

Pilgrim Way Commentary on Haggai

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Apology for This Work

This commentary on the prophecy of Haggai follows in a long line of other works by divines of the past as they have sought to study and expound this book.

This work grew out of over 35 years of both preaching through Haggai in three pastorates in Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina as well as teaching through the epistle as an instructor at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland. I needed my own notes and outlines as I taught and preached from Haggai, so this commentary flows from those notes and outlines. Thus, the layout of this commentary is a practical one, written by a preacher to be preached from in the pulpit or to be taught in a Sunday School. I patterned the format after the format used by August Van Ryn and Thomas Robinson, in their commentaries on Luke and Romans respectively. They did not write full-blown prose commentaries but short thoughts that were designed to stimulate thought in the reader rather than spoon-feeding him. In this book, my thoughts are deliberately short and sometimes, full sentences are not used. These are more thoughts and observations than a full commentary.

This commentary cannot be easily classified into any single theological system. I believe that no single theological system is an accurate presentation of Scriptural truth in and of itself. When Charles Spurgeon wrote "There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else", he displayed a most unfortunate theological hubris. Calvinism is a flawed, limited and uninspired theological system. There is some truth there, as there is in any theological system, but it ranks no better than other competing systems, such as Arminianism (which is nothing more than a modified version of Calvin's teachings), dispensationalism, covenant theology, Lutheranism, Romanism, Orthodox theology, pre-wrath rapture, take your pick. All these systems are flawed as they are all the products of human attempts to understand and systematize Biblical presentations. They can all make contributions to our overall understanding of the truth but none may claim to be the only correct such presentation, at the expense of all others. Knowing the human impossibility for absolute neutrality and the human love for theological systems, I readily admit that I cannot be as dispassionate and uninfluenced by human teachings in these pages as I would like. No man can be. But I have made every attempt not to allow my own personal systems to influence my understanding of what the clear teachings of Scripture is.

I have freely consulted a wide variety of commentaries and sermons for insights and other views of various texts that I might have missed. As the old preacher once remarked "I milked a lot of cows but I churned my own butter." Direct quotes are attributed to their proper source to prevent that unpardonable sin of literary theft. But simply because I quoted a writer should not be viewed as an endorsement of all that he wrote or of his theological system. I selected the quote because I found it interesting and useful, not because I am in any degree of agreement regarding the rest of his teachings.

This commentary is based on the text of our English Received Version, commonly referred to as the King James Version or the Authorized Version. I believe that this is the most preserved English translation available to us and that it is the superior translation in English. I can see no good reason to use or accept any of the modern versions, especially the current "flavor of the month" of the New Evangelicals and apostate fundamentalists, the corrupt and mis-named English Standard Version. When it comes to these modern, critical text versions, I reject them

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for a variety of reasons. One major reason is that they have not been proven on the field of battle. I have liver spots older than the English Standard Version, but I am expected to toss my English Received Text, over 400 years old, and take up this new translation, whose ink is still barely dry? How many battles has the ESV won? How many missionaries have done great exploits with an NIV? What revivals have been birthed and nurtured with an NASB? We will stick with the translations and texts that our fathers have used, and that God has blessed. We are also favorably inclined to the Geneva Bible, Tyndale Bible, Matthews Bible, and other "cousins" of our standard English text. The Greek text used is the underlying text of our English Received Text and its 1769 revision, which is the text most widely in use today by God's remnant.

I have also decided to do some textual studies, mainly comparing the King James readings with the English Standard Version and Legacy Standard Version. I also refer to the readings in the English translations that preceded the King James Bible for sake of comparison and to examine how the English Received Text readings developed from the Tyndale Bible, through the Coverdale Bible, the Geneva Bible and the Bishops Bible.

The presupposition of this commentary is that what the Bible says is so and that we will not change the text to suit our theological fancy. It says what it says and that is what we must accept, else we will be found unfaithful stewards of the Word of God, a judgment we fear. We will not amend our text but will take it as it is the best we can.

This commentary certainly is not perfect, nor is it the final presentation of my understanding and application of the book of Haggai. A commentary over 35 years in the making can never truly said to be finished. As new insights are granted by the Holy Spirit and as my understanding of the epistle deepens, additional material will be added, and sections will have to be re-written. One is never truly "finished" with any theological book. As one deepens and grows in his relationship with the Lord, so does his theological understandings and that should be reflected in one's writings.

This book was also written as a theological legacy to my four children. They will need to be mighty for God in their generation for their days will certainly be darker than the generation their father grew up in. This book is an expression not only of the heart of a preacher in the early 21st century but also of a Christian father for his children, so they may more fully understand what their father believed and preached during his ministry.

It is my sincere prayer that this unpretentious contribution to the body of Christian commentary literature will be a blessing to the remnant of God's saints in the earth as we approach the coming of our Lord.

Introduction to Haggai

TITLE AND WRITER

The title of this book is also the name of its writer. Haggai referred to himself as simply "the prophet Haggai" (1:1; et al.) We know nothing about Haggai's parents, ancestors, or tribe. His name apparently means "festal" or possibly "feast of Jehovah." It is a form of the Hebrew word *hag*, meaning "feast." This has led some to speculate that Haggai's birth may have occurred during one of Israel's feasts. Ezra mentioned that through the prophetic ministries of Haggai and Zechariah the returned Jewish exiles resumed and completed the restoration of their temple.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Babylonians, led by Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and took most of the Jews captive to Babylon. There the Israelites could not practice their formal worship as the Mosaic Law prescribed because they lacked an authorized altar and temple. They prayed toward Jerusalem privately (cf. Daniel 6:10) and probably publicly, and they established synagogues where they assembled to hear their Law read and to worship God informally.

King Cyrus of Persia allowed the Jewish exiles to return to their land in 538 B.C. At least three waves of returnees took advantage of this opportunity, but many did not. They may have taken Jeremiah's advice to settle in for a 70-year exile in Babylon literally. They got so comfortable in Babylon that when the 70 years expired, many of the exiles did not want to return to Israel. They may have been seduced by the society, culture and economic seductions of Babylon. But a remnant did return. The first of returnees was the group of almost 50,000 Jews that returned under the leadership of Sheshbazzar, and Zerubbabel who replaced him, in 537 B.C. (Ezra 1:2-4). Haggai and Zechariah appear to have been two of these returnees, as was Joshua the high priest, though Haggai's name does not appear in the lists of returnees in the opening chapters of Ezra. During the year that followed, these returnees rebuilt the brazen altar in Jerusalem, resumed offering sacrifices on it, celebrated the feast of Tabernacles, and laid the foundation for the reconstruction of the (second) temple. Opposition to the rebuilding of the temple by the transplanted residents of the land resulted in the postponement of construction for 16 years. Cyrus had lost interest in the rebuilding project, and nothing was done for the remainder of his life. During this period, apathy toward temple reconstruction set in among the residents of Judah and Jerusalem. Unable to work on the temple, the residents concentrated on rebuilding their houses.

In 520 B.C., as a result of changes in the Persian government under Darius and the preaching of Haggai, the people resumed rebuilding the temple. They finished the project about five years later in 515 B.C. (Ezra 1-6). Haggai first sounded the call to resume construction, and Zechariah soon joined him.

DATE

Haggai delivered four messages and he dated all of them in the second year of King Darius I (Hystaspes) of Persia (i.e., 520 B.C.). His ministry, as this book records it, spanned less than four months, from the first day of the sixth month (1:1) to the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month (2:20). In the modern calendar this would have been between August 29 and December 18, 520 B.C. Haggai was a post-exilic prophet. This prophecy marks the division in the "Minor Prophets" between the pre-exilic and post-exilic prophets.

PLACE OF COMPOSITION

Haggai preached and wrote in Jerusalem.

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

Haggai was as specific about his audience as he was about when he prophesied. The first message was for Zerubbabel and Joshua, the Jewish governor of Judah and its high priest (1:1). The prophet delivered the second one to those men and the remnant of the people (2:1). The third oracle was for the priests (2:11), and the fourth one was for Zerubbabel (2:21).

Haggai's purpose was to motivate the Jews to build the temple. To do this he also fulfilled a secondary purpose: he confronted the people with their misplaced priorities. They were building their own houses but had neglected God's house. It was important to finish building the temple because only then could the people fully resume Levitical worship. They had

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gone into captivity for covenant unfaithfulness. Thus, they needed to return to full obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. Furthermore, in the ancient Near East the glory of a nation's temple(s) reflected the glory of the people's god(s). So to finish the temple meant to glorify Jehovah.

OBSERVATIONS

Haggai is the second shortest book of the Old Testament, after Obadiah. His writing style is simple and direct. The book is a mixture of prose and poetry, the introductory sections being prose and the prophecies poetry. The book contains four short messages that Haggai preached to the returned Jews in less than four months of one year, 520 B.C. Haggai was clearly aware that the messages he preached to the Israelites were from God. He affirmed their divine authority 25 times. In contrast to almost all the writing prophets, Haggai was successful in that the people to whom he preached listened to him and obeyed his exhortations.

The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah are related. In Ezra, we get the temple built and worship restored; in Nehemiah, the restoration of the city; Haggai opens out the secret of the hindrances to the work; in Zechariah we have truth presented by which God strengthened the hearts of the remnant.

Haggai has 2 chapters, 38 verses and 1,130 in our English text.

