

The Prophecies of Haggai**Haggai 1:1**

In 538 BC, King Cyrus the Great permitted the Jews to return to Judah and rebuild God's temple, which had been lying in ruins since its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. Approximately 50,000 Jews returned from Babylon under the civil leadership of Zerubbabel and the spiritual guidance of Joshua the high priest. Opposition from hostile neighbours and indifference from the Jews themselves caused the work to be abandoned after two years (cf. Ezra 4:1–24).

King Darius Hystaspes became king of Medo-Persia in 522 BC. He is not the same as Darius the Mede (cf. Daniel 6:1, 28), perhaps better known as Cyrus the Great (Daniel 1:21; 10:1). He ascended the throne after the death of Cambyses. He was an officer of Cambyses and the great-grandson of the brother of Cyrus I. Darius retained the loyalty of the Persian army and thereby defeated other contenders for the throne.

Haggai and Zechariah were two contemporary prophets called by the LORD. Four prophecies came to Haggai, on three days over a period of four months in 520 BC, in the second year of the Persian king Darius Hystaspes (ca. 521-486 BC).

These four prophecies were addressed to specific people in each case. The first prophecy was directed to Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest (1:1).

Zerubbabel, whose name means "the shoot from Babylon," could actually have been the king of the Jews, as he was a direct descendent in David's line. He was the grandson of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah in Matthew 1:12) and an ancestor of Jesus's earthly father, Joseph. Zerubbabel re-established the Davidic throne and line, even though it would not again be occupied until the time of the Messiah (cf. Psalm 2:110). But God had a special promise for Zerubbabel, as we will see.

Joshua, the high priest's name is spelt Jeshua in Ezra 3:2. He was a descendant of Zadok and the religious leader of the returning exiles. He re-established the high-priestly line of Aaron.

God also had special words for him in Zechariah 3:1-8 and 6:11–13. His name means ‘YAHWEH is salvation’, and is the Hebrew form behind the Greek name Jesus (Ἰησοῦς).

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Haggai 1:1-2:23

1. What was the second year of King Darius, if he reigned from 521 to 486 BC? 1:1
2. Whose words was Haggai conveying to Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest? 1:1

Reflection & Application

What is the significance of the names?

- Haggai (חַגַּי) Chaggay meaning:
.....
- Zerubbabel (זְרֻבָּבֶל) *Zerubbabel* meaning:
.....
- Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) *Yehoshua* meaning:
.....
- Zechariah (זְכַרְיָה) *Zekaryah* meaning:
.....

Build My House!**Haggai 1:1-11****Introduction**

The Exiles returning from Babylon found the land in extreme poverty and hardship, as it had lain largely untended for almost 70 years. In 520 BC, 18 years had passed since the permission was granted to rebuild the temple, yet it was still a ruin. Haggai and Zechariah were commissioned by the LORD to stir up the people once again:

- not only rebuild the temple, but also to
- reorder their spiritual priorities (cf. Ezra 5:1–6:22).

As a result, the temple was completed four years later in 516 BC (Ezra 6:15).

The rebuilding of the temple was not an end in itself. However, the temple represented God's dwelling place, his manifest presence with his chosen people. Rebuilding the temple invited the return of God's presence into their midst. Haggai saw, through God's revelation, the supreme glory of the ultimate temple yet to come (2:7), encouraging them with the promise of even greater peace (2:9), prosperity (2:19), and divine rulership (2:21-22).

The prophecies communicated that God desired to open the eyes of the people, encouraged them to repent and obey, and promised that blessing would result. One feature of Biblical prophecy is its recurring relevance in successive generations. The fulfilment of prophecy is not necessarily limited to a single application. For example, it can be compared to the art of sending a flat stone skimming across a lake, so that it touches the water a number of times, or to a series of mountain ranges where each peak hides the following.

Therefore, in the prophecy of Haggai, we can expect the word of God to have more than one level of application. As well as anticipating fulfilment of the prophecies within a few months or years, it is helpful to look ahead to later fulfilments, especially the life of Jesus and the church, and even our own day as well. We can outline this section as follows:

1. The Neglect.
2. The Rebuke.
3. The Consequence.
4. The Correction.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Haggai 1:1-11

1. What is the significance of the phrase, “the word of the LORD came”? 1:1

Note: It was not Haggai’s take on national affairs. He did not have special insight, such as the experts on TV and the news media. It was The LORD Himself speaking. That is what made him a prophet.

