

Haggai 2

Verse 1

On the twenty-first of the seventh month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

Chapter 1 ended on 6-24-520 BC as the people had just begun to work on the temple after a 15-year delay. The date is now 7-21-520BC, about one month later.

The 2nd Message

Verses 2 - 3

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, ³‘Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison?

Since the 3 deportations to Babylon took place in 605, 597, and 586 BC and it is now 520 BC it is fair to assume that not many of the people had seen the former temple. If a person was young, let's say 15, when they were deported then they would be 100, 90 or 81 years old at this point in time.

There is no doubt that the glory of Solomon's Temple greatly exceeded the one built during the time of Zerubbabel. About 50,000 exiles returned to Jerusalem in 539 BC so 20 years later in 520 BC, the population could have increased by 20%, making a new total of 60,000. Whereas during the time of Solomon the population of Israel had to be in the 4 to 5 million range.

See 2 Samuel 24:9

⁹ And Joab gave the number of the census of the people to the king: in Israel there were eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

Just the fighting men totaled 1.3 million so the total population had to be about 4 times that number, a total of 5.2 million.

A population of 5.2 million can support and produce a much more extravagant temple than a population of 60,000, plus David had personally saved a huge amount of money for the building of the temple.

Verse 4

⁴ But now take courage, Zerubbabel,' declares the Lord, 'take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,' declares the Lord, 'and work; for I am with you,' declares the Lord of armies.

Verse 5

⁵ 'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit remains in your midst; do not fear!

God had made a number of promises to Israel but the main promise was to be in their midst. So, when God said, "**My Spirit remains in your midst; do not fear**", He was letting the people of Judah know that God would be with them just as He was with their ancestors as they left Egypt.

We know Israel as a nation had been unfaithful to the Lord and that is why they were expelled from Canaan but God kept His promise to the faithful remnant. This remnant demonstrated their faith by making the decision to finish the temple as God has commanded them. Because of their faith God protected them and gave them success in their work.

Verses 6

⁶ For this is what the Lord of armies says: 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews has told us the correct interpretation of this verse.

See Hebrews 12:26 - 27

²⁶ And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven." ²⁷ This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

If one reads all of chapter 12, it is apparent that the previous shaking took place when God appeared to Moses and the people on Mt Sinai.

See Exodus 19:18

¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the entire mountain quaked violently.

Then the writer says that the next shaking will also affect the heavens and that all of the physical things in the universe will be removed. We know this will take place when Christ returns to judge all of the nations of the world. After that God will create a new heaven and a new earth, and this new creation will be “spiritual in nature”, not a new physical creation like He created in Genesis 1.

As to when this will take place The Lord says, “in a little while”. Here we can see the time frame from God’s perspective.

See 2 Peter 3:8

⁸ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

God is not concerned with time as mankind is but acts out of concern for all of the souls of mankind.

Verses 7 - 9

⁷ I will shake all the nations; and they will come *with* the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord of armies. ⁸ ‘The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,’ declares the Lord of armies. ⁹ ‘The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of armies, ‘and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the Lord of armies.”

