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Haggai (Full Book)



Haggai - Steve Gregg

In this concise and engaging exploration of the book of Haggai, Steve Gregg highlights the historical context and key themes of this often overlooked prophetic work. Gregg discusses the importance of rebuilding the temple after the Jewish exile and emphasizes the need for the people to prioritize their spiritual commitments over material wealth. Drawing connections to Jesus and the breaking down of barriers between Jews and Gentiles, Gregg ultimately invites listeners to consider the timeless relevance of Haggai's message in their own lives. With his insightful analysis and accessible delivery, Gregg offers a fresh perspective on this ancient text.

Transcript

Tonight we're taking the very short book of Haggai. And if you've been coming for very long to these meetings, which usually are only once a month and once in a while they're even missed, so it goes more than a month between, you know we started, I don't know how many years ago in Genesis, it's got to be, I mean we're up to like the 37th book and we, that's got to be at least that many months, right? So I imagine it's been close to three years or more that we began in Genesis. And here we are, very near the end of the Old Testament.

And this one is a very short book. It's not the shortest book. Obadiah is the shortest book.

It's only one chapter. But Haggai is two chapters. It is, however, quoted in the New Testament, so it has relevance to us as New Testament believers.

And we'll take a look at what it has to say. It's short enough that we'll be able to take it verse by verse. There are notes for you on the seats nearby, just as far as an introduction to the book goes.

This is the first of the books that we have come to that is what we call a post-exilic prophet. There are three post-exilic prophets. Now post-exilic refers to after the Jews' captivity in Babylon, which was 70 years long.

Because of the idolatry of the people, God punished Israel, or actually Judah by this time. Israel was the northern kingdom. They had been punished earlier.

But Judah, the remaining southern kingdom, came under judgment at the hands of the Babylonians. And in 586 B.C., the temple was destroyed, and the Jews were deported into Babylon, the ones that were still around in Israel and Judah. Some very famous people that we know of were taken into captivity.

In 605 B.C., earlier than this, Daniel and his three friends had gone into captivity. In 597, Ezekiel had gone into captivity in another wave of captives, and then this temple was destroyed in 586. Now this is almost 70 years later.

In 536 B.C., Cyrus conquered the Babylonians, and he released all the captives that the Babylonians had taken out of their own lands into Babylon. Cyrus was Persian, and the Persian Empire therefore conquered the Babylonians and had the policy of repatriating people to their homelands who had been taken against their will 70 years earlier by the Babylonians. That meant that the Jews, if they wished, could go back.

In fact, Cyrus issued a decree specifically urging them to go back, if they wished, to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, rebuild the city, and reestablish their nation, which had been totally demolished and had ceased to exist 70 years earlier. Not many of the Jews took up that offer, though. Fifty thousand, which might sound like a pretty large number, but actually it's less than half the population of the town I live in, which isn't a very big town.

So not a very large population of Jews did come back to do the rebuilding. They were led by a man of David's lineage named Zerubbabel, though he was of David's lineage and therefore of the royal lineage, he was not king. They were a subject people still under the Persians.

They were a vassal state, so they didn't have a king. But the Persians made Zerubbabel governor of the returning exiles in the city of Jerusalem. And there was a high priest named Joshua.

And these two leaders, one political and one religious, were the people who helped to get the country back established from scratch again with these 50,000 who returned. Now, most of the Jews did not return. Most of the Jews remained in the foreign lands to which they'd been carried off.

And frankly, most Jews to this day remain away from Israel. There has not been a time in the past 2,500 years that the majority of Jews have been in their homeland, even now. And there's more Jews outside of Israel than in, and that's always been the case.

And that was the case even when the exile was officially ended and the diaspora was permitted to come home. But not everyone wanted to. They were comfortable.

Now even those who had come back, though not very comfortable, had become somewhat lukewarm. What happened, they came back, the captives that did come with Zerubbabel, they came back in 536 BC. And they were all happy to be there.

And they actually laid the foundation of the temple. So they got right away started on the rebuilding of the temple as one of their first priorities. But they didn't finish it.

They just got the foundation done. And then they ran into opposition. There were local people who'd been there all through the exile period while the Jews were away.

These were the people who were essentially the same as the Samaritans in the New Testament. These were people who had some Israelite ancestry, but they were mixed race with Gentiles. And they were also not very religious.

They had not followed the Jewish religion all those years. So they had a sort of a mixed religion. And they were not therefore very united with the Jews who were somewhat distantly related to them.

But they saw the Jews coming back as sort of an encroachment on their territory where they had been all the time. And when the Jews started building the temple again, this offended the local Samaritan people. And they wrote letters to the Persians back in, you know, where the Jews had come from to put a stop to this.

And there were local and official Persian decrees made that did kind of put a damper on this. So the Jews just stopped working. At one point, they were actually forbidden to continue working.

So they stopped. So the temple had a foundation laid, but no other work done on it for 16 years. And in 520 BC, 16 years after they'd returned, two prophets arose.

One was Haggai, and the other was Zechariah. And I said these are post-exilic prophets because these are the first prophets to come after the exile was officially over. All the prophets we've studied so far, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the other minor prophets that we've studied, either lived before the exile began or in the midst of it.

Ezekiel and Daniel were in the midst of the exile in Babylon. But apart from those two, all the prophets we've studied previously were warning about the impending exile and conquest of Jerusalem. And so the Jews were now coming to the prophets who have a different message.

Now this different message was a message of encouragement. The pre-exilic prophets usually were giving warnings and threats that God was going to send Israel into Babylon if they didn't give up on their idolatry, and they did not. So they went into captivity.

But now when they came back, they were no longer worshiping idols. The truth is, after

the exile, the Jews never again worshipped idols in their land. There were never idols set up in Israel again by the Jews.

They apparently learned their lesson from the exile. And they were happy to listen to the prophets. This is a benefit that Haggai and Zechariah enjoyed that the previous prophets had not.

Most of the previous prophets had been ignored. Some of them had been killed by the Jews. But Haggai and Zechariah, the post-exilic prophets, were pretty much welcomed.

Their words were heeded. Once they began to speak, the people actually obeyed, which is a refreshing change from the earlier period of their history. Of course, Malachi, I haven't mentioned, he's also a post-exilic prophet.

He came along a little later still, later than Haggai and Zechariah. But Haggai and Zechariah were contemporary. Haggai began prophesying first, and Zechariah started prophesying about two months later.

And Haggai continued prophesying alongside Zechariah for about two more months. From the first to the last of Haggai's prophecies, there's a span of only four months. His entire ministry on record is a four-month ministry.