1 st prophecy	Haggai 1:1	To Zerubbabel and Joshua. (First day of the sixth month) 29 August 520 BC
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Haggai’s First Prophecy

2. To whom was the word of the LORD directed and why? 1:1
3. When we read, “This is what the LORD of Hosts says...”, why does the LORD specifically use this title? What is the meaning it conveys? 1:2

Note: The LORD of Hosts or *YAHWEH tsebaot* (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת) from *tsaba* (צָבָא), meaning *army, war or warfare*, is a warrior title.

4. Why did the LORD of Hosts call them, ‘these people’? What does it convey regarding his feelings towards the people of Judah? 1:2
5. Why did they say the time was not right to rebuild? 1:2

6. What was the rebuke against the Jews? What was the LORD's reply to this kind of thinking? 1:3-4
7. What was the real root of the problem? 1:4
8. What did the LORD want them to reflect upon? 1:5, 7
9. What would they gain from this kind of neglect? Name five things for them to consider. 1:6

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Note: What do you think the LORD wants them to consider? Are they receiving blessings, or are they being cursed? They need to consider the consequences of their indifference (vv. 5–11) carefully. The prophecy paints a vivid picture of their economic and social distress because of their selfish lack of concern for God's house. The Lord was not blessing their efforts.

10. What was the first step in realising their unfaithfulness in this situation? 1:5, 1:7
11. What did they have to do practically? How did they have to remedy the fact that God was withholding his blessing? Name three commands given? 1:8

12. What does it cost to build God's house? 1:8
13. Was the fact that their lives were so hard circumstantial, or the result of spiritual neglect? 1:9
14. What was the return on their neglect of the LORD's house? 1:10

Note: Economic catastrophe, resulting from God's withholding of the summer dew, was the price for their disobedience (cf. Deuteronomy 7:13). Grain, wine, and oil were the primary crops of the land. The cattle also languished because of the absence of spiritual health (Joel 1).

We should consider our own spiritual priorities as well. God's curse still operates today, since it will only be removed at the very end, in the era of the new heavens and the new earth (Revelation 22:3). Believers do well to grasp the damaging and continuing effect sin has on our lives.

We can be set free from any curse now by true and full repentance from whatever has allowed the curse to operate, and asking God to apply the effects of the cross to our lives (Galatians 3:12–14). To get the picture today, we may only look at our own land. The poverty, 'natural disasters', violence, crime, decline of our systems, general unhappiness, feelings of dread, and destruction of the environment all point to the spiritual neglect of the people.

15. What was at the heart of God's message to them? 1:9
16. What was the motivation to rebuild? So that they would gain financially, or their lives would be easier? 1:8
17. What was the secondary benefit? 1:10-11

Reflection & Application

Note: Throughout history, whenever the LORD's honour and worship were neglected, the results were devastating:

The Tabernacle was destroyed by the Philistines.

Solomon's Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar

Haggai's Temple was desecrated and destroyed by the Romans

1. What is the equivalent of the LORD's house in our day? Ephesians 2:19-21

2. How do the blessings and curses compare with Deuteronomy 28?

3. How does the teaching of 1:1-11 compare to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:31-33?

Introduction

After the exile to Babylon, Cyrus issued the decree for the Jews to return. The land of Judah was backwards, poor, and underdeveloped. The returning exiles were demoralised and had little strength. Some became wealthy, but the large majority were poor. They battled to eke out a living. So when they experienced opposition against the rebuilding of the temple, they gave up.

The LORD stirred up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to challenge the people. The leaders Zerubbabel and Joshua, as well as the remnant of the people, accepted Haggai's message that the temple must be rebuilt, and acted upon it. The leaders were godly men, able to accept God's word and guide the people by example. They stirred up the people, and they started rebuilding twenty-three days after Haggai received his 1st prophecy on 29 August, 520 BC. Thus, the rebuilding started on 21 September, 520 BC.

Who were the remnant of the people? They were the exiles who returned from Babylon and took the message to heart. They realised that the words of the prophet Haggai were "from the LORD." They "obeyed" and "feared."

