
HAGGAI 2: 1 In the seventh month, in the twenty-first day of the month, the LORD's word came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

When this prophecy was uttered, about four years before the temple was finished, and sixty-eight after the former one was destroyed, it appears that some old men among the Jews were greatly dispirited on account of its being so much inferior in magnificence to that of Solomon. Compare Ezr 3:12. To raise the spirits of the people, and encourage them to proceed with the work, the prophet assures them that the glory of the second temple should be greater than that of the first, alluding perhaps to the glorious doctrines which should be preached in it by Jesus Christ and his apostles, Hag 2:1-9. He then shows the people that the oblations brought by their priests could not sanctify them while they were unclean by their neglect of the temple; and to convince them that the difficult times they had experienced during that neglect proceeded from this cause, he promises fruitful seasons from that day forward, Hag 2:10-19. The concluding verses contain a prediction of the mighty revolutions that should take place by the setting up of the kingdom of Christ under the type of Zerubbabel, Hag 2:20-23. As the time which elapsed between the date of the prophecy and the dreadful concussion of nations is termed in Hag 2:6, A Little While, the words may likewise have reference to some temporal revolutions then near, such as the commotions of Babylon in the reign of Darius, the Macedonian conquests in Persia, and the wars between the successors of Alexander; but the aspect of the prophecy is more directly to the amazing victories of the Romans, who, in the time of Haggai and Zechariah, were on the Very Eve of their successful career, and in the lapse of a few centuries subjugated the whole habitable globe; and therefore, in a very good sense, God may be said by these people to have shaken "the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;" and thus to have prepared the way for the opening of the Gospel dispensation. See Heb 12:25-29. Others have referred this prophecy to the period of our Lord's second advent, to which there is no doubt it is also applicable; and when it will be in the most signal manner fulfilled. That the convulsion of the nations introducing this most stupendous event will be very great and terrible, is sufficiently plain from Isaiah 34, Isa 35:1-10, as well as from many other passages of holy writ.

Verse 1

In the seventh month - This was a new message, and intended to prevent discouragement, and excite them to greater diligence in their work.

HAGGAI 2: 2 "Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying,

HAGGAI 2: 3 'Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Isn't it in your eyes as nothing?

Verse 3

Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? - Who of you has seen the temple built by Solomon? The foundation of the present house had been laid about fifty-three years after the destruction of the temple built by Solomon and though this prophecy was uttered fifteen years after

the foundation of this second temple, yet there might still survive some of those who had seen the temple of Solomon.

Is it not in your eyes - Most certainly the Jews at this time had neither men nor means to make any such splendid building as that erected by Solomon. The present was as nothing when compared with the former.

HAGGAI 2: 4 Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the LORD. 'Be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,' says the LORD, 'and work, for I am with you,' says the LORD of Armies.

Verse 4

Yet now be strong - Do not let this discourage you. The chief glory of the temple is not its splendid building, but my presence; and as I covenanted to be with you when ye came out of Egypt, so I will fulfill my covenant; for my Spirit remaineth among you, fear not; Hag 2:5. What is the most splendid cathedral, if God be not in it, influencing all by his presence and Spirit? But he will not be in it unless there be a messenger of the Lord there, and unless he deliver the Lord's message.

HAGGAI 2: 5 This is the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, and my Spirit lived among you. 'Don't be afraid.'

HAGGAI 2: 6 For this is what the LORD of Armies says: 'Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the dry land;

Verse 6

Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens - When the law was given on Mount Sinai, there was an earthquake that shook the whole mountain, Exo 19:18. "The political or religious revolutions which were to be effected in the world, or both, are here," says Abp. Newcome, "referred to; compare Exo 19:21, Exo 19:22; Mat 24:29; Heb 12:26-28. The political ones began in the overthrow of the Persian monarchy by Alexander, within two centuries after this prediction; and if the Messiah's kingdom be meant, which is my opinion, this was erected in somewhat more than five centuries after the second year of Darius; a short period of time when compared with that which elapsed from the creation to the giving of the law, or from the giving of the law to the coming of the Messiah's kingdom. It must be understood that the word אֶחָד achath, once, has a clear sense, if understood of the evangelical age; for many political revolutions succeeded, as the conquest of Darius Codomanus, and the various fortunes of Alexander's successors; but only one great and final religious revolution." - Newcome.

