

# *The Book of Haggai*

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**(2000 Study)**

The following notes on the Book of Haggai were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 2000. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by “**Comment**” or “**Q**” (an abbreviation for “**Question**”) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

# THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 2000)

**Hag. 1:1** In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

Haggai wrote in the second year of Darius the Persian (not Darius the Mede), who reigned after Cyrus and Cambyses. The Prophet Daniel had probably deceased by this time, for the last record we have of him was in connection with the beginning of the reign of Cyrus.

In his book, Daniel spoke about two horns in reference to the Medo-Persian Empire. The horn symbolizing the Persian part of the empire grew higher. As time went on, the Mede portion died out altogether except for the territory that was incorporated into the Persian Empire. Incidentally, "Darius" was a title like "Caesar" and "Pharaoh."

In approximate terms, Haggai wrote about a hundred years after the destruction of Solomon's Temple. Evidently, he started his ministry in the second year of Darius the Persian. The "word of the LORD" came through him unto Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and unto Joshua, the high priest. In antitype, both Joshua and Zerubbabel represent Jesus, for he will be both Priest and King. The name Haggai means "feast," for a lot of condensed information was said by the Lord through him.

**Hag. 1:2** Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.

**Hag. 1:3** Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

At first glance, the people's saying, "The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built" seems like a contradiction because the time setting was some years after Cyrus the Persian had issued the decree for the Jews who so desired to freely go back to their homeland to rebuild the Temple. Since Cyrus did not authorize the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, as Isaiah seems to indicate, the Pastor properly interpreted the Hebrew word *ir* to represent the "court" of the Temple (Isa. 45:13). Thus the returning Jews could build a Temple and a courtyard at this time, but not the city. The Pastor's reasoning harmonizes, for the last thing Cyrus would do after the Jews had been in Babylonian captivity would be to give them permission to return to build and fortify their capital. Subsequently, many years later, the building under Ezra was stopped because enemies sent word back to Persia that the Jews were starting to rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 4:24).

Thus Cyrus gave authorization for the *Temple* to be built. "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an *house* in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up" (2 Chron. 36:22,23).

In other words, the Jews had gotten a miraculous pronouncement by Cyrus not only to be released from bondage but also to return to their homeland and rebuild their Temple, yet they said, "The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built." Moreover, Cyrus

had published the pronouncement throughout all his kingdom by heralds; that is, a trumpet was blown, and the pronouncement was given verbally as well as in writing. Therefore, the real reason the people made the statement that the time had not come to rebuild Jehovah's Temple was because they wanted to build and ornament their *own* houses first, feeling that was the reasonable, pragmatic approach. Their thinking was reasonable according to the *flesh*, but instead they should have first taken care of the *Lord's* house. With regard to this matter, God stirred up Haggai the prophet to make a pronouncement. In addition, He stirred up Zechariah so that there were two witnesses. Thus the people had no excuse for their actions. Cyrus issued the decree in 536 BC, and now, a little over a decade later, nothing had been done about the Temple. Not even the altar had been constructed. Thus Haggai was stirred up to begin his ministry. In fact, even after the altar was built, the people were slack and had to be prodded.

**Comment:** Few Jews, relatively speaking, returned to Israel in faith following the decree of Cyrus—only about 50,000.

**Reply:** Yes, and one might ask why the numbers are slightly different in two separate accounts. The number of Jews who actually left Babylon varied two years later because of deaths and births that had taken place.

In summary, the setting of Haggai's ministry was not too long after Cyrus issued the decree, yet during those years, nothing had been started on the Temple because the people were first building their personal homes. They used what appeared to be rational reasoning, saying, "The time is not come to build God's house." From God's standpoint, this reasoning was irrational.

**Hag. 1:4** Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?

"Ceiled houses" were houses finished and decorated on the inside. The people made excuses for not building the Temple, such as the fact that living conditions were austere. (Later on, when they got around to rebuilding the city, they had to do it with a sword in one hand and a shovel in the other.) The Jews used their temporal deprivations as excuses for the time not being right to rebuild the Temple. Actually, however, these conditions were a test of their zeal.

**Hag. 1:5** Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

**Hag. 1:6** Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

The people should have been aware that something was wrong because of the adverse happenings. Everything they did resulted in problems, so even for the natural man, the logical question should have been, "What have I done wrong?" Whether morally or physically wrong, something was not normal. The Jews particularly should have been influenced by signs because they were brought up to believe that if obedient, they would prosper and even get a lengthening of days. Conversely, disobedience brought punishments, sickness, poor crops, etc. Therefore, the Jews back there should not have been oblivious to what was happening.

