

## ***XI. God's Glory***

19-Feb-06 Haggai 2:1-9

*Theme:* The future glory of the Temple will be greater than its former glory, because that Temple is Christ and the nations He brings into the kingdom of God.

*Key Verses:* Haggai 2:6-9 <sup>6</sup>For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; <sup>7</sup>and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. <sup>8</sup>'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup>'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts.

### Review

Two weeks ago, we studied Haggai chapter 1. The people of God were secure in their *paneled palaces*, but God's house still lay in ruins. The remnant had begun the work enthusiastically, but opposition and other excuses caused the work to lay fallow for sixteen years. In the meantime, they had gone on with life and had let the building of God's house become a secondary priority. So God sends the prophet Haggai into their lives to shake up their *topsy turvy* viewpoint and reorient their spiritual compasses in alignment with God's priorities.

Although the remnant had put their own comforts first instead of God's work, they were frustrated in their efforts to gain the comforts they desired. In God's sovereignty, He sent them leanness in response to their disobedience. *Lean living* may be a sign that our priorities are not Biblical. If we are dissatisfied and frustrated, then we should heed Haggai's advice to "consider your ways!" Perhaps the answer lies in obedience to God's revealed will.

That was the case in Haggai's day. God's revealed will was clear; He said, "Build the Temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified" (Hag. 1:8b). To the credit of the remnant, they listened to God's word, recognized it as truth, repented of their sin, and responded in *open obedience*. God repeated the covenant promise to be in their midst as an encouragement to them. He also gave them *stirred spirits* in order to be able to accomplish the work. Twenty-three days after Haggai's opening message, the work at the Temple site had resumed.

We are also called to build God's house, to labor for His kingdom. Our housebuilding takes the form of obedience and worship. We are called to obey the commands of God, to live holy lives, to love our neighbor, to share the gospel, and to worship our Creator. "The chief and highest end of man is to glorify God and fully to enjoy Him forever" (WCF LC 1).

### Introduction

In Haggai chapter 1, the message is an exhortation *to build*. The remnant had returned to Jerusalem specifically to rebuild the Temple, but they had failed to complete the task. But as we have seen, Haggai's message to build had results; the people obeyed and work began again on the Temple. The next three messages have a different tone. Rather than exhortations, they are encouragements. The people have obeyed the exhortation, but they need encouragement, because the task is still difficult. Today, we will look at Haggai's second message, in 2:1-9. The first message in 1:1-11 tells the people *what* to do; this second message tells them *why* they should do it. It is not simply an exhortation to build; it is encouragement to build for *God's*

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

*glory*. The encouragement comes in two parts: 1) first there is recognition of *gone glory*; and 2) there is a prediction of *greater glory* to come.

### Exposition

#### A. Gone Glory (2:1-5)

Haggai's second message is given **in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month** (v. 1a). This date is approximately 3.5 weeks after the Temple reconstruction project had begun (*cp.* 1:15). The seventh month of the Jewish calendar corresponds to September/October. Since the number seven has special significance in the Bible, it is no surprise that the seventh month of the Jewish calendar was the holiest month of the year. The month started out with a special New Moon festival or Sabbath: the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23-25). Then on the tenth day of the seventh month was Rosh Hashanah or the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32).

Just a few days later, on the fifteen day of the month, the annual Feast Tabernacles (or Booths or Ingathering) was celebrated for 7 days, followed by a holy convocation on the eighth day (Lev. 23:33-43). This feast had a dual purpose. The people were supposed travel to Jerusalem and dwell in tents or booths for seven days to commemorate the wilderness wandering of the Exodus generation. During that period of time, the Israelite camp of tents was ordered around the Tabernacle, with God's tent house in the center of His people. But like any sacramental festival, this feast also had a forward looking connotation. It also celebrated the ingathering of the harvest, which looked forward to the ingathering of the spiritual harvest of souls into the kingdom of God.