The people feared the LORD. The wisdom literature teaches that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of the LORD is described as reverence and awe. Malachi says that reverence and awe are what God desires.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Haggai 1:12-2:5

1. What was the response of the remnant of the people? 1:12

2. How is the voice of the LORD their God equal to the message of the prophet? 1:12
3. Why did they respond in this manner? 1:12d
4. What was the LORD's response to their obedience? What happens when we obey the LORD's voice and when we fear the LORD? 1:13

Note: Once they obeyed, a short message came from God through Haggai. Instead of a curse (1:6, 10,11), and hearing "I am against you," they heard God say, "I am with you."

5. What did the LORD do, and what did the people do? 1:14
6. How long after they received Haggai's message of the LORD's rebuke did they start the rebuilding? 1:14b-15

Note: Work began on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month (1:15), i.e. 21 September 520 BC.

1st prophecy	Haggai 1:1	To Zerubbabel and Joshua. (First day of the sixth month) 29 August 520 BC
	Haggai 1:15	The work of rebuilding began. (Twenty-fourth day of the sixth month) 21 September 520 BC

The Rebuilding.

The LORD gave them power and zeal. It was no longer a negative situation. They no longer felt dejected and overwhelmed. They were positive and committed. They were working together for the kingdom of God.

The LORD of Hosts was still in 'full battle dress', but no longer because he was against them. He was now with them as the One who fights for them.

7. On which day did the second prophecy come to Haggai? Which day was the 21st day of the seventh month? 2:1

Note: The final day and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles! **Leviticus 23:39-43** This was a feast to celebrate God's provision for and presence with Israel during her 40 years in the wilderness.

2nd prophecy	Haggai 2:1	To Zerubbabel, Joshua and the remnant. (Twenty-first day of the seventh month) 17 October 520 BC
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Haggai's Second Prophecy

8. Who was Haggai's second prophecy addressed to? 2:2
9. Which three rhetorical questions did the LORD ask the people through Haggai? 2:3
10. What was the Second Temple like in comparison to Solomon's Temple? Ezra 3:12
11. Why does God point out these conditions? What is He trying to tell them? 2:4
12. What was the LORD's encouragement to them four times? 2:4

13. How does this message compare with the encouragement to Joshua when facing the daunting prospect of the conquest of Canaan? Joshua 1:5, 6-7, 9

Haggai	Joshua
	 1:5
1:4	 1:6
1:4	 1:7
1:4	 1:9
1:4	

14. What was the spiritual significance of YAHWEH's encouragement to them when compared with Joshua, the leader of Israel after Moses? What was the LORD confirming with them? 2:5
15. What was significant about the words that were spoken to them at the Feast of Tabernacles? 2:1
16. Who would remain with them? 2:5

Reflection & Application _____

1. What do you think is the application to the church when we face overwhelming obstacles and hostility? 1 John 5:3-5

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2. How is the Word of the LORD heard today?
3. What was significant about the promise of the presence of the Spirit, considering Ezekiel's vision? Ezekiel 10:18-19

YAHWEH's Glory Returns**Haggai 2:6-9****Introduction**

The returning exiles from Babylon felt that whatever they tried did not matter much. What encouragement did the word of God through Haggai offer them? That, despite the way they felt, they were working on something that would last forever. What if this temple that Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the remnant of the people were working on would be something far greater than they could ever imagine?

Discouragement. When the exiles returned, they quickly became discouraged, despondent, and afraid. They were reprimanded by God for their own self-interest, self-pity, and self-focus. Under God's rebuke, they started to rebuild the temple. Structurally, this temple was vastly inferior to Solomon's temple. This caused many to be discouraged by its lack of splendour (2:3).

A call for strength. However, they received the LORD's encouragement. Three times we hear the words, "Be strong," and then, "I am with you." "Be strong, for I am with you!" and, "My Spirit remains among you. Do not fear." These were similar to the words spoken to Joshua, more than 900 years earlier. "This is the covenant I made with you," the LORD of Hosts confirmed. "My Spirit remains among you." But that was not all!

Shaking. Just as the LORD once shook Mount Sinai during the wilderness period, so the LORD would once again shake the heavens and the earth. Shaking can be because of the fear experienced by the recipient of the anger. Alternatively, it can be because of anger on behalf of the wrathful party. Shaking can produce results like when ripe figs drop from a tree as its branches are being pulled, and many of the figs are destroyed. There are two kinds of shaking in view here.