Outline: from John Phillips, *Exploring the Minor Prophets*, pages 243-244

- I. Call to Build (1:1-15)
 - A. Background (1:1-2)
 1. The Period (1:1a)
 2. The Prophet (1:1b)
 3. The Problem (1:2)
 - B. Burden (1:3-11)
 1. Its Context (1:3-4)
 2. Its Content (1:5-11)
 - a. Jews' Condition Exposed (1:5-6)
 - b. Jews' Condition Explained (1:7-11)
 1. The Cause (1:7-9)
 2. The Consequences (1:10-11)
 - C. Blessing (1:12-15)
 1. The Response (1:12)
 2. The Reassurance (1:13)
 3. The Revival (1:14-15)
 - a. Truth (1:14)
 - b. Time (1:15)
- II. The Call to Behold (2:1-9)
 - A. Present (2:1-3)
 1. A Special People (2:1)
 2. A Struggling People (2:2)
 3. A Sorrowing People (2:3)
 - B. Past (2:4-5)
 1. An Application of Covenant Position (2:4)
 - a. Be Strong (2:4a)
 - b. Be Sure (2:4b)
 2. An Appeal to Covenant Principle (2:5)

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- C. Prospect (2:6-9)
 - 1. The Lord and His Power (2:6-7a)
 - a. Shaking All Nature (2:6)
 - b. Shaking All Nations (2:7a)
 - 2. The Lord and His Presence (2:7b-c)
 - a. In Grace (2:7b)
 - b. In Glory (2:7c)
 - 3. The Lord and His Possessions (2:8)
 - 4. The Lord and His Peace (2:9)
- III. The Call to Behave (2:10-19)
 - A. Blessing That Was Wanted (2:10-14)
 - 1. The Principle of the Law (2:10-13)
 - a. Virtue Cannot Be Caught (2:10-12)
 - b. Vileness Cannot Be Contained (2:13)
 - 2. The People of the Lord (2:14)
 - a. Unclean in Their Souls (2:14a)
 - b. Unclean in Their Sacrifices (2:14b)
 - B. Blessing That Was Withheld (2:15-17)
 - 1. The Neglected House (2:15)
 - 2. The Niggardly Harvests (2:16-17a)
 - 3. The Negligent Heart (2:17b)
 - C. Blessing That Was Waiting (2:18-19)
 - 1. The Ground of Blessing (2:18)
 - 2. The Greatness of Blessing (2:19)
- IV. The Call to Believe (2:20-23)
 - A. Will Manifest His Power (2:20-22)
 - 1. By Shaking the Elements (2:20-21)
 - 2. By Shattering the Enemy (2:22)
 - B. Will Magnify His Prince (2:23)

Booklist on Haggai

- \$ From the author, John Cereghin,
- # Rosscup, James, "Old Testament Commentaries for Bible Expositors, 1987-1992", *The Master's Journal*
- @ Spurgeon, Charles, *Commenting and Commentaries*
- % *Biblical Viewpoint*, Bob Jones University

% Alden, Robert, "Haggai" in volume 7 of the Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank Gaebelin, 1985, 23 pages. Based on the NIV. Has a brief but helpful introduction and bibliography. Comments are concise due to the constraints on space within the commentary set. On the positive side, the commentary discusses only the major aspects of the text. On the negative side is the lack of exegetical depth in the comments. This is not to imply that the work lacks good exegesis, for comments on the text are very helpful. Knowledge of Hebrew is required only for the "Notes" section, which often contains valuable textual information. Sees one of Haggai's objectives to remind the people of their unique status as a theocracy that represented God on earth (573). Identifies Haggai's one theme as "rebuilding God's temple" (573). Observes that repetition is the most characteristic style. Notes that 2:6 is the only verse in Haggai quoted in the New Testament and that the writer of Hebrews quoted it freely and

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made some interpretive comments (586). Says that the KJV's translation of 2:7 is "beautifully messianic" but most modern translations don't support it (586). Concludes that although there are problems "a messianic view...should not be wholly dismissed" (586). Notes that the NIV left it open for interpretation. Says that the promise to Zerubbabel must be understood Messianically "for the Persians simply would not tolerate a man laying claim to the promises here stated (591)." Gives a helpful synopsis of the signet ring (591).

% Achtemeiei, Elizabeth, *Nahum-Malachi*, 1986, 13 pages for Haggai. Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version. Gives a helpful chart of the historical context of the post-exilic prophets (90-91). Notes that Haggai's message is in strict chronological order and identifies the exact day and month in which the five distinct sections of the book were given (94). Claims that Haggai's place in the canon is difficult in that the church does not know quite what to do with it. Says "he reeks of something that smells very much like the external and superficial religion of which we would all like to be rid" (95). Comments do not deal with specific issues of the text; rather, the discussions tend to be over larger issues of interpretation. Claims that the message of the canon and Haggai particularly is "that the Lord of Hosts is not everywhere and at all times available to human beings" (96). Sympathizes with the Jews who had "no stomach for construction work," seeing that their leaders had "paneled houses" and most Judeans were "desperately poor" (98). Recognizes the symbolic significance of Zerubbabel as the "holder of the Davidic office" with ultimate Messianic fulfillment (105). Expresses typical critical views throughout.

% Austel, Hermann, "Haggai" in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Walter Elwell, 1989, 5 pages. Comments are divided according to sections of text, are summary in nature, but do provide significant interpretation and historic details. Identifies some of the key truths learned from Haggai: 1) God and His work must take first place in the life of his people, 2) putting personal or selfish interests ahead of God is self-defeating, 3) God showers his blessings on those who put His interests before their own, 4) The value or significance of a man's work is not to be estimated by comparing it to the work of others, but by the measure of its conformity to God's will and purpose (682). Sees grammatical and contextual problems with the Messianic interpretation of 2:7 (685). Recognizes Messianic implications in the closing prophecy to Zerubbabel (685f).

% Ackroyd, P. R., "Haggai," in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Matthew Black, 1962, 3 pages. Comments only on parts of the text and does some helpful summarizing Refers to 2:5a as a gloss (644) and suggests removing part of 2:22 (645).

% Baldwin, Joice, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, ed. D. J. Wiseman, 1988, 29 pages for Haggai. In addition to specific comments on each book, has a survey of the entire period of the post-exilic prophets and theological overview of the significance of the temple and Messianic hope Has a chart relating the dates of Haggai's messages to the modern calendar (29). Explains the technique of the RSV for distinguishing between Haggai's sermons and "the editorial framework in which they are set" (29). Claims that someone other than Haggai put the book together (30). Notes that the free use of the "messenger formula" is a chief characteristic of Haggai's style (31). Says that although God's kingdom is the "ultimate goal of history," Haggai saw it beginning in his day and obedience would bring the people to experience "in a small measure 'realized eschatology'" (33). Has a helpful discussion on the title "Lord of Hosts" (44f). Concerning 2:7 says the "familiar translation with its Messianic expectations has rightly been abandoned in the more recent translations"

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(48). Suggests that it was only as time passed and Zerubbabel was not honored, that the “Messianic hopes were transferred to his descendants” (54). A verse-by-verse commentary, including many cross-references and helpful explanations of Hebrew expressions.

% Barnes, W. Emery *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*. The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, 1934, 20 pages for Haggai. Comments are brief, verse by verse, usually focusing on an individual word or phrase in the verse. Refers to the Hebrew text and ancient versions Offers a thorough explanation of the title Lord of Hosts, that is so common in post-exilic prophets. Concludes that the name is appropriate for these books that “teach that God’s good providence bends the nations to do His good will for Judah” (p 4). Interprets 2:7 to refer to those nations that the Lord desires or chooses (pp 12f). Notes that the versions are typically “unsuccessful in dealing with this passage” (p 13) Says the shaking in 2:21 refers to upheavals in the Persian empire at the time of Darius (p. 19) Says that “my servant” in 2:23 is perhaps “quasi- Messianic” (p. 19)

% Bewer, Julius A., “Haggai,” in *The Prophets*, Harper’s Annotated Bible, 1955, 5 pages. The text of the AV with a brief introduction and critical notes. Although brief, reflects critical positions throughout. Notes places where the Hebrew text is uncertain and suggests alternative translations to the AV. Claims that the book was edited because Haggai is always referred to in the third person (567). Says that Haggai regarded the temple not “merely” as the symbol of God’s presence, but the guarantee of it (567). Suggests that 2:6ff. refer to “political upheavals accompanied by earthquakes” (570). Claims that the closing prophecy concerning Zerubbabel was never fulfilled and what became of him is unknown (571).

% Boice, James, *The Minor Prophets*, 2 volumes, 1983, 16 pages. Comments are general, non-technical, sermonic and devotional. Offers a brief overview of the historic period. Identifies the key passage of the book to be “give careful thought to your ways”. Rejects the Messianic interpretation of the “desire of all nations, notwithstanding Handel’s Messiah (149). Rather he interprets to mean the chosen from every nation that “will increase the glory of the true temple, which is the church” (150).

% Brown, William P., *Obadiah through Malachi*. Westminster Bible Companion, ed. Patrick D. Millet and David L Bartlett, 1996, 11 pages for Haggai. After a short introduction, brief, non-technical summaries of the book’s six sections, quoting the NRSV. Intended for the laity. Follows the common critical position of dividing 1:15 (126)

% Calvin, John, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, 5 volumes, 74 pages for Haggai. Exhaustive comments cover sections of varying lengths. Includes interpretations of text, discussions of theology, relevant applications, and corrections of erroneous interpretations, usually associated with Rome. Each section ends with a prayer. Offers a brief synopsis of Haggai’s message, noting that he condemned the “sloth of the people” (316). Suggests that sloth in the church is even more grievous since we are a spiritual temple (326). The shaking of the heaven and earth ultimately refers to God’s “ineffable power” in restoring His Church (357). Has a relatively brief discussion of the desire of nations, concluding that the context seems to point to Gentile riches that will be brought in (360). Applies the prophecy concerning Zerubbabel to Christ (384-388).

% Carstensen, Roger, N., “The Book of Haggai,” in *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymon, 1971, 3 pages. Basically, this is merely a brief summary

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of the messages of the prophet, without much real help on interpretation problems, but with a few useful cross-references.

% Cashdan, Eli, "Haggai," in *The Twelve Prophets* Soncino Books of the Bible, ed. A. Cohen, 1948, 12 pages. Gives both the Hebrew and English texts; comments are verse by verse, brief, but with significant details. Reflects traditional Jewish interpretations. Says that the Talmud declares the departure of the Holy Spirit from Israel after the death of the three post-exilic prophets (254). Notes that Haggai was the inspiring cause of the new temple: "No Haggai—no Temple" (254). Interprets 2:6ff. to refer to the political shakings associated with the fall of Persia: there would be "the enrichment of the House of God by offerings and costly gifts from all peoples" (260). Interprets the greater glory of the second temple to refer to its longer duration than Solomon's (261). Sees the promise to Zerubbabel as a reversal of the woes against Jehoiachin who had sincerely repented (264).