HAGGAI 2: 7 and I will shake all nations. The precious things of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of Armies.

Verse 7

And the Desire of all nations shall come - The present Hebrew text is as follows: **וּבֵאוּ חֲמַדַּת כָּל הַגּוֹיִם**. This is a difficult place if understood of a person: but **חֲמַדַּת** chemdath, desire, cannot well agree with **בֵּאוּ** bau, they shall come. It is true that some learned men suppose that **חֲמַדוֹת** chemdoth, desirable things, may have been the original reading: but this is supported by no MS., nor is **בֵּאוּ** found in the singular number in any. It is generally understood of the desirable or valuable things which the different nations should bring into the temple; and it is certain that many rich presents were brought into this temple. All are puzzled with it. But the principal difficulty lies in the verb **וּבֵאוּ** ubau, they shall come. If we found **חֲמַדַּת וּבֵאָה** ubaa chemdath in the singular, then it would read as in our text, And the Desire of all nations shall come: but no such reading appears in any MS.; nor is it fairly acknowledged, except by the Vulgate, which reads, *Et veniet desideratus cunctis gentibus*, "And that which is desired," or the desired Person, "shall come to all nations." In Hag 2:7 God says he will shake or stir up all nations; that these nations shall bring their desirable things; that the house shall be filled with God's glory; that the silver and gold, which these nations are represented as bringing by way of gifts, are the Lord's; and that the glory of this latter house shall exceed the former. Bp. Chandler labors to vindicate the present translation; but he makes rash assertions, and is abandoned by the Hebrew text. The **בֵּא** ba, to come, is often used in the sense of bring, and that **חֲמַדַּת** chemdath, desire, may be considered as the plural for **חֲמַדוֹת**, having the point holem instead of the **וּ** vau, and thus mean desirable things, will not be denied by those who are acquainted with the genius and construction of the Hebrew language. Bp. Chandler thinks that **בֵּא**, he came, cannot be used of things, but of persons only. Here he is widely mistaken, for it is used of days perpetually; and of the ark, 2Sam 6:9; and of mounts coming against Jerusalem, Jer 32:24; and of trees coming to adorn the temple, Isa 60:13; and of silver and gold coming into the temple, Jos 6:19; and Jer 6:20, *Why doth incense come to me?* See Abp. Secker's notes. I cannot see how the words can apply to Jesus Christ, even if the construction were less embarrassed than it is; because I cannot see how he could be called The Desire of All Nations.

The whole seems to be a metaphorical description of the Church of Christ, and of his filling it with all the excellences of the Gentile world, when the fullness of the Gentiles shall be brought in.

HAGGAI 2: 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,' says the LORD of Armies.

HAGGAI 2: 9 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the LORD of Armies; 'and in this place will I give peace,' says the LORD of Armies."

Verse 9

And in this place will I give peace - **שְׁלוֹמִי** shalom a peace-offering, as well as peace itself; or Jesus Christ, who is called the Prince of peace, through whom peace is proclaimed between God and man, between man and his fellows; and through whom peace is established in the disconsolate soul. And at this temple this peace was first promulgated and proclaimed.

But it is said that the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former. Now this cannot be said because Jesus Christ made his personal appearance in that temple, or rather in that built by Herod; for, though we allow that Jesus Christ is equal with God, we do not grant that he is greater. Now the first temple was the dwelling-place of God: here he manifested his glory between the cherubim, and it was his constant residence for more than four hundred years. But the glory of this

latter house was greater because under it the grand scheme of human salvation was exhibited, and the redemption price paid down for a lost world. As all probably applies to the Christian Church, the real house of God, its glory was most certainly greater than any glory which was ever possessed by that of the Jews. See on Hag 2:22-23 (note).

