

# HAGGAI

## Chapter 2

### *The Promised Glory of the New House*

On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: <sup>2</sup>“Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, <sup>3</sup>‘Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? <sup>4</sup>But 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, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the LORD Almighty. <sup>5</sup>‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’ <sup>6</sup>“This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. <sup>7</sup>I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD Almighty. <sup>8</sup>‘The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the LORD Almighty. <sup>9</sup>‘The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the LORD Almighty. ‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the LORD Almighty.”

**2:1** *twenty-first day of the seventh month.* Oct. 17, 520 B.C., the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. It was a time to celebrate the summer harvest (see Lev 23:34–43), though the crops were meager (see 1:11; cf. Jn 7:37). Solomon had dedicated the temple during this feast (1Ki 8:2). (CSB)

Hbr *Tishri* (our Sept/Oct, three and a half weeks after the work on the house of the Lord had begun. (TLSB)

This was a new message, and intended to prevent discouragement, and excite them to greater diligence in their work. (ACC)

**2:2** *Speak now.* Directed to the governor, the high priest, and the remnant of the people, some of whom would have had childhood memories of what the temple had looked like before it was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC. (TLSB)

**2:3** *is left.* Some of the older exiles (perhaps including Haggai himself) had seen Solomon’s magnificent temple, destroyed by the Babylonians 66 years earlier. (CSB)

*this house in its former glory.* See vv. 7, 9. Zerubbabel's temple was considered a continuation of Solomon's. (CSB)

Solomon's temple was exceedingly glorious. (TLSB)

*seem ... like nothing.* Cf. the reaction when the foundation of the temple was finished (Ezr 3:12). (CSB)

Replacement temple must have seemed inferior to those who remembered the glory of Solomon's temple. Luther: "Many little children had been carried away into captivity, like Daniel, who lived almost until the return from the captivity. Here, too, this text indicates that there were still some survivors who had seen God's earlier house which had been so magnificently and beautifully constructed. So it did seem impossible to them that the temple could be restored. We have had the same experience. In the beginning, the preaching of the Gospel seemed foolish to us, but this is the way God declares His power. You see, at the time when we expect nothing less, when we think that everything is going to pieces, that's when the Lord is near" (AE 18:380). (TLSB)

**2:4** *be strong ... work.* David used these words in 1Ch 28:20 when he encouraged Solomon to build the temple. Joshua son of Nun had been exhorted with similar words (Jos 1:6–7, 9, 18). (CSB)

Three repetitions of this verb heighten God's call for courage and fortitude. (TLSB)

*I am with you.* See 1:13 and note; 1Ch 28:20. The same God who helped Solomon will empower Zerubbabel and the people. (CSB)

In the strength of the Lord, nothing is impossible for His people. (TLSB)

He is a God of the present. We are to be thinking of the present too. There is no dark age in the church. There is no golden age. There is instead the ever ongoing present age of the church in which God's people moved by his Spirit do what he wills and pleases. (PBC)

**2:5** *the covenant.* At Mount Sinai, God had declared that Israel would be His own possession from among all peoples (Ex 19:5–6), and He had given them the assurance that He would dwell among them and be their God (Ex 25:8). (TLSB)

*my Spirit.* The Holy Spirit had rested on Moses and the 70 elders as they had led the people out of Egypt and through the desert (see Nu 11:16–17, 25; Isa 63:11). See also Zec 4:6 and note. (CSB)

In the past, God had given His Holy Spirit to Moses, to Joshua, and to David. This same Spirit would now be among these people to comfort and strengthen them. (TLSB)

*Do not fear.* See notes on v. 4; Jos 1:18; Isa 41:10. (CSB)

This isn't a godly pep talk in which he tells us that we can do it if we look far enough inside ourselves. He isn't hinting at the fact that there may be latent reserves of power inside that haven't tapped yet. No the power come from him. The courage comes from him. It comes through his words. (PBC)

**2:6** An announcement of the coming day of God's judgment on the nations—which the fall of Persia to Alexander the Great (333–330 B.C.) would foreshadow. Heb 12:26–27 relates this verse to the judgment of the nations at the second coming of Christ. The background for the shaking of the nations here and in vv. 21–22 is the judgment on Egypt at the Red Sea. Cf. also Isa 14:16–17. (CSB)

**LORD ALMIGHTY** – This is now the seventh time the Lord addresses himself by this title. The word “almighty” in the Hebrew is the word for hosts. It is used for the mass of fighting men that advances to do battle with the enemy. (PBC)

