

Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Haggai 2.

(2014)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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Haggai 2.

Topics.

- Haggai's second message, "I am with you."
- The glory of the old and the new Temple.
- The LORD will fill the House of God with glory.
- Haggai's third message, "The silver and gold, is mine."
- Haggai's fourth message, "Holiness is not contagious but evil is."
- Prior to the rebuilding the Temple and after the Temple is built.
- Haggai's fifth message, "A shaking of the nations."
- The LORD will make Zerubbabel like a signet ring.
- The glory of the spiritual Temple God is building in Christ.
- The LORD will make Zerubbabel like a signet ring.
- The glory of the spiritual Temple God is building in Christ.

INTRODUCTION: to the book of Haggai when the first wave of Jewish exiles returned from Babylon to Jerusalem in 538 B.C., they began to rebuild the Temple but soon gave up. Inspired by the prophetic ministries of Haggai and Zechariah, they finally completed the task in 515. Haggai rebuked the people for living in "panelled houses" while the house of God remained in ruins (1:3). He warned that, despite their best efforts, their wealth would never suffice, because the LORD was not pleased with their neglect of his Temple (see Lev. 26:2-20).

He called them to repent and renew their covenant with the God of their fathers. He assured them that God would conquer the nations and restore Israel. The rebuilding of the Temple symbolized God's restored presence among his people, unique among the nations of the earth. Haggai's message was one of rebuke and encouragement. Instead of addressing the people at large, Haggai went straight to headquarters, i.e., to Zerubbabel the prince and to Joshua the high priest and the whole situation changed from defeat and discouragement to victory.

The following is a summary of Haggai's five messages: -

1st message: consider your ways.

2nd message: I am with you.

3rd message: the silver is mine, and the gold is mine.

4th message: holiness is not contagious, but evil is.

5th message: a shaking of the nations.

Haggai's five messages are all dated, they cover a period of three months and twenty-three days (Hag 2:10) in these few weeks the whole situation changed from defeat and discouragement into victory.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

I am With You.

Haggai 2:1-3 ----- ¹In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet. ²"Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, ³"Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?"

The glory of the old and the new temple: the people of Israel who had seen the original Temple were disappointed with the new Temple. It did not match the splendour, majesty or opulence of the first Temple, and because of this the people felt that the LORD would not be with them. The LORD, understanding how those who had seen the original Temple felt, tells Haggai to go to Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people and tell them that He knows that they consider the new Temple as nothing and because of its lack of rich and lavish beauty fear that the LORD will not be with them.

The LORD encourages Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the People.

Haggai 2:4-5 ----- ⁴Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. Work, *"for I am with you, declares the LORD"* of hosts, ⁵according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. *My Spirit remains in your midst.* Fear not.

The LORD tells Zerubbabel Joshua and the people not to be disappointed that the New Temple lacks the glory of the original Temple, because God will be with them regardless.

Verses (v4-5) refer to the following verses: -

- There (at the entrance of the tent of meeting) I (the LORD) will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory. ⁴⁴I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar. Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate to serve me as priests. ⁴⁵I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. ⁴⁶And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God. (Exod. 29:43-46).
- I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. (Lev. 26:12).
- I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. (Exod. 20:2).

The LORD will fill the House of God with Glory.

Haggai 2:6-7 ----- ⁶For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. ⁷And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts.

These words of the LORD applies to Haggai's era, Israel flourished and prospered for a time after the new Temple was rebuilt, but Haggai's prophetic words also carry within them an echo of the Lord Jesus Christ when he returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The Third Message

The Silver and Gold is Mine.

Haggai 2:8-9 ----- 8“*The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,*” declares the LORD of hosts. 9The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.’ ”

The glory of the last Temple will be greater than that of the first. These prophetic words of Haggai refer to the time after the completion of the Temple, but contained within the LORD'S message is an echo of the church age in which God is building a new Temple in Christ called, one nation in Christ, a new creation, a new man, and the body of Christ, many of the Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel include the New Testament Gentiles who accept Christ, because God is creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentile (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew).

