

The Half Hour That Changes the World

Haggai

Book 37

Basic Questions behind the book:

In a world of meetings and deadlines, of business and noise, what are our priorities?

Summary of book:

The book of Ezra provides the historical background for Haggai. Cyrus, king of Persia, issued his edict permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem. A party returns under Zerubbabel and they lay the temple foundations, but work is stopped because of opposition and other distractions. The Jewish people leave this project on the side and get themselves comfortable and settled. That is where Haggai comes in. He reminds people of God's plan and urges people to restart the project. Haggai prophesies that the glory of the new temple will be greater than that of the old.

Vital Statistics:

Purpose: To call the people to get their priorities right and to complete the rebuilding of the temple.

Author: Haggai. Nothing else is known about him other than what is in this book

Recipients: To the people living in Jerusalem and to those that had returned from exile

Dating: 520 BC. The date of the book is very easy to identify to precise dates, because he tells us when he had his four different prophecies.

Setting: The temple of Jerusalem had been destroyed in 586 BC. The Jewish people that return to their land start rebuilding the temple, but don't complete it. They are facing some really tough times and Haggai believes it is because they haven't prioritised God's house.

Other Notes:

Haggai was the first of the post-exilic prophets. Jesus, in Haggai, is to be the restorer of the heritage of the people of God. He will be the new temple, whose glory will surpass that of Solomon's. He is to be the signet ring, the royal Son of David's line.

The book is short. It is a treasure box of little gems that repay careful study and reflection.

*"Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses,
while this house remains a ruin?" (1:4)*

*"This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more
shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land'." (2:6)*

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