*shake.* First of three occurrences of this word, which refers to events associated with God's effect on human history (vv 7, 21). When God acts, as on the Last Day, all the forces of nature will experience upheaval along with the nations of the world (Mt 24:29). (TLSB)

**2:7** *desired ... will come.* “Desired” can refer to individuals, as in 1Sa 9:20; Da 9:23 (where the same Hebrew verb is translated “highly esteemed”); 11:37. Thus it may have Messianic significance (cf. Mal 3:1). The same Hebrew word can also refer to articles of value, however (see 2Ch 20:25; 32:27)—such as the contribution of King Darius to the temple (Ezr 6:8). If that is the intent here, the bringing of the “riches of the nations” to Zion in Isa 60:5 is a close parallel (see note there). (CSB)

*fill ... with glory.* “Glory” can refer to material splendor (see Isa 60:7, 13 and notes) or to the presence of God (Ex 40:34–35; 1Ki 8:10–11). The latter references connect the glory of the Lord with the cloud that filled the sanctuary. When Christ came to the earthly temple, God's presence was evident as never before (see Lk 2:27, 32). (CSB)

The Lord promises that His glory will fill this rebuilt temple as it filled Solomon's temple (1Ki 8:11). (TLSB)

**2:8** *silver ... gold.* God provided for Solomon's temple (1Ch 29:2, 7) and for Zerubbabel's (Ezr 6:5). (CSB)

*The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine.* Whatever was needed to build the temple, the Lord provided. He will also provide whatever spiritual riches are needed for His more glorious house, the Church. (TLSB)

**2:9** *glory ... greater.* Ultimately because the Messiah would be present there (see v. 7 and note). (CSB)

Luther: “This splendor could not lie in gold or silver or other precious objects, since that first temple had been built much more richly and splendidly. Rather, this is a spiritual splendor, which comes through the preaching of the Gospel. All these things have been fulfilled in Christ” (AE 18:383). *greater than the former.* What would make the second temple even more glorious than the first was the presence of God’s Son in it (Lk 2:27, 46). (TLSB) Hbr *shalom*, a multipurpose word that can mean “health,” “prosperity,” or “peace,” and may serve as a greeting. God’s greatest gift of peace is in the sending of the Messiah (Lk 2:14, 29). (TLSB)

*this place.* Probably Jerusalem (see Isa 60:17 and note). (CSB)

*I will grant peace.* Probably an allusion to the priestly benediction (see Nu 6:26). (CSB)

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The pastor says these words every time he is finished with his sermon in church. It isn’t peace which man can give. It isn’t peace we can dissect and analyze. It is simply the peace of God which he snows down on his people in quiet softness. (PBC)

**2:1–9** The Lord encourages His people to continue their work of rebuilding the temple with the assurance that He will be with them and that in the future, the glory of this house will be greater than the first temple. Do we at times become discouraged thinking that God’s Church and the preaching of His Word count for nothing in this world? The Lord assures us that it is here we find our greatest treasure: forgiveness of sins and peace in Christ our Savior. • Praise to You, O Lord, for establishing Your glorious Church and for the peace that she proclaims. Amen. (TLSB)

### *Blessings for a Defiled People*

<sup>10</sup> **On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Haggai: <sup>11</sup> “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Ask the priests what the law says: <sup>12</sup> If a person carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, oil or other food, does it become consecrated?’” The priests answered, “No.” <sup>13</sup> Then Haggai said, “If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?” “Yes,” the priests replied, “it becomes defiled.” <sup>14</sup> Then Haggai said, ”‘So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,’ declares the LORD. ‘Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is**

defiled. <sup>15</sup>”“Now give careful thought to this from this day on <sup>a</sup>—consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the LORD’s temple. <sup>16</sup>When anyone came to a heap of twenty measures, there were only ten. When anyone went to a wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were only twenty. <sup>17</sup>I struck all the work of your hands with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not turn to me,’ declares the LORD. <sup>18</sup>‘From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the LORD’s temple was laid. Give careful thought: <sup>19</sup>Is there yet any seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit.’”“From this day on I will bless you.””

