

**The Hebrew
Old
Testament
Word Book
HAGGAI**

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Preface

This work is designed specifically for the person that has had one year of Old Testament Hebrew. A need was identified for a work that is focused upon the level of a second year student and desire a deeper look at the text. The format is historical-grammatical exegetical and meant to not only bring out the detailed “richness” of the language, but the emotional sense that is found in the Hebrew Bible.

It is important to understand the original historical Hebrew meaning of the words and the historical setting involved. Thus, this work is titled “The Hebrew Old Testament Wordbook,” with the focus placed upon the Hebrew language as it relates to its historic usage and context.

The following guidelines are used throughout the work:

1. Use the original language separated by phrases.
2. Keep the word order as close to the original as possible.
3. Parse all the verbs.
4. Find important word derivations.
5. Translate the basic grammar constructs keeping them as basic as possible.
6. Keep the translation as raw and literal as possible.

This work is not intended as a new translation, or even a good translation, but to enable the user to quickly identify the author’s emphasis using word order and verb tense. It is hoped that this work will be a help to students and teachers of the Word so that one might pronounce more of God’s Word and less of man’s word. This is how it should be.

John Pappas,
Las Cruces, New Mexico, 2022

Introduction

Author

The prophet identified as Haggai (Heb. חַגַּי, Gr. Ἀγῆαιος) “festive,” was one of the last three writing prophets of the Old Testament some four hundred years before the arrival of Jesus Christ and the four hundred years of silence from God. Haggai is identified as the author (Hagg. 1:1) but is not identified by pedigree, heritage, or occupation. We know nothing about him. We know essentially nothing of his family or life other than what is found in this prophecy attributed to him and a couple references in Ezra. References to Haggai in Ezra (5:1; 6:14) identify him and Zechariah as contemporary prophets and that their work being effective in the rebuilding effort. There is much speculation concerning his age and birth, but really there is no Biblical or extrabiblical evidence to support such speculations. We do not even know when he returned to Israel, though it seems he was among the first group that returned to the land in 538 B.C., since he is there prophesying before Ezra arrived with the second group (Ezra 7-10; 458 B.C.).

The author of Haggai has never been questioned since he is identified as the prophet of the book (Hag. 1:1).

Date of Writing

The date of this prophecy is identified by the rule of the Persian king Darius who held Israel as a vassal state. The first prophecy was received on the second year of king Darius Hystaspes, that is, 520 B.C (Hag. 1:1). It is interesting to note that before the captivity, prophets dated things by referencing events to either a king of Israel or Judea, but after the captivity the reference is to gentile kings since Israel was ruled by foreign kingdoms. These are thus the times of the gentiles (Luke 21:24). The times of the gentiles referred to in Scripture started with the captivity of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar and will end with the Second coming and new age of the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem is His Temple on Mount Zion.

Are the months specified Jewish or Persian? It has universally been accepted that the month reference, i.e. “in the sixth month,” is reckoned to be Jewish months. There are four prophecies in this short book. Haggai’s written prophetic ministry lasted a total of

four months. Zechariah started prophesying in Haggai's final prophecy, in the eighth month.

The 4 Prophecies of Haggai in 2nd year of Darius (520 B.C.)			
1:1	1 st prophecy	6 th month, 1 st day	Elul 1 = August 29
2:1	2 nd prophecy	7 th month, 21 st day	Elul 24 = September 21
2:10	3 rd prophecy	9 th month, 24 th day	Tishri 21 = October 17
2:20	4 th prophecy	9 th month, 24 th day	Chislev 24 = December 18

Place of Writing

Jerusalem is identified as the place of Haggai's prophecies as they looked upon the Temple compound and compared it to that of Solomon's glorious Temple (Hag. 2:3), yet the prophetic later Temple, the Millennial Temple, will be greater than Solomon's (Hag. 2:9). Ezra says, "Haggai and Zechariah prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem" (Ezra 5:1).

Major theme

The theme of Haggai is: how can a covenant lifestyle work apart from covenant worship? The focus is upon the importance of Israel's personal relationship with God and His place in their priorities of life. Is walking with God possible without walking in God way? In the case of life under the Mosaic Covenant, one's relationship with God was not only personal but national as Israel was a chosen nation whose worship was formally organized around the place where they met God. The Temple was the place where they found mercy within the sacred confines of the holy of holies. If the nation places no priorities upon approaching the throne of grace, the great mercy seat of God, with the sacred blood of the sacrifice in the Temple how can they have a proper Mosaic Covenant relationship with their God? How could they approach their God without the shed blood of the prescribed sacrifice? If they could not approach their covenant God properly, how then would their quality of life be? If the Mosaic Covenant blessing was conditioned upon obedience to God and His law, can Israel live well and prosper without God in their midst?

This story is an object lesson concerning sin and one's ability to recognize just how overwhelming sin can be. The nation was in great sin by satisfying their own desire for nice houses at God's expense. One can be so overcome with self-seeking, self satisfaction that they may not be able to see their sin and the destruction that it causes. Yet if one is chosen of God, He will not let His own continue in sin without consequences. This is the story of God coming into their lives after 15 years of inactivity with their Temple building effort. God moves in the nation by sending a prophet with a message of correction and a promise of mercy as He moves in their national leader to accomplish the rebuilding effort and to restore the nation to right relationship with Him. The seventy-year captivity is over, they are back in the land, and it is time to dedicate

themselves to proper covenant worship and life back in the land. God exhorts them, “be strong ... and work, for I am with you ... My Spirit remains among you, do not fear!” (Hag. 2:4-5).

Introduction

Haggai is the first prophet raised up in the postexilic era. They had been in captivity for seventy years in Babylon when God intervened bringing up a pagan king (Cyrus) to secure their freedom, and at the point of this writing, they had been free for sixteen years back in the land and had not yet rebuilt the Temple. Over fifty thousand returned to the land settling in Jerusalem (Ezra 1,8). It is time for God to stir up the hearts of the people through the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5-6).

There are a cluster of books which go together here – the history books – Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther; then the prophetic books – Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Also, the Septuagint attributes the author of Psalms 137 and 145-148 to either Haggai or Zechariah.

The Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonian armies on the 9th of Av 586 B.C. This marked the end of independent Jewish national and religious life. Never again will they have an independent Jewish existence without some sort of external Gentile control over their lives. This is the Times of the Gentiles.

Hill and Walton give us an excellent introduction as they write, “The backdrop for Haggai’s prophecy was the reign of Darius I, king of Persia (521-486 BC). Cyrus had consolidated his power base by defeating the Medes in 549 BC and was welcomed into Babylon as king of Persia in 539 BC. According to the Cyrus Cylinder, a decree issued in 538 BC permitted conquered peoples who had been deported by the Babylonians to return to their homelands. This naturally included the Jews, although they are not named on the cylinder. The first wave of emigrants to Jerusalem numbered 42,360 (plus 7,337 servants; cf. Ezra 2:64-65), and they were led by Sheshbazzar (Ezra 1:5-11). He was a prince of Judah and first governor of the restoration community. The foundation for a new temple was laid during the early stages of his administration (Ezra 5:16).”¹

Construction ceased after opposition to its construction was brought to the king by the inhabitants in the land. The back story of those opposing the construction is as follows: “As they [the returning Jews] stood at last before the ruins of the Temple they were stricken with grief. Jerusalem had become a desolate city. Even more desolate they found those of their people who had been left behind by the conquerors – ‘The poor of the land to be wine-dressers and husbandmen.’ These had inter-married in the meantime with those foreign peoples the Assyrians and Babylonians had colonized in Samaria in place of the Jews that had departed. Thenceforth, this mixed group became known as Samaritans. Although they considered themselves Jews in every way and wished to join the returned exiles in rebuilding the Temple, Zerubbabel nonetheless declined their offer curtly,” ‘Ye have nothing to do with us to build a house for our God.’ ... This rejection of the Samaritans as brother Jews and equals by the returned exiles had serious consequences, of both a religious and a political nature. The Samaritans kept presenting their grievances to the Persian satrap of the province, who, in turn, forwarded their

¹ Andrew Hill & John Walton, *A survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), p. 679

petitions to the ‘King of Kings’ in Babylonia, with the result that the construction of the Temple edifice was suspended for eight years.”²

The Lord raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to motivate the people to restart the building effort. The Second Temple referred to a Zerubbabel’s Temple was completed and dedicated in 516 BC, exactly seventy years after Solomon’s Temple was destroyed. This Second Temple was later expanded under Roman rule by Herod, and it too was destroyed on the 9th of Av, AD 70.

Date (B.C.)	The Time of Haggai and the rebuilding effort ³
538	Cyrus issued a decree allowing the people to return.
536	Upon the return, an altar for sacrifice was built and the work of rebuilding the Temple begun.
535	Threats and a legal suit caused the people to stop work on the Temple. Only the foundation had been laid.
520	After fifteen years of inactivity on the Temple, the prophet Haggai preached a message of rebuke. His four prophecies lasted four months.
516	Four years later the Temple had been rebuilt.

Outline

- I. Prophecy # 1 - The Lord’s house should be built (1:1-2)
 1. The time of the prophecy (1:1a).
 2. The identity of the prophet (1:1b).
 3. The prophecy (1:2).
- A. The Lord questions the people (1:3-6).
 1. They built houses for themselves, but where is the Lord’s (1:3-4).
 2. The people are to consider their ways (1:5).
 - a. You sow much but reap little (1:6a).
 - b. You drink but are not full (1:6b).
 - c. You are clothed but are not warm (1:6c).
 - d. You earn but it goes away (1:6d).
- B. The Lord directs the start of building His house (1:7-11).
 1. Bring wood from the mountains (1:8).
 2. Build the temple (1:8b).
 3. Take pleasure in it (1:8c).
 4. When you worked for yourselves, I blew it away (1:9a).
 5. Why ?
 - a. Because My house was in ruins, your house was complete (1:9c).
 6. Therefore, the Lord caused a drought (1:10).
- C. The building commences (1:12-15).
 1. The leaders obey the voice of the Lord (1:12-15).
 - a. The ruler – Zerubbabel (1:12a).
 - b. The high priest – Joshua (1:12a).

² Nathan Ausubel, *Pictorial History of the Jewish People* (New York: Crown, 1984), p. 68

³ Table adapted from, Paul Benware, *Survey of the Old Testament* (Chicago:Moody, 2003), p. 257

- c. The remnant (1:12c).
- 2. The people feared the presence of the Lord (1:12-13).
- 3. The building commences (1:14-15).
- II. Prophecy # 2 (2:1-9)
 - 1. The Lord gives strength for rebuilding the temple to (2:1-5).
 - a. The ruler.
 - b. The priest.
 - c. The people.
 - 2. The later temple will be greater than the former (2:6-9a).
 - 3. I (Lord of Hosts) will give peace in this place (2:9b).
- III. Prophecy # 3 (2:10-19).
 - 1. The people are unclean (2:10-14).
 - 2. The Lord points out their sin (2:15-17).
 - 3. The promised blessing (2:18-19).
- IV. Prophecy # 4 (2:20-23).
 - 1. The Lord speaks to the ruler (2:21).
 - a. I will shake heaven and earth (2:21b).
 - b. I will overthrow kingdoms (2:22a).
 - c. I will make you (Zerubbabel) a signet ring (2:23).
 - d. I have chosen you (2:23b).

II. Figures of speech.

- שִׁמוּ לִבְכֶּם עַל-דַּרְכֵיכֶם (1:5) – “Set your mind upon your ways,” meaning, “consider your ways.”

First Prophecy (1:1-15)

The Lord's House should be built (1:1-7)

"Consider Your Ways"

Haggai 1:1-7

¹In [the] second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in [the] first day of [the] month, [the] word of the Lord came by [the] hand of Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the priest, the high one, saying, ² Thus said [the] Lord of hosts, saying: The people, the this one, saying, Not [the] time, to come, [the] time of [the] house of the LORD to be built. ³And it shall be, [the] word of the LORD in [the] hand of Haggai the prophet saying: ⁴Is it time for you, you dwelling in your houses, those which have been covered, and this house lay waste? ⁵And now thus says [the] LORD of hosts: Set your heart upon your ways! ⁶You scattered seed greatly, and bring in little. Eating, but nothing to one's fill. Drinking, but nothing to one's fill with drink. Clothe, but nothing to warm. For he who earns wages, earns wages bagged up [in] one with holes. ⁷Thus says [the] LORD of hosts: Set your mind upon your ways.

בשנת שנים לדריוש המלך בחדש הששי
ביום אחד לחדש היה דבר־יהוה ביד־חגי
הנביא אל־זרבבל בן־שאלתיאל פחת יהודה
ואליהושע בן־יהוצדק הכהן הגדול לאמר:²
כה אמר יהוה צבאות לאמר העם הזה אמרו
לא עת־בא עת־בית יהוה להבנות:³ ויהי
דבר־יהוה ביד־חגי הנביא לאמר:⁴ העת
לכם אתם לשבת בבתיכם ספונים והבית
הזה חרב:⁵ ועתה כה אמר יהוה צבאות
שימו לבבכם על־דרכיכם:⁶ זרעתם הרבה
והבא מעט אכול ואין־לשבעה שתו
ואין־לשכרה לבוש ואין־לחם לו והמשתכר
משתכר אל־צרור נקוב:⁷ כה אמר יהוה
צבאות שימו לבבכם על־דרכיכם:

Introduction

When the Lord says, "consider your ways," it is most certainly a call for self-examination. Can the child of God become so self-focused, self-directed, self-seeking, that he or she misses the obvious, misses the word of promise from the Lord. It is here

that one finds stagnation – spiritual stagnation, because of the lack of fellowship with God. This lack of fellowship is because of the lack of hearing the word of God. That was the root of their problem. But they also encountered problems they thought they could not control, that is, they thought since the rebuilding of the House of God had stopped that they could not restart the building due to outside influence and control. So, they simply moved to their own wants and needs leaving the very thing that brought them together in fellowship with the Lord, the Temple, and their identity as elect, chosen of the Lord of hosts to a point of desolation and emptiness. But the Lord directs the ways of His people, and it has been eighteen years since they returned to the land with the resources given them to rebuild the Temple – it is time for the Lord to intervene in their lives and to put everything in place for restoration of fellowship.

The prophet and date of prophecy identified (1:1)

1:1. בְּשָׁנָה שְׁנִיָּים לְדָרְיוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ (In [the] second year of Darius the king). As to the timing of this prophecy, the method is common for the prophet to give the formula dating from an important figure so as to not only identify the historical date, but the context as well (cf. Dan. 7:1; 8:1; 9:1; Ezek. 8:1; Zech. 1:1,7). The normal dating of important events was in reference to a king; however, this writing is not dated to a king of Judah or Israel, but to a foreign king who rules over them. It is important to note that after the Babylonian captivity, Israel never again was sovereign over the promised land. There were short periods of partial independent self-rule, but not until 1948 did Israel have sovereignty over part of the land. This, after all, is the prophetic period called the “Times of the Gentiles” (Dan. 2:31-45; 7:1-28; Luke 21:24; Rev. 13:1-10; 17:7-14) where even today half of Jerusalem is under Gentile rule!

The year is identified by the adjective שְׁנִיָּים (shēnayim) adj.f.sg, with bet prefix, “two,” which is derived from the verb שָׁנָה (shanah) “to repeat,” “do again.” It is the second שָׁנָה (shaneh) n.f.du., “year” of דָּרְיוֹשׁ (dar’yavesh) with lamed prefix, that is, Darius the Great (522-486 B.C.) the מֶלֶךְ (melek) n.m.sg, with he’ prefix, “king” of Persia.

The word Darius is of Persian origin and means “lord.” Darius is a title rather than a name. There were three Darius’ recorded in Scripture: (i) Darius the Mede (Dan. 9:1), ruler of the Chaldeans under Cyrus; (2) Darius Hystaspes, called Darius I (Hag. 1:1), ancestor of Cyrus but not by succession; and (iii) Darius the Persian, either Darius II, Nothus (423-404 B.C.) (Neh. 12:22), or Darius III, Codomannus (336-331 B.C.). The king mentioned here is Darius I, who seized the throne of Persia on September 29, 522 B.C.⁴ He was also known as Darius the Great because of his achievement in restoring the great Persian kingdom. He was the Persian king from 521 – 486 B.C. His advance to power is full of intrigue as he was not part of the royal succession. His story follows:

⁴ John Walton, Victor Matthews, Mark Chavalas, The Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), p. 796

Darius was born in 550 B.C. to Hystaspes of Ariaramnes, a satrap, and descendant of Hakhmanish (Achaemenae), an ancestor of Cyrus I. Gaumata, the Pseudo-Smerdis, usurped the throne from Cambyses. Darius was one of Cambyses' officers and retained the loyalty of the Persian army. Within two months, Darius had killed Gaumata (522B.C.) and spent the next two years defeating nine kings in nineteen battles to secure the throne⁵.

Darius then reorganized the empire into twenty satraps and many provinces. He established a postal system to communicate throughout the expanded empire, making Aramaic the official language. He then continued his conquest into remote regions of India, rebuilding an ancient canal from the Nile to the Red Sea, but it was his conquest west into Greece that finally ended the Persian ruler's life. He died in 486 B.C. returning to Persia after defeat on the Greek battlefield in the famous battle of Marathon.

Back in Jerusalem, the Jews had not worked on the rebuilding of the Temple for sixteen years due to Samaritan and Persian pressure. The incredible blessing of God that brought 50,000 Jews and a decree by Cyrus the Great (Ezra 1:2-4) that was prophesied by Isaiah (Isa. 44:28) was long forgotten. Discouragement and spiritual apathy ruled the day until God brought forth the prophet Haggai. Dr. Whitcomb describes:

"[J]ust after securing his throne, Darius I became God's instrument for encouraging the Jews to complete their second Temple. In 520 B.C., Tattenai, the recently appointed Pers. governor of W Euphrates provinces (formerly included in the realm of Darius the Mede), challenged the Jews who had started to build their Temple through the encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1-3). Their explanation that Cyrus had given Sheshbazzar (Zerubbabel) official permission to build the Temple was forwarded to Darius I with a request to investigate. Providentially the work was not halted during the long process of searching for Cyrus' decree (Ezra 5:5).

*The transition of royal power from Cambyses to Darius I was so traumatic that it is a testimony to Persian efficiency that the document was ever discovered. An expanded form of the decree of Cyrus on a parchment scroll had been filed away in a branch library in the distant city of Ecbatana (Ezra 6:2). Darius I then proceeded to issue his own decree, commanding Tattenai to assist the Jews in their work on the Temple and to provide expenses from the tribute that came from the western provinces (Ezra 6:6-12).... With this substantial material assistance (and with additional words from the Lord during Darius' fourth year [518 B.C., cf. Zech. 7:1-8:23]), the Jews completed the Temple in his sixth year (Feb/March, 516 B.C.). Nothing further is known of the experiences of the Jews during the subsequent thirty years of the reign of Darius I."*⁶

⁵ Merrill C. Tenney, gen. ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), vol. 2, 26

⁶ *Ibid*, 28

בחדש השישי ביום אחד לחדש (In the sixth month, in [the] first day of the month). The prophet adds the precise day and month based on the Jewish lunar calendar. This is a common way for the prophets to provide the precise day they received a prophecy from God. It is important to identify the exact date as it serves as evidence for the validity of the prophecy. Usually, a prophet would receive a near prophecy and a far prophecy. The near prophecy served to validate the prophet. If the prophecy does not come true, then the prophet's life was at risk. If the near prophecy comes to pass, then the prophet is validated, and the far prophecy is believed to come to pass. The fulfilled prophecy served as a witness for the true prophet of God, thus the people would turn their ears to the message from the LORD.

The month and day is given in the traditional manner using the *bet* prefixed to "in the month, the sixth." The definite article connected to the adjective שִׁשִּׁי (shishshiy) "sixth," specifies the definiteness of the month. The Hebrew חֹדֶשׁ (chodesh) n.m.sg., with bet prefix, "month," is to the ancients measured by "the new moon," so month comes from the verb חָדַשׁ (chadash) "to be new," The calendar of the ancients used the new moon as the monthly reference and were guided by the lunar calendar. For the Hebrews, the sixth month was the month of Elul corresponding to August-September and was the harvest season for olives, grapes and dates.

The day is identified as, ביום אחד לחדש, "in [the] day, the first for the month." The day, יוֹם (yom) n.m.sg., with bet prefix, that the prophecy is given by God is identified as the אֶחָד ('echad) "first," day for the, חֹדֶשׁ (chodesh) n.m.sg., as the lamed prefix reads, "for the month." This date is identified by the modern date of August 29, 520 B. C.⁷, and by the Jewish date as 1 Elul, 520 B.C., thus it was the start the new moon festival.

היה דבר־יהוה ביד־חגי הנביא אל־זרubbבל בן־שאלתיאל פחת יהודה ([the] word of [the] Lord came by [the] hand of Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah). In Hebrew, this reads, היה דבר־יהוה "it came, word of Lord." Hebrew has no need of adding the definite article to "[the] word of [the] Lord," because its definiteness is found in its local context. This prophecy is understood to be the thing that came to the prophet. Notice the verb, הָיָה (hayah) Qal Perf. 3m.sg., "it came," is placed at the head of the phrase, and the expression "word of the Lord," follows, thus emphasizing the thing that came, that is, the emphasis is placed upon the coming. When Haggai received the word, he in turn wrote it down and gave the message to Zerubbabel the son of the governor of Judah.

What came was, דבר־יהוה "[the] word of [the] Lord." The word, דָּבָר (dabar) n.m.sg., constr., "word, speech," is attached to יְהוָה (yehovah) pr. n., "the existing One", by a maqqef ensuring the reader understands this prophecy came not from Haggai, but directly from the Lord! How this word came to the prophet is not specified, however, the stress is here upon the reception of the word, and as the construct means, whose source is from the Lord. As is typical of the way God works, He uses the יָד (yad) n.f.sg., with bet

⁷ Earl Radmacher, gen.ed., *NKJV Study Bible* (Nashville:Thomas Nelson, 2007), p.1449

prefix, “hand,” of the prophet. The hand is thus used metaphorically meaning “power, means, direction,” yet it was not in the power or strength of the man Haggai, but the sense is, “by means as an instrument,” by whom the Lord delivered His message.” The prophet is a mediator between God and man so that God worked through men and by extension through the hands of His prophets.

בִּיד “In/by the hand of...”	
Moses	Lev. 8:36; 10:11; 26:46; Num. 4:37; 4:45; 9:23; 15:23; 16:40; 27:23; Josh. 14:2; 20:2; 21:8; 22:9; Judge 3:4; 1 Kings 8:53, 56; 2 Chron. 35:6; Neh. 9:14;
Priests	2 Chron. 23:18
Nathan	2 Sam. 12:25
Ahijah	1 Kings 12:15; 14:16; 2 Chron. 10:15
Jehu	1 Kings 16:7
Jonah	2 Kings 14:25
Isaiah	Isa. 20:2
Jeremiah	Jer. 37:2
Angel	Acts 7:35

The prophet is identified as, חַגִּי (chaggy) pr.n., Haggai, meaning, “festive,” from חָגַג “to hold a feast, celebrate.” Haggai the נָבִיא (nabiy’) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “prophet, spokesman,” is the first writing prophet to prophesy after the captivity while Ezra and Nehemiah are historical accounts of this period. Haggai was a contemporary of Zechariah and is identified as the first of the postexilic writing prophets. His prophecies from God are chronologically ordered and received within a four-month period. Each prophet directed his prophesy toward an individual or nation, Haggai was given this prophecy to give, אֶל-זִרְבָּבֶל בֶּן-שְׁאֲלִיָּאֵל פַּחַת יְהוּדָה “to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel governor of Judah.”⁸ The prophecy is directed אֶל (‘el) prep., “to, towards,” זִרְבָּבֶל (z^erubbabel) pr.n., Zerubbabel, "sown in Babylon", who is identified as the בֶּן (ben) n.m.sg., “son,” of שְׁאֲלִיָּאֵל (sh^ealtiy’el) pr.n., Shealtiel, from שָׂאֵל (shaal) to ask, and אֵל (‘el) God, and hence meaning, “I have asked of God.” Shealtiel is identified as the פֶּחָה (pechah) n.m.sg., (of foreign origin), constr., “governor,” of יְהוּדָה (y^ehudah) n.m., Judah “praised.” As Dr. Unger notes, “the civil head or governor (*peha*, a special term denoting the [district] governor under Persia, and another reminder of foreign domination).”⁹

Zerubbabel was born during the seventy-year Babylonian Exile and was the grandson of Jehiachin, the last rightful ruler of Judah (Ezra 3:2). Zerubbabel led the

⁸ 1 Chron. 3:17-19, identifies Zerubbabel as both the son of Shealtiel and the son of Shealtiel’s brother Pedaiah. This has been reasoned to be because of a levirate marriage, i.e., after Pedaiah died his brother Shealtiel may have taken the widow as his wife and to them was born Zerubbabel (cf. Deut. 25:5-10, Bible Knowledge Commentary). A second explanation identified by the Jewish sages suggests he was raised by his uncle Shealtiel and is thus referred to as his son (Ibn Ezra).