This evangelistic element of the Feast of Tabernacles is symbolized in the sacrifices ordained by God during the seven days (*cp.* Num. 29:12-38). On the first day of the feast, 13 bulls were sacrificed. On the second day of the feast, 12 bulls were sacrificed. Each day, the number of bulls to be sacrificed was decreased by one until the seventh day, when 7 bulls were sacrificed. The total number of bulls sacrificed was 70, corresponding to the 70 nations of the world in Genesis 10. "Whenever the number seventy appears in Scripture, it speaks of the nations of the world" (Jordan). So, in the Feast of Tabernacles, we have a picture of sacrifice for sin being made for the nations of the world, speaking of a time when the gospel would go forth and the nations would be added to the Church. We've already seen that picture of the Church Age in the prophecy of Micah:

<sup>1</sup>Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and *peoples shall flow to it.* <sup>2</sup>*Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths."* For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Mic. 4:1-2).

Why am I spending all this time on a description of the Feast of Tabernacles? Because it is pertinent for the context and message of Haggai. Haggai's second message here in chapter 2 comes on the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles. It is a day of holy convocation, a Sabbath day of rest, a day of reflecting on what God had done and what God will do. Haggai's message regarding housebuilding comes during the feast when the remnant should be keenly aware of God's house. After all, the Feast of Tabernacles is concerned with houses—they are living in tents to remind them of the camp around God's Tent; but it is also concerned with worship—it is a week of Sabbaths—which is what you do at God's House.

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

### 1. *Tumbledown Temple (2:1-3)*

So, at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, Haggai has a second message about housebuilding. It is addressed to the same audience as before: **to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people** (v. 2). Again, no one is left out of this message from God and His prophet.

Haggai knows that the people have already become discouraged in their building project. And so he asks a series of questions that highlight the object of their discouragement:

<sup>3</sup>Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing? (Hag. 2:3).

The building project has only been resumed for a few weeks, but already it is clear that the new Temple will be nowhere near as large, grand, or glorious as Solomon's Temple. This should have been obvious to them for some time. When the remnant first returned eighteen years previously in 538 BC, they established themselves in their homeland and rebuilt the altar before turning their efforts to the Temple (*cp.* Ezra 3:1-13). In 536 BC, when the Temple foundation was laid, there was much joy and rejoicing. However, the older generation wept, because they could remember the original Temple and could already see the new one would not measure up:

<sup>12</sup>But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, *old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes.* Yet many shouted aloud for joy, <sup>13</sup>so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off (Ezra 3:12-13).

Now, sixteen years later, in the year 520 BC, the scene described in Ezra has been repeated of a sort. For the old generation still remembers the former glory of the Temple, and they realize that this *tumbledown temple* will never measure up. All they can see is the *gone glory*.

It is like the story of Ichabod in 1 Samuel. The old priest Eli's two wicked sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are killed at the battle of Aphek against the Philistines. They had tried using the Ark of the Covenant as a good luck charm, but the Ark was also captured in the battle. Eli dies when he hears the news. Phinehas' pregnant wife, hearing the news of her husband's death, goes into labor and dies. Her son is named "Ichabod" which means "Inglorious" because "the glory has departed from Israel" (1 Sam. 4:21). That's what the elders of Haggai's day feel as well—the glory of God's Temple is gone. Thomas Moore writes:

The Jews were accustomed to say that there were five things in the first temple that were wanting in the second: (1) the sacred fire; (2) the Shekinah; (3) the ark and cherubim; (4) the Urim and Thummim; (5) the spirit of prophecy. Besides these things, it was greatly inferior in external splendor.

The first four items in the list above were lost forever during the Babylonian captivity. But the fifth item, the spirit of prophecy, returned in the form of Haggai. Haggai knew that the external splendor of the new Temple was inferior. He knew that the resources and wealth of the remnant paled in comparison to those of Solomon.

And so Haggai starts his second sermon with recognition of their disappointment and discouragement. Haggai's first message had started with a statement of the people: "The time has not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built" (Hag. 1:2b). Now, Haggai

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

expresses another sentiment of the people: “The temple we are rebuilding is not as glorious as the former temple.” Then they were procrastinating; now they are discouraged. But their discouragement probably goes deeper than just this glory issue.