Jews and Gentiles become One New Nation in Christ.

The prophetic words, (the latter glory of this Temple will be greater than the former glory of the previous Temple,” partially refer to the Temple built at the time of Haggai, but the ultimate glory refers to the spiritual Temple God is building in Christ at this present time (see the title: “The Glory of the Spiritual Temple God is Building in Christ,” at the end of this chapter.

The Commonwealth of Israel: it is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew) this means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called, a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God). The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (new nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world.

This new nation is the latter glory of the Temple of God echoed in Haggai's prophetic words (Hag 2:8-9), but Haggai's amazing and prophetic message does not end here the LORD'S words continue to transcend time until they arrive at their final destination which is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Haggai 2:4-5). The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

Holiness is Not Contagious but Evil Is.

Haggai 2:10-14 ----- ¹⁰On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet. ¹¹"Thus says the LORD of hosts: Ask the priests about the law: ¹²"If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy?" The priests answered and said, "No."

Holy flesh: under the Levitical law the animal to be sacrificed was ceremonially made completely holy by the altar on which the whole animal was sanctified. This means that any part of it that had to be carried away was also holy. Most of the sacrifices became food for the high priest and his family and for the Levitical priesthood and their families. It appears that certain parts of the sacrifice were carried away in the pockets of the priest aprons (perhaps to the proper place of eating it) which made the priest garment holy, but if the priest apron touched any common thing (bread, stew, wine, oil or any kind of food,) that common thing is not made ceremonially holy by its contact with the priests holy garment.

The following verse shows that the flesh of the sacrificed animal sanctified (made holy) the person who touched it.

- Whatever touches the flesh of the sacrificed animal shall be holy. (Lev. 6:27)

But this sanctification was not transferred to anything that person might touch afterwards. In contrast to this the following verse shows that whoever was defiled by contact with a dead body (or any other uncleanness) transferred that defilement, even to the tabernacle.

- Whoever touches a dead person, the body of anyone who has died, and does not cleanse himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. (Num. 19:13).

According to Haggai, the guilt of sinfulness, irreverence, wickedness and immorality etc., incurred by the Jews in neglecting the re-building of the Temple had tainted the labour of their hands, and caused famine and what worth and blessing they might claim for restoring their altar-worship and keeping the prescribed feasts (Ezra 3:2-6) was not transferred or communicated to them or their land.

This is because the blessing that should have come because of their religious deeds, sacrifices, altar worship and ceremonial acts were cancelled because of their corruptions and indifference and lack of passion toward the things of God. This indifference was outwardly manifested in the fact they gave all their time to building their own homes while the House of God lay in ruins.

The LORD tells Haggai to ask the priests a question concerning the law and they answer correctly in that that the flesh of the sacrifice only made holy whatever it touched and no further whereas whoever was defiled by touching a dead body, defiled everything they touched as the following verse states: -

- Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean, and anyone who touches it shall be unclean until evening." (Num. 19:22).

The principal is, "unholiness spreads further than holiness." Worship on the altar counted for nothing while the people's hearts remained indifferent to God. Performing duty and ceremonial rites does not counterbalance a lifestyle of disobedience and indifference toward God in daily life. The sacrifices offered on the altar (the holy thing) which they raised after returning from Babylon instead of making the land holy (blessed and prosperous) defiled it, because their hearts were not toward the LORD, they were simply acting out of a sense of duty and legalistic law. The holy meat does make the apron of the priest in which the meat is carried holy, but it cannot transfer that holiness to anything beyond the apron in which it is being carried. This is cited to illustrate the principle, that a holy sacrifice, cannot make holy a person whose heart is indifferent to the LORD and who give all their

time to increasing their own life and neglecting any thought or time for the LORD as the Jews at this time were doing in building their own houses and totally ignoring the House of the LORD. The practical application is that one person's righteousness cannot make another person righteous. An example of this truth would be a son or daughter who is born into a Christian home and raised by Christian parents neither the son nor the daughter can be made righteous by their parents' righteousness. Each must come to the altar themselves which of course for us today is the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Haggai is saying: the flesh of the sacrifice is made ceremonially holy and good by the altar, but it cannot make another thing holy and good so those offering the sacrifice should not live a lifestyle to please themselves and justify their wrongdoing and corruptions by their sacrifices and ceremonies. In contrast to this those who are unclean, corrupt and not pure of heart do not corrupt the sacrifices made holy by the altar since the sacrifice itself is good and godly.