% Chishoim, Robert B., *Interpreting the Minor Prophets*, 1990, 11 pages for Haggai. Argues for and illustrates the thematic progression and parallelism of the book (220). Comments are over large sections of text and includes an analysis of the book's theology. Notes the frequent parallels to Deuteronomy by which the prophet made clear to the post-exilic community that they were under the same "covenant demands" as their forefathers (221). Rejects the Messianic interpretation of 2:7 and suggests that the exceeding glory of the temple points ultimately to a millennial temple, "which should be viewed as an extension of, and not as distinct from, the second temple" (224). Claims that Zerubbabel was the Davidic representative and therefore the promises to him pointed to Messiah and had ultimate eschatological significance (227). Says that the message of Haggai "testifies to God's sovereignty over His world" (228).

% Coad, F. Roy, "Haggai," in *The International Bible Commentary*, ed. F. F. Bruce, 1986, 5 pages. Begins by comparing Haggai to Paul's letter to Philemon (959). Provides brief summaries of each section with helpful following notes on any difficulties. Understands 2:7 as Messianic, though admits that Haggai's hearers would not have understood (961).

% Cody, Aelred, "Haggai," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy, 1990, 3 pages. Introduction speaks of an editor who provided a framework and added some comments to the prophet's messages (350). Interprets 2:7 as a reference to treasures, not the Messiah (p 351).

§ A liberal Roman Catholic commentary.

Coggins, Richard L. *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*. Old Testament Guides, 1987. 90 pages. This work offers brief assistance on critical issues, historical matters, and exegesis. Coggins is not a particularly interesting writer, but he offers quite a bit of expertise that can be helpful as one reads and discerns carefully in choosing what is usable and bypassing the rest.

% Deane, W. J., *Haggai*. In *The Pulpit Commentary*, ed. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, n.d., 50 pages. Begins with general comments on matters of introduction. Claims that the theme of rebuilding the temple was so important because so long as the temple was in ruins the covenant was in suspension (iv). Says that the language of the prophet is "tame and featureless, indulging in unnecessary repetitions, and rarely rising above the level of ordinary prose" (v). He discusses difficulties of interpretation, usually transliterating the Hebrew, but sometimes using the Hebrew script. Comments tend to be brief with the exposition sections interrupted by homiletical suggestions by different authors. Sees the shaking of 2:6 to involve

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imagery from Sinai that will occur under “the Messianic dispensation” (20). Recognizes and discusses the difficulties in interpreting the desire of nations to be Christ (20f). Identifies Christ as the “true Zerubbabel the Son and Antitype of Zerubbabel” (24).

% Deere, Deiwood. *The Twelve Speak*. 2 volumes, 1958, 8 pages for Haggai. Gives a translation of the text with footnotes. The comments are brief and seldom offer substantial help. Some references to the Hebrew text and ancient versions. Says the shaking of nations implies divine judgment and the “desire of nations” refers to “costly treasures” that will beautify the temple (63). Concludes by remarking that Haggai kept the Messianic hope alive in Israel “during a dark hour of her checkered history” (65).

% Dods, Marcus, *The Post-Exilic Prophets; Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*. Reprint, 1956, 23 pages for Haggai. The book begins with a lengthy discussion of the prophetic office, including the function of the prophet and the uses of the prophetic message. Specific comments are brief, but verse by verse. Interprets 2:7 to be defined both by context and the meaning of the words to refer to “wealth, glory, natural characteristics and special gifts and aptitudes” (53). Does not even acknowledge the traditional Messianic interpretation. Helpful synopsis of the title “Lord of Hosts” (57f.). Concerning the statement that God chose Zerubbabel, notes that “election by God is at the root of all the promised prosperity. Chosen for what?” (57).

% Driver, S. R., “Haggai,” in *The Minor Prophets*. The Century Bible. n.d., 26 pages. Comments involve notes on the Revised Version; comments are brief, usually focusing on a word or phrase. Has a lengthy introduction reviewing the history of the period and offers a synopsis of the content of the major sections. Says that Haggai “lacks the imagination and poetical power possessed by the prophets generally,” but “he possesses all the feeling and spirit of a prophet” (153). Claims, “that Haggai connected the advent of the Messianic age with Zerubbabel is an instance of the inevitable limitations of prophecy” (159). Sees Zerubbabel as a type of Christ (169).

% Dunning, H. Ray, “The Book of Haggai,” in volume 5 of *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 1966, 15 pages. Divides the book into four sections and comments on groups of verses, with special attention on key words (like “signet” in 2:23) or phrases. Rejects the Messianic interpretation for 2:7 (329).

% Edgar, S. L., *The Minor Prophets (Excluding Amos, Hosea, and Micah)*, Epworth Preacher’s Commentaries 1962, 12 pages for Haggai. Suggests that Haggai put too much emphasis on the physical temple, making little of spiritual religion in so doing. Haggai had a different attitude from that of either Deutero-Isaiah or Jeremiah (47). Comments are general over sections of text. Makes frequent parallels to New Testament teaching. Says that the reference to the Exodus in 2:5 is “best regarded as an intrusion; it is not included in the Greek” (51). Is not opposed to the sentiment of seeing Christ as the desire of nations but claims the text does not support the interpretation (52f). Makes some significant application to 2:13ff. Notes that contact with holy things or people is not sufficient; each must have “his own personal knowledge of Him as Savior and Lord” (54). Notes that the signet ring is a symbol of authority (56).

% Fausset, A. R. *Jeremiah-Malachi*, Volume 4 of *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, 9 pages for Haggai. No introduction to the book. Verse by verse comments on the KJV, dealing with some Hebrew

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words. Provides considerable detail in his comments on 2:6 and 2:7. Concludes each chapter with a number of observations practical in nature.

% Feinberg, Charles L., "Haggai," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, ed. Charles P. Pfeiffer and Everett F Harrison, 1962, 8 pages. Comments are general, but often instructive. Says that it is unfair to limit Haggai's message to matters of building without recognizing his message of Christ and establishing of the earthly kingdom (889). Applies 1:6 (bag with holes) to any materialistic society who forgets God (890). Claims that 2:6-9 is a promise of future glory and is distinctively Messianic (892). Notes that Haggai blends together aspects of the first and second advents (892). Gives a helpful summary of the difficulty of the desire of nations and concludes that "a reference to the Messiah is not automatically ruled out on the basis of language considerations (893). Says that the promise to Zerubbabel was not uniquely personal, but applied to his office and his line that the Davidic promise would be fulfilled (895).

% Feinberg, Charles, L., *The Minor Prophets*, 1951, 12 pages for Haggai. This work is difficult to use because there are no verse divisions. The only way to find one's location in the commentary is to read until Feinberg makes a reference to where he is in the text. The text is treated in a general way. This commentary's value lies in giving the expositor a broad overview of Haggai. The author is dispensational. Refers to the Babylonian Talmud as identifying five things missing from the second temple that were present in Solomon's: the ark, the holy fire, the shekinah glory, the Holy Spirit, and the Urim and Thummim (240). Feinberg maintains that 2:6ff are "distinctly Messianic" blending both advents (243). Sees the ultimate shaking of nations to be when Christ's kingdom is "realized upon earth" (244). Defends the Messianic interpretation of 2:7, claiming both traditional Christian and Jewish support. He says, "the desire of all nations can only refer to the longing of all nations for the Deliverer, whether they realize it or not" (244). Suggests that the greater latter glory has reference to the millennial temple, that he says is described in Ezekiel 40-48 (245). Sees the battle of Armageddon in the closing message to Zerubbabel (247).

% Gailey, James H, Jr., *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah,, Malachi*, *The Layman's Bible Commentary*, 1962, 9 pages for Haggai. Comments are on groups of verses, mainly summarizing. Suggests that the book was composed by someone who remembered both the prophet's messages and the setting in which he gave them (85). Says the shaking of the heavens and earth once again reflects on the previous shaking at the time of the Exodus and that the effect of this shaking will be the bringing in of the treasures of the nations (90f). Says that whatever Haggai's expectation was concerning Zerubbabel, "his language sketches vividly the circumstances of divine intervention" similar to the Day of the Lord language (93).

% Gill, John, "Haggai," in vol.6 of *Gill's Expositor*, 1810; reprinted 1979, 12 pages. Brief introduction that discounts the angel theory for 1:13 (664). Valuable for interpretations from Rabbinic sources like Kimchi and Aben Ezra. Follows the Messianic interpretation for 2:7 (671f.)

@ Grynaeus, John James, *Haggeus, the Prophet; a most plentiful Commentary, gathered out of the Publique Lectures of Dr. J. J. Grynæus*, 1586. Grynaeus was a voluminous author, and commented on most of the books of Scripture, but only this work has been turned into English, and it is now seldom met with.

% Hailey, Homer, *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets* 1972, 19 pages for Haggai. Includes a

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helpful introduction and detailed outline before brief, non-technical comments verse by verse. Understands the reference to the Spirit of God in 2:5 as an allusion to the filling of Moses, the elders, and Joshua (309). Objects to the Messianic interpretation of 2:7 with three arguments (310).

% Henderson, Ebenezer, *The Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets*; 1866, 14 pages for Haggai. Presents his translation at the top of the page followed by comments verse by verse, dealing with issues of the Hebrew text, ancient versional evidence, and textual critical matters. Includes many references to Arabic. Suggests that what is written is only a summary of the "original discourses" (340). Says that the shaking of 2:6ff must be confined to the period before Christ's coming (347). Notes that there are "insuperable" objections to the Messianic interpretation of the desire of nations (348). Claims that the closing prophecy is uniquely fulfilled in Zerubbabel (352).

% Henry, Matthew, "Haggai," in volume 4 of *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, n.d., 13 pages. Briefly summarizes each chapter and then comments on sections of verses, explaining phrases and providing some helpful devotional comments. Says that 2:5b refers to "the Spirit of prophecy" (1395). Interprets 2:7 as Messianic (*ibid*).

% Ironside, H A., *Notes on the Minor Prophets*, 1909, 12 pages for Haggai. A very brief devotional commentary with summaries of the messages of the two chapters and practical applications. Follows the Messianic interpretation on 2:7 (335).

% Jennings, A. C., "Haggai," in volume 5 of *Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1959, 8 pages. Brief, verse by verse comments. Follows Keil's understanding of 2:6; rejects the Messianic interpretation of 2:7 (552).