The work was hard. They had to get lumber from faraway mountains. They had to clear the rubble from the construction site. They had to dress the stone they had and quarry more. They had to organize schedules and work teams. The labor was difficult, time-consuming, and slow. In fact, as we will see from 2:18, the actual work of building the Temple did not really begin for another two months. Up to that point, all the work had been simply preparation.

Besides, all of the feasts and holy days of the seventh month were adding to the delay. In the first twenty-one days of the seventh month, they had already rested from labor at least nine days for the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles. In all probability, there were probably two other “normal” Sabbath days in the month. So, about half of the time they had been working on the Temple, they had not been working on the Temple!

Do you feel like the remnant of Haggai’s day? Did you start out with joy in doing the Lord’s work, in building His kingdom, in worshiping Him, only to find out somewhere along the way you became discouraged, disillusioned, disappointed? Have you lost the joy of your salvation? Have the difficulties of life soured your outlook on the gospel? If so, hang in there, and listen to Haggai’s encouragement. It was for the people of his day, and it is for us as well.

### 2. *Spiritual Strength (2:4-5)*

<sup>4</sup>‘Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,’ says the LORD; ‘and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,’ says the LORD, ‘and work; for I am with you,’ says the LORD of hosts (Hag. 2:4).

“Be strong and work.” That is God’s encouragement to His discouraged people. Three times He says **be strong**. This encouragement is for Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the priest, and the remnant in the land. Repetition in the Scripture reinforces the message. That is why Christ often said “Verily, verily I say unto you ....” Usually a double repetition in Scripture is enough to get the message across, but sometimes we have a triple repetition, as in the case of God’s holiness: “*Holy, holy, holy* is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” (Is. 6:3b).

This is not the first triple repetition of the exhortation to “be strong.” The first time it occurs is in the book of Joshua. At the beginning of the book of Joshua, the namesake of Haggai’s high priest is encouraged by God for the task ahead of him—leading the Israelites across the Jordan in the conquest of the Promised Land.

<sup>6</sup>*Be strong* and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. <sup>7</sup>Only *be strong* and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. <sup>8</sup>This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. <sup>9</sup>Have I not commanded you? *Be strong* and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go (Jos. 1:6-9).

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

Joshua needed encouragement, just like the remnant needed encouragement. And so God tells him to “be strong.” This commandment is also connected with the construction of the first Temple. David tells his son Solomon the very same thing:

<sup>20</sup>And David said to his son Solomon, “*Be strong* and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God—my God—will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD (1 Chr. 28:20).

The apostle Paul also tells us to “*be strong* in the Lord and in the power of His might (Eph. 6:10). Our *spiritual strength* comes from God and it is directed for a purpose: we are to **work**. Joshua was to work by leading the Israelites and conquering Canaan; Solomon was to work by building the first Temple; the remnant was to work by building the second Temple; and we are to work by building God’s Temple today – His Church.

But all of our efforts in being strong and working would be of no avail if the next statement in verse 4 were not true: “**For I am with you,**” says the **LORD of hosts**. Once again, we are confronted with the heart of the covenant, the Immanuel principle—God with us (*cp.* Hag. 1:13). It is the Lord of hosts, the Lord of armies that has the power to enable us to be strong and to work for His kingdom. Boice comments:

It is the presence of God that makes God’s people strong. In ourselves we are not strong. That is why God does not say, as we might say to someone in order to buck them up, “Go on, I know you can do it. Just be strong. Give it your best.” That advice might be valuable at a football rally or when a person is waiting to participate in a talent contest, but it is not valuable in spiritual things simply because we are not equal to our spiritual tasks. Like Moses, we are weak. Like Joshua, we face tasks that are impossible by normal means. Like Solomon, we are not the heroes our forefathers were. But we can be strong and we can be equal to the task, because God is with us. In His strength we can be courageous.

How is that for encouragement? But wait, there’s even more! God reminds them of the covenant He made with their forefathers at Sinai and promises to give them His Spirit in order to complete the work they have been given:

<sup>5</sup>According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear! (Hag. 2:5).

