

2026

out

POSTEXILIC PROPHETS

HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH & MALACHI

COVENANT^{EFC}

CRY

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out

STUDY 1

**HAGGAI: INTRODUCTION & "BUILD
GOD'S HOUSE!"
(Haggai 1:1-15)**

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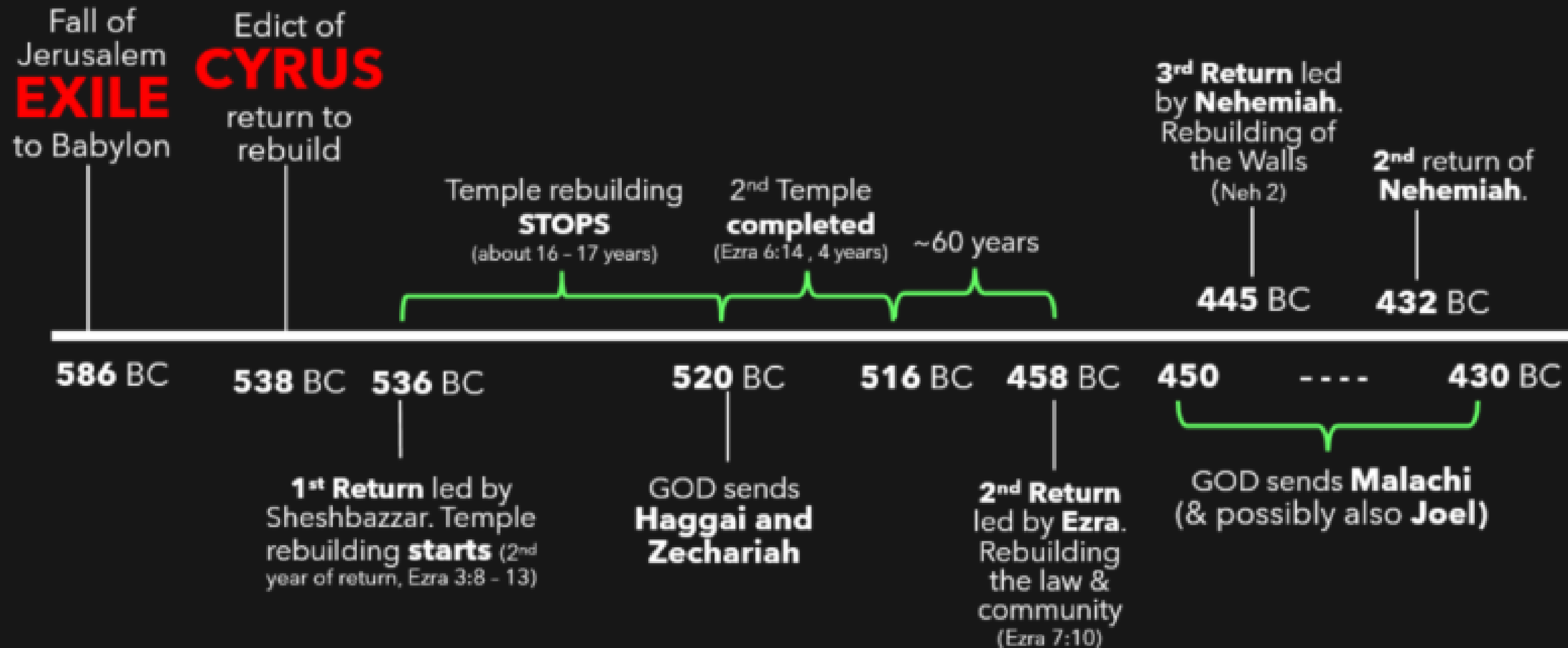
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NOTE TO ALL USERS

- The post-exilic prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) speak to the generation that returned from the Babylonian Exile (586–538 B.C.).
- The exile was the ultimate fulfilment of the prophets' warnings of judgment, while their return, initiated by the Persian King Cyrus's decree in 538 B.C., was the initial fulfilment of the prophets' promises of restoration.
- As a pre-work, read Ezra 1-7 for background understanding of the commencement of the return, the oppositions encountered and the eventual completion of the second temple. The following timeline may help.

Timeline of the Post-exilic period





Ice-breaker Activity: "Unfinished..."

- Can you recognize this famous unfinished building project?
- What is one spiritual project God may have given you that is yet to be finished?



