



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V26 N45 November 10, 2024

UNDISTRACTED

“Greater Glory Ahead”

Haggai 2:1-9

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Eternity

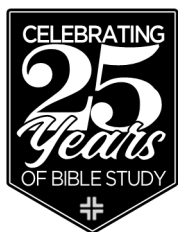
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his eternal kingdom.

“My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

John 14:2-3



What about future hope and faithfulness?



Zerubbabel, the governor, Joshua, the high priest, and the remnant of the people that had returned from Babylonian captivity stopped rebuilding the temple after the foundation had been laid c. 536 B.C. (cf. Ezr 3:7-13). Construction then languished for sixteen years (cf. Ezr 4:1-5:17) until it resumed c. 520 B.C. as a result of the preaching of the prophet Haggai (cf. Ezr 6:1-12; Hag 1:1-15). But the second temple, Zerubbabel’s temple, didn’t measure up to the first temple, Solomon’s temple. It lacked the grandeur of the previous temple, and everyone knew it. Haggai asked three questions to reveal what the people were thinking. “Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?” (Hag 2:3). Clearly, the returnees needed a word of encouragement if they were to remain *faithful* to the task at hand. And Haggai gave them that word recorded in Haggai 2:6-9. It was an *eschatological* word of encouragement—eschatology has practical implications. Eschatological hope feeds faithfulness.

There’s no explicit reference to heaven, hell, or the return of Christ in Haggai 2:6-9. There is, however, explicit reference to four things the LORD Almighty *will* do. The future tense indicates that these are things God will do in the future—from Haggai’s perspective anyway. First, he says, “I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land” (v. 6). He did this in the past; note the reference to the exodus in the previous verse. And he’s going to do it again. Second, he says, “I will shake all the nations” (v. 7). He did this in the past in connection with the exodus, too. And like then, his intervention in the future will impact the nations. Third, he says, “I will fill this house [the temple] with glory” (v. 7), and when that time comes, the present glory of it will be greater than the past glory of it. Put differently, in the future the temple will be even more glorious than Solomon’s temple. Finally, he says, “And in

this place [Jerusalem] I will grant peace” (v. 9). God’s “I wills” culminate in the coming of peace to Jerusalem and presumably to the nations.

Here’s the question: Has God already done these four things or are they things he will yet do in the future? Here’s the answer: There are good reasons to believe that Haggai’s prophecy awaits fulfillment in the future. In the first place, the words Haggai uses are *eschatological* words. They’re called that because references to God’s intervention in the earth in terms of him “shaking the heavens, and the earth, the sea and the dry land” are associated elsewhere in scripture with the end times. The same language is also called *apocalyptic* because it refers to cataclysmic events that mark the coming of God to judge the earth and establish his rule over the nations. Some see the fulfillment of Haggai’s words in the appearance of Jesus in Herod’s temple (see Lk 2:32), but the nations didn’t acknowledge him at that time, and neither did peace come to Jerusalem then. So it seems the LORD Almighty’s promise through the prophet will be fulfilled when the Lord comes again.

One commentator offers the following summary of the eschatological implications of Haggai’s second message: “In this first extended eschatological vision of the book, Haggai, in clearly apocalyptic terms, describes the tremendous upheavals that will attend the epiphany of YHWH [i.e., Yahweh or the LORD] in the last days. When nature and the nations suffer convulsion, the peoples of the earth will come to recognize the sovereignty of YHWH and render the homage due Him. That will take the form particularly of tribute brought to the new Temple of YHWH, which, in that day of His coming, will be filled with a glory far surpassing that of the Temple of Solomon. Climaxing it all will be the peace of YHWH centered in that glorious place” (Eugene H. Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Exegetical Commentary*, 40).

