

Dr. Gary Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 26, Haggai

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 26, Haggai, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Gary Yates' lecture on the Book of Haggai is part of a series on the Book of the Twelve, focusing on post-exilic prophets. The lecture discusses the ministry and message of Haggai, who, along with Zechariah, urged the people to rebuild the temple in 520 BC, emphasizing its importance for experiencing God's presence and blessing. **Yates explains that the rebuilding of the temple after the Babylonian exile underscored God's covenant faithfulness**, reminding the Israelites that God would restore them. **He emphasizes the importance of God's presence among his people**, and says that their relationship with God was missing when they allowed the temple to remain in ruins. **Yates also analyzes Haggai's five messages**, explaining their historical context and theological implications, while addressing the promise of a greater glory for the rebuilt temple, and discusses the connection with the eschatological temple.

2. 22 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 26 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Book of the Twelve [Minor Prophets]).



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on26.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 26, Haggai

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Gary Yates's lecture on the Book of Haggai, incorporating direct quotes where relevant:

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Yates on Haggai

Main Themes and Key Ideas:

This lecture focuses on the ministry and message of the prophet Haggai within the context of the post-exilic period and its significance for understanding God's covenant faithfulness and the importance of prioritizing God's presence. It also reviews theological principles from Habakkuk and their link to Haggai's message.

I. Review of Habakkuk and Theological Applications:

- **Faith and Trust in God:** The Book of Habakkuk teaches the importance of exercising faith and trust in God, even when faced with difficult questions and lamentations. "It is a book calling for us to exercise faith and trust in the Lord. It is also a book that models for us that we can bring our questions, our laments, and our complaints to God, and God will help us to grow in wisdom as we do that."
- **God's Sovereignty:** God is sovereign over all nations and rulers, using even wicked nations to accomplish His purposes. "God is sovereign over all the nations and rulers of the earth, no matter how powerful they seem to be."
- **Worship and Lament:** Worship is not just joyful celebration; it also includes expressing questions, doubts, and lamentations to God. "Worship is not just an upbeat, positive, happy experience. We can often come to God when we are wrestling with questions and doubts."
- **Caution Against Cynicism:** While doubt can be a part of faith, it's important to avoid cynicism and skepticism, which can be as superficial as blind faith. "Be careful as you're doing this of idealizing doubt or buying into the idea of our culture that cynicism, skepticism, or constant questions and doubt about God and the promises of his word, be careful of buying into the idea that those things are more intellectually honest than genuine trust, faith, and confidence in God."

- **Living by Faith:** The righteous live by their faith, not by their doubts. Ultimately, faith and trusting in God's promises is the goal. "The righteous live by their faith, not by their doubts...Worship often involves asking God questions and dealing with our doubts and wrestling with those things. But the ultimate goal is faith and trusting in the promises of God because we know that God is absolutely faithful to his promises."

II. The Post-Exilic Context and Haggai's Ministry:

- **Historical Significance:** Haggai and Zechariah are crucial figures in the post-exilic period, called by God in 520 BC to encourage the rebuilding of the temple.
- **Theological Crisis of the Exile:** The Babylonian exile was a major theological crisis, causing people to question God's faithfulness. The return from exile and rebuilding of the temple served as a reminder of God's commitment to His people. "I think, in many ways, the Babylonian exile is the ultimate and the greatest theological crisis in the Old Testament...The post-exilic period, as God leads his people back, as God brings them back to the land, is an encouragement to those discouraged people who, in many ways, had abandoned their trust and believed that God had abandoned them."
- **God's Covenant Faithfulness:** The post-exilic period demonstrates God's covenant faithfulness, echoing Moses's words in Deuteronomy 30:1-10 and Jeremiah's prophecy of a 70-year exile.
- **Cyrus as God's Instrument:** God used the Persian king Cyrus the Great as His instrument to bring about restoration, similar to how He used Assyria and Babylon for judgment. Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Jews to return and rebuild their temple. "God is going to use in the post-exilic period the Persian king Cyrus the Great to be his instrument that would bring about the restoration...Cyrus issues a decree allowing the Jews and other people to return to their homeland, to rebuild their temples, and to worship the Lord."
- **Three Stages of Return:** The return to the homeland occurred in three stages: Zerubbabel (rebuilding the temple), Ezra (spiritual reform), and Nehemiah (rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem). Haggai and Zechariah's ministry is tied to the first return.