% Keil, C. F., *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, trans. James Martin, 2 volumes, 1885; reprinted 1949, 49 pages for Haggai. Conservative comments with a technical examination of the Hebrew text, usually including all of the views of the passage with arguments for and against. Keil's writing style is pedantic and difficult to digest, but one's labor in wading through the material is rewarded with an enhanced understanding of Haggai. Surveys the historical context of Haggai. Notes that Haggai's style is principally prose, rather than the poetical diction of earlier prophets (173). Argues against any Messianic meaning for 2:7, claiming the reference is to the valuable possessions of the heathen (193) which will fill the temple after the shaking of 2:6 (194). Claims that the shaking began not with the birth of Christ, but shortly after Haggai during the reign of Xerxes (196). Sees 2:21-23 as transferring the Messianic promise given to David to Zerubbabel (214).

% Kodell, Jerome, *Lamentations, Joel, Zechariah, Malachi, Obadiah, Haggai, Second Zechariah, Baruch*, *Old Testament Message: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, 1982, 13 pages for Haggai. Comments are general over large sections of text and reflect typical critical positions. Gives a brief synopsis of Persian history as it relates to Israel (48f). Notes that the term "remnant" (1:12) had 'messianic overtones" (53). Says that the capitalizing of "spirit" by the RSV in 2:4,5 is an "anachronism" (56). Interprets 2:7 to refer simply to "all the treasures of the world" (56). Infers that Hebrews interpreted the shaking of the nations in a way not intended by Haggai (56). Suggests that the Lord's promise to Zerubbabel may have political meaning that in effect reverses the words to Jehoiachin in Jeremiah 22:24 (58).

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% Kraeling, Emil G. "Haggai," in *Commentary on the Prophets*, 1966, 10 pages. Comments based on the RSV. Denies that the book was written by Haggai; rather, it is a "third-person report" about his messages (273). He sees a contrast between Haggai's concern for the temple and the pre-exilic prophets, who claimed the Lord did not care about the cult (274). Claims that in various places the text is out of order with "glossatory" additions in places (277). Says that 2:6 is "Messianic dogmatics .. based on old poetry taken literally" (279). Says that Haggai's prophecy concerning Zerubbabel made him "overbold" and was most likely his undoing (282).

% Laetsch, Theo, *The Minor Prophets*, 1956, 20 pages for Haggai. Comments are general over sections of varying length, includes some grammatical notes dealing with technical issues. Offers a chart of the chronology of Haggai and Zechariah (385). Interprets the "desire of nations" in 2:7 to be the ones God as chosen to come into the church (391, 395). The shaking of nations alludes to the judgments on Egypt and Babylon: "these two deliverances are the greatest in the Old Covenant...and both are prophetic types of the N T. deliverance, which also made them possible" (393). But the direct reference is to the shaking of Persia by the Greeks that "prepared the way for the spread of Messiah's kingdom" (395). Claims the greater glory of the new temple refers to the church in which all the nations are washed, sanctified, justified in the name of Christ and by the Holy Spirit (396). Sees Messianic significance in the promise to Zerubbabel (402).

% Lindsey, F. Duane, "Haggai," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B Zuck, 1985, 8 pages. Introduction points out Haggai's stress on divine authority for his book (1537). Brief comments that often point out repeated words and expressions. Suggests that 2:7 is deliberately ambiguous, indicating both treasures and a personal Messiah (1542).

% March, W. Eugene, "The Book of Haggai," in volume 7 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. L. Keck and others, 1996, 26 pages. Reviews the historical context, noting that little is known about the prophet (707-710). Identifies Haggai's style as "brief apologetic historical narrative" (711). Discussion of text in two parts: commentary and what he calls reflections. The comments are general, over sections of text. Says that Haggai's use of the Lord of hosts title "derives originally from the theology and cult of the early monarchy and the Jerusalem temple" (717). Parallels the language of 2:6f. to the "theophanic tradition, the tradition of God's appearing accompanied by the cataclysmic shaking of the heavens and the earth" (723). Rejects the Messianic interpretation of 2:7, notwithstanding the fact that "Christians have incorporated this understanding in the hymn 'Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus'" (724).

% Mason, Rex, *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary, 15 pages for Haggai. Comments based on the NEB. Sees 1:1 to be "the editor's introduction to the brief collection of Haggai's oracles" (14). Notes that "these are the words of the Lord of Hosts" (1:2) is the typical "messenger formula" that indicates the prophet's awareness that he was not speak in on his own authority (15). He identifies this first "fragment" of Haggai's oracle as a "prophetic dispute" (15). Says 1:10-11 is the "outlook of traditional covenant theology" as expressed in Deuteronomy 28 (16). Suggests that the order of verses at 1:13ff is most likely wrong and gives an alternative sequence (17). Claims that the reference to shaking heaven and earth in 2:6 was common prophetic jargon for the "appearance of God to the whole world in a final act of judgment and salvation" (20). Notes the contrast between the LXX's and the Vulgate's handling of 2:7 and suggests that the Vulgate's Messianic interpretation was not intended in the context and reflects a post-Christian perspective (20). Says that the references to Joshua in Haggai

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were added by editors because the priesthood did not come into prominence until after Haggai's preaching (25).

% McCurdy, James Frederick, *The Book of Haggai*, Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, ed. Philip Schaff, 1874; reprinted 1964, 25 pages. Written by an American because the German commentary was not yet ready. The notes and the exegetical sections are technical and detailed, but "theological" and "homiletical" sections make the work practical. Contains much helpful interaction with earlier commentators like Calvin and Keil. Rejects the Messianic interpretation for 2:7 (17f.) but understands Zerubbabel in 2:23 as prefiguring Christ (25).

% Merrill, Eugene, *An Exegetical Commentary: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 1994, 53 pages for Haggai. Discusses the historic context extensively, including details from Persian history. Reviews some of the critical positions regarding the integrity of book. Claims that Haggai's distinctiveness was "his single-mindedness" (16). Comments include his own translation followed by exegesis and expositions that involve technical matters as well as general interpretation issues. Shows parallels between 2:6-9 and the Exodus (38-40). Sees the section as describing the eschatological temple (41). Hardly acknowledges Messianic interpretation of 2:7 (41). Suggests that Zerubbabel became a code word for Messiah (58).

% Meyers, Carol L., and Enc M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*. the Anchor Bible, 1987, 84 pages for Haggai. In addition to the commentary there is an extensive introduction dealing with the historical context, literary matters, and text issues of both books. Reflects critical positions throughout. Comments are in two divisions: notes on the text and comments on the passage. The notes are extremely extensive (14 pages on 1:1 alone), technical, often giving evidence from Ancient Near Eastern languages and literature. The comments are general over sections of text. Makes some helpful observations, but overall lacks any devotional insight. Says the shaking in 2:6 refers to "eschatological events associated with God's entry into the sphere of human history" (52). Sees 2:7 as providing a "universalistic dimension to Haggai's eschatological vision" and claims that this is the theme in which the "composite Haggai-Zechariah 1-8 concludes" (53). Says the fact that Haggai's prophecy was not fulfilled "only serves to confirm its authenticity" and that it nonetheless served to get the temple rebuilt (84).

% Mitchell, Hinckley G. *Haggai and Zechariah*, The International Critical Commentary, 1912, 55 pages for Haggai. Comments are verse by verse with detailed evidence about the text, including textual criticism, history, and geography. Conclusions are typically liberal, but usually surveys the whole range of interpretations on specific problems. Claims that there are significant reasons for assuming the book to be anonymous, the name Haggai being added because the prophecies were dated on feast days (25), but concludes the book is a "genuine collection of the words of the prophet whose name it bears" (30). States that not everything is from the "prophet's own hand" (27); "it has suffered... at the hands of careless or ignorant readers or transcribers" (31). Gives a four-page chart listing additions, omissions, errors, and corruptions of the text (32-35). Suggests the prophet used both the common language of life with varying degrees of poetical thought and expression whereas the compiler used prose (39). Concerning the shaking of heaven and earth in 2:6, he comments, "the extravagance of some of these representations makes it probable that they finally became merely a literary form for the assertion of the divine omnipotence" (61). Notes that any Messianic interpretation of 2:7 has generally been abandoned (63). Sees the comments to Zerubbabel to mean that Haggai had forgotten "the inspiring idea of the Second Isaiah, that Israel had now inherited the promises

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made to David” by reviving “the doctrine of the ideal king and identified Zerubbabel with the long-expected son of David” (78).

@ Moore, T. V., *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. A New Translation, with Notes*, 1856. A capital book. Most useful to ministers.

% 49 pages for Haggai. Gives a brief overview of the historical context of the message. Comments are essentially verse by verse followed by practical inferences from the larger section. Says the divine title Lord of hosts “indicates universal dominion of God, over all ranks of being in heaven and earth” (56). Some comments directly on the Hebrew text, particularly specific lexical notes. Rejects the idea that the shakings of 2:6 refer to the establishment of the NT dispensation (72). Notes that the notion that the desire of nations refers to Christ has “become so canonized, in the language of the Church, that it will not be laid aside without some repugnance” (75).

% Morgan, G. Campbell, *The Minor Prophets*, 1960, 9 pages for Haggai. Comments are very general, essentially consisting of a detailed outline. Discusses “the message” and “the permanent message” (120-22).

% Motyer, J. Alec, “Haggai,” in volume 3 of *The Minor Prophets*, ed. T. E. McComiskey, 1998, 40 pages. Extremely thorough and helpful. Has an extensive introductory section dealing with issues of authorship, date, style, and theology. Comments are very extensive and occur on two levels. The top text concerns technical issues and the bottom discussions deal with interpretation comments. Each section includes Motyer’s translation of the text parallel to the NRSV. Claims that the fact that Haggai begins and ends with references to Zerubbabel is evidence of his framing the whole message in terms of the Davidic Covenant and therefore with a conscious “messianic urgency” (964). Says that the building of the temple was not a means to pressure or please God, but “an act of obedience performed in the faith that God will keep his promise” (965). Gives a helpful synopsis of the status of the text, concluding that the Majority Text is “in a good state of preservation” (967). Notes that “specialists” are reluctant to allow that prophets were their own editors and maintains that “there is no compelling argument against the view that Haggai was his own editor” and that “it seems almost perverse to deny Haggai such an obvious task as committing his oracles to writing” (967f.). Analyzes the book in a A-B-B-A pattern (968). Says that the temple was the “outward form of the real presence of the Lord among his people. To refuse to build the house was at best saying that it did not matter whether the Lord was present with them. At worst it was presuming on divine grace (974). Says that there is no intrinsic problem with referring “desire” in 2:7 to Messiah but argues for the idea of gentile treasures being brought into the temple on the basis of the verb and the allusion to the Exodus motif of spoiling the Egyptians (990f).

