


Aramaic Bible Companion

HAGGAI

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CHAPTER 1

THE FIRST PROPHETIC WORD 1-11

THE DATE -DARIUS YEAR 2 -MONTH 6 (ELUL) 1-2

In the second year of King Darius [*This is Darius Hystaspes -King Darius the Great who was relieved of his responsibilities in his second administrative year at Babylon by his brother in law Cyrus reigned much earlier when the decree to return the exiles was first given*] in the **sixth month** [*following the olive harvest and before the early rains*]and the **first day of the month** the word of the LORD came **BY THE HAND** of Haggai [*"my pleasant feast"*] the prophet unto Zerubbabel [*"Seed of Babylon"-born there*] son of Shealtiel [*"asked of God"-Shealtiel appears to be an uncle of Zerubbabel who was born by levirate marriage to the wife of Pedaiiah*] governor [*tjɔ Literally "excavator"*] of Judah and unto Joshua son of Jehozadak [*"The LORD is righteous"*] the high priest saying "Thus the Lord of hosts has spoken to say 'This people are saying '**the time has not come**' '**the time for the building of the house of the LORD**'"

The triple use of "saying" brings illumination to three matters:-

First, God has spoken and continues to speak to illumine his sovereign rule over all things and take a responsible part in the development of the world He has made

Second, God has a controversy with his people. He is never content that they postpone or put off the day when his will is done and His work forwarded.

Third, the LORD is making it very clear that He hears excuses and does not appreciate the postponement of His purposes. He holds us to account. He hastens the hour of His coming and blessing both by famine and by prophecy and by the actions of those who have power in the world...

On the historical background *I believe it is important to distinguish between Darius Hystaspes (521-485B.C.) and Darius the Great who came to the throne of the Medes in 559BC and reigned one year at Babylon after which his clash with Cyrus took place. The latter is Daniel's "Darius the Mede" who managed the administration of Babylon for two years (539-8) when it fell into the hands of the Medes and Persians. Darius son of Hystaspes –is referred to by Zechariah as in the "fourth" year of his reign. If we were to suppose that Haggai's Darius is "Darius the Great" we face the fact that Babylon was not even conquered by the Persians in 555B.C. and the additional fact that when Darius reigned in Babylon as co-regent with Cyrus his administration did not reach a third or fourth year.*

THE LORD'S WORD IN OUR HAND 3-5

The word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet saying "Is it now time for you to rest or Sabbath in your houses with ceilings yet this house is a waste? But now thus says THE LORD OF HOSTS (1) "set your hearts on your ways"

A HANDFUL OF TELL-TALE SIGNS OF LOSS OF BLESSING 6

You have sown much but brought in little

You eat but not to satisfaction

You drink and not to the full or hilarity

You have been dressed but there is no warmth to it

Even the wage of the wage-earner was in a bag pierced with holes.

Poor harvests poor food little joy poor clothes and loss of money are all evidence that life and work is being pursued without godliness

DISAPPOINTMENT 7-9

Thus says THE LORD OF HOSTS (2) "set your hearts upon your ways. Climb the mountain and bring down wood and build the house and I will be delighted with it or be conciliated with that and I

will be glorified says the LORD." "**You turned to look for something great and behold little is yours.**"

"You brought (the produce) to your house and I blew upon it. What is the reason says THE LORD OF HOSTS? (3) Because of my house which is desolate but **each man of you is rushing [xwrr] to build his own.**

PRODUCTIVITY SHUT DOWN THROUGH GODLESS INDUSTRY 10-11

On account of you **the heavens have shut up** the dew and the earth has withheld its wealth of produce and I have called for heat and drought on land and hills and corn and new wine and new oil and all that which the fertile earth produces and upon man and animal and upon all the hands do by labour. *The significance of this prophecy was that it was given precisely at the end of the olive harvest which signified judgment and 30 days before the early rains. The people responded within 24 days -just in the week before the early rains. Still the LORD tested faith and waited for over 3 months to bless them.*