Spiritually speaking, the Lord's people would be getting very troubling experiences. In such conditions in life, the Christian should go to the throne of grace and do self-examination, asking, "Why are these things happening?" One who is in a spiritually bad climate must leave that environment if he wants to prosper and grow. For instance, if a bartender is called and consecrates, he has to forsake that profession. If one is an active general in the Army, he should submit his papers for retirement because friendship with the world is enmity toward God (James 4:4). One cannot be a success in the world without being a friend of the world.

The Jews had a lot of problems, but they failed to associate the problems with the fact that they were not zealous enough in rebuilding the Temple. Moses had predicted that the Israelites would be successful and would prosper temporally in crops, in warfare, and in their personal lives *if they obeyed God's commandments*. Disobedience and slothfulness would bring adverse circumstances. Haggai told the people their problems were occurring because they were not rebuilding the Lord's house. Advice for the Christian is to seek first the Kingdom of heaven, and then the other things will be added (Matt. 6:33).

In short, the Jews were given providential circumstances to alert them, and Haggai was reiterating those circumstances to show the reason for them, namely, their lack of zeal and their neglect to follow the Lord's instructions to rebuild His Temple.

**Hag. 1:7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.**

**Hag. 1:8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.**

**Hag. 1:9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.**

**Hag. 1:10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.**

**Hag. 1:11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.**

“Consider your ways,” which was another way of saying, “Do self-examination,” is mentioned twice (see verse 5). Jehovah was responsible, and properly so, for the problem wherein everything seemed to go wrong in regard to material prosperity. Verses 1-11 are a prelude, giving the circumstances that existed, before the Book of Haggai goes into more substantive detail.

**Hag. 1:12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD.**

**Hag. 1:13 Then spake Haggai the LORD'S messenger in the LORD'S message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.**

**Hag. 1:14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,**

**Hag. 1:15 In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.**

In verse 1, the “word of the LORD” came on the *first* day of the sixth month of the second year of Darius. Now it was the *24th* day of the same month and year. Thus it took only a little more

than three weeks for the remnant of Jews to respond. In other words, the response was immediate, and God's spirit came on (1) Zerubbabel, the "governor," or civil prince; (2) Joshua, the high priest; and (3) the people. However, it took a prophet, speaking in the name of Jehovah, to light the fuse, as it were, to bring this energy.

At this late date, in the second year of Darius the Persian, the Jews began to rebuild the Temple in earnest at the prompting of the Prophet Haggai. This is one of the rare instances in Scripture where the people obeyed the prophet, and he encouraged them. No doubt he exhorted along very practical lines, and the people could not deny the lesson and advice. It was only 23 days after Haggai gave the advice that the people began to act. God stirred up the spirit of Joshua, Zerubbabel, and the people with the result that they had a mind to work.

**Comment:** The remnant of Jews did introspective work on themselves, which was necessary in order to be stirred up by God's Spirit.

**Reply:** Yes, they began to build the Temple after the Lord stirred up their spirit.

**Hag. 2:1** In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying,

**Hag. 2:2** Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,

Now the time setting was the 21st day of the seventh month, approximately *one month* later, when the "word of the LORD" came again by the Prophet Haggai, to be given to Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the "residue of the people." Verses 1-9 are a separate unit, in which Haggai encouraged them.

**Hag. 2:3** Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

The second message from Jehovah began, "Who is left among you that saw this house [Solomon's Temple] in her first glory?" Some were still alive who had seen the former Temple. Of course they were now quite old, for in order to remember it, they had to be at least seven years old when they last saw Solomon's Temple, and they subsequently lived in Babylon for 70 years before returning to Judah.

**Comment:** At the age of seven, one would be especially impressed with the size of the structure, and the sight was seared into the memory.