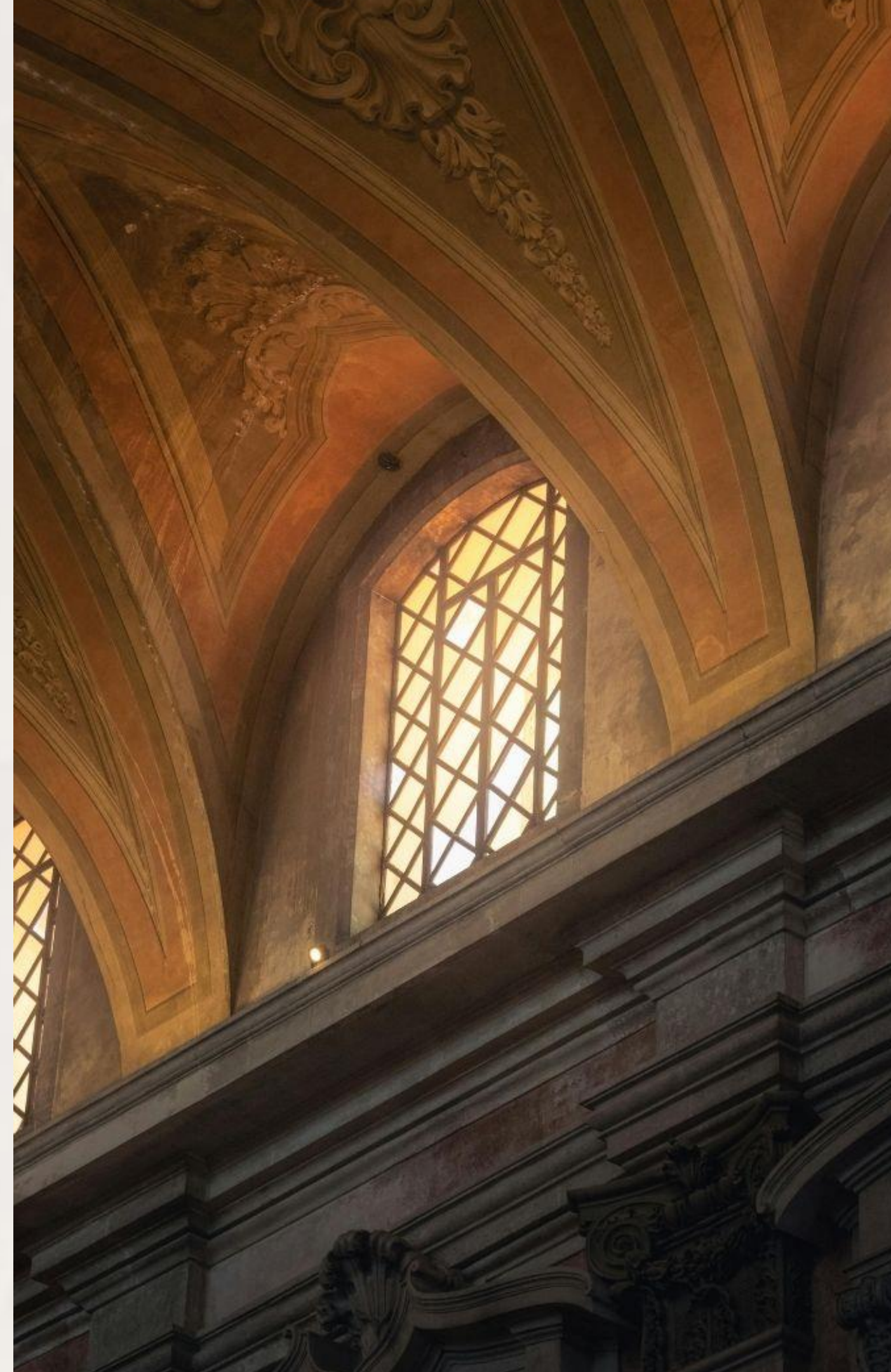
Photo credit: Pinterest



WORSHIP

**As we worship the Lord God Almighty,
may we catch a glimpse of His glory!**

- Glory (Hillsong)
- A Thousand Hallelujahs (Brook Ligertwood)
- Build my Life (Pat Barrett)
- Make Room (The Church Will Sing)





WORD

STRUCTURE OF HAGGAI

1st MESSAGE:



—

The challenge towards
covenant renewal
(1:1-15)

2nd MESSAGE:



—

The promise of
restoration
(2:1-9)

3rd MESSAGE:



—

The call to holiness
(2:10-19)

4th MESSAGE:



—

Zerubbabel chosen
(2:20-23)

Source: adapted from Andrew E. Hill
(Tyndale Old Testament Commentary)

Activity 1: Watch a Video

Let's watch a [short Bible Project video](#) that provides a good introduction and summary of the context, structure and message of the book of Haggai.

