

# Haggai

## IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

### Welcome

“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, ... the Word of God has been approaching you.”

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of the Book of Haggai using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to Reading the Prophets*—especially the section on Haggai—will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don’t miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church’s criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



### Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God’s unified plan.



### Read Scripture in light of the Church’s living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit’s guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you’ll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



### Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,\* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,<sup>7</sup>but emptied himself,<sup>†</sup> taking the form of a servant,<sup>‡</sup> being born in the likeness of men.<sup>§</sup>And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.<sup>¶</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,<sup>||</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>|||</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure.  
14 Do all th tioning,<sup>15</sup>that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

**2:7 emptied himself:** The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

**2:8 death on a cross:** The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

**2:9 exalted him:** By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

**2:10 every knee should bow:** An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven ... earth ... under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

**2:11 confess:** I.e., acknowledge. Included in this open dec

serious that we pur sense of awe at ser the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God’s g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu **2:15 pervers** • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

*A Thing to Harpagmos* (G in the Greek O Occurrences of “robbery”. Its considerable d the leading vi (1) Some, like “something sel

## Prepare

Read the Introduction to Haggai, paying particular attention to the *Historical Background*, *The Message of the Prophet*, and the *Christian Perspective* on it. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of Haggai to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

## Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of Haggai, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

*Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.*

## Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on Haggai as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

# STUDY QUESTIONS

## Chapter 1

### *For understanding*

1. **1:2.** What does the title “LORD of hosts” mean as a title for the Lord? How often does Haggai use it in this short book? What excuse do people make that the right time has not yet come? What is the central problem addressed by Haggai? What time has now come?
2. **1:4.** What were Judeans investing time, energy, and resources in doing? For what does Haggai rebuke them? To what may he also be alluding?
3. **1:12.** Who are the remnant of the people? How will this remnant give evidence of their repentance? What does fear of the Lord mean?
4. **1:15.** When is the people’s response dated? How was this time presumably spent?

### *For application*

1. **1:2.** Have you delayed building in your heart—or even your family home—a house for the Lord? If you have delayed, when will a more opportune time come? What does building that house entail for you?
2. **1:5–6.** What efforts have you made to improve your spiritual life, even if you seem to have few positive results to show for it? What have you considered to be potential obstacles? In what ways have you avoided surrendering yourself to Jesus?
3. **1:9.** If the Lord were to charge you with paying more attention to your own needs than to him, to what in your conduct could he point? What excuses would you make for yourself? If you accepted the correction, what changes do you think you would have to make?
4. **1:13.** Look up passages in Scripture where an emissary of the Lord announces that the Lord is with a person or group (e.g., Judg 6:12; Lk 1:28). Why is this reassurance being given? When the celebrant at the liturgy says “the Lord be with you”, what does that statement usually preface? Why is the Lord’s presence in a task so important?

## Chapter 2

### *For understanding*

1. **2:4.** How did David encourage Solomon to build the first Temple? How is the expression “people of the land” used in preexilic times? In the postexilic period? What does it seem to mean here?
2. **2:5–9.** About what does Haggai prophesy? When this day comes, to what will the Second Temple, small and unimpressive, give way? On what events are these future events patterned?
3. **2:20–23.** How is Haggai’s fourth prophetic address, dated December 18, 520 B.C., unlike the first three? What does it promise? For what is Zerubbabel, from the royal line of David, chosen? Although he never becomes king himself, what does God’s favor toward him signify? What does Zerubbabel’s appearance in the Matthean genealogy of Jesus verify about Jesus’ identity?
4. **2:23.** For what is a signet ring used? To what was its impression equivalent? What does it signify here? What words of Jeremiah does Haggai’s message to Zerubbabel echo? How was Jehoiachim likened to a “signet ring”? How is the sign of the ring reversed here?

### *For application*

1. **2:3.** What is your opinion of the state of the Church today? How do you think it compares with previous ages? How do the problems you perceive in the Church affect your faith?
2. **2:5–9.** What activity of the Holy Spirit do you see going on in the Church now? Where does the Church seem to be thriving? What renewal movements are making a significant impact? How are you called to participate in Church renewal?
3. **2:11–14.** The note for v. 11 refers to spiritual apathy, or lack of concern for spiritual things. According to the *Catechism*, how do acedia, or spiritual sloth, and related problems impede growth in charity (CCC 2094)? How does acedia interfere with prayer (CCC 2733)? Has this problem affected your spiritual development? If so, in what ways?
4. **2:15–19.** How would you describe your vocation in life? Was there ever a time when you resisted it? If so, how happy were you? How has obedience to your vocation resulted in a blessing?