**2:10** *twenty-fourth day ... ninth month.* Dec. 18, 520 B.C.—when winter crops were planted. (CSB)

Hbr *Chislev*, our Nov/Dec. Haggai received his third message exactly three months after work on the Lord’s house had begun. (TLSB)

**2:11** *priests.* They were consulted about the precise meaning of the law (see Jer 18:18; Mal 2:7–9). (CSB)

Priests had the responsibility of distinguishing between what was clean and what was unclean. They were also responsible for interpreting and applying the Law (Dt 17:8–13). (TLSB)

*law.* Hbr *torah*, “instruction in God’s will”; may refer to a ruling or decision based on the Ten Commandments and other laws in the Five Books of Moses. (TLSB)

**2:12** Garments were made holy by contact with holy meat (Lv 6:27) but could not communicate holiness to other items. (TLSB)

*consecrated meat.* Meat from an animal set apart for a sacrifice. (CSB)

Flesh of animals sacrificed to the Lord. (TLSB)

*does it become consecrated?* A question about transmitting holiness. Consecrated meat made the garment “holy” because it was in direct contact with that garment (see Lev 6:27), but the garment could not pass on that holiness to a third object. Cf. Eze 46:20. (CSB)

**2:13** *contact with a dead body.* Anyone who touched a dead body was unclean (Nu 19:11–13), and everything touched by the unclean person also became unclean. (TLSB)

*does it become defiled?* Ceremonial uncleanness is transmitted much more easily than holiness. Anything touched by an unclean person becomes unclean (see Nu 19:11–13, 22). (CSB)

**2:14** *this people*. See 1:2 and note. (CSB)

*Whatever they do ... is defiled*. Even though the people were back in the holy land, that holiness did not make them pure. They needed to obey the Lord, particularly with regard to rebuilding the temple. See notes on vv. 12–13. (CSB)

People were unclean or defiled because the temple had not yet been completed, despite good beginnings. Their previous failure to act according to God's will in one area of life contaminated all other activities in which they engaged, such as trying to raise crops. (TLSB)

**2:15** *before one stone was laid*. Before the 24th day of the sixth month (1:15). (CSB)

Haggai invites the people to look forward to what is coming in contrast to what had been happening. Repeated in v 18. (TLSB)

**2:16** *how did you fare?* People are asked to think about conditions before the temple rebuilding began. Then, they lacked wheat and wine. (TLSB)

*heap*. Probably of grain (see Jer 50:26). (CSB)

Sheaf of grain. (TLSB)

*only ten ... only twenty*. The poor harvests were related to the sin of the people. See 1:11; Isa 5:10 and note. (CSB)

*wine vat*. A trough into which grape juice flowed. See note on Isa 16:10. (CSB)

Where grapes were crushed and juice was drained. (TLSB)

**2:17** *I struck you*. The Lord permitted disease, mold, and hail to ruin their crops so that they would turn their hearts to Him in repentance (1:10–11). (TLSB)

*blight, mildew*. Mentioned as a curse for disobedience in Dt 28:22. See also 1Ki 8:37; Am 4:9. The blight was probably caused by a scorching east wind (see Ge 41:6 and note). (CSB)

*hail*. Sent to destroy the fields and livestock of Egypt (see Ex 9:25; Ps 78:47–48). (CSB)

*you did not turn*. See Am 4:9. (CSB)

**2:18** Repeated from v 15. From the time that the foundation of the temple had been laid until the present day, the people had continued to suffer want. (TLSB)

*when the foundation ... was laid.* The same potential for blessing existed at the time when the foundation of the temple was laid in 536 B.C. (Ezr 3:11). This is a warning not to fail again. (CSB)

**2:19** *vine ... fig tree ... pomegranate ... olive tree.* Grapes, figs and pomegranates ripened in August and September, and olives from September to November. These harvests, like the earlier grain crops, had produced little. See 1:11 and note. (CSB)

*I will bless you.* Because of their response to Haggai's message, future abundance is assured. Cf. Mal 3:10. – Just as our God wants change to take place in our lives, so also he wants the blessings to start in our lives. (PBC)

Despite all their hard efforts, the people had not enjoyed good harvests. But now, because of their determination to rebuild the temple, they can look forward with hope. The Lord will mark this day as the beginning of showers of blessings on them. (TLSB)

**2:10–19** The people have not received the blessings they expected from the Lord. And the offerings they bring to the Lord are unclean (v 14) because of their earlier failure to rebuild the temple. But now the Lord promises to bless them. The people of Judah need to realize that without this blessing, both the temple building project and their crops will suffer. We also need the Lord to bless us, for without Him, we can do nothing. By His bodily presence in Christ, He has demonstrated His gracious kindness to us. We can depend on Him to provide for all our needs, both spiritual and physical. • Father, forgive me for the times I have lived my life without considering You. Help me depend on You to bless all that I undertake as Your child. Amen. (TLSB)