Zerubbabel's Temple did not look anything like Solomon's Temple in many, many ways. When Cyrus issued the decree for Jews to return to the homeland, he even gave the dimensions to which the Temple could be built, not including the court. With the numerous workers, only one month was required to build the house. Of course the Jews did not have to go to Lebanon to get cedars, for the Second Temple was just a shrine, as it were, but to have the dimensions from Cyrus in advance was significant. How did he know what measurements to specify? Daniel probably stated the dimensions to Cyrus and got permission accordingly. How did God stir up the heart of Cyrus? Daniel was still alive when Cyrus issued the decree—at least to the third year of his reign. And who stirred up Daniel? Jeremiah was the one by means of his prophecies (Jer. 25:11,12; 29:10; Dan. 9:2). Thus Jeremiah was used in a mighty way to influence Daniel, who was a most unusual person from both a pragmatic standpoint and God's standpoint, being called "greatly beloved" by the angel Gabriel (Dan. 9:23).

The message through Haggai continued: “How do ye see it [Zerubbabel’s Temple] now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?” It had the height and the outer dimensions, and it was made of wood, so it was like a house. Almost from a profane or natural standpoint, the structure was simplicity itself except that the dimensions were very significant.

As an illustration, a scale model of the Tabernacle has been set up in a town in Pennsylvania. What is of interest is not necessarily its accuracy, for the understanding of detail is woefully lacking and wrong, but the fact that the dimensions are accurate is helpful. While looking at the structure’s height, length, and width, we can sense that we are back in Moses’ day.

As the years went by, the Second Temple was garnished more and more until parts were destroyed and it was rebuilt by Herod.

**Hag. 2:4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts:**

**Hag. 2:5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.**

Notice how *direct* Haggai was in encouraging Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people. God was telling them, “Be strong,” “I am with you,” and “Fear ye not.” Evidently, Haggai’s enthusiasm was contagious, for they were inspired to action.

**Hag. 2:6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;**

Verses 6-9 are a prophecy of the future. The title “LORD of hosts” emphasizes Jehovah’s might, the Greek for “hosts” being *Sabaoth* (Rom. 9:29; James 5:4). Particularly the heavenly hosts are moved around with mathematical precision, with every planet and sun being in its orbit.

“Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.” From our perspective, that “little while” is a long time. The principle is the same in Habakkuk 2:3, “For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” From our standpoint, the vision seems to tarry but not from God’s standpoint. The vision will come to pass at a precise time, exactly on schedule. Nothing will slow down or speed up the timetable in God’s plan. If with God a thousand years are as one day, we can see from the breadth of *His* mind and thinking that the time period is only “a little while” (Psa. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8). God’s thinking is as far above us as the heavens are above the earth (Isa. 55:9). Thus we get just a little touch of the scope of the majesty and wonder of God, His own Deity.

**Q:** Does Hebrews 12:26,27 refer to the same time period? “Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

**A:** Yes. No doubt Paul had Haggai 2:6 in mind when he made that statement in his Epistle to the Hebrews—just as Jesus quoted extensively from Deuteronomy during his First Advent.

Of course the “little while” is from God’s standpoint, but if we live, say, a million years from now and look back, what happened back here in the 21st century will seem like nothing timewise. It will be like a breath in the night. However, when we are on this side of the

circumstance, the time period seems long.

“I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.” In the great Time of Trouble, God will shake the anarchistic as well as the conservative element. At first glance, the “earth” and the “dry land” seem to be a duplication, but there is a distinction. All four terms need to be considered: heavens, earth, sea, and dry land.

From a natural standpoint, the “heavens” can refer to just our solar system or to all the heavens we see at nighttime. The “earth” is down here. The “sea” would be the water. The heavens (sun, moon, stars, etc.) influence the earth and mankind below.

Spiritually speaking, the “heavens” are the powers of spiritual or ecclesiastical control; the “earth” is organized society, stabilized humanity; and the “sea” represents restless, anarchistic masses. Just as the literal earth is influenced by the literal heavens, so the spiritual and ecclesiastical rulership affects the populace underneath, those under religious restraint. In contradistinction, the waters, the “seas,” are more out of control.