James Jordan explains:

He also speaks of the promise in Egypt. What was the promise? The promise is made in Exodus 3:12 – “So He said, ‘I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.’” God says, “I will certainly be with you.” This is the same thing He says to the people in Haggai 2:4. What is the sign? When they come out of Egypt, they will worship God at the mountain. In order to worship God, they have to build a house, and the Spirit is given to build the house. To build the house, the Holy Spirit empowered Bezalel and Aholiab. So the Lord says through Haggai, “Now I am telling you to build a house of God and the promise is still valid—My Spirit is abiding in your midst. And because the Spirit is abiding in your midst, new Bezalels and Aholiabs will be able to build the house and you will be able to worship.”

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

The encouragement of Haggai's message to the remnant can be summed up succinctly in Paul's words: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). When we are discouraged, when we are depressed, when we are down in the dumps, remember God's exhortation to be strong and to work through the *spiritual strength* that only He can provide. Even when all we can see is the *gone glory*, we need to look with spiritual eyes at the *greater glory* to come.

### B. Greater Glory (2:6-9)

So far, God's encouragement to the remnant has focused on the past. They are celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, and one aspect of the Feast is to look back and remember what God has already done for them. And so He reminds them of their past: the Exodus and the covenant at Sinai; the encouragement to Joshua at the Jordan river; and the words of David to Solomon in preparation for building the first Temple. But there is an even more important aspect of the Feast which looks forward to the ingathering of the nations. And so, Haggai now turns his focus to the future, to describe that *greater glory* that shall surely come.

#### 1. *Trembling Treasure* (2:6-8)

<sup>6</sup>For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; <sup>7</sup>and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts.

<sup>8</sup>'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts (Hag. 2:6-8).

In order to understand the *trembling treasure* promised by God, we will have to work our way very carefully through the various words and phrases in these verses.

**Once more (it is a little while)** (v. 6a). Right off the bat, we are confronted with a translation challenge. The meaning that you might derive from the NKJV and most other English translations is that in some short period of time in the future, God is going to do a momentous event of shaking. Once. One time only. However, the sense of the original Hebrew is different. It implies a series of continuous shakings. The meaning is better conveyed as: "In just a little while, I will begin shaking and will continue to shake ...."

So, what does God mean when He says that He **will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations** (vv. 6b-7a)? This is Day of the LORD language. It is language of cataclysm, of confrontation, of judgment. Isaiah uses exactly the same language in his prophecy of judgment against the nation of Babylon:

<sup>9</sup>Behold, *the day of the LORD comes*, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. <sup>10</sup>For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine. ... <sup>13</sup>Therefore *I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place*, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger (Is. 13:9-10, 13).

Similar language of shaking is used to describe God's presence with the Israelites during the Exodus and at Mt. Sinai:

<sup>7</sup>O God, when You went out before Your people, when You marched through the wilderness, <sup>8</sup>*the earth shook; the heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God; Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God*, the God of Israel (Ps. 68:7-8).

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

When God shakes the heavens and the earth, it is a picture of the Day of the Lord, when God comes to bless or restore His people, and to judge the nations who are far from Him. The Day of the Lord is often described in fearful language, such as the shaking of the heavenly bodies, because “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31). The Day of the Lord is anytime that God comes to inspect His people or the nations. It happens every Sabbath day, because every Lord’s Day is a Day of the Lord. It happens occasionally throughout history, when God comes to judge the nations. And its final occurrence will be on the day of Christ’s Second Advent, even as Jesus Himself predicts:

<sup>29</sup>Immediately after the tribulation of those days *the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* <sup>30</sup>Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Mt. 24:29-30).

God has been in the business of shaking the nations. He shook Egypt during the Exodus; He shook Israel and Judah because of their disobedience and sent them into captivity; He shook Assyria; He shook Babylon. But now, God is telling the remnant that He is not yet out of the nation shaking business. More nation shaking is soon to follow. Persia would soon be shaken and replaced by Greece. Greece would be shaken by Rome. And Rome would be shaken by the Messiah at the advent of the Kingdom of God in the New Covenant era. God’s people were to be encouraged by the future course of history—history under the sovereign control of God. Bentley puts it this way:

God is saying, ‘I am going to rearrange the nations. All you have to do, Judah, is to stand back and see my mighty actions.’ Haggai said, ‘Don’t fear all those powerful nations. God has them in His hands. He is going to shake them for His own purposes, and that will all work out for your good.’