⁹ Merrill Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG, 2002), p.1947

captives back to Judea (Ezra 2:2) and assisted in building of the altar of God upon returning to Jerusalem (Ezra 3:2). It was Zerubbabel that directed the distribution of money given by the Persian king Cyrus to the masons and carpenters (Ezra 3:7) and saw the restoration of the foundation of the Temple and upon its completion celebrated with praise only to find opposition and weeping (Ezra 3:7-12), and now fifteen years later the Lord has a message for the political leader Zerubbabel.

God's Special Direct Revelation to His people	
By speaking	Gen. 17:1-2; Exod. 33:11; Rev. 1:10-11
By dreams	Gen. 20:3; Num. 12:6
By visions	Gen. 15:1; Job 33:14-15; 2 Cor. 12:1-4

Haggai is the instrument through which the Spirit worked (cf., Acts 3:18; 2 Peter 1:20-21), providing the nation the word of the Lord. It is no mistake that some 18 years after the Jews returned to the land from their captivity that they started to rebuild the temple with a feast or dedication of the altar of sacrifice (Ezra 3:1-6,8), and now God raises up a prophet by this name (Haggai, "feast") who the Lord will use to finish the building. What started out as a feast of enthusiasm over the years faded but will end in a feast of dedication with the completion of the Temple (Zech. 4:9). The Lord will use His instrument Haggai to deliver four important messages to the people. Notice the order of the context given: it starts with a call to action and ends with a Messianic prophecy.

The four messages of Haggai - "the word of the LORD came."		
1:1	¹ In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, 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 Jehozadak, the high priest, saying,	September Message A Call to Action (1:1-15)
2:1	¹ In the seventh <i>month</i> , on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying:	October Message A Word of Encouragement (2:1-9)
2:10	¹⁰ On the twenty-fourth <i>day</i> of the ninth <i>month</i> , in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying,	December Message 1 Confirmation of Blessing (2:10-19)
2:20	²⁰ And again the word of the LORD came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying,	December Message 2 Restoration of the Davidic Kingdom (2:20-23)

ואליהושע בן־יהוצדק הכהן הגדול לאמר (and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the priest, the high one, saying). Not only was the prophecy meant to be given by God through the prophet to Zerubbabel, the political governor, but this message is also given to (אֵל) the high priest of the day, to יהושע (yehoshua) pr.n., Joshua "Jehovah is salvation." This

high priest is identified as the son of יהוֹצָדָק (y^ehotsadaq) pr.n., Jehozadak, “Jehovah is righteous.” Joshua is further described to be the כֹּהֵן (kohen) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “priest” the great one as the adjective גָּדוֹל (gadol) adj.m.sg., with he’ prefix, is used to describe the high priest. It was Jehozadak that was carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar (1 Chron. 6:15) so that it was right that the high priest on return to the land be his son, Joshua. So that what is represented here is both the proper political and religious leaders of the day. Finally, in typical Hebrew prophetic fashion the infinitive of אָמַר (amar) Qal Inf., “to say,” “speak” is used to introduce the message of the prophet.

The three returns from exile lasting 93 years				
	Date (B.C.)	Lead by	Number that returns	Text
First	538/537	Sheshbazzar/Zerubbabel princes of Judah	42,360 + 7,337 servants	Ezra 1:11
Second	458 (80 yrs later)	Ezra	4,000 to 5,000	Ezra 7:7
Third	445 (13 yrs later)	Nehemiah		Neh. 2:1; 13:6

The Lord questions His people (1:2-7)

1:2. כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לְאֹמֶר (Thus said [the] Lord of hosts, saying). The particle כֹּה (koh) adv., means “thus” and serves the requisite formula, “thus says the Lord.” The idea is uniquely Jewish and recalls the great Shema (“hear”) of Deuteronomy six, “Hear, O Israel, The LORD our God, the LORD is One, You shall love the LORD your God...” And as if to uniquely distinguish the Jewish God who is speaking, אָמַר (‘amar) Qal Perf. 3m.sg., “he said.” The Lord often uses the expression יְהוָה צְבָא (y^ehovah) צְבָא (tsaba’) n.m.pl., “that which goes forth,” “army,” “host,” from the verb צָבָא (tsaba) “to go forth,” “fight,” “wage war;” and refers to the host of angels that accompanies the Lord. Who is speaking through this prophet Haggai? None other than the God who created, sustains, and commands even the angels of heaven.

הָעָם הַזֶּה אָמְרוּ (the people, the this one, saying). The subjects of this message, הָעָם (‘am) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “the people,” is placed at the head of the verse in order to stress the ones who are speaking. In the Hebrew, it is common to refer to a particular thing by using the demonstrative pronoun זֶה (zeh) dem. pron. m.sg., with he’ prefix, “the this,” to make definite and certain the identity of the ones, namely, “the people,” and can be translated simply as, “this people say.” The perfect of אָמַר (‘amar) Qal Perf., 3c.pl., “to say, speak” is used, detailing what the people are currently saying and reveals what is on their heart. This rebuke is cuts to the heart of the problem as the are referred to “this people,” not “My people,” for they are always His people, but sin separates and in this case their fellowship with the LORD is broken. It is a good thing that the Lord keeps His word and is faithful even though the people are not faithful to Him.

לֹא עַת־בָּא עַת־בֵּית יְהוָה לִהְיוֹת לְהַבְנוֹת (not [the] time, to come, [the] time of [the] house of the LORD to be built). What are the people saying? “The time is not come, the time of

the house of the Lord to be built.” It is no mistake that the negative particle לֹא “not,” is at the head of the phrase as it emphasizes the strong statement concerning the time aspect of the people’s claim. Time, עֵת (‘eth) n.c.sg., is attached to the infinitive, בּוֹא (bo’) Qal Inf., “to come,” by the maqqef in order to point out the time aspect, turning it definite. The verb instead of the infinitive is often translated, i.e., “[the] time has not come,” but is really simply, “[the] time not to come.” The sense is left more urgent when used with the infinitive. There is a time to come, but now is not the time. Their claim has sense of a time when God will supply them with abundance, when their houses all look like the rich and famous. After all, has not the Lord already said He would return them to the land with all the necessary funds to build His Temple?

Then, as if to reinforce the sense of time, time is repeated, עַת־בַּיִת יְהוָה לְהַבְנוֹת, **“time of [the] house of [the] LORD of hosts.”** Time, עֵת (‘eth) n.c.sg., “time” is again at the head of the phrase. The Bible often speaks of the House of the Lord and the House of God as synonymous with the Temple (cf. 1 Kings 6:2). The Hebrew for house is בַּיִת (bayith) n.m.sg., “house,” and comes from the verb בָּנָה (banah) “to build.” It is always time to do the work of God first and in that day, the Temple was the covenant place where man met God, the dwelling place of the LORD. So the question of the timing of the building, the בָּנָה (banah) Nif. Inf., “to be built.” Again, the infinitive is used instead of a full verb. The idea of the time aspect of the verb is not needed since time is the central point and the urgency of it is the subject.

1:3. וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה בִּיד־חַגִּי הַנְּבִיא לֵאמֹר (and it shall be, [the] word of the Lord in [the] hand of Haggai the prophet saying). The introductory statement is repeated but slightly changed to stress the power that lies in the hand of the messenger Haggai. The power of the word was given to Haggai by the Lord Himself. The two most important concepts with respect to prophecy are presented here, the phrase “it shall be,” speaks of the assurance that the prophecy will come to pass, and the word, “hand,” speaks of the power of the One behind the word who will bring the prophecy to pass. It is not the power of the prophet, but the power behind the prophet, the power of the Lord that brings it to pass.

The verse starts out with the simple imperfect “to be” verb הָיָה (hayah) Qal Impf., 3.m.sg., with vav prefix, “to be,” “become,” and is the common expression of the prophet concerning the message about to be presented and furthermore enforces the certainty of the thing that will come to pass. The word דְּבַר (dabar) n.m.sg., “speech,” “word,” “thing,” is the thing that is to come to pass. And it is brought to the prophet by יְהוָה (Y’hovah) pr. n., “the existing One”, and in order to express all this in a tight grammatical context the Masoretes added the maqqef between words, דְּבַר־יְהוָה בִּיד־חַגִּי **“[the] word of the LORD in the hand of Haggai.”** The Hebrew יָד (yad) n.f.sg., with bet prefix, “hand,” is figuratively “strength,” or “power,” is common within the Jewish mindset because of its biblical usage in such important passages relating to the Lord’s power in releasing Israel from their Egyptian bondage. Though the power behind the message is found in the Lord, it is חַגִּי (chaggay) pr.n., “Haggai” whose name means “festive” from the verb חָגַג (chagag) “to hold a feast,” “festival,” “make a pilgrimage,” or

“dance.” God uses Haggai as His human voice – the prophetic mediator between God and Israel.

The Hebrew concept of a prophet, a נָבִיא (nabiy’) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “a prophet,” or “spokesman,” has as its basic understanding one who speaks for God to someone or some group on earth. Then in typical prophetic fashion, the Qal infinitive of אָמַר (amar) “saying” is used.

1:4. הֲעַת לָכֶם אַתֶּם לְשֹׁכֵת בְּבֵיתֵיכֶם סְפוּנִים וְהַבַּיִת הַזֶּה חָרַב (Is it time for you, you dwelling in your houses, those which have been covered, and this house lay waste). The prophet introduces this convicting question by using the interrogative *he* (not the def. art.) prefixed to the word עֵת (‘eth) n.c.sg., “time,” and makes this an emphatic question by using the compound לָכֶם lamed prefix with pron. suffix 2m.pl., “for you.” And further, to stress the point that he is not just addressing the leaders, he collectively address all of them by using the plural pronoun אַתֶּה (‘athey) pron. 2m.pl., “you.” The charge against them is strong and God’s anger is found in the repeated pronouns, “Is it time for you! You dwelling in your houses!” Their בָּיִת (bayith) n.m.pl., with bet prefix, and pron. suff. 2m.pl., “your houses,” have been covered, you might say, finished. The Hebrew סָפַן (saphan) Qal Part. Pas. m.pl., “to cover with boards, paneling, or plaster,” as the Targum identifies as cedar but what exactly this covering is more likely varied and the essential message is that their own houses were finished while this house, speaking of the Temple, has all its pieces still laying on the ground from the destruction 66 years ago by the Babylonians (586 B.C.; 2 Kings 25:9). They had been back in the land with the order to rebuild the Temple since 538 B.C., it is now 520 B.C., in those 18 years they have been busy, but not busy building the house of the Lord! The Qal infinitive of יָשַׁב (yashab) “to dwell,” speaks of their current condition as they are currently dwelling in their houses. They built their houses and the Lord asks, is the last house to be built is the Lord’s?

The last phrase וְהַבַּיִת הַזֶּה חָרַב **“and the this house waste.”** The definiteness of בָּיִת (bayith) n.m.sg., with vav and he’ prefix, “house,” together with the demonstrative pronoun זֶה (zeh) dem. pron. m.sg., with he’ prefix, is smoothed out, “and this house,” and specifically identifies to the house of the Lord. The Temple was no doubt the central focus of Jerusalem, visible everywhere, and when they walked out of their finished houses the debris left in the streets was a reminder of the spiritual condition of the people – they too were in a state of shambles, it was plainly obvious, but like those visible stones tossed in their streets, passed by without a second thought, their lives were miserable. The emphasis “and the house, the this [one],” seems to make the Temple of the Lord a very personal place where the people met their God. In fact, it is very personal as the inner sanctuary of the Temple is patterned after heaven (Heb. 8:5) and is the place where man has an opportunity to humble himself before God and call on the name of the Lord.

They have left the Temple, חָרֵב (chareb) adj.m.sg., “a waste heap,” “desolate,” or “dry,” which also illustrates the spiritual condition that they find themselves in at the moment. They are spiritually a waste heap, a desolate land without refreshing. Spiritually, they are dry as the metaphor of the Holy Spirit relates to refreshing and a river of water

(Ezek. 36:25-27; John 7:37-39; Isa. 12:3; Joel 2:28-32). The waste heap of the Temple also illustrates the state of waste that they find themselves in as the scattered remains upon the face of the earth reflects their scattered life without God as their central figure. Where do they go for direction? How can they function in life if they place themselves first? What a picture we have here! Where can one go to find refreshing?

1:5. ועתה כה אמר יהוה צבאות (And now thus says [the] LORD of hosts). Now the Lord, after 18 years, comes to them through His prophet Haggai to direct their hearts, to move in them in a way that will get results. Haggai writes with urgency as the particles, עַתָּה ('atah) part., with vav prefix, "and now," כֹּה (koh) part., "thus, so," together form an urgent directive. The prophet's words come directly from the Lord as He אָמַר ('amar) Qal Perf., 3m.sg., "spoke." And, in order to identify the One speaking to them as the One who commands the angles in heaven, namely, the heavenly host, as He is identified as, יהוה צבאות "[the] Lord of hosts." The term signifies the One that commands the company of angels in heaven. The Hebrew צָבָא (tsaba) n.f.pl., means "that which goes forth," "army," "host," comes from the verb "to go forth," "fight," "wage war," thus bringing the sense of what the Lord of hosts represents. It is meant to bring comfort knowing that God Himself commands the angelic world and that as they experience spiritual battles, the Lord Himself will move in a supernatural way – commanding the angelic army to help Israel in their struggle. God will be with them in such a way that Israel will complete the task of rebuilding. They have help and that help will take on the battle in the heavenly realm, taking on the powers of Satan and his evil worldly movements that oppose God, the people of God and the things of God.

שִׁמוּ לִבְכֶּם עַל־דְּרֹכֵיכֶם (Set your heart upon your ways!). In an effort to stir them to action, the Lord commands them to consider what they are going. What we say today, examine your ways. Then He will go through what they are doing and review the outcome.

The expression "set your heart upon your ways," starts with the imperative at the head of the phrase. The word is from שָׁם (sum) Qal Impv. 2m.pl., "to put," "place," "set," "determine," and is the common word used to place a thing foremost in importance, so the translation is sometimes "consider," when used with the mind. The word for mind and heart is the same, לֵבָב (lebab) n.m.sg., with pron. suffix 2m.pl., "heart," "the inner man," or "mind," and here together with the exhortation to consider their doings and their ways reflects a strong sense of considering, reflecting, and setting the mind upon a thing with an emphasis upon action. Here, the proper translation is to "set one's mind" upon their actions, but I have translated it "set your heart" because the heart is the seat of the emotions and often times it is the emotions that need to be stirred in order to bring about motion and action. The mind is the rational aspect, but the heart moves the rational into action and what is intended by God here is that the individual would consider their actions and actively, you might say, change what they are doing emotionally. To repent and get right with their God and act! To make the personal relationship with God a part of their being, to move to the inner part of man and make God a permanent emotional part of them. The imperative is meant to implore them to

examine carefully what they are doing, what they have been blessed with and cared for historically but why their labor has produced little in light with the promise of God to bless them in the land. Remember the great Shema of Deuteronomy six and the subsequent cursing and blessing part of the Mosaic law. Remember My command,

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. ¹⁰ "So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, ¹¹ "houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant-- when you have eaten and are full-- ¹² "then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. (Deut. 6:4-12)

The Bible often uses the word דֶּרֶךְ (derek) n.m.pl., with pron. suffix 2m.pl., “way,” “road,” or “path,” in the metaphorical sense as, “a course of life,” or “mode of action.” Here דֶּרֶךְ (derek) is plural and attached to the preposition עַל (‘al) “upon, unto,” with the maqqef, thus serving to emphasize their mode of life, to consider all that they do. The plural “ways” works with the phrase “set your heart” to emphasize every aspect of their life and direction, with the implication that their relationship and covenant blessing with God is what is to be considered – think about it, direct your mind upon your mode of living without God, without seeking the God who directs the hosts of heaven.

1:6. זָרַעְתֶּם הַרְבֵּה וְהָבָא מְעַט (You scattered seed greatly, and bring in little). The result of their relationship with the LORD, the cursing and blessing aspect of the covenant promise is now recalled to them by the Lord. First, instead of a land flowing with milk and honey (Deut. 6:3) they have planted by זָרַע (zara) Qal Perf., 2m.pl., “to sow,” “scatter seed,” with great intensity and energy spent, here emphasized by use of the Hifil infinitive of רָבָה (rabah) “to be or become great,” “many;” the causative has the sense of intense focus and determination. All that determined focused struggle planting seed, care, then effort harvesting with the result of little return. The Hifil infinitive is again used for בֹּא (bo’) Hif. Inf., with vav prefix, “to come,” “go” and is translated “to cause to bring in.” Maybe indicating that what grew was a lot of weeds with few real fruit so that their labor was increased as hand watering and weeding resulted and a small harvest as the Hebrew substantive מְעַט (m’at) “a few,” “a little” is brought in.

אָכּוּל וְאִין-לִשְׂבֹּעָה (**Eating, but nothing to one's fill**). The prophet continues with the literary style of contrasts: אָכּוּל ('akal) Qal Inf., "eating," but (vav prefix translated as a contrastive), אִין ('ayin) part., with vav prefix, "nothing" to one's שִׂבְעָה (saba') n.f.sg., with lamed prefix, "satisfaction," "one's fill," "fill to satisfaction."

שָׁתָהּ וְאִין-לִשְׂכָּרָה (**Drinking, but nothing to one's fill with drink**). The infinitive שָׁתָהּ (shathah) Qal Inf., "to drink," is again used as absolute "drinking," but again, אִין ('ayin) part., with vav prefix, "nothing" to one's satisfaction. The Hebrew is specific שָׁכַר (shakar) Qal Inf., "to be or become drunk," but here, "to be filled with drink." There is a specific expectation of that which comes from the vine, namely, wine, and is required not only for Temple ceremonial purposes but for all the cultural functions respecting the occasion. No wine for feast days or wedding ceremonies and etc. A rationing of the wine is implied and seen as a curse as Joel writes, "The vine has dried up, and the fig tree has withered; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree – all the trees of the field are withered; surely joy has withered away from the sons of men" (Joel 1:12).

לְבוּשׁ וְאִין-לְחָם (**Clothe, but nothing to warm**). Finally, the prophet concludes his three part literary contrast basic provisions with the provision for clothes as he again uses the infinitive of לָבַשׁ (labash) Qal Inf., "to dress," "to wear," or "to clothe," and yet, אִין ('ayin) part., with vav prefix, "nothing" for warmth. The Hebrew חָמָם (chamam) n.m.sg., with lamed prefix, (or Qal Inf.) "heat," "hot," is used here to indicate either the heat that come from the vine trimmings in the form of wood, or the cloth for warmth that normally comes from the sheep's wool that is lacking due to the lack of feed for the sheep so that the sheep are few in number. In every sense they lack the normal cycle of harvest for cloth production.

לֹא וְהַמְשַׁתְּכֵר מִשְׁתַּכֵּר אֶל-צָרוּר נִקּוּב (**For he who earns wages, earns wages bagged up [in] one with holes**). The effect of a bad harvest now affects their well being. All of them collectively are affected as it reaches each laborer. Each one is affected as indicated by the third person singular pronoun used with the preposition, לוֹ (lamed prefix, with pron. suff. 3m.sg.) "to/for him." The intensity stressed in the participle from שָׁכַר (sakar) Hithpael Part. m.sg., with vav prefix, "to hire," translated, "the one who is intensively being hired," that is "one that earns wages." This same one who is being (passive) hired brings in little in the form of wages, that is, the Hithpael participle is simply repeated, וְהַמְשַׁתְּכֵר מִשְׁתַּכֵּר "and the one earns wages [is] the one that earns wages." As is the custom in that day for the laborer to be paid as a percentage of what is harvested. He works hard, but little is harvested, so his payment is small. It is as though his bundle, as the Hebrew reads, אֶל ('el) prep., "to" the צָרוּר (ts'rrpr) n.m.sg., "bundle, parcel, pouch, bag," is a bag with holes. The participle נִקְבָּה (naqab) Qal Pas. Part., m.s., "to pierce," "perforate" describes the state of the harvest bag has holes large enough to have his portion simply fall through the holes and the state of the bag is such that the harvest is unable to be bundled up and taken off. It is like a double insult. First the harvest is light, then, once paid, the laborer loses even more of the harvest due to the condition of his bag.

1:7. כה אמר יהוה צבאות (Thus says [the] LORD of hosts). Whenever the prophet of God wants to make certain that he is speaking, or rather, repeating the words of God, he will mark it with the prophet's words, "Thus sayth the LORD..." The particle כה (koh) "thus, this is," serves to mark the prophet's message. It serves what the modern translations simply say, "thus says the LORD..." So that what is אמר ('amar) Qal Perf., 3m.sg., "spoken," or "said," has its source identified as coming from יהוה (yehovah) pr. n., Jehovah "the existing One", the One who directs the צבא (tsaba') n.f.pl., "army, hosts" of heaven. This message comes from God, the ever-existing One who directs the affairs of the myriad of angels under His command. This expression is used in order to distinguish the "all powerful," eternal God from the gods of the nations. Who is the God of Israel? He is the personal God of Israel, Jehovah, the One that commands the army of angels.

שימו לבבכם על־דרכיכם (Set your mind upon your ways). The direction given by God to the people is given in the form of a command and is given by the directive שום (sum) Qal Impv. 2m.pl., "to set, put, or place," their very being, what in the Hebrew mind is the לבב (lebab) n.m.sg., with pron. suffix 2m.pl., "heart, the inner man," or by extension, "the mind," of man and serves as the seat of emotions and action. The command is to direct the heart of the people "upon" (על) their דרך (derek) n.m.pl., with pron. suffix 2m.pl., "way, road, or path," In other words, direct your mind and all your deeds toward what you are doing. This is the second time Haggai has said "consider your ways," sandwiched between their immediate struggles concerning scarcity. Look at what you are doing, compare that to what is normally expected. Since the outcome of your hard work is producing little in return what do you think is the problem? That old saying is appropriate, "the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result." How long, how many years will they live with little before they remember the One that brings in their harvest? Consider your ways!

The Lord directs building His House (1:8-11)

Haggai 1:8-11

⁸Go up [to] the mountain and bring wood and build the house and I will be pleased in it and I will be glorified, says [the] Lord. ⁹Turning and looking to the great [harvest], and behold, [it was] for little. And you brought [it] in the house, I blew on it. Why? declares [the] Lord of hosts. Because My house which [is] waste, and you run, each one, to his house. ¹⁰Therefore, over you [the] heavens withheld from [the] dew, and [the] earth, she withheld her produce. ¹¹And I have proclaimed desolation to the land and to the hills, and upon the grain, and upon the new wine, and upon the fresh oil, and upon what the ground brings forth, and upon the man, and upon the cattle, and upon all labor of [the] hands.

⁸ עלו ההר והבאתם עץ ובנו הבית
וארצה־בו ואכבד אמר יהוה: ⁹ פנה
אל־הרבה והנה למעט והבאתם הבית
ונפחתי בו יען מה נאם יהוה צבאות יען
ביתי אשר־הוא חרב ואתם רצים איש
לביתו: ¹⁰ על־כן עליכם כלאו שמים מטל
והארץ כלאה יבולה: ¹¹ ואקרא חרב
על־הארץ ועל־ההרים ועל־הדגן
ועל־התירוש ועל־היצהר ועל אשר תוציא
האדמה ועל־האדם ועל־הבהמה ועל
כל־יגיע כפים:

Introduction

This section provided the reason for their problems – they need their God close not far off. They work and work yet fall short. They have fallen into the habit of self- sufficiency and self- reliance not realizing they are in need of the Lord of the Harvest. They clearly see the destruction and desolation of the Lord's house in front of them. It has been 18 years since work stopped on the rebuilding effort due to discouragement within their camp and opposition outside their camp by the half-Jew, half- Canaanite, Samaritans. This is the story of God moving into their lives after a time of spiritual stagnation, habit and a lack of spiritual leadership. Have you been there? Has something happened in your life that caused great spiritual discouragement and you too have gotten on track and the joy of your spiritual life has moved in leaving you dry and unfruitful? It is the work of God to bring you back and this is a story of exactly that work of the Spirit that moves in them to action. The first action is to restore their relationship with the Lord – to repent

and get right with their Lord. After 18 years the time was right and the Lord directs them to build His house. How can they feast in the Lord with the central place where the Feast of the Lord are taken place? For those of us who live in the Church age, indwelt by the Spirit as we live as living temples of God, who get in a rut, how do we get out of our personal rut? We too can be desolate, the Spirit still within us, yet absent of His word effected in us because we too are discouraged and unfruitful. How does this individual get out of the rut? By getting back to the basics, repent of our sin, get right with God, and let the Spirit of God move in us and we too will return to a peaceful life full of the fruit of the Spirit.

