

# HAGGAI

## Chapter 2

*The Coming Glory of the Temple*

**In 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? 4 Yet 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, 5 according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not. 6 For 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. 7 And 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. 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. 9 The 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.’”**

**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)

**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)

*is it not as 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.* 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)

*fear not.* 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 of hosts* – 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** *nations shall come in.* "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. (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** *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 give peace.* Probably an allusion to the priestly benediction (see Nu 6:26). (CSB)

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)

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*

**10** On 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.” 13 Then Haggai said, “If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?” The priests answered and said, “It does become unclean.” 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. 15 Now then, consider from this day onward. Before stone was placed upon stone in the temple of the LORD, 16 how 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. 17 I 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. 18 Consider 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: 19 Is 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.”

**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)

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

Flesh of animals sacrificed to the Lord. (TLSB)

*does it become holy?* 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** *every work of their...is unclean.* 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 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)

**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)

*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 Chosen as a Signet*

**20** The word of the LORD came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, **21** “Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, **22** and 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, every one by the sword of his brother. **23** On 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.”

**2:20** The Lord spoke through Haggai a second time on the same day (v 10). (TLSB)

**2:21** *Zerubbabel*. 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)

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

*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)

*every one... 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. (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)

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.* 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)