And in the middle of it, Zechariah picked up. And we don't know that his ministry went much longer than that. We don't know when it ended.

We know when it started. So this is the thing, that when Zechariah and Haggai rose up, it was because although the Jews had rebuilt the foundation of the temple, they had not done anything else for 16 years. They just let it sit.

In the meantime, the Jews had been building their own homes. They had received an edict from Persia not to build any longer on their temple, but they had not been forbidden to build their own homes. It would seem, I think, probable that all of the building supplies, which the king of Persia 16 years earlier had granted them to build the temple, probably had gone into the construction of their houses.

I don't know this to be true, but there's indication of it in chapter 1, because the people are rebuked for building their fancy houses and for neglecting the building of the temple. They're told to go up into the mountains to cut trees to bring wood to build the temple. They already had wood for the temple 16 years earlier.

It sounds like they may have misappropriated it, using it, building their own houses. Now they didn't have that wood anymore, so they had to go cut wood from the forest themselves and provide their own wood. But the message of Haggai and later of Zechariah was to encourage the people that they could now ignore the Persian edict that forbade them to build their temple, and that God wanted them to do it.

Now they didn't have a new edict from Persia allowing it, it's just that the prophets had ignored what the Persians said, just do what God says. Now it so happens that during the ministry of Haggai, the 70 years since the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC, the 70 years came to its end to the day, during the time of Haggai's prophecy. And he actually makes reference to it in his last prophecy.

But it may be that the people had not begun building the temple any further because the 70 years had not run through yet, and they knew that the Bible had said it would be desolate for 70 years. And it starts out by God saying, you people say it's not time to build the temple yet, well it's time now. And so this is how the prophecy begins.

Now Haggai's going to encourage the people to build, and we're told that they obeyed. When Zechariah comes along, which we won't take tonight, we'll take that next time, Zechariah has many visions, all of them encouraging Joshua and Zerubbabel and the exiles in the building of the temple. It's primarily, at least the first part of Zechariah is about the building of the temple, which is what the setting is here too.

So they've had the foundation laying there for 16 years, now it's 520 BC and they are instructed to go back into work to get it done. Now on the back of your notes I have the four messages that Haggai gives. It's two chapters, there's four messages.

The first message occupies the first chapter, and the other three messages are in the second chapter, and that's all there is. And the first one, chapter one, verses one through eleven, essentially is telling the people that God is displeased with their apathy because they have not actually been zealous to rebuild the temple. And this is really telltale, because to worship God in the Old Testament manner required a temple, required sacrifices.

They had been deprived of that sort of against their own will when the temple was destroyed, and they had spent 70 years unable to worship God according to their law. But you'd think that they'd be very eager to see that change so they can get back to their worship. And so actually when Haggai encourages them, they do seem to get eager to do that and they get busy again.

But they've been apathetic for the last decade and a half, and so this is what God's rebuking them for. Apparently in that period of time they've not only been building and decorating their own houses, but they have been experiencing drought and economic hardship. And God in this prophecy in Haggai chapter one is saying, hey that was me.

That economic downturn you've been experiencing, that's no accident. It's because you have not been zealous with your priorities to build my house as you should, and therefore your crops have not been good, there's been drought, this is all because of me. You should have figured that out.

And that's essentially the message in the first chapter. Then the second chapter is three other messages, shorter, the first nine verses, essentially is addressed to those who now can see how the temple building is shaping up. And among those who were there, there were some, there would not have been very many, but there were some who had seen the first temple before it was destroyed.

Now since 70 years have passed, these people if they were anything more than pre-adolescent, they'd be pretty old people. But of course anyone who was 10 years old, maybe even 20 years old, might still be alive, who'd gone into captivity and now they'd be 80 or 90 years old. Most people of that generation would be dead, but some were still living and basically the message is addressed to them because they're now seeing the new temple is not going to be anything like the one that went down.

The one that went down was built by Solomon at the wealthiest time in Israel's history with unlimited manpower. Not only a lot of population of Jews, but tons of foreign servants had been employed and it took years, but Solomon built the temple, the original temple, as what we call one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Fantastic building, but it had been destroyed.

And now the people who were there who could remember Solomon's temple and were now seeing the tawdry replacement that was being built with a smaller budget and smaller workforce, smaller blueprint, they were a little discouraged. And so the second message in chapter 2, verse 1 through 9, is encouraging them saying, you know, this might seem like it's not much, but it's actually very significant. The glory of this temple is actually going to end up being greater than the glory of Solomon's temple.

And we'll have to talk about what that means. The third message is in chapter 2 also, verses 10 through 19. And basically, the prophet is told to go and talk to the priests about a detail of the ritual law.

The idea being, there's two questions set in juxtaposition. One, if there's something that's been defiled, and in Judaism that could be from any number of things, if you've touched a dead body, if a woman's on her period, if a person has leprosy or anything like that, if anyone's come into contact with the unclean, they are personally defiled. And the first question is, well, what if someone who's defiled is touched by something that is holy, like holy meat or something that's re-offered in the temple? Does it make the defiled person clean? And the official answer the priest gives is, no, it does not.

If you're unclean, you are not changed from that condition by coming into contact with something that is ritually holy. Then the second question is, well, what about the thing that's ritually holy if it comes into contact with something unclean? Is it made unclean? And the answer is yes, it is. Now, essentially, that means that uncleanness transfers readily, but holiness does not.

In other words, if you're holy and you touch an unclean thing, you don't make it holy. You become unclean. Uncleanness transfers from the unclean to the holy, but holiness does not transfer from the holy to the unclean.

That's the point. And what God goes on to say is, these people still in their hearts aren't as zealous for God as they should be. There's some uncleanness still in them.

But the fact that they're touching holy things, building a temple, being an offer sacrifice because they set up an altar. The altar had been set up already before. When they built the foundation, they also set up the altar so that they had been doing the sacrifices, but they didn't have the temple built.

He says, all these rituals you're doing, those may be holy things, but they're not transferring to make you less unclean than you are because you are unclean. And therefore, you touching these holy things is defiling those, which is an idea that's very common in the prophets. In the Proverbs, it says the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.

In fact, it says it three times in Proverbs. That a wicked person who's offering sacrifices, that doesn't make them clean. As a matter of fact, it makes the sacrifices an abomination to God if they're offered by a wicked person.

Isaiah chapter 1 and Malachi chapter 1 make the same point. And there are numerous other parts of the Old Testament where the prophets say this. Essentially, it's not offering sacrifices that makes you holy.