- **Focus on Rebuilding the Temple:** Haggai and Zechariah's mission was to encourage the people to resume rebuilding the temple, which they had abandoned due to a lack of resources, opposition, and misplaced priorities. "Their job is to encourage the people, to exhort the people to get back to the job of rebuilding the temple of the Lord that they had initially started in 536 BC but had abandoned for the last 15 or 16 years."
- **Support and Encouragement:** They not only called the people to rebuild but also supported and encouraged them throughout the process, which ultimately led to the temple's completion in 515 BC.

III. The Importance of the Temple:

- **God's Presence:** The temple was not just a building, but the place where God chose to dwell among His people, mediating His presence. "In the Old Testament, the temple is the place where God had chosen to dwell among his people...God's presence was there so that they could worship him, enjoy him, experience the blessings of his presence, and to offer and to present their prayers to him."
- **Greatest Covenant Blessing:** The greatest blessing was not the promised land or military victories, but the presence of God Himself. "The greatest covenant blessing that the Lord gave to the people of Israel was not the promised land...The greatest blessing within the covenant relationship with God and the greatest thing that we enjoy in our relationship with God today is the presence of God himself."
- **Misplaced Priorities:** Haggai confronts the people for prioritizing their own homes over God's house, reflecting misplaced values and hindering their relationship with God. "Haggai is going to confront the people about their misplaced priorities...The tragedy of this and the sinfulness of what they've done is the fact that they reflect priorities that seem to say there are things that are more important to us than the presence of God."
- **Reminder of God's Greatness:** The focus on the temple serves as a reminder of God's greatness and the importance of His presence in their lives.

IV. Unifying Features and Key Expressions in Haggai:

- **"The Lord of Hosts":** This title for God appears throughout the book, reminding the people that God is still King, even under Persian rule. "Thus the Lord of hosts, the Lord of armies, Yahweh Sabaoth...it's a reminder to the people, even in the midst of this post-exilic period, that God is still king."

- **"Give Careful Thought/Consider Your Ways":** This expression is used to prompt the people to reflect on the consequences of neglecting the temple and later, as encouragement, to recognize God's impending blessings.
- **"I Am With You":** This promise emphasizes the ultimate covenant blessing: God's presence. "When the people begin rebuilding the temple, the Lord says to them, I am with you. And remember, the ultimate covenant blessing was God's presence."
- **"I Will Once More Shake the Heavens and the Earth":** This refers to God's future powerful acts to fully restore His people. "The Lord is going to do powerful and mighty things that will ultimately bring about the full restoration of his people."

V. The Five Messages of Haggai:

1. **Call to Rebuild (1:1-12):** The people are called to realize the need to rebuild God's house, emphasizing the negative consequences of their neglect.
2. **People Obey (1:12-15):** The people obey the call to rebuild, demonstrating repentance and prompting God to promise His presence. "The people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and they began the rebuilding process." Yates emphasizes the surprise element of obedience here.
3. **Promise of Glory (2:1-9):** This message addresses the people's concern that the new temple is less glorious than Solomon's. God promises that "the latter glory of this house will be greater than the former glory." Yates discusses various interpretations of this promise, suggesting it may refer to the eschatological kingdom and a future temple.
4. **Illustration from the Law (2:10-19):** Through an illustration involving ritual purity, God shows how their neglect of the temple has defiled the community. However, He promises to bless them from that moment forward.
5. **Promise to Zerubbabel (2:20-23):** God promises Zerubbabel, the governor, that He is about to shake the heavens and the earth, and that he will be like a signet ring, chosen by God. This is interpreted as a near and far prophecy, referencing both the immediate future and the ultimate restoration of the Davidic dynasty through Jesus. "I will take you, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, and I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, declares the Lord of hosts."

VI. Key Takeaways:

- The book of Haggai emphasizes the importance of prioritizing God's presence and relationship with Him.
- Obedience to God leads to blessings and restoration.
- God is faithful to His covenant promises, even in the face of judgment and exile.
- The promises in Haggai point to both near and far fulfillments, including the ultimate establishment of God's kingdom through Jesus.

This briefing document provides a comprehensive overview of the key themes and ideas presented in Dr. Yates's lecture on the Book of Haggai.

