



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V26 N47 November 24, 2024

UNDISTRACTED

“Signed, Sealed, Delivered”

Haggai 2:20-23

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Jesus Christ

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

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

Hebrews 1:3



Will a descendant of David ever rule again over Israel?



Many passages in the Old and the New Testament speak of *eschatological* events, that is, events that will mark the end of the age, for example, the return of Jesus to rescue and then to rule, judgments and resurrections associated with those returns, and the arrival of the kingdom of God on earth in full flower. These among others are *eschatological* events.

The Old Testament prophets speak of the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth. There’s more to say about this than can be said here, but consider the following. The prophet Daniel speaks of a kingdom established by God that will supplant the Gentile kingdoms of the world. It will be a kingdom “that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever” (2:44). In another place, Daniel associates the establishment of this kingdom “with one like a son of man coming in the clouds of heaven” (7:13) – note that Jesus used “Son of Man” frequently to refer to himself. The prophet writes: “He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given” – i.e., the Ancient of Days gave him – “authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and people of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (7:14).

This kingdom that God will establish on earth will include the nation of Israel. Ezekiel describes a future time when Israel will be one nation in the land with one king over them, never again to be two nations or two kingdoms (37:22). Regarding that time, the LORD says, “My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and their children’s children will live there forever and David my servant will be their prince forever” (vv. 24-25; cf. Jer 31:33-34) – note this is in fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham (Ge 12:2-3; 15:4-19) and to David (2Sa 7:8-16; cf. Ps 89).

The kingdom will also include Gentile nations. Regarding the future glory of the second temple, the prophet Haggai quotes the LORD who says: “I will once more *shake the heavens and the earth*, the sea and the dry land. I will *shake all nations* [a reference to judgment] and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory . . . The silver is mine and the gold is mine . . . The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house” (2:6-9). Then regarding the future restoration of the Davidic dynasty, the LORD says: “I am going to *shake the heavens and the earth*. I will *overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms* . . . On that day . . . I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel . . . and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you” (vv. 21-23).

Resistance to the establishment of God’s kingdom on the part of the nations is futile. According to Psalm 2, the LORD “laughs/scoffs,” and “rebukes/terrifies” the “kings/rulers” who conspire against him (vv. 2-5). But to his anointed one, he says: “Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession” (v. 8). Psalm 110, quoted in the New Testament with reference to Jesus (Mt 22:41-45), concurs; the Messiah will one day rule over the nations. The psalmist writes: “The LORD [i.e., Yahweh] says to my lord [the Messiah]: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’ The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, ‘Rule in the midst of your enemies!’” (vv. 1-2). And “The LORD is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the ruler of the whole earth” (v. 6).

The coming of the Lord to judge the nations is described in the New Testament in Revelation 19:11-21, and the coming of the kingdom of God in Revelation 20:1-6. In both texts, Christ is the protagonist. He is the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS who defeats the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies (19:19-20), and he is the one who reigns with his saints on earth for “a thousand years” (20:4; cf. Mt 24:3-30; Lk 1:32-33; 2:11).

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Haggai 2:20-23

20 The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month: 21 "Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. 22 I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother.

23 "'On that day,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,' declares the LORD, 'and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,' declares the LORD Almighty."

Read in another translation

20 Then the LORD spoke to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month: 21 "Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah: 'I am ready to shake the sky and the earth. 22 I will overthrow royal thrones and shatter the might of earthly kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and those who ride them, and horses and their riders will fall as people kill one another. 23 On that day,' says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, my servant,' says the LORD, 'and I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you,' says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.'" (NET)

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

- Underline "word of the LORD" in v. 20.
- Bracket "a second time" in v. 20.
- Bracket "twenty-fourth day of the month" in v. 20.
- Bracket "Zerubbabel governor of Judah" in v. 21.
- Circle "shake," "overturn," "shatter," and "overthrow" in vv. 21, 22.
- Circle "fall" in v. 22.
- Highlight "'On that day'" in v. 23.
- Circle "my servant" in v. 23.
- Box "like" indicating *comparison* in v. 23.
- Circle "signet ring" in v. 23.
- Circle "chosen" in v. 23.