God is still in the nation-shaking business. All of the kingdoms of this world except one will be shaken in judgment. The only “kingdom which cannot be shaken” is the Church, the kingdom of God. The writer to the Hebrews applies Haggai 2:6 to our present age:

<sup>25</sup>See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, <sup>26</sup>whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “*Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.*” <sup>27</sup>Now this, “*Yet once more,*” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. <sup>28</sup>Therefore, since *we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken*, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. <sup>29</sup>For our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:25-29).

What does the writer to the Hebrews tell us? Exactly the same thing that Haggai is telling us. Haggai tells us to “work,” and Hebrews tells us to “serve God.” While God shakes the nations, we are to be about our kingdom responsibilities: obedience and worship.

The next difficult phrase in Haggai 2:7 is this: **and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations.** Who or what is the “Desire of All Nations?” This phrase appears in several well-known Christmas hymns, although the *Trinity Hymnal* does not have the verses in which the

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

phrase appears. Charles Wesley uses the phrase in verse 4 of *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*. This phrase is also used in verse 8 of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*.

<i>Hark the Herald Angels Sing</i> , verse 5	<i>O Come, O Come Emmanuel</i> , verse 8
Come, <i>Desire of nations</i> , come, Fix in us Thy humble home; Rise, the woman's conqu'ring Seed, Bruise in us the serpent's head. Now display Thy saving power, Ruined nature now restore; Now in mystic union join Thine to ours, and ours to Thine.	O come, <i>Desire of nations</i> , bind In one the hearts of all mankind; Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, And be Thyself our King of Peace.
	Source for both hymns: <a href="http://www.cyberhymn.org">www.cyberhymn.org</a>

Both of these hymns apply the term “Desire of All Nations” to Christ. However, most scholars and commentators believe this is not the correct meaning. First of all, the Hebrew verb “come” is plural and requires a plural subject. Therefore, the text really is saying the following: “the desires of all nations shall come in.” Secondly, Christ is not the “Desire of All Nations.” Thomas Moore rightly points out that He is their aversion. Isaiah 53:2 says that “there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” So, what then does this phrase mean?

There are two possible meanings. The first interpretation takes it to mean the good things or treasures of the nations. In other words, the wealth of the nations will come into God's house. This is consistent with the context, which talks about God's ownership of all wealth: **‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts** (v. 8). This interpretation is also supported by other passages in Scripture, for example:

<sup>5</sup>Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, *the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you*.  
... <sup>11</sup>Therefore your gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night, *that men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles*, and their kings in procession (Is. 60:5, 11).

The other interpretation is that Haggai is referring to the nations themselves. **‘I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts** (v. 7b). While God could be talking about the gold and the silver being the glory of the Temple, it is probable that He is referring to the people who will inhabit the true Temple, the Church of Christ. Boice says:

In my opinion, the “desired of all nations” refers to people, in the sense that “the chosen, the elect out of all nations, those Gentiles whom God has from eternity foreknown and predestinated,” will increase the glory of the true Temple, which is the Church. That is, the ultimate glory of God's house will not be a mere physical glory but a spiritual glory that comes from having an increasingly large host of all tongues and nations enter into it.

I don't believe that these two views are incompatible; rather, I believe that both interpretations are valid. God fills His Temple with glory by bringing in both the wealth of the nations and the nations themselves. God shakes the nations and brings His *trembling treasure* into His kingdom. This picture is consistent with the Feast of Tabernacles. God's original Tabernacle was built with the wealth of the Egyptians. God's people were augmented with a mixed multitude, so more than just Jews were incorporated into God's people from the very beginning. Both the



## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

wealth of the nations and the nations themselves are being added to God's kingdom for His glory.

