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COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Haggai

by Matthew Henry

To the Students of the Words, Works and Ways of God:

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AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE PROPHECY OF

HAGGAI

The captivity in Babylon gave a very remarkable turn to the affairs of the Jewish church both in history and prophecy. It is made a signal epocha in our Saviour's genealogy, ^{<417>}Matthew 1:17. Nine of the twelve minor prophets, whose oracles we have been hitherto consulting, lived and preached before that captivity, and most of them had an eye to it in their prophecies, foretelling it as the just punishment of Jerusalem's wickedness. But the last three (in whom the Spirit of prophecy took its period, until it revived in Christ's forerunner) lived and preached after the return out of captivity, not immediately upon it, but some time after. Haggai and Zechariah appeared much about the same time, eighteen years after the return, when the building of the temple was both retarded by its enemies and neglected by its friends. *Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them* (so we read ^{<418>}Ezra 5:1), to reprove them for their remissness, and to encourage them to revive that good work when it had stood still for some time, and to go on with it vigorously, notwithstanding the opposition they met with in it. Haggai began two months before Zechariah, who was raised up to second him, that out of the mouth of two witnesses the word might be established. But Zechariah continued longer at the work; for all Haggai's prophecies that are recorded were delivered within four months, in the second year of Darius, between the beginning of the sixth month and the end of the ninth. But we have Zechariah's prophecies dated above two years after, ^{<300>}Zechariah 7:1. Some have the honour to lead, others to last, in the work of God. The Jews ascribe to these two prophets the honour of being members of the great synagogue (as they call it), which was formed after the return out of captivity; we think it more certain, and it was their honour, and a much greater honour, that they prophesied of Christ. Haggai spoke of him as the *glory of the latter house*, and Zechariah as *the man, the branch*. In them the light of that morning star shone more brightly than

in the foregoing prophecies, as they lived nearer the time of the rising of the Sun of righteousness, and now began to see his day approaching. The Septuagint makes Haggai and Zechariah to be the penmen of Psalm 138 and Psalm 146, 147, and 148.