The Lord directs the building His House (1:8)

1:8. עלו ההר והבאתם עץ ובנו הבית (Go up [to] the mountain and bring wood and build the house). The command to go up the mountain is specifically in reference to the mountain that contains the proper timber appropriate for construction of the Temple. The simple imperative is used for עֲלֶה ('alah) Qal Impv. 2m.pl., “(you all) go up, ascend, climb up,” the mountain, the plural indicating all the people are to join together in this focused task to go up the הַר (har) n.m.sg., with he' prefix, “the hill, the mountain.” The definite article prefixed to mountain makes this a specific mountain and here specifically pointing either to the mountain before their eyes that contained proper cedar and fir, or to the mountain the LORD had initially specified as the source of wood for construction – the cedars and fir of Lebanon acquired in David's time (1 Kings 5:10). The timbers of Lebanon are the best and larger cedar required for construction spanning the walls and the source of the wood in the original Temple. However, the only requirement for the construction is that the wood be cedar and fir¹⁰ not where it is to come from. There were three types of wood required, cedar for the roof, inside walls and ceiling; fir for the floor (1 Kings 6:19,15), and *shittim* identified as acacia wood used for the individual items within the holy place which some were covered with gold (Exod. 30:5). The point is clear here that their collective attention is required now as this activity is heightened to the level of a national emergency. While retrieving timbers all the way from Lebanon, some 100 miles away, is an added burden, the requirements for the Temple sanctuary are sacred and nothing within the holy chambers are common – they are holy unto the Lord. It would not be a stretch to say the source of the timbers was again the great timbers of Lebanon – the only cedar timber large enough for the task.

The command is, והבאתם עץ ובנו הבית **“and bring wood and build the house.”** The command to go up to the mountain to retrieve the required timber is made more intense by the use of the causative for the verb בֹּא (bo') Hif. Perf., 2m.pl., with vav prefix, “to come, go,” so that they are “to cause to go,” meaning, bring עֵץ (ets) n.m.sg., “wood, timber, tree.” The hard task of bringing the timbers down the mountain then back up the mount of the Lord is not an easy one, so the emphasis is placed upon the strongest

¹⁰ The double inner doors of Solomon's Temple were made of Olive wood (1 Kings 6:31), while the main doors were made of fir (1 Kings 6:34).

Hebrew verb – the causative action. The mountains of Lebanon contain the large cedar that the original Temple was built with and the inhabitants of Tyre were commissioned to bring the cedars to Jerusalem. This foreign help was again used by decree of the King of Persia for the second Temple some 18 years earlier. Did the local mountains contain cedar large enough for the task? The decree to rebuild specified cedar and the resources required to obtain them just like the first Temple (cf., 1 Kings 5:6; Ezra 3:7). Ezra provides the decree declared by Cyrus some 18 years earlier:

⁷ They also gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia. (Ezra 3:7)

However, work stopped after the walls were built but short of the cedar work. What happened to all the cedar gathered before construction stopped? Did the cedar from Lebanon ever reach Israel 18 years earlier? Did the people use the cedar that was meant for the Temple on their own houses? Are their houses paneled with the choice cedar of Lebanon originally meant for use on the Temple? Can Israel go all the way to Tyre to retrieve the required timber or will they simply use the local source and make them work?

The command to build is again emphasized by the imperative to build the Temple. They are commanded to build, בָּנֶה (banah) Qal Impv. 2m.pl., with vav prefix, “and build,” the בַּיִת (bayith) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “house,” which the definite article makes specific – this is the house of the Lord, namely, the Temple. No doubt the Lord means to contrast His house with their fine paneled houses. This is a command for action! Their national emergency is an urgent call to get right with their Lord – mobilize the people!

It should be noted that the stone required for the construction is not mentioned here. While the foundation was laid before work stopped (Ezra 3:10), the state of the walls is not mentioned. It may be that the stone walls are up, and all the material that is needed is the wood to complete construction of the structure. The walls may have been completed, or the large stone required to finish the walls were already collected and still placed around the construction site ready for use.

וְאֶרְצָהּ בּוֹ וְאֶכְבֹּד אֹמֶר יְהוָה (and I will be pleased in it and I will be glorified, says [the] Lord). The Lord proclaims that if they would build His house that He would be pleased with the it. His pleasure has a continuous aspect as brought out in the imperfect verb for רָצָה (ratsah) Qal Impf. 1c.sg., with vav prefix, “to be pleased with, accept favorably.” This might better be translated “I will accept favorably [the house].” The inclusion of the maqqef with His pleasure and the preposition בּוֹ bet prefix, with pron. suffix 3m.sg., “in him/it,” makes clear the object of His pleasure, namely, His house - the Temple of the Lord.

To make sure the reader understands the importance of this construction project, He adds honor to pleasure in a poetic statement as He states, וְאֶכְבֹּד “and I will be glorified.” The second phrase carries more weight as the word כָּבֵד (kabad) Nif. Impf.

1c.sg., with vav prefix, “I will be heavy, weighty, honored,” is the common word translated “glorified” when speaking of the Lord. God is glorified as He alone gets the glory for the return of the Jews to the land with the Temple treasure and all the resources to rebuild the Temple given them by pagan kings who plundered the land. Who could do such a thing except the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the same God that brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt without a single battle and returning with a great bounty given by Pharaoh? Who is able to do such a thing? To God be the glory!

The reason for their hunger (1:9-11)

1:9. פָּנָה אֶל־הַרְבֵּה וְהָנָה לְמַעַט וְהַבְּאִתֶּם הַבַּיִת וּנְפַחְתִּי בוֹ (Turning and looking to the great [harvest], and behold, [it was] for little. And you brought [it] in the house, I blew on it) . The reason for their hunger and lack of joy is now given by the Lord to the people through the prophet Haggai (“festive”). It was the harvest festival time, and the people were looking forward to a great harvest, but they brought in little. This expression has the sense of expectation as the verb פָּנָה (panah) Qal Inf., means “to turn [the face]” and in this case to “turn and look upon,” or “to turn with expectation,” concerning the harvest bounty. It is literally, פָּנָה אֶל־הַרְבֵּה “turning toward the great [harvest].” The preposition אֶל (‘el) “to, towards,” with the maqqef joined with the causative infinitive רָבָה (rabah) Hif. Inf., “to be great,” “much,” adds to the climatic emotion of harvest and the intense work that went into it. Most translations add the personal pronoun for smoothness, that is, “You looked for much...”

The Lord says to look at the little progress that they have before them. Behold הִנֵּה (hinneh) part., with vav prefix, “behold, look,” continues the thought concerning the harvest which was מְעַט (m’at) subst., with lamed prefix., “for little” as they turned to see the results. For the work they have expended, consider the return. The work has been hard and intense as בֹּא (bo’) Hif. Perf. 2m.pl., with vav prefix, “to come, go, enter,” translated “you caused to come” or “you brought in.” What they brought in at harvest time was little compared to what was expected. They brought the harvest into the בַּיִת (bayith) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “the house,” and there was little there.

The Lord then adds to the heartbreak of the harvest as He describes the condition of the grain as He adds, וּנְפַחְתִּי בוֹ “and I blew on it.” The Hebrew נָפַח (naphach) Qal Perf. 1c.sg., with vav prefix, “to breath, blow,” means the Lord brought a persistent wind and He blew, בֵּה (bet prefix with pron. suff. 3m.sg., “on it.” The grain must have been thinner than usual and in combination with a persistent wind resulted in the loss of a great deal of the harvest as the thin grains simply blew away with the wind.

יֵעַן מָה נָאִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (Why? declares [the] Lord of hosts). The question is posed concerning their sacristy, יָעַן (ya’an) conj., “because”, or “on account of,” מָה (mah) interr., “what?” The Lord asks them, “On account of what?” or “why?” “What do you think is going on? What is the reason for your scarcity? Can you figure it out? Does it make since to you? What was the promise of the Lord? Remember, obedience brings blessing, and for the Hebrew in the land, blessing means abundance in the field,

fellowship with God, and good relations one with another. Peace can only come to this people when the Lord is placed first in their lives and that means His house, the place where proper Mosaic fellowship is found, must be in place.

The word of the Lord is spoken through the prophet so the usual prophetic expression נֹאֵם (na'um) Qal Part. m.sg., “declares,” יהוה צבאות “[the] LORD of hosts.” Again, the identity of the One talking through the prophet is identified as the One that is the commander of the צְבָא (tsaba') n.m.pl., “hosts, army” of heaven.

יֵעַן בֵּיתִי אֲשֶׁר-הוּא חָרֵב (Because My house which [is] waste). In case they cannot figure it out, the reason is given. Because (יֵעַן), He says, בֵּיתִי אֲשֶׁר-הוּא חָרֵב “My house which it is a waste.” The Hebrew בֵּית (bayith) n.m.sg., with pron. suff. 1c.sg., “My house” is the Lord’s house, the Temple. How is it that the very place where the people can go to petition the LORD of hosts is ignored and desolate? Do they seek after the Lord who is the Forgiver of their sin year after year? Do they seek after the Provider of their harvest? Do they seek the One who Tabernacles with them? The Temple is the place of fellowship with God, the place where they not only find the mercy seat but the place where they can seek the Lord of hosts on His terms under His covenant direction. Yet at the time of the yearly feasts of Israel the house of the LORD אֲשֶׁר-הוּא חָרֵב “which it is desolate.” The relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר (‘asher) attached to the personal pronoun הוּא (hu’) “he/it” by the maqqef places emphasis upon the house “which it [My house] [is] waste.” The word for waste is an adjective חָרֵב (chareb) adj. m.sg., meaning, “waste,” “desolate,” or “dry,” so that the Temple is characterized as “ruined,” a waste heap, desolate with the foundation and walls standing but nothing else.

וְאַתֶּם רָצִים אִישׁ לְבֵיתוֹ (And you run, each one, to his house). A contrast is drawn between the wasteness of the Temple and the comfort of their own houses. The phrase starts with the personal pronoun אַתָּה (‘attah) pers. pron. 2m.pl., with vav prefix, “you” רוץ (ruts) Qal Part. m.sg., “run.” The participle is used instead of the simple verb for רוץ indicating a state of being more than an action. You might say they are runners to their houses, not runners to their God’s house. Most translate the participle “while running,” adding a temporal sense of a repeated habit in contrast to the state of being of the Lord’s house as desolate.

The emphasis concerning their habit of running to their own houses instead of the house of the LORD is highlighted by the use of the word אִישׁ (‘iysh) n.m.sg., “man.” English translations naturally make this, “each one” or “each man,” to his house. The stops are pronounced as this might better be translated, You – Runners – Each one – To his own house. What a statement, or rather what a condemnation! They have their own בֵּית (bayith) n.m.sg., with lamed prefix and pron. suffix 3m.sg., “house,” personalized houses – as the lamed prefix is added, “to his house,” which is moved to the English as “to his [own] house.” They care for and tend their own house, but not the house of the Lord. They love their house, but not their Temple. They seek out the comfort and safety of their own houses while the place of true safety and comfort that is found only in the Lord is no longer available to them because the Person they should seek after, at the place they should run to, is laid waste. Does God have a place in their life? Can they

build a life apart from God? The obvious answer is they cannot find peace and safety in the land of promise without the One that gave them the promise.

1:10. על־כֵּן עֲלֵיכֶם כֻּלָּא שָׁמַיִם מִטַּל (Therefore, over you [the] heavens withheld from [the] dew). The construction על־כֵּן (עַל) “to,” together with, כֵּן “thus,” is naturally, “to thus,” or “therefore,” and provides the explanation concerning their agricultural problems, that God is the source and active agent that held back the nightly dew with a persistent wind that left no morning dew, not even the nightly cloud dew that serves to refresh and water their crops by night.

This righteous judgment is directed to them as the preposition is combined with the personal pronoun, עֲלֵיכֶם “upon you,” or “over you,” it [the dew] is withheld. The Hebrew כָּלָא (kala’) Qal Perf. 3m.pl., “to restrict,” “restrain,” “withhold,” or “kept back,” speaks of their root problem – they plant but they must rely upon God for water. While irrigation is possible, that blessing of nightly dew upon the crops serves as a blessing to the crop and a dry persistent wind at night is devastating. The direction of their blessing is from above, from שָׁמַיִם (shamayim) n.m.pl., “heavens.” The first heaven where the clouds are, but ultimately it is the third heaven where God resides that the wind and rain goes forth at the command of the al-powerful God, Lord of hosts. While there are natural laws that govern the weather, the Bible clearly declares the weather is supernaturally controlled by God so that modern science is dumbfounded at predicting it. Just as the angelic host go forth at His command to protect and guide His people so also do all blessings, and here, curses – the judgments for disobedience to the Mosaic law is lack of blessing in the land. The word for dew is טַל (tal) n.m.sg., with mem prefix, “dew,” or “night mist,” from טָלַל (talal) “to cover with a roof,” or “cover over.” The basic necessities for a healthy crop are held back from them - God has held back His blessing.

וְהָאָרֶץ כֻּלָּא יְבוּלָה (and [the] earth, she withheld her produce). The result of the lack of nightly dew was that the earth did not bringing forth its fruit. The אֶרֶץ (‘erets) n.f.sg., with vav and he’ prefix, “land, earth, or ground,” is restricted as the prophet Haggai repeats the Hebrew verb כָּלָא (kala’) Qal Perf. 3f.sg., “to restrict,” “restrain,” “withhold,” in its natural manner of production from producing fruit. There is some יְבוּלָה (yēbul) n.m.sg., with pron. suffix 3f.sg., “produce,” “fruit,” but what the land produces is described in verse nine as little – she [the land] simply holds back her fruit due to her lack of nightly refreshing from the dew.

1:11. וְאֶקְרָא חֲרָב עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְעַל־הַהָרִים (And I have proclaimed desolation to the land and to the hills). Verse eleven provides a startling and sobering reality that God can simply call out a drought and it comes to pass. The Lord of the Harvest is truly Lord of all the earth. Notice the verb is in the imperfect for קָרָא (qara’) Qal Impf. 1c.sg., with vav prefix, “to call,” “call out,” or “proclaim,” meaning the action is not complete, it is an ongoing event that God is actively holding up the heavens and earth, the clouds and rain – every moment, everything is in His hands and at His command. In this case, He calls

the drought and continues to hold it up at the time of this prophecy in order to let them contemplate the charge against them and know it need not be permanent. He will relent whenever they repent and get right with their God. That is the great truth of His mercy that extends to us today. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

What the Lord calls out is a drought, the Hebrew חֶרֶב (choreb) n.m.sg., “drought, dryness, desolation,” is called out upon both the אֲרָץ (‘erets) n.f.sg., with he’ prefix, “land, earth,” and the הָר (har) n.m.pl., with he’ prefix, “mountains, hills.” The preposition עַל (‘al) “upon, on, over” is included with each element affected so as to precisely identify the extent of the drought, it is distributed עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְעַל־הַהָרִים **“upon the land and upon the mountains.”** Scarcity is uniformly applied to the land where they grow their crops and upon the mountains where they grow their trees - both are affected – desolation to their land has been proclaimed and will continue to be active until they repent and get right with God.

עַל־הַדָּגָן וְעַל־הַתִּירוֹשׁ וְעַל־הַיִּצְהָר וְעַל אֲשֶׁר תּוֹצִיא הָאֲדָמָה (And upon the grain, and upon the new wine, and upon the fresh oil, and upon what the ground brings forth). While the first phrase describes the location affected, this phrase describes the specific fruit that is affected. In the fields of the land they grow דָּגָן (dagan) n.m.sg., with he prefix, “the wheat,” or “grain, which is derived from the verb דָּגַהּ (dagah) to multiply, increase, but they will not increase for the Lord will hold back the water. From the earth also should flow the fruit of the vine, the תִּירוֹשׁ (tiyros) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “fresh or new wine, freshly pressed wine, fresh grape juice,” and upon (עַל) the precious olive oil, the יִצְהָר (yitshar) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “fresh oil.” Those things that are “pressed” like the olive and grape which require additional processing to capture and preserve in vessels for use and considered the basics. Finally, everything else that they grow that comes from the ground, or as the Hebrew says, וְעַל אֲשֶׁר תּוֹצִיא הָאֲדָמָה **“and upon what the land brings forth.”** The Hebrew causative of יָצָא (yatsa’) Hif. Impf., 3m.sg., “caused to go out, caused to come out, caused to go forth” out of the אֲדָמָה (‘adamah) n.f.sg., with he’ prefix, “ground, land.” The summer fruit that is common in the region – the sweet melons, the vegetables that were cultivated at that time and the seasonal fruits and nuts. This land can be rich in produce. This land (though it does not look like it) can be a land flowing with milk and honey or it can be a land laid waste.

Haggai and the word חֶרֶב “waste, desolate, dry”		
1:4	⁴ <i>Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins (חֶרֶב)?</i>	Adjective
1:9	⁹ <i>You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because of My house that is in ruins (חֶרֶב), while every one of you runs to his own house.</i>	Adjective
1:11	¹¹ <i>For I called for a drought (חֶרֶב) 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 the labor of your hands.</i>	Noun

ועל־האדם ועל־הבהמה ועל כל־יגיע כפים (and upon the man, and upon the cattle, and upon all labor of [the] hands). In this final phrase, the prophet moves from to the affected animals that likely must be culled due to the scarcity of food produced for them. The effect of the wind and drought is that every product of their hard work is measured as little. So the curse extends על ('al) prep., with vav prefix, “upon, on,” the singular אָדָם ('adam) n.m.sg., with he' prefix, “man, mankind,” collectively, all men, or mankind. The drought affecting the בְּהֵמָה (b'hemah) n.f.sg., with he' prefix, “beast, cattle, animal,” with specific reference to the work that is exerted upon the land. The prophet closes by identifying their individual effort as he declares, ועל כל־יגיע כפים “and upon all work of the palms of the hand.” Notice the word for work reflects that of Genesis 1-3, יָגִיעַ (y'giya') n.m.sg., “toil, work,” whose extent is identified as כֹּל (kol) n.m.sg., “all, whole, every” hand. The word selected for hand adds a more graphic picture, specifically, כַּף (kaph) n.f.du., “palm, sole, palm of hand, soul of foot, spoon, bowl,” from the verb, “to bend, bend down,” bringing to mind the purpose of man in cultivating the earth and the word is used of both man and beast – all work of man and beast is to no avail as the Lord God is the One that provides the essential elements of the harvest. There is no amount of work that man can put forth to accomplish a successful harvest without the Lord's blessing, so the picture of the bent hands that have worked so hard that they are not open flat not closed fist, but open and bent as the power of man pictured as insufficient and falls short of the glory of God.

The People Obey the Lord (1:12-15)

Haggai 1:12-15

¹²Then he will obey, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Joshua son of Jehozadak the high priest, and all [the] remnant of the people heard in [the] voice of the Lord their God and to the words of Haggai the prophet as what [the] Lord their God sent him. And the people feared before the Lord. ¹³Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, said in messages of [the] LORD to the nation saying, I [am] with you, says [the] Lord. ¹⁴And [the] Lord shall cause to stir up [the] spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and [the] spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and [the] spirit of all [the] remnant of the people. And they came and they did work in [the] house of [the] Lord of hosts, their God, ¹⁵in [the] day, [the] twentieth and forth, of [the] month of [the] sixth, in the second year for Darius, the king.

¹²וישמע זרובבל בן־שלתיאל ויהושע
בן־יהוצדק הכהן הגדול וכל שארית העם
בקול יהוה אלהיהם ועל־דברי חגי הנביא
כאשר שלחו יהוה אלהיהם ויראו העם
מפני יהוה: ¹³ויאמר חגי מלאך יהוה
במלאכות יהוה לעם לאמר אני אתכם
נאמ־יהוה: ¹⁴ויער יהוה את־רוח זרובבל
בן־שלתיאל פחת יהודה ואת־רוח יהושע
בן־יהוצדק הכהן הגדול ואת־רוח כל
שארית העם ויבאו ויעשו מלאכה
בבית־יהוה צבאות אלהיהם: ¹⁵ביום עשרים
וארבעה לחדש בששי בשנת שתים לדריוש
המלך:

Introduction

One of the greatest things that can happen in the life of a nation or individual is to simply respond, in the affirmative, to the word of the Lord. The response naturally leads to blessing. For the nation Israel the result of hearing the word of the Lord results in blessing in the land, the people restored to fellowship with their God and each other and a refreshing to the land. The feasts of the Lord are an important component of their worship and the Temple is their central place of the feasts of the Lord. For the individual, hearing the word of God results in great joy as feasting in the word produces fruit that only the Spirit of God can produce. After all obedience is simply the conviction by the Spirit through the word of God that He is with you, thus the saying, the blessing of obedience, the blindness of disobedience.

The people obey the Lord (1:12)

1:12. וישמע זרובבל בן-שלתיאל ויהושע בן-יהוצדק הכהן הגדול (Then he will obey, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Joshua son of Jehozadak the high priest). Zerubbabel is the leader of the people who is again identified by pedigree as the son of Shealtiel. Zerubbabel is the grandson of king Jehoiachin, who was king of Judah for only three months before Nebuchadnezzar took him and his royal household prisoner to Babylon (2 Kings 24:8-12). The most striking thing in the whole of this small prophecy of Haggai is that God says Zerubbabel will hear the Lord - he will obey. This is stated as a simple statement of fact. The word is שָׁמַע (shama') Qal Impf. 3m.sg., with vav prefix, "to hear," "listen to," "obey" and when God is talking, the people of the ear must obey. That is the meaning behind the "shema," the hearing of Israel (cf. Deut. 6 "Hear! Oh Israel the Lord God is one..."). Hearing the word of the Lord and obeying the word of the Lord are synonymous to the Jewish mindset, so the usual translation "obey" here. The word obey should not be passed over lightly. This verb together with the verb "fear" in this verse are the most important words in this book. As it turns out the word obey only appears once in the four prophecies of Haggai making this command to build the house of the Lord the central action for them leaving the other three prophecies to be actions the Lord Himself will perform. Yet the word "obey" is not left to their will alone as verse 14 says it was the Spirit of God that "stirred up the spirits of the people to accomplish this work. Notice the verb "obey" is a 3m.sg., "he obeyed," namely, Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel as governor is here representing the nation which in turn extends to the high priest and all the people. The expression in the next phrase, "in the voice," completes the collective thought with the group with Zerubbabel as the representative head of the group, and thus the normal translation, "Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the LORD their God." The book opens identifying the two most important representative heads of the nation, so the two names are repeated complete with pedigrees. First, the political leader represented by זְרֻבָּבֶל (Z^erubbabel) pr.n., Zerubbabel who is further defined as the בן-שלתיאל "son of Shealtiel." Then the religious leadership represented by יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (Y^ehoshua') pr.n., with vav prefix, Joshua who is identified as the בן-יהוצדק "son of Josedechech."

וכל שארית העם בקול יהוה אלהיהם (and all [the] remnant of the people heard in [the] voice of the Lord their God). All the people are in agreement with leadership concerning the command of the Lord God. It is an excellent day when the nation hears and obeys the Lord their God. There seems to have been a revival where the nation as a whole has confessed their sin and decided to follow the Lord's direction. What a great day that must have been. Finally, the people are focused on a common cause. Finally, the eyesore of the town, the partially built Temple of the Lord, will get cleaned up. Is it time now for the house of the Lord to be made beautiful again, made usable? Can the people come to celebrate the feasts of the Lord at the Temple of the Lord their God and it not be

a ruin? They collectively, כָּל (kol) n.m.sg., with vav prefix, “all,” or “every” one of the שְׂאֲרִית (sh’riyth) n.f.sg., “rest, residue, remnant,” those who returned from the exile of the nation, the עַם (‘am) n.m.sg., with he prefix, “people,” the definite article pointing out the nation of Israel, they collectively have heard the voice of the Lord and will act.