The remnant of Haggai's day received a quick initial fulfillment of these promises. The fulfillment is recorded in Zechariah 6:9-15. Zechariah is writing on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month in the year 520 BC (*cp.* Zech 1:7), or about 4 months after Haggai 2:1-9. In Zechariah 6, a bunch of visitors from Babylon come bringing silver and gold for the Temple. Notice what God says:

<sup>15</sup>*Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the LORD.* Then you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God (Zech. 6:15).

God promises the remnant through Haggai that He will bring in the wealth of the nations to build the Temple, and that He will even bring in the nations themselves. And then just four months later, the down payment arrives. The wealth of the nations and the nations begin coming.

### 2. True Temple (2:9)

<sup>9</sup>'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts (Hag. 2:9).

The *true Temple* of God will have *greater glory* than anyone in Haggai's day can imagine. The remnant could imagine a lot. They had the writings of Ezekiel, who envisioned a massive Temple that would dwarf Mt. Zion, so large that it could never be built (*cp.* Ez. 40-48). But the *true Temple* would be even more glorious than Ezekiel's Temple. Why? Because the *true Temple* is Jesus Christ and His Church.

This promise in Haggai did receive a literal fulfillment of sorts. The second Temple of the restoration was never that glorious. Functional, yes; but glorious, no. However, King Herod set out upon a rebuilding project, and after 46 years, he had completed the third Temple which was even more glorious than Solomon's. It didn't last very long, because the Romans ended up destroying it in 70 AD shortly after it was finished. The true glory of that Temple, of course, was when Christ entered it, for His glory superseded that of any building (*cp.* Mt. 12:6).

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt [literally "tabernacled"] among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14).

Right from the start of John's gospel, the apostle makes us aware that Christ is the *true Temple*. He is the tabernacle, the house of God, the presence of God in the midst of His people. His glory is far more glorious than the earthly Temple—He is filled with the heavenly glory of God. That glory was displayed on the Mount of Transfiguration (*cp.* Lk. 9:28-36). He is the replacement for the earthly Temple (*cp.* Jn. 2:19-21). Christ is Immanuel—"God with us" in the flesh. Christ is also the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles (*cp.* Jn. 7:2, 37-39).

Furthermore, Christ is the fulfillment of the promised **peace** that comes with the glory of God's Temple. We've already seen that Christ is our peace from Micah 5:5. Remember what Paul says about Christ:

<sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>*For He Himself is our peace*, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, <sup>15</sup>having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law

## Minor Prophets: Micah & Haggai

of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus *making peace*,<sup>16</sup> and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.<sup>17</sup> And *He came and preached peace* to you who were afar off and to those who were near (Eph. 2:13-17).

Do you see what Paul is saying? 1) Christ *makes peace* between man and God by reconciling us to Himself through His death and resurrection; 2) Christ *preaches peace*, drawing those who are far off to Himself; and, most importantly 3) Christ *is our peace* – Christ is the reason that we have assurance of forgiveness of sins and right standing with God. When Christ came, the *true Temple* of God had come, and *God's glory* was on earth for all to see.

The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ is the Temple of God. But it teaches that the Church is also being built up into the Temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16), with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pe. 2:4-8). We are the nations that have been shaken and brought into the Church. We are the “desired of all nations,” the treasures that God has collected and redeemed out of the world. We are His glory, and God continues to increase that glory by converting sinners and adding “to the church daily those who [are] being saved” (Acts. 2:47b).

### Conclusion

What a message of encouragement for weary kingdom builders! Although you may not be able to see it, God's Temple, God's house, God's people, God's kingdom, God's Church, is glorious. And it is glorious because you are part of it, if you are trusting in Christ for salvation. God's encouragement to us is to “be strong” and to “work” in the *spiritual strength* of the Lord. We are to take care of our business, and God will take care of the business of shaking the nations and adding to the wealth and population of His kingdom. We are the *trembling treasure* brought into God's storehouse; we are called to obedience and to worship. God will take care of the rest; He will ingather the nations, just as the Feast of Tabernacles promises. After all, God is not interested in a *tumbledown Temple* of broken stones; He cares for the living *true Temple* of Jesus Christ and the nations who worship Him in obedience.

Next week: Lesson 13 – Chosen Community – Haggai 2:10-23

Close in Prayer.