If you are a hypocrite, if you are compromised, if you are wicked and you're engaged in ritual worship, it just makes the worship disgusting. And that's what the third message is. The fourth message is very short, verses 20 through 23 of chapter 2, and it's a promise made to Zerubbabel, the governor.

And basically what he's saying is that Zerubbabel is going to be preserved through the upheavals of history following. Now, this prophecy doesn't have to do with him personally. Just like when God spoke to Abraham and said that he was going to receive the land of Canaan.

Well, Abraham didn't receive it. His offspring did. Many times when a promise is made to an Old Testament character, it's fulfilled not in their own lifetime, but in their offspring.

And of course, the offspring of Zerubbabel is Jesus. Jesus descended from Zerubbabel, as the New Testament testifies. So it ends up being a messianic prophecy.

Okay, so that's what we have here. So let's look at the book. Chapter 1, verse 1, in the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month.

Now, you may be interested or not interested, no, that day happened to be August 29th. The sixth month, of course, is not on our calendar. It's on the Jewish calendar.

That would be June for us, but in their calendar, which begins in April, it is August. August 29th of the year 520 BC. Now, what's interesting is that this is a new moon.

A new moon was celebrated by the Jews every first day of the month. Just like they had to rest on the seventh day of every week as a Sabbath, they had to do the same thing on the first day of every month as a new moon. And then, of course, they had their annual festivals as well.

So their calendar, according to the Torah, involved them in holy days that were annual and holy days that were monthly and holy days that were weekly. The weekly being the Sabbath, the monthly being the new moons. And on those days, they were commanded to have a holy convocation, which would be a meeting, a gathering for religious worship.

So probably this prophecy was given while they were gathered on that new moon, probably around the temple foundation and offering sacrifices as they would on a holy day. And so that's the time and the setting where Haggai gives his first prophecy. The word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak, the high priest, saying, thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying, this people the time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.

Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple lie in ruins? Now, they were saying it's not time that the Lord's house should be built. That would indicate that they knew that at some point they should. Yeah, we can't just leave this slab here with the altar standing on it with no building on it forever, but it just hasn't been the right time yet.

Why? Well, we don't know why they thought it was, because their enemies were intimidating them. That could be one factor. Was it because they simply had the wrong priorities? It's time for me to panel my house over God's house some other time.

Or was it that they were actually aware that the prophecy that the temple would lie desolate for 70 years had not quite run out? It would. It would within about four months of this point, and it would literally run out to the day, the 70 years. But I don't know how much they were aware of, you know, that and how much they were saying it, but they were for whatever reason making excuses, not building the temple.

And that's not really time for that. God says, well, oh, so I guess it's time for you to build your paneled houses. My house is lying in ruins, but your house is looking pretty good.

Where'd you get those paneled boards? Anyway, those wouldn't be the ones that were

set aside for the temple 16 years ago, would they? You know, the wealthy people in Old Testament times paneled their house with cedar. We have numerous references to this. The rich would panel their houses with cedar.

And cedar is the very wood that came from Lebanon that had been provided by the king's edict. The Persian king had said that the forests of Lebanon should yield cedar for the building of the Lord's house. So 16 years earlier, they'd gotten all this cedar wood, and now suddenly their houses are all paneled with cedar and the temple isn't built.

So God says, now therefore, says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. You have sown much and bring in little. You eat and do not have enough.

You drink, but you are not filled with drink. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages, earns wages to put it in a bag with holes.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. Now, consider your ways, he's saying, listen, things haven't gone well for you. You've got nice looking houses, that's for sure.

But your food, you don't have enough food. You don't have enough clothing. You earn money somewhere, but it seems to disappear as if the bag you put it in has holes in it.

You know, you put your money in the bag, next thing you look, it's gone. What's up with that? How'd that happen? He says, well, why don't you think about that? Why don't you consider your ways? Think about this, he says twice. In other words, he's saying that these kinds of disadvantages or misfortunes should give one pause to say, is there something that God would like me to do differently? Now, of course, the Bible doesn't teach that if you have financial, you know, shortages, that that means you're sinning.

Jesus was rather poor himself, and he never sinned. Paul was, Paul said he was hungry and thirsty and naked most of the time and homeless a lot of the time, but he certainly wasn't that way because of sin. God will allow godly people to be tested with lack and with other things, but when apparently there's a protracted period where there's no blessing of God on anyone, the whole country seems to be under some kind of a curse, then maybe you should be thinking about that, especially in view of the fact that in Deuteronomy 28, God made it very clear.

If you keep my covenant, if you obey my laws, if you keep all my statutes, then you'll be blessed. You'll be blessed in the field, you'll be blessed in the city, you'll be blessed, you know, when you go in, when you come out, your animals will not miscarry, they're young. In other words, they will have a really prosperous nation.

Once again, a prosperous nation doesn't mean everyone in it is prospering, but God was dealing with Israel as a nation, not so much in this case as individuals. Now, God does deal with people as individuals, obviously, especially in terms of their souls and their destinies, but when it comes to dealing with the nation as a whole, he evaluates them by

apparently what the most common traits are among the majority, and when they're putting their own interests ahead of God's interests, as they were, well, then he apparently disciplines them, and that's what he's saying he's doing. They should have perhaps figured that out.

Consider your ways means you haven't really tried to put this together, have you? You've been neglecting what God wants done, and you've been doing something that you want done, and things are going wrong all over the place. You guys haven't had a good harvest for years. You haven't had rain.

What's going on with that? Well, think about it. Maybe there's something you should be doing differently, and he says, yeah, there is. Now, I just want to say this, that when God rebukes them for building their own paneled houses or fancy houses, while God's house is in ruins, of course, he's speaking to the priorities that are manifested by the way we spend money.

Jesus said, where your heart is, your treasure will be also. So, you know, somebody says, oh, I love the Lord. Yeah, but look, where's your money? You know, how much of that has gone to spread the kingdom of God? How much of that is building the Lord's house, which of course is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the body of Christ? How much evangelism? How much discipleship? How much of the kingdom work is being supported by what portion of what you have? And on the other hand, how much of your own projects are supported with the money you have? Now, I'm not making this up.

Jesus is the one who said, where your heart is, your treasure will be. Or where your treasure is, your heart will be. Both are true, actually.

If your heart is there, you're going to channel your treasure there. If your treasure is already there, your heart's going to be there too. The point is that your heart and its condition can be diagnosed very well by looking at your bank book and seeing on the register, where has all of my elective money been going? Because where it's going is where my heart is.