% Perowne, T. T., *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*, *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* 1890, 28 pages for Haggai. Says that the simplicity and severity of Haggai’s style rather than an issue for objection is “proof of the Wisdom of Almighty God” (20f). Rejects the notion that the book is fragmentary and incomplete (21). Comments are verse by verse, dealing with specific words or phrases in the text and giving evidence from ancient versions. Reviews various interpretations of 2:6, referring also to the interpretation of the “inspired writer to the Hebrews” (36). Says concerning the interpretation of Christ being the desire of nations that “as interesting as is this view, and the strong temptation to maintain it at any cost, there are objections to it which cannot satisfactorily be overcome” (37). He maintains, however; that the

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Messianic reference to the passage is not to be ignored (38). Sees the promise to Zerubbabel to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ (46).

% Petersen, David L., *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library, 1984, 90 pages for Haggai. Lengthy introduction (23 pages), that covers in detail the historical background and that speculates about editorial activity. Commentary has been organized section by section: his own translation, usually in poetic form, followed by technical notes on Hebrew words (transliterated) and textual criticism; then lengthy verse by verse comments with much interest in form criticism. Often makes comparisons between Haggai and other Scriptures, for example, 2:6-8 and Isaiah 60:5-11 (68).

\$ Phillips, John, *The Minor Prophets*, The John Phillips Commentary Series, 1998, 17 pages. A standard, conservative exposition with very useful outlines and illustrations.

% Pusey, E. B., *The Minor Prophets*, 2 volumes, 1950, 29 pages for Haggai. Comments are verse by verse and detailed. Sometimes discussions lack direct relevance to the text. Refers to Jewish interpretations throughout. Offers a translation with many cross references. Discussion of Hebrew words is reserved for footnotes (readers who lack excellent eyesight may want to have a magnifying glass on hand to read these notes!). Says that the fact that the word of the Lord came by Haggai means that while the prophets were gifted with the Holy Spirit, they were "willing and conscious instruments in speaking His words" (299). Notes that since Christians are the temple of God, all the words of Haggai are applicable (301). Sees the shaking of nations to include and encompass judgments at both comings of Christ (309-311). Argues for Christ as the desire of nations (312). Says that in Zerubbabel God reverses the curse on Jehoiachin and sees the civil leader as a type of Christ (320).

@ Rainolds, John, *Haggai; Interpreted and Applied, 1613 and 1649*. Rainolds was the tutor of Hooker, and had a main hand in our authorized version of the Bible. Bishop Hall says, "the memory, the reading of that man was near a miracle." We ought to be enraptured with a Commentary from such a divine, but we confess that we are not.

% Redditt, Paul L., *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, The New Century Bible Commentary, 1995, 43 pages for Haggai. Comments based on the RSV. Offers brief survey of history of the period. Suggests that Haggai's message is similar to other exilic prophets such as Ezekiel and II Isaiah (11). Sees two voices in the book, one belonging to Haggai and the other to the redactor who edited the book" (11). Claims the book "consists of four edited sections" (11). Says that Haggai's message is "steeped in theology in the narrow sense of that word, i. e. the doctrine of God" (12). Comments are essentially verse by verse, focusing on specific phrases in the verses. Says the characteristic title Lord of hosts is God's war name (18). Sees the shaking in 2:6 to be eschatological and recognizes no Messianic sense for 2:7 (24). Claims that Haggai reversed Jeremiah's prophecy to Coniah when he called Zerubbabel God's signet ring (32). Concludes that Haggai's message was "too optimistic" as seen from the conditions of the sixth century (34).

% Ries, Claude A., "The Book of Haggai," in volume 3 of *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary*, ed. C. W. Carter, 1969, 11 pages. Two-page introduction that covers six topics, including practical "Lessons." Brief, non-technical comments on some key words and phrases. Good coverage of the interpretation problems in 2:6-9 (745).

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Ruckman, Peter, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on the Minor Prophets, Volume 2, Habakkuk- Malachi*, 2011. This is Ruckman's second volume on the Minor Prophets. He published the first volume in 1978 but waited over 20 years to publish the second volume due to the difficulty of the material, especially in Zechariah. As his other commentaries, this is strongly dispensational, premillennial and based on the King James text.

% Smith, David A., "Haggai," in volume 7 of *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, 1972, 17 pages. Considers the book a compilation by one of Haggai's disciples with various additions (293). Regards 2:15-19 as misplaced from following 1:15a (294). The comments follow sections of text quoted from the RSV Usually explains difficult words and phrases.

Smith, George Adam. "Haggai," in volume 2 of *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, 1928, 17 pages. Sets forth typical critical positions. Even the order in which he discusses the prophets in this volume reveals the critical notions on dating. Topical organization according to various subjects. Within each of these sections, he discusses passages from various places in Haggai. Not particularly useful as a commentary. Technical details from Hebrew text, versions, etc. occur in footnotes. Begins by noting that Haggai's view of the temple was not essentially different from other prophets such as Second Isaiah (233f). Notes that from "the earliest times" the majority of the church has interpreted 2:7 as referring to Christ and that Messianic identification is not contrary to Jewish tradition, claiming Akiba "defined the clause of the Messiah" (239). Claims that when "the monarchy fell the Messianic hopes were no longer concentrated in the person of a king; and the evangelist of the Exile found the elect and anointed Servant of Yahweh in the people as a whole" (245). Says that in looking to Zerubbabel, Haggai "conserved the Messianic traditions of his religion though not less disappointed than Isaiah in the personality to whom he looked for their fulfillment" (247).

% Smith, Ralph L., *Micah-Malachi*, Volume 32 of *Word Biblical Commentary*, 1984., 18 pages for Haggai. This work continues the quasi-conservative tradition that the *Word Biblical Commentaries* have established in the Old Testament. The section on Haggai begins with an extensive bibliography. Reviews the theories about the prophet, ranging from Bentzen's notion that Haggai was a "religious quietist" to Hanson's theory that he was a "hierocrat" involved in the development of the apocalyptic style (147). Believes that the book was composed shortly after Haggai spoke, either by Haggai himself or one of his disciples (149). Commenting on Haggai's overall message, says that his "perspective was limited but he was on the right track" (149). Discusses the text in four parts: notes on the translation, form/structure/setting, general comments, and explanation. Notes that Haggai's theology was "grounded in the curses and blessings of covenant theology" (153). Says that the reference to shaking the heaven and earth in 2:6f is not speaking of political rebellion, but Yahweh's intervention expected in Haggai's time (158). Identifies 2:20-23 as an "oracle of salvation addressed to Zerubbabel" (162). Claims that Haggai's prophecy was fulfilled in Christ, "in a spiritual but no less real way" (163).

% Stuhmueller, Carroll, "Haggai," in volume 1 of *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A Fitzmeyer, and Roland E. Murphy, 1968, 3 pages. Comments on just a few verses, usually those that pose some problem like 2:7b. Provides bibliographic references, often to German and French works.

\$ A liberal Roman Catholic commentary.

% Stuhmueller, Carroll, *Rebuilding with Hope: A Commentary on the Books of Haggai and Zechariah* 1988, 41 pages for Haggai. Regards the book as a compilation of Haggai's sermons

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by an inspired editor, who added about a dozen segments of his own (14) and “relocated” one section later in the book (15, 33). Comments basically offer theological summarization of Haggai’s messages with many comparisons to other Scriptures. There are few technical matters concerning Hebrew Claims that Hebrews reinterpreted Haggai (31f.).

Verhoef, Pieter A., *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*. NICOT 1987, 364 pages. This volume by a professor of OT, Emeritus, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, is conservative in its coverage of much current literature, introductory matters, and verse-by-verse content. Explanations of the text and the tracing of the flow of thought are competent. Verhoef takes issue with W. Rudolph who says that Haggai has no relevance for those of the Christian faith (vii), and strives to show the significance of both Haggai and Malachi for today. He has interacted with much scholarship within the text and in his footnotes. He believes that someone close to Haggai wrote the book with authentic material from Haggai. He upholds the unity of the book and traces the movement through the verses carefully in relation to its background. He seems to be premillennial in understanding the fulfillment of prophetic aspects about the temple beyond the second advent. He deals at length with many of the problems by giving different views and factors to weigh, e.g., on God’s love and hate (Mal 1:2-3), “one” (2:15), and “Elijah” (4:4-6).

% von Orelli, C., *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, translated by J. S. Banks, 1897, 20 pages for Haggai. Brief, verse by verse comments followed by brief expositional summaries of sections. Comments consider issues from the Hebrew text, but often seem to be random—just notes on particular aspects of the verse without tying things together. Says that Haggai’s language lacks the “poetical fervor and original wealth” of the pre-exilic prophets and bears “the impress of the poverty of the age” (283). Rejects the Messianic interpretation of 2:7, claiming that it is “wrecked” on the plural verb (292). But he does conclude that the “world-embracing transformation” was “brought about by Jesus Christ, who opened up His Father’s house to the heathen” (293). Says that Haggai’s attention to Zerubbabel sees him as “the representative of the Davidic race and heir of the ‘unchangeable mercies of David’” (300).

% Wisenian, D. J., “Haggai,” in *The Eerdmans Bible Commentary*, ed. D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer, 1987, 5 pages. Includes a brief presentation of the book’s message (781-82). Brief but helpful comments on key problems of interpretation like 1:15 and 2:15.

Wolff, Hans W. *Haggai, A Commentary*, 1988, 128 pages. This work by an expert in exegesis, history, and critical study is a translation from the German *Biblischer Kommentar* series. Wolff sees three layers of composition from Haggai to the final writer. The chronicler, he feels, added interpolations at 2:5, 9, 14, 17-19, 21-22. The helpfulness of the large amount of information and expertise on exegesis is reduced by what some will consider arbitrary opinions about composition and rearrangement.