The seas cover not the earth but wet land below them. From the natural standpoint, “dry land” would be the deserts, the wildernesses. The contrast is with stabilized earth under control holding the status quo, the restless sea that is out of control, and dry, parched land. With regard to the last term, a relatively small number of people live in these remote territories with barren land. What happens in the United States, England, Germany, France, Israel, etc., has no effect whatsoever on these people. They are not connected to the Internet, they have no electricity or sewers, they live as bedouins—they are not part of civilization. With these thoughts in mind, when God says, “I am the LORD of hosts [Sabaoth], and I will shake the heavens down here, the earth, the sea, and the dry land,” His point is that even those in the most remote part of civilization are going to be affected by the shaking. In other words, Haggai was prophesying, “*All will be shaken.*”

Now we can appreciate the *enormous* extent and pervasiveness of the real Time of Trouble yet future. People at the North Pole, the South Pole, deepest Africa, etc., will all feel the effects, for the Lord of the galaxies will shake this planet *worldwide*. Thus Haggai’s statement on behalf of Jehovah goes even beyond the picture of the smiting of the image, which pertains to the remnants of the Roman Empire, the Greeks, the Persians, and the Babylonians—to more or less the civilized part of the world.

**Hag. 2:7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.**

“I [God] will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.” The term “all nations” can be thought of as “all peoples,” which gives a better focus on the extensiveness of the coming trouble. Thus, “I [God] will shake all *peoples*, and the desire of all *peoples* shall come.” The reign is also extensive. Jesus “shall have dominion [reign] ... from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth” (Psa. 72:8). “At the name of Jesus *every* knee should bow ... [and] *every* tongue should confess [even in the remotest of regions] that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10,11). We get just a tiny feel of the immensity of the experience that is to happen. *Everyone* will be affected.

With the signs and wonders that will occur, telecommunications and computers will not be needed—whether those signs are of the Adversary or of the Lord. God will allow the Adversary a limited amount of deception earlier, but when He takes over, He will have His own signs and wonders to enlighten the world. Everyone will see them. Similarly, we say that music is an international language. The heavens are also an international language—the sun,

moon, stars, etc. The heavens are a testimony by which faith can grasp the significance of a God through what is visually seen. Therefore, signs and wonders, depending on their magnitude, are also an international language. We believe the “shake-up” will be more along those lines rather than for someone to go to the North and South Poles, for example, and communicate in a limited fashion.

“I will fill this house [the Third Temple of the future] with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.” Zerubbabel’s Temple was later enlarged by Herod, particularly the part with the Wailing Wall, and thus is called Herod’s Temple. In fact, both the original and the enlarged structure can be considered the Second Temple.

**Comment:** Verse 9 is the proof text that the “house” of verse 7 is the Third (or Ezekiel’s) Temple, which will be built after the shaking of all nations.

**Reply:** Yes. When the word “house” or “temple” is used, we have to understand the context and the thinking of the writer. For example, when we say “tabernacle,” we might be referring to the Tabernacle plus the court, or just the center building with the tent. Thus there are different parameters. Also, the Tabernacle was in the midst of the nation of Israel, with the tribes, starting with the Levites, encamped around it.

Jesus chased the money changers out of Herod’s Temple at the First Advent, quoting the prophecy that the Temple will be called “the house of prayer” (Matt. 21:13). Actually, he was quoting from Isaiah 56:7, which speaks of the future Third Temple: “Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.” Jesus was saying that the Temple area was sacred, even if Zerubbabel’s (Herod’s) Temple was inferior, for that structure was built according to God’s providence within the parameters of Cyrus’s decree. That was the place toward which Jews had to face when they prayed and brought their firstfruits.

The term “house of Hohenzollern” or “house of Windsor,” for example, means a government authority—not so much the building itself but what the building represents. When God said, “I will fill this house with glory,” the reference was to the figurative understanding of what that house is—and particularly to what *will be* in the Temple area. In other words, “This area, or spot, will be a house of prayer for all nations.” The “house” was both a location and a symbol of power, that is, the Lord’s dynasty.

The term “the desire of all nations” is related to the Apostle Paul’s statement “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God... For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Rom. 8:19,22). At present, the people do not feel they are groaning for that desire and waiting for the sons of God to be manifested, but the groaning fills a time gap that will end with the fruition of God’s appointed plan in one form or another. Incidentally, the shaking of all nations in the Time of Trouble and the desire of all nations will come before the building of Ezekiel’s Temple.

In verse 7, the “LORD of hosts,” the *Almighty God*, is speaking. Through Haggai, God said He will do two things: (1) “I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come”; and (2) “I will fill this house with glory.” It is significant that Haggai closed the two statements *most emphatically*: “[Thus] saith the *LORD of hosts*.” In other words, when God says He will do something, it is as good as done.

Both the shaking “of *all nations*” and the “desire of *all nations*” are future, the latter coming as an aftermath of the former. Ezekiel’s Temple will not be built until after the Kingdom is

established. The shaking of all nations is the great Time of Trouble.