### *Zerubbabel the Lord's Signet Ring*

<sup>20</sup> **The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month:** <sup>21</sup> **“Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I will shake the heavens and the earth. <sup>22</sup> I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother. <sup>23</sup>”** **“On that day,” declares the LORD Almighty, ‘I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,’ declares the LORD Almighty.”**

**2:20** See note on v. 10. (CSB)

The Lord spoke through Haggai a second time on the same day (v 10). (TLSB)

**2:21** *Zerubbabel*. See note, 1:1. Haggai's first message on the 24th day of the month was directed to the people (v 10). Now he addresses Zerubbabel, the one through whom spiritual blessings will be realized in the future. (TLSB)

*shake ... the earth*. See v. 6 and note. (CSB)

**2:22** *throne of kingdoms*. Earthly rulers and their dynasties. (TLSB)

*overturn ... overthrow*. The Hebrew for these words is used with reference to Sodom and Gomorrah (see Ge 19:25; Am 4:11). (CSB)

There will be a complete overthrow of the kingdoms of this world, together with their charioteers, their cavalry, and all their weapons of war (Ps 46:9–10). (TLSB)

*chariots ... horses ... riders*. Cf. the destruction of Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea (Ex 15:1, 4, 19, 21). (CSB)

*each by ... his brother*. The plight of the armies of Midian (Jdg 7:22), Gog (Eze 38:21) and the nations fighting against Jerusalem in the last days (Zec 14:13). (CSB)

The Lord will use one nation to destroy another. (TLSB)

**2:23** *On that day*. The day of the Lord. See Isa 2:11, 17, 20; 10:20, 27; Zec 2:11 and notes. (CSB)

OT prophets often used this expression when referring to the NT era (Zep 3:9, 11, 16; Zec 13:1). (TLSB)

*my servant*. A term applied to prophets (see Isa 20:3 and note), political leaders (Isa 22:20) and the Messiah (see Isa 41:8–9; 42:1 and notes). (CSB)

*signet ring*. A kind of seal that functioned as a signature (see Est 8:8) and was worn on one's finger (Est 3:10). Like other seals (cf. Ge 38:18) it could be used as a pledge or guarantee of full payment. Its mention here probably reverses the curse placed on King Jehoiachin in Jer 22:24 (cf. Jdg 17:2). Zerubbabel would then be a guarantee that someday the Messiah descended from David will come (cf. Mt 1:1, 12). In 2Co 1:22 the Holy Spirit is the seal guaranteeing the believer's future inheritance (cf. Eph 1:13–14). (CSB)

*signet ring*. Ring engraved with a person's name or symbol and used to make an impression on a clay seal or wax tablet as a way of sealing a decree. To have a signet ring was a mark of authority. (TLSB) The promise made to David (2Sm 7:11–16; Ps 78:70) is repeated to Zerubbabel, a descendant of David, through whom the promised Savior would come (Mt 1:12, 16). Zerubbabel never became a king over Judah, as perhaps some



Judeans hoped would happen. Luther: “This applies not so much to the person of the king as it does to the person of Christ, who was born out of

God’s children have his mark upon them; they in turn put their mark (his mark) on the world. Since our baptism we carry with us the name of Jesus. (PBC)

*chosen you.* See Isa 41:8–9; 42:1 and notes. (CSB)

The promise made to David (2Sm 7:11–16; Ps 78:70) is repeated to Zerubbabel, a descendant of David, through whom the promised Savior would come (Mt 1:12, 16). Zerubbabel never became a king over Judah, as perhaps some Judeans hoped would happen. Luther: “This applies not so much to the person of the king as it does to the person of Christ, who was born out of (John 4:22). Therefore, Christ, who came from the Jews, changed everything with His coming, namely, through the preaching of the Gospel. You see, as long as Zerubbabel lived that change did not occur. It came after his death when the new King, Christ, was born. To Him be praise and glory. Amen” (AE 18:386–87). (TLSB)

**2:20–23** Haggai concludes by looking to the future. The time was coming when the Lord would overthrow the kingdoms of the world and make His chosen servant Zerubbabel the one through whom the promise of the Savior would be realized. When we see the world in turmoil, with wars and rumors of wars across the globe and evil increasing all around, how often do we find ourselves foolishly wondering whether the Lord is in control? We need to remember that just as He did in the past, so today the Lord continues to govern all things in the interest of His kingdom. Through Jesus, the promised descendant of David and Zerubbabel, we receive forgiveness for our sins of doubt and worry. • Heavenly Father, I praise You for sending Jesus to be my Savior from sin, my comfort in affliction, and my reason for living. Amen. (TLSB)