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Haggai 2:1-9

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

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket the chronological reference in v. 1.
- Circle the question marks in v. 3.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 4.
- Underline "be strong" (3x) in v. 4 and "Do not fear" in v. 5.
- Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 4.
- Circle "covenanted" in v. 5.
- Double underline "I will" in vv. 6-7, 9.
- Circle "shake" in vv. 6, 7.
- Highlight "what is desired" in v. 7.
- Bracket the divine name "LORD Almighty" in vv. 6-9.
- Circle the repeated term "glory" in vv. 7, 9.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time (2:1). How long after it came to him the first time?
2. Describe *how* the people felt about their rebuilding efforts and explain *why* (v. 3; cf. Ezr 3:1-13).
3. Describe *how* feeling the way they did would *affect* them.
4. Knowing *how* they felt, *what* did the LORD tell them to do and *why*?
5. Verse 5 reads, “*This* is what I covenanted with you . . .” (cf. Ex 33:14). To what does “*this*” refer?
6. Has he *covenanted* anything of that sort with believers today? Explain. (See note on v. 5.)
7. Briefly *summarize* the things God “*will*” do in the future (vv. 6-9).
8. Verse 7 reads “*what* is desired by all nations will come” (lit. “the desire of all the nations will come”). Explain what the LORD means (see note).
9. Describe the practical value of knowing what God *will do* in the future.
10. **Discussion:** Talk about the relevance of this passage to Christians who are neither under the law nor rebuilding the temple.

Commentary On The Text

Haggai's second message comes with a *superscription* (2:1), as did the first (1:1). It indicates that the word of the LORD came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-first day of the seventh month (Tishri, modern October 17) of the same year, 520 B.C., which was the last day of the feast of Tabernacles, nearly a month after the people resumed rebuilding the temple on September 21 (1:15). Unlike his first message, this one was a message of encouragement addressed to those who "began to work on the house of the LORD Almighty, their God," namely, Zerubbabel, Joshua, and "the whole remnant of the people" (1:14). Over 400 years earlier, Solomon had dedicated his temple during this very festival (1Ki 8:2). According to one writer: "In the first chapter of this prophecy the nation needed a word directed to their consciences because of their coldness and indifference; now they stood in need of a word of cheer and comfort to strengthen their hands and purposes as they pursued the task in obedience to the Lord" (Charles L. Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets*, 242).

Once the people resumed building the temple, it didn't take long before they had second thoughts. The work of clearing the site of rubble, re-dressing the stone fit for use, and organizing work teams was hard. On top of that, twenty-six days passed, and by that time, it had become painfully evident that their temple didn't measure up to Solomon's standards. Haggai asks three questions to point to the elephant on the worksite: "Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?" (v. 3). One commentator writes: "Even in the initial stages of reconstruction the people were apparently making insidious comparisons between the restored temple and the glories of Solomon's temple which had been dedicated centuries before at the same time of the year (1 Kings 8:2)" (F. Duane Lindsay, "Haggai," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 1541). Their predecessors had made the same discouraging comparison after they laid the foundation of the temple sixteen years before (Ezr 3:12, 13; cf. Zec 4:6-10). Comparison is truly the thief of joy!

To make matters worse, the month of Tishri (September-October) was filled with religious holidays. "Progress would have been delayed during the seventh month by the major festivals on which no work would be allowed. In addition to Sabbath rest days, the first day of the month was the Feast of Trumpets, and the tenth the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:3-2). Then on the fifteenth day the Feast of taber-

nacles began (Lev. 23:33-36, 39-43; Deut. 16:13-15), which lasted for seven days. It would be understandable if the enthusiasm was frustrated by a lack of progress due to the compulsory holidays" (Pieter A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, NICOT, 92). It was all very depressing.

In the midst of their discouragement, the LORD spoke to them through Haggai the prophet. He told them to "Be strong" like he had told them generations earlier after their departure from Egypt. (Haggai's message contains a number of allusions to the exodus.) And he told them to "work." But how could they remain obedient and continue to "work" in the face of such disappointment? Their work didn't matter since the temple they were building amounted to nothing. Why should they "be strong" in such circumstances? The LORD's presence was the answer. The One who had brought them out of Egypt and had promised to be with them was still with them. His covenant was still in effect. "My Spirit remains among you," he said. "Do not fear."