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. If Haggai's previous message was delivered on December 18, 520 B.C. (see 2:10), when was his fourth message delivered?
 2. *Who* is Zerubbabel's grandfather (v. 23; cf. 1Chr 3:17; cf. 2Ki 24:12) and *why* does it matter?
 3. The LORD says, "I am going to shake the heavens and the earth." To what does that *figurative* language refer?
 4. According to verse 22a, *what* is the LORD going to do?
 5. According to verse 22b, *how* is he going to do it?
 6. "On *that* day" does not refer to one specific twenty-four hour day. Explain (see note).
 7. The LORD says he will make Zerubbabel "*like* my signet ring." Explain the *comparison* (see note).
 8. If Zerubbabel did not *personally* experience what the LORD promised, *who* must he represent?
 9. The Lord's promise regarding Zerubbabel would be especially significant to the returnees from Babylonian exile. How so?
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about your expectations for the future given the LORD's message to Zerubbabel.
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Commentary On The Text

Haggai's fourth and last message was received on the same day as his third, "the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month" (2:10), December 18, 520 B.C., only this time, unlike the first and second messages, this message was addressed to Zerubbabel alone. Regarding its content, one commentator writes: "This oracle set forth the Lord's twofold intention for the future. First, the oracle warns of an overthrow of human power and government (vv. 21-22). Repeated use of the first person in this announcement underscores the Lord's direct involvement in these events" (Richard A. Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, NAC, vol. 21A, 191). In other words, the LORD God intends to judge the temporal kingdoms of this world and to replace them with his everlasting kingdom (cf. Da 2:44; 7:13-14). "Second, the oracle proclaims the Lord's choice of Zerubbabel as the agent for accomplishing his purposes (v. 23). Here too there is an emphasis on divine initiative, as indicated by the repeated use of the first person in speech attributed to the Lord. This final verse of the book bristles with language of divine selection that emphasizes Zerubbabel's role as a Davidic successor. Haggai's final message looks beyond the stark condition that characterized the restoration community to a time of apocalyptic interruption of human history signaled by the Lord's choice of a new leader" (Taylor and Clendenen, 191). In other words, the LORD intends to raise up a descendant of Zerubbabel and who will execute judgment on the nations and subsequently be enthroned to rule over the kingdom of God.

In 2:21-22, the LORD tells Haggai to tell Zerubbabel what he is going to do. The participle used connotes *imminence*, "I am about to shake heaven and earth," the LORD says—even though what is prophesied neither occurred in Zerubbabel's lifetime nor since. His words have a decidedly ominous tone. One commentator writes: "The shaking of heaven and earth announced in v. 21 warns of a violent disruption of normal processes in the created order. Cataclysmic earthquakes and thunderous noises in the atmosphere will herald the Lord's impending judgment. Military strength and political stability that previously provided solace will be violently altered, Haggai says" (Richard A. Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, NAC, vol. 21A, 193). The LORD's repeated use of the first person is vivid: "I will overturn," "I will shatter," "I will overthrow," he says, implying his direct intervention as in the past with regard to Sodom and Gomorrah and the Exodus. The figurative language is *apocalyptic* and together with the expression "On that day," suggests

these are eschatological events, destined to occur at the end of the age. Another author writes: "The language of the passage is unmistakably apocalyptic, as the shaking, the universalism ('the heavens and the earth,' 'kingdoms of the nations'), and the overthrow of all human structures attest. It is also the language of holy war in which YHWH [Yahweh or the LORD] vanquishes all competing princes and powers and sits enthroned above them on behalf of His own people" (Eugene H. Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Exegetical Commentary*, 55). In a nutshell, the LORD will one day turn the cosmos upside down in connection with the establishment of his kingdom.