HAGGAI 2: 10 In the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the LORD's word came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

Verse 10

In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month - Three months after they had begun to rebuild the temple, Haggai is ordered to go and put two questions to the priests.

1. If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and he touch any thing with his skirt, is that thing made holy? The priests answered, No! Hag 2:12.
 2. If one has touched a dead body and thereby become unclean, does he communicate his uncleanness to whatever he may touch? And the priests answered, Yes! Hag 2:13.
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HAGGAI 2: 11 "Thus says the LORD of Armies: Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,

HAGGAI 2: 12 'If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with his fold touches bread, stew, wine, oil, or any food, will it become holy?'" The priests answered, "No."

HAGGAI 2: 13 Then Haggai said, "If one who is unclean by reason of a dead body touch any of these, will it be unclean?" The priests answered, "It will be unclean."

HAGGAI 2: 14 Then Haggai answered, "'So is this people, and so is this nation before me,' says the LORD; 'and so is every work of their hands. That which they offer there is unclean.

Verse 14

Then answered Haggai - So is this people - As an unclean man communicates his uncleanness to every thing he touches, so are ye unclean; and whatever ye have hitherto done is polluted in the sight of God. For your neglect of my temple has made you unclean, as if you had contracted legal pollution by touching a dead body.

HAGGAI 2: 15 Now, please consider from this day and backward, before a stone was laid on a stone in the LORD's temple.

HAGGAI 2: 16 Through all that time, when one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were only ten. When one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty, there were only twenty.

Verse 16

Since those days were - I have shown my displeasure against you, by sending blasting and mildew; and so poor have been your crops that a heap of corn which should have produced twenty measures produced only ten; and that quantity of grapes which in other years would have produced fifty measures, through their poverty, smallness, etc., produced only twenty. And this has been the case ever since the first stone was laid in this temple; for your hearts were not right with me, and therefore I blasted you in all the labors of your hands; and yet ye have not turned to me, Hag 2:17.

HAGGAI 2: 17 I struck you with blight, mildew, and hail in all the work of your hands; yet you didn't turn to me,' says the LORD.

HAGGAI 2: 18 'Consider, please, from this day and backward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, since the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider it.

Verse 18

Consider now from this day - I will now change my conduct towards you: from, this day that ye have begun heartily to rebuild my temple, and restore my worship, I will bless you. Whatever you sow, whatever you plant, shall be blessed; your land shall be fruitful, and ye shall have abundant crops of all sorts.

HAGGAI 2: 19 Is the seed yet in the barn? Yes, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree haven't produced. From this day will I bless you."

HAGGAI 2: 20 the LORD's word came the second time to Haggai in the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying,

Verse 20

Again the word of the Lord came - This was a second communication in the same day.

HAGGAI 2: 21 "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, 'I will shake the heavens and the earth.

Verse 21

I will shake the heavens and the earth - Calmet supposes that the invasion of Cambyses, and his death, are what the prophet has in view by this shaking of the heavens and the earth: but this invasion and defeat happened three years before they had begun to work at the temple; and how could it be made a matter of interest to Zerubbabel? Calmet answers this, by translating the words in the past tense; and shows that the fact was recalled to Zerubbabel's attention, to fix his confidence in God, etc. Bp. Newcome says we may well understand this and the twenty-second verse of the calamity undergone by Babylon in the reign of Darius; of the Macedonian conquests in

Persia; and of the wars which the successors of Alexander waged against each other: others understand it of the Romans.

HAGGAI 2: 22 I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms. I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations. I will overthrow the chariots, and those who ride in them. The horses and their riders will come down, everyone by the sword of his brother.

HAGGAI 2: 23 In that day, says the LORD of Armies, will I take you, Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the LORD, 'and will make you as a signet, for I have chosen you,' says the LORD of Armies."

