# Haggai

Haggai is the record of the prophecy given to the Prophet Haggai.

It’s a message to the people of JeruSalem, given about 22 years after the first batch of refugees returned to the land of IsraEl after the deportation to Babylon. It concerns the need to rebuild God’s Temple.

*Most of this book is poetry*

Something that only a Bible translator would notice is when words are in the form of Hebrew poetry. There’s a definite cadence that can be seen in the original language. Therefore, because this is the chosen style of God, we’ve tried to recreate it as it was originally intended: in poetic verse.

*Why use poetry?*

Poetry must conform to a certain rhythm and style. These act as memory aids, helping you to recall the words, making it easier for messages to be spread via the most common communication method of the time: song.

*Who was talking?*

When translating the words of the prophets, you can’t help but notice the constant changing personal pronouns (I, you, he, they, etc.) used in the text. It makes it very confusing to figure out exactly who’s talking.

However, we now realize one reason for the confusion that’s usually overlooked: God didn’t speak to the prophets personally. Rather, He sent His messages through a mediator, either referred to as a messenger (an angel), or sometimes as ‘The Word’ (which some interpret to mean Jesus).

So there are actually *three* voices speaking:

 1. That of the prophet, who sometimes quotes himself,

 2. That of the angelic messenger who’s bringing the message from God,

 3. The words of God Himself (which we put in italics).

How can we tell the difference? From the context, the pronouns, and the tenses:

 1. When the prophet speaks, he’s either clearly reporting what he said or did, or is simply saying what was happening.

 2. When the angelic messenger speaks, he talks about God in the third person.

 3 When God is speaking, all references to God are naturally spoken in the first person.

Did we get it all right? Probably not, but it’s an honest attempt. If you think you’ve spotted a place where our choice is incorrect, please let us know and we’ll reconsider it.

### Haggai

## Chapter 1

1In the 2nd year [of the reign] of King Darius, in the 6th month and on the 1st day of the month, The Word of Jehovah came by the hand of HagGai the prophet and said:

 ‘Speak to ZerubBabel son of ShealtiEl from the tribe of Judah and to JoShua (son of JoZadek) the High Priest, and tell them 2that Jehovah the Almighty says this:

 *‘These people say that the time isn’t right*
 *To rebuild the Temple of Jehovah.’*

3Then the Word of Jehovah went on to say this through the hands of HagGai the prophet:

 4[‘For God says:]

 *‘Is it, indeed, the right time*
 *For you men to live in nice houses,*
 *While this Temple is lying in ruins?*

 5*‘And now,‘* says Jehovah the Almighty,
 *‘Arrange your hearts for the ways you must go!*
 6*For you plant a lot, but you don’t harvest much;*
 *You eat, but not ‘til you’re full;*
 *You drink, but not ‘til you’re drunk;*
 *You wear clothes that don’t keep you warm;*
 *And those to whom you’ve paid wages*
 *Keep them in bags full of holes.’*

 7‘So, thus says Jehovah the Almighty:

 *‘Get your hearts ready to travel,*
 8*And go to the mountains to cut the wood*
 *With which you’ll rebuild My Temple.*
 *For, if you choose to do this,*
 *I’ll think well of you,*
 *Because that would glorify Me,’* says Jehovah.

 9*‘Now you look for much [but find] little,*
 *And after you carry it home,*
 *I just blow it away.*
 *This happens,* says Jehovah the Almighty,
 *Because you’ve abandoned My Temple*
 *While you each [repair] your own homes.*
 10*So the sky is withholding its dew,*
 *And the ground is withholding its blessings.*

 11*‘Therefore, to your land and its mountains;*
 *Also, to your oil and your grain,*
 *And to the ground that brings wine to men,*
 *I will be sending the sword!*
 *I’ll also send the sword to your cattle,*
 *And [to the things that you make with] your hands.’*

12Well, ZerubBabel (son of ShealtiEl) from the tribe of Judah, and JoShua (son of JoZadek) the High Priest (as well as all the rest of the people) listened to the voice of Jehovah their God and to the words of HagGai the prophet – to all [the words] that Jehovah their God had sent to them – and the people became fearful before Jehovah.

13Then HagGai, one of the messengers of Jehovah, told the people this:

 ‘Jehovah says:

 *‘I am with you!’*

14So after that, Jehovah awakened the spirit of ZerubBabel (son of ShealtiEl) from the tribe of Judah, the spirit of JoShua (son of JoZadek) the High Priest, and the spirits of the rest of the people, and they went to work on the Temple of their God Jehovah the Almighty!

15They started [the project] on the 24th day of the 6th month in the 2nd year [of the reign] of King Darius.