What's more, to encourage them he went on to tell them what he had in store for the temple they were building. "I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land," he said. "I will shake all nations." "I will fill this house with glory" even greater than the glory that filled Solomon's temple. One day the nations will give to the temple even as the Egypt gave the sons of Jacob upon their hasty departure (Ex 12:33-36). In that day the nations will bring their wealth to Jerusalem according to Isaiah 60:5; 61:6; and 66:20. And so, the glory referred to no doubt entails the material splendor of that future temple, but it also implies God's presence there (v. 4, 5) in the person of the Messiah. While the expression "the desired of all nations" may not be a direct reference to Jesus Christ as traditionally thought, it certainly alludes to him vis-à-vis the messianic kingdom.

"And in this place I will grant peace," Haggai said. This *shalom* implies more than the absence of conflict; it implies prosperity, wholeness, health and well-being. These are all things God promised to do that he hasn't done yet. But when Jesus returns to establish God's kingdom, he will. Their obedience didn't seem to matter much in light of the apparent insignificance of what they were doing. Only after God revealed what he was ultimately going to do did they recognize its importance.

The *upper* story of this narrative is about God's faithfulness to his people based on his covenant promises. The *lower* story is about his people's faithfulness to rebuild the temple based on God's words of encouragement.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *twenty-first day* Cf. 1:1, 15. 17 Oct., 520 B.C. A number of Jewish festivals occurred during the month Tishri: the Feast of Trumpets on the first day, the Day of Atonement on the 10th day, and the Feast of Tabernacles from the 15th day to the 21st day with the 22nd also being a rest day (Lev 23). “Exactly 440 years earlier (Tishri, 960 B.C.) Solomon had finished and dedicated his Temple (1 Kings 6:38; 8:2), to which the prophet is about to compare the one under present construction. Twenty-six days had passed since construction began, and already the differences were becoming painfully evident” (Eugene H. Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Exegetical Commentary*, 37).

v. 3 *Who* “No one would be more aware of the contrast between the respective structures than those old enough to have remembered the Solomonic Temple so ruthlessly destroyed by the Babylonians 66 years earlier. To these Haggai addresses his question, which is *not*, therefore, *altogether* rhetorical” (Merrill, 38, italics added). Haggai’s questions weren’t altogether rhetorical, but they were intended to point to the proverbial elephant in the room. The people compared their temple with Solomon’s temple and concluded theirs didn’t amount to much, which implied that what they were doing didn’t matter much (cf. Ezr 3:10-13).

v. 4 *Be strong* The LORD delivered similar words of encouragement to his people before they entered the land (see Dt 31:6; cf. Jos 1:6, 7; 10:25). They were to “be strong” and “work.” The exhortation was to a bold, confident, single-minded effort to rebuild the temple.

v. 4 *for* “This can be possible because YHWH [the LORD] will be with them just as He was with Moses and Joshua” (Merrill, 38).

v. 5 *covenanted* The covenant the LORD had made with his people following the exodus was still in effect. Just as their departure from Egypt was followed by the promise of his presence to bless their obedience, so also is their departure from Babylon followed by an affirmation of that covenant, along with the continuing promise of his presence to bless their work on the temple. “Just as YHWH [the LORD] had been with His people in the ancient days of redemption and election, so much so that they triumphed gloriously over their foes, so He would be with them now. For this reason they had every cause to be encouraged and to ‘not fear’” (Merrill, 38). The covenant God made with Israel and the promise of his presence that accompanied it does not pertain to Christians; nevertheless, he has likewise promised to be with us (Mt 28:20; Heb 13:5, 6).

v. 6 *I will shake* This shaking refers to a future intervention of God in the earth like his past intervention in connection with the exodus from Egypt. Psalm 77:16-18 describes how he shook the earth in connection with the crossing