A practical example of this would be a preacher who is living a secret life of adultery, his sinful life does not make the word of God unholy, the Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit will still save honest and humble men and women seeking God despite the preachers secret corrupt lifestyle (though he will be held accountable).

If someone is Unclean Touches Bread, it also becomes Unclean.

Haggai 2:13 ----- 13 Then Haggai said, "If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these (bread, stew, wine, oil or any kind of food), does it become unclean?" The priests answered and said, "It does become unclean."

The following verses show that amongst the nation of Israel defilement incurred by contact with a dead body was one of the deepest and most serious (one of the reasons for this no doubt was because of the health issues involved)

- Whoever touches the dead body of any person shall be unclean seven days. (Numbers 19:11).
- Whoever touches a dead person, the body of anyone who has died, and does not cleanse himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from Israel. (Numbers 19:13) (Num. 19:11-16) (Lev. 21:11) (Lev. 22:4) (Num. 6:6).

The following verses show that a ceremonially and unclean person imparts their uncleanness to anything they touch even to the House of the LORD: -

- Whoever touches a dead person, the body of anyone who has died, and does not cleanse himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. (Num. 19:13).
- Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean, and anyone who touches it shall be unclean until evening. (Num. 19:22).

In contrast to an unclean thing making a holy thing unclean, a holy thing cannot make an unclean thing holy. This means that a ceremonially holy person cannot impart their holiness onto an unclean or common person. The message here is that ceremonial holiness is not as easily communicated as ceremonial impurity, so the paths to sin are many while the path to holiness is one. One drop of dye will discolour a glass of clear water, whereas many drops of clear water will not clear the dye from the water or purify it.

Haggai puts another question to the priests, "If a person that is unclean because they have touched a dead body should touch bread, pottage, wine, or oil, or any meat, would these things also become unclean and made not fit for holy use?" The priests correctly answered saying that the bread, pottage, wine, or oil, or any meat would be made unclean because according to the law whatever an unclean person touched was made unclean. The principal is that pollution, defilement and wrong-doing is easily and extensively imparted than is holiness, righteousness and doing what is good and right.

What Israel offers on the Altar is Unclean.

Haggai 2:14 ----- 14 Then Haggai answered and said, "So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, declares the LORD, and so with every work of their hands. And what they offer there is unclean.

The words, "What they offer is unclean," refers to what they offer on the altar, in the writings of Ezra we read: -

- They set the altar in its place, for fear was on them because of the peoples of the lands, and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, burnt offerings morning and evening. (Ezra 3:3).

The LORDS words, "What they offer there is unclean" (Haggai 2:14), refer to the sacrifices they are offering on the altar they built in the open air, under Cyrus (because the Temple is laying in ruin). These offerings remain unclean because the people have no passion to re-build the House of the LORD. It could be said that they have quickly built a BBQ type altar so they could give more time to building their own homes and still be able to at least fulfil their Jewish duties in offering sacrifices to the LORD.

The following words of Samuel show that even though the holy flesh of the sacrifice sanctified the priest apron it cannot make those who offered the sacrifice holy or their religious ceremonial works acceptable to God if they are lacking the spirit of obedience and while the people neglect to build the LORD'S House.

- Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. (1 Sam. 15:22).

It matters not how strictly we might adhere to ceremonial rites, holy days or keep religious traditions and customs if we are living a lifestyle that is contrary to the will of God and brings a bad testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ all our religious works and deeds will count for nothing. External ritual devotions and holy actions did not and cannot sanctify impure and corrupted hearts. Every religious and ceremonial work and all that Israel offered at the altar ever since they came out of Babylon did not make the land or the people clean, but left them in the state they were prior to making such offerings and sacrifices.