There's just no avoiding it. That's inseparable. What you spend your elective money on is what you value, obviously.

You don't part with your money lightly. You part with it to get things you value. And so the more you spend on yourself, the more you're valuing the things that please yourself.

And that's not a new doctrine. It's here in Haggai. It's in the teaching of Jesus too.

So with God's house or God's projects remaining unfinished, it seems of strange apathy and a strange wrong prioritizing for the people of God to be trying to live wealthy, as if that has some value in the grand scheme of things. As if having a better car, a better house, a better wardrobe, whatever, is that somehow going to be of value to you like 50

years from now? You say, well, I won't even be alive 50 years from now. Exactly.

Exactly my point. 50 years from now, what will you wish that the money you now have had been spent on? Or 100 years from now, 1,000 years from now, a million years from now, you'll still be thinking about it. What will you think about it? This is something that only foolish people don't think about.

And so these people were foolish. They were not considering. We are prioritizing things in a way that's not pleasing to God.

And he's already started to show his disapproval. We can see it in our harvests. We can see it in our bank balances.

We can see that the money we had seems to have been put into a bag of holes in it because it doesn't around anymore. I don't know where it went. It could be inflation.

It could be taxation. It could be theft. Jesus said, do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal.

That happens. He says, but lay up treasures in heaven, of course, where moth and rust is not corrupt and thieves do not break in and steal. So how do you lay up treasures in heaven? What Jesus told the rich young ruler, he said, sell what you have and give it to the poor and you'll have treasures in heaven.

He also said to his disciples on another occasion, sell what you have and give alms and store up yourself a treasure that does not wax old, eternal in the heavens. Giving alms, giving to the poor. That's where God's priorities are.

That and the gospel, of course. Those are the two priorities that the Bible reveals that God really wants us to be committed to in practical and financial ways. Helping the poor and of course spreading the gospel.

That's God's house being built today. In those days it was building a building to worship it. God doesn't live in buildings made of hands.

He lives in a temple made of living stones. Therefore, the concern for God's people and for the expansion of God's kingdom and family is where our priorities should be. He says twice, consider your ways here.

He says in verse 8, go up to the mountains and bring wood and build a temple, build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified, says the Lord. Now, bringing pleasure to God and glorifying God. Those are the two reasons for existence.

It may not be our identified reasons for existence. If not, then we're out of touch with reality. The reason God made anything at all was to glorify himself and to please himself.

He's the only one in the universe that deserves to be pleased. I don't. You don't.

What did you ever do to deserve to be pleased? God, who makes it all, deserves to be pleased by all. It says in Revelation 4:11, it says, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power because you have created all things and for your pleasure they are and were created. Everything is made to please God.

You were made to please God. You're also made to glorify God. Even the heavens declare the glory of God.

If you're not glorifying God in your life, you're out of touch with the whole universe. You haven't yet aligned yourself with why you exist. They hadn't at this point either.

He says, listen, I need a temple built here, as it turns out. That's my project right now. You need to build it so that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified, says the Lord.

So glorifying God, pleasing God, that he might have pleasure, these should be the things that matter more than anything else to every human being. And if it's not likely that it will, it should at least be what matters most to the people who call themselves children of God. And that will show, of course, in the way we, not only the way we spend money, we have other assets besides money.

We have time. You know, in biblical times, most people had to work 12-hour days, six days a week. They'd work seven if the Sabbath didn't forbid it.

But they had to work almost their entire daylight hours of their week, just usually to put food on the table. They didn't really have the luxury that we have. We can work eight hours a day and have that many waking hours left of the day to do what we want.

We have wealth in terms of free time, leisure, as well as in terms of money. We have many assets and we are stewards. That means we're responsible to manage them for the owner, who happens to be God.

So this is what the Bible teaches very plainly, and it is what most people like to forget, and by forgetting, fail to bring pleasure to God and to glorify God to the degree that those who make it their business to do so would do so. Now, he did say to them in verse 8, go up to the mountains and bring wood. So apparently they have to go cut down wood in the forest, again suggesting perhaps they had already used the wood that was previously available for building the temple.

Okay, now you've got to replace it at your own expense, with your own labor. Verse 9, you looked for much, but indeed it came to little. When you brought it home, I blew it away.

Why, says the Lord of hosts, because of my house that is in ruins? Well, every one of you

runs to his own house. Runs to his own house doesn't mean they're fleeing to their own house, it means that they're making haste to attend to their own houses, but not God's house. He actually takes responsibility for the losses economically.

You brought your cross, I blew on it and scattered it. I'm the one who made sure that you were not doing well this way. Therefore, the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit.

I call for a drought on the land, God says. Now this is fulfilling threats that were made in Leviticus 26, verses 19 and 20, and Deuteronomy 28, several places in that chapter, Deuteronomy 28, verse 17, verse 23, verses 38, 39, all of these places are where God tells them, if you break my covenant and you don't please me, I'm going to make the sky above you like bronze, which means your prayers will bounce off at right hand. Rather than go through to heaven, and no more rain will come from it.

As you can't get blood from a turnip, you can't get rain out of a bronze dome. And he says he'll make the ground like stone. In other words, they're not going to produce any crops.

That's one of the things God threatened. A drought, and therefore no productivity of the crops. And so that's what he says, that's happened to you.

You should have considered this. You should have thought of this. For I call for a drought on the land, and the mountains, on the grain, and the new wine, and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all labor of your hands.

Now that's actually the end of his first prophecy. And we have then a few verses telling us how the people responded to it. It says, Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehoshaddak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God.

Now that's a line you don't hear very often in the Old Testament. Usually when the prophets speak, we do not read of the people obeying. Rather, we hear the people complaining and plotting to kill the prophets.

But here, these returned exiles are of a different spirit, although they're not entirely pleasing to God in their hearts yet. But they are at least accepting the rebuke and responding. They obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet as the Lord their God had sent him.

And the people feared the presence of the Lord. Now notice it says they obeyed the voice of the Lord and the voice of Haggai as God had sent him. The idea here is that when God sends the messenger and that messenger speaks for God, that is God speaking.

It's the word of the Lord. It's not just the word of the man. It's not that Haggai was just some grumpy old guy who wanted to complain about the people's apathy.

He had a word from God and they recognized he was a prophet. Now they hadn't had any prophets for a long time, so I'm not sure how exactly they knew he was a prophet, except that it just rung true. What he said was obviously true.

And so they saw that as God speaking through him, and it was, and so they obeyed. Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, spoke the Lord's message to the people saying, I am with you, says the Lord. Now, I don't know if he just came back another day and said, I'm with you, says the Lord, and walked away.