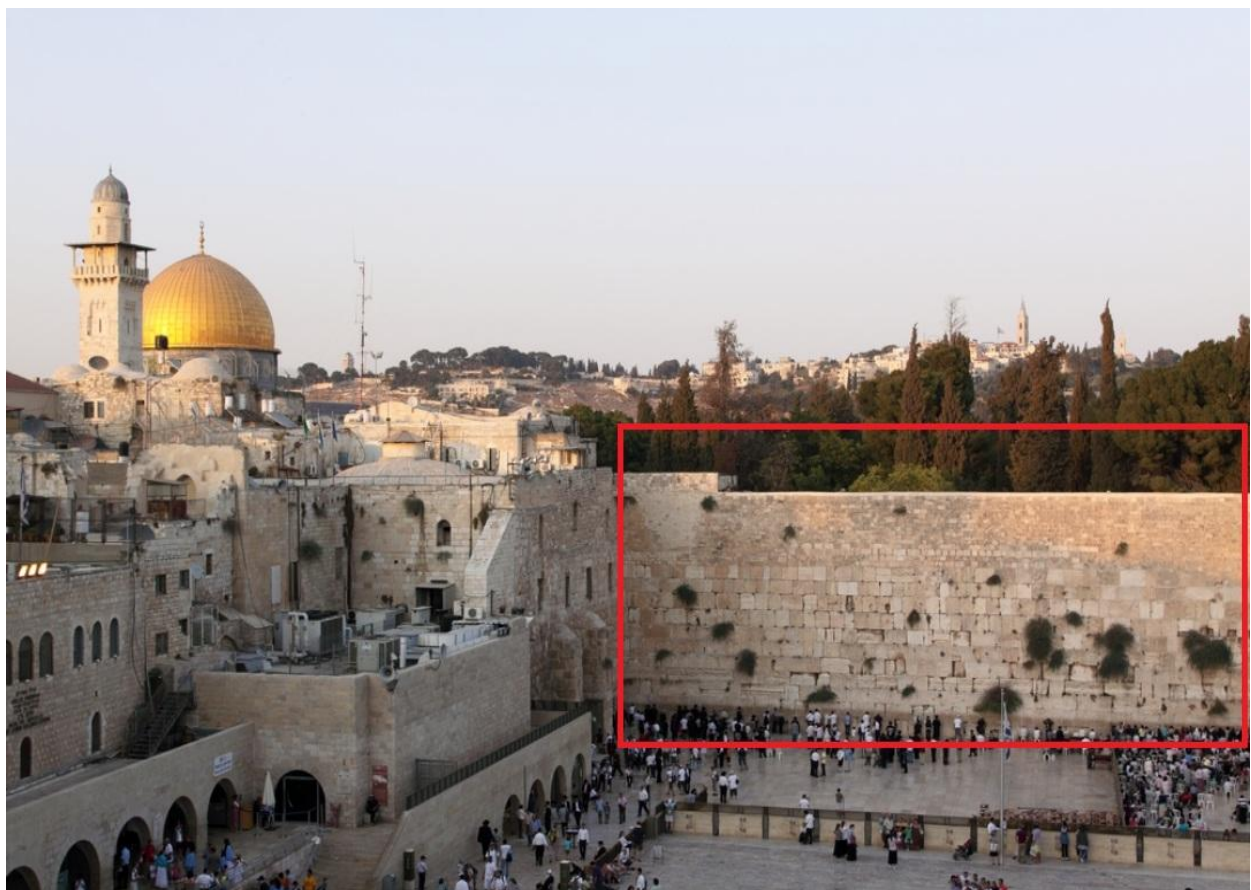
Having discussed the end times in verse 6, Micah now describes what will take place before the end of time comes. This part of the prophecy concerns the period of time between 520 BC, the time of this prophecy, and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. So, the question that needs to be answered is, when did the glory of this house exceed its former glory? There are two possibilities that appear to answer this question.

1. During the time of Herod the Great (37 BC – 4 BC), the vast resources of his kingdom were used to greatly expand and beautify the temple. Rebuilding the Temple began in 19 BC which was the 18th year of King Herod’s reign.

Herod completely dismantled the old temple structure and expanded the Temple Mount to twice its original size. He did this by setting massive white-stone blocks for the retaining walls and filling the interior. The Temple Mount was also made much taller, so that the white stone gleamed in the bright Palestinian sun and could be seen from miles away.

The new sanctuary was built with large, costly white stones, rather than recycling the modest materials of Zerubbabel's earlier structure and it was finished in 1 and 1/2 years. The king also greatly enlarged the Temple area and the work on the surrounding buildings and courts lasted for 78 years. Josephus said that before the time of Herod the Temple area was square, each side being a stadium but Herod enlarged the courts to six stadia. All around the Temple Mount beautiful marble porticos were constructed and a wall surrounded the whole area. A small portion of it remains to this day, and it is known as "The Wailing Wall."

See pic 205



Two large bridges connected the Temple with the city on the west. All this work took about eighty years to complete, from 16 BC to 63 AD. According to John 2:20, it had been 46 years at that point in time.

It could be argued that the new Temple built by Herod was a completely different temple from the one built by Zerubbabel. If you tear a building down to its bedrock and build something twice as high and five times as large, it is a new building. However, within Jewish literature, acknowledging a "Third Temple" was a theological impossibility because a true Third Temple was tied to the coming of the Messiah and the ultimate restoration of Israel—something Herod certainly did not represent. Therefore, they mentally separated the physical stones (which were entirely new) from the institutional identity (which remained old).

Because Herod's structure was viewed as the *Second* Temple, it means that at the first coming of Christ, no physical "Third Temple" was built. However, the early church saw the church as the third temple.

See 2 Corinthians 6:16

¹⁶ Or what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said,

**“I will dwell among them and walk among them;
And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**

¹⁷ Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord.

**“And do not touch what is unclean;
And I will welcome you.**

**¹⁸ And I will be a father to you,
And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,”
Says the Lord Almighty.**

Therefore, some scholars believe that this prophesy was fulfilled by the church, the true temple of God. However, verse 9 says, “The **latter glory** of this house will be greater than **the former**”. If we assume “this house” means the temple built by Zerubbabel, then the comparison must be made between the latter days and the earlier days of that temple, not between Zerubbabel's temple and the church. If that is the case, then the “latter glory” must refer to Herod's temple.

When Paul said that the church is the temple of God, we know what he said is true but that doesn't mean that the prophesy in verses 7 thru 9 was meant to foretell that truth. Rather, God was letting the people of Judah know that the current state of the temple, which was meager in comparison to Solomon's temple, would not be the final state of this (Zerubbabel's) temple. In time it would have a greater glory and this is exactly what happened during the reign of Herod the Great. In fact, it became greater than the temple that Solomon built.

