

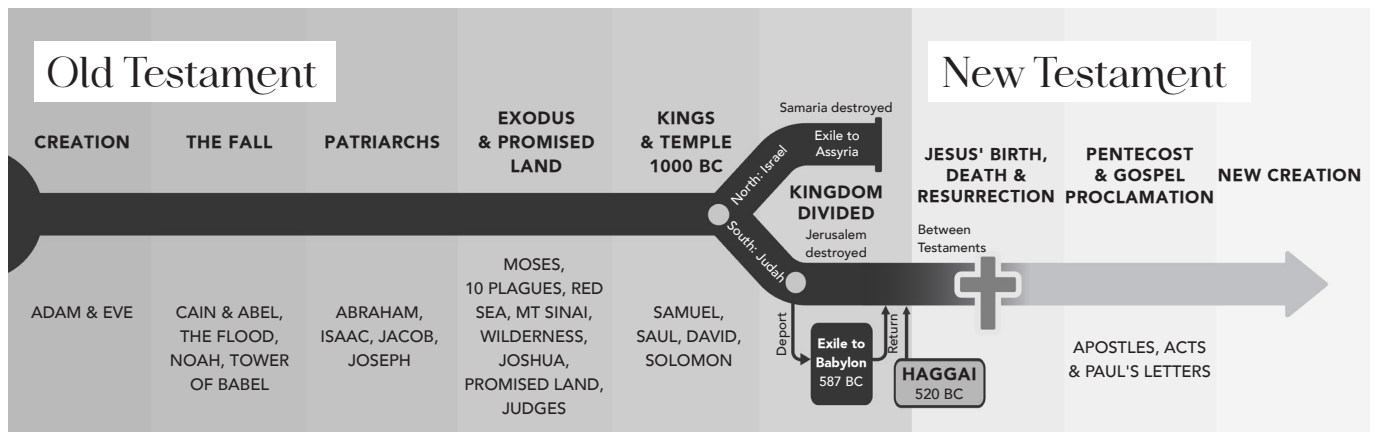
Haggai is a short but rich book of the Bible.

While fairly unknown, it's full of wonderful gospel threads that are knitted together in Jesus.

# Overview of Haggai

## WHERE DOES IT FIT IN THE BIBLE'S STORY? (BIBLICAL THEOLOGY)

Haggai is written at a key time in Israel's history. God's people have finally returned to the Promised Land (538BC), after being exiled in Babylon for nearly 70 years. But it's a very confusing time - a time of new hope, but also a time of great disappointment.



## Quick Backstory

- God gave amazing promises to Abraham - they would be God's people in God's place under God's rule. *"Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."* (Gen 12:1-13)
- God's promises seemed to be fulfilled around 1000B. They were in the Promised Land under the great King David, centred around the temple, where God dwelt with his people.
- But everything unravelled in 587 BC. The Babylonians destroyed the temple in Jerusalem, and took God's people away into exile.
- In 538 BC, the Persian King Cyrus decreed that God had appointed him to build a temple for God in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2), so he sent God's people back to the Promised Land.
- Now God's people are back, trying to rebuild the temple... What will happen next?

**WHAT IS IT? (GENRE)**

Haggai is a fast paced little book. It is structured around 4 prophecies, with snippets of history and conversations weaved through-out.

**WHO WROTE IT? (AUTHOR)**

The human author could be the prophet Haggai, or someone who heard Haggai speak. It could be someone from the older generation who saw Solomon’s beautiful former temple, and now is seeing the disheartening new temple (2:3).

**WHO RECEIVED IT? (AUDIENCE)**

Haggai was originally written for God’s people building the new temple in Jerusalem, as they struggled to make sense of their priorities and dashed hopes.

**WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN? (DATING)**

Haggai was written sometime after Haggai prophesied, which was in the 2nd year of King Darius 520 BC, 18 years after they had returned from Exile.

**HOW DOES IT FIT TOGETHER? (STRUCTURE)**

There are 4 prophecies spoken on 3 days, in the 2nd year of King Darius (520BC).

Prophecy	Time	Theme	Key Verse(s)	To
1	Day 1 (1:1) 1st day of the 6th month = 29th August 520 BC  Response (1:15) 24th day of the 6th month = 21st September 520 BC	Priority	1:4	Zerubabel (Governor of Judah)  Joshua (son of the high priest)
2	Day 2 (2:1) 21st day of the 7th month = 17th October 520 BC	Promise	2:9	Zerubabel (Governor of Judah)  Joshua (son of the high priest)
3 & 4	Day 3 (2:10) 24th day of the 9th month = 18th December 520 BC	Problem + Promises	2:14, 2:23	3: Priests  4: Zerubabel (Governor of Judah)





**WHAT IS IT ABOUT? (THEMES)**

As you read Haggai, look out for play on words (1:4), repeated phrases (1:5, 1:7, 2:15, 2:18), surprises (1:11-1:12) and puzzles (1:9, 2:23). Overall, Haggai is about the puzzle of the temple. The temple is the place where God dwells with his people ('God with us'). But it doesn't make sense until we meet Jesus. We discover that God's temple is not a physical building but a living person. In his incarnation, Jesus is literally God dwelling with humanity (Jn 1:14), and in his death and resurrection, Jesus provides the way that sinful humans can dwell with our holy God forever (Heb 10:19-22).

*Quick story of the temple* 

To get a feel for how important the temple is in the Bible's story, have a look at some of these key verses.

**The story up to Haggai**

Gen 3:8, 22-24, Ex 40:34-38, 1 Kgs 6:1, 8:1-12, 2 Kgs 25:1-2, 8-17, Ez 1:1-4; 4:1-4, 17-24

Then Solomon said, *"The Lord has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever."* (1 Kgs 8:12-13)

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**Beyond Haggai**

Ez 6:13-18, Ez 40:1-5, 43:1-9, Mal 2:1-2, 7-9

*"Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple. He said: "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever. The people of Israel will never again defile my holy name—neither they nor their kings—by their prostitution and the funeral offerings for their kings at their death."*

(Ez 43:5-7)

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### The New Testament

Jn 1:14, 2:19-21, Heb 9:22-26, 10:19-22, Eph 2:18-22, Rev 21:1-4, 22

*"For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence."* (Heb 9:24)

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### Pray

Dear Lord,

*Thank-you for giving us the book of Haggai which helps us to reflect on the importance of the temple (God with us) over 2500 years ago. Help us to humbly sit under your Word and see your character and plans more clearly. We pray for those around us who don't yet know Jesus, that they might discover how they can be made clean. And for those who already know Jesus, may we see the extraordinary privilege of now being your temple, and so prioritise the building of your people.*

