

## **BUILD GOD'S HOUSE**

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Brian Orchard, February 5, 2021

The Apostle Paul made it very clear that those living in what he described as the end of the ages were meant to draw lessons from the things that God had orchestrated in the past. Now, of course, what He had in mind at that time talking to the Corinthians was the Exodus and Israel coming out of Egypt through the Red Sea and the lessons that that was meant to portray for us – spiritual lessons.

That's very true of all of the prophets. A great deal of information is passed on to us from things that have happened in the past. We are going to look at the message from one of the prophets sent to the tribe of Judah at a very specific time in their history. The message and the events tie together and give us a great deal to think about. It provides a message for those people who will actually be living at the end of the ages, as Paul referred to it. The Jews were in captivity at this particular point in time and our story begins with a miraculous act of God. Let's look at the end of 2 Chronicles chapter 36 because it leads into the book of Ezra. We see here the captivity of Judah by Babylon, the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. And right at the end, the last couple of verses of 2 Chronicles refers to a proclamation that Cyrus the king of Persia made. That is picked up again in the book of Ezra and almost stated word for word.

**Ezra 1:1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled...**

There is an interesting connection right there. We'll look at what Jeremiah said, as being referred to here, in Jeremiah chapter 29, verse 10.

**Jeremiah 29:10 For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.**

**11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**

That's the reference that is being made here. After 70 years God was going to do something, and this is exactly what He's doing. It's a fantastic miracle in the sense of to whom He is making this proclamation and what is contained in it. Back in Ezra 1:1:

**Ezra 1:1 ... the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,**

This must have come as a shock, after 70 years of captivity, to have the one holding you in captivity and having the power over you, to turn around and to make this sort of a proclamation.

**2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah.**

Babylonians had destroyed the temple. Now God is inspiring the ones who did the destroying to announce its rebuilding.

**3 Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem.** (Just imagine who's mouth this is coming out of.)

**4 And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.** (Providing the means to go ahead with the rebuilding program.)

Although these words are from Cyrus, they are actually from God. God is making a very strong statement here and three times in the short proclamation, as it is recorded for us, is a reference to building the temple, to building the house of God. So, the first thing I believe for us to grasp, and the message we're going to look at in just a little bit here, stands on this foundation of how important it is to God where He dwells. It's very, very important to God and we must not demean that in any way, or not appreciate its importance.

I would like to underline the importance of this. The message that we're going to read is from one of the shorter prophets, but it's a powerful message. I want to follow the line that leads from the tabernacle in the wilderness right through into the future. To do that I'm going to go back to Exodus 25, verse 8. This is familiar, which is why I start here. I could go back a little further, but this verse will give us the feeling that I feel we need. This is where God is preparing to have them build the tabernacle. He says:

**Exodus 25:8 And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.**

It's important to God. He is dwelling amongst His people. God didn't need to dwell amongst His people. He had a great throne in heaven. To come down and spend time with man in a tent tabernacle, the importance of that is that His focus will always be on His people. The word sanctuary means to make a sacred place, as in a permanent dwelling, a permanent residing place for God. As I say it's rather remarkable, given the glory and the greatness of God's throne in heaven. To dwell in a physical structure

made by the hands of man, shows us that it's very, very important in God's relationship with man.

**Exodus 29:45 I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God.**

It's not just a matter of dwelling. There's a reason for God dwelling and it impacts the people, Israel in this particular case, and gives them a daily focus, a regular focus of God, where God is, what God is doing and what their role is.

**46 And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, (that's a part of the deal here) who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord their God.**

That's where our line starts. But let's come to 1 Kings chapter 6 as we move down the timeline in that sense. I'm not making a big deal about the timeline, but I'm just moving on through certain statements that God has made.

**1 Kings 6:12 "Concerning this temple which you are building...**

Now we're coming down to the time of Solomon's temple. We're moving on from the tabernacle to Solomon's temple.

**12 ... if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David.**

**13 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel."**

It's moved from the tent tabernacle dwelling to a permanent, glorious temple that Solomon is going to build. It's still all about God dwelling with His people. Moving forward we come to Isaiah chapter 12.