Or if that's more like a summary of maybe a series of prophecies he was giving them as they were working. Because they were starting to obey, and whether Haggai just said, the Lord says he's with you, or whether there were a series of messages that are not recorded, whose message can be summarized as, I am with you, I don't know. We simply can't say.

So the Lord stood up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people, and they came and worked on the house of the Lord, of Hos, their God. On the 24th day, the sixth month in the second year of King Darius. Now, that day that's referred to is September 21st.

He had begun to speak on August 29th, so it's been about three and a half weeks, I guess. Yeah, 23 days after Haggai began to exhort, they got started. Well, what'd they wait three and a half weeks for? Well, they had to go up the mountains and they had to cut down the wood, and they had to gather supplies.

So they were obeying already, they just hadn't started building. Until that day. Now, the second prophecy, in the seventh month on the 21st day of the month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai, the prophet, saying, now this is October 17th of the same year.

So they started working on the building September 21st, and now this prophecy came to them several weeks later. Now, this happens to have been the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The seventh month from the 14th to the 21st day of the month was the Feast of Tabernacles.

And so this is the last day, what in the Gospel of John is referred to as the great day of the feast. It was the high point of the week-long festival of Tabernacles. And this is, so again, the people were gathered for some ritual worship at the time when God gave this second prophecy.

It would appear that these prophecies came to Haggai while in places where the people were already gathered to worship, he found a ready crowd. Just like Jesus and the

Apostle Paul, when they traveled, they went into the synagogue on the Sabbaths, because that's where they'd find people. You find the crowds, and you talk then, that's how God reaches them, they're already gathered for other purposes.

And on that day, it says, Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak, the high priest, and the remnant of this people, saying, 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? In other words, are there still some of you around here who remember Solomon's temple before it fell? I'll bet you're not impressed with this one. This is pretty small, pretty tawdry compared to that one, isn't it? And he goes on and says, Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel, says the Lord, and be strong, Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak, 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. According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my spirit remains among you.

Do not fear. For thus says the Lord of hosts, once more it is a little time, little while, I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and the dry land, 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. The silver is mine and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts.

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. He's basically saying, I know you're discouraged, it doesn't look like this project is going to be as impressive as the temple you had before, and in a sense it won't be.

You don't have the resources Solomon had, either financial or human resources, and so you're going to settle for a smaller temple. However, this glory of this temple is going to be superior to the glory of Solomon's temple by other measures. So be strong and work, I'm with you.

Don't think that the inferior appearance of this temple means I'm not with you or that somehow you're not being blessed. He says, once more, well, he says in verse 5, according to the word that I covenanted with you when I came out of Egypt, so my spirit remains among you. Do not fear.

Now, the fact that God's spirit remained among them is interesting because in what form did the spirit manifest himself among them in the Old Testament? Largely through the prophets. The spirit of God spoke through the prophets. So the presence of Haggai and Zechariah, both prophesying about this time, was evidence that the spirit of prophecy had returned to the people of God.

The spirit was there, speaking to them. God was giving them instructions through the spirit. Now, Zechariah, who began also prophesying right around this same period of

time, in chapter 4 of Zechariah, he saw this vision of the two olive trees, and in the vision, there were golden pipes from these olive trees filling a golden bowl, and from this golden bowl, the seven golden lampstands were being fed.

And so the oil was continually coming from the olive trees, it was olive oil that they used. Of course, it couldn't really be done, you can't just, it's not like drawing maple from maple trees, you don't just stick a spigot in an olive tree and get olive oil out, but you have to crush it and all that, but it was a symbolic vision. From the olive trees, the oil was flowing, continuously, these were live trees, so they're continually producing, and it was filling the bowl, it was keeping the lamp of Israel lit.

And when God explained this to them, in words that most of us have heard many times, God said, it's not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of Hosts. That's what the oil coming in and keeping the flame burning represented, it was God's spirit, it was like that oil. And the light continuing to shine was no doubt an emblem of Israel's life continuing to exist, basically.

And so God's spirit was keeping them alive, keeping the lamp burning, as it were, and that's also what Haggai around this time is telling us, God says, my spirit is among you, my spirit is with you. So the emphasis here is it's not going to be done by human talent or might or power, it's going to be done because the spirit of God is in the project. As Solomon said in Psalm 127, unless a man builds a house, unless the Lord builds a house, they labor in vain that build it.

Unless God's working on the house, you might as well not work on it. It's not by human effort or skill that this is going to be done, at least not properly. It's only by the spirit of God.

And this is true also, by the way, in building the church. Jesus said, upon this rock I will build my church, and Jesus is the one who builds the church. But he does it through his spirit and through the gifts of the spirit operating through the people of the church.

It's through the spirit's work, through various gifted members who have gifts of the spirit, that the spirit is building the body of Christ, which is of course the temple today. So it's parallel to what they're experiencing. Now in verse 6, he says, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Once more, it is a little while, I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land, I will shake the nations, and they shall come.

Now, once more I'm going to shake the heavens and the earth, when did he do it before that? He doesn't indicate when he shook them before that, but Hebrews chapter 12 actually quotes this passage and applies it in an interesting way. That some may not have expected, hard to say. In Hebrews 12, 26, verse 25, we'll start there.

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. Whose voice then shook the earth, but now he is promising yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven. Now this yet once more, this is a quotation from Haggai 2, 6. This yet once more indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken as of things that are made, that things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Well, okay, what things are being shaken? And what things cannot be shaken and remain? Well, the latter question is answered in verse 28. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace that we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear for our God is a consuming fire. So the kingdom that we have received is unshakeable.

But what was being shaken down? When the writer of Hebrews wrote, what was about to happen? The writer of Hebrews quotes this verse, so he does leave out one of the phrases. In Haggai, he says, it is a little while. Once more, it is a little while from now, not long from now.

I'm going to shake heaven and earth. Now, the writer of Hebrews doesn't quote the it is a little while line, though he certainly knew of it. It is implied.

The writer of Hebrews saying, hey, this is that time that he was talking about that little while it is passed. This book, Hebrews, was written very shortly before the destruction of the temple in 70. And the shaking of the earth, which he said happened before when God spoke from earth, he shook the earth.

He's talking about Mount Sinai. He said that when God instituted the old covenant Mount Sinai, the mountains shook. There was an earthquake.

There was fire. There was smoke. There was all kinds of phenomena.