- The shaking of the nations that is taking place and will continue until the end of time.
- The shaking of the whole of the created order at the end of time.

The Feast of Tabernacles. Remember, this prophecy came to Haggai on the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles, according to Leviticus 23:39-44, a feast to celebrate God's provision for and presence with Israel in the wilderness.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Haggai 2:6-9

1. What is the significance of the shaking prophesied by Haggai? 2:6
2. What will the extent of this new shaking be, compared to Mount Sinai? Exodus 29:18-19; 24:15-18
3. What else, apart from the created order, will the LORD shake? 2:7
4. What is meant by “the desired or delight of all nations?” Was it the Deliverer for whom Israel longed? Does it mean the Messiah? 2:7
‘The desire’ is singular, and the verb ‘they will come’ is plural.

Note: *Jesus is not ‘the desire of all nations’, rather the aversion.*

T.V. Moore

5. Does this interpretation agree with Zechariah 8:20-23?
6. Does this mean that *the world* regards the kingdom's people as its finest? 1 Corinthians 1:26-27
7. According to whom, then, will *the desired of all the nations* come, if it is not according to the reckoning of the world? 1 Corinthians 1:28-31

Note: *The desire of all the nations* is rather what God regards as His very best. He is saying that God's chosen people, from every tribe and language and tongue and nation, will come and make up a great kingdom of priests to serve the Lord (Revelation 5:9).

(Michael Bentley, Haggai, p. 61)

8. What will happen to the rebuilt temple when the shaking occurs? 2:7
9. What does this glory mean? 2:7

Note: We are twice told that God's house will be filled with *glory*. The Hebrew word for glory is *kabod* (כָּבוֹד or כֶּבֶד), meaning *abundance, honour, or glory*. However, no Scripture indicates that God's glory ever came to Zerubbabel's temple. Zerubbabel's temple was the same one that Herod renovated/expanded. It was to this very temple that Christ came (John 1:14).

10. Does the glory of God which will return refer to the 1st coming of Jesus in John 1:14? Or does it refer to the glory of God in the New Jerusalem at the end of time?
11. What does this remind you of? 1 Kings 8:10-11; Ezekiel 10:18
12. What is the meaning of *the silver is mine and the gold is mine*, according to the LORD? 2:8

Note: The real temple was Jesus's body, not Herod's temple. He was God's meeting place with man on earth. But His body is also the temple we as Christians are spiritually built into, the one in which God lives by His Spirit (Ephesians 2:21-22). The glory of the latter temple will far surpass the grandeur of Solomon's temple (the former temple).

13. How would the glory of the present house be greater than the glory of Solomon's temple? 2:9

Reflection & Application ---

1. Explain the meaning of the verses in Haggai 2:6-7 as quoted in Hebrews 12:26-27.
2. What does *at that time* mean? Hebrews 12:26; Revelation 6:12-14
3. How would the LORD shake the earth and the heavens once more? Hebrews 12:26-27.
4. What is "a kingdom that cannot be shaken?" Hebrews 12:22-24
5. Have you received the peace from the LORD that has been granted in the New Temple? 2:9; Colossians 3:15
6. Are you a citizen of the New Jerusalem? A city that cannot be shaken? If so, what is the test? Hebrews 12:28-29

From Curse to Blessing**Haggai 2:10-16****Introduction**

In pagan religion, curses are invoked by magic. There are curses in the Bible as well. In the word of God, they are the result of covenant disobedience, whereas obedience carries with it covenant blessings. Deuteronomy 28 is a whole chapter dealing with covenant blessings (Deuteronomy 28:1-14) and curses (Deuteronomy 28:15-68).

What most Christians do not realise is that the New Testament mentions curses as well. Paul writes to the Corinthians and states:

1 Corinthians 16:22 If anyone does not love the Lord-- a curse be on him. Come, O Lord!

Paul writes to the Galatians and teaches the uselessness of an attempt at works-based salvation.

Galatians 3:10 All who rely on observing the law are under a **curse**, for it is written: "**Cursed** is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

In the NT, at the trial of Jesus and the foot of the cross, the Jews called down curses upon themselves. They cried out, "Let his blood be upon us and upon our children!" However, the good news is that in the New Jerusalem:

Revelation 22:3 No longer will there be any **curse**. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

Through the prophet Haggai, God once again speaks. This time to the priests on curses and blessings. On 18 December 520 BC, the third prophecy from the LORD came to Haggai.