4. Study Guide: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 26, Haggai

Haggai: A Study Guide

Quiz

1. What are two applications or theological principles that we can take away from the book of Habakkuk, according to Dr. Yates?
2. According to Yates, what is wrong with the modern view of worship as simply a joyful time of celebration?
3. Why does Dr. Yates consider the Babylonian exile the greatest theological crisis in the Old Testament?
4. What are the three stages of the Jewish people's return to their homeland after the decree of Cyrus, and who were the leaders associated with each?
5. What was the specific mission that Haggai and Zechariah had from God?
6. Why was the rebuilding of the temple so important for the post-exilic community beyond simply constructing a place of worship?
7. What is the significance of the title "Lord of Hosts" (Yahweh Sabaoth) as used throughout the book of Haggai?
8. What are the covenant curses mentioned in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, and how were they relevant to Haggai's message?
9. Explain the two parts of the object lesson given by the Lord through Haggai to the priest (holy meat in the fold of garment; person who is unclean by contact with a dead body).
10. What does it mean that Zerubbabel is referred to as God's signet ring in Haggai 2:23?

Quiz Answer Key

1. One application from Habakkuk is to exercise faith and trust in the Lord. Another is that we can bring our questions, laments, and complaints to God, and God will help us to grow in wisdom as we do that.
2. The problem is that those types of emotions (joyful celebration) are not always reflective of the experiences that people are going through in life. The Old

Testament reflects the idea that we continue to worship God even when we express questions and doubts.

3. It appeared to the people of Israel that God had abandoned them, leading to questions about whether God could be trusted and whether the covenant with his people was still valid. They wondered if the gods of Babylon were greater than their God.
4. The first return was led by Zerubbabel and Joshua, focused on rebuilding the temple. The second return, almost a century later, was led by Ezra, who focused on religious reform. The third was led by Nehemiah, who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem.
5. Their mission was to encourage the people to return to the task of rebuilding the temple of the Lord that they had initially started in 536 BC but had abandoned for the last 15 or 16 years.
6. The temple was the place where God had chosen to dwell among his people in a special way. It allowed them to worship him, enjoy his presence, experience his blessings, and offer their prayers. The post-exilic community could not fully experience God's designed relationship with them as long as it was in ruins.
7. It is a reminder to the people that God is still king, still on his throne, and still in charge of his heavenly army, even though they are under Persian control and do not have their own king.
8. The covenant curses involved God taking away the blessings of the land and its produce, and that was relevant to Haggai's message because the people were experiencing those curses as a result of neglecting to rebuild the temple.
9. The first part of the object lesson: consecrated meat that was carried in a garment made that garment holy, but the holiness could not then be transformed from that garment to another object. Second part: If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these (objects/people), it becomes unclean.
10. The authority of David was a reflection of the authority of God. For Haggai, God is now reversing the judgment of Jeremiah 22. God still has a plan. God still has a future for the people of Israel, and that will include a restored Davidic king. Zerubbabel represents the initial fulfillment of that promise.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the tension between divine sovereignty and human response as exemplified in the book of Haggai. How does the text balance the initiative of God with the agency of the people in the rebuilding of the temple?
2. Analyze the significance of the temple in Haggai's messages, exploring its role as more than just a physical structure. How does the temple relate to the presence of God and the covenant relationship with Israel?
3. Examine the ways in which Haggai's prophecies address both the immediate concerns of the post-exilic community and point towards future eschatological fulfillment. How does the book use present circumstances to convey hope for a greater restoration?
4. Compare and contrast the prophetic messages of Haggai and Zechariah, highlighting their common goals and distinct approaches in motivating the people to rebuild the temple. In what ways did their ministries complement each other?
5. Evaluate the contemporary relevance of Haggai's message for believers today. How can the themes of misplaced priorities, covenant faithfulness, and the importance of God's presence be applied to modern Christian life and ministry?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Post-Exilic Period:** The period in Jewish history after the Babylonian exile, starting with the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC, which allowed the Jewish people to return to their homeland.
- **Zerubbabel:** The Persian-appointed governor of Judah during the post-exilic period, who led the first return of the Jews to Jerusalem and initiated the rebuilding of the temple.
- **Joshua (Jeshua):** The high priest during the post-exilic period who worked alongside Zerubbabel in leading the people and rebuilding the temple.
- **Cyrus the Great:** The Persian king who conquered Babylon and issued a decree allowing the Jewish people and other conquered peoples to return to their homelands and rebuild their temples.
- **Temple (Second Temple):** The rebuilt temple in Jerusalem after the return from Babylonian exile, completed in 515 BC. It was not as opulent as Solomon's temple but was significant as the center of Jewish worship and God's presence.
- **Lord of Hosts (Yahweh Sabaoth):** A title for God emphasizing his sovereignty and power as the commander of heavenly armies, used frequently in Haggai to remind the people of God's ongoing authority.
- **Covenant Curses:** Consequences for disobedience to God as outlined in the Mosaic covenant, including agricultural failure, financial hardship, and lack of blessing.
- **Signet Ring:** An object bearing a unique symbol that was used to mark or to identify the authority of an official or a king or a ruler. In Haggai, the Lord refers to Zerubbabel as his signet ring (2:23).
- **Eschatological Kingdom:** The future, ultimate, and complete restoration of God's kingdom, often associated with the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of a new temple or a new Jerusalem.
- **Lament:** A passionate expression of grief or sorrow, often found in the Psalms, used to express questions, doubts, and complaints to God during times of difficulty.

