

Discussion Guide for Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Haggai was a prophet after the return from exile, about 520 BC. Together with Zechariah he pushed the people to get the temple rebuilt. They had started the work, but later let it slide in favor of building their own homes. He points out that, although this temple pales in comparison to Solomon's temple, it would have greater glory because Messiah would set foot in it.

"Although we in the New Testament time do not worship in a temple, we still have a place that we call God's house. It is our church. And regardless of the time in history, you can always tell something about the believers if you look at their house of worship. If they expect their God to live in a shack something is wrong especially when the people themselves live in fine houses." (Eric Hartzell, The People's Bible) God is to be first in all areas of our lives.

- ✓ Even though Cyrus had allowed the Jews who wanted to do so to return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding the temple and had even provided some of the money to do this, what were the people saying fourteen years later?
- ✓ Why did God say that they planted much and harvested little and put their money in a purse with holes in it?
- ✓ How did Zerubbabel and the people respond to God's message through Haggai?
- ✓ Although the temple these people were building couldn't compare to the one Solomon built and Nebuchadnezzar destroyed, how would its glory be even greater? (chapter 2)
- ✓ Just because the soles of their feet were touching the ground of the Promised Land again didn't make these people holy. To what does God want them to give careful thought?
- ✓ God promises that Zerubbabel is a sign to the people that the Messiah and Judgment day will come. He is listed in the genealogies of both Matthew and of Luke.

Zechariah was both a prophet and a priest. He was most likely born in Babylon during the captivity. He joins with Haggai in calling on the people to rebuild the temple (520 BC), however his ministry continues much longer than Haggai's, possibly to 480 BC. He is given at least 7 specific prophecies about Messiah, some of which are very familiar to us in the NT.

- ✓ What reaction did the people have to Zechariah's call to repentance?
- ✓ What is the meaning of the vision of the man among the myrtle trees?
- ✓ What is the meaning of the vision of the four horns and the four craftsmen?
- ✓ Why does the Lord say that Jerusalem would be a city without walls? (chapter 2)

- ✓ Who will be included among God's people?
- ✓ What did the Lord do for Joshua so that Satan could no longer accuse him? (chapter 3)
- ✓ How and when did God remove sin in a single day?
- ✓ Oil was used for anointing priests and kings and, together with lamps, is often a picture of the Holy Spirit. How do we see the Holy Spirit at work in chapter 4?
- ✓ The flying scroll Zechariah sees is unusual because of its size and because of the fact that it has writing on both sides. What is the message of the scroll? (chapter 5)
- ✓ Where was the basket containing "wickedness" taken?
- ✓ How would the black horses going to the North give God's spirit rest? (chapter 6)
- ✓ Zechariah sees the joining of the offices of king and priest. How is this picture of Jesus the Messiah?
- ✓ What does God tell his people is more important than fasting? (chapter 7)
- ✓ What may have caused the people to be fearful as they built the temple? What does God tell them? (chapter 8)
- ✓ What things does God hate?
- ✓ The destruction of Israel's enemies from the north to the south likely refers to the coming of Alexander the Great. (chapter 9)
- ✓ Other than being quoted and applied to Jesus in the New Testament, what thoughts from 9:9-10 point to the Messiah as their fulfillment?
- ✓ What good reminder does Zechariah give us at the beginning of chapter 10?
- ✓ How is Jesus pictured in Chapter 11?
- ✓ What will happen because the people rejected the faithful shepherd?
- ✓ Chapter twelve begins visions that see their fulfillment in the last day. See John 19:34 and Revelation 1:7.
- ✓ Jesus quoted 13:7 regarding his arrest in Gethsemane. What will happen to the remnant of believers, the 1/3 who are left?
- ✓ How is the last day pictured in 14:1-11?

- ✓ “Holy to the Lord” was the phrase engraved on the gold plate worn on the turban of the High Priest. How does this help us understand what is being pictured at the end of Zechariah’s book?

Malachi means “my messenger.” He is believed to be the last prophet of the Old Testament. Not much is known about him, but the sins for which he rebukes Israel would fit well with conditions between the two governorships of Nehemiah. That would place his work at around 435 BC. The format of the book includes a series of questions and answers. Israel was losing hope because they expected God to fulfill His promises sooner, on their timetable, not His. Malachi assures them that God will keep his promises.

- ✓ When Israel doubted God’s love for them, to what did he point them to show that he did love them?
- ✓ How had the people and the priests been showing contempt for God?
- ✓ What was to be the job of a priest, one these priests were not doing? (chapter 2)
- ✓ What very “modern” problem does Malachi address?
- ✓ “Be careful what you ask for.” How did Malachi apply this saying to the people’s request that God bring justice? (chapter 3)
- ✓ Normally we are not to test God, but how does he invite us to test him?
- ✓ How is God’s explanation of giving the opposite of the way most people think?
- ✓ When will we see clearly the distinction between the righteous and the wicked?
- ✓ Who is the prophet Elijah that Malachi says will come before the day of the Lord? (chapter 4)