**Isaiah 12:6 Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!"**

Now, this is coming from the prophet Isaiah, so it has a future element to it. We see that back in verse 12 of chapter 11 where it says:

**Isaiah 11:12 He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.**

This "dwelling in the midst" now takes on a little broader spectrum in the sense of other nations. This word for nations is *goy*, which means nations other than Israel. Other nations are going to be brought into a focus of where God dwells and ultimately the whole world. I assume we'd understand that. God is enlarging the concept of His dwelling with people.

**Zechariah 2:10** "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the Lord.

**11** "Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.

It's very, very important to God. It just keeps coming up over and over again, that He will be glorified to His people Israel and ultimately to the world, to the many nations that are going to be joined to the Lord in that day. And they will become "My people". God's throne is in heaven, but He desires to dwell in the midst of His people.

**Zechariah 8:3** "Thus says the Lord: 'I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the Lord of hosts, the Holy Mountain.'

Fascinating, the concept here of a City of Truth, simply from the point of view of where we are today where truth is not a very abundant commodity to be had and to think of a time ahead of us (and I find great comfort in this) truth will be established as the way of life for all nations and all peoples. And when it comes from God, it is truth. You can know it's right and you can, as they say, take it to the bank. Whereas today, we live in an environment where we do not know what is truth, if what we're being told is true or not. And you can come to this time when it's going to be the City of Truth. It's a wonderful thing to contemplate. The world's attention will be focused on the truth of God, focused on where God is dwelling. Moving forward in this timeline:

**2 Corinthians 6:16** And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

Paul is referring very specifically, of course, to the Church and to us. There's no change in its importance to God. It's a sacred place, it's a permanent place to reside.

**Hebrews 3:6** but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

I'm missing the obvious scriptures, because they're so familiar to you. The Church is the household of God, a dwelling place of God in the Spirit, as Paul said to the Church in Ephesus. Finally, in this timeline, let's come through to Revelation chapter 21.

**Revelation 21:3** And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

We go from the tabernacle in the wilderness to the New Jerusalem, and there's no deviation. I suppose we could have taken the timeline all the way back to the Garden of

Eden when God was there with Adam and Eve. But I think the point from the tabernacle forward is sufficient.

There is a point on this timeline that we come to for this particular prophet and that is the prophet Haggai. Haggai is a prophet on this timeline and his message has very much everything to do with where God dwells and the importance of it. That's the significance of this book, and without some of that background I didn't feel that we would necessarily get the weight of the message that Haggai presents to us here.

Cyrus' decree to build God's house was given to Zerubbabel. I'm just going to pick up a little more from Ezra before we actually turn to Haggai.

**Ezra 3:11 And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel." Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.**

This group is a remnant, a section of the Jews. It's not the entire house of Judah that have been sent back by Cyrus to begin the rebuilding project of the temple. That was God's desire after 70 years of captivity. Hopefully, great lessons have been learned through the captivity and what God is about to restore. That's what Jeremiah was talking about. So they began the rebuilding project of the temple. I don't know if I can make it a complete 100% statement, but anytime God's work is done amongst men on this earth (up to this point in time because Satan had a fairly free hand, not a totally free hand), there is opposition. There is opposition to the work that people do in the name of God and for God. Satan is always there to try and stop it. He's right here, "johnny on the spot", as they start to rebuild the temple.

**Ezra 4:1 Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the Lord God of Israel, 2 they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' houses, and said to them, (and this is an incredible, carnal attitude here) "Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here."**

We touched recently here in a sermon where the people who had been implanted back in Samaria when Israel had been removed and gone into captivity, these people... Lions came out and were chasing them, they were having trouble so they wanted to know how to worship the God of that land. You might remember that. And so, these people are saying, "We worship your God as you do." But if you'll remember of course, they were not. They did not know the true God. They continued to worship their pagan gods and so what they're saying here is disingenuous and not exactly true. Zerubbabel was wise enough to know that.

**3 But Zerubbabel and Jeshua ... said to them, "You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us."**

**4 Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building,**

**5 and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.**

And so, they come along, doing everything that they can to disrupt this building program and I'm hoping that we can see this in a larger term. We're going to go right into the middle of it as we progress here. It's not just a physical building that is being portrayed here. It's a work that God is doing, as I said, right through to the end.