After you have viewed it, discuss the following question:

1. What was the situation that God's people in Judah were facing at the time of Haggai's message?

Activity 2: Read & Discuss

Read Haggai 1:1-11 and discuss the following questions

2. What was the people's initial attitude to building the house of the LORD? (v.2)
3. Why do you think the people had that attitude? (infer from v.4,9)
4. What was life like for the people as a result of their reluctance to build God's house? (v.6, 10-11)

🔍 EXEGETICAL INSIGHT 1

What are “paneled houses”?
Do they look like this?



Paneled Houses?

🔍 Exegetical Insight 1: What are “paneled houses”?

- The phrase “paneled houses” is probably better understood in the sense of ‘roofed’ or ‘completed’ houses, in contrast to the LORD’s ‘unfinished’ house—lacking even a roof! *
- Thus the use of the term does not mean that the returned exiles were trying to build luxurious homes for themselves and thereby forgetting God’s house – they were poor and just trying to survive!

*Andrew E. Hill, , ed. David G. Firth, vol. 28, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2012), 65.

🔍 Exegetical Insight 1: What are “paneled houses”?

Why this matters to us...

Even if we think we are just “trying to survive” in life, and don’t have the luxury or buffer we want, we are still called to build God’s house and Kingdom (Matt 6:33, Luke 17:19).

🔍 Exegetical Insight 2: Why does God “punish” the people for their disobedience?

- At first glance it seems harsh and transactional that God is punishing His people for not building His house, by causing a drought.
- Commentator Anthony Petterson explains: There is Hebrew word play going on. The LORD's people have left the temple ‘desolate’ (*ḥārēb*, v.4,9), so the LORD has called for a ‘desolation’ (*ḥōreb*) or drought upon the land (v.11) to get their attention!*

*Anthony R. Petterson, , ed. David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham, vol. 25, Apollos Old Testament Commentary(Nottingham, England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015), 58.

🔍 Exegetical Insight 2: Why does God “punish” the people for their disobedience?

- But this is not tit-for-tat transactional punishment. This is because we must understand all of this through the lens of the Mosaic covenant, a relational covenant which included covenant blessings and curses. God put the land under His curse because the people were unfaithful to the covenant (see Deuteronomy 28:22-24).
- The Mosaic covenant was a covenant of grace, centered on relationship, because God had chosen Israel to be His treasured possession, and given them the privilege to walk in His ways (Exodus 19:4-6).

🔍 Exegetical Insight 2: Why does God “punish” the people for their disobedience?

Why this matters to us...

- The covenant God establishes with us is RELATIONAL, not TRANSACTIONAL.
- We don't obey God to earn the blessings we want or to avoid punishment. For instance, we can't say, “Lord if I build your house you must prosper me and give me a high-paying job!”
- We obey as a response of faith to God's gracious love.

Activity 3: Pause & Reflect

"Consider your ways..."

- The phrase **"consider your ways"** (Haggai 1:5,7, ESV) can also be understood as **"give careful thought"** or **"reflect deeply from the heart"**.
- Ask yourself this soul-searching question: **In what ways might we be placing our priorities over God's priorities?**

Activity 4: Read & Discuss

Read Haggai 1:12-15 and discuss the following questions:

5. How did the people respond to God's command after they had heard Haggai's message? (v.12)
6. What did God say and do to assure and strengthen the people? (v.13-14)

🔍 Exegetical Insight 3: What does the title “The LORD of hosts” mean?

- The title “The LORD of hosts” (*yhwh šəbā’ôt*) occurs 14 times in Haggai, and is repeated 5x in today’s passage (v.2,5,7,9,14)
- The word “hosts” literally means armies, and refers to the armies of heaven
- Thus the title speaks of the tremendous might and power of God

🔍 Exegetical Insight 3: What does the title "The LORD of hosts" mean?

Why this matters to us...

It is the God of tremendous might who calls us to join His work of building His house. His might alone will accomplish the work and make us sufficient for the task He has called us!



Reflect & Share

1. How is God calling you to build His house today? (v.8)
2. What might be holding you back from full obedience to God? (v.12)



Pray for One Another

1. That we would experience the close and abiding presence of the Lord in every season of life. (v.13)
2. That the Lord would stir up our spirits and give us zeal to build His house, living for something larger than ourselves. (v.14)



Additional Resources

- Anthony R. Petterson, ed. David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham, vol. 25, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Nottingham, England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015)
- Andrew E. Hill, , ed. David G. Firth, vol. 28, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2012)
- Mark J. Boda, , The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004)