Verse 10

¹⁰ On the twenty-fourth of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Haggai the prophet, saying,

The 2nd message came on 7-21-520 BC and this 3rd message came on 9-24-520 BC. About 2 months later.

The 3rd Message

Verses 11-14

¹¹ “The Lord of armies says this: ‘Now ask the priests *for* a ruling: ¹² If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and touches bread with this fold, or *touches* cooked food, wine, oil, or any *other* food, will it become holy?’” And the priests answered, “No.” ¹³ Then Haggai said, “If one who is unclean from a corpse touches any of these *things*, will *the latter* become unclean?” And the priests answered, “It will become unclean.” ¹⁴ Then Haggai responded 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 what they offer there is unclean.”

In verse 12 God told Haggai to ask the priests the following. “If a person carries consecrated (holy) meat in the fold of their garment and that fold touches everyday food (like bread, wine, or oil), does the food become holy? The priests answer, “No”. The point being that Holiness is not transferable. Simply being in contact with something holy does not make an object holy.

Then in verse 13 Haggai asked the priests if someone ceremonially unclean touches those same items, will they become defiled. The priests answered yes. The lesson here being that uncleanness is transferable.

Those who had returned to Jerusalem were still offering sacrifices to God but because of their uncleanness (unwillingness to complete the temple) their offerings were seen as unclean. Therefore, God could not bless them as He wanted to.

Verses 15 - 17

¹⁵ But now, do consider from this day onward: before one stone was placed on another in the temple of the Lord, ¹⁶ from that time *when* one came to a grain heap of twenty measures, there would be only ten; and *when* one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there would be only twenty. ¹⁷ I struck you and every work of your hands with scorching wind, mildew, and hail; yet you did not come back to Me.’ declares the Lord.

Haggai explains that this is why the people have not been blessed in recent years. Yes, they were initially forced to stop the work on the temple but at some point, they should have come to God about this issue so that He might open a door of opportunity for them to restart the work. Instead, they forgot about the temple and God was not pleased with their sacrifices so He withheld His blessings so they might see the error of their ways. When this did not work, He sent a prophet to confront them of their sin.

Verses 18 - 19

¹⁸ **‘Do consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month; from the day when the temple of the Lord was founded, consider: ¹⁹ Is the seed still in the barn? Even including the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree, it has not produced fruit. Yet from this day on I will bless you.’”**

Even though God had withheld His blessings in the recent past, yet from this very day, shortly after they had restarted the work on the temple, God promised to bless them.

Verse 20

²⁰ **Then the word of the Lord came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying,**

The 3rd message came on 9-24-520 BC and this 4th message came later on the same day.

The 4th Message

Verse 21 - 23

²¹ **“Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, ‘I am going to shake the heavens and the earth.’ ²² And I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and the horses and their riders will go down, every one by the sword of another.’**

This same prophesy was delivered in verse 6 of this chapter on 7-21-520 BC. So why is it being repeated again just two months later? The first time this prophesy was delivered, God directed this message of encouragement to all of the Jewish people but in this second iteration it was spoken to Zerubbabel alone. The next verse explains why this message was directed to him alone.

Verse 23

²³ **‘On that day,’ declares the Lord of armies, ‘I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, My servant,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you,’** declares the Lord of armies.

To understand the significance of Zerubbabel being made like a signet ring, it is important to know his family line.

See Matthew 1:10 - 11

¹⁰ Hezekiah fathered Manasseh, Manasseh fathered Amon, and Amon fathered Josiah. ¹¹ Josiah fathered Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. ¹² After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah fathered Shealtiel, and Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel.

King Josiah had 3 sons and a grandson who reigned as kings in Judah, and these men were the last 4 kings of Israel.

15. Josiah

16. Jehoahaz – also known as Shallum was the 4th son of Josiah

17. Jehoiakim – the 2nd son of Josiah

18. Jehoiachin - also known as Jeconiah and Coniah – was a son of Jehoiakim

19. Zedekiah – the 3rd son of Josiah

Matthew uses "father" to mean an ancestor in the case of Jeconiah because we know that Jeconiah was the son of Jehoiakin.

See 1 Chronicles 3:15 – 16

¹⁵ The sons of Josiah were Johanan, the firstborn, the second was Jehoiakim, the third, Zedekiah, and the fourth, Shallum. ¹⁶ The sons of Jehoiakim were his son Jeconiah and his son Zedekiah.

Zerubbabel was a grandson of Israelite royalty but he was not a king of Judah. His grandfather was King Jehoiachin (Coniah), whom God had dramatically rejected.

See Jeremiah 22:24

²⁴ **“As I live,” declares the Lord, “even if Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet ring on My right hand, yet I would pull you off;**

By telling Zerubbabel, who was the governor and legal heir to the royal line, that He would make him "like a signet ring," God was letting Zerubbabel know that He was reversing the generational shame of his grandfather, signaling that the royal line of David was not abandoned. This promise would not be fulfilled until the time of Christ but it was a matter of great comfort to Zedekiah and to any Jew that read the book of Haggai.