They wrote a letter to King Artaxerxes and made certain false accusations and appealed to the king in a very compelling way.

**13 Let it now be known to the king that, if this city is built and the walls completed, they will not pay tax, tribute, or custom, and the king's treasury will be diminished.**

They appealed to the king in terms of the royal purse and the king was listening to what they said. Then he issued a proclamation to stop work on the temple. This is coming from King Artaxerxes.

**21 Now give the command to make these men cease, that this city may not be built until the command is given by me.**

This man seems to be oblivious to the direction that was given by Cyrus previous to him. A little later they go back, and research and they do find out that Cyrus indeed made this proclamation, but for now he issues this decree to stop.

**23 Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter was read before [these people], they went up in haste to Jerusalem against the Jews, and by force of arms made them cease.**

**24 Thus the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem ceased, and it was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.**

The building program came to a halt. You could read this and say that the enemies of God's work had a victory. They were able to stop the building program. But God has a somewhat different view of what's taking place here, because it's not just that they were forced to stop. It's what happened after they stopped work on the rebuilding program.

Now, we have a period here of something like 15 years, maybe 16. 15 years where work has not been done. We step into the picture with the prophet Haggai.

**Ezra 5:1** Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah (they are contemporaries)... prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them.

**2 So Zerubbabel ... and Jeshua ... rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem...**

Something has gone on here, over the 15 year period, that was more than just simply the legality of not being able to do the work. And Haggai steps into the picture at this particular point in time with a message to God's people who are not doing the work that God had sent them to do.

We know through Haggai that God has a little different view of this than just simply that they legally couldn't go on with the building program.

**Haggai 1:1** In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel ... and to Joshua ... saying,

**2 "Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying: 'This people says...**

God taps into the people's attitude before He goes any further. And that's where the problem emerges, the attitude of these people that has developed over this lay-off period of time. The people are saying:

**2 ... "The time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built."**

"We were forced to stop. What can we do? We can't do anything." And yet, when Haggai went to Zerubbabel at that period after 15 years, Zerubbabel got up and got back into the building program. Apparently they could have done it earlier if they had wanted to. But they're saying, "Well, no. All the enemies are still about here. We can't go and do this." They were timid, apparently, and holding back from stepping forward with confidence to do the work that God had asked them to do. And so we come to verse 2:

**2 "Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built."**

**3 Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying,**

**4 "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"** (Getting directly to their attitude and really challenging them.)

**5 Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: "Consider your ways!**

There's an attitude problem here that is being addressed, the people have let their own houses come before the importance of God's house. That is a driving lesson that comes through this particular message from Haggai. The people had let down. They had become lax. What was important to God was not important to them anymore and

they're obviously doing their own thing with their own lives, benefitting themselves and not doing what God wanted done.

This is not the first time that this attitude of God's people comes forward. Something for us to think about. It came through when God told them to send spies into the land that He had promised them and to bring back a report. God knew it was a land of milk and honey. God knew it was a great land that He was giving them. "Send out some spies. Let them come back and tell everyone how great it is and encourage them to get up and go forward." You know the story.

**Numbers 13:30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."**

Great attitude! Let's go and do what God says to do. He has promised us this land. He promised He'd give it to us. Okay, there are a few little difficulties, but God will take care of that. Let's go!

**31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we."**

There's that negativity coming in. They point out the descendants of Anak. There were giants. There were large people. They were looking at all the negatives and pulled back from doing what God wanted done.

**Numbers 14:1 So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.**

**4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."**

Incredible! Absolutely incredible! After all that God had done for them and all that God said He would do for them. That wasn't in their vision. That wasn't what they were seeing. Come across to Proverbs 29 for a principle.

**Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man brings a snare...**

That is in both of those examples that I've just recounted to you and is certainly true in terms of the rebuilding project that Haggai is addressing.

**25 The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.**

These are principles, of course. We read, not just looking in hindsight backward to a situation, but we bring it forward for us to think about today. "Whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe." Our trust and our looking to God is going to have to grow. Our confidence is going to have to grow because if we look around at what's going on in the world around us it's becoming a fearful situation. That will be a snare to us in our spiritual lives if we allow that fear to grow and to develop. It has to be trust in God.