Much of the subject matter of the Book of Haggai has to do with the rebuilding of the Temple, but Zerubbabel's Temple, the Second Temple, was inferior even to Solomon's Temple. In the statement "I will fill this house with glory," the thought is, "I will fill this *institution* with glory." In other words, God was saying, "This *institution* will be filled with *my glory*." Of course the Jews back there were thinking about Zerubbabel's Temple, which was so inferior, but the "house," or institution, has both a literal and a figurative application, for God considers the Temple Mount to be His most precious domain here on earth. In fact, He said, "I will make the place of my feet glorious," so He considers that plot to be sacred ground whether or not there is a building on it—and even though He has allowed the permission of evil with the Dome of the Rock and other Islamic edifices to be there temporarily (Isa. 60:13).

When God said, "I will fill this house with glory," the words were meant to encourage the returned Jews. While He was saying, "In your sight, the Second Temple does not look like much," He was implying that great things were to come in "a little while," but a thousand years to God are like a watch in the night.

**Comment:** This small Book of Haggai, consisting of only two chapters, uses the term "LORD of hosts" 14 times.

**Comment:** With regard to the term "a little while," Psalm 37:10,11 reads, "For yet for a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Peace will be part of the "desire of all nations."

**Reply:** Yes. At present, the whole creation groans together in travail and pain, not knowing what the "desire of all nations" is. In the Kingdom, the people will see that everlasting life is possible with peace, health, happiness, and security. God will fulfill their presently unknown desire—what they really need and want.

Jehovah knows how to solve everything. We are the problem, the confused ones who need guidance. "Myself I cannot guide" and "I need thee every hour" are the words in two hymns.

**Hag. 2:8** The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

**Hag. 2:9** The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

**Q:** Isaiah 60:5,6,9 also mentions silver and gold. "... the Gentiles shall come unto thee.... they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the LORD.... Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee." Do the Isaiah texts, as well as verse 8, refer to the building of the Third Temple?

**A:** Yes. Both literal (or material) and symbolic (or spiritual) things are referred to by Isaiah. Many things will be embodied in the structure of the Third Temple. In the Kingdom Age, the Temple Mount will be the stage of God, from which His word goes forth. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem [the Temple Mount in particular]" (Isa. 2:3). Now, with satellite communications, light and sound and images and music can be transmitted instantly all over the globe as the signals are bounced. Thus, when future pronouncements are made, they will go forth not only from Jerusalem, the capital of the

world, but also from the Temple Mount. The “desire of all nations [the Kingdom] shall come,” but the news, the Lord’s program, instead of coming through multiple television channels, will come from the one channel in Jerusalem. The instructions coming forth will be relayed to the uttermost bounds of God’s realm, or Kingdom.

When Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers, he said with regard to Zerubbabel’s Temple, which Herod had enlarged, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer” (Matt. 21:13). In other words, Jesus felt the Temple Mount was so sacred that he was grieved to see the defilement of that edifice. For instance, instead of going around the Temple, a distance that was twice as long, women carrying their water pots from the Pool of Siloam took shortcuts through the sacred precincts of the Temple. This activity disturbed Jesus greatly, even though the edifice was not the Temple of the future. Jesus considered the Temple Mount to be holy ground.

Because of the importance of the subject, verse 9 is more or less a repeat of verse 3. “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts.” A significant point here merits further discussion and some repetition. In verse 3, the Lord, through Haggai, asked, “Doesn’t the Temple seem like nothing compared to that of Solomon?” yet in verse 9, God said, “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than [that] of the former.” This statement seems impossible; it seems to be an enigma. Solomon’s Temple was famed for its glory in sacred history, and Herod’s Temple was famed for its glory in secular history, but Zerubbabel’s Temple is just not mentioned. Thus verses 6-9 are a prophecy of the future. Herod’s Temple was an enlargement of Zerubbabel’s, and being so much grander with platforms, etc., it swallowed up Zerubbabel’s work. Some damage was done to Zerubbabel’s Temple, but the interior was left more or less intact, and the courts and even the whole Temple Mount were enlarged.