### Haggai

## Chapter 2

1Then on the 21st day of the 7th month, the Word of Jehovah came again by the hand of HagGai the prophet.

He said:

 2‘Speak to ZerubBabel (son of ShealtiEl) of the tribe of Judah, and to JoShua the High Priest (son of JoZadek), and to all the rest who are left there, and ask them this [from Jehovah]:

 3*‘Who among you had seen this Temple*
 *In [the days of] its glory?*
 *Do you see what it has become…*
 *It no longer exists here before you!*

 4*‘So ZerubBabel, you must be strong,’* says Jehovah;
 *And High Priest JoShua, you must be strong…*
 *And you people of the land must also be strong;*
 *For, if you choose to [obey Me],*
 *I’ll be there with you,’*

 ‘...says Jehovah the Almighty.

 5*‘This is the same thing that I said to [your fathers]*
 *When they were fleeing from Egypt…*
 *And then, I sent them My Breath.*
 *So now, you must also show courage!’*

 6‘For, thus says Jehovah the Almighty:

 *‘Once again, I’ll shake the lands and the skies,*
 *As well as the seas and dry ground.*
 7*I’ll also shake all the nations,*
 *And My chosen ones will return…*
 *Then I’ll fill this Temple with glory!’*

 ‘...says Jehovah the Almighty.

 8*‘For, all the silver is Mine,*
 *And all the gold is Mine also...’*

 ‘...says Jehovah the Almighty.

 9*‘So the glory of this Temple will be greater…*
 *The last will be greater than the first!’*

 ‘...says Jehovah the Almighty.

 *‘And to this place, I’ll bring peace...’*

 ‘...says Jehovah the Almighty…

 ‘*Peace that will save all the lives*
 *Of those who rebuild this Temple.’*

10Then it was on the 24th day of the 9th month in the 2nd year of Darius that these words came from the [messenger of the] Lord to HagGai the prophet.

He told them that 11Jehovah the Almighty said this:

 ‘Ask the Priests [this question] concerning the Law:

 12‘If a man should touch holy meat
 With just the edge of his clothes,
 And the edge of his clothes should thereafter touch
 Bread, stew, wine, or olive oil
 (Or any other such food);
 Would it make those things holy?’

And all the Priests replied:

 ‘No!’

13Then HagGai asked:

 ‘But, if they should touch a dead person,
 Would any of these things still be clean?’

And the Priests replied:

 ‘[No, they’d] be defiled!’

14Then HagGai told them that this is what Jehovah said:

 *‘So it will be of these people*
 *(Of this nation that stands here before Me*
 *And of the works of their hands)…*
 *Those who come here will all be defiled*
 *If they’re more concerned about their own [homes]!*

 *‘Such ones should rather be grieving*
 *About the wicked things that they’ve done;*
 *For they’ve hated [the prophets]*
 *That scolded them at their gates.*

 15*‘So, take [these words] to your hearts from this day*
 *Before laying stone upon stone*
 *To [rebuild] the Temple of Jehovah:*

 16*‘Remember when you went to your stores*
 *To get 20 measures of barley*
 *And found there were only 10 measures?*
 *Or, when you went to the wine vat*
 *To draw 50 measures [of wine]*
 *And found there were just 20 measures?*

 17*‘Well, I’m the One who had struck you*
 *With this lack of production…*
 *[I’m the One who struck] the works of your hands*
 *And sent hail and strong wind upon you,*
 *Because you refused to turn back to Me,* says Jehovah.

 18*‘So, keep this in your hearts from this day…*
 *From the 24th day and 9th month…*
 *From the day the Temple’s foundation was laid…*
 *Yes, store it deep in your hearts!*

 19*‘Will the threshing-floor still [be empty]? No!*
 *And will the grapevines, fig trees, pomegranates, or olives*
 *Fail to put out their fruit? No!*
 *Because, from this day, I’ll bless them!’*

20Then the Word of the Jehovah came to HagGai the prophet a second time [that day] (on the 24th day of the month), and he said:

 21‘Speak to ZerubBabel (son of ShealtiEl) of the tribe of Judah, and this is what you must tell him:

 *‘I’ll shake the ground and the sky,*
 *As well as the sea and dry land.*
 22*Then I’ll wipe away the thrones of the kings*
 *And I’ll destroy all the power*
 *Of the nations [that are living around you]!*

 *‘Their chariots and horsemen will be wiped away…*
 *Their horses and horsemen will fall,*
 *And they’ll each turn their swords on their brothers.*

 23*‘O ZerubBabel,*

 *‘On this day, I’ve chosen you as My servant,’*

 ‘...says the Almighty Jehovah.

 *‘I’ve established you as a seal,*
 *For you’re the one whom I’ve chosen.’*

 ‘...says the Almighty Jehovah.’