THE PEOPLE LISTEN TO THE LORD 12-13

But Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jehozadak the high priest and the whole remnant of the people listened to the voice of the Lord their God and to the words of **promise** of Haggai the prophet as one whom the LORD their God had sent and the people feared in the presence of the LORD. And Haggai the messenger of the LORD spoke in the messages of the LORD to the people saying "I am with you whispers the LORD"

THE PEOPLE AWAKE TO THE LORD 14-15

And the LORD roused up or awakened 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 **THE WHOLE REMNANT** of the people and they came and they offered for service and work in the house of the LORD of hosts their God on **the twenty fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.** *What we are reading about is a very direct response to the word of God. Within twenty four days the people were galvanised to obey the LORD'S word and engage in the work of the rebuilding of the temple.*

CHAPTER 2

THE SECOND PROPHETIC WORD 1-5

On the twenty first day in the seventh month [*The month of the "early rains" when the LORD usually gave sign of his promise through the opening of heaven though in this instance there is no evidence the drought ended-further faith was required and taking to heart of the people's disregard of God and His house which lay waste-but now solid signs of faith in action were evident. Rebuilding had begun*] the word or promise of the LORD came **BY THE HAND** of Haggai the prophet saying "Please now [*all "please do it now" or "I pray" -one root is "half-cooked"-as if to say God knows emphasis is needed-reiteration-more heat-a further plea*] speak to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel governor of Judah and to Joshua the son of Jehozadat the High Priest and to **THE REMNANT** (*Haggai uses the "feminine" tyrav gender to stress the ready submission of the remnant at this stage to the will of the LORD*)
Zerubbabel was according to 1Chronicles 3.19

QUESTIONS 1,2,3 &4(the questions relate to the glory of God's presence as opposed to the glory of buildings)

(1) "Who among you is the remnant one who saw **this house** in its first **glory**? And how are the current sights of it for you? What is it like **now**? Is it not as nothing in your eyes? *It was 54 years since 587B.C.when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Peradventure some who joined in the re-building might have seen the earlier temple. They would have been like Daniel in their teens when taken captive and may have joined the first émigrés to come home while in their early seventies. By the time re-building got underway and the prophet asked the question they would have been approaching 80 years of age.*

(2) But **now** O Zerubbabel be strong whispers the LORD and be strong O Joshua son of Jehozadak the High Priest and be strong you entire people of the land whispers the LORD and work for **I am with you** whispers THE LORD OF HOSTS. (4) *Whatever the glory of the structure the presence of the LORD is of much greater moment.*

(3) (Now) The promised word which I covenanted with you in your departure from Egypt for My Spirit is with you-is among you -do not fear!" *As in the Exodus from Egypt so after the Exodus from Babylon the Spirit of the LORD was among His people-indeed in far greater measure. Moses would have been overjoyed by the emergence of prophets like Zechariah and Haggai and by the peoples' will to work. It was on a par with the enthusiasm of the newly liberated Jewish slaves to provide gifts for the tabernacle.*

THE WORLD SHALL BE SHAKEN 6-9

(1) For thus says THE LORD OF HOSTS (5) still one time (cardinal number)-it is sudden [*the f[m] may be either "intensive" or "diminutive"-or an adverb of "immediacy". The prophecy links with many similar prophetic notices of a latter day "shaking" and the return of the "treasures of the house" from Babylon does in part fulfil what is conveyed but the scale of the shaking and the widespread nature and volume of treasure together with the universal shake which is on par with the terrestrial disturbance of the flood demands the "intensive" use whatever else immediate must have occurred besides. The context is one larger than the "second temple" setting and exegesis must have respect for context.*]

(2) For I will be the One who causes the heaven and earth to move with concussion or noise and crashing [*c[r]*] We speak of God as "The prime mover" in the universe. In this prophecy the LORD indicates that He has reserved the right to seriously shake the present earth. In my view the "shaking" envisaged in this prophecy is due to occur sometime in the immediate future. It may even re-align the earth vis-a-vis the sun and it will as this scripture states involve the heavens as well as the earth. There is no evidence that it is to occur before the rapture of the saints of God but every reason to believe that it is included in the judgements that follow that event.(*cf Matthew 24.38 and 28.29 in which latter context our LORD intimates this "shaking" can be expected*)