And earlier in chapter 12, the writer of Hebrews has alluded to that. We didn't read it because we didn't want to take so much time reading it. But going back, he refers to the fact that, well, if you look back, for example, at just a few verses earlier, verse 18.

For you have not come to the mountain, meaning Sinai, that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness, and a tempest, and a sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged to be saved. That the word should not be spoken to them anymore, for they could not endure what was commanded. Now, this is Mount Sinai he's talking about.

And he says, when God spoke from Mount Sinai, the earth shook. But now he's going to shake not just the earth. He's going to shake heaven, too.

Now, this we don't know what that really means. In Haggai, he talks about shaking

heaven and shaking all the nations of the earth and shaking the sea and all that stuff. I mean, it's figurative.

He's not talking about a literal earthquake like they had at Mount Sinai, but he's saying things are going to be shaken up again. Even the heavenly realms will be shaken up. There's going to be spiritual changes going on here.

And I believe, and a person would be welcome to disagree if they think they have good reason, but I believe he's saying that God's going to shake things up and the temple's going to go down. Just as the tabernacle was built at Mount Sinai, that temple which is replaced is going to go down real quick in 70 AD. And that's going to be shaking up the whole heavens and earth, in a sense, figuratively speaking.

Certainly he's not talking about literal shaking here. At least I don't believe he is. So he sees this as a prophecy about the fall of Jerusalem.

But it can't be just that. He sees that as applicable to his time. But the prophecy goes on to say he's not just shaking heaven and earth, but the sea and the dry land and all the nations.

And he's actually going to say the same thing later on, near the end of chapter 2. He's going to say more about shaking things up. Let me see here. Yeah, in chapter 2, verse 21.

So there's more to this than just the fall of Jerusalem. But the writer of Hebrews sees in it, at least as one application, a reference to the fall of Jerusalem, I believe. Some may see it differently, but that's what I think he's talking about there.

And then he says at the end of verse 7, chapter 2, verse 7, in the New King James, which follows pretty closely to the King James on this point, he says, and they, he says, they shall come to the desire of all nations. Now, other translations read this quite differently. And make it that the desire of all nations is what's coming.

And the desire of all nations, many have thought this refers to the Messiah, of course. I grew up thinking this was referring to the Messiah. But the more I studied it, the more I realized that most evangelical scholars think not.

Not because they're against there being a reference to the Messiah here. It'd be a great thing if it was. The problem is there's a grammatical problem.

Because the shall come is in the plural rather than singular. If it's not about the desire of all nations will come, why is it then plural? Most translations, I think now, and most commentaries prefer to believe that it's saying the desired things of all nations. That is referring to the wealth of the nations, the gold and the silver and so forth that is needed by the Jews for this project.

That God will bring all the nations to help build it. Now even if it is talking about things coming, this would connect with Psalm 72, which is a messianic psalm. And Isaiah 60, which talks about the wealth of the nations being brought in to Jerusalem.

The idea here is it's looking at a time when the Gentiles, the worshippers of Yahweh, are bringing their gifts to the temple just like the Jews were required to do. The desirable things of the nations is how many of the translations feel it should be rendered. Also the fact that the New Testament never quotes this verse about Jesus.

That doesn't prove anything, but the New Testament writers did like to quote obvious verses that they thought were filled in Jesus. And you'd think that if they saw this as a reference to the Messiah, this would be a great verse to be quoting. But either way, you could see it as a reference to the Messiah coming, or you could see it as a reference to because of the Messiah, because of the new order, the new temple made up of living stones.

The New Testament order has had outreach to the nations, and now not only Israel but the nations bring their gifts to God. That is an emblem of worshipping God. They come and bring their sacrifices and so forth.

Now the language of course is the language of Old Testament worship, but that's very commonplace in the prophets when they're talking about New Testament worship. They speak of it in terms of burning incense and offering sacrifices and things. That is the things that were familiar to them as forms of worship.

They tell with the Malachi chapter one talks about how incense will be offered to God all over the world from the east to the west. It's talking about the present age where the Gentile nations around the world are worshipping God, but the burning of incense we'd have to take spiritually, as in Revelation where the incense is said to be the prayers of the saints. The point I'm making is that he is talking either about the Messiah, or if that can't be sustained from the passage, it is talking about the Messianic age nonetheless.

The circumstances brought about by the Messiah so that the Gentiles now are being brought into the worship of God, which only began to happen because of the gospel being preached to all nations and the Great Commission going forward. So it is looking forward to the Messianic time regardless of what the desire of all nations are referring to. And he says, I'll fill this temple with glory.

Now this temple, if it is talking about Zerubbabel's temple, it was filled with glory in one sense and that Jesus preached there. And according to Hebrews 1.3, Jesus is the bright shining of God's glory and the express image of this person. Jesus is the glory of God.

John said in John 1.14, the word became flesh and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. So Jesus is the glory of God and

he ministered in this same temple that Zerubbabel was now building. In a sense that made this temple more glorious than Solomon's.

Because Jesus, remember, said one greater than Solomon is here. Solomon built the temple, the first one, and that's about the best that can be said about it. Mostly paganized Jewish kings used that temple after Solomon's time.

It was not really, most of the time it was not used for good things, but Solomon built that temple, but one greater than Solomon has come, Jesus said. And he is building his house. He's building his church, which is the temple made of living stones.

And this house is filled with glory. That is, Zerubbabel's house that he built was filled with the glory of Jesus being there. But I believe it too was a type and a shadow, as the temple always was, of the spiritual temple, which is the Messiah's own temple, which he built.

Jesus walked out of the temple about three days before he was crucified and said to them, your house is left to you desolate. You will not see me anymore until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And so he left this temple just prior to his own crucifixion and said, it's done.

It's desolate. It's God forsaken. But that doesn't mean God has no house to live in.

It's just that, as Stephen said in his sermon in Acts 7, God does not dwell in houses made with hands. He dwells in a spiritual temple, of which that earthly temple is a type. And that's where the real glory of the Lord is manifested, because Christ lives in every stone of that living stone temple.

It's a greater glory. It's filled with glory. The silver is mine, the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts.

Now, this too might suggest that the desire of all nations is referring to the gold and the silver and the wealth of the nations that are being brought to Jerusalem to the worship of God. Because by saying the silver and the gold are mine, he may be following up on that, saying, well, the reason that the nations are bringing all their wealth in is because it's really mine. And, you know, when these people become converted, they're going to recognize that their wealth is mine and they're going to bring it and use it.

Unlike you Jews in Zerubbabel's day, who took the material gain I've given you and used it for your own houses. But it is mine. The silver is mine, the gold is mine, and someday even the Gentile nations are going to know that.