Verse 23

In that day, saith the Lord - Some think, says this same learned writer, that Zerubbabel is put here for his people and posterity: but it may well be said that the commotions foretold began in the rebellion of Babylon, which Darius besieged and took; and exercised great cruelties upon its inhabitants. - Herod. lib. iii., sec. 220. Justin. 1:10. Prideaux places this event in the fifth year of Darius; others with more probability, in the eighth year. Compare Zac 2:9.

And will make thee as a signet - I will exalt thee to high dignity, power, and trust, of which the seal was the instrument or sign in those days. Thou shalt be under my peculiar care, and shalt be to me very precious. See Jer 22:24 (note); Sol 8:6 (note); and see the notes on these two places.

For I have chosen thee - He had an important and difficult work to do, and it was necessary that he should be assured of God's especial care and protection during the whole.

On the three last verses of this prophecy a sensible and pious correspondent sends me the following illustration, which I cheerfully insert. Though in many respects different from that given above, yet I believe that the kingdom of Christ is particularly designed in this prophecy. "I think there is an apparent difficulty in this passage, because the wars of the Persians and Babylonians were not so interesting to the rising commonwealth of the Jews as many subsequent events of less note in the world, but which were more directly levelled at their own national prosperity; and yet neither the one nor the other could be termed 'a shaking of the heavens and the earth, and an overthrow of the throne of kingdoms.' "I know not if the following view may be admitted as an explanation of this difficult passage. I take 'the shaking of the heavens and earth' here (as in Hag 2:6) to have a more distant and comprehensive meaning than can belong to Zerubbabel's time, or to his immediate posterity; and that it extends not only to the overthrow of kingdoms then existing, but of the future great monarchies of the world; and not excepting even the civil and ecclesiastical establishments of the Jews themselves. For I take 'the heavens,' in the prophetic language, uniformly to denote the true Church, and never the superstitions and idols of the nations. "What, then, are we to understand by the promise made to Zerubbabel, 'I will make thee as a signet?' In the first place, the restitution of the religious and civil polity of the people of Israel, conformably to the promises afterwards given in the four first chapters of Zechariah. And, secondly, as the royal signet is the instrument by which kings give validity to laws, and thereby unity and consistence to their empire; so Jehovah, the God and King of Israel, condescends to promise he will employ Zerubbabel as his instrument of gathering and uniting the people again as a distinguished nation; and that such should be the permanency of their political existence, that, whilst other nations and mighty empires should be overthrown, and their very name blotted out under heaven, the Jews should ever remain a distinct people, even in

the wreck of their own government, and the loss of all which rendered their religion splendid and attractive. "In confirmation of this interpretation, I would refer to the threatening denounced against Jeconiah, (called Coniah, Jeremiah 22), the last reigning king of Judah, and the progenitor of Zerubbabel. I apprehend I may be authorized to read Jer 22:24 thus: 'As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, be the signet upon my right hand, yet will I pluck thee thence, and I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life,' etc. "If it be considered that the kings of Judah were in an especial and peculiar manner the delegates of Jehovah, governing in his name and by his authority, a peculiar propriety will appear in their being resembled to signets, or royal seals contained in rings. Compare Gen 41:42; Est 3:10, Est 3:12; Est 8:2, Est 8:8; Dan 6:7. And the promise to Zerubbabel will be equivalent to those which clearly predict the preservation of the Jewish people by the Divine command. see Zac 2:1-13; and the faithfulness of God to his covenant concerning the Messiah, who should be born of the seed of Abraham, and in the family of David, of whose throne he was the rightful Proprietor. "According to this view, by the promise, 'In that day; - I will make thee as a signet,' etc., must be understood, that the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people, when all the great empires of the heathen were overthrown, would manifest the honor now conferred on Zerubbabel as the instrument of their restoration after the Babylonish-captivity. Thus the promise to Abraham, Genesis 22, 'I will make of thee a great nation - and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,' evidently referred to a very distant future period and the honor connected with it could not be enjoyed by Abraham during his mortal life." - M. A. B.

I think, however, that we have lived to see the spirit of this prophecy fulfilled. The earth has been shaken; another shaking, and time shall be swallowed up in eternity.