(3) And the sea *The sea will be moved and in this context the prophecy of Luke 21.25*

(4) And the dry land *Movement or re-alignment of the continents may be expected in the same way as at the flood but for very different reasons*

(5) And I will cause a movement of all Gentile nations and the desire of all nations [*tdmj*] shall come. *This word has no plural-it is singular. It is difficult to avoid the concept of Messiah in the term "Precious one" "Desirable" or "Delight"*

(6) And I will continue to fill this house with glory whispers THE LORD OF HOSTS. (6) [*Hebrew Piel continuous of al m*] *The further reference to continued presence relates to the millennial kingdom and not to any intermediate period such as the "second temple" era which ended as Josephus portrays in vivid terms with "Let us leave this place"-the supposed last voice as the presence of God withdrew at the end of the siege.*

(7) The great glory of this latter house will be greater than the first says THE LORD OF HOSTS (7)

(8) And in this historic place I will provide the gift of peace whispers THE LORD OF HOSTS. (8)

THE THIRD PROPHETIC WORD 10-19

A NEW DAY OF BLESSING 10

On the twenty fourth day of the tenth month in the second year of Darius the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet saying. *Three months and three days after the great latter day promise and the promise of a house far superior to that of Solomon-which had over the centuries retained considerable glory even though a long time had elapsed Haggai could prophecy that blessing was even then begun. When God's people have a mind to work He Himself will bless them. From the Day of Atonement to the depths of mid-winter when snow fell on high ground and **the latter rains commenced a change had come over Judah.** In less than one hundred days the perspective of a nation utterly changed for the better. It will be even so when Messiah returns-the whole world will change in far less than 100 days. Glory and peace will dwell in the midst of the earth.*

SYMBOLS OF THE ADVENTS OF CHRIST

The in-depth message of this prophet is housed in the lessons from the "former" and "latter" rains. They are symbolic of the first and second comings of our LORD. The early rains come in September. It is thought that the LORD was born or came to tabernacle with us in September. The "latter rains" fall in December-January during the feast of Dedication in winter. This time answers to the action of the Maccabees who cleared the idol of Antiochus Epiphanes from the temple area in 165BC and hails the time when Messiah shall come and unset the latter day Antichrist and fill His temple.

CAN HOLY THINGS CONVEY HOLINESS? NO! 11-12

QUESTION No.5 (the question relates to Matthew 23.19-God's sanctification!)

Thus says THE LORD OF HOSTS (9) says "Please ask the priests a TORAH or pointer saying "**Behold a man carries consecrated flesh in the folded skirt of his garment** -then he touches the bread and the stew and wine and oil and anything else he eats -is it caused to be holy? And the priests answered "No" *The consecrated flesh could not sanctify either the clothing or other foodstuffs. There is no sanctifying efficacy in offerings and no conveyancing of sanctity. Holiness is from God alone.*

CAN HANDLING THE UNHOLY CONTAMINATE? YES! 13

QUESTION No.6 (the question relates to Matthew 15.19uncleanness is of the heart)

Then Haggai said "if or when a living soul that is contaminated touches any of these will he be contaminated? The priests answered "he will be contaminated!" And Haggai answered and said "So is this people and so is this nation in my presence" whispers the LORD and so is all the work of their hands and when they come near to offer there it is contaminated.

NO ONE TOOK TO HEART DISASTERS-NO-ONE CAME CLOSER 15-17

AND NOW I PRAY YOU WILL SET IT TO HEART from this day and from before the raising up of one stone upon another in the temple of the LORD. From their coming to the grain pile of twenty measures of wheat or corn and there were but ten. And they came to the wine-vat to draw off [pvj] fifty measures from the press and there were but twenty. I caused you to be stricken with the blight of the east wind with yellow-green mildew and with hailstones on all the work of your hands and none of you were near me whispers the LORD.