3rd prophecy Haggai 2:10**To the priests.**
(Twenty-fourth day of the ninth month)
18 December 520 BC**Haggai's Third Prophecy.**

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Haggai 2:10-19

1. Whom was the third message from the LORD directed at? 2:10
2. What were the main tasks of a priest? Malachi 2:6-7
3. Which two very important questions did Haggai have to ask the priests, and what were the answers? 2:12-13

Result of contact

Consecrated meat:

Defilement by a corpse:

4. Which two very important conclusions had to be derived from these two questions? 2:12-13 Cf. Numbers 19:11, 22

Statement 1: is not contagious.

Statement 2: is contagious.

Note: There is even a principle among Jewish understanding about scripture that if you handle a sacred book, your hands become defiled. This is a test for so-called 'writings of holiness'.

It is also a law of nature. If you wash your hands with disinfectant and you touch a rotting carcass, then you become unclean. The carcass does not become pure. For example, Louis Pasteur realised that if you touch something full of germs and then touch a patient being operated on, infection sets in and the patient dies.

5. How did it apply to the people of Judah? 2:14

6. Why was this so? What did they do for this to apply to them? 2:14
7. What does it teach us, Christians? Matthew 5:29-30
8. Can an unbeliever ever please God? 2:14
9. How do we as believers move from curse to blessing? What phrase is mentioned five times in 1: 5, 7; 2:15, 18 (2x)?
10. How were things before the commencement of the rebuilding? 2:15
cf. 1:6, 9

Statement 1: how things were before the rebuilding started (Haggai 2:15).
11. How did things change after the foundation stone was laid? 2:18-19

Statement 2: But since, things have changed (Haggai 2:18).
12. What changed at the ceremony? 2:18-19
13. Which nation-wide act of obedience had a similar effect during the first entry into the promised land? Joshua 5:8-9
14. How is this gathering in contrast to their earlier actions, when they worked separately on their own houses? 1:4, 9 cf. Zechariah 8:9-13

Reflection & Application

1. What do individual believers, as well as the church as a whole, need?
2. As an individual, can God bless you and make your work prosper if you are defiled?
3. When alone, are we useful and able to do God's work? 2 Timothy 2:20-21
4. When we consecrate ourselves, how will our reward change? 2:19
5. Why is this the case?
6. Why is consecration not only individual, but also corporate? Ephesians 2:19-22

The Reign of the LORD**Haggai 2:20-23****Introduction**

For the Christian, the circumstances in the world are a constant concern. Powerful nations, forces, and political leaders threaten and shape our world. Communism and Islam are just two of the many great threats we face. Crime, failing services, and the struggle to survive make our lives difficult. We may become so despondent at times that we stop being involved in “building God’s house.”

It was the same in Haggai’s day. The returning exiles arrived in the promised land and faced many hardships. They were dejected, backwards, overwhelmed, fearful, and surrounded by enemies. They focused on building their houses and tried to eke out a living. They received a stern rebuke from the LORD through his prophet Haggai, who told them to rebuild God’s house. **‘Go, bring, and build!’** They feared the word of the LORD and obeyed his commands.

God promised that the glory of the new temple would be unsurpassed. That the LORD Himself would fill this new house with glory.

God pointed out the following in his third message on 18 December 520 BC:

- How things were before the rebuilding (there were only curses).
- How things were after the rebuilding started (there would be abundant blessings).

God pointed out that only sanctified lives could lead to acceptable worship. Defilement was contagious; holiness and consecration were not. Defiled hands and hearts cannot offer anything pleasing to God.

The fourth and last prophecy came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Haggai 2:20-23

1. To whom was the fourth and last message from the LORD directed?
2:20-21

Note: To understand the ‘shaking’ mentioned in 2:20, look at the 1st mention of ‘shaking’, as referring to the heavens and the earth as well as the world’s kingdoms, so that *the desired of the nations* come in (Haggai 2:6-9). Shaking has to do with the removal of that which is temporal.