The desirable things of the nations that we've brought to the worship of God, and it'll be more glorious than this temple they're building now. He says, the glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the glory of the former, verse 9, says the Lord of hosts. And

this place I will give, in this place I will give peace, says the Lord of hosts.

Well, all right. The peace that he will give probably is twofold. In one sense, they've had a lot of opposition from their enemies, and he's going to give them peace from that.

They're going to be able to get the job done and worship God without their enemies successfully threatening them. But more than that, of course, in the temple that's filled with the glory, the spiritual temple, that's where there's peace. Jesus said, these things I've spoken to you that in me, you'll have peace.

In the world, you have tribulation. But in me, you have peace. And in Christ, as part of his temple, there is peace given.

In Ephesians chapter 2, Paul says, he is our peace, who has made the two one, the Jew and the Gentile, and broken down the middle wall of partition between them. That's interesting because the middle wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentile, most commentators believe that that's an allusion to the fact that there was a temple wall in the court of the Gentiles. In the inheritance temple, which was Zerubbabel's temple, that said no Gentiles can get past this wall.

There is a court of the Gentiles, then beyond that there's a short wall, and then a court of the Jews, and then as you get closer to the temple, it was more restrictive. But the Gentiles could come into the court of the Gentiles, but at the wall that's separated between the court of the Gentiles and the court of the Jews, there's a sign that says, Gentiles enter beyond this wall at your own risk. Your death will be your own fault.

That's a paraphrase of what they said, but it's very much like that. And so this middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles that Paul says has been broken down in Christ may very well be an allusion to that wall in the temple that was clearly a barrier between Jews and Gentiles. The peace, Paul says in Ephesians 2, he is our peace who has broken down that middle wall of partition between us and made in himself of the two one new man, so make him peace.

Now, verse 10, we come now to the third message. It's verses 10 through 19. On the 24th day of the ninth month in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, now this is December 18th of the same year.

December 18th, it's nine weeks after the previous message was given. Exactly three months after the work had resumed. And that means Zechariah had begun prophesying a month earlier than this.

Now, it says, thus says the Lord of hosts. Now ask the priest concerning the law. According to Deuteronomy and Leviticus and even Malachi 2, 7, people were supposed to go to the priest to ask questions about the law.

And so God says to Haggai, go ask the priest about this thing, about the law. Ask the priest concerning the law, saying, if one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and with the edge of it, he touches bread or stew or wine or oil or any food, will it become holy? Then the priest answered and said, no. And Haggai said, if one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean? So the priest answered and said, it shall be unclean.

So again, holy meat touching ordinary meat doesn't make it holy, but unclean meat touching something holy makes that unclean. So the transference of uncleanness is more natural than the transference of holiness. And by the way, that was something any Jew should have known.

If you touched someone that was unclean, you were unclean. And that's why the Jews were avoided touching lepers, avoided touching women on their period, avoided touching dead bodies, avoided touching the carcass of an animal or anything else that was said to make them unclean. Because contact with the unclean would make them unclean.

It's interesting, though, that Jesus, when he encountered lepers, he touched them. He touched a woman or let her touch him who had an issue of blood. He touched the dead body of the son of the word of name who died.

He touched the beer, the coffin. All of those things would make a man unclean, according to the law. But what happened? Jesus, when he touched the leper, the leper became clean.

Jesus didn't become unclean. The holiness and cleanness of Jesus transferred to the unclean and made them clean. The opposite of the law.

This is why in the law, God had to tell Israel, don't let any Canaanites survive in the land I'm saying to because they'll corrupt you. But now we're told to go into the nations among the pagans and uncorrupt them because the dynamic of the new covenant is the opposite of the old. Under the old covenant, there is no dynamic power to avoid uncleanness if you were in contact with the unclean.

But the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of the grace of God, the new covenant power means that our holiness, our cleanness transfers to the unclean. At least can because we can lead them to Christ. And nations are made better by the invasion of the holy ones through the Great Commission.

And so, you know, the New Testament is different than the law, but under the law, it's made very clear. Unclean person touches us. Holy meat.

Well, that holy meat is history. It's not good anymore. Verse 14, then Haggai answered and said, so is this people.

And so is this nation before my eyes, says the Lord. And so is every work of their hands and what they offer there is unclean. Now, they're touching holy things.

They're bringing sacrifices to offer to the Lord, but they are personally unclean. Now, they're not ritually unclean, so they're not really violating the law. If they were actually ritually unclean, if they had touched a dead body and the next day, I mean, that would make them unclean for a week.

If the next day they would go off for sacrifice, that would be a breach of the law. He's not saying that they have been ritually unclean. He's just saying they are spiritually unclean.

And therefore, although they're offering holy things on the altar, it's their uncleanness makes those holy gifts unacceptable, makes them unclean. And although that's that's about to change, he's basically saying you still need to improve spiritually. So that your gifts can be truly clean.

And now carefully consider from this day forward, from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the Lord. Now, they've been building for three months. So some stones, the building is not complete, but some stones have been laid on top of other stones.

So before that started happening, before you guys resumed your work three months ago, remember back then there were, he says, in those days, when one came to a heap of 20 ethos, which an ethos is a dry measure of usually of grain. It's about 35 liters or nine gallons. When one came to a heap of 20 ethos, there were only 10.

When one came to the wine vat to draw out 50 baths, a bath is a liquid measure of six gallons. So when they came to a wine vat to draw out 50 baths, from there, there were only 20. Now, what it's saying is that they've had a 40% to 50% reduction of economic wealth.

They came to where they expected to find 20 ethos of grain. There were only 10. That's a 50% reduction.

They expected 50 baths of wine, but there's only 20. That's only 40% of what they expect to have. Their economic situation is in the tank.

And he says, that was still true. Well, that was true before you started building. You'll find out it's still kind of true.

He says, remember that? He says, I struck you with the blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands, yet you did not turn to me, says the Lord. Consider now from this day forward, from the 24th day of the ninth month, from that day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed still in the barn? As yet, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not yielded their fruit.

But from this day, I will bless you. Now, this is the end of that prophecy. He's saying, remember before you started building how bad it was economically? And notice it's not really any better now.

There's still no fruit on the trees. There's still no grain in the barns. But that's changing, starting today.

From this day on, I'm going to start blessing you. I haven't been yet. I've been watching your work for the past three months.

And now I'm ready to start blessing you. Now, what's so big about this day? Notice the emphasis on this day. It says, verse 18, consider now from this day forward, from the 24th day of the ninth month, strong emphasis on that particular day.