% Wolf, Herbert, *Haggai and Malachi*, 1976, 55 pages for Malachi. Begins with a brief survey of the historical period and ministry the prophet. Notes the emphasis on the divine authority of Haggai’s message (9) and remarks on the prophet’s frequent use of repetition (9, 19). Identifies several places Haggai either quotes or alludes to other canonical books (10). Comments are concise and helpful, often giving the significance of Hebrew words, though in a non-technical manner. Notes the difficulties with the desire of nations, favors the idea of wealth, but does not completely reject a Messianic significance (36f). Helpful discussion on the relationship of Zerubbabel to Messiah in the closing verse (54f).

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Haggai Chapter 1

1:1 In the second year of Darius^a the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month^b came the word of the Lord by Haggai^c the prophet unto Zerubbabel^d the son of Shealtiel,^e governor of Judah, and to Joshua^f the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,^h

1a Darius ruled the Persian Empire from 521 B.C. to 486 B.C. Most prophets dated their prophecies or ministries with regards to whoever was king in Israel or Judah at the time. But since there was no king at this time, Haggai marks his time according to the reign of Darius since it was now the time of the Gentiles and since Israel was under the control of a Gentile king.

“The “Darius” of verse 1 is not Darius the Mede from the book of Daniel (see Dan. 5:31–6:1). That Darius was a viceroy Cyrus left in charge of the kingdom while he finished his conquest of the Babylonian Empire. This Darius was a Persian who came much later. Now when it comes to the identity of these Persian Kings in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, there are all kinds of guesses by the scholars. We are not going to get into all of that here; you can study that on your own (one of the best works on the subject is A Chronology of the Old Testament by Floyd Nolen Jones). All you really need to know is that there are three Darisuses mentioned in the Scriptures. Besides the Median King mentioned in the book of Daniel, there is a Persian King of that name given in Ezra 4:24 and another one given in Nehemiah 12:22. The one mentioned here in Haggai is the Persian King of Ezra 4–6 who ordered the work to begin again on the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra 6:1–3) after Artaxerxes stopped it back in Ezra 4:21–23. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, Volume 2).”

1b “**first day of the month**” The Jews usually had a religious convocation of the first day of each month, so Haggai took advantage of this gathering to deliver this message.

1c “Haggai” from a Hebrew root “hag”, meaning a festival. He may have been born during one of the feasts of Israel.

1d “Zerubbabel”= “Sown or birthed in Babylon”

1e “Shealtiel”= “Asked for of God”. He was the son of Jechoniah (Jehoiachin) who was taken captive to Babylon in 2 Kings 24:15 and 1 Chronicles 3:17.

1f Joshua was the first high priest after the return. We also see him in Zechariah 3:1-9.

1h Nehemiah is not mentioned by the prophet, as the prophecies are directed more at Zerubbabel. God expected him to be the leader and motivator in the rebuilding of the temple.

1:2 Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts,^a saying, This people^b say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built.^{cde}

2a “**Lord of Hosts**” is a military name for God, the “God of Armies”, a title of power that would be easily understood by men. The Medes and Persians may have had a mighty army, especially in the light of their defeat of mighty Babylon, but God was still greater than any human government or military.

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2b **“This people”** not “my people”. God would not own them in their backslidings and disobedience. Compare Exodus 32:7, when God disowned Israel during the affair with the Golden Calf.

“This people” will always talk against God. Public opinion is always a very powerful force to reckon with. The people in the church see no compelling reason to finish repairing the temple as their welfare is not affected one way or the other. They were God’s people and were back in the land, so that was good enough. And as long as the modern “people” have their salvation, assurance of salvation and a comfortable home, then all is well with them, in their opinion.

2c When would it be time? Cyrus gave the decree for the rebuilding of the temple in 536 BC but local opposition (see the book of Nehemiah) and other problems discouraged the people from the work and it ceased for about 16 years. Prevented by governmental decree for working on the temple, the people had turned their attention to building their own houses. It always seems to be time to take care of our own personal needs, but when would it be time to take care of the things of God? The people were putting their own needs and interests first and God’s interests last.

It could have been that they simply did not want to expend the time, effort and the money to rebuild the temple, preferring to invest rather in rebuilding their own houses. Or they may have been afraid to attempt to rebuild the temple, seeing as how they did not have the vast resources that David and Solomon had when they built the original one. There was no way that the rebuilt temple would match the beauty and splendour of the first temple, so they may have feared that God would not accept the effort.

It must be remembered that God originally commanded Moses to build the tabernacle, which was not an impressive structure. God never commanded David to build the temple at all, but He allowed it. If God would take pleasure in a humble tent, then He certainly would accept even a stripped-down version of a rebuilt temple. Did some of them think that God Himself would complete the temple in the light of Ezekiel’s prophecies of the millennial temple in Ezekiel 40-48? But whatever was holding them back, the Jews had no real excuse, since both God and the King were on their side and both had commanded the rebuilding of the temple.

We should also compare the remnant’s hesitancy to rebuild the temple and David’s great desire to build the temple in 2 Samuel 7.

Also see Hosea 10:12 where the Lord clearly says **“It is time to seek the Lord”**. It is ALWAYS time to seek the Lord!

1d It can also apply to the idea that there are many who say that the current situation was so bad that they could not rebuild the house. They had been ordered to cease building in Ezra 4:21 and the remnant had received no additional word from the occupying government that they could rebuild (that would not come until Ezra 6:7). This is clearly a case of **“the powers that be”** (Romans 13:1) saying one thing (stop the building) and God saying something else (build the house). Peter told you when that happens: **“We ought to obey God rather than men”** (Acts 5:29). The rule of thumb laid down by Christ is: **“Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s”** (Matthew 22:21). But when the two conflict, you are to obey God and take the consequences from Caesar if necessary.

The remnant had enemies all around, were under a foreign occupying government and were small in number and were poor. Is now the time to rebuild the temple? Many could have found any number of excuses why they should not rebuild. This is why Haggai was given his messages to encourage the remnant to resume and complete the building.

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Today, we also live in a very bad day of distress. Our government is becoming more hostile. The apostasy is increasing in intensity and the falling away is accelerating. There is a remnant of God’s people who look at the spiritual waste and ruin. There seems to be little, if any word from God in this generation as most pulpits have fallen away from Biblical preaching. Should we go on with God? Should we still seek heart purity and a walk with God? We started this work, but should we continue with it? Does God care? Would it do any good in the face of our enemies? The Prophet would enthusiastically say “yes!”

The remnant had been forced by the State to stop the rebuilding on the temple and then they practically had to be forced to resume the work.

2e “The time is not come” What are the excuses offered by the modern Christian to not continue seeking after God today?

1. **Because the government told us to stop.** During the COVID-19 “pandemic” in 2020-2021, the State ordered churches to shut down to “flatter the curve” and “stop the spread” so many ministries were suspended. Many Christians cited Romans 13 as the justification to stay shut down until the state said they could re-open. But months dragged on, and in some states, like California, the churches were still being harassed 6 months after the initial shut down. Many Christians began to get out of the habit of church attendance and sitting under preaching and got comfortable with staying home and putting their quest after Christian purity on hold until the state gives them permission to resume. But when will that be, if ever?

2. **It is a bad day.** But it is never a good day to walk with God. Enoch and Noah did it in the horrible days before the Flood (Genesis 5 and 6). Conditions will not improve but will only worsen as we get closer to the rapture. They may say “The apostasy is so deep and strong that there can be no revival today so why bother?”

3. **It make little difference if we seek God or not or if we complete the temple or not.** We are back in the land and are getting back to some semblance of normal. Rebuilding the temple will have little, if any effect on our situation, so why put forth the time and the effort? And in modern terms, why put forth the additional effort in developing a walk with God? We are still saved whether we do or not.

4. **With so much going on, how can we focus on God?** There is persecution and the present distress of our age, plus the usual concerns of life. They take up all of our time, so how can we focus on God? It is these people who say “I am too busy for God now. As soon as I retire or as soon as the kids are through school, then I will seek God.”

5. **I don’t know how to seek God or to walk with God.** This is the truth that reveals their spiritual immaturity, so they cover it with these excuses.

6. **There is spiritual opposition.** No matter what you do or say, there will always be someone around to criticize you. The Daughters of Jerusalem were a thorn in the side of the Shualmite in the Song of Solomon until she won them over in Song 6. But whenever you try to do anything for God, “the brethren” will be there to throw as much cold water on your plans as they can. They will accuse you of being a fanatic, or being hyper-spiritual, of thinking you are better than everyone else, etc. After all, if you believe in the security of the believer, then it doesn’t matter how you live as a Christian so why put in all this additional spiritual effort?

1:3 Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,^a

3a God always speaks through a prophet when He has a word for His people. He does not thunder from heaven, nor does He send angels, but uses men to deliver His word to men.

1:4 *Is it time for you,*^a **O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses,^{b-c} **and this house *lie waste?***^d**

4a Emphatic.

4b The Lord would not have minded that they rebuilt their houses, but not at the expense of the temple. That should have been rebuilt first, then the private houses. Haggai responded to the claim that it was not yet time to rebuild the temple with “But it’s time for you to build your fancy houses?”

They were in the world and began to settle into the world. Without any word from God, they began to “settle in” with stocks, bonds, houses and annuities. They were God’s people but they began to focus on the material to the neglecting of the spiritual. Once we leave off communion with God and pursuing a life with God, something else will fill that void in the life, usually self or materialism,

4c “cieled” also had reference to very elaborate decorations and designs, the type you might see in palaces. Much money was going into these private home renovations, but little, if any, was going toward temple reconstruction. King Cyrus had provided the Jews with money to buy hardwood timber to rebuild the temple (Ezra 3:7). Did some of that money and wood go into the rebuilding of private homes, rather than for use in the temple?

4d One sign of a backslidden congregation is when they allow their meeting house to suffer neglect. While it is true that God does not meet with us in buildings made with hands, it still is a good barometer of the heart of a congregation of how much importance they put in whatever building they use to meet in. It also is a public testimony. Who would visit a church whose building needed a good paint job and where the chapel had not been vacuumed in weeks? Or if the bathrooms were filthy or if the grass had not been cut in months? It would be a sign of gross neglect on the part of those people that they thought so little of their public testimony and forwarding the glory of God in that community that they would spend no time or effort in their public meeting place.