4th prophecy Haggai 2:20

To Zerubbabel

(Twenty-fourth day of the ninth month)
18 December 520 BC

Haggai’s Fourth Prophecy

2. What was a further aspect of the shaking of the heavens and the earth? 2:21-22
3. What will be established on that day when world kingdoms are removed? 2:23
4. What is **‘that day’** which the prophets always refer to? 2:23
Revelation 11:15

Note: The prophet Zechariah, a contemporary of Haggai, mentions **‘that day’** 20 times, and Zechariah is not referring to the political liberation of the Jews. The 1st shaking is when the nations come into the kingdom, such as on the day of Pentecost and afterwards throughout the gospel age.

But there is a day of a 2nd shaking called **“that day...,”** which is the day when all the present political systems will end (Revelation 6:12-17).

5. Why would Zerubbabel be the LORD’s signet ring? 2:23

Note: Zerubbabel is really a nobody. Yet, he is symbolic of a great political upheaval. Zechariah has similar prophecies about Joshua, the high priest. It is very clear that Joshua and Zerubbabel stood as symbols for the Messiah to come.

6. Why would Zerubbabel be like a signet ring on the LORD's hand?
2:23

Note: Zerubbabel will be like the signet ring of the LORD of Hosts. A signet ring refers to the ruling power of the king. The signet ring was a symbol of honour, authority, and power (cf. Song 8:6). Such rings were used to stamp the royal seal on a document or decree. What does Zerubbabel, as God's signet ring, signify? Zerubbabel stands as the official representative of the Davidic dynasty.

Example: Just as Joseph bore Pharaoh's signet ring and represented him. Zerubbabel represents the LORD. This is the renewal of the messianic line interrupted by the Exile.

7. Who were called 'the servant of the LORD' in the past? cf. Joshua 1:1; 13; 15, Joshua 8:31, 33, Joshua 22:2, 4, 5

Note: *The Servant of the LORD* in Isaiah, the servant songs. For example, Isaiah 42:19

Jesus, "I came not to be served, but to serve." Mark 10:45

Here in Haggai, Zerubbabel is called the *Servant of the LORD*. Therefore, he is standing in the line of OT types of Christ. He is pointing to **the Servant of the LORD**, par excellence.

8. Who was the LORD's pre-exilic signet ring, even though he was a wicked king? Jeremiah 22:24
9. If Jehoiachin had been rejected as God's earthly ruler, but now Zerubbabel, his grandson, is affirmed, what does it signify?

Note: Zerubbabel appears in the line of Christ on both Joseph's side (Matt. 1:12) and Mary's side (Luke 3:27). To complete the picture of the coming Ruler, we have to turn to Zechariah as well.

10. What does Zechariah say about Joshua the High Priest? Zechariah 6:11-15

Note: The Branch is the one who will be both priest and king, who will build the temple of the Lord. Zerubbabel and Joshua are symbols of this Priest-King. They are shadows of future fulfilment (Zechariah 3:8).

Reflection & Application _____

1. What are two aspects of a Kingdom?
2. What are we busy building?
3. In what way is the LORD shaking the heavens and earth and the nations today?

*God still shakes [the heaven and the earth] today, when the gospel is preached, for he forms anew the children of Adam after his image. This spiritual regeneration is such an evidence of God's power and grace that he may justly be said to shake the heaven and the earth. **John Calvin***

4. What is now hidden to the unbeliever, which will be seen by all on that day? Philippians 2:9-11

Haggai is a small book with a vast prophetic impact. It addresses the small group of the dejected remnant returning from the Babylonian exile. It challenges them to rebuild a seemingly insignificant building in an economically limited backwater.

However, unbeknownst to them, they were embarking on a vast building project that would not only host the glory of the LORD when revealed, but also draw the desire of all the nations into it.

This temple they were building was the significant start of a vast, indestructible, eternal Kingdom. The city of this kingdom would be the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Zion, the City of God.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

When the Israelites came to Mount Sinai, it was shaken, and it filled them with great fear. However, the prophet Haggai, as quoted in Hebrews, promises:

Hebrews 12:26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." ²⁷ The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken--that is, created things--so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Let us, as Christian believers, enter into this faithful covenant relationship with the LORD, who will not break his word, which no circumstances in this universe can change. Let us worship the LORD in the right manner.

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our "God is a consuming fire."

Apart from the unshakable new creation that would result, Zerubbabel was also the signet ring of the LORD of Hosts. The shaking on *that day* would change the political order of the world forever.

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Banner of Truth

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