Well, in Ezekiel chapter 24, there's also a strong emphasis on a particular day. Ezekiel 24, verses 1 and 2 says again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to be saying, Son of man, write down the name of this day, the day, this very day. The king of Babylon started the siege against Jerusalem.

Now, the siege of Jerusalem, of course, resulted in the destruction of the temple and so forth. This very day, write that day down. Don't lose track of this particular day, he says.

And now Haggai is given another day. He says, note this day. Pay attention to this day.

Now, he doesn't say why that is important, but it just so happens that from the day that Ezekiel mentioned, which is in the ninth year, the tenth month, the tenth day of the month, from that day, when Jerusalem began to be besieged, until this day, that Ezekiel is being told to make note of, it's exactly 25,200 days. 25,200 days between those two days. Since the Jewish year was 360 years, if you divide 25,200 by 360, it's 70.

To the day, this was 70 years after the siege of Jerusalem began. Now, he doesn't make that point here. It's just something that is true.

But it may be significant, since such an emphasis is placed on the beginning day and on this day as well, and it just so happens to be exactly, to the day, 70 years. And God says, okay, now I'm going to start blessing you. I started cursing you when Nebuchadnezzar got to your gates.

And it's been 70 years. I said it would be 70 years. 70 years has passed from this day.

I'm going to start blessing you now. Notice you've been building for three months, still haven't gotten the blessing. No grain in the barn.

No fruit on the trees. Why? Well, it wasn't this day yet. But now it is this day.

And from this day on, things are changing. Okay, then we have this very short prophecy

at the end. Verse 20, and again the word of the Lord came to Haggai the 24th day of the month.

Now, no other information is given, which suggests that this is the same day. The previous prophecy was also on the 24th day of the month, although the month and the year were given. Here it's just the day, probably later the same day this prophecy came.

Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake heaven and earth. I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms. I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms.

I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride them. The horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will take you, Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Sheophil, says the Lord, and I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, says the Lord of hosts.

Now, this shaking up, remember earlier he had mentioned shaking heaven and earth, and the writer of Hebrews said, well, that's kind of related to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. But this is talking about something much more than that. It's talking about overthrowing Gentile kingdoms.

It's talking about overthrowing the chariots and the armies and those who ride in them and their riders. This is talking about, I believe, ongoing geopolitical chaos, that the world is going to have its shakeups. God's the one who shakes things up, and at different times he shakes down different kingdoms when it's their time to go.

The rise and fall of empires is really kind of God's doing. God, as it says in Daniel chapter 2, I guess it is, says he raises up kings and brings down kings. That might be Daniel 4, but I think it's chapter 2. The idea is that God is the one, he's the mover and the shaker.

He's the one who shakes up things. One kingdom falls, another kingdom moves in. One army is prevalent, and then it gets overthrown by another army.

This is kind of like, no doubt, a summary of ongoing history into the future centuries. He says, that may be true, but Zerubbabel, I'm going to be hanging on to you. I'm going to make you like my signet ring.

Now a signet ring was a very valuable kind of ring. If a king or some important person had a signet, that's how he signed his letters. That's how he sealed his documents.

That's what he put into the wax to prove that it was authentic. He loses that. Anyone who's got that, if someone steals it from you, they can sign documents in your name.

They can do anything you can do. You keep that thing, you watch over that thing. You don't let that get into the wrong hands.

God said, I'm going to keep you like my signet ring. That is, I'm not going to let go of

you. I'm going to see nations rise and fall.

But you're going to, you, and I think this would have to be applied to you and your offspring, and ultimately to his most famous offspring, which is Jesus Christ, who is descended according to both Matthew chapter 1 and Luke chapter 3, both genealogies of Zerubbel. In fact, after David, Zerubbel is the only name that's in both the lists. But it is, Messiah came through Zerubbel.

And there's no doubt a reference to Messiah, that God is going to preserve the line of Zerubbel through the permanent ruler, Messiah, who came 2,000 years ago and has been seated on the throne ever since. And God preserves him and keeps him. It doesn't matter what happens in the geopolitical world, the kingdom of God and the Messiah, Zerubbel's offspring, continues to be secure.

I just might say that Zerubbel's ancestor, who was King Jeconiah, God had put a curse on him. This is back at the beginning of the captivity. In Jeremiah chapter 22, the wicked King Jeconiah was an ancestor of Zerubbel, and God had said this about him, the word Keniah is an abbreviation of Jeconiah.

And God said in verse 28, Jeremiah 22, 28, no earlier, 24, As I live, says the Lord, though Keniah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on my right hand, yet I would pluck you off, and I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, meaning the Babylonians. And he goes on to say it's the Babylonians, Nebuchadnezzar is named in the next verse. Now, King Jeconiah was under God's curse.

In the later verses I started almost to read, it talks about how Jeconiah will not have any heir of his seated on the throne, ruling in Israel anymore, or Judah. But he says, even if he was my signet ring, I would take him off, I'd cast him away. Now, you don't get rid of your signet ring, but Keniah, he's just so offensive to me, even if he had been my signet ring, I'd throw him away.

But unlike Jeconiah, Zerubbabel is told, I'm going to make you like a signet ring, meaning I'm going to keep you, unlike your ancestor Jeconiah, I didn't keep him, I got rid of him. I'm not going to get rid of you. And so this, I believe, is to be understood as a reference to Jeconiah's most famous offspring, just like prophecies about David are fulfilled in Jesus because he's the most famous son of David.

And even promises made to Abraham are fulfilled in Jesus, the most famous son of Abraham. We know that because Galatians 3.16 says, unto Abraham and his seed the promises were made, it does not say to his seeds as of many, but to your seed, singular, which is Christ. So promises made to Abraham are fulfilled in Christ, the son of Abraham, the seed of Abraham.

Promises made to David are fulfilled in Jesus, the son of David. A promise made to

Zerubbabel is fulfilled in Jesus, the most famous son of Zerubbabel. These men are all types and ancestors of Jesus, and therefore the application of this promise to Zerubbabel is best understood to be fulfilled in Jesus, who is like God's signet, preserved and cherished, treasured and kept by God.

So, very short book, but I'm glad to have had a chance to go over it. Next time we're going to have to go through Zechariah. When I say have to, it's a delight to go through Zechariah.

It's just challenging. It's a very fascinating book. I've taught it many times.

I'm eager to teach it again. What is the challenge is trying to get it done in one night. There's just so much in it.

But we'll save that for a month. I have a month to worry about how to do that. So, any questions?