All the people have heard the voice, or rather, בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם **“in the voice of the Lord their God.”** To say, “in the voice,” קוֹל (qol) n.m.sg., with bet prefix, “voice,” “sound,” or “noise,” means to respond and to hear with a reaction, hence, the normal sense is to hear or obey the voice. They heard in a positive sense, in the affirmative, that is to say, they heard and it cut through to their hearts which results in action. The imperfect of שָׁמַע (shama’) Qal Impf. 3m.sg., with vav prefix, “to hear,” “listen to,” “obey” “to hear” is placed at the head of the verse in order to stress the hearing of all involved. And the effectivity of the word of God is as the great Dr. Unger points out¹¹:

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. (1 Thes. 2:13)

עַל־דְּבָרֵי חַגִּי הַנְּבִיא כַּאֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם (And to the words of Haggai the prophet as what [the] Lord their God sent him). The identification of the source of the message is reiterated here. The remnant heard the word of the Lord through the prophet, and here the emphasis is placed upon the message. The phrase “obeyed the voice and the words,” equates the words of the prophet to the voice of God. The use of the preposition עַל (‘al) prep., with vav prefix, “and on, upon,” gives the cause or reason for their hearing the דְּבָר (dabar) n.m.pl. with he’ prefix and in constr., “word,” of חַגִּי (chaggay) pr.n. Haggai “festive.”

Haggai is identified as the נְבִיא (nabi) n.m.sg., with he prefix, “spokesman, prophet, speaker,” sent by the Lord their God. This statement gives the method by which the prophet of old received the word of God. First it is said to come by the voice of God, then the voice is said to be sent שָׁלַח (shaalach) Qal Perf. 3m.sg., with pron. suffix 3m.sg., “to send, stretch out,” to them. And in order to make the identification of the source of this word is uniquely identified as the יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם **“LORD their God,”** not just the Lord, not just אֱלֹהִים (‘elohiym) “God,” but the addition of the personal pronoun 3m.pl., identifies the LORD as their personal God, the God of Israel.

וַיִּירָאוּ הָעָם מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה (And the people feared before the Lord). Haggai concludes this verse by stating the reaction of the people as they feared the Lord. The well-known Jewish idiom, “the fear of the Lord is the start of wisdom,” (Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10) is a statement of fact that brings deliverance from calamity (Prov. 14:26). The Hebrew יָרָא (yare’) Qal Impf. 3m.pl., with vav prefix, “to fear,” “revere,” “to be afraid” is in the imperfect “they shall fear” but the vav consecutive moves it to the perfect tense

¹¹ Merrill Unger, *Unger’s Commentary of the Old Testament* (Chattanooga:AMG, 2002), p. 1950

and all the verbs consecutive events¹² as they heard and feared. The definite article placed with the singular אֱמ (‘am) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “nation,” or “people” points out the chosen nation, collectively feared the Lord. For the Hebrew nation the fear of the Lord is a basic concept that is viewed as a contrast between who it is they are to fear - God or man. This is seen in the following proverb:

The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe. (Prov. 29:25)

This fear is especially personal for Israel who has had the Lord’s physical protection observed time and time again. Notice the action of the Lord against Egypt on behalf of Israel:

And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." (Exod. 14:13-14)

And Israel understands the last days judgment and their national salvation is the final salvation experience as the prophet Isaiah proclaimed before their Babylon captivity:

The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; The LORD alone will be exalted in that day, ¹⁸ But the idols He shall utterly abolish. ¹⁹ They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily. ²⁰ In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver And his idols of gold, Which they made, each for himself to worship, To the moles and bats, ²¹ To go into the clefts of the rocks, And into the crags of the rugged rocks, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily. (Isa. 2:17-21)

The fear of the Lord involves the three tenses of salvation. It starts at the point of salvation, it continues as one grows in the knowledge of the Lord, and is perfected at the glorification of the body of man.

Notice the addition of the word פָּנִים (panim) n.m.pl., with mem prefix, “faces” (“from the face” means, “before”) “before,” stressing the direction of the nation’s fear. The idea is that the people, after seeing the result of their hard labor which amounted to little, then upon hearing the reason given by God through the prophet for their little, they finally understood, but incredibly, only after God moved in their hearts. The result was they heard and feared the power that the Lord their God has over nature and over every

¹² When the author wants to convey consecutive events in past time, the phrase will begin with the perfect followed by a series of vav consecutives attached to the imperfect. This construction is referred to as the vav conversive.

nation, so they feared the Lord their God. He is after all יְהוָה (y^ehovah) “the existing One,” the covenant God of Israel, their all-powerful אֱלֹהִים (‘elohiym) God, and the LORD of hosts (1:2,5,7,9,14).

Israel and יְהוָה “The Fear of the LORD”		
Ps. 19:9	The fear of the LORD <i>is</i> clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD <i>are</i> true <i>and</i> righteous altogether.	The fear of the Lord keeps one clean
Ps. 22:23	You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!	Fear Him!
Ps. 25:14	The secret of the LORD <i>is</i> with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.	He will reveal His covenant
Ps. 27:1	The LORD <i>is</i> my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD <i>is</i> the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?	The strength of life
Ps. 33:18	Behold, the eye of the LORD <i>is</i> on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy,	The hope in His mercy
Ps. 34:7	The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.	He delivers them
Ps. 103:17	But the mercy of the LORD <i>is</i> from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children,	He gives mercy to them
Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10	The fear of the LORD <i>is</i> the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do <i>His commandments</i> . His praise endures forever.	The beginning of wisdom
Prov. 8:13	The fear of the LORD <i>is</i> to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.	To hate evil, pride and arrogance
Prov. 10:27	The fear of the LORD prolongs days, But the years of the wicked will be shortened.	Prolongs your days
Prov. 14:26	In the fear of the LORD <i>there is</i> strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge.	Is strong confidence and refuge
Prov. 14:27	The fear of the LORD <i>is</i> a fountain of life, To turn <i>one</i> away from the snares of death.	A fountain of life
Prov. 15:16	Better <i>is</i> a little with the fear of the LORD, Than great treasure with trouble.	Priceless
Prov. 15:33	The fear of the LORD <i>is</i> the instruction of wisdom, And before honor <i>is</i> humility.	The instruction of wisdom

1:13. וַיֹּאמֶר חֲגִי מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה בְּמַלְאכּוֹת יְהוָה לְעַם לֵאמֹר אֲנִי אֶתְכֶם נֹאמ־יְהוָה (Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, said in messages of [the] LORD to the nation saying, I [am] with you, says [the] Lord). Haggai writing of himself in the third person identifies himself as the, מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה “messenger of the LORD,” as he records what he

אָמַר ('amar) Qal Impf. 3m.sg., with vav prefix, “to say,” or “speaks” to the people. The word מַלְאָךְ (mal'ak) n.m.sg., “messenger,” “an angel,” “representative,” comes from an unused root meaning to dispatch as a deputy, and it is again revealed that the LORD's messenger is the prophet חַגַּי (chaggay) Haggai.

There are four מְלָאכֻת (mal'akuth) n.f.sg., with bet prefix, “messages” identified as “of/from the Lord” the construct relationship, בְּמִלְאכֻת יְהוָה “**in a message of/from [the] LORD,**” speaks of the source of the message that Haggai is to deliver לָעָם “to the people.” The definite article is combined with the lamed prefix as is common when used with the pronominal prefix, so that it is, “to the nation,” or, עָם ('am) n.m.sg., with lamed prefix, “to the people.” But this command involves action on their part to get busy with finishing the Temple and is accompanied with a great promise, namely: אֲנִי אֶתְכֶם נֹאמֵר יְהוָה “**I am with you, declared [the] LORD.**” What a statement this is! The infinitive אָמַר ('amar) Qal Inf., to say, speak is placed before the personal pronoun אֲנִי ('any) pers. pron., 1c.sg., “I,” in order to stress the speaking aspect of the the One speaking through Haggai, and placed together with the participle נֹאמֵר (n'um) Qal Part. Pass., m.sg., “utterance, declaration,” from the verb to prophesy, emphasizes the spoken nature of the message that had its source from יְהוָה (y'ehovah) pr.n., Jehovah “the existing One.” This declaration of encouragement, “I am with you,” serves to shut the mouth of any objections they have had over the last 18 years. The objection from outside sources, namely, the Samaritans who objected to their building activities directly to the king, and inside sources who remembered the glory of the previous Temple and objected to the new less glorious building. When the Lord says, I am with you, then as the saying goes, who can be against you (Rom. 8:31; cf., Psa. 46:11; Isa. 41:10; 43:2; Matt. 28:20).

The Lord stirs up the spirit of the nation (1:14)

1:14. וַיַּעַר יְהוָה אֶת־רוּחַ זְרֻבָבֶל בֶּן־שֵׁלְתִיאל פַּחַת יְהוּדָה (And [the] Lord shall cause to stir up [the] spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah). The language is strong as the causative is used for עוּר ('ur) Hif. Impf. 3m.sg., with vav prefix, “to rouse oneself, stir up, awaken,” and translated, “he [Yahweh] shall cause to stir up,” אֶת־רוּחַ זְרֻבָבֶל “the spirit of Zerubbabel.” The sign of the direct object אֶת ('eth) is attached to רוּחַ (ruach) n.f.sg., “spirit, wind, breath,” of זְרֻבָבֶל (Z'rubbabel) pr.n., Zerubbabel (“sown in Babylon”). God is all powerful, moving in man through His word and His Spirit to perform His will. This is one of the most incredible truths of Scripture: that God moves in man to cause man to do His will (cf. 1 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 1:5-11; Phil. 2:13; Heb. 2:4; 13:21). Whoever and wherever one is, God can cause to stir up to action the very being of a man to cause him to perform His will. This had happened with God's people to start the initial rebuilding effort (Ezra 1:5). One finds this repeated time and again even within the pagan world as God moves even in them to action (cf. 2 Sam. 23:18; 2 Chron. 21:16; Isa. 13:17; Jer. 50:9; 51:1; Dan. 11:2; 11:25). Indeed, was it not the Lord God who stirred up Cyrus, king of Persia to set Israel free and direct them to

return to Jerusalem (2 Chron. 36:22; Ezra 1:1; Isa. 45:13)? Time and again God moved in man, moving in his spirit to accomplish His will on earth.

The unsaved man thinks God's word is foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18) and it is God who moves in man to stir his רִיחַ (ruach) - his spirit, to awaken him to action. But in this case God stirs up Zerubbabel the בֶּן (ben) n.m.sg., with maqqef, "son of" שְׁאַלְתִּי־אֵל (sh^e'altiy'el) pr.n., Shealtiel ("I have asked of God"). The identity of Zerubbabel is said to be from an aristocratic lineage. He is the son of a governor of Judah. The word for governor is of foreign origin, the outcome of the organization established during the Babylonian captivity, namely, that Judah is now a Persian province, and the only king is the king of Persia. The political ruler of Judah is identified as the פֶּחָה (pechah) n.m.sg., "governor," of יְהוּדָה (j^ehudah) pr.n., "Judah."

וְאֶת־רוּחַ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹצָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל (and [the] spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest). In like manner to the political leader, now the religious leader, Joshua, is moved in his spirit to action. The sign of the direct object (אֶת) identifies the person, place or thing that the action is performed. So it is that the רִיחַ (ruach) n.f.sg., "spirit," is caused to be moved by God as the controlling verb is the Hifil imperfect of עוֹר from the previous phrase. Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) is again identified as the בֶּן־יְהוֹצָדָק "the son of Josedech," identified as the הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל "high priest."

וְאֶת־רוּחַ כָּל שְׂאֵרֵי הָעָם (and [the] spirit of all [the] remnant of the people). The controlling verb עוֹר "caused to stir up" is distributed also to this group, as God stirs up the spirit of the remnant of the people. Again the sign of the direct object is used with the conjunction אֶת ('eth) pointing out the action is upon the רִיחַ (ruach) n.f.sg., "spirit" of כָּל שְׂאֵרֵי "all the remnant." The Hebrew word for remnant is שְׂאֵרִית (sh^eriyth) n.f.sg., "the rest," "remnant," which is from the verb שָׁאַר (sha'ar) "to remain," "be left" and points not to a remnant of the Lord, but rather the remnant of the עַם ('am) "people, nation" – the people who came out of the captivity.

וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ מְלָאכָה בְּבֵית־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם (And they came and they did work in [the] house of [the] LORD of hosts, their God). The result of God stirring the spirit within them is that they moved to action. The controlling verbs are coming and doing. The imperfect of בּוֹא (bo') Qal Impf. 3m.pl., with vav prefix, "to go in," "enter," or "come," and is the vav consecutive translated as "they came" signifying consecutive action reflecting the result of the action by God within them. Again the imperfect is used for the verb עָשָׂה ('asah) Qal Impf. 3m.pl., with vav prefix, "to do," or "work," as they did the work, or one could say, started to work. Notice the use of the word מְלָאכָה (m^ela'kah) n.f.sg., "work, occupation, business," is from מַלְאָךְ (mal'ak) "a messenger, representative, angel." The word picked by Haggai was not the common words for work, 'abodah or ma'aseh, but mela'kah which is the work that God does (cf. Gen. 2:2; 5:29).

It is the work of the Lord that is needed to attend to the building of the Temple. The term בְּבֵית־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת "in the house of the LORD of hosts," is marked by use of the maqqef to identified whose house this is and is the common term for the Temple, the

vocabulary serves a play on words, a contrast with the house of the people compared with the house of the Lord, their houses are paneled while the house of the Lord is laid bare (1:3). Just as they had used all their energy to build their own houses, so the Lord moves in them to place their focused priority upon His בַּיִת (bayith) n.m.sg., with bet prefix, “house.”

We find now that when the Lord stirs up one’s heart the person has a renewed energy and concentration placing the יהוה צבאות “**LORD of hosts**” before themselves and making the Lord say He is אֱלֹהֵיהֶם (אֱלֹהִים with pron. suff. 3m.pl.) “**their God.**” The use of YHWH and Elohim emphasizes the God of Israel is the all powerful God of the universe.

1:15. בְּיוֹם עֶשְׂרִים וָאַרְבַּעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ בִּשְׁנֵי בָשָׁנִים לְדִרְיוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ (In [the] day, [the] twentieth and forth, of [the] month of [the] sixth, in the second year for Darius, the king). The timing aspect of this event is now made precise, and it is identified as the time span of twenty-three days since verse one identified the first day of the month as the day the message came to Haggai.

It should be noted that in the second year of king Darius the Lord also came to Zechariah but in the eighth month (Zech. 1:1). This was an important moment for the Lord to move in the nation. Again the day is identified as, בְּיוֹם עֶשְׂרִים וָאַרְבַּעָה “**In [the] day, the twenty and four.**” The day is identified with the bet prefixed to יוֹם (yom) n.m.sg., with bet prefix, “day,” and is placed at the head of the phrase in order to identify the day first. Next, is placed the number of the days as עֶשְׂרִים (‘esriym) adj.m.pl., “twenty,” and אַרְבָּעָה (‘arba’) adj.f.sg., with vav prefix, “four.” Next is found the חֹדֶשׁ (chodesh) n.m.sg., with lamed prefix, “month, new moon,” prefixed with the lamed “to, for, at,” and is the typical way in which to identify the day of the month. Next is the number of the month, identified as in the שִׁשִּׁשִּׁי (shishshiy) adj.m.sg., with bet prefix, “**in the sixth,**” שָׁנָה (shaneh) n.f.sg., with bet prefix, constr., “in the year.” Finally, the special marker of the notable king in charge of the land as Israel has returned to the land but they are not independent as they are a vassal state to Darius. Yet this message was delivered, שְׁנֵי (sh’nayim) adj.m.du., “**in the second,**” year of דָּרְיָוֶשׁ (dar’yavesh) pr.n., with lamed prefix, “Darius” the מֶלֶךְ (melek) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “king.” “The date when the actual rebuilding was resumed was 24 Elul (September 21), 520 B.C. There had been a delay of 23 days between the original prophecy (v.1) and the resumption of the work (v. 15). This delay is explained by two factors: (a) the harvest of figs, grapes, and pomegranates was in Elul, the same sixth month, and (b) a period of planning and gathering of materials probably preceded the actual reconstruction.”¹³

¹³ F. Duane Lindsey, in John Walvoord, Roy Zuck, gen. ed., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs: Victor Books, 1985), vol. 1, p. 1540

Second Prophecy (2:1-9)

The Lord Gives Strength (2:1-5)

Haggai 2:1-5

¹In [the] seventh, in [the] twenty and one of [the] month, [the] word of [the] LORD came by [the] hand of Haggai the prophet saying, ²Speak now to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to [the] remnant of the people, saying, ³Who among you that [is] left saw this house in its first glory? And how [is] it looking now? Not the like of which [is] in your eyes as nothing? ⁴And now be strong, Zerubbabel, says the LORD, And be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest, And be strong, all [the] people of the land, says [the] LORD, and work! For I [am] with you, says [the] LORD of hosts. ⁵According to the word which I covenanted with you in your exit from Egypt. And My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

¹בשביעי בעשרים ואחד לחדש היה
דבר־יהוה ביד־חגי הנביא לאמר:
²אמר־נא אל־זרובבל בן־שלתיאל פחת
יהודה ואל־יהושע בן־יהוצדק הכהן הגדול
ואל־שארית העם לאמר: ³מי בכם הנשאר
אשר ראה את־הבית הזה בכבודו הראשון
ומה אתם ראים אתו עתה הלוא כמהו כאין
בעיניכם: ⁴ועתה חזק זרובבל נא־מ־יהוה
וחזק יהושע בן־יהוצדק הכהן הגדול וחזק
כל־עם הארץ נא־מ־יהוה ועשו כ־אני אתכם
נאם יהוה צבאות: ⁵את־הדבר אשר־כרתי
אתכם בצאתכם ממצרים ורוחי עמדת
בתוכם אל־תיראו:

Introduction

It is here that the Lord of hosts brings the nation Israel a word of encouragement, and it comes as they are gathered for the Feast of Tabernacles. All Israel was required to gather in tents in Jerusalem in the sight of the Temple. It is this background that the word of the Lord comes to the prophet Haggai with a word of encouragement to the nation that the Lord their God is with them. It seems proper, maybe even legal, for the Lord to address the national importance concerning the place where the people of the Mosaic covenant meet their God formally. Yet, in the absence of the Temple, the Lord declares He is with them and just as with the Egyptian wilderness experience with all the power and miracles exhibited then, that power is still available to them now in this important mission. After all, it was because of the nation's sin that they were removed from the land of promise,

but it was also part of that same covenant of curses and blessing that the prophecy of the Lord would return them to the land. Just as He did at first in Egypt. This second regathering of the nation was not only promised, but the promise of His care for them was secure – they are His people. He is their Rock, their Strength, their Life, so His Spirit is with them to help with this task also - to provide them all they need.

The Lord gives strength for rebuilding the Temple (2:1-5)

2:1. בשביעי בעשרים ואחד לחדש היה דבר־יהוה ביד־חגי הנביא לאמר (In [the] seventh, in [the] twenty and one of [the] month, [the] word of [the] Lord came by [the] hand of Haggai the prophet saying). While chapter one finds its timing linked to king Darius, chapter two starts with the timing linked only to the Jewish monthly calendar. The month is identified as the שְׁבִיעִי (shēbiy'iy) adj.m.sg., with bet prefix, “seventh,” [month]. The month is placed at the head of the date. The day is placed with the month, being in (bet prefix) the עֶשְׂרִים (‘esriym) adj.m.pl., with bet prefix, “twenty,” or “twentieth,” and אֶחָד (‘echad) adj.m.sg., with vav prefix, “one,” that is, the twenty-first day of the month. The ancients identified the lunar calendar by the new moon, hence the word חֹדֶשׁ (chodesh) n.m.sg., with lamed prefix, “of the new moon,” or “month.” The Hebrew seventh month is Tishri which is part of September and part of October. We find that it was the twenty-first day of the month, which is reckoned to be October 17, 520¹⁴, the last day of the week long Feast of Tabernacles, and seven weeks after the first prophecy. The Feast of Tabernacles (חג הסוכות¹⁵) is that feast celebrating the presence of the Lord and closes off the yearly festival cycle. The feast falls under the fall festivals and is the final feast in the yearly cycle.

The Seven Holy Feasts of Israel		
Hebrew Month		Observance
Month 1: Nisan	March-April	Nisan 14: Passover (Ex. 12:1-11; Lev. 23:5)
		Nisan 15-21: Feast of Unleaven Bread (Lev. 23:6-8)
		Nisan 21: Feast of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:9-14)
Month 3: Sivan	May-June	Sivan 6: Feast of Weeks (Lev. 23:15-22)
Month 7: Tishri	September-October	Tishri 1: Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23-25)
		Tishri 10: Day of Atonement (Lev. 16; 23:26-32)
		Tishri 15-21: Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33-36)

The feast was celebrated for seven days from the 15th to the 21st, and followed on the eighth day by a day of holy convocation (Lev. 23:33, Num. 29:12-18; Deut. 16:13-15). “It was also called the feast of ingathering (Ex. 23:16) for the autumn harvest of the fruits

¹⁴ John Walton, Matthews, & Chavalas, gen. ed., *The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2000), p. 797

¹⁵ Sukkot (booths) are temporary shelters built during the feast for them to experience a time of dwelling in booths. Remembering the 40 year wandering of the Exodus guided by the Lord, yet a joyous time of the harvest celebrating the fall first-fruits.

and olives, with the ingathering of the threshing floor and the wine press, which occurred at this time (Lev. 23:39; Deut. 16:13). It was the outstanding feast of rejoicing in the year, in which the Israelites, during the seven day period, lived in booths or huts made of boughs in commemoration of their wilderness wanderings when their fathers dwelt in temporary shelters. According to Neh. 8:14-18, the booths were made of olive, myrtle, palm, and other branches, and were built upon roofs of houses, in courtyards, the court of the temple, and in the broad places of the city streets. Sacrifices were made more numerous during the feast than at any other, consisting of the offering of 189 animals for the seven day period.”¹⁶ It was on this seventh day of the feast that the tabernacles were to be taken down. This is the day, after a week of preparation and reflection, that the word of the Lord came to Haggai.

The word of the Lord that came to the prophet is described in the perfected tense of הָיָה (hayah) Qal Perf. 3m.sg., “to be, become,” meaning that the prophet received all that he was to repeat to the people. The use of the word, דָּבָר (dabar) n.m.sg., “word,” or “thing,” in the singular reflects the collective nature of the thing spoken. That is to say, the Lord had a word, a message, and that message was given each time in a complete message to be repeated to the nation.

The method by which the message was received from the Lord and distributed to the people is described by the common Hebrew idiom as being given, בִּיד־הַגַּי “in the hand of Haggai,” that is to say, “by the mediated power and authority of Haggai.” Since Haggai is identified as the נָבִיא (nabiy’) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “the spokesman,” “the speaker,” or “prophet.” And in typical fashion, the prophet completes the declaration as he writes in the third person speaking of himself with the infinitive, אָמַר (‘amar) Qal Inf., “saying.”

2:2. אִמְרָנָא אֶל־זִרְבָבֶל בֶּן־שֵׁלְתִיאל פַּחַת יְהוּדָה (**Speak now to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah**). The second prophecy is directed to Zerubbabel, the political representative of the people, and to Joshua the religious representative of the people. The urgency is highlighted as the Lord says, אִמְרָנָא אֶל־זִרְבָבֶל “**Speak now to Zerubbabel.**” The command is elevated as the imperative of אָמַר (‘amar) Qal Impv. 2m.sg., “(you) speak,” is modified with the particle of entreaty נָא (na’) “I beseech you, go to, now, oh,” exhorting Haggai to immediate action with a face-to-face with the leadership. The message is directed אֶל “to,” זִרְבָבֶל (Zerubbabel) “Zerubbabel”, again identified as the בֶּן־שֵׁלְתִיאל “son of Shealtiel”, the פַּחַת יְהוּדָה “governor of Judah.”

וְאֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹזָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל (**and to Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest**). The message is also directed to the religious head, Joshua. The direction is tightly linked to Joshua by the *maqef* between the preposition אֶל (‘el) prep., with vav prefix, “and to,” and יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (Yehoshua’) Joshua. He is again identified by pedigree as בֶּן־יְהוֹזָדָק “son of Jehozadak.” And so as not to mistake who this is, he is again identified as the הַכֹּהֵן

¹⁶ Charles Pfeiffer, Howard Vos, John Rea, gen. ed., *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 603

הגדול **“high priest.”** The definite articles with both כֹהֵן (kohen) and גָּדוֹל (gadol) mark out the distinction of this individual not merely as one of the many priests, but הכהן הגדול **“the priest, the high one.”**

ואל־שארית העם לאמר (and to [the] remnant of the people, saying). The final phrase includes all the people that are in the land. Again, the direction is tightly linked with the people by the *maqef* placed between the preposition אֶל (‘el) with vav prefix, “and to,” and, שְׁאֵרִית (sh’eriyth) n.f.sg., “the rest, the remnant.” These are the people, the עַם (‘am) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “the nation,” that is called Israel. God speaks to these three groups collectively called Israel. Then in typical prophetic fashion, the Lord speaks, אָמַר (‘amar) Qal Inf., “saying.”