That day (v. 23), the day of the LORD, will bring both judgment (vv. 21-22) and blessing (v. 23). Jehoiachin, Zerubbabel's grandfather (1Chr 3:17-19; Mt 1:12) was the last king of Judah—the one taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar along with the king's mother, his wives, his officials, the nation's prominent citizens, and a large number of its fighting men (2Ki 24:10-17). After returning to the land, the returnees no doubt wondered whether the LORD would ever restore a descendant of David to the throne—albeit the nation no longer existed. Jerusalem and Judea were located in Yehud, a province of the Persian Empire. The LORD answers that question in a resounding manner in verse 23. He promises to take Zerubbabel, his "servant," his "chosen" one—terms with strong messianic associations (Isa 41:8; 42:1; 44:1; 49:7)—and make him "like my signet ring" or perhaps "into my signet ring" (v. 23)—signifying a ruling king's authority. According to one commentator: "The signet ring, engraved with the king's seal, was used to endorse all official documents (cf. Est. 8:10). It was so precious that, to guard it against theft, it was usually worn on the king's person. This vivid figure attested the *renewed election of the Davidic line, represented in Haggai's day by Zerubbabel*" (Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, TOTC, 54-55, italics added). In other words, the LORD vowed to keep his promise to David by returning one of his descendants to the throne. Since the prophecies of verses 23, underscored by the three-fold repetition of "declares the LORD Almighty," were not fulfilled in Zerubbabel himself, it is best to view him as a representative of a greater figure to come. In the words of one commentator: "One must see Zerubbabel as a prototype of one to come who will be YHWH's servant and chosen vessel . . . the signet will be of the line of which Zerubbabel is the most visible figure in Haggai's own generation" (Merrill, 37)—namely Jesus Christ (Mt 1:12-16).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 20 *the word of the LORD* Cf. Nu 23:19; Isa 55:10-11; Heb 4:12. "As in earlier sermons, the phrase 'word of the Lord' (*dēbar YHWH*) calls attention to the divine origin of the prophet's message. It emphasizes that the oracle Haggai is about to announce to Zerubbabel originates not in the prophet's own imaginations or political aspirations but in divine intentions" (Richard A. Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, NAC, vol. 21A, 192).

v. 20 *a second time* "This fourth and final message of Haggai, an oracle of salvation, was received and delivered on the very same day as the third, but to Zerubbabel alone" (Eugene H. Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Exegetical Commentary*, 55). "There is no reason to doubt that the prophet could receive two separate messages on one day (cf. 2:10)" (Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, TOTC, 54).

v. 20 *the twenty-fourth day . . .* That is, on "the twenty-fourth day of the *ninth* month" (2:10), December 18, 520 B.C., perhaps "at the ceremony celebrating the foundation laying of the Second Temple" (Mark J. Boda, *The NIV Application Commentary: Haggai, Zechariah*, 159; cf. Andrew E. Hill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, TOTC, 94).

v. 21 *Zerubbabel governor of Judah* I.e., a descendant of David (cf. 1Chr 3:19). "In 3:17-24, the Chronicler traced David's descendants into the restoration period. David's kingdom ended temporarily with the Babylonian exile (cf. Amos 9:11), but by tracing David's line the writer was giving his original readers hope that God would fulfill His promises. The future did not depend ultimately on the decisions of any human king, but on the faithfulness of Yahweh (cf. Hag. 2:21-22)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 1 Chronicles," 2024 ed., 19-20, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/1chronicles.pdf). "The audience of this message is clearly defined from the outset as Zerubbabel, the political ruler of the province. As the message progresses, however, this designation will be left to the side as Haggai unfolds the significance of this character to the future of God's people in 2:23" (Boda, 161).

v. 21-22 *shake, overturn . . .* "The shaking of the heavens and the earth would not only be a signal for the nations to bring their wealth (2:7-9), but also an indication that the last days had come. The prophet uses traditional vocabulary for God's miraculous intervention. As at the Exodus horses, chariots and riders will *go down* (Ex. 15:1, 5); kingdoms will be *overthrown* as were Sodom and Gomorrah (Dt. 29:23; Is. 13:19; Je. 20:16; Am. 4:11); men will fall *everyone by the sword of his fellow* (Jdg. 7:22; Ezk. 38:21; Zc. 14:13). The fact that Judah is small and defenseless makes no difference when God says *I will overthrow*. He will act, and Judah will not need to fight" (Baldwin, 54; see also Taylor and Clendenen, 193-94 and Boda, 162).

