

Assignment 6.2

Haggai

Describe history author, date, audience, situation and purpose.

The book of Haggai is about rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem. Haggai mainly spoke to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah. Haggai prophesied in the fall (autumn) of 520 B.C.E.

God told Haggai to stir the people up to rebuild His temple. Before this message and even after, the people just didn't care. Haggai 1:4 says "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses and this temple to lie in ruins" However, the people soon set to rebuilding the temple, 23 days after the message was delivered. (1:1 and 1:15)

However, they did a shabby job and God says in 2:3, who is left among you who saw this temple in its former days ... in comparison ... is this not nothing now! Haggai represents rebuilding a temple to rebuilding a people. Israel went in to exile in 722 BC and Judah in 586 BC a lot of years between.

God was still hard at work in their lives. But they weren't hard at work in His. They were concerned with their own lot and God tells them to "consider their ways-they sow, but bring in little. They eat but have not enough ... earn wages to put in a bag with holes. (1:6)

They could not see that their troubles were because they weren't thinking of the Lord and His temple. They were thinking of themselves.

Haggai gives the people, through Zerubbabel, 4 of God's messages.

1. Messages. A call to action! -which was building the temple. If they did this wholeheartedly God will bless them.

2. Word of encouragement. Because the new temple didn't match the former glory of the old one, God encouraged them to keep working because they did stop. (Ezra 4:24)

3. Confirmation of blessings. Haggai had to question the priests about clean and unclean things. (2:12-14) It is because Haggai was letting the people know that they were unclean.

Israel and Judah were building the temple, but they defiled the temple by what they offered in it. They even felt that they would be clean if they

lived near it. People feel the same today, with going to church one day a week and the rest of the week they don't give two hoots about God!

God would bless them if they just did as He asked and not make a pretence about it!!!

4. Message of restoration of the Davidic Kingdom.

The temple building was an example of Christ's coming and the New Heavenly Temple in Her Final Glory. Basically the people in Haggai's time, weren't of the same calibre as the ones that many other prophets i.e Isaiah, was preaching too.

Haggai was preaching to a people that loved the Lord. Isaiah may have been preaching to a people that loved their neighbour's wife too! These people didn't. They loved the Lord but were misguided and not showing that love to the Lord, first

God was in their midst, but they were rushing and looking after their own comforts and had no time for Him, or felt that way!

The Davidic message was hope for them. If they sought the Lord, He would bless them.

Haggai describes the Lord's future plans. He tells Zerubbabel of Jesus' coming! He says that God will over throw the Gentiles. This was good news because the Gentile nations were still oppressing the people. They felt they had no time for the Lord because of the burdens the other nations placed upon them.

This message was one of hope because it spoke of Jesus' time. (2:22) Also Zerubbabel had hope because Jesus was to come from his line, and he was an ancestor of David! Wow! What good news!

Zerubbabel was a ruler. He loved the Lord. The Lord was to bless the people through Zerubbabel's line. That was good news!!!

(Encountering the Old Testament A Christian survey by Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer 3rd edition pages 455 to 458)