of the Red Sea, and Psalm 68:8 (Ex 19:16-20; cf. Jdg 5:4, 5) describes how he shook it in connection with the giving of the law. The language of Haggai’s message suggests that the cataclysmic events he described occur in the last days prior to the establishment of God’s messianic kingdom. “These phenomena will accompany the new exodus and new covenant as well, as both Haggai (2:6-7) and other prophets attest. There will be a shaking of the natural structures (Jer. 4:24; Ezek. 38:20) and of men and nations (Isa. 64:2; Ezek. 38:20; Mic. 7:17). This is clearly eschatological language . . . These cataclysmic events will cause the people to bring their ‘precious things’ to the holy city and temple. Once this has come to pass, YHWH [the LORD] will fill the Temple with His glory” (Merrill, 41). The same author writes, “When nature and the nations suffer convulsion, the peoples of the earth will come to recognize the sovereignty of YHWH and render the homage due Him. That will take the form particularly of tribute brought to the new Temple of YHWH, which, in that day of His coming, will be filled with a glory far surpassing that of the Temple of Solomon. Climaxing it all will be the peace of YHWH centered in that glorious place” (Merrill, 40).

v. 6 *heavens and earth* . . . This figure of speech called *merism* refers to the entire cosmos.

v. 7 *what is desired* “The rendering, ‘the desire of all nations’ (KJV), has been usually understood as a messianic prophecy referring to the coming of the One desired by all nations. [Charles Wesley followed this interpretation in his Christmas Carol “Hark the Herald Angels Sing.” “Come, Desire of nations, come! Fix in us thy humble home.”] The trend of recent translations and commentators has been away from this personal reference to the impersonal ‘desired things’ (F. Duane Lindsay, “Haggai,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 1542; cf. *The NET Bible*, 13^{tn} on Hag 2:7).

v. 9 *glory* Certainly, an allusion to the material splendor of the temple in the future glorified with the wealth of the nations. Note the parallel here to the temple of Solomon. “David gained dominion over the surrounding states and from them extracted revenues, particularly in the form of gold and silver (2Sam 8:7-8, 10-11). These he ‘dedicated to YHWH’ (v. 11). Solomon later used them to beautify the Temple at Jerusalem (1 Kings 7:51; cf. 1 Chron. 29:3-5) preparatory to YHWH’s taking up residence there and filling the place with His glory (1 Kings 7:51-8:11)” (Merrill, 41). Likely, an allusion also to the glory of God’s presence there. “Even though the present temple was less glorious than Solomon’s temple, the Lord promised that the final glory of the temple would be greater than its former glory. The Lord also promised to bring peace to the site of the temple, Jerusalem. Neither of these has happened yet, so the fulfillment must be future (millennial). Lasting peace will only come when Messiah comes to rule and reign (cf. Isa. 2:4; 9:6; Zech. 9:9-10)” (Constable, 33; Merrill, 42).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

When what you do for God seems small, be encouraged by taking heart in his faithfulness and abiding presence.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

When my youngest son started second grade, he got the traditional teacher pep talk about all the new things they were going to learn over the year and how challenging it might be but they could do it! The teacher passed out a coloring sheet that said, "I can do hard things." That's all well and good, but my son made his own little adjustment, adding a quick apostrophe and letter "t" that changed the sheet to read, "I *can't* do hard things." Caboose kids are full of entertainment. To this day, we still laugh about and quote this mantra when we're faced with overwhelming obstacles. The complacent and apathetic Israelites repented for their sin and failure to honor God with their time and resources but the job ahead, rebuilding the temple, seemed overwhelming and they likely felt they weren't up for the task. This is parenting! Many times, we feel like we aren't up for the task. Maybe you feel like you are talking to a preteen brick wall or you've redirected your toddler from the same thing 64 times in the past nine minutes. You've told your kindergartener to clean their room repeatedly and they've ignored you, or you caught your 10-year-old lying again. It seems easier to throw your hands in the air and admit defeat than to stay the course and remain consistent. Yes, parenting can be hard but there's good news for us. God promises His presence! Be strong. Don't give up and do not fear because our Almighty God is right there, and His sustaining power will be what we need to carry the task to completion.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Haggai 2:1-9

1. What does God tell Haggai to tell the people to do and what did God promise (verse 4)?
2. What will God fill His house with?
3. What will God grant in this place?

What Do You Think?

In this passage we learn God's presence brings His peace. Why do you think this was a comfort for the returning Israelites?

What Do You Do?

What motivates you to do hard things?

CORE COMPETENCY: Eternity

I believe in heaven, hell, and one day Jesus will come again.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 51:10

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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BIBLE CHURCH**

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.