

AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE PROPHECY OF

HAGGAI

After the return from captivity, Haggai was sent to encourage the people to rebuild the temple, and to reprove their neglect. To encourage their undertaking, the people are assured that the glory of the second temple shall far exceed that of the first, by the appearing therein of Christ, the Desire of all nations.

CHAPTER 1

Haggai reproves the Jews for neglecting the temple. (1-11) He promises God's assistance to them. (12-15)

<5000> **Haggai 1:1**

Vs. 1-11: Observe the sin of the Jews, after their return from captivity in Babylon. Those employed for God may be driven from their work by a storm, yet they must go back to it. They did not say that they would not build a temple, but, Not yet. Thus men do not say they will never repent and reform, and be religious, but, Not yet. And so the great business we were sent into the world to do, is not done. There is a proneness in us to think wrongly of discouragements in our duty, as if they were a discharge from our duty, when they are only for the trial of our courage and faith. They neglected the building of God's house, that they might have more time and money for worldly affairs. That the punishment might answer to the sin, the poverty they thought to prevent by not building the temple, God brought upon them for not building it. Many good works have been intended, but not done, because men supposed the proper time was not come. Thus believers let slip opportunities of usefulness, and sinners delay the concerns of their souls, till too late. If we labor only for the meat

that perishes, as the Jews here, we are in danger of losing our labor; but we are sure it shall not be in vain in the Lord, if we labor for the meat which lasts to eternal life. If we would have the comfort and continuance of temporal enjoyments, we must have God as our Friend. See also ⁴⁰²³Luke 12:33. When God crosses our temporal affairs, and we meet with trouble and disappointment, we shall find the cause is, that the work we have to do for God and our own souls is left undone, and we seek our own things more than the things of Christ. How many, who plead that they cannot afford to give to pious or charitable designs, often lavish ten times as much in needless expenses on their houses and themselves! But those are strangers to their own interests, who are full of care to adorn and enrich their own houses, while God's temple in their hearts lies waste. It is the great concern of every one, to apply to the necessary duty of self-examination and communion with our own hearts concerning our spiritual state. Sin is what we must answer for; duty is what we must do. But many are quick-sighted to pry into other people's ways, who are careless of their own. If any duty has been neglected, that is no reason why it should still be so. Whatever God will take pleasure in when done, we ought to take pleasure in doing. Let those who have put off their return to God, return with all their heart, while there is time.

⁴⁰¹²Haggai 1:12

Vs. 12-15: The people returned to God in the way of duty. In attending to God's ministers, we must have respect to him that sent them. The word of the Lord has success, when by his grace he stirs up our spirits to comply with it. It is in the day of Divine power we are made willing. When God has work to be done, he will either find or make men fit to do it. Every one helped, as his ability was; and this they did with a regard to the Lord as their God. Those who have lost time, need to redeem time; and the longer we have loitered in folly, the more haste we should make. God met them in a way of mercy. Those who work for him, have him with them; and if he be for us, who can be against us? This should stir us up to be diligent.

CHAPTER 2

*Greater glory promised to the second temple than to the first. (1-9)
Their sins hindered the work. (10-19) The kingdom of Christ
foretold. (20-23)*

Haggai 2:1

Vs. 1-9: Those who are hearty in the Lord's service shall receive encouragement to proceed. But they could not build such a temple then, as Solomon built. Though our gracious God is pleased if we do as well as we can in his service, yet our proud hearts will scarcely let us be pleased, unless we do as well as others, whose abilities are far beyond ours. Encouragement is given the Jews to go on in the work notwithstanding. They have God with them, his Spirit and his special presence. Though he chastens their transgressions, his faithfulness does not fail. The Spirit still remained among them. And they shall have the Messiah among them shortly; "He that should come." Convulsions and changes would take place in the Jewish church and state, but first should come great revolutions and commotions among the nations. He shall come, as the Desire of all nations; desirable to all nations, for in him shall all the earth be blessed with the best of blessings; long expected and desired by all believers. The house they were building should be filled with glory, very far beyond Solomon's temple. This house shall be filled with glory of another nature. If we have silver and gold, we must serve and honor God with it, for the property is his. If we have not silver and gold, we must honor him with such as we have, and he will accept us. Let them be comforted that the glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, in what would be beyond all the glories of the first house, the presence of the Messiah, the Son of God, the Lord of glory, personally, and in human nature. Nothing but the presence of the Son of God, in human form and nature, could fulfill this. Jesus is the Christ, is He that should come, and we are to look for no other. This prophecy alone is enough to silence the Jews, and condemn their obstinate rejection of Him, concerning whom all their prophets spake. If God be with us, peace is with us. But the Jews under the latter temple had much trouble; but this promise is fulfilled in that spiritual peace which Jesus Christ has by his

blood purchased for all believers. All changes shall make way for Christ to be desired and valued by all nations. And the Jews shall have their eyes opened to behold how precious He is, whom they have hitherto rejected.

Haggai 2:10

Vs. 10-19: Many spoiled this good work, by going about it with unholy hearts and hands, and were likely to gain no advantage by it. The sum of these two rules of the law is, that sin is more easily learned from others than holiness. The impurity of their hearts and lives shall make the work of their hands, and all their offerings, unequalled before God. The case is the same with us. When employed in any good work, we should watch over ourselves, lest we render it unequalled by our corruptions. When we begin to make conscience of duty to God, we may expect his blessing; and who so is wise will understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. God will curse the blessings of the wicked, and make bitter the prosperity of the careless; but he will sweeten the cup of affliction to those who diligently serve him.

Haggai 2:20

Vs. 20-23: The Lord will preserve Zerubbabel and the people of Judah, amidst their enemies. Here is also foretold the establishment and continuance of the kingdom of Christ; by union with whom his people are sealed with the Holy Ghost, sealed with his image, thus distinguished from all others. Here also is foretold the changes, even to that time when the kingdom of Christ shall overthrow and occupy the place of all the empires which opposed his cause. The promise has special reference to Christ, who descended from Zerubbabel in a direct line, and is the sole Builder of the gospel temple. Our Lord Jesus is the Signet on God's right hand, for all power is given to him, and derived from him. By him, and in him, all the promises of God are yea and amen. Whatever changes take place on earth, all will promote the comfort, honor, and happiness of his servants.