Back to the book of Haggai. God has said, "You're taking care of yourselves, but look at My house. It's in ruins and nothing is happening. Consider your ways!" That's a fairly strong statement that God is making: "Consider your ways!"

**Haggai 1:6** "You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes."

**7 Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Consider your ways!"**

Twice stated and then sandwiched in between those two statements is the physical things that were going on in their lives. God is saying, "You're not being blessed. Consider, think about why you are not being blessed." In Philippians 2 we see this aspect of human nature is not just restricted to one point in time. We see this statement:

**Philippians 2:21** For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.

Same situation. We see it cropping up again here through the Apostle Paul's writings. All seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus telling us clearly there have to be priorities in our lives. There has to be a priority in our life and God, clearly, has to come first. 2 Timothy 4, verse 10, we get this situation with Paul:

**2 Timothy 4:10** for Demas has forsaken me...

Paul is doing the work of God. Demas was supposed to be right there with him, sleeves rolled up, getting in and helping Paul do God's work

**10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world...**

What are you doing? "You're building your paneled houses while My house is in ruins." Same sort of concept. He loved this present world:

**10 ... and has departed for Thessalonica...**

**11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.**

**15 You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.**

**16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me (Paul said). May it not be charged against them.**

Paul seems to be well acquainted with the problem of worldly distraction from the task at hand. That is not just relative to one particular person or one particular point in time. We need to contrast that attitude with the attitude of King David. Psalm 132, picking it up in verse 3. This is David speaking. This is David's attitude.

**Psalm 132:3** "Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, or go up to the comfort of my bed;

**4 I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids,**

**5 until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."**

Incredible attitude, beautiful attitude. "I won't take care of my own needs until God's needs are taken care of." Very instructive for us in terms of an attitude.

**13 For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place:**

**14 "This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it."**

There is God's attitude. David picks up on that and makes it his attitude. We're coming back now to Haggai "To consider" is not a light thing. It is to consider your heart, or it is to reveal the true intent of your heart by seeking and searching. In Lamentations chapter 3, verse 40, this statement is made and it backs up what it means to consider:

**Lamentations 3:40** Let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the Lord;

**41 Let us lift our hearts and hands to God in heaven.**

**42 We have transgressed and rebelled; You have not pardoned.**

It means, to search very diligently and to seek into your own heart. We emphasize this prior to Passover every year. It's an important activity for us to do. We need to be doing it on a fairly regular basis, but it's something that we need to do. If things are not right (going back to Haggai), consider. That's what he's saying here, consider. You're not being blessed. Things are not going right, so consider. Think about it. It's good for us to do that probably at all times. I'm just emphasizing it here.

**Haggai 1:8** Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the Lord.

I wonder, and it's probably true that Paul, as he spoke to the Church in Corinth, understood some of these principles from the "so-called" Old Testament when he talks about building God's building. You gather the material together. You have gold, silver, wood, hay, stubble and so on. But go and build a building, because that's what is being talked about, what is going on. Verse 9 is a verse I'd like you to think about and consider because I do. I come back to it every now and again. I see something very important in this verse for us today, for those of us involved in the work of God today.

**9 "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the Lord of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.**

I think we need to think about that in terms of the Church today. I think we can clearly see that the Church is in need of a rebuilding program. I can't believe that anyone would say the condition of the Church today is great, wonderful. I think we all agree that something needs to be done and I think we need to ask ourselves and what I would hear, instead of our own house I put in our own organization. "Because of My house that is in ruins while every one of you runs to his own organization." Think about it from that point of view. I think you'll see that it's worth some consideration.

We are attempting, as you well know, to put forward... Well, it didn't start with we, but we're backing up the people who are doing it now because when they started TruthSum as a website they wanted to reach out and get people from other organizations involved in this project. It was not meant to be a Father's Call project. It was meant to be independent of and a point of truth, that "House of Truth" that we read about in Zechariah. Just a point where people could reference truth.

