

Book of Haggai

Chapter 1:1-15

We really need quite a history lesson before beginning the study of this book. Here are some questions for which we could use the answers:

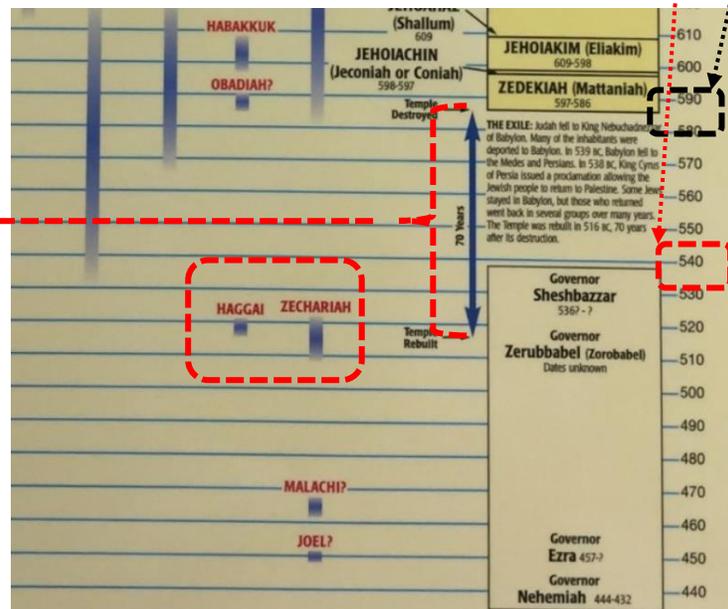
1. What happened to the Babylonians ... the ones who destroyed Jerusalem?

- The final destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon occurred in **586 BC**.
- The Persian king Cyrus the Great destroyed Babylon in **539 BC**.
 - Bible.org** > Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562), who had conquered and destroyed Jerusalem and deported its leading citizens in July of 586 B.C., had passed from the scene to be followed by Amel-Marduk (562-560), Neriglissar (560-556), and Labashi-Marduk (556). Nabonidus (556-539), whose north Mesopotamian roots and devotion to the moon god Sin were to alienate him from his Babylonian subjects, then took over. Preoccupied as he was by his cult and by foreign travel and trade, Nabonidus left the responsibility of government largely in the hands of his son **Belshazzar**. It was the latter, as the Bible clearly intimates, who fell to Cyrus when Babylon finally capitulated to the Persians on October 12, 539 B.C.
 - The survivors of the destruction of Jerusalem were under Babylonian rule for 47 years of their 70-year captivity ... and then under Persian rule.

The Captivity

(There is a timing issue with this timeline. It is probably associated with when the designer chose to start the 70-year exile.

The chart is indicating the extended past the release of the Jews by Cyrus the Great.

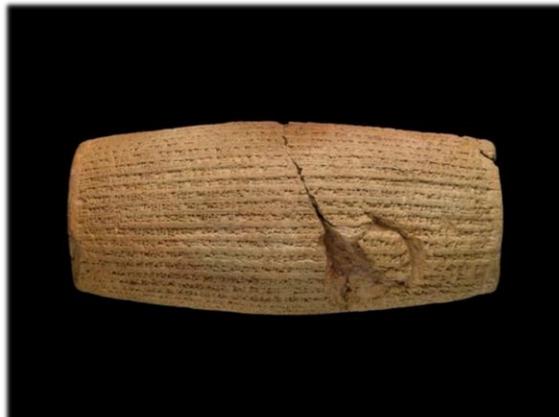


2. Where were the survivors of the destruction of Jerusalem deported to?

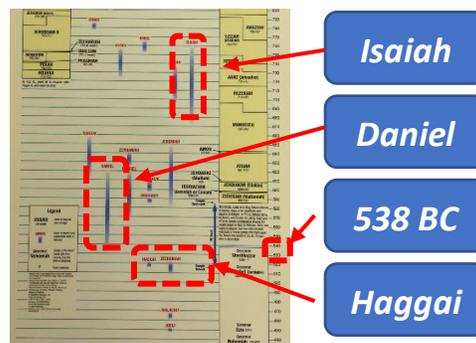
- Babylon.