This is because their heart was not involved in their actions; they were not performing such ceremonial rites from a heart of gratitude, devotion and thankfulness, but from fear and a sense of duty. It could be likened to religious people who go to church every Sunday, but live their life totally indifferent to God every other day of the week. Their church going is not from devotion toward God, but rather as an insurance policy for eternal life or as a legalistic act to bring about God's blessing upon their lives.

A most tragic situation: at this time all Israel's outward religious services, and all the sacrifices they offered up, were in the LORD'S account impure and abominable, as well as themselves; coming from an unsanctified heart, and offered up with unclean hands, and without repentance towards God and faith and living in other respects in disobedience to God, especially while they neglected the building of the temple; satisfying their own conscience by offering sacrifices on the altar, when the House of God lay desolate which should have been their highest priority at that time.

CONCLUSION: when common and unclean things come in contact with holy things they are not sanctified by such contact, likewise when common and unclean things touch what is clean they pollute the clean thing by their contact with it. Under the law touching holy things does not make an unclean or common person ceremonially holy or clean, in contrast to this whatever holy thing an unclean or common person touched and handled was made unclean. Haggai is saying that the unsanctified and polluted Jews while outwardly performing the Jewish ceremonial duties and bringing their offerings and sacrifices to the altar are instead of not making a thing holy are polluting God's

ordinances and altar. Even worse than this they are leaving themselves and the people as unacceptable to God as they were before they performed such ceremonial rites and offered the sacrifices. This shines a spotlight on the truth that something more needs to be done other than just offering sacrifices and performing religious ceremonial duties. The heart must be involved in the offering, the sacrifice and the ceremonial rites.

All sanctified actions, offerings and sacrifices no matter how good are all spoiled by unsanctified hearts. The uncleanness of the heart (indifference to God, deceit, hypocrisy and wickedness etc.) pollutes even the best of offerings and ceremonial rites. This is because outward acts of religious service cannot sanctify profane hearts and minds.

The following verses clearly show that religious works and sacrifices count for nothing before God unless they are performed and offered with a right heart attitude.

- For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. (Psalm 51:16).
- Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. (1 Samuel 15:22).
- Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. ⁷Then I said, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: ⁸I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:6-8).

Jesus himself cites these words of David: -

- Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; ⁶in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" (Heb. 10:5-7).
- To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice. (Proverbs 21:3).

Many spoil the good work they do, by going about it with hearts devoid of God and by living a lifestyle indifferent to God and that brings a bad testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Religious people who live this way will gain no advantage by their religious works no matter how strictly they perform them.

Following are the two principals to learn from Haggai's message: -

1. Sin is more easily learned from others than holiness.
2. Impurity of the heart, life and behaviour will make the work of the hands and all sacrifices offered unclean before God.

The case is the same with us. When employed in any good work, we should watch over ourselves, lest we render our good works and deeds unclean by our corruptions. When we begin to make a good conscience our duty before God, we may expect His favour and blessing.

Prior to the Rebuilding of the Temple.

Haggai 2:15-17 ----- ¹⁵Now then, consider from this day onward. Before stone was placed upon stone in the temple of the LORD, ¹⁶how did you fare? When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten. When one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. ¹⁷I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail, yet you did not turn to me, declares the LORD.

Prior to the rebuilding of the Temple the people were indifferent to the LORD, they were busying themselves building their own houses and doing their own thing, but though they were working hard their work came to ruin because they did not have the LORD'S blessing or favour with them.

After the Rebuilding of the Temple.

Haggai 2:18-19 ----- ¹⁸Consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. Since the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider: ¹⁹Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on I will bless you."

After the Temple was built, the peoples focus returned to God and His favour returned to them. The LORD now multiplied their work and their efforts so that everything they did prospered.

The Fifth Message

The LORD will make Zerubbabel like a Signet Ring.