Unfortunately, what we've discovered is that no one else from any other organization is interested. It goes from mild disinterest to pretty vitriolic disinterest in doing that. They're not prepared to step outside of their own organizations to assist getting truth before God's people. Verse 9 of Haggai has some merit for us to consider what our attitude might be about where God's building is. It lies in ruins and what are we doing? Looking after ourselves. Putting our life, our comfort first before God's work? Might want to think about that.

**10 Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit.**

**11 For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."**

He's asking them to look at their circumstances after 15 years, to think about it and to consider why they're in the condition they are in because he's turning their attitude back to the building program.

**12 Then Zerubbabel ... and Joshua ... with all the remnant of the people, (Like I said, it's a remnant because the whole tribe of the house of Judah did not come back.) 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 feared the presence of the Lord.**

**13 Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, spoke the Lord's message to the people, saying, "I am with you, says the Lord."**

This is one of those positive examples where the people have responded to the prophet that God has sent to them. Haggai has gone with a message and they have considered their ways. So God immediately says, "I am with you. I'll support you, back

you up. You get back into the work and put My work first, I'm right with you. I will back you up and support you."

**14 So the Lord stirred up the spirit of ... and the spirit of Joshua ... and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God,**

They got back into it with all of their heart. They put their personal interests to one side. They heeded the message. So God said, "I'm right with you. I'm right there." Zechariah 8, remember I said these two are contemporaries. Picking it up in verse 6:

**Zechariah 8:6 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, will it also be marvelous in My eyes?' says the Lord of hosts.** (As the people re-focused, God backed them up and came right in behind them, blessed the efforts they put out.)

**7 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west;**

**8 I will bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness.'** (God is addressing through Zechariah the same situation. It says here in the end of verse 9:)

**9 ... For the house of the Lord of hosts, that the temple might be built.**

Even Zechariah is backing them up with the knowledge that God will bless them, support them in the work that they are doing. We come to chapter 2 of Haggai. If I understand the dating correctly it's about a month later, after the work had resumed on the temple.

**Haggai 2:1 In the seventh month, on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying:**

**2 "Speak now to Zerubbabel ... and to Joshua ... and to the remnant of the people, saying:**

**3 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?**

Now we get into an interesting little section here where God, through the words of Haggai, is going to lift the focus from that temple that's lying in ruins (which is as nothing compared to Solomon's temple) and move it forward. In their eyes it was as nothing and he says, "But don't just focus on the fact that this is as nothing compared to Solomon's temple."

**4 Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the Lord; 'and be strong, Joshua ... and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the Lord, 'and work; for I am with you,' says the Lord of hosts.**

“Don’t be put off that this is a small, insignificant work by comparison to things that have gone on in the past. If you roll up your sleeves, if you get in and work for My work, I’m right with you, I’ll back you up and I’ll support you.”

**5 'According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!'** (If we look at Zechariah 4, verse 6, he says to them:)

**Zechariah 4:6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts.**

That’s how the work will be done. And when the people’s attitude is in tune with God’s attitude, God’s Spirit can move things forward powerfully. This work is to be done by the power of God’s Holy Spirit. It’s a vital ingredient and of course, that’s what’s being said here by Haggai. He says, “My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!” We could go back to Exodus 34, verse 10, where the covenant was made, where God promised to do a powerful work through His people. That’s not a building of a building. That’s a work that God was going to do with His people. Just to reinforce this point, Isaiah 41, verse 8. We need to remember this, too:

**Isaiah 41:8 "But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend.**

**9 You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest regions, and said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away:**

**10 Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'**

**13 For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'**

As we get into to doing God’s work, doing God’s will in the building program that we are a part of, we need to remember that. God is right there. He will support and strengthen. The admonition is appropriate for us today. Romans 8, verse 31, simply says:

**Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?**

We need to remember that. That’s an important point for us in this day and age and the environment in which we find ourselves. Coming back to chapter 2 of Haggai we take one giant step forward in time. This house is nothing compared to the former glory. Now God is going to take that way forward.

**Haggai 2:6** "For thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land;

**7** and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the Lord of hosts.

Touching on what we read earlier about all nations back in the book of Isaiah. God is going to shake all nations and bring the attention of the world to where God dwells because He's going to fill this temple with glory. We need to ask the question, "What temple is He talking about?" But let us conclude this section.