v. 22 *fall* "The last word is a euphemism for death, the cause of which is identified in the final phrase ('each by the sword of his brother') . . . In the end God causes such confusion in his enemies that ironically they are the ones who enact judgment on themselves, confirming the ineptitude of human political power and military prowess" (Boda, 162-63).

v. 23 *On that day* "The day of the Lord (see Isa 2:11, 17, 20; 10:20, 27; Joel 1:15; Zec 2:11 and notes)" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Hag 2:23). "The expression [day of Yahweh or day of the LORD] occurs more than two hundred times in the Hb. Bible, often in an eschatological sense" (Taylor and Clendenen, 196) — "a favorite phrase in eschatological speech (cf. Isa. 2:11, 17, 20; 3:7, 18; Amos 8:3, 9; Hos. 2:18, 21, and many others" (Merrill, 56).

v. 23 *my servant* "In his use of the word 'servant' Haggai is invoking Davidic associations. His point is that Zerubbabel represents a restoration of the Davidic line of promise. As a result of this divine initiative, what was lost by the tragedy of the exile will in the future be regained in a manner that exceeds expectations" (Taylor and Clendenen, 197).

v. 23 *signet ring* I.e., "a piece of metal jewelry on which was etched an impression of the seal of the king. It symbolized his authority because of its use to authenticate legal documents and royal pronouncements (Est. 8:10; Ezek. 28:12; 1 Macc. 6:15) and by extension was regarded as a precious possession (Song 8:6)" (Boda, 164). "God had previously revealed that if Jehoiachin, Zerubbabel's grandfather, was His signet ring, He would take it off and give it to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 22:24-25). Thus it is clear that this figure of a signet ring views Zerubbabel as the descendant of David and Jehoiachin through whom God would restore the royal Davidic line and provide the victory promised in verses 21 and 22. He will do that, not through Zerubbabel personally, but through one of his descendants, namely, Jesus Christ (cf. Matt. 1:21)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Haggai," 2024 ed., 38-39, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/haggai.pdf).

v. 23 *chosen* "By calling Zerubbabel His 'servant' and 'chosen' one God gave him the same status David had enjoyed (cf. 2 Sam. 3:18; 6:21; 7:5, 8, 26; 1 Kings 8:16). The comparison to a 'signet ring' indicates a position of authority and reverses the judgment pronounced on Zerubbabel's grandfather Jehoiachin (cf. Jer. 22:24-30)" (Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., "A Theology of the Minor Prophets," in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, 422).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

One day the LORD will shake the heavens and the earth and will appoint a son of Zerubbabel and David, Jesus Christ, to rule over the nations in the kingdom of God.

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

My friend, Tammy, always says to me, “You don’t know what you don’t know.” In the early days of becoming a believer, there was a lot I didn’t know and the Bible seemed impossible to me. I would wonder who this Paul guy is and how do these people know where the book of Matthew is located when the pastor asks us to turn there. It’s hard trying to sneak a peek at the table of contents without anyone noticing. I’m a little more knowledgeable today than I was 27 years ago, but there are many times when biblical comprehension escapes me. Case in point, this week’s passage. What in the world?! Is he talking about after they build the temple, when the temple is destroyed or when Jesus returns? And why is God calling Zerubbabel a signet ring? And what does this have to do with anything? Where does it fit in the big story? When I get a little stumped, I always go back to what I do know. The Bible is God’s story of the redemption of His people through Jesus Christ. All parts of the Bible, even Zerubbabel, signet rings, and the heavens and earth shaking, point to Jesus. As primary disciples of our children, passages like this give us an opportunity to show them how we lean into the Lord. We can share with them our lack of understanding and what we do about it. We can pray for wisdom as a family and search the Word together. This is a teachable moment and the Spirit will guide you. We’re praying for you as you seek and serve the Lord.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Haggai 2:20-23

1. What does God say He will do?
2. Read Matthew 1. Notice any connection to Haggai (verse 13)?
3. What will the Lord make Zerubbabel like?

What Do You Think?

How does the book of Haggai connect the Old Testament and New Testament?

What Do You Do?

A signet ring is a symbol of binding authority. Use foil or other items around the house to make your own personal signet ring. How will you use it?

CORE COMPETENCY: Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is fully God, perfectly man, and died for my sins.

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.

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