1:5 Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.^a

5a Or even “reconsider your ways, because you are wrong and your priorities are not in order.” The lazy and unwilling heart will always find its excuses. Whenever God is not put first in all that we do, we need to consider our ways. This admonition is used 5 times by Haggai, here, in 1:5,7; 2:15 and 18. We should regularly “consider” and “reconsider” our ways. We may be wrong! We always convince ourselves that we are in the right but in reality, we could be in the wrong and God could be beating on us to try to wake us up to that unpleasant fact.

| AV | ESV | LSV |
|---|--|--|
| 5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. | 5 Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. | 5 So now, thus says Yahweh of hosts, “Set your heart <i>to consider</i> your ways! |

The LSV adds “set your heart...” It does this again in 1:7 and 2:18.

1:6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.^{a-b}

6a This is because God was cutting them short for not putting Him first. They were suffering from a loss of blessing and provision which resulted in a loss of prosperity. God was hindering their harvests and their bank accounts. If they were not concerned about the things of God, then they had no reason to expect any blessings from God. The fastest way to go broke is to put your interests over God's interests.

6b Leviticus 26:18-26 and Deuteronomy 28:38,39 both speak to this situation that the harder the Jews worked, the less they seemed to have, because God was withholding His blessing due to their disobedience and apathy.

1:7 Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.^a

7a Or even "reconsider your ways, because you are wrong and your priorities are not in order." Whenever God is not put first in all that we do, we need to consider our ways, as in 1:5.

1:8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it,^a and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.^{b-c-d}

8a As long as they put forth good effort and built with a sincere heart, the Lord would take pleasure in their service and would accept it. See our remarks under 1:2 for possible reasons why they thought the Lord would not accept their labor. It may not be big but if it is sincere and done with a good heart, it will be accepted by the Lord. This would be a great comfort to those in small ministries. They cannot hope to compete with the larger ministries and the "megachurches" but if they work Biblically and with a desire to honor and glorify the Lord, then it would be accepted. Size does not matter in God's work. It is quality, not quantity that God is looking for. We can't always wait for God to send some millionaire along who will finance our projects. Many times, we have to start the work by faith and then watch God send in the rest of the materials and moneys.

"God believes in work and the message of this little Book of Haggai is the gospel of work (J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, volume 3, page 888)."

8b The rabbis stated that the second temple lacked five things:

1. The ark
2. The sacred fire
3. The Shekinah
4. The Urim and Thummin
5. The spirit of prophecy

Yet the Lord would still take pleasure, even in this "stripped down" second temple.

8c This is the ultimate motivation for everything we do for God.

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8d Do the work. Go after a walk with God and seek heart purity. There may be only a remnant of a remnant who would seek after these things and the work and results might be feeble according to human sense, but God promised He would be pleased with the efforts and would bless and honor it.

1:9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, *it came* to little; and when ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that *is* waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.^a

9a See remarks under 1:6. The reason why God withheld His blessings was because the people were not concerned with rebuilding the temple to the glory of God. The house of God remained ruined, surrounded by nice houses, and few seemed bothered by that situation. It was a very poor testimony that the residents of Jerusalem thought so little of the testimony of their God that they would be allowed the central place of their worship to lie waste with no effort being put forth to rebuild. These Jews must not have loved their God very much, compared to the heathen nations round about them that would never have allowed the temple of their false gods to remain in such a state! How can you evangelize others to your god if you are so careless about the temple of your god?

1:10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit.

1:11 And I called for a drought^a upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.^b

11a God controls the weather systems, not the jet stream or El Nino or high pressure systems.

11b God would continue to withhold His blessings and bring judgments until they got burdened over rebuilding the temple. God would bring a drought, with all of its resultant hardships and economic issues, until the people changed their way of thinking.

1:12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the Lord.^a

12a Good for them that the religious leadership responded in such a good way to Haggai's message. But they obviously needed to be "stirred up" as they had not provided the necessary leadership for the people to continue and to finish this work. Leadership should always lead by example and Zerubbabel and Joshua should have been leading the way for the rebuilding, but they obviously were not, for whatever reason, until now.

1:13 Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people,^a saying, I *am* with you, saith the Lord.^b

13a It is emphasized that Haggai, as any prophet or preacher, speaks God's words as he receives them. If he is faithful in the discharge of that message, then the word of the prophet is to be treated with the same weight of authority as if God Himself were speaking directly.

13b A word of encouragement for the remnant. They were weak in numbers and materials, but God would be with them and strengthen them in their work of rebuilding the temple. God will always bless and encourage obedience.

1:14 And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God,^a

14a God stirs up the leadership to obey and fulfil the words of God and they are then in turn to stir up the people to follow them by their example. If the people are disobedient, it is usually because their spiritual leadership is disobedient. An obedient leadership will usually result in an obedient people.

1:15 In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

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Haggai Chapter 2

“Chapter 2 of Haggai consists of three distinct prophecies: 1) verses 1–9 addressed to Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the remnant of the Jews, 2) verses 10–19 addressed to the priesthood and the people, and 3) verses 20–23 addressed to Zerubbabel. Haggai is still prophesying “in the second year of Darius the king” (see 1:1,15). The first prophecy comes on the twenty-first day of “the seventh month” (Sept.–Oct.), and the last two prophecies come on the twenty-fourth day of “the ninth month” (Nov.–Dec.). (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on the Minor Prophets Volume 2*).

2:1 IN the seventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, saying,^a

1a Again, God speaks through His appointed prophets, not directly to the kings, governors or the high priests, when He has a word such as this. This is the ministry of the prophet, to repeat what God has told him and to “deliver the mail”. Even today, preachers do the work of prophets to their congregations, giving them the word of God that God has given them, as well as relevant insights to that word.

2:2 Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people,^a saying,

2a “**residue**” another term for that good theological word “remnant”, on which we build our understanding of Remnant Theology, where God delights to deal and work through small, but dedicated bands of believers to the exclusion of working through the “herd” or the “masses”. Church history shows many instances where God worked mightily through remnants, such as the the Donatists, Waldensians, Albigensians, Mennonites, Anabaptists, Brethren, “Plymouth Brethren” and today, in the post-Fundamentalist movement.

2:3^a Who *is* left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? *is it* not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?^{b-c-d}

3a Compare Ezra 3:8-13 “**Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the**

fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."

3b Disinterest in the work had been overcome, but now discouragement threatened. The second temple could not hope to compare to the glory of the first and no doubt many of the "old timers" did not tire in bringing up that fact, something that may have discouraged the builders. "If we can't build something as glorious as Solomon's Temple, then why bother?" There were some of the remnant that must have been at least 80 years old, if they could remember seeing the first temple before its destruction. Older people often act like this, pining about the "old days" and disparaging the efforts and work of the younger generation. There was no doubt about the glory of Solomon's temple, that it should have been considered one of the wonders of the ancient world. It had been estimated that at gold valued at \$1000 an ounce (about what it is at the time of this writing in 2023), the temple could have been worth over \$12 billion! How could the remnant hope to build anything that could even approach that?

3c We have to wonder if God deliberately did not want the second temple to be as glorious as the first. The Jews tended to make much of the magnificence of Solomon's temple, maybe too much so. They saw the glory of the temple daily but that did not prevent them from lapsing into apostasy numerous times. What good did that magnificent temple do for them and their spiritual life? Do we put too much emphasis on the building and the ceremonies instead of worshipping in Spirit and in truth? The Jews would have no such magnificent temple to distract them from a purer worship of God the second time around. Of course, God was not above destroying both temples when His judgment called for it. Does your religion end when your temple is burnt to the ground? If you lost your missal and rosary beads? If your subscription to the *Sword of the Lord* expired or if you lost your copy of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*? If the piano or organ in your church broke and you had to sing acapella next Sunday? If you were simply stripped down to your Bible and maybe having church in someone's living room, could you still worship and serve God?

God does not judge the spiritual worth of a (church) building by its size but by the heart of those who built it, paid for it and will worship in it.

3d Compare with Ecclesiastes 7:10, "**Say not thou that the former days were better than these.**"

2:4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua,^a son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong,^b all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I *am* with you, saith the Lord of hosts:

4a Zerubbabel and Joshua, the leaders in the re-building effort, are encouraged by God Himself to push on in completing the project, and not to allow themselves to be discouraged or side-tracked, for God would be with them and bless the work. Zerubbabel was the civil ruler, Joshua was the religious ruler, and the Lord encourages both of them to "be strong" in finishing the work.

4b "**be strong**" is repeated 3 times in this verse:

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1. Be strong- Zerubbabel, the political leader
2. Be strong- Joshua, the spiritual leader
3. Be strong- all of the people

God is encouraging everyone involved in the rebuilding.

2:5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you:^a fear ye not.

5a God blessed that first weak, poor, landless people that came out of Egypt, and He promises to do the same this with this returning remnant, that was also weak and poor, although they did have the land.

2:6^a For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

6a This shaking in verses 6 and 7 is a reference to the tribulation shakings of both the heavens and the earth, through the judgments of that period. Not only nature would be shaken, but so would all human institutions, including government, religion, business, and the home. God will shake in His preparations to overturn all of these institutions that have been corrupted by sin, as He will eventually renovate everything by fire (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21:1).

2:7 And I will shake all nations,^a and the desire of all nations shall come:^b and I will fill this house with glory,^{c-d-e} saith the Lord of hosts.

7a Compare Hebrews 12:26, which also mentions this shaking. Hebrews has a tribulational application, showing this shaking will have an ultimate fulfilment in the tribulation, although there would be many "little shakings", political, cultural, economic and religious, leading up to that time. As of this writing (2018) it seems God has all nation in a constant state or turmoil, and this condition will not improve anytime soon.

God would "shake all nations" in the immediate historical context and in the prophetic context, but nothing is said about God redeeming these nations.

7b "**Desire of All Nations**" This must be a reference to the universal and worldwide peace that Christ will bring with Him when He establishes His millennial kingdom after the second coming in Revelation 19. After these shakings of the tribulation, Christ will return to establish His millennial reign and bring in "peace on earth". Christ alone can fulfil what the nations need and desire- peace. No nation on earth at this time desires Christ or His laws, but by the end of the tribulation, the nations will see what utter ruin came upon them for following the Antichrist and rejection Christ. By then, they will be willing to accept the Kingdom which Christ will establish, at least to some degree. They one desired the Antichrist but he destroyed everything he touched. When confronted by the Kingdom of the True Christ, they will come to desire what He has to offer them in the Millennium.