2:3. מִי בַכֶּם הַנִּשְׁאָר אֲשֶׁר רָאָה אֶת־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה בְּכְבוֹדוֹ הָרִאשׁוֹן (Who among you that [is] left saw this house in its first glory?). The question is proposed expecting that some among them had indeed seen the previous temple in all her glory since it was destroyed on the 9th of Av, 586 B.C. It has been about 84 years since its destruction by the Babylonians and the Jews taken as prisoners. The Temple is not yet built, so the LORD opens with the interj., מִי (miy) pron., “who,” בַּכֶּם bet prefix with pron. suffix 2m.pl., “in you,” or “among you,” has seen the first Temple? The remnant is identified by the passive participle of שָׁאַר (sha’ar) Nif. Part., m.sg., with he’ prefix., “those that be left over,” thus serving to highlight the devastation that resulted from the Babylonian destruction of the city, the deportation of her inhabitants, the long exile out of the land of promise, and their return. There is no doubt very few are left who saw the Temple’s previous beauty, after all, it had been an additional 18 years since they returned, laid the foundation. The text seems to indicate that some among them indeed had seen the glory of the first Temple as they cried aloud at the appearance of the Second Temple (Ezra 3:12-13). But now, 18 years later, 84 years since it stood, it would seem very few would be left. There may have even been very few 18 years earlier when the foundation was laid.

If you could imagine the glory of Solomon’s Temple that was so magnificent, colorful, and spacious, especially for those אֲשֶׁר רָאָה **“that saw”** it during the feasts, the grandest of feasts being the feast of Tabernacles. The relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר (‘asher) rel. pron., “who, which, that,” serves to replace the noun and asks the question, who indeed was left that had seen it? The perfect tense highlights the seeing aspect of רָאָה (ra’ah) Qal Perf. 3m.sg., “to see,” “to look at.” All that is left of the בַּיִת (bayith) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “the house,” speaking of the House of the LORD, which is the Temple of the LORD. The use of the word house speaks of the contrast between the Lord’s house verses their paneled houses and is used in a symbolic literary way during the current feast of Tabernacles as they are tearing down their tents.

Notice the use of the near demonstrative pronoun זֶה (zeh) dem. pron., with he’ prefix, “the this,” which provides the emphasis that, אֶת־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה **“the house, the this,”** points to the Temple as the thing that is before their eyes as all Israel is gathered before the LORD in front of His Temple at the end of this feast of Tabernacles. The Temple

should be at the center of their hearts, it should be special to them, it should be important to them, it should be near to them. That was God's desire that they be near to Him, but His presence cannot be near if the Temple is not complete. How can they be close to Him if His dwelling place is still in ruins? How indeed can they approach their God on these holy days with the Temple in ruins?

Solomon built a Temple that God describes as, כְּבוֹדוֹ הָרִאשׁוֹן **“in its first glory.”** The word glory is used to described it. It is the word, קָבוֹד (kabod) n.m.sg., with bet prefix and pron. suffix 3m.sg., “in its glory, honor, abundance,” one could translate this word, “riches” and the place is clarified by use of the adjective רִאשׁוֹן (ri'shon) adj.m.sg., with he' prefix, “ the first one” or “former one.” Though the glory of the Lord had left Solomon's Temple long ago (Ezek. 10:18-19), the expression “first one,” points not to the Shekinah glory, but the building itself. “There is no way these relatively poor exiles could have matched the extravagances of Solomon with his professional craftsmen working with imported woods and huge quantities of gold.”¹⁷

Ezra gives us details of the building size,

³ In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem: "Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits, ⁴ with three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber. Let the expenses be paid from the king's treasury. ⁵ Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which is in Jerusalem, each to its place; and deposit them in the house of God." (Ezra 6:3-5)

The Houses of the Lord and Israel			
Structure	Dates (B.C.)	Destruction	Size
Tabernacle ¹⁸ (Exod. 25:8)	1446-960=486 yrs		15Wx45L ft
1 st Temple - Solomon's (1 Kings 5-8)	960-586=374 yrs	9 th Av 586 B.C.	30Wx90Lx45H ft (1 Kings 6:2)
2 nd Temple - Zerubbabel's (Ezra 3:1-5; 6:1-15)	538-		90Wx90L ft (Ezra 6:3)
2 nd Temple - Herod's (John 2:20)	19 B.C.- A.D.70	9 th Av A.D. 70	Expanded courts to 351Nx309Sx518Ex536W yd ¹⁹

¹⁷ Frank Gaebelin, gen. ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1985), vol. 7, p. 585

¹⁸ Tradition: The Tabernacle served from Moses to Solomon for 39 yrs in the desert, 14 years in Gilgal, 369 years in Shiloh, and 57 years in Nov and Giv'. (Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy* (Eugene:Harvest, 2005), p.64)

Tribulation Temple (2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-2)	Future < 7 years		Unknown
Millennial Temple (Ezek. 40-48; Hag. 2:6-9)	Future = 1000 yrs		87.5Wx175L (Temple proper=100cubitsx100cubits. Ezek. 40:48-41:15; Temple area=500 cubits square. Ezek. 42:15-20)
New Heavens and Earth – No Temple	Future = eternity		

ומה אתם ראים אתו עתה הלוא כמוהו כאין בעיניכם (And how [is] it looking now? Not the like of which [is] in your eyes as nothing?). For those who saw the Temple before its destruction on the 9th of Av, 586, the condition of it now looked shocking. The particle מָה (mah) pron., with vav prefix, “and how,” introduces this phrase emphasizing the Temple as the object by use of the Sign if the Direct Object with the pron. suff. 3m.sg., “it” [the house]. Haggai uses the personal pronoun אַתָּה (‘attah) pers. pron. 2m.pl., “you” before the participle רֹאֶה (ra’ah) Qal Part., m.pl., “to see,” or “look at.” The participle is acting as a guran and so it is translated “looking.” And how [are] you seeing it,” אַתָּה (‘attah) adv., “now, at the present time?” The first Temple had lots of gold and built by the finest craftsmen. This second Temple whose foundation was laid 15 year ago, its stone walls somewhat completed with the rest of the stones laying around the structure must have looked like nothing but an old ruined structure, unloved and uncared for.

The final phrase is meant to bring shame and conviction. In the New Testament the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit works in the believer to speak to the heart, convicting man to action, but in the Old Testament, believer’s were not permanently indwelt with the Spirit, so God speak through the prophets directed the people to action. Notice the language used in the second phrase: הלוא כמוהו כאין בעיניכם “Is it not like nothing in your eyes?” The interrogative is prefixed to the negative particle לֹא (lo’) neg. part., with inter. prefix, הלוא “is [it] not?” The subject “it,” is provided as is necessary with the ה interrogative, “is it?” כְּמוֹ (k’e-mo) prep., with pron. suff. 3m.sg., “like it,” “the like of which it [is]” as nothing. The negative particle אֵין (‘ayin) part., with kef prefix, “as nothing,” to you, or as the Hebrew idiom conveys, בעיניכם, which is אֵין (‘ayin) n.m.du., with bet prefix and pron. suffix 2m.pl., “in your eyes.”

2:4. ועתה חזק זרובבל נא־יְהוָה (And now be strong, Zerubbabel, says the LORD) . It is now time for an encouraging word directed toward זְרֻבְבָּל (Zerubbabel) “Zerubbabel,” the grandson of king Jehoiachin, identified as the leader of the first group

¹⁹ Charles Pfeiffer, Howard Vos, John Rea, ed., *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* (Peabody:Hendrickson, 1999), p. 1677

returning from Babylon. Zerubbabel is exhorted to lead now, at this, עַתָּה ('attah) part., "now, at this time," to be strong. The imperative of חָזַק (chazaq) Qal Impv., 2m.sg., "to strengthen," "be strong, be courageous," is used for each group identified. Back in verse 1:13, the LORD told them He was with them, now the encouragement is for them to "be strong, be resolute" because there is an important task requiring all Israel's attention – to build the House of the LORD! Haggai repeats what the Lord God said by the usual prophetic declaration נֹאמַם־יְהוָה "saith the LORD." The participle נֹאֵם (n'e'um) Qal Pas. Part., m.sg., "to say, declare," is from the verb נָאֵם (na'am) "to speak as a prophet, prophesy," so the One declaring is identified as יְהוָה (y'ehovah) "the existing One."

וְחֹזֶק יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־יְהוֹזָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל (And be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest). Again the imperative of חָזַק (chazaq) Qal Impv. 2m.sg., with vav prefix, "to strengthen," "be strong," is used. This time the exhortation is directed towards יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (y'hoshua') pr.n., "Joshua," identified as the בֶּן־יְהוֹזָדָק "son of Jehozadak." Jehozadak, identified as the הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל "the high priest."

וְחֹזֶק כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ נֹאמַם־יְהוָה וַעֲשׂוּ (And be strong, all [the] people of the land, says [the] LORD, and work!). Finally, the exhortation is repeated using the verb, חָזַק (chazaq) Qal Impv. 2m.sg., with vav prefix, "be strong," and is directed toward כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ "all [the] people of the land."

The final phrase finishes the *inclusio*²⁰ in typical prophetic fashion, נֹאמַם־יְהוָה "saith the LORD." But here the final word is the imperative of עָשָׂה ('asah) Qal Impv. 2m.pl., with vav prefix, "to do, work, fashion," and as the great Dr. Gill notes, "Take heart, be of good courage, do not be dismayed at these things; though, the building may be contemptible in the eyes of some, nevertheless go on with it manfully and vigorously; let none despise the day of small things, for from these low beginnings great things will arise, and glorious things will follow, as hereafter predicted."²¹

כִּי־אֲנִי אִתְּכֶם נֹאם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (For I [am] with you, says [the] LORD of hosts). The Lord exhorts them to action, but He also encourages them in their effort by proclaiming, כִּי־אֲנִי אִתְּכֶם "for I [am] with you" (cf. 1:13; Deut 31:23). The particle כִּי (kiy) conj., "for," or "because," provides the reason for their success, for if God is with you who can be against you? The personal pronoun אֲנִי ('aniy) pers. pron. 1c.sg., "I" is tightly linked with the reason, כִּי־אֲנִי "for I" pointing to their source of strength - the Lord God is their strength, their shield.

As is the usual case, the preposition, אִתְּ ('eth) "with" is combined with the personal pronoun to express the nearness of the Lord as He is "with you." The participle of נֹאֵם (n'e'um) Qal Pass. Part., m.sg., "says" is from the verb נָאֵם (na'am) "to speak as a prophet, prophesy." And this prophecy comes from יְהוָה (y'ehovah) Jehovah, "the existing One," who is further identified, as before, as the One possessing the צָבָא

²⁰ An *inclusio* is a literary device where it finishes as it starts. It starts and finishes with "says the Lord."

²¹ John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible* (www.e-sword.net)

(tsaba') n.m.pl., "armies," or "hosts," from the verb **צָבָא** (tsaba') "to go forth, wage war, fight." This army of the Lord is of course the host of angels that look after and attend to the work of God in heaven and on earth. While the Spirit of God moves and directs the hearts of men, the angels of God protect and guard the nation Israel in the spiritual battles and the rebuilding of the Temple has been a great spiritual battle for the last 15 years.

2:5. אֶת־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַתִּי אִתְּכֶם בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם (According to the word which I covenanted with you in your exit from Egypt). Notice the covenant is not identified as the Abrahamic, but the Mosaic – the conditional covenant whose condition of blessedness of life in the land of promise is based upon their faithfulness to the Mosaic Law. The phrase starts with the preposition **אֶת** ('eth) "with," linked with the maqqef to the noun **דָּבָר** (dabar) n.m.sg., with he prefix, "speech," or "word," **אֶת־הַדָּבָר** "**with the word,**" and translated, "according to the word."

The relative pronoun **אֲשֶׁר** ('asher) rel. pron., "who," or "what," further describes and limits the "word" as it is specifically related to the covenant. The Hebrew **כָּרַת** (karath) Qal Perf. 1c.sg., "to cut," "cut a covenant," speaks of the law which was not only cut in stone, but includes the whole of the 613 statutes given under the dispensation of the law. That very law which was covenanted between God and Israel. This is emphasized by the compound **אִתְּכֶם**, the preposition **אֶת** ('eth) prep., with pron. suffix 2m.pl., "with you all." The repeated use of the preposition **אֶת** in this section stresses the statement of fact that "I am with you." Even in their disobedience the LORD of hosts is with them looking after them because they are His and His word is sure and true and it is His reputation, His word that is at stake.

The Lord recalls the incredible start of His miraculous work in releasing them from their slavery in Egypt, His miraculous protection and provision in the 40 year wilderness wandering identified as, **בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם** "**in your exit from Egypt.**" As they **יָצְאוּ** (yatsa') Qal Inf., with bet prefix and pron. suffix 2m.pl., "go out," or "went forth," out from **מִצְרַיִם** (mitsrayim) pr.n.du., with mem prefix, Egypt, "land of the Copts," or "double straits."

וְרוּחִי עִמָּדְתָּ בְּתוֹכְכֶם אֶל־תִּירָאוּ (And My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not). This statement serves to provide encouragement as the covenant provided promises of both blessings and cursings, however, the Lord makes it very clear that Israel is His eternal possession and will not be totally destroyed (cf Deut. 28:9; 30:1-10; Neh. 1:8-9; Isa. 43:5-7; 60:21; 66:18-20; Jer. 23:5-8; 30:5-11; 31:10-14, 38:40; 32:37-44; Ezek. 20:31-42; 34:11-17, 21-28; 39:23-29; Zeck. 8:7-8; ,22; Matt. 24:31; Rom. 11:25-29; Rev. 18:4). They can only go so far with their sin. God is sovereign and the nations likewise can only go so far against Israel. So it is, that He says, "My Spirit remains among you," in times of critical national revival. The participle is acting as a verb with the stated subject as **רוּחִי** (ruach) n.f.sg., with pron. suff. 1c.sg., "My Spirit," remains **עֹמֵד** ('amad) Qal Part., f.sg., "stands" or "remains" in your midst.

The final clause simply says, “be not afraid.” The imperfect verb יָרֵא (yare’) Qal Impf., 2m.pl., “fear,” or “be afraid,” is acting as an imperative and serves to exhort them to have confidence in the Lord – trust in the Lord because He is with them.

The Glorious New House (2:6-9)

Haggai 2:6-9

⁶ For thus [the] LORD of hosts said, yet first, it [will be] a little while, and I will cause to shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land. ⁷ And I will cause to shake all the nations, and the desire of all the nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory, says [the] LORD of hosts ⁸ The silver [is] for Me and the gold [is] for Me, says [the] LORD of hosts. ⁹ The greater house will be this latter one, [more] glorious, than the former, says [the] LORD of hosts, and in this place I will give peace, declares [the] LORD of hosts.

⁶ כי כה אמר יהוה צבאות עוד אחת מעט
היא ואני מרעיש את־השמים ואת־הארץ
ואת־הים ואת־החרבה: ⁷ והרעשתי
את־כל־הגוים ובאו חמדת כל־הגוים
ומלאתי את־הבית הזה כבוד אמר יהוה
צבאות: ⁸ לי הכסף ולי הזהב נאם יהוה
צבאות: ⁹ גדול יהיה כבוד הבית הזה
האחרון מן־הראשון אמר יהוה צבאות
ובמקום הזה אתן שלום נאם יהוה צבאות:

Introduction

When will Israel find peace? Only in the day of peace in the place of peace will Israel find their rest. While God has brought reconciliation through the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, placing His Spirit in the Church age believer's body who is thus called the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19), Israel, as a nation, will not find peace through reconciliation in the land of promise until the Second Coming of the Prince of Peace, as the Son of Glory that is her Son of Righteousness – her Righteousness, Redeemer and Savior, her El-Shaddai who will bring in her rest in the Millennial kingdom. The Lord will dwell with them in a greater house when the season of the feast of Tabernacles is made manifest (Isa. 60:7,13).

The last day's temple will be greater than the former (2:6-9)

2:6. כי כה אמר יהוה צבאות עוד אחת מעט היא (For thus [the] LORD of hosts said, yet first, it [will be] a little while). The expression, כי כה אמר יהוה צבאות “For thus

[the] LORD of hosts said,” now moves to express a connection with the far prophecy of the promised Messiah who will some day come and shake the heavens and earth. This prophecy will be fulfilled just prior to the Messianic kingdom when the LORD of hosts will Himself be present with Israel in His glory, tabernacling with them and teaching them from the Temple Himself (cf. John 17:5; Matt. 24:30; 25:31; Ps. 8:5-6; Num 14:20-23; Ps. 102:15-16; Matt. 24:30; 25:30; Dan. 2:44; Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 11:9; Isa. 56:7; 66:20-23; Jer. 33:18; Zech. 14:16-21). This prophetic call starts in typical fashion with the two particles together כִּי לָהּ “for thus.” The two particles כִּי (kiy) “for,” and לָהּ (koh) “thus, so,” speak of the certainty of the act proclaimed.

To the expression, “For thus said the LORD of hosts,” is added the time aspect. The expression עוֹד אֶחָת מֵעַתָּה הִיא “**yet once it [is] a little [while],**” is a common idiom for a far-off event, don’t expect it soon, but what will come serves to build off their immediate task, specifically, to rebuild the Temple. It is essential, one could say, that this Temple be built now so that the future event can be a reality. Yet God does not leave unfilled prophecy to man, He moves in man to accomplish His will be done. The expression might better be translated “yet first, it [will be] a little [while],” or “but first, it [is] a little while,” placing a break in the two events – the immediate building project and the return of the LORD with His army to judge the nations (Rev. 19:11-20). This verse is used in Hebrews 12:26 with reference to serving God with grace and godly fear (Heb. 12:28). Notice how the author of Hebrews interprets this expression as he compares and contrasts the covenant given at Mount Sinai with the New Covenant whose greater mediator is Christ not Moses and whose mountain is Zion – the mountain of the Lord (Heb. 12:18-29),

²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. ²⁵ 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, ²⁶ whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." ²⁷ Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. ²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire. (Heb. 12:22-29)

The expression עוֹד אֶחָת “**yet first,**” uses the adverb of degree, עוֹד (‘od) “yet, still,” which is not used with respect to time (e.g. “at that time, now,”), but with respect to degree or iteration as in, “again, more, still.” When used with the cardinal number אֶחָד (‘echad) adj.f.sg., num, “one,” might better be translated as, “once more,” suggesting the

LORD had done something of the kind before. Indeed, Hebrews links this with the giving of the law at Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:16-18) and He will shake the heavens and earth again when He returns to judge the nations, bring in true peace to Jerusalem and His Temple will be glorious because He will be there with them in all His glory. Notice the description of the Mount Sinai incident given in Exodus 19,

¹⁶ Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. ¹⁹ And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. (Ex. 19:16-19)

Next, the time aspect is given by the abstract expression, **מַעַט הִיא** “**it [is] a little [while].**” This expression is like the father trying to comfort his children concerning a favorable outcome of some painful situation, that is, “don’t worry about the time aspect, you don’t have to worry about that, that is in my hands.” It will be a little while before I shake heaven and earth again, in the meantime busy yourselves with the rebuilding effort. The substantive, **מַעַט** (m^e’at) subst., “little, few, small,” is combined with the feminine pronoun **הִיא** (hu’) pers. pron. 3f.sg., “she/it” which points back to the cardinal number **אֶחָד** “once, first,” to highlight the repeated act of an event of Mount Sinai.

וְאֲנִי מַרְעִישׁ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם (**and I will cause to shake the heavens**). Is this hyperbole? Is this a metaphor, or is this literal? I take this to be literal where the Lord of hosts will shake the heavens and the earth in a dramatic way. Some have taken this to be a metaphor for a great army, like the historic Persian, Greek or Roman army that God prophesied would take over the world by force. Others have taken this in a literal sense to refer to the coming of our Lord with His first coming and hence is seen as fulfilled at the cross. Yet the fulfilment of this prophecy is bigger than the cross. This shaking of heaven, earth, sea and land, is described in detail in the Book of Revelation with Christ’s second coming. What transpired in Exodus 19 with the shaking of the Mount Sinai, the sound of the trumpets, the descending of the Shechinah Glory and the voice of the LORD that Moses heard all prefigure the larger event of the second coming of the LORD with His heavenly host. The extent of the shaking is not local to a single mountain, but the Lord shakes all the mountains of the earth, all the elements of heaven, and all those in the sea – this is global in extent.

The personal pronoun **אֲנִי** (’aniy) pers. pron. 1c.sg., with vav prefix, “I,” highlights the action of the personal God of Israel, **וְאֲנִי מַרְעִישׁ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם** “**And I, making to shake the heavens...**” Notice the causative participle of **רָעַשׁ** (ra’ash) Hif.

Part. m.sg., “to quake, shake,” is acting verbally, pointing to the Lord of hosts with the masculine singular. The sign-of-the-direct-object אֶת (‘eth) SDO identifies שָׁמַיִם (shamayim) n.m.du., with he’ prefix, “the heavens,” as the thing that the Lord is acting upon. The participle usage may additionally highlight the fact that it is the Lord that is “the one that is known as the shaker of the heavens.” Who is the Lord God of Israel? The almighty shaker of heaven and earth!

וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־הַחֲרָבָה (and the earth, and the sea and the dry land). The sign-of-the-direct-object continues listing all the objects that the Lord intends to shake. So it is that He will shake the אֶת־הָאָרֶץ “the earth.” The sign-of-the-direct-object אֶת (‘eth) SDO, with vav prefix, is placed with אֶרֶץ (‘erets) n.f.sg., with he’ prefix, “earth, land,” and as a whole everything in it. The sea יָם (yam) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “sea” (אֶת־הַיָּם) and the dry land that are of the earth provides the extent of the shaking as one understands that everything is effected everywhere on the whole globe of the earth. The distinction between the earth and the dry-land חֲרָבָה (charabah) n.f.sg., with he’ prefix, “dry land,” from חָרַב (charab) “to be dry,” “waste,” or “desolate,” serves to paint the picture of the universal nature of the event. This is not a common event, not like Mount Sinai, not like anything else since the creation account. This event will transform the character of all the elements of the earth. Scripture is progressive, so we find the Book of Revelation gives us additional details in sequential order, putting it all together in a final record of this all powerful physical shaking of heaven and earth that serve to result in the movement of the governments of the earth, shaking them up also.

2:7. וְהָרַעַשְׁתִּי אֶת־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם (And I will cause to shake all the nations). The Lord now narrows the focus of His wrath toward all the inhabitants of the earth. While the previous usage of “shake” was a causative participle, now a full verb is used, meaning, the one that shakes now causes to shake the nations. The Hifil perfect of רָעַשׁ (ra’ash) Hif. Perf. 1c.sg., with vav prefix, “to quake,” or “shake” is a future event so the normal translation, “I will shake,” but since God is speaking and it is a sure event, He uses a prophetic perfect where the future is viewed as a completed act. This is God after all and His word is sure. If He says He will act, He will surely act. The sign-of-the-direct-object אֶת (‘eth) is added to complete the close relationship of this future destruction as it now moves to the nations. The extent of this destructive shaking is further defined by adding the adjective כָּל (kol) “all,” גּוֹי (goy) n.m.pl., with he’ prefix, “the nations,” or “people groups.” No one on earth will be spared this shocking event, it will be global in scope. The word for shake can have the sense of, “fear, making afraid, to quake, tremble,” so that the shaking of the earth by the Lord, like a mighty earthquake shakes the foundations of the earth, serves to make the nations fear; hence, they shake, tremble in fear, for where could they hide, where can they escape the wrath of the Lord? The biblical shaking of the Lord can mean: (1) the battle horses the Lord brings upon a city, (2) the shaking of the physical earth by the Lord, (3) and at times the reference is a general expression concerning the all-powerful God who created the heavens and earth; (4) and finally, as a metaphor for a great event like the fall of Satan (Isa. 14:16).