While it is true that there is to be a spiritual house (the Church) and that the spiritual will be greater than the natural, yet verse 9 is referring to the future *natural* house, or Temple. It is like the office of the Presidency. Different individuals may fill that office, but it is still the *one* office. With regard to the Temple of Jerusalem, Solomon’s was destroyed and replaced by Zerubbabel’s, which was replaced by Herod’s, which will be replaced by Ezekiel’s. The house of the Lord is at Jerusalem, and three temples have already come and gone (actually *two* temples, for Herod’s was an enlargement of Zerubbabel’s). Ezekiel’s Temple is the one that will *abide*, and its glory will be greater than that of Solomon’s Temple. Verse 9 says, “*In this place*,” meaning in Jerusalem, so we know the reference is to a *literal* Temple in *literal* Jerusalem.

Haggai was giving a prophecy in veiled language, for it would have been too discouraging to the Jews living back there to explain that their efforts and labors in building Zerubbabel’s Temple would be partially destroyed, Herod’s Temple would be built and also destroyed, and then, finally, an enduring Temple would be constructed more than 2,000 years later. Hence the Lord has led His people by only *partial* light until the end of the age. Today we are living in a time when there is considerably more light because the end of the age is near. In Ezekiel’s Temple, the Lord will give true and lasting peace. Even the fundamental cubit measure will be larger in Ezekiel’s Temple, being “a cubit and an handbreadth” (Ezek. 43:13). Therefore, the finished Temple will be a larger structure in dimension as well as in glory. In short, Haggai was saying that the glory of the future literal structure on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem will far exceed the glory of Solomon’s Temple, built in the same location.

“And in *this place* [the Temple Mount] will I give peace.” In the Kingdom, the message of peace—the orders, the commands—will come from Jerusalem. The law will go forth from Zion, but the word [the expression] of that law will go forth from Jerusalem. Incidentally, when the Prophet Jeremiah had to give an important message, he usually delivered it in the gateway

to the Temple Mount and also from the Temple balustrade, the surrounding court, on a couple of occasions.

When people gave gold, silver, and their most precious things for the Temple, those items were really coming out of the Creator's storehouse. Out of His great storehouse, puny man was taking a tiny amount of precious things, as though the items belonged to man. The same is true with us as Christians. The only thing we can give to God is our will, for we are nobodies in intellect, physical strength, etc. Our will, our intent, is precious in His sight, even though the performance is weak.

God's "peace" is the *true* peace. Gospel ministers apply "this latter house" to the Church in the Gospel Age, giving the slant, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). That explanation applies elsewhere in Scripture, but the emphasis is different here. When the greater Temple is built in the future, in the Kingdom, there will be peace.

Zechariah and Haggai were contemporaries. In fact, only two months separated the start of their ministries. Zechariah 1:1 reads, "In the *eighth* month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah." Haggai 1:1 states, "In the second year of Darius the king, in the *sixth* month ... came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet." Both prophets spoke at the *same* time to the *same* people on the *same* subject matter—the Temple, Zerubbabel, and Joshua. However, Haggai's personality was different from that of Zechariah. God used the person with the right temperament for the way He wanted the message to be given.

Haggai pointed out the inconsistency of the people's focus of attention, saying, "You are building and garnishing your own houses, and neglecting work on the Temple. All you did was to build an altar." The people felt that if they got their houses built and properly fortified, they would then concentrate on the Temple. Having returned to Israel in caravans, almost as bedouins, they felt their reasoning was correct. "Doesn't it make sense that we get settled first?" But Haggai reasoned, "First things first. God comes first." Haggai's reasoning was like a dart in the people's hearts. Thus he initiated the activity on the Temple, performing an evangelistic role, as it were.

In addition, teachers are needed for slow and sturdy growth. Accordingly, Zechariah, who was more of a philosopher, went into many other subjects. For example, he said, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). Haggai, a strong character, a fireball, first had to stir up the people. Then Zechariah performed his role as a visionary. Generally speaking, God has two witnesses, and He uses the vessel(s) with the temperament that fits the nature of the message of the hour.

**Hag. 2:10** In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

**Hag. 2:11** Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,

**Hag. 2:12** If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

**Hag. 2:13** Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

Haggai reasoned with the people on basics. Certain parts of offerings in the Temple were

considered holy. When sacrifices were done, the parts that were considered holy were used either for sacrificial purposes to be burned on the altar or for edible purposes. If a priest was bearing this holy flesh in the skirt of his garment and it touched (unholy) bread, wine, etc., the flesh became unclean. And if something unclean touched the bread, wine, etc., it remained unclean. The Lord, through Haggai, was giving an analogy on the *contamination of evil*.