QUESTION No.7 18

PLEASE LAY THIS TO HEART FROM THIS DAY for from the twenty fourth day of the tenth month from the day when the temple of the LORD has been founded **YOU MUST LAY IT TO HEART.**

QUESTION No.8 19 (the question relates to evidence of disobedience Galatians6.7)

Is there still [seed in the granary and is there still [dw[h -interrogative h with "still" The word can be taken as an adverb but it seems better to be taken as an infinitive absolute of "testimony" so the meaning is filled up to read "Is it to remain testimony" or "is it to witness(to you)?"] seed in the granary? Further have the vine fig pomegranate and olive tree not borne fruit? **From this very day I will bless you**

THE FOURTH PROPHETIC WORD 20-23

GOD SPEAKS TWICE IN ONE DAY

And it happened that the word of the LORD came a second time to Haggai in the twenty fourth day of the (tenth) month saying "Speak to illumine Zerubbabel Governor of Judah saying *The "illumination" of Zerubbabel(the prince of Judah who was taken from Zion to Babylon and returned to Zion is also to be understood within scripture as the illumination of the house of David and to apply to that other greater Prince of the house Christ Jesus who was born in this world but came from heaven and*

returned there from whence He will bring in His millennial rule in Jerusalem at His glorious appearing. In his fourth chapter Zechariah develops the concept of the Ruling Zerubbabel when the topmost stone of the temple is placed in the house of the latter day as Zerubbabel (presumably) saw the finish of the 2nd temple just four years after its foundation was re-laid-though a false start had been made in the first year of Cyrus (Ezra 5.13).

- (1) **'I am going to move heaven and earth'** [*v[r "to cause to shake, tremble, leap or be in tumult"*] This divine action appears to be linked to an event of worldwide significance to disrupt nations seriously and ultimately. It also appears to involve our solar system and Satan's power over nations will be loosed and terminated for the Messianic era. In Ezekiel 38.22 in an ultimate struggle before the Kingdom of Messiah a supernatural demonstration of the power of the natural elements comes into play against Israel's enemies. To the "shaking" there are multiple biblical testimonies. You may wish to refer to the accompanying article on the "Eschatological Approaches of Haggai to Messiah".
- (2) 'I will turn like a cake or roll over or convert [*qpj*] kingdoms'
- (3) 'And I will destroy lay waste or cut off **the strength** [*qzj*] "daring" or "obstinacy" or "power to hold retain and repair" or "power to urge and press ahead" of the nations.'
- (4) 'And I will tumble ruin or turn back the vehicle and its drivers' [*bkr can apply to "charioteers" "riders" "drivers of vehicles"*] The interpretation relates to the time of shaking but no full scale battles except skirmishes by the harassing tribes occurred in the time of Zerubbabel. This full-scale defeat of mighty nations awaits fulfilment in the time of the "returning Zerubbabel"
- (5) 'Horses and their riders will fall-each man by the sword of his brother' A further notable promise of God to Haggai and Israel is that their adversaries would collapse by internal internecine conflicts. This prophecy is confirmed by Ezekiel 37.19-21 where in the struggle of the latter day "every man's sword shall be against his brother." (Ezekiel 38.21)
- (6) 'On that day whispers THE LORD OF HOSTS(10) I will take you O Zerubbabel my servant son of Shealtiel for myself and I will make you as a signet ring' Such common Persian "seals" *mtwj* were hung traditionally around the neck and the seal itself fell like a mayoral badge of office over the chest. Prominent demonstration of the public credentials and of the seal of state authority was customary hundreds of years before [cf Song of Solomon 8.6]
- (7) 'For in your house [*Jb*] I have made my choice whispers THE LORD OF HOSTS.(11) The choice of Zerubbabel was the choice of a prince of the house of David to lead Israel in her return. However this Zerubbabel never became a king. There were to be no further kings until the Edomite dynasty of the Herods established power by the aid of Rome. In his "princely" office Zerubbabel mirrors Christ who came as King incognito and of Him we can say He is God's choice and in His coming the whole will delight.

THE END

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To the glory of the Lord
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