The רָעַשׁ shaking of the LORD of hosts		
	Time	Who or what is shaken?
Judges 5:4; Ps. 68:8; 77:18;	Moses	God shook the nations of the wilderness wonderings from Egypt and Sinai to entering Canaan.
2 Sam. 22:9; Ps. 18:7; 60:2;	David	The Lord delivered David from his enemies (2 Sam. 22:1)
Jer. 4:24; 8:16;	Jeremiah	Judah by the Babylonians
Jer. 50:46; 51:29; Ezek. 26:10; Ezek. 31:16	Jeremiah	Babylon by the Medes and Persians; Egypt by the Babylonians
Ezek. 31:16; Ps. 46:3; 72:16; Isa. 13:13; 24:18; Jer. 10:10; 49:21; Ezek. 38:20; Joel 2:10; 3:16; Amos 9:1	Future	Egypt, Babylon, world, earth, the nations, Edom; Gog

ובאו חמדת כל־הגוים (And the desire of all the nations will come). After the destruction of the great day of the Lord called the day of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), the day of the wrath of the Lord (Zeph. 1:18), the day of vengeance (Isa. 34:8; 35:4; 61:2; 63:4), birth pangs (Isa. 21:3; 26:17-18; 66:7; Jer. 4:31; Micah 4:10; Matt. 24:4-7), tribulation (Matt. 24:9), and the last half of the Tribulation called the Great Tribulation (24:21), those left on the earth will collectively come to the Lord of hosts and all will be saved (cf. Rom. 11:26). The Tribulation will end the Times of the Gentiles which started with the Babylonian captivity wherein the central focus is Gentile domination and control over Jerusalem and God's Temple (Isa. 24:21-23; 59:16-20; Matt. 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Rom. 11:25). The Tribulation will produce a Messianic revival among the Jewish people scattered throughout the world, resulting in the final regathering of Jews to the land in belief (Zech. 8:7-8; Ezek. 36:24; 37:21), and ending the period called the mystery of the hardening of Israel (Rom. 11:25).

Notice, the use of the prophetic perfect of בֹּא (bo') Qal Perf., 3c.pl., with vav prefix, "to go in," or "come," the action is seen as complete, already taking place in time by the One that is sovereign over time, yet it is future. The feminine of חֲמֻדָּה (chemdah) n.f.sg., constr., "desire," "that which is desirable," points to the people's new found love for the One that has called them up to the Mountain of the Lord. No fear is left upon the earth because the Lord of hosts has shaken the earth with such a great destructive force that all that are left are those that are called of the Lord. This event is much like that of the day when the priestly line of Korah rebelled against Moses and Aaron as the chosen spokesmen and princes of the Lord. Moses directed the division of the camp in two. Then the Lord opened up the earth and swallowed the rebellious camp after which the earth closed over them (Num. 16:28-34; cf. Rev. 12:16; 19:11-16; 20:7-15). The extent of this event, in contrast to that of Moses' day when the Lord cleansed the camp of Israel is פֶּלַח

(kol) part., “all,” the גוֹי (goy) n.m.pl., with he’ prefix,” “nations, that is, the extent is the whole earth and every nation on the earth.

ומלאֹתִי אֶת־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה כְּבוֹד אֵמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (And I will fill this house with glory, says [the] LORD of hosts). The high point then is the brilliance of the Shechinah Glory and God’s presence on earth, specifically His presence in the Temple. This high point is made even more clear by the use of the insensitive of מָלֵא (male’) Piel Perf., 1c.sg., with vav prefix, “I intensely filled (this is a prophetic perfect so the translation, “I will intensely fill”). The sign-of-the-direct-object אֶת (‘eth) SDO, is now attached to the house, בַּיִת (bayith) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “house,” and means “the House of God,” which came to mean “the Temple.” But this possessive suggests that the Temple is designed to be the singular dwelling place of God and hence is designed and built to properly possess His glory – the house where you meet with the God of glory, specifically, the Son of Glory. The fulfilment of this prophecy is found in the Prophets and the book of Revelation as follows (cf. Isa. 4:5-6; 11:10; 35:1-2; 40:5; 58:8-9; 60:1-3; Ezek. 37:1-7; 44:102; Zech. 2:4-5; Matt. 16:27; 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; Rev. 21:1-3; 21:10-11; 21:23-24

⁸ *The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed. (Rev 15:8 NKJ)*

And,

In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious; And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing For those of Israel who have escaped. ³ And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy-- everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem. ⁴ When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, ⁵ then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering. ⁶ And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain (Isa 4:2-6 NKJ)

The demonstrative pronoun זֶה (zeh) dem. pron., with he’ prefix, points more specifically to “the this” glory. The word glory כְּבוֹד (kabod) n.m.sg., “glory,” or “honor,” comes from the verb כָּבַד (kabad) meaning “to be heavy,” or “weighty,” and might be translated כְּבוֹד אֵמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת “I will intensely fill this house with glory.”

To finish the thought, the typical prophetic statement is used: אֵמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת “the LORD of hosts said.” The idea of the glory of the Lord in connection with the term

“LORD of hosts” serves to add to the exaltation of the One true God who is over all, where even the army of angels are at His command concerning spiritual battles that take place not just on earth but in the heavenlies. These angels serve to help Israel during her time of need, so it is that the Lord commands His host of angels to assist Israel to build the Temple. Not only does the Lord employ His Spirit but the His angels are called to action.

2:8. לִי הַכֶּסֶף וְלִי הַזָּהָב נָא יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (The silver [is] for Me and the gold [is] for Me, says [the] LORD of hosts). The Lord continues His discourse by explaining that the silver and gold of the Temple were for Him. The silver and gold of the Temple reflected His holiness, purity, His extreme value to them, but mostly His glory – His shining glory, Shechinah Glory of the Lord. Dr. Unger writes, “The restorative community was disappointed in the absence of precious metals in the second Temple, in contrast to the lavish silver appointments of Solomon’s magnificent edifice.”²² This is emphasized by the placement of לִי (lamed prefix with pron. suffix 1c.sg.) “for Me,” at the head of the phrase. All the riches they possess belong in the construction of the Temple. While the silver would be nice to have in order to buy building materials either for themselves or the Temple, the Lord intends His house to have כֶּסֶף (keceph) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “silver,” and זָהָב (zahab) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “gold,” as ornaments on the walls, the fixtures, and the priestly devices. The house of God must reflect the character of the Lord and while they lived in the paneled houses where can they find a fitting house for their God full of the glory and those things that reflect His holiness and glory?

The Lord finished the thought by use of the expression, נָא יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת **“declares the LORD of hosts.”** Notice the slight deviation from the previous construction of אָמַר “the LORD of hosts said.” Here, the word for “says,” is the passive participle נֹאֵם (ne’um) Qal Pass. Part., m.sg., “to declare” and might be translated “the thing being declared,” and serves to emphasize this statement as not just spoken but declared – that is, what is said is final.

Uses of Gold in the Temple and its Representation	
Used in the Tabernacle/Temple structure	Exod. 26:29,32; 2 Chron. 3:4-6
Used in the Tabernacle/Temple furniture	Exod. 25:10-40; 30:3-5; 2 Chron. 4:7-8. 20-22
Priestly garments	Exod. 28:11-36
Symbolized holiness	Exod. 28:36; 39:30; Lev. 8:9; Ezra 8:28; Prov. 27:21; Isa. 48:10 Zech. 13:8-9; Mal. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:20; 1 Pet. 1:7; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 4:4

²² Merrill Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga:AMG, 2002), p.1953

2:9. גדול יהיה כבוד הבית הזה האחרון מן־הראשון אמר יהוה צבאות (**The greater house will be this latter one, [more] glorious, than the former, says [the] LORD of hosts**). The Lord is looking far into the future as this Temple will be a place of the glory of the Lord. The Lord calls this Temple the “great one.” The adjective גדול (gadol) adj.m.sg., means “great one,” or keeping with the language of the context, “great house.” The Lord says הִיָּה (hayah) Qal Impf. 3m.sg., “it will be,” כָּבוֹד (kabod) n.m.sg., “glorious,” or “abundant [in riches],” a house characterized by glory. Notice the definite article attached to, בַּיִת (bayith) n.m.sg., “the house,” pointing to the partially built Temple before them, and the inclusion of the demonstrative pronoun זֶה (zeh) with he’ prefix, “the this,” makes this house a special, definite, unmistakable house – a greater house wherein will be found the Lord of glory in His brilliance – a house filled with the glory of the Lord.

Also notice this future house is different from any previous house as the adjective אַחֲרָיוֹן (‘acharon) adj.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “behind,” “following,” “after,” “the one after,” this one will be more glorious. The inclusion of all the definite articles is significant as they point to a specific future Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. It is a physical Temple located on Mount Zion, not a metaphorical temple. There are some who try to make this physical temple the body of a believer in the Church age spoken of in 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19, but the definite articles make this interpretation impossible. This is referring to the physical Temple physically located before them located in Jerusalem and the central theme of this prophecy. The reference here is to Ezekiel’s Temple described in Ezekiel 40-48 within is found all unique construction details of a building never seen built. The final Temple of the Lord is the Millennial Temple wherein is found complete peace and final rest for Israel from her enemies. The Millennial Temple will be the final Temple and the greatest Temple in its glory because unlike the second Temple which contained no Shechinah Glory, the Millennial Temple will.

The comparison of this future Temple is made with the first Temple built by Solomon. It is compared מִן (min) prep., “from,” the רִאשׁוֹן (ri’shon) adj.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “first,” or “former,” and normally translated as a comparative, “*than* the former.”

ובמקום הזה אתן שלום נאם יהוה צבאות (**And in this place I will give peace, declares [the] LORD of hosts**). Next, the Lord gives them a word of hope. In typical prophetic fashion this is a far prophecy placed immediately after the near command to action. The Lord tells them this place will be a place of peace. The Hebrew is מָקוֹם (maqom) n.m.sg., with vav and bet prefix, “a standing place,” “a place,” stands before the demonstrative זֶה (zeh) dem. pron., with he’ prefix, “the this,” in order to emphasize the physical place, this Temple, that the Lord Himself will, נָתַן (nathan) Qal Impf. 1c.sg., “give, set,” or “place,” is described as a place of שְׁלוֹם (shalom) n.m.sg., “peace.” Again, in poetic fashion the Lord finishes with the passive participle נִאֲמָה (n’e’um) Qal Pass. Part., m.sg., “declares,” יהוה צבאות “[the] LORD of hosts.” Who is the Lord? The One that will bring these words to completion. He will give Israel rest and peace because He promised to do so by His word and backed up for His name’s sake.

Third Prophecy (2:10-19)

The People are Defiled (2:10-14)

Haggai 2:10-14

¹⁰In [the] twenty and fourth of the ninth [month], in the second year of Darius, [the] word of [the] LORD came to Haggai the prophet saying, ¹¹Thus said [the] LORD of hosts, ask now of the priests concerning [what the] law says. ¹²If one carries holy meat in [the] edge of his garment, and it touched in his skirt upon the bread, or upon a boiled food, or upon the wine, or upon oil, or upon any meat, will it become holy? and the priests answered, and they said, no! ¹³Then Haggai said, if an unclean person touches in all these things, will it be unclean? then the priests answered and said, he is unclean. ¹⁴Then Haggai answered and said, so [is] this people, and so [is] this nation before me, declares [the] LORD, and so [is] every work of their hands, and that which they bring in there [is] unclean.

¹⁰ בעשרים וארבעה לתשיעי בשנת שנים
לדריוש היה דבר־יהוה אל־חגי הנביא
לאמר : ¹¹ כה אמר יהוה צבאות שאל־נא
את־הכהנים תורה לאמר: ¹² הן ישא־איש
בשר־קדש בכנף בגדו ונגע בכנפו
אל־הלחם ואל־הנזיד ואל־היין ואל־שמן
ואל־כל־מאכל היקדש ויענו הכהנים ויאמרו
לא: ¹³ ויאמר חגי אם־יגע טמא־נפש
בכל־אלה היטמא ויענו הכהנים ויאמרו
יטמא: ¹⁴ ויען חגי ויאמר כן העם־הזה
וכן־הגוי הזה לפני נאם־יהוה וכן כל־מעשה
ידיהם ואשר יקריבו שם טמא הוא:

Introduction

The Lord poses two questions to the priests in order to get them to think about holiness. The questions, and accompanying answers are: “(1) If that which is holy touches that which is unholy, will it make the unholy holy? The answer is no. (2) If that which is unclean touches that which is clean (holy), will the unclean make it unclean (unholy)? The answer is yes.”²³ Holiness is noncommunicable, however unholiness is communicable. Uncleanness is communicated to the clean by contact, so that when the clean and unclean come in contact, both are unclean. Yet, the law is stated: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

It should be pointed out that the concept of holiness in this context focuses upon that which is common and that which is separated for a special purpose. Meat and bread

²³ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee* (Nashville: Nelson, 1982), Vol. 3, p. 897

are of themselves not clean or unclean, but meat dedicated for a special purpose to God is to be treated in every respect according to prescribed handling and separation from the common things. Likewise, that which is common is not to be used in service to God. These objects of everyday worship and provision for the priests are applied specifically to the holy utensils of the Lord, the priest, whose purpose is to regulate the holy nation by the holy Word.

Two questions are posed in an effort to exhort God's holy people to holiness – a people set apart as useful instruments fit for holy use by a holy God. Everything around them is to be holy – their God, His sanctuary, His priests, His nation and their holiness to the Lord during the holy feasts, specifically, the feast of Tabernacles, even the most holy day of the feast which this message is received is called a holy convocation (Lev. 23:36). They stand before the holy Temple of God where the holy of holies and the holy place are not complete but where the holy word of God is read and heard and His holy law is prescribed with a focus on holy living unto the Lord their God. But will Israel be holy? Will the priests of Israel be holy unto the Lord their God whom they serve? Will they remember the command concerning their positional holiness: “And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine” (Lev. 20:26).

The People are Defiled (2:10-14)

2:10. בעשרים וארבעה לתשיעי בשנת שתיים לדריוש (In [the] twenty and fourth of the ninth [month], in the second year of Darius). This is the third prophecy Haggai received from the Lord and involves their state of sin and the Lord's promise to shake heaven and earth for them. But first, the Lord declares their uncleanness in no uncertain terms. The timing of this prophecy is identified in typical fashion placing the day first in the list. So here, the prophet identifies the specific day as בעשרים וארבעה “in the fourth and twentieth [day].” The month is then given prefixed by the lamed תְּשִׁיעִי (t^eshiy'iy) num., with lamed prefix, “to the ninth [month].” Finally the year is listed as בשנת שתיים “in the year, the second one,” of דָּרְיָוֶשׁ (dar^eyavesh) pr.n., with lamed prefix, “to Darius,” which is of Persian origin meaning “lord.”

The date is identified as the month of Chisleu, which covers some of November and December. This is two months after the previous prophecy and three months after the work began anew on the Temple (Hag. 1:14).

היה דבר־יהוה אלי־חגי הנביא לאמר ([the] word of [the] LORD came to Haggai the prophet saying). This is the third time the word of the Lord came to the prophet. Haggai. The verb הָיָה (hayah) Qal Perf. 3m.sg., “it came,” is placed at the head stressing the active nature of the coming of the word, היה דבר־יהוה אלי־חגי “it came, [the] word of [the] LORD to Haggai.” As חָגִי (chaggay) pr.n., Haggai “festive,” is called נָבִיא (nabiy') n.m.sg., with he' prefix, “the prophet, spokesman, speaker,” of the LORD. The

prophets along with the priests of the Lord act as mediators between the holy God and sinful people. And in typical mediatorial fashion, the word of the LORD that Haggai received is in the infinitive of, אָמַר ('amar) Qal Inf., “saying, speaking.”

2:11. כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (Thus said [the] LORD of hosts). This is the typical introductory statement of the prophet and Haggai has used this pattern, כֹּה אָמַר “thus He said,” with regard to the LORD three times now. The source of this message is identified originating from יְהוָה (y^ehovah) pr. n., Jehovah “the existing One,” of צְבָא (tsaba') n.m.pl., “hosts, army.”

שְׁאַלְנָא אֶת־הַכֹּהֲנִים תּוֹרָה לֵאמֹר (ask now of the priests concerning [what the] law says). The Lord poses a question to the priests for the purpose of identifying a basic point concerning proper handling of the sacred, that which has been consecrated to the Lord their God: what is clean? The Lord asks the question using the particle of entreaty attached to the imperative of שְׁאַל (sha'al) Qal Impv., 2m.sg., “ask,” “enquire.” The particle, נָא (na') is the particle of entreaty, “now, I beseech you,” stressing the urgency of the question at hand. This question is posed to the priests by use of the sign-of-the-direct-object אֶת ('eth) with the definite article attached to כֹּהֵן (kohen) n.m.pl., with he' prefix, “the priests.” And the question concerns the Law, the תּוֹרָה (torah) n.f.sg., “the law,” or “instruction,” that God gave them in the wilderness. The question serves to force those in charge of the spiritual health of the nation to pause and consider a deeper meaning of the sacrifice that is required of them. The construct relationship of the priests with the law is not simply, “priest of the law,” but the priests possessing the very word of God, e.g., possessing all the care and responsibility of the spiritual life surrounded by the word of God. This might better read, “what the law has to say.”

A. Can a holy (cleansed) object transfer its holiness to the unclean (unholy) (2:12)?

2:12. הֵן יִשְׂאֵ־אִישׁ בֶּשֶׂר־קֹדֶשׁ בְּכֹנֵף בִּגְדּוֹ (If one carries holy meat in [the] edge of his garment). The question from the law starts with the particle הֵן (hen) part., “if” he carries, that is, if the priest carries the holy meat. The masculine of the verb נָסָא (nasa') Qal Impf., 3m.sg., “to lift,” “bear up,” or “carry,” joined together with אִישׁ ('iysh) n.m.sg., “a man” points, in a general sense, to any man, but whose focus is specific as this may be any of the priests who officiate at the altar including the assistants. Notice the absence of the definite article moves the question to the generic, so the translation, הֵן יִשְׂאֵ־אִישׁ בֶּשֶׂר־קֹדֶשׁ “if one carries holy meat.”

This is no doubt the sacrifice as בָּשָׂר (basar) n.m.sg., “flesh,” together with קֹדֶשׁ (qodesh) n.m.sg., “holiness,” “separateness,” refers to the meat set apart for the daily sacrifice and this part must be that which is allocated for food for the priests or that which is carried to the fire to be burnt up. Care is taken to keep the holy, holy, so that both the priest and the altar where the meat is burnt must be ceremonially cleansed by the

sprinkling of blood upon the altar for seven days (Exod. 29:35-46). The handling of the meat is in the כַּנָּף (kanaph) n.f.sg., with bet prefix, “wing,” referring to the “edge,” of the priestly “skirt.” The proper handling is as follows: The priest would place the meat onto a properly prepared holy vessel, either a golden or silver dish, putting oil and frankincense on it. Then taking his stand at the south-eastern corner of the altar, he placed a handful that was to be burnt, put it in another vessel along with additional frankincense and placed the meat upon the altar, salted it, the placed it upon the fire. The rest of the meat offering belonged to the priest.²⁴ Both the priest and priestly garment are clean so that he may then handle the holy meat vessel with the corner fold of his priestly כִּנְיָד (beged) n.m.sg., with pron. suffix, 3m.sg., “garment, clothing.” The priestly garments must be holy (Exod. 28:2-4), as were the articles of the holy place, the holy plate where the meat is placed and the holy altar where the whole thing is placed (Num. 4:15). The meat is holy, it was sanctified by means of the prescribed handling of the sacrificial animal before, during and after its slaughter. So that the priests have preserved all holiness in their handling of a holy object. Yet, in this case the blood of the meat spills on his garment – the meat touches the edge of his garment; thus the garment is now unclean. The basic law is summarized in Leviticus 6:27:

²⁵ "Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed, the sin offering shall be killed before the LORD. It is most holy. ²⁶ The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of meeting. ²⁷ Everyone who touches its flesh must be holy. And when its blood is sprinkled on any garment, you shall wash that on which it was sprinkled, in a holy place. ²⁸ But the earthen vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken. And if it is boiled in a bronze pot, it shall be both scoured and rinsed in water. (Lev. 6:25-28)

וּנָגַע בְּכִנְפוֹ אֶל־הַלֶּחֶם (and it touched in his skirt upon the bread). If the priest then carries something else in his unclean garment, namely, he mixes the holy bread with the unclean garment. What then? The לֶחֶם (lechem) n.m.sg., with he' prefix, “the bread,” or “grain,” is then placed in the same corner of the כַּנָּף (kanaph) n.f.sg., with bet prefix and pron. suffix 3m.sg., “garment,” where upon it touches נָגַע (naga') Qal Perf. 3m.sg., with vav prefix, “touch,” “strike” resulting in the whole thing being unclean. The priest along with the garment even the vessel where the meat was carried are unclean and their physical presence in the holy place makes that place unclean.

וְאֶל־הַנֵּזִיד וְאֶל־הַיַּיִן וְאֶל־שֶׁמֶן וְאֶל־כָּל־מֵאֵכֶל (or upon a boiled food, or upon the wine, or upon oil, or upon any meat). Upon the נֵזִיד (naziyd) n.m.sg., with he' prefix, “boiled food,” or “soup,” most likely the earthen vessel or bronze pot of Lev. 28, so it is in a bowl and placed in the same spot on the garment where the meat spilled. Likewise, if the priest handles יַיִן (yayin) n.m.sg., with he' prefix, “wine,” from an unused root meaning to effervesce, most likely, the sacrificial wine. How and why would the priest place

²⁴ Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), p. 103

unclean soup or wine in the skirt of his unclean garment? Also, ואל־שמן ואל־כל־מאכל (shemen) n.m.sg., “fat, oil,” is used for the sacrifice as well as, ואל־כל־מאכל “upon every meat.” The extent is then extended to כֹּל (kol) n.m.sg., “all, every,” kind of מֵאֲכָל (ma’akal) n.m.sg., “meat,” or “food.” Yet all these are now not holy since the unclean garment has affected their whole worship. Everything related to the preservation of the holiness of God in His holy Temple has been completely polluted, they were mixing the holy with the unholy and the Lord needed to reason with them concerning holiness so the question is posed.

הֲיִקְדָּשׁ (will it become holy?). The question is posed by use of the interrogative he’ prefixed to קָדַשׁ (qadash) Qal Impf. 3m.sg., with interr. he’ prefix, “to consecrate,” “be holy,” or “separate.” “The question Haggai posed is whether this holiness could be twice transmitted. Does the consecrated meat consecrate the garment? Can the garment in turn consecrate other foods such as bread, broth, wine, and oil?”²⁵

וַיֹּעֲנוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא (and the priests answered and they said, no!). The Lord directs the כֹּהֵן (kohen) n.m.pl., with he’ prefix, “the priests,” to answer and so they answer. The imperfect of עָנָה (‘anah) Qal Impf., 3m.pl., with vav prefix, “to answer,” or “respond,” is a vav consecutive expressing a past tense response, so the translation “then they answered.” The priests, the text says, וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא “and they said no.” The Qal Imperfect of אָמַר (‘amar) Qal Impf. 3m.pl., “to say, speak,” is a vav consecutive expressing their response to be לֹא (lo’) part., “no.” The proper handling of this most important event that starts with the meat sacrifice, whether, sin (Lev. 6:24-30), trespass (Lev. 7:1-10), or peace (Lev. 7:11-21) cannot be acceptable without being performed in the holy place of the Temple as prescribed (Lev. 6:16).