3. When did Cyrus release the Jews to go back to Jerusalem?

- a. **Bible.org** > In **538 B.C.** Cyrus issued his decree that the Jews and all other captive peoples could return to their respective homelands. He had begun to organize his vast domain into a system of satrapies further subdivided into provinces, and the satrapy of special relevance to the Jewish community was known as “Babylon beyond the river”, a huge jurisdiction between the Euphrates River and the Mediterranean Sea. Within that satrapy were entities such as Galilee, Samaria, Ashdod, Ammon, and especially Yehud (or Judah). Each of these was under a **governor** who reported directly to the satrap, or administrator of the district.
- b. **Hoglund** > Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, **governor** of Judah (1:1). One of the major changes for the Jewish community in this period was the imposition of a “governor” over the community, appointed by the Persian king.
 - I. **Bible Study Tools** > Zerubbabel was the grandson of King Jehoiachin of Judah (**1 Chronicles 3:17**) and therefore a descendant of David. Born in Babylon during the exile of Judeans, Zerubbabel migrated to Judah after King Cyrus II allowed the banished tribe to return to their home to restore the temple.
 - **1 Chronicles 3:17** > ¹⁷ *The sons of Jeconiah, the prisoner, were Shealtiel his son,*
 - **Christianity.com** > Both Matthew and Luke list this Babylonian-born, Persian-appointed governor of Judah as a forefather of Joseph, the adoptive father of Jesus (see **Matthew 1:12-13** and Luke 3:27).
 - I. **Matthew 1:12, 13** > ¹² *After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel.* ¹³ *Zerubbabel was the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor.*
- c. The “Cylinder of Cyrus”



- d. Quote from the Cylinder
- *Akkad, the land of Eshnunna, the city of Zamban, the city of Meturnu, Der, as far as the border of the land of Gutu - the sanctuaries across the river Tigris - whose shrines had earlier become dilapidated, the gods who lived therein, and made permanent sanctuaries for them. I collected together all of their people and returned them to their settlements,*
- e. Extremely interesting! **Isaiah** prophesied the coming of Cyrus **by name** (!) as the “anointed” one sent by God to build the temple and walls 150 years (!) before Cyrus.
- Isaiah 44:28, 45:1** > *“It is I who says of **Cyrus**, ‘He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.’ And he declares of Jerusalem, ‘She will be built,’ And of the temple, ‘Your foundation will be laid.’” Thus says the LORD to **Cyrus** His anointed, Whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him And to loose the loins of kings; To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:*
- f. Then ... let’s add yet another very interesting fact.
- Who is the known Jew who was in Cyrus’ court?
 - Who was the known individual who was in a power position in the kingdom?
 - Who was the known person who knew and trusted in God and His Word?
 - Who was a prophet who would have known the writings of Isaiah?
 - Yes ... Daniel! He mentions Cyrus in Daniel 10:1 (*“In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia*) and had been in the Persian society since the banquet of Belshazzar (the story of the writing on the wall). Is it possible he mentioned the writings of Isaiah to the King and told him his name was specifically written down 150 years before??
 - Remember this and pray for Mike Pence and Kayleigh McEnany as they interact with the President. They may have an influence far beyond the average individuals.



4. Who is “Haggai” and how does he fit in this story?

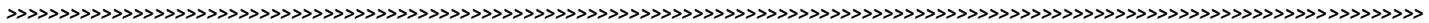
- a. He was a prophet of God sent to Jerusalem (along with the prophet Zechariah) to restart the building of the temple. The work had started but then stopped for 16 years.

5. When was the Book of Haggai written?

- a. We actually know the month, day, and year of his writing!! Haggai relayed four separate messages in 520 BC ...
 - i. His first message was given on **August 29 in 520 BC**.
 - ii. His second message was relayed on **October 17 in 520 BC**.
 - iii. His last two messages were spoken on **December 18 in 520 BC**.
- b. **Swindoll** > A number of the dates in Haggai can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Persian records and related accurately to our modern calendar.

6. Who is the “Darius the King” mentioned in chapter 1?

- a. “Got Questions” tells us of three different “Darius” found in the scriptures
 - i. “Darius the Great” is the one in the Book of Ezra.
 - 1. Darius the Great ruled from 521-486 BC
 - 2. Haggai wrote his book in 520 BC
 - 3. Therefore, Darius the Great is the “Darius” of Haggai



SORRY ... but we are *still* not ready to get into Haggai. One more brief piece of history ... We need to *skim* through the first six chapters of Ezra to get a bit more understanding.