Haggai 2:20-22 ----- ²⁰The word of the LORD came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the (ninth) month (v18) ²¹"Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, *"I am about to shake the heavens and the earth,"* ²²and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms. *"I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms"* of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their riders. And the horses and their riders shall go down, everyone by the sword of his brother. ²³On that day, declares the LORD of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, declares the LORD, and make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, declares the LORD of hosts."

Haggai's Messages.

- His first message came on the 1st day of the 6th month (Hag 1:1).
- His fifth message came on the 24th day of the 9th month (Hag 2:10).

All came in the second year of Darius which means Haggai's five short messages cover a period of three months and twenty-three days in these few weeks the whole situation changed from defeat and discouragement into victory.

Signet-ring: comes from the Hebrew word (chowtham) and means a signature-ring, especially to seal, to make and end. The LORD told Zerubbabel there will be a shaking of the nations, but God will make him like a signet ring (symbolising a great reward).

When Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to their own land after their seventy years in captivity to Babylon he appointed Zerubbabel as governor of the colony that triumphantly marched back with great rejoicing to their own land to rebuild their beloved city Jerusalem. The work was completed and a great celebration was held at the dedication of the new Temple and so far as the record tells, the work of Zerubbabel was complete, but Zerubbabel's promised reward does not end at the completion of the Temple, he is also connected with becoming an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ in both the royal line (Matt. 1:13) and the Lucian line (Luke 3:27).

Israel's victory: Haggai fulfilled his brilliant mission of rebuking and encouraging the Jews and the whole situation changed from defeat and discouragement to one of victory and triumph.

NOTES on Haggai: sadly in some circles of Christianity this Old Testament chapter is used today to make some followers of the Lord Jesus Christ feel guilty, so that they will be motivated into giving excessive amounts of money, to build a multimillion dollar church building, or to influence believers into the service of the

Lord Jesus Christ. This is a total misuse of the LORD'S message that came to Haggai, because New Testament Christians are not under the same legal and binding covenant of law or the covenant of blessings and cursing Israel entered into with the LORD (Deut. 28).

New Testament believers are not saved by works or self-effort, salvation comes by God's grace. Righteousness and eternal salvation are granted as a free gift that comes to everyone who is faithful to God and trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ. Building God's church today is not about financing opulent million dollar buildings, nevertheless a building maybe required for practical purposes, but if it is built using guilt and putting the congregation under financial oppression it is not in the will of God.

Building God's House (Temple) today is about becoming more Christ like, and living in the will of God. New Testament Christianity is fluid and not restricted to a particular building or even a special day. The Christianity Christ taught is so exciting and real, it cannot be contained. It has no limitations and overflows into every moment of a Christian's life. The New Testament church is spiritual and global, moving and manifested in the lives of all those who are faithful and who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

For further information concerning tithing, see the title: -

- Tithing (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The Glory of the Spiritual Temple God is Building in Christ.

Jews and Gentiles are being united together as one body in Christ to be a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Believing Jews and Gentiles are being prepared by the prophets and apostles teachings and by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit to become a majestic and glorious sacred temple in which God dwells for all eternity.

When this majestic building is completed there will be nothing so worthy of reverence since God dwells in it; so ancient since the patriarchs and prophets laboured in building it; so solid since love cements it together; so closely united and indivisible since Christ is the corner stone; so exalted since it reaches as high as heaven and to God himself; so full of wisdom since its specifications are the word of God; so full of light since the Holy Spirit dispels every dark corner; so spacious since it is spread over the whole earth; so invincible and indestructible since it is being built by God, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit and by the influence of God's eternal word; so divine since it is a living, vibrant, dynamic temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit and so universal since all its unique stones though spread throughout the world are compacted together in Christ.

God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious temple; Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel and love its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it. It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal house fit for the most Holy God to dwell in.

It's beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, sex, and condition: the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most profound philosophers, the most eminent scholars and all those of whom the world was not worthy have formed this building.

Peter wrote: -

- Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him Will not be put to shame (1 Pet. 2:6).

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ are represented as living stones that God is using to build this spiritual, majestic temple of eternal glory which will be manifested in splendour for all to see when: -

- The Lord himself descends from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ are raised then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

End.