קָדַשׁ “apartness, separateness, holiness, sacredness, dedicated”; Gr. ὁσιότης “holiness”; εὐσέβεια “reverence, piety towards God, godliness”; ἁγιωσύνη “sacredness, moral purity”; ἱεροπρεπής “reverent, actions or sacred things to God”	
Israel	
They were holy to the Lord	Jer 2:3
They were a holy people	Exod 19:6; Deut 7:6
They formed a holy race	Ezra 9:2
They were expected to be holy	Lev 11:44-45; 19:12
The priests were holy	Lev 21:5-6
Christians	
They are a holy people	Col 3:12; 1 Peter 2:9
They are a holy temple	Eph 2:21
They are saints	2 Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1
They are sanctified (made holy)	1 Cor 6:11
They are chosen to be holy	Eph 1:4
They are called to a holy life	1 Thes 4:7
They must live holy lives	Heb 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16
They are to serve God in holiness	Luke 1:74-75

²⁵ Robert Alden, in Frank Gaebelin, gen. ed., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985) vol. 7, p. 588

They must purify themselves in holiness	2 Cor 7:1
They will be presented to God as holy	Col 1:22
Special Things	
The ground where one meets God	Exod 3:4-5
The Holy Place and the Most Holy Place	Exod 26:33
The altar in the tabernacle	Exod 29:37
The garments of the priests	Exod 28:2-4
The turban of the priest	Exod 39:30-31
The furnishings used by the priests	Num 4:15
The guilt offering	Lev 7:1
Anything given to the Lord	Lev 27:9,14,21,28
The camp of the Israelites	Deut 23:14
The temple	Hab 2:20
The Sabbath	Exod 16:23
The Year of Jubilee	Lev 25:12
Mount Zion in Jerusalem	Psa 2:6; Isa 27:13
The city of Jerusalem	Neh 11:1; Matt 4:5
The angels	Acts 10:22; 1 Thes 3:13
The Scriptures	Rom 1:2; 2 Tim 3:15
The law of God	Rom 7:12
A Christian's faith	Jude 20
A Christian's hands in prayer	1 Tim 2:8
The kiss of greeting among Christians	1 Cor. 16:20; 1 Thes 5:26

B. Can the Unclean (unholy) transfer uncleanness to the holy (cleansed) (2:13)?

2:13. וַיֹּאמֶר חֲגִי אִם־יִגַּע טֹמֵא־נֶפֶשׁ בְּכֹל־אֵלֶּה הִטְמָא (Then Haggai said, if an unclean person touches in all these things, will it be unclean?). What defines an individual's cleanliness is identified then confirmed and acknowledged by the priests. If Israel is a holy nation, and they are, then it is imperative that the nation observe the holiness laws and central these laws is the holy Temple overseen by the holy priests. They must repent and get right with their God – they, as a nation, must be holy vessels of God.

Haggai speaks in the vav consecutive of אָמַר ('amar) Qal Impf. 3m.sg., with vav prefix, "then he said." This second question is again introduced by the particle אִם ('im) "if," and the verbs are all imperfects to reflect this question as a general principle. The first imperfect is נָגַע (naga') Qal Impf. 3m.sg., "to touch," or "strike" in any way at any time. According to the law, a person who goes to Jerusalem on one of the prescribed holy days must cleanse himself and cannot participate in organized worship unless he is clean. An unclean person must separate himself for seven days before entering Jerusalem and before worship. If a clean individual comes in contact with a dead body and touches it then they too will become טָמֵא (tame') adj.m.sg., "unclean, impure," (Num. 19:11).

¹¹ He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. ¹² He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh

day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. ¹³ Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him. ¹⁴ This is the law when a man dies in a tent: All who come into the tent and all who are in the tent shall be unclean seven days; ¹⁵ and every open vessel, which has no cover fastened on it, is unclean. ¹⁶ Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. ¹⁷ And for an unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and running water shall be put on them in a vessel. ¹⁸ A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, sprinkle it on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave. ¹⁹ The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean. ²⁰ But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean. (Num. 19:11-20)

Haggai wants to be specific as he says this person is a, נֶפֶשׁ (nephesh) n.m.sg., “a soul,” “a life,” “a person,” from the verb “to take a breath” – this is a living, breathing person who was ceremonially clean and a sanctified vessel of God. If a living, breathing person that is declared unclean touches בכל־אלה היטמא “in all things it is unclean?” The law of uncleanness states that uncleanness is communicable: an unclean object transfers uncleanness to other objects. The law of cleanliness states that cleanliness is uncommunicable: a clean object cannot transfer its cleanliness to another object. The extent of the corruption is described as כֹּל (kol) n.m.sg., with bet prefix, “in all,” אֵלֶּה (‘elleh) dem. pron., m/f.pl., “these things” will be תִּמָּא (tame’) Qal Impf. 3m.sg., with he’ interr., “will it be unclean?” The singular is used collectively for universality – will everyone, each one individually be unclean?

ויענו הכהנים ויאמרו יטמא (then the priests answered and said, he is unclean). The priests must declare the truth of this statement, but little do they know they are being setup for a shocking indictment. The Lord will declare, by their own admission from the law, that the whole nation is likewise unclean. So, the כֹּהֵן (kohen) n.m.pl., with he’ prefix, “the priests,” (the definite article makes this group specific) are the ones who declare a thing to be clean or unclean and should know, if any would know the details of the law. Central to the Levitical Law is the idea of clean and unclean as the subject permeates the whole of the law. Holiness to the Lord translates to love the Lord your God with all your heart (Deut. 6:4-5). The priests in this case likewise answer in the imperfect vav consecutive of עֲנֶה (‘anah) Qal Impf. 3m.pl., with vav prefix, “to answer,” “speak,”

meaning they understand the general principle as if to say, “it is always true.” Indeed, it is a universal fact that it is unclean. The declaration is in the imperfect of טָמֵא (tame’) Qal Impf. 3m.sg., “to be unclean,” or “impure.” The singular is used collectively for a universal – each individual one is unclean.

טָמֵא “Unclean” What makes one unclean?	
Eating unclean foods	Lev 11:1-23
Childbirth	Lev 12:1-8
Skin diseases	Lev 13:1-14:57
Discharges from the body	Lev 15:1-33
Touching a dead body	Num 5:2
Worshiping false gods	Jer 13:25-27; Hos 8:5
A life of sin	Isa 64:5-7

בר “purity, cleanness”; נְקִיּוֹן “cleanness, innocence” ; טָהוֹר “pure, clean, morally or ceremonially”	
How could one become clean?	
By washing self and clothes	Exod 19:10-14; 30:18-21; Lev 22:6
By certain sacrifices and ceremonies	Lev 12:6-8; 14:1-11
By turning to the Lord	Psa 51:2,7; Is 4:4; 6:5-7
Inward cleansing from sin:	
The need for such cleansing	Matt 23:25-28
God’s promise for such cleansing	Jer 33:8; Ezek 36:25,33
The process of such cleansing:	
The believer must ask for it	Psa 51:2,7; 1 John 1:9
It takes place in the heart	Psa 24:3-4; Mark 7:18-23
It occurs through Christ’s blood	Heb 9:14; 10:19-22; 1 John 1:7
It occurs through the word of God	Eph 5:25-27
The results of such cleansing:	
It leads to a life of holiness	2 Cor 7:1
It leads to a life of purity	1 John 3:3
It leads to a life of love	1 Peter 1:22

2:14. וַיַּעַן חַגִּי וַיֹּאמֶר כֵּן הָעַם־הַזֶּה וְכִן־הַגּוֹי הַזֶּה לִפְנֵי נְאֻם־יְהוָה (Then Haggai answered and said, so [is] this people, and so [is] this nation before me, declares [the] LORD).

The response by Haggai echoes what the Lord has declared to him, as Haggai עָנָה (‘anah) Qal Impf. 3m.sg., with vav prefix, “answered,” saying, כֵּן הָעַם־הַזֶּה וְכִן־הַגּוֹי הַזֶּה לִפְנֵי “So [is] the people, this one, and so [is] the nation, this one, before Me,” quoting the Lord. The particle, כֵּן (ken) part., “thus, so,” and may be understood as, “and has just been said” concerning this עַם (‘am) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “nation, people, kinsman.” The emphasis is placed upon the definite one, “the people, the this one,” the definite

article is used with the demonstrative pronoun זֶה (zeh) dem. pron., with he' prefix, "the this [one]." This might better read, "the people, this one."

As with the people, כֵּן (ken) part., with vav prefix, "so," is the nation, The singular of גּוֹי (goy) n.m.sg., with he prefix, "nation," or "people," points to the nation not to nations (pl.) or foreigners, but to Israel as a nation. This is a Hebrew couplet meant to express the chosen people of Abraham are in fact the very offspring that was promised to be a nation and Israel is indeed that holy nation, a set apart people unto the Lord. Again the demonstrative pronoun with the definite article is used to place emphasis upon the specific nation that is before the Lord, as the Hebrew has it, לִפְנֵי "before me." The personal relationship is thus emphasized by use of the first-person personal pronoun, אֲנִי (paniyim) part., with lamed prefix and pron. suffix 1c.sg., "before Me."

וְכֵן כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יִקְרִיבוּ שֵׁם טָמֵא הוּא (and so [is] every work of their hands, and that which they bring in there [is] unclean). Because of their sin everything is polluted. The focus is placed upon the unclean aspect of their worship, their sin, trespass, and peace offering cannot be accepted because there is no Temple for the priest to officiate. The clause starts with the particle of conclusion כֵּן (ken) part., with vav prefix, "thus," or "so then" everything they touch is ceremonially defiled. The matter that the Lord wants them to understand is that the rebuilding of the Temple is of first importance. They did not have the Lord first in their priorities and hence first in their minds. They were not set apart for service to the Lord - they were thus not holy. They desired to build a roof over their own heads first, which is not the offence. Would the Lord have them build the Temple before their own heads covered? No, but the point is that their houses were now built and they are now taking resources from the Temple to embellish their houses.

With this offense identified, then it is now easily seen why the ceremonial analogy is applied to them and, כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵיהֶם "every work of their hands". The adjective כָּל (kol) n.m.sg., "every," modifying the noun, מַעֲשֵׂה (ma'aseh) n.m.sg., "work," or "deed," performed with their יָד (yad) n.m.du., with pron. suffix 3.m.pl., "hands," covers everything they have done and everything they have touched. The strength of the message is brought to light by the causative verb of קָרַב (qarab) Hif. Impf., 3m.pl., "to come near," "approach," meaning, "all they will bring in," the unfinished Temple is, טָמֵא (tame') adj.m.sg., "unclean."

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they do not profane My holy name by what they dedicate to Me: I am the LORD. ³ "Say to them: 'Whoever of all your descendants throughout your generations, who goes near the holy things which the children of Israel dedicate to the LORD, while he has uncleanness upon him, that person shall be cut off from My presence: I am the LORD. ⁴ 'Whatever man of the descendants of Aaron, who is a leper or has a discharge, shall not eat the holy offerings until he is clean. And whoever

touches anything made unclean by a corpse, or a man who has had an emission of semen, ⁵ `or whoever touches any creeping thing by which he would be made unclean, or any person by whom he would become unclean, whatever his uncleanness may be-- ⁶ `the person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat the holy offerings unless he washes his body with water. ⁷ `And when the sun goes down he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat the holy offerings, because it is his food. (Lev. 22:1-7)

The uncleanness of the nation thus legally affects their blessing in the land. Their land flowing with milk and honey, their lives of plenty and peace are dependent upon their obedience and love for their Lord and His law. Yet their obedience is spiritual. Did they forget the great Shema and the blessing and cursing's of Deuteronomy 6-7? Will they repent and get right with their God? Will they recall their great promise?

⁵ "You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you. ⁶ "Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. ⁷ "For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; ⁸ "a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; ⁹ "a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. ¹¹ "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, (Deu. 8:5-11)

A Promised Blessing (2:15-19)

Haggai 2:15-19

¹⁵And now, I entreat you, set your heart from this day and onward. From before [the] setting of a stone upon a stone in [the] Temple of [the] Lord ¹⁶From those [days] it came to a pile of twenty, but it was ten. [When] it came to the wine-press to draw out fifty scoops, but twenty came. ¹⁷I caused to strike you with blight and mildew and hail, every deed of your hands, and none of you to me, declares [the] Lord. ¹⁸Set your mind, now, from this day and from beyond [this] day, [the] twenty and forth of [the] ninth [month] out of the day, which [the] Temple of [the] Lord was being intensely placed. Set your mind! ¹⁹Is the seed still in [the] storehouse? And until the vine and the fig tree and the pomegranate, and the olive tree it has not brought forth. From this day I will intensely bless [you].

¹⁵ועתה שימו־נא לבבכם מן־היום הזה ומעלה מטרם שום־אבן אל־אבן בהיכל יהוה: ¹⁶מהיותם בא אל־ערמת עשרים והיתה עשרה בא אל־היקב לחשף חמשים פורה והיתה עשרים: ¹⁷הכיתי אתכם בשדפון ובירקון ובברד את כל־מעשה ידיכם ואין־אתכם אלי נאם־יהוה: ¹⁸שימו־נא לבבכם מן־היום הזה ומעלה מיום עשרים וארבעה לתשיעי למן־היום אשר־יסד היכל־יהוה שימו לבבכם: ¹⁹העוד הזרע במגורה ועד־הגפן והתאנה והרמון ועץ הזית לא נשא מן־היום הזה אברך:

Introduction

One must understand the dispensational differences set up between Israel during the Mosaic covenant and the New Covenant. The Mosaic covenant was made with Israel and specified a conditional covenant blessing and cursing in the land, while the New Covenant specified an unconditional blessing for Israel in the promised land with the Lord their God physically with them – tabernacling with them in abundance and in a state of peace. So far with Israel's time back in the land they had no abundance and no peace because they did not see obedience as something that was important to their lives. Like Christian's today who live their life according to the blindness of disobedience to the commands of Christ and find no peace. The gifts of the Spirit flow to those that are obedient to and grow in the grace of God in Christ. The Mosaic covenant was made complete in Christ so that today both Jew and Gentile share in the spiritual blessing of salvation in Christ in the dispensation of the New Covenant, however, there will be a day when all Israel will be saved and partake in the physical blessings of the Messianic

kingdom in the land (cf., Zech. 14:9, Rom. 11:25-27). However, the author of history will move in Israel to rebuild the Temple and one cannot ignore the unconditional promise of this blessing of the fruit of the vine. Yet how often does one neglect so great a salvation and quickly move back to one's old ways? So, it will be for Israel. Their Temple will be rebuilt, but Jerusalem and Israel were still under foreign domination and the Times of the Gentiles will affect their quality of life in the land. By the time of Christ, the plan of the Herodian Temple no longer resembled the divine plan but rather the plan of a foreign power. But for now, the Lord will move in history and bless them for a season because Israel is chosen of the Lord and because it is for His name's sake (Isa. 66:5).

The Lord points out their sin (2:15-17)

2:15. ועתה שימורנא לבבכם מן-היום הזה ומעלה (And now, I entreat you, set your heart from this day and onward). The Lord now commands them in the most forceful way showing the urgency of the matter with the adverb, עַתָּה ('attah) part., "now, at this time," placed with the imperative שׁוּם (sum) Qal Impv. 2m.pl., "to put," "place," or "set" together with the particle of entreaty, נָא (na') thus expressing the urgent exhortation, "I pray, now, then," and tightly connected with the maqqef indicating the Lord wants them to set their לֵבָב (lebab) n.m.sg., with pron. suffix 2m.pl., "hearts," upon the task at hand.

שימו לבבכם "Set your heart = consider, give careful thought"		
Hag. 1:5	שימו לבבכם	You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but 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 <i>to put</i> into a bag with holes.
Hag. 1:7	שימו לבבכם	<i>You</i> looked for much, but indeed <i>it came to</i> little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. Because of My house that <i>is in</i> ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.
Hag. 2:15	שימורנא לבבכם	from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the LORD... I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not <i>turn to Me,</i> ' says the LORD.
Hag. 2:18	שימורנא לבבכם	from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid -- consider it: Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded <i>fruit. But</i> from this day I will bless <i>you</i> .

The focus of their attention is identified by the expression, מִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וּמֵעַלָּה (min) “**from this day and forward.**” The point of origin starts with the preposition מִן (min) “from,” this point, this יוֹם (yom) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “day,” and made specific with the demonstrative זֶה (zeh) dem. pron. with he’ prefix, “the this [one].” The adverb מֵעַל (ma’al) with vav prefix and directional he’ suffix, “upper part, upward, above, forward,” completes the time frame. The directional he’ is included in an effort to indicate direction to or away from, and means “above,” or “upwards,” namely, “from this point upward,” or to be closer to our English idiom, “from this point forward.” What point? The Lord tells them to look back at their quality of life in the land since the beginning of their rebuilding effort.

מִטֶּרֶם שׁוּם־אֶבֶן אֶל־אֶבֶן בְּהֵיכַל יְהוָה (from before [the] setting of a stone upon a stone in [the] Temple of [the] Lord). The point of origin to start with is from the point in time of the rebuilding of the Temple. This point in time is prefaced by the word, טֶרֶם (terem) prep., with mem prefix, meaning, “before, not yet,” but is not the normal word for before, the Lord uses a word from an unused root meaning to interrupt or suspend, thus highlighting the idea in an incredible way so as to get the point across that they have interrupted the building to the Temple for their own houses. The point where all their troubles began was even before they started laying or placing שׁוּם (sum) Qal Inf., “to put,” “place,” or “setting” a אֶבֶן (‘eben) n.f.sg., “stone” upon stone, or, שׁוּם־אֶבֶן אֶל־אֶבֶן “**placing a stone upon a stone.**” The expression now is not “the house of the Lord,” as in 1:14, but, בְּהֵיכַל יְהוָה “**in [the] Temple of [the] LORD.**” This is the start of the rebuilding of the הֵיכָל (heykal) n.m.sg., with bet prefix, “the palace,” or “temple” of יְהוָה (y’hovah) Jehovah. As the great Dr. John Gill writes, “the foundation of the temple was laid quickly after the Jews returned from Babylon, upon the proclamation of Cyrus, Ezra 3:10 but, through difficulties and discouragements they met with, they desisted from the work, and went no further; a stone was not laid upon it; or, as the Targum, a row, or course upon course, until this time: and now all the intermediate space of time between the first laying the foundation of the temple, and their present going to work upon it.”²⁶

2:16. מֵהַיּוֹם בָּא אֶל־עֲרֹמַת עֲשָׂרִים וְהִיטָה עֲשָׂרָה (From those [days] it came to a pile of twenty, but it was ten). Now the Lord points out what should have been obvious to them. They had such a great blessing to start with. The king Persia, Cyrus, had given them ample funds to start the building of the Temple. He also had returned the vessels of the Temple so that they could start out fresh without having to rebuild any of the complicated Temple cups and vessels made of gold and silver. It has been some fifteen or sixteen years since they started the building effort. The Qal infinitive of הָיָה (hayah) with mem prefix and pron. suffix., 3m.pl., is simply “from them were,” but, “days” needs to be added for readability in the English as it is the previous antecedent. As one would expect from their normal harvest that בּוֹא (bo’) Qal Perf. 3m.sg., “it came,” אֶל־עֲרֹמַת “**to a pile of twenty.**” The Hebrew עָרֹם (‘arem) n.f.sg., constr., “of a heap,” or “a

²⁶ John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Bible* (www.e-Sword.net)

pile of,” of something, in this case it is used of the wheat or barley harvest (cf. Ruth 3:7). The Hebrew עֲשָׂרִים (‘esriym) num.f.du., “twenty [measures],” as a measure of sheaves or bushels of the harvest. Do they remember the story of Hezekiah whose reforms and cleansing of the Temple resulted in the Lord blessing Israel with harvest עֲרָם “heaps,” as 2 Chronicles 31 describes:

And the children of Israel and Judah, who dwelt in the cities of Judah, brought the tithe of oxen and sheep; also the tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the LORD their God they laid in heaps (עֲרָם). ⁷ In the third month they began laying them in heaps (עֲרָם), and they finished in the seventh month. ⁸ And when Hezekiah and the leaders came and saw the heaps (עֲרָם), they blessed the LORD and His people Israel. ⁹ Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. ¹⁰ And Azariah the chief priest, from the house of Zadok, answered him and said, "Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and have plenty left, for the LORD has blessed His people; and what is left is this great abundance." (2 Chron. 31:6-10)

The vav prefixed to הָיָה (hayah) Qal Perf. 3f.sg., with vav prefix, “to be,” or “become,” is contrastive, so the usual translation “but,” instead of the twenty measures of grain they only brought in the singular עֶשֶׂר (‘eser) num.f.sg., “ten.” For them to work so hard to only bring in half the normal harvest was meant to get their attention – and it did!

בֵּא אֶל־הַיֶּקֶב לַחֲשֹׁף חֲמִשִּׁים פֹּרָה ([When] it came to the wine-press to draw out fifty scoops). And as for, or, in the Hebrew, בּוֹא (bo’) Qal Perf. 3m.sg., “it came,” אֶל (‘el) prep., “to,” or “concerning,” the יֶקֶב (yeqeb) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “wine press,” they squeezed out only twenty measures. The word, יֶקֶב comes from an unused root meaning to excavate. The word is used of both an olive press and a wine press where the fat is squeezed out and the press is often simply hewed out of a rock. The measure that is used for the press is חֲשָׁף (chasaph) Qal Inf., “to strip,” “draw out” signifying a scope that is used to draw out a proper measure of the precious liquid.

For the number fifty, the Hebrew uses the plural of חֲמִשִּׁים (chamishshiyim) num., “five.” The final word פֹּרָה (purah) n.f.sg., “winepress,” clarifies what is meant and is used exclusively for the winepress and comes from פֹּר (pur) “to break,” “crush.” The word is only used twice in the whole of the Old Testament, here and Isaiah 63:3, “I have trodden the winepress (פֹּרָה) alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes.”

וְהִיטָה עֲשָׂרִים (But twenty came). The harsh reality of their hard work during the growing season comes to them in the form of a lack of bounty. For what comes in is

עֶשְׂרִים (‘esriym) num., “twenty [measures].” All the Lord asks is for them to put Him first in their lives, to repent and get right with Him and He will bless them in both the field and in life. Instead, they seek self first and leave the leftovers for the Lord. Oh, how often that occurs in our own lives. How often do we give the Lord what is left over after the week is done? Whether it be time or money the Lord wants to be first in their lives.

2:17. הִכִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם בְּשֹׁדֶפֶן וּבִירְקוֹן וּבִבְרָד אֶת כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם (**I caused to strike you with blight and mildew and hail, every deed of your hands**). The Lord tells them that He is the cause of all the trouble that has come to them during their past growing seasons. The Hebrew is strong as the causative of נָכָה (nakah) Hif. Perf., 1c.sg., “to strike,” “hit,” or “kill,” expresses, I (the Lord) caused to strike you with blight, mildew, and hail. Oh, what a picture this is! The author means to specify precisely who He was striking by using the sign-of-the-direct-object, אֶת (eth) SDO, with pron. suffix 2m.pl. – “you” [this people, this nation (2:14)].

The Lord strikes them with, שִׁדְדָפֹן (shiddaphon) n.f.sg., with bet prefix, “to blight,” “blast,” from the verb שָׁדַף (shadaph) “to scorch.” The first thing that the Lord hit them with was burning winds, causing a great reduction in what came from the ground. Then the Lord hit them with too much moisture causing, יֵרָקוֹן (yeraqon) n.m.sg., with vav prefix, “mildew” on the crops. Finally, the crops were hit with בָּרָד (barad) n.m.sg., with vav prefix, “hail.” All the worries of a farmer have hit them except the dreaded locus swarm. The extent of damage is specified by use of the preposition, אֶת (‘eth) “with,” כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם **“all the work of your hands.”** The extent is given as, כֹּל (kol) “all, every,” attached with the maqqef to מַעֲשֵׂה (ma’aseh) n.m.sg., “work,” “a thing done,” thus collectively effecting all the work of יָד (yad) n.f.du., with pron. suffix 2m.pl., “your hands.”

וְאִין־אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי וְאִין־אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי (and none of you to me, declares [the] Lord). The Lord says, וְאִין־אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי **“and none of you to me,”** meaning they collectively did not turn to the LORD in corporate worship. Should that be a sign to them concerning what the Lord expects of them regarding their relationship with Him? After all, He did spare them, providing enough for them to tithe the ten percent and still have ten percent left over for sustaining their basic needs, but nothing else. Where is the promise of blessing in the land? Why are they not blessed in the land? Should they consider their ways? The particle, אֵין (‘ayin) part., with vav prefix, “nothing, a non-entity, none,” of אֶת (‘eth) SDO with pron. suff. 2m.pl., “you,” אֵל (‘el) prep., with pron. suff. 1c.sg., “to me.” Most translations need to clarify the Hebrew by inserting a verb like “turn, return,” or “come back” to me.

The promised blessing (2:18-19)

2:18. שִׁמּוֹנָא לַבְּכֶם מִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה (Set your mind, now, from this day). After pointing out their sin and the clear evidence of God’s direct judgment over their disobedience in holding back the fruit of the land, the Lord now directs them to focus on fixing their spiritual situation. The command is now given as the imperative, שׁוּם (sum) Qal Impv. 2m.pl., “to put,” “place,” or “set,” your heart is used to direct their heart upon the Temple! The inclusion of the particle of entreaty, נָא (na’) “I pray, now,” attached to the end of the imperative brings the intensity and urgency in focus. Haggai has used this particle-imperative combination three other times in chapter two.