50, 000-foot look at the Book of Ezra, chapters 1-6

- **Chapter 1** > Cyrus releases the Jews from Babylon and allows them to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild their Temple. He even gives them 5,400 gold and silver items from the Temple in Jerusalem.
- **Chapter 2** > A little over 50,000 individuals make the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem.
- **Chapter 3** > Upon arrival, the returnees immediately build the altar and offer burnt sacrifices on it. They then start rebuilding the Temple.
- **Chapter 4** > The enemies hear about the rebuilding and start major problems. When that doesn’t stop the construction they send a letter to the new king in Persia > Artaxerxes. The King reviews the information and orders the work to shut down. The rebuilding of the Temple stops from then until Darius (the Great) some 16 years after that.

Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel > (Clarke) He was son of Jeconiah, king of Judah, and of the family of David, and exercised the post of a governor among the people, but not over them, for both he and they were under the Persian government; but they were permitted to have Zerubbabel for their own governor, and Joshua for their high priest; and these regulated all matters relative to their peculiar political and ecclesiastical government. But it appears from Ezra, that Tatnai, the governor on this side the river, had them under his cognizance. None of their own governors was absolute. The Persians permitted them to live under their own laws and civil regulations; but they always considered them as a colony, over which they had a continual superintendence.

Interesting fact!! **Constable** tells us the name “Zerubbabel” means “born in Babylon” or “seed of Babylon”

The Lord of hosts > (Constable) Haggai announced that his message came from “Yahweh of Armies”, Almighty Yahweh. This title appears 14 times in Haggai ... "Yahweh" occurs 34 times in the 38 verses of Haggai.

Remember > Although they a back in Jerusalem ... the ruling party was the Persians. The Lord, through Haggai, was informing them that HE was the “Yahweh of the Armies” ... HE was in charge.

The time has not come ... > (Wiersbe) Excuses. “It isn’t time to rebuild the house of the Lord” was their defense of their inactivity. Billy Sunday called an excuse “the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie,” and Benjamin Franklin wrote, “I never knew a man who was good at making excuses who was good at anything else.”

³***Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying,*** ⁴***“Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?”***

Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet > T. his time the message is addressed to the populous

Paneled > (Strong’s) a primitive root; to hide by covering; specifically, to roof (passive participle as noun, a roof) or wainscot

Keil and Delitzsch > in your houses, they being wainscoted, i.e., with the inside walls covered or inlaid with costly wood-work. Such were the houses of the rich and of the more distinguished men (cf. Jeremiah 22:14; 1 Kings 7:7).

Desolate > (Strong’s) parched or ruined

NLT > *Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruins?*

Declares the Lord of hosts > (Constable) There are six occurrences of the phrase "**declares the LORD of hosts**" in Haggai (Haggai 1:9; 2:4; 2:8-9; 2:23 [twice]) and six occurrences of the shorter phrase "declares the LORD" (1:13; 2:4 [twice], 14 , 17 , 23). This is unusual for a book as short as Haggai. Obviously the writer wanted to emphasize the divine origin of his message to the people.

Runs > (Clarke) Ye run every man unto his own house - To rebuild and adorn it; and God's house is neglected!

¹⁰ *Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce.* ¹¹ *I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands."*

Do you realize the blessing that is in these two verses?!? The drought they were experiencing had a cause! It wasn't just "nature" ("Global Warming"?) with results that could go on for years and years. There was a definable end to it! And the solution was in their hands. THEY, personally, could make a difference in the success of their future!

¹² Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him. And the people showed reverence for the LORD.

What a blessing > They GOT it!! They didn't just "obey" ... they "showed reverence for the Lord". Their heart changed. This is the first time since our study in Jonah that the recipients understood and obeyed the Lord! And the Lord's response? *I am with you,' declares the LORD* (verse 13)

¹³ Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke by the commission of the LORD to the people saying, "*I am with you,' declares the LORD.*"

NLT (verses 12, 13) > *Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of God's people began to obey the message from the LORD their God. When they heard the words of the prophet Haggai, whom the LORD their God had sent, the people feared the LORD. Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, gave the people this message from the LORD: "I am with you, says the LORD!"*

(And in Haggai 2:19 [on December 18, 520 BC] the Lord speaks through Haggai with a promise to the remnant ... from that day onward He was going to bless them.)

¹⁴ So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God, ¹⁵ on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.

And they came and worked on the house > The ACTIONS of a changed heart!

On the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king. >
September 21, 520 BC

Hoglund > Twenty-fourth day of the sixth month (1:15). In comparing the opening date formula (1:1) with this date, it appears the community actually acted on Haggai's message within three weeks. This suggests a fairly quick response to Haggai's word on the part of the community leadership since allocating resources and budgeting for building materials would normally take some time.