was not that He required the most beautiful Temple in the world, He simply needed them to be faithful.

vs. 12-15 - The people are stirred to action, and God promises to bless it. 23 days later the work begins, probably to allow for the gathering of material. It would be completed and dedicated in 516 B.C. (Ezra 6:15-18)

Chapter 2 Notes

In this chapter God promises to bless the work on the new Temple.

vs. 1-9 - The date is the 21st of *Tisri* (roughly September/October), so 27 days since construction resumed on the Temple. It is also the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (see Leviticus 23:34). The common reaction amongst those old enough to remember the splendor of Solomon's Temple, which was destroyed 66 years before. It was evident even in these early stages of construction that this new Temple was far less magnificent than its predecessor. See also Ezra 3:12-13. Far more important than the aesthetics of the Temple is the presence and blessing of God upon them. In vs. 6-9, God promises that one day the Temple will be glorious in the Messiah's kingdom. Note the prerequisites of this: the shaking of creation (vs. 6), shaking of nations (vs. 7), nations paying tribute to God (vs. 7-8). This has not happened in our past, but we anticipate them in the establishing of the Millennial Kingdom.

vs. 10-19 – The date is the 24th of Chisleu (roughly November/December), so 63 days since the last message in vs. 1 and 90 days since work began in 1:15. While the Jews had been working on the sacred Temple, they had unrepented sins in their hearts. There is a technical question that arises around the transitive properties of holiness and pollution. First is the question of transmitted holiness in vs. 12. In the ceremonial law, if Object A was holy and Object B touched holy Object A, then Object B was also considered holy. But if Object B then touched Object C, then Object C was not considered holy. Leviticus 6:27 seems to apply to this specific case. Second is the question of transmitted pollution. In the ceremonial law, if Object A was unclean and Object B touched unclean Object A, then Object B was also considered unclean. If Object B then touched Object C, then Object C was also considered unclean. See Numbers 19:22. The point of this is to stir the people to not think they are holy because of the work on the Temple, but to work on the Temple because of the holiness in their own hearts.

vs. 20-23 - The date is the same as the previous message in vs. 10, the 24th of Chisleu. The purpose of this section is to encourage Zerubbabel in leading the people in their work. Again, God looks beyond that day to a day to come. In his own day, Zerubbabel may have doubts and fears about the task God gave him. In the future, people will look back and bless his memory. Zerubbabel was the descendant of king David. His grandfather, king Jeconiah, had been rejected by God, saying that though he “were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence” (Jeremiah 22:24). God seems to reverse that language here in accepting and marking Zerubbabel as a signet. The significance seems to be that

even though Zerubbabel was not a king the royal line of David, the Messiah would pass through him. He is found in the genealogies of Christ in Matthew 1:12 and Luke 3:27.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 273

It is easy to be discouraged when we look at the work of our own hands. Zerubbabel's Temple had little of the splendor of Solomon's architectural masterpiece. Did God not deserve better? Maybe, but what God deserved was *something!* Do not stay idle thinking that you cannot honor Him with your labor. It is God who takes what the feeblest of our efforts and makes something beautiful from it.

Hymn for Day 273

Our hymn today is "To the Work!", written in 1871 by Fanny Crosby. It encourages us to actively be engaged in God's Work, much like Haggai stirred the Jews in their task to rebuild the Temple.

*1. To the work! To the work! We are servants of God;
Let us follow the path that our master has trod;
With the balm of His counsel our strength to renew,
Let us do with our might what our hands find to do.*

Refrain

*Toiling on, toiling on,
Toiling on, toiling on,
Let us hope and trust,
Let us watch and pray,
And labor till the master comes.*

*2. To the work! To the work! Let the hungry be fed;
To the fountain of life let the weary be led;
In the cross and its banner our glory shall be,
While we herald the tidings, Salvation is free! [Refrain]*

*3. To the work! To the work! There is labor for all;
For the kingdom of darkness and error shall fall;
And the love of our Father exalted shall be,
In the loud swelling chorus, Salvation is free! [Refrain]*

*4. To the work! To the work! In the strength of the Lord,
And a robe and a crown shall our labor reward,
When the home of the faithful our dwelling shall be,
And we shout with the ransomed, Salvation is free! [Refrain]*