Particle of Entreaty נָא “I pray, now”		
2:2	אִמְרָנָא אֶל־זִרְבָבֶל	Qal Impv. “Speak now to Zerubbabel”
2:11	שְׁאַל־נָא אֶת־הַכֹּהֲנִים	Qal Impv. “Ask now the priests”
2:15	וְעַתָּה שִׁמּוֹנָא לַבְּכֶם	Qal Impv. “And now, I pray, set you heart”
2:18	שִׁמּוֹנָא לַבְּכֶם	Qal Impv. “Set you heart now”

It is not just the mind that the Lord wants them to focus, but the, לֵבָב (lebab) n.m.sg., with pron. suffix 2m.pl., “heart,” which is also commonly translated as “mind,” “soul,” or the “inner man.” The idea is simple, focus your whole being, with everything you have on the Lord and the thing commanded. Are the people not to love the Lord their God with all their heart (Deut. 6:4)?

The time is specific, as the demonstrative pronoun זֶה (zeh) dem. pron., with he’ prefix, “the this,” is placed with the word “day,” which is augmented with the definite prefix - מִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה “**from this the day.**” It could not be any more specific what the Lord demands of them. He demands that they focus on building the Temple from this day forward.

וּמֵעַלָּה מִיּוֹם עֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבַּעָה לַתְּשִׁיעִי לַמָּן־הַיּוֹם (and from beyond [this] day, [the] twenty and fourth of [the] ninth [month] out of the day). Not only is the Lord asking them to immediately focus upon the building of the Temple that day but to keep the focus from that day forward. Notice the inclusion of the precise date of the prophecy. The counting of the days is ascending – מַעַל (ma’al) subst., with vav prefix, “above,” “beyond,” from the verb עָלָה (‘alah) “to go up, ascend, climb.” Some translate, “from this day upwards.” The accounting is יוֹם (yom) n.m.sg., with mem prefix; “from the day”, and starts specifically on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month – the month of *Chisleu* (part of November and December), just three months from the time construction on the house of the Lord restarted (cf. 2:10).

אֲשֶׁר־יִסַּד הַיְכָל־יְהוָה שִׁמּוֹ לַבְּכֶם (which [the] Temple of [the] Lord was being intensely placed. Set your mind!). The verb used here is the intensive passive of יָסַד (yasad) Pual Perf. 3m.sg., “to fix,” “establish,” “begin,” and is literally, “it was being intensely established.” Dr. Gill observes, “not from the time it was first laid after their

return upon the proclamation of Cyrus, but from the time they began to clear that foundation, and to build upon it; and which having lain so long neglected, the renewal of it is represented as a fresh laying of it: now the prophet, as he had directed them to consider what adversity and calamities had attended them from the time of their neglect unto this time; so he would have them particularly observe what blessings they would enjoy from hence forward.”²⁷

The, הֵיכָל (heykal) n.m.sg., “palace,” or “temple,” is tightly linked to the Lord by use of the maqqef (הֵיכַל־יְהוָה). This is the palace or Temple of the Lord. The statement is closed as it began in order to emphasize the command - שִׁמוּ לִבְכֶּם “set your heart!”

2:19. הָעוֹד הַזֶּרַע בַּמְּגוּרָה (Is the seed still in [the] storehouse?). The month of *Chisleu* (part of November and December) is the winter sowing season and as it turns out the conditions are not good for planting, so the seeds are still in the storehouse. The adverb with the interrogate of עוֹד (‘od) adv., with interr., he’ prefix, “yet,” or “still” places emphasis upon the fact that the זֶרַע (zera’) n.m.sg., with he’ prefix, “seed, sowing time,” is still in the מְּגוּרָה (m’gurah) n.f.sg., with bet prefix, “storehouse,” or “granary,” but the word can also mean, “fear, fright.” Does Haggai use this specific word for a purpose? Do they fear the Lord? Will they fear the Lord their God, their provider and savior? Will they seek the Lord as David did in the midst of his troubles?

I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears
(מְּגוּרָה). (Ps. 34:4)

There have been two interpretations of “is the seed still in the storehouse?” The first suggests that there is no seed left in the storehouse to plant and it is not time for the fruit of the vine so that they are in a bad situation – a helpless situation. The second interpretation is that they have seed, but it is still in the storehouse because they have not been able to plant due to the weather and it is not time for the fruit of the vine so that there is still hope, though the planting season has been delayed and the time is late. Verse 17 reflected upon the previous harvest which produced little; however, the Lord did provide the minimum for their survival – half the normal harvest (v.16). Thus, I prefer the later interpretation since the flow of the narrative suggests the Lord will move in them to action with the rebuilding effort as will was their planting. Now that He has their attention and He has sent His prophet Haggai to explain matters to them, it is time to work in them to move to action. This is divine grace as the Lord works in the individuals to accomplish His will for remember grace is more than simply favor but can also mean “the merciful kindness by which God, exerting His holy influence upon souls, turns them to Him, keeps, strengthens, increases them in faith, knowledge, affection and kindles them to the exercise of His will.”²⁸

²⁷ John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible* (online Bible)

²⁸ Definition adapted from Theological Dictionary of the New Testament for grace.

ועד־הגפן והתאנה והרמון ועץ הזית לא נשא (And until the vine and the fig tree and the pomegranate, and the olive tree it has not brought forth). Since the Lord had brought in terrible harvest and planting weather, the seeds were still in the store houses as the people were also in a spiritual slump. The Lord has a way of taking a bad situation and turning it into something good. The curses and blessing promises of the Law (Deut. 6-8) and the restoration of the nation is a constant cycle for God's chosen people, Israel. The concept of the Lord correcting those He loves (cf. Prov. 3:12; Rev. 3:19) is found in both the Old and New Testaments, and the purpose is the same in both – to mature His chosen ones. Tests and trials are critical to the maturity of the believer, they serve to humble us (Deut. 8:2-3), to see if we will love Him, (Deut. 13:3), to fear (Exod. 20:18-20), and obey Him (Gen. 22:1; Exod. 16:4-5), the trial serves to build up one's faith (James 1:2-3; Rev. 3:10-11).

In this clause, the adverb, עַד ('ad) adv., with vav prefix, "until," "unto," or "forever," is used to highlight the fact that it is winter and not yet time for the fruit of the trees and vines to be harvested. It is typical that along with the seasonal crops that they also possess the גֶּפֶן (gephen) n.m.sg., with he prefix, "vine," meaning the grape vine and the תְּאֵנָה (tē'en) n.f.sg., with vav and he' prefix, "fig tree," and the רִמּוֹן (rimmon) n.m.sg., with vav and he prefix, "pomegranate tree," and the עֵץ - the עֵץ ('ets) "tree," of זַיִת (zayith) n.m.sg., with he' prefix "olive."

The main verb is now placed with the negative particle לֹא (lo') to continue the picture of loading up the trees and vines with fruit. The Hebrew used is נָשָׂא (nasa') Qal Perf. 3m.sg., "to lift," "bear up," or "carry," and provides the literary picture of, "having brought forth" from the vine. Will they have a fruit harvest this year or will they be greatly diminished as in the previous year?

מִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲבָרֶךְ (From this day I will intensely bless [you]). But now it is clear that the Lord will help them complete the building from this day forward in a supernatural way and also they will see the power of the Lord by His additional promise to supernaturally bless their crops מִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲבָרֶךְ "from the this day." And we know this will be a supernatural act of God because He uses the intensive for בָּרַךְ (barak) Piel Impf. 1c.sg., "to bless," and here more likely the usage is the blessing with intense emotion that produces a result. At times the Piel is used with the sense of the causative. This may be the case here as the Lord does cause the seed to bear fruit, but He will do so with intensity – the fruit of the vine will produce in abundance this year because the Lord has promised it.

Fourth Prophecy (2:20-23)

A Promised Blessing (2:20-23)

Haggai 2:20-23

²⁰And [the] word of [the] LORD came again to Haggai in [the] twentieth [day] and of [the] forth month saying, ²¹ Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I [am] the One who causes to shake the heavens and the earth. ²² And I will overthrow [the] throne of kingdoms and I will cause to destroy [the] strength of [the] kingdoms of the peoples, and I will overturn [the] chariot and those who ride them, and [the] horses shall go down and their riders each man by [the] sword of his brothers. ²³ In [the] day of him, said [the] Lord of hosts, I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, My servant, says [the] LORD, and I will set you as a signet-ring, for in you I choose says [the] LORD of hosts.

²⁰ ויהי דבר־יהוה שנית אל־חגי בעשרים
וארבעה לחדש לאמר : ²¹ אמר אל־זרובבל
פחת־יהודה לאמר אני מרעיש את־השמים
ואת־הארץ: ²² והפכתי כסא ממלכות
והשמדתי חזק ממלכות הגוים והפכתי
מרכבה ורכביה וירדו סוסים ורכביהם איש
בחרב אחיו: ²³ ביום ההוא נאם־יהוה
צבאות אקחך זרובבל בן־שאלתיאל עבדי
נאם־יהוה ושמתיך כחותם כִּי־בך בחרתי
נאם יהוה צבאות:

Introduction

In this concluding prophecy, the Lord of hosts gives Israel a near and a far prophecy. The near prophecy involves the supernatural effort to now rebuild the Temple through the human agency of the political leader Zerubbabel. The far prophecy involves the removal of all the foreign nations dominance upon God's chosen people, Israel, and they will fear no more the nations with their war machines. Haggai is a prophecy concerning the rebuilding of Jewish life centered around the presence of the Lord. Life in the land that is characterized by joy and plenty, a festive day of rejoicing in restoration of relationship with the One who choose them, a people made to enjoy the presence of the Lord on earth.

The Lord speaks to the ruler (2:20-23)

2:20. ויהי דבר־יהוה שנית אל־חגי (And [the] word of [the] LORD came again to Haggai). The Lord speaks to Haggai again on the very same day. This last time the Lord

speaks about far prophecy. It is typical for the Lord to give Israel concise direction concerning the nation's sin, explain how it affect them now and in the immediate future, then provide a final word of encouragement with a view of their final redemption when the Lord Himself will revenge their enemies in the Great Tribulation then they will enjoy peace at last in the millennial kingdom with their Messiah ruling from the Temple on mount Zion.

The Hebrew is literally, ויהי דבר־יהוה שנית אל־חגי **“and it comes, [the] word of [the] LORD, again, to Haggai.”** The verb is in the imperfect tense of הָיָה (hayah) Qal Impf. 3m.sg., with vav prefix, “to be,” or “become,” properly translated future as, “it will come,” expressing the flow of the דָּבָר (dabar) n.m.sg., “word,” of יְהוָה (y^ehovah) pr.n., Jehovah “the existing One,” to חֲגִי (chaggay) pr.n., Haggai “festive,” received that day. In fact, “the word came,” is further characterized by the adjective שֵׁנִי (sheniy) adj.m.sg., “again,” or “a second time,” on the same day as the former.

בעשרים וארבעה לחדש לאמר (In [the] twentieth [day] and of [the] forth month saying). Using the same expression as in 2:10, Haggai provides the date of the prophecy. It is בעשרים וארבעה לחדש לאמר “In [the] twentieth and of [the] forth month.” This second message came on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, namely, November-December 520 B.C.

2:21. אמר אל־זרubbabel פחת־יהודה לאמר (Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying). This message is directed to Zerubbabel. The Lord commands Haggai to אָמַר (amar) Qal Impv. 2m.sg., “to speak,” אל־זרubbabel “to Zerubbabel.” The name זְרֻבְבָל (z^erubbabel) means, “sown in Babylon,” where he no doubt was born. Zerubbabel is identified as the פֶּחָה (pechah) n.m.sg., “the governor,” and is a word of foreign origin. But he is the political ruler of יְהוּדָה (y^ehudah) pr.n., Judah “praise.”

אני מרעיש את־השמים ואת־הארץ (I [am] the One who causes to shake the heavens and the earth). The all-powerful God of the universe proclaims He will shake the heavens and the earth. The use of the causative participle is significant; רָעַשׁ (ra'ash) Hif. Part. m.sg., “to quake,” “shake,” expresses who God is. He is the One that causes to shake the heavens and earth. Some translate “I [will] shake the heavens and the earth,” translating the participle as a verb, and as a prophetic perfect at that. The personal pronoun אֲנִי (aniy) pers. pron. 1c.sg., “I,” is used with the participle to express the emphatic idea of who is performing the action, “I am the One known to shake heaven and earth.” The sign-of-the-direct אֶת (eth) points out the two direct objects שָׁמַיִם (shamayim) n.m.pl., with he' prefix, “the heavens,” and אֶרֶץ (erets) n.f.sg., with he' prefix, “the earth.”

2:22. והפכתי כסא ממלכות (And I will overthrow [the] throne of kingdoms). The Hebrew moves from the causative, “I am the One that causes to shake the heavens and

earth,” to the simple statement of fact that the Lord will overturn the throne of the kingdoms.” The perfect of הָפַךְ (haphak) Qal Perf. 1c.sg., with vav prefix, “to turn,” “overthrow,” is a vav translated as a prophetic perfect as “I will overthrow” the kingdoms. Notice the Lord goes to the heart of the kingdoms by the use of the word כִּסֵּא (kisse’) n.m.sg., “seat,” “throne” from the verb כָּסָה (kasah) “to cover.” This is personal, there is a person behind the evil that is responsible. We are all responsible moral agents, and here, the Lord holds the person on the throne responsible for the actions of their kingdom. In this case there are multiple kingdoms as the plural of מַמְלָכָה (mamlakah) n.f.pl., “kingdom,” is used. Who are these kingdoms? Some have suggested this prophecy was fulfilled when Alexander the Great swept through the region in 330 B.C., however, this prophecy goes beyond Alexander in both extent and scope. This prophecy looks into the far future, to the last days kingdoms of the earth with Christ’s second coming to judge the nations for how they treated Israel.

וְהַשְׁמַדְתִּי חֹזֶק מַמְלָכוֹת הַגּוֹיִם (and I will cause to destroy [the] strength of [the] kingdoms of the peoples). All the future kingdoms that come against Israel and have caused God’s chosen nation problems will come to certain judgment. The verb is placed at the head of the phrase and is the causative perfect of שָׁמַד (shamad) Hif. Perf. 1c.sg., with vav prefix, “to destroy,” “exterminate,” or “annihilate,” meaning that the Lord will perform the action in a causative sense. Notice this is also in the perfect tense yet is translated as future. The prophetic perfect is used here and is translated, “I will cause to destroy.” What is it that the Lord will destroy? It is their חֹזֶק (chozeq) n.m.sg., “strength.”

Over the generations the Hebrews at times were overpowered, outnumbered, and made to pay tribute to dominate nations. Notably, Israel was overpowered by Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and now Persia. Israel upon their return is a vassal to Persia so it is that ever since the Babylonian captivity, world history is referred to as the Time of the Gentiles (cf. Dan. 2:31-45; 7:1-28; Luke 21:24). Israel was weak because the nation had not been faithful and obedient to the Lord. The prophets tell a story of a people that refused to obey God and keep Him as the center of their worship, so they experienced hardship, bondage, and loss over and over again. Now at the other side of the Babylonian captivity, the Lord makes another promise to them, that is, to be with them, to protect them, and bless them. But as the story goes, Israel will not keep His statutes and will not make Him the center of their life. So, the מַמְלָכָה (mamlakah) n.f.pl., “kingdoms,” of the גּוֹי (goy) n.m.pl., with he prefix, “nations, peoples” or “gentile,” will overtake them time and time again, until the Lord Himself will put an end to their hostility toward Israel. In fact, the millennial kingdom will find the “kingdoms” of the earth subdued with the Lord exacting immediate justice upon those not abiding by the rules of the kingdom (cf. Zech. 14:16-17; Rev. 20:7-10).

Time of the Gentiles – The Big Picture of Gentile Dominance of World History (Dan. 2)		
Babylon	Dan. 2:32	Image with a head of fine gold
Medo-Persia	Dan. 2:32	Image with a chest and arms of silver
Greece	Dan. 2:32	Image with a belly and thighs of bronze
Rome	Dan. 2:32	Image with legs of iron and feet of iron and clay

והפכתי מרכבה ורכביה (and I will overturn [the] chariot and those who ride them). The picture provided by the Lord is that of a kingdom that rules by organized warfare since they ride מֶרְכָּבָה (merkabah) n.f.sg., “a chariot,” and those that רָכַב (rakab) Qal Part. m.pl., with pron. suffix 3f.sg., “mount and ride” chariots. The Lord speaks in terms that they understand in their day where the most frightening, most technical advancement in warfare is the chariot. While there were wood chariots, metal chariots were the more advanced and could not be destroyed by fire. When a battle chariot plowed through the front line there was little to stop it. While the chariot was instrumental in destroying Israel by the Assyrian army it was the massive troop of 600 Egyptian chariots that pursued Israel wherein the Lord provided safe passage for Israel then destroyed the Egyptian army along with their chariots in the Red sea (Exodus 15:4). The chariot became a symbol of power and strength (cf. Psa. 20:7). The verb הָפַךְ (haphak) Qal Perf. 1c.sg., with vav prefix, “to turn,” “overthrow,” or “overturn,” is again placed at the head of the phrase in order to emphasize the Lord’s work – “I overturned” (this is a prophetic perfect so the better translation is “I will overturn”). Just the sight of a chariot brought great fear in the opponent. It might be equivalent to the modern helicopter gunship. There are stories of people throwing up their hands and surrendering just at the sight of the helicopter gunships. Yet just as David wrote in his psalm,

⁶ Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand. ⁷ Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God. ⁸ They have bowed down and fallen; But we have risen and stand upright. ⁹ Save, LORD! May the King answer us when we call. (Psa. 20:6-9)

וירדו סוסים ורכביהם איש בחרב אחיו (and [the] horses shall go down and their riders, each man by [the] sword of his brothers). The most feared battle charge arrangement is found here. The chariots descend first, then the horse and rider, and finally the foot soldier. The chariots are unstoppable with all their weight advantage and when they are in full frontal assault, their momentum advances through the front lines, breaking it, leaving the opposing army exposed, causing great confusion and destruction. Next the powerful, but agile horse and riders move in to slay with the sword. The technology, tactics, and brutality of warfare finds an ever increasing level of destruction with the imagination and cunning of mankind.

Yet here, the Lord destroys their high-tech army. The perfect tense of the verb יָרַד (yarad) Qal Perf. 3cpl., with vav prefix, “to go down,” “descend,” is a prophetic perfect, so the better translation is “they will go down,” or “come down,” namely, the סוּס (sus) n.m.pl., “horses” with their רָכַב (rakab) Qal Part., m.pl., with vav prefix, pron. suffix 3c.pl., “to mount and ride, riders.” The precise construction of the phrase makes plain these riders are אִישׁ (iysh) n.m.sg., “men,” not angels or anything else. This is a human battle with all its power and fury, as the riders carry חֶרֶב (chereb) n.f.sg., with bet prefix,

“swords,” and brother comes against brother. The word אָח (‘ach) n.m.pl., with pron. suffix 3m.sg., “brother,” may be interrupted as a literal brother, i.e., a relative, a reciprocal relationship, i.e., or “each to the other.” It seems here a reciprocal relationship may fit the meaning “everyone by the sword of another” (NASB), as opposed to literal relative, “everyone by the sword of his brother” (ESV, NIV). However one interprets this, the battle is intense and is described elsewhere as regional (Zech. 12:2; 14:15).

The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: ² "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. ³ "And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. ⁴ "In that day," says the LORD, "I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. ⁵ "And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.' ⁶ "In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place-- Jerusalem. ⁷ "The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. ⁸ "In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. ⁹ "It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. ¹⁰ "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. (Zech. 12:1-10)

But it is the Lord who is Israel’s protector as Jeremiah writes,

¹⁹ *The Portion of Jacob is not like them, For He is the Maker of all things; And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance. The LORD of hosts is His name.*

²⁰ *"You are My battle-ax and weapons of war: For with you I will break the nation in pieces; With you I will destroy kingdoms; ²¹ With you I will break in pieces the horse and its rider; With you I will break in pieces the chariot and its rider; ²² With you also I will break in pieces man and woman; With you I will break in pieces old and young; With you I will break in pieces the young man and the maiden; ²³ With you also I will*

break in pieces the shepherd and his flock; With you I will break in pieces the farmer and his yoke of oxen; And with you I will break in pieces governors and rulers. (Jer. 51:19-23)

2:23. ביום ההוא נאם־יהוה צבאות (In [the] day of him, said [the] LORD of hosts). After the great battle in “the that day,” the specific day called the day of the Lord, the Lord Himself will use the event to declare His glory. The expression “in the day, that one,” is used of three events, (1) the great day when the Lord brought Assyria and Babylon against Israel taking them into captivity (cf. Isa. 13:6; Lam. 2:22; Ezek. 7:19; Amos 5:27); (2) against Egypt (Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 13:5); and (3) the future day when the Lord returns the second time to bring judgment upon the nations and Israel and restore what is left of Israel, His remnant, and bring in His kingdom reign on earth (Isa. 2:12; 34:8; Zech. 14:1; Ob 1:15; Joel 1:15; 2:2; 3:14; Zeph. 1:7; Mal. 4:1-5). But here, the focus is immediate and limited to this rebuilding effort and the supernatural movement of the Lord upon the leadership of Israel to accomplish the building effort. This is a day of action, a day of stirring up the nation to complete the task commanded. As usual with this book of the Bible, the Lord uses the expression, נאם־יהוה צבאות “declares the LORD of hosts,” emphasizing the צָבָא (tsaba’) n.m.pl., “that which goes forth,” “an army,” “host.” The Lord is the One that commands the host of heaven.

אקחך זרובבל בן־שאלתיאל עבדי נאם־יהוה (I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, My servant, says [the] LORD). It is common language for the Lord to declare rulers of Israel and Judah are His signet ring. The meaning is to make Zerubbabel the living message of the Lord. The signet ring was used to mark and seal an official letter of the ruler. The letter was carried by a third party to its intended audience and the one receiving the letter knew who it was from by the unique mark on the seal and the seal secured the integrity of message. Zerubbabel is to be a living example of this prophecy, for the Lord Himself will, לָקַח (laqach) Qal Impf. 1c.sg., with pron. suffix 2m.sg., “take,” זְרֻבְבָל (z’rubbabel) pr.n., Zerubbabel who was “sown in Babylon,” the son of שְׁאֵלְתִּיֶּאֱל (sh’e’altiy’el) pr.n., Shealtiel “I have asked of God,” who is a עֶבֶד (‘ebed) n.m.sg., with pron. suffix 1c.sg., “servant” of the Lord.

ושמתוך כחותם כִּי־בך נאם יהוה צבאות (and I will set you as a signet-ring, for in you I choose says [the] LORD of hosts). The simple verb placed at the head of the phrase emphasizes the work of the Lord in appointing or placing Zerubbabel as the human instrument used in the rebuilding effort. The verb שָׁם (sum) Qal Perf. 1c.sg., with vav prefix and pron. suffix 2m.sg., “to put, place, set, appoint, make,” (this is a prophetic perfect so the better translation is “I will set you”). The figurative use of the word, חֹתֶם (chotham) n.m.sg., with kaf prefix, “seal, signet, signet-ring,” from חָתַם (chatham) “to seal, seal up,” is evident by use of the kaf prefix, “as” or “like.” Zerubbabel is not a signet ring but like a signet ring characterized as the authentic representative marked out for the

purpose of building the Temple. The use of a signet has a long and rich history. The Lord commanded the priest of Israel to engrave the names of the twelve tribes upon the two stones within the Ephod as a signet. A signet or seal was widely used throughout the ancient world to identify the individual as authentic and hence whatever was marked with the bearer's seal was identified as originating from the source and genuine. So that documents were sealed with the signet either in clay or with wax for important matters. Signets or seals were normally constructed of clay, wood, metal or stone, and were in the form of a finger ring or simply attached with a cord and wore around the neck. As a metaphor the signet has the sense of the owner's mark, a living, walking, breathing possession, sealed for a special purpose. In this case, Zerubbabel was chosen as a servant and sealed for this purpose and the special purpose was to be the focal point to direct and finally complete the construction of the Temple.

The metaphor of the signet is further explained by the phrase, כִּי־בַךְ בַּחֲרָתִי **“for in you I choose.”** The purpose is introduced by the conjunction כִּי (ki) part., “for, that, because, when,” introducing the purpose clause that בַּךְ (bet prefix with pron. suffix 2m.sg.) “in you,” the Lord has chosen. The verb בָּחַר (bachar) Qal Perf. 1c.sg., with bet prefix, “to choose, elect, decide for,” serves to emphasize the close association by which the Lord will be associated with Zerubbabel in the rebuilding effort. To finish the prophetic נְאֻם (n’um) Qal Part., m.sg., “utterance, declaration,” יְהוָה (y’hovah) pr. n., Jehovah again includes His association with the angelic forces of heaven that He directs to assist Israel in the rebuilding effort as Jehovah is the LORD of the צָבָא (tsaba’) n.m.pl., “that which goes forth, army, host.”

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