

HAGGAI

The Man: The first postexilic prophet, Haggai prophesied over four months in 520 B.C. He may have been a cultic prophet

The Times: Those who returned from the Babylonian Exile faced formidable obstacles in their efforts to rebuild Jewish life in Judah. The “Promised Land” had been reduced to about 20 square miles. Jerusalem and surrounding villages were in ruins, crops failed, and there was enmity between the returnees and those who never went into exile. Even after the Persian king, Darius, gave permission to rebuild the Temple, defeatism and lethargy held sway over the people.

The Message: Haggai exhorted the people to finish the great work, accusing them of taking care of their own houses while neglecting the Lord’s. He proclaimed that the Lord would fill the new Temple with even greater glory than in the past.

Prophetic Themes in Haggai

Authority: Haggai received the Lord’s word; he was sent by God: [1:1,3,12];
Thus says the Lord of hosts ... [1:2,5,7,9; 2:4,6,7,8,9,11]

Specific Sins: you neglect the Lord’s house but care for your own: [1:9]

Judgment: God caused a drought and blight as punishment : [1:10-11; 2:16-19]

Call to Repentance: Get to work on the temple: [1:7-8]

Day of the Lord = Salvation: The Lord will shake the nations, filling His house with treasures and glory; the Lord’s blessings begin now: [2:6-9,19] The Lord will overthrow the nations, for He has chosen Judah’s governor to restore the Davidic line: [2:21-23]

Readings at Mass

No passage from the Book of Haggai is used as a Sunday reading.

1:1-8 – You have not been satisfied because you neglected the Lord’s house. [Year I, Thursday of the 25th Week in Ordinary Time]

2:1-9 – The Lord will fill His Temple with glory. [Year I, Friday of the 25th Week in Ordinary Time]