

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Lesson 40

Haggai and Zechariah

Today, we begin our examination of the final three Minor Prophets, the three who ministered to the Jews following the Babylonian exile. Known as the "post-exilic Prophets", the messages of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi complete the books of the Old Testament and focus on the period known as the "restoration period", when God was returning the Jews from captivity to the Promise Land. Beginning with the Assyrian victory over the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC, followed by the Babylonian captivity of the Southern Kingdom in 586 BC, God's chosen people ended their captivity in 536 BC with the return of the first 50,000 people back to Jerusalem.

The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther are the three historical books of the Bible that have the same setting as that for these three prophets. Irving L. Jensen in his book, [Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament](#), tells us: "... the main appeal of Haggai and Zechariah was to inspire the Jews to finish building the Temple which had been discontinued in 534 BC, and the burden of Malachi was the tragic apostasy of God's people. Whatever there was of revival and spiritual restoration in Israel's return from exile had, by Malachi's time, degenerated to spiritual coldness with threat of disaster. It is not without significance that the last word of Malachi, and therefore of our Old Testament, is the awful word 'curse'. (Malachi 4:6)"

In this lesson, we will consider the two books written by Haggai and Zechariah, whose messages were to inspire the people of Israel to rebuild the Temple and to rebuild their relationship with God who would be sending the promised Messiah. George L. Robinson has called the Book of Zechariah the "most messianic, the most truly apocalyptic, and eschatological of all the writings of the Old Testament." ([The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Online](#)).

Read the books of Haggai and Zechariah; then answer the following:

1. What decree ended the Babylonian captivity and called for the Jews to return to Jerusalem? (see Ezra 1:2-4)
2. God granted the Jews return to Jerusalem for three purposes as noted by Ezra in Ezra 9:9. What were these three purposes?
3. What was the main subject of Haggai's message?

4. What were the main subjects of Zechariah's message?
 - a. (Zech 1:2-3)
 - b. (Zech 1:16 and 4:9)
 - c. (Zech 2:13)
 - d. (1 John 3:2-3)
5. Haggai had a co-worker during this time. Who was it? (see Ezra 5:1 & 6:14)
6. Haggai delivered four messages or sermons. Over what period of time did he deliver them?
7. Zechariah delivered his messianic and apocalyptic messages over what period of time?
8. Complete the following timeline:
 - a. 536 BC (Ezra 2:64-67)
 - b. 536-535 BC (Ezra 3:1-6)
 - c. 535-534 BC (Ezra 4:24)
 - d. 520 BC (Ezra 5:1, Haggai 1:1)
 - e. 520 BC (Ezra 5:2, Haggai 1:14-15)
 - f. 516 BC (Ezra 6:14-15)

In this study, God's Holy Word speaks to each of us about the importance of establishing and keeping the right priorities when it comes to living the life that Christ wants us to live. If we are living in God's will, Christ tells us that our first priority is to seek first the Kingdom of God. Are we doing that today? Or, have we allowed the building and improvement of our homes, family activities, jobs, careers and other seemingly important things to push God aside or somewhat removed from the top of our list of priorities? The fact is that we cannot succeed at any of those other things, including raising our family, having a successful career, or planning for the future without God being preeminent.

Let's pray this week that God will open our eyes to the right priorities and guide us in reestablishing a right relationship with Him.

Have a great week everyone, and thanks for studying with us.

In Christ,

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