5. FAQs on Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 26, Haggai, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on the Book of Haggai and Related Theological Concepts

Here is an 8-question FAQ, thoroughly answering questions based on the provided text.

- **What is the primary message of the Book of Haggai?**
- The primary message of Haggai is a call to the people of Judah to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem after their return from the Babylonian exile. It emphasizes that rebuilding the temple is essential for fully experiencing God's presence and blessings. Haggai confronts the people about their misplaced priorities, highlighting that they are focusing on their own homes and well-being while God's house lies in ruins. The book underscores the importance of prioritizing a relationship with God above material comforts and personal gain.
- **Why was rebuilding the temple so important in the post-exilic period?**
- The temple was more than just a building; it was the place where God chose to dwell among his people in a special way. God's presence was mediated to the people of Israel at the temple, enabling them to worship, enjoy, and experience God's blessings, and present their prayers. Rebuilding the temple was thus crucial for restoring their relationship with God and fully experiencing the covenant blessings they had been missing since their return to the land. Without the temple, they could not fully enjoy God's presence and the intended covenant relationship.
- **How did God use foreign leaders like Cyrus the Great in the restoration of Israel?**
- God used Cyrus the Great, the Persian king, as his instrument to bring about the restoration of Israel. Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Jewish people and other conquered peoples to return to their homelands, rebuild their temples, and worship their gods. This decree was vital for the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding the temple. While Cyrus may not have had a personal relationship with God, God used him to fulfill his purposes, similar to how he used the kings of Assyria and Babylon.

- **What is the significance of the phrase "Consider Your Ways" in the book of Haggai?**
- The phrase "Consider Your Ways" (or "Give careful thought") appears multiple times in Haggai, serving as a central theme. Initially, it's a rebuke, urging the people to reflect on the disasters and lack of blessings in their lives because they had neglected rebuilding the temple. Later, after they begin rebuilding, it becomes an encouragement, prompting them to recognize the blessings that God will bestow upon them from that point forward. It emphasizes the direct correlation between their obedience to God and the prosperity and blessings they would experience.
- **What is the meaning of "Lord of Hosts," and why is this title used throughout Haggai?**
- The title "Lord of Hosts" (Yahweh Sabaoth) is a significant designation for God that appears throughout the Book of Haggai. It serves as a reminder to the people that even though they are under Persian control and lack their own king, God is still sovereign and in control of all things. It underscores that God is king over all, including his heavenly army, and that he has the power and authority to fulfill his promises despite their current circumstances.
- **What was the third message about, and how does it relate to the New Testament?**
- The third message in Haggai concerns the glory of the rebuilt temple. While some older people wept because the new temple was not as grand as Solomon's, God promised that the latter glory of this house would be greater than the former. Some believe this refers to the glory brought by Jesus' presence in the second temple. Some believe that this is talking about an eschatological temple. The New Testament also emphasizes that Jesus is the replacement of the temple. The focus is not just on the structure but on the experience of God's presence, now realized in Christ.

- **What was the point of the fourth message about the law, and how does it relate to post-exilic Israel?**
- The fourth message uses an illustration from the Old Testament law about purity to emphasize that Israel had become impure because of their failure to rebuild the temple. Just as ritual impurity could be transferred, their disobedience had defiled the entire community, rendering their worship and sacrifices unacceptable to God until they completed the temple. However, the message also offered encouragement, indicating that once they resumed rebuilding, God would begin to prosper and bless them, marking a clear transition from deprivation to divine favor.
- **What did the fifth and final message communicate, and what significance did Zerubbabel have?**
- The final message in Haggai is a promise to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah and a member of the Davidic family. God promises to shake the heavens and the earth, overthrow kingdoms, and ultimately establish the throne of David. While not fully realized immediately, this message signifies God's commitment to the house of David and foretells the future coming of a Davidic king, Jesus the Messiah. Zerubbabel's position as governor, appointed by the Persians, serves as a reminder that God had not forgotten his covenant with David and would ultimately restore the Davidic dynasty.