Notice the line of reasoning. If several drops of ink were put in a clean glass of water, the water would become darkened or contaminated. If the situation were reversed and several drops of water were put in an inkwell, the color of the ink would not change or become purified. God stated the same type of reasoning in a religious sense. When the priests gave the correct answer, "It shall be unclean," Haggai pointed out that they and the people were the problem, as we will see.

**Hag. 2:14** Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.

**Hag. 2:15** And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD:

**Hag. 2:16** Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressvat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty.

**Hag. 2:17** I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD.

Haggai replied, "So is this people [unclean], and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean." The prophet continued, "And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD." Haggai then proceeded to use natural thinking or reasoning.

Coming right down to specifics, Haggai said, "When you had a heap of wheat and went to thresh it out, you ended up with only 10 measures instead of 20 because 50 percent of it was chaff. When you saw the large pile, you estimated that you would reap 20 bushels, but when you actually separated the chaff—which should have been a relatively minor portion of the wheat—you found as much chaff as wheat. The same thing happened with the grapes that were in the winepress (the 'pressvat'). You were able to extract only half the amount you had estimated, and a pitifully small amount of wine was produced." Haggai attributed this condition to their lack of zeal in following the Lord in the rebuilding of the Temple.

As Christians, we sometimes forget to pray for the Lord's assisting grace at auspicious moments because we are so engrossed in the immediate turmoil and circumstances. The Jews felt they were using common-sense reasoning, but Haggai said in effect, "You are garnishing your homes. You have become so occupied in decorating and finishing your homes that *months* have gone by without progress on the Temple."

The problems were like a board coming up and hitting the people in the forehead, then a bee stinging them, and next a nail going into their foot. Being too concerned with the pain and what was happening, they forgot that the Lord was talking to them. In Deuteronomy, God said, "This is the way I talk to my people. If they do good and obey me and think first of me, they will prosper along temporal lines." (Of course Christians prosper spiritually as they obey

God's will.)

The people were being cursed in trying to do their normal duties because they were unholy. They were not prospering in temporal needs because they were not obeying the Law. Everything they touched seemed to be going from bad to worse.

What a powerful message Haggai gave! The people would have thought, "What he is saying makes sense. Our crops are not prospering." Haggai remonstrated, "If you will listen to the Lord, He will bless you." The prophet did not just criticize and warn but gave constructive advice. Clearly, Haggai was the right man at the right time to give that particular message for the Lord—and then three months later he disappeared from the scene.

The people faced want, discouragement, mildew, hail, and blasting of the wind by sandstorm as they labored mightily with their hands. "Yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD."

**Hag. 2:18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider it.**

**Hag. 2:19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.**

Haggai was saying, "If you turn around and hearken, then from the moment of that change, you will be blessed temporally in basket and store." Spiritually speaking, many repentant sinners come to the Lord in a time of sorrow, sickness, disappointment, or disenchantment. Such conditions are fertile ground, for when one, without guidance, has made a miserable wreck of his life, where else can he look but to God? One who comes from a land of darkness to the light from above truly experiences the power of the Lord in his life.

**Hag. 2:20 And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying,**

**Hag. 2:21 Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;**

**Hag. 2:22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.**

A separate message came forth on the same day—the 24th day of the ninth month. Jehovah repeated part of the former message to Haggai: "I will shake the heavens and the earth." The message was to be given to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah. Of course Zerubbabel would have misunderstood the message to apply to his day. However, the misunderstanding was beneficial to him, for it gave him strength and character to do things—just as Moses said to Joshua, "Be strong and of a good courage [in the LORD]" (Deut. 31:7).

"I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother." In allowing the Jews to return to their homeland with suzerainty as a vassal state and giving them encouragement, Cyrus gave permission to rebuild the Temple, but he limited the dimensions, telling what could and could not be done.

In the homeland, the Jews were surrounded by hostile neighbors, one of whom was even a relative of the priestly family of Israel. That individual was a thorn in the flesh for a long time, until he received a final rebuke. Years earlier Gideon, a man of courage, needed assurance of what the Lord's will was, and then went forth in the strength of the Lord. Somewhat similarly, Zerubbabel was now told by Jehovah of hosts, "Do not be concerned about building this house, for I will be with you."

