

Preface To The Prophet Haggai

(1532)

Haggai is the first prophet given to the people after the Babylonian Captivity, and by his prophecy the Temple and the worship of God were set up again. Besides, for two months Zechariah was given him as a companion, so that God's Word by the mouth of two witnesses might be the more surely believed, for the people had fallen into great doubt whether the Temple would ever be rebuilt.

It is our opinion that Daniel is speaking of this prophet, when he says, in Daniel 9:25, "From the time when the command goeth out that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, until the prince, Christ, there are seven weeks and two and sixty weeks, etc." For although a decree had gone out before from King Cyrus that the Temple should be rebuilt at Jerusalem at his (the king's) expense, yet it was hindered until the time of Haggai and Zechariah, when God's decree went out through them, then the work went on.

He denounces the people, however, because they had given no thought to preparing the Temple and the worship, but had only been careful and greedy to get property and houses for themselves. For this reason they were afflicted with famine, with injury to their crops, — wine, corn, and all kinds of grain, — as an example to all the godless, who pay no heed to God's Word and worship, and are always greedy to fill their own bags. It is only to them that the text applies, when he says, "Their bag shall be full of holes."

So we find in all history that when men will not support God's servants or help maintain His Word, He lets them be greedy for their own gain and gather wealth continually; but at last He causes the bag to be full of holes, and blows into it, so that it turns to dust and melts away, and no one knows what becomes of it. Either he will eat with them, or they shall find nothing to eat.

In the second chapter he prophesies of Christ also, and says that He shall soon come, "A comfort of all nations," by which he indicates in a mystery that the kingdom of the Jews shall have an end, and the kingdoms of all the world be destroyed and become subject to Christ. This has happened before now and is constantly happening until the Last Day, when it will all be fulfilled.