It is true that the nations of the earth do not desire Christ today. They hate Him, His word, His people, His church and His laws. If Christ returned today the same way He came in the First Coming, this generation would crucify Him on the Washington Monument. God's people and the true remnant church do desire Him and in the Millennium.

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7c The second temple would have something that Solomon’s Temple never had- the privilege of being visited by God Himself, in the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His earthly ministry! This is not a millennial reference as God says “THIS temple” and this temple was destroyed in AD 70.

7d The order of these events is:

1. The shaking of all nations in the tribulation period
2. The “desire of all nations” shall come, which would be Christ in the Second Coming
3. God then fills the house with glory. While there is the more immediate application of Christ visiting the second temple, there is a further application of the glory of the millennial temple, which would be Ezekiel's temple, detailed in Ezekiel 40-48. But the Lord says “this house”, so He is talking about this rebuilt temple, although it was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, so this second temple is not Ezekiel's temple, unless God considers Ezekiel's temple to be a continuation of the second temple. Verse 9 does speak of “this latter house”, a reference to the temple that will follow the second temple. I don't think that refers to the tribulation temple as that will be defiled by the Antichrist in the Abomination of Desolation. It also will probably be destroyed in the latter half of the tribulation. It must then refer to the Millennial temple of Ezekiel 40-48.

7e “This prophecy of the Lord's *shaking all nature* is clearly apocalyptic in scope. In both the Olivet discourse and the Apocalypse there are confirming prophesies of natural disasters providing a background of chaos for the closing scenes of the drama of the last days (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:12-17). Haggai, in 2:7a, added a prophecy of the Lord's *shaking all nations*. The word translated "shake" means "to shake violently" as in Psalm 46:3; 77:18; Jeremiah 10:10.

There was a "mild" shaking going on in the Persian world at the time of Haggai's prophecy. The Greeks were beginning to make their presence felt in the West. The beginning of Darius's reign was a period of upheaval (521-519 B.C.). Then although a dozen revolts had threatened his empire, especially to the north and east, Darius was forced to move westward in 518 B.C. And an expedition to Greece had to be cut short because of the hostility of the Greeks. But these troubles were nothing compared with what Haggai and other Old Testament prophets predicted for the end times.

The shaking to which Haggai referred is the great tribulation (Matthew 24:29-30). There are to be wars under the seals (Revelation 6:3-4), under the trumpets (8:8; 9:13-21), and under the vials (16:12-16). There is to be a massive Russian invasion of Israel (Ezekiel 38-39) and finally the terrible battle of Armageddon is to take place (Revelation 19:17-21). Violent shaking indeed! {John Phillips, *Exploring the Minor Prophets*, page 254}.”

AV

ESV

LSV

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.</p> | <p>7 And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts.</p> | <p>7 ‘And I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the desirable things of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says Yahweh of hosts.</p> |
|---|---|--|

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“and the desire of all nations: Both the ESV and LSV butcher the phrase. They should have just left it alone as they could not improve upon it.

2:8 The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine,^a saith the Lord of hosts.

8a Thus God would have no problems financing the rebuilding from His own coffers, since it all belonged to Him anyway. It all belongs to God. He gives it to men to be used for His glory, and He can easily rake it away in a matter of seconds (Proverbs 23:5).

2:9 The glory of this latter house^a shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace,^{b-c} saith the Lord of hosts.

9a See notes under 2:7, especially regarding the “latter house”.

9b God would give the second temple peace until He allowed it to be destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. But it would also be defiled under Antiochus Epiphanies in 168 BC. But the Lord Jesus Christ would visit this temple multiple times during His earthly ministry, an honor Solomon’s temple never had.

9c God will give peace to Israel and to the nations. The United Nations will have absolutely nothing to do with it. The UN is totally impotent when it comes to bring peace to anywhere. And no political party or political philosophy will be able to reduce a single war or conflict anywhere. No religious leader can do anything to bring about “peace on earth”, no matter how many prayers any pope prays. This verse tells you WHO will bring in world peace (God) and HOW and WHEN He will bring in world peace- at the Millennium with Jesus Christ sitting on and ruling from the throne of David at Jerusalem.

2:10 In the four and twentieth *day* of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,

2:11 Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Ask now the priests *concerning* the law, saying,

2:12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

2:13 Then said Haggai, If *one that is* unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

2:14^a Then answered Haggai, and said, So *is* this^b people, and so *is* this nation before me, saith the Lord; and so *is* every work of their hands; and that which they offer there *is* unclean.

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14a These questions in verses 11-13 lead up to the observation by the Lord that the priests were working while defiled. The nation was defiled due to their disobedience and the priests were no better. Thus, any re-building of the temple and resumption of the sacrifices would not be accepted by the Lord due to this defilement. The nation and especially the priests had to be cleansed from their defilement before the work of re-establishing the Mosaic sacrifices and temple activities could continue. As long as their hearts were defiled, their hands would be as well and any work they would have been doing for the Lord would not be accepted. If they offered defiled sacrifices, would God accept it? The obvious answer was “no”. If a priest was ceremonially unclean from touching a corpse, could that priest minister? The answer again was no. So if the heart was similarly defiled, would that service be accepted as long as the heart was in such a state?

14b Not “my” people.

2:15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord:

2:16 Since those *days* were, when *one* came to an heap of twenty *measures*, there were *but* ten: when *one* came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty *vessels* out of the press, there were *but* twenty.

2:17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye *turned* not to me, saith the Lord.^a

17a Natural disasters are designed to get the attention of those affected, but the deafness of men in these situations is usually universal. They will attribute it to “natural causes”, “Mother Nature” or just plain bad-luck, failure to see (or ignoring) the hand of God in these situations is a usual sin of any generation. God uses nature to scream at the top of His lungs at rebellious man and man goes deaf. His towns and finances lie in ruins and man develops blindness.

2:18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth *month*, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord’s temple was laid, consider *it*.^{a-b}

18a See remarks 1:9 as this is similar. God would withhold His blessings and provisions until the people got themselves straightened out and back into the right relationship with God. He also sends judgments to get the attention of His people so they will consider their ways, acknowledge their sins, repent and return to Him (2:17).

18b This date would answer to December 24, 520 B.C. on our calendar.

2:19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless *you*.^a

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19a This is the promised blessing for obedience, where God would bless future efforts, work and harvests, if the people would obey His voice.

2:20 And again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying,

2:21 Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah,^a saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;

21a It is of continued interest to see that God will not directly speak to “important men”, even the governor and the high priest directly, but will always employ a prophet. There are several reasons why God operates in this manner, but I can see it as a test of humility. The object of the message may be a powerful and important man, but will he be humble enough to realize that if God has a message for him, He will not speak directly to this “important and powerful” man but will rather sent a humble and obscure prophet to deliver the message. A proud man may think “Let God speak directly to me! I will not listen to some preacher who is below me on the social ladder!” and thus might be offended enough to reject any message God would have for him. But a truly spiritual and humble man, even a “great” one, will receive a divine message, even if it is delivered in a plain brown wrapper.

2:22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.^a
b

22a This was a day of great political upheavals, from the fall of Babylon to the political situation of the Mede and Persian Empires. But even greater political shakings were ahead, as God was nowhere near finished in His dealings with the Gentile world powers. The ultimate shaking will come during the tribulation period, where we will see political consternation such as we have never seen in human history. God will overthrow all thrones and kingdoms as He will bring the Gentile world powers to an end in preparation for the establishment of the millennial kingdom.

22b This sounds like civil wars.

2:23 In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet:^a for I have chosen thee,^b saith the Lord of hosts.

23a There would be no need to for Zerubbabel to fear about the days ahead. Maybe he was insecure or fretful or worried about his future and the future of the remnant. Who wouldn't be in such days? Who would be even in days like today, in our current distress and we stand at the border of the tribulation period? God assured him that he would figure prominently into God's plans for the days ahead and for the future of the nation.

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“Signets” were objects of honor and authority (Song 8:6; Jeremiah 22:24) and were prized possessions of men as it would be used to sign and seal documents (Genesis 38:18).

23b One of Zerubbabel's ancestors, Coniah, was judged in the sense that none of his children would sit on the throne of David (Jeremiah 22:24-30). But because of his obedience, Zerubbabel would be means of having that curse partially reversed. This happened as Zerubbabel became the “tie” or meeting place of both Joseph's lineage and Mary's lineage. Both were of the line of David. Joseph, as the legal earthly step-father of Jesus, traced his line from Solomon (Matthew 1:13). Mary, His biological mother, traced her lineage through Nathan (Luke 3:27). Zerubbabel appears in both genealogies, the royal one through Joseph and the physical one through Mary. He tied both lines together. If Coniah was cursed, and his descendents (of which Joseph was one), the line of David had a “backup”- from Nathan, through Zerubbabel to Mary. The judgment on Coniah then would not invalidate the promise to David that his seed would sit on the throne of Israel, which eventually will be fulfilled in Christ.

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About the Author

Dr. John Cereghin was saved on February 9, 1978 at the age of 13 after being raised in the Roman Catholic church. He was saved after listening to a program on missionary shortwave radio station HCJB from Quito, Ecuador. He left the Catholic church in 1983 and joined Maranatha Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland in 1985. In 1986, she transferred from the University of Maryland to Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland, earning the first doctor's degree awarded by the school in 1995. Dr. Cereghin also earned his Master of Theology degree from Foundations Theological Seminary in Dunn, North Carolina in 1994.

Dr. Cereghin's ministry background includes working at Radio Station WOEL in Elkton, Maryland (1986-1998), teaching in various capacities at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland from 1988-1998, also serving as Dean of Men, Registrar and Academic Dean, and pastoring Queen Anne's Baptist Church, Centreville, Maryland (1989-1990), Charity Baptist Church, Mebane, North Carolina (1994-1995) and Grace Baptist Church in Smyrna, Delaware (1998-present). He is married to his wife Teresa and they have 4 children and 3 grandchildren.