Actually, however, verses 21 and 22 are a prophecy to be fulfilled yet future. It is good to first get in the time frame of when a prophecy was uttered and then not to overlook the spiritual theme. The type helps us to better understand the antitype, which pertains to the time when God will deliver Israel from Jacob's Trouble. "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jer. 30:7). As in the case of Gideon and the 300 against the Midianites, one of the methods used will be to cause confusion in the enemy host, who slew one another in panic.

The Jews who lived comfortably in Babylon did not return to the homeland and become part of the remnant. God was now giving the returned remnant, who came *voluntarily* to this hostile environment, a vision of the future to encourage them. No time was given as to the fulfillment of this hope, so they assumed it was in their day. Otherwise, they would have been discouraged.

One might ask, "Is it fair for God to make such a prediction in view of the fact that it certainly would not materialize in their day?" The prophecy might seem to be an exaggeration in regard to kingdoms of the heathen being overthrown, etc. However, the prophecy should be taken from the following standpoint.

The Jews had been taken into Babylonian captivity for 70 years. Jerusalem and their Temple had been destroyed, and those who returned to Israel under hardship conditions had come back voluntarily. The journey with Ezra to the homeland was long and arduous, being primarily on foot with only a handful of goods, to a hostile environment to start from scratch. These Jews needed encouragement, for they were like pioneers. Therefore, God gave them a vision of the future, saying that this place would one day be the *throne* of His Kingdom and that all nations would be beaten down, as it were, under Israel. However, God did not tell them that this would not occur in their day, for knowledge of the long period of time would have depressed and discouraged them. It is like telling someone about the resurrection when there is fear of death or great sickness. To give such a one an assurance that there will be a resurrection for him and his loved ones would give him hope—even though that resurrection might be a long way off. *Hope* is the important thing.

**Hag. 2:23** In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

Verse 23 refers to Jesus. However, it was purposely worded in a way that Zerubbabel thought God would make him "a signet," a sign. Thus this prophecy of the future was a blessing to Zerubbabel, even though Paul emphasized that the Old Testament was not written for the Israelites but for us, upon whom the ends of the age are come (1 Cor. 10:11). With this type of reasoning in ancient times, we have to insert descriptive words in English in order to properly understand it. Thus God was saying to Zerubbabel, "I will make thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant now, a picture of the greater than Zerubbabel in the future. Like a signet on a ring, you are the sign, the type." In the Kingdom Age, people will look back to the Old Testament prophecies and be given perfect explanations. It will then be seen that Zerubbabel pictured the kingly (or civil) authority of Jesus and that Joshua pictured the ecclesiastical (or religious)

authority. Both aspects will come together in the Kingdom.

God chose Zerubbabel for the type, and when the antitype comes, the people will look back at the type and see that he was a symbol. Nevertheless, Zerubbabel, a godly man, drew the lesson to himself in his day because he did not know any details about Jesus, the Messiah. A signet is a sign or a symbol. Zerubbabel was not the real thing but a *symbol* of the *real* thing: Jesus. Similarly, a signature is a name that represents a person, who is the reality. The offices of Joshua and Zerubbabel were a sign or a symbol.

**Comment:** Zerubbabel is in Messiah's lineage in both Matthew and Luke, being the grandson of Jehoiachin (1 Chron. 3:16-18).

After Zerubbabel is studied in the Book of Zechariah, verse 23 will make more sense. When Zerubbabel is resurrected, there may actually be a reenactment to point him out as a type of the greater Zerubbabel, that is, Jesus, who will be both Priest and King. The Melchisedec priesthood is both a king and a priest upon the throne. Thus, in the Kingdom, although the offices of church and state will be kept separate merely to prevent the confusion of pictures, there will be just *one government* (of combined church and state). In Ezekiel's Temple, the "prince" will represent the function of the Ancient Worthies, giving instruction in *civil* matters, and the priesthood of Zadok will give instruction in *religious* matters.

A broad summary of the Book of Haggai is that because the remnant endured such hardships in returning to Israel from Babylon, God looked favorably on them, even though they were involved in temporal things. The Lord told them they were not prospering because of their delay in rebuilding the Temple.

The Book of Haggai is short, but the prophet gave the same general theme as all of the other prophets; namely, the day is coming when Israel will be saved, but that day will be preceded by the great Time of Trouble. Then God's Kingdom will be established. This is the testimony of *all* the prophets.