**8** 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the Lord of hosts.

**9** 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the Lord of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the Lord of hosts."

What about the shaking of the heavens and the earth? Does that give us a timing?

**Hebrews 12:25** See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, how much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,

**26** whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven."

**27** Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

**28** Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

There is a time coming when God is going to shake the heavens and the earth so that all that is not of spiritual quality will disappear, will dissipate and only the spiritual will be left. That will point the whole world, all nations, to God. God will dwell in His temple in Jerusalem and it will become a focal point for everyone. But I also read this and ask the question, "Is it possible that at some point in the future God will shake His Church to see what is spiritual and what is not spiritual? Is that a way that we might finally get unity within the body of Christ, the unity we don't have now?" It seems to be that the Church of God has no stomach for unity except to be unified with the things relating to self. Maybe the charge of God is yet to shake the Church to see what is spiritual, what is solid and what will remain. That flows into the work that we are doing now; that we are being asked to do.

**Joel 3:16** The Lord also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

**17** "So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again."

Matthew 24 makes it quite clear that when this shaking takes place, the return of Jesus Christ is imminent.

**Matthew 24:29** "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

**30** Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, (Referring to the return of Jesus Christ.)

**31** and He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

It's signaling the return of Jesus Christ. Where does Jesus Christ return? We've covered this recently, just to reinforce it. It's important. When Jesus Christ returns, where does He go?

**Malachi 3:1** "... the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple,

He's going to come to His temple and, according to this prophecy in Haggai, "The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former." The Church that He returns to is refined, it's wearing white. It is ready to marry Christ and Christ is going to fill the temple with His glory. And it's going to be part of bringing the attention of the world together towards where God is, towards what God is doing. So, very clearly, Haggai's message is for the Church today. Still reading here in Haggai 2, it talks about clean and unclean.

**Haggai 2:10** On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month...

**11** "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying,

**12** "If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?" Then the priests answered and said, "No." (Going back to the law of clean and unclean.)

**13** And Haggai said, "If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?" So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

**14 Then Haggai answered and said, "'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the Lord, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.**

He's referring back to the law of putting a difference between the holy and the unholy. It's probably a reference to, as Ezra points out, "the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of the land." It's a call to cleansing. Come out of those situations. They've been off-base for 15 years. They've mixed, they've intermarried with the people roundabout and come back to square one. Let's re-focus and focus on what God wants done. The temple of God is holy, which temple we are, Paul says. God's indwelling presence is to be protected with holiness. As Peter said, "also be holy in all of your conduct." That comes back to us.

**15 'And now, carefully consider from this day forward: from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the Lord —**

**16 since those days, when one came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were but ten; when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were but twenty.**

**17 I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me,' says the Lord.**

**18 'Consider now from this day forward, (learn the lesson that I am giving you through Haggai) from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid — consider it: (Think back over what's been going on for the last 15 years.)**

**19 Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.'"**

Another affirmation from God. When you get back with the right focus and you put My house, My work in front of your house and the things that are important to you personally, I will be with you and I will bless your efforts.

**20 And again the word of the Lord came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying,**

**21 "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying: 'I will shake heaven and earth.**

**22 I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms. I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them; The horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.**

This has to be stepped into the future. This was not something for Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, the head of the building program, to do at that time. He was not

able to overthrow thrones and kingdoms. So this is a reference to the type. Zerubbabel becomes a type of Jesus Christ.

**23 'In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant ... 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the Lord...'**

Christ will return to His temple and the temple will be built.

**Zechariah 4:9 "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.**

**10 For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth."**

What we see is a continuation of the work that was begun with Israel coming right on into the future. It's always about God wanting to dwell with His people on His terms. In Exodus 15, interesting comment here as they come out of Egypt. They come through the Red Sea.

**Exodus 15:2 The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him.**

What is interesting is this word "praise". Because it is the same word, as we see in verse 13, that is "habitation", where it says:

**13 You in Your mercy have led forth the people whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in Your strength to Your holy habitation.**

It's exactly the same word and the *King James version* has for verse 2:

**2 ... I will prepare him an habitation;**

The concept is right here, and it flows right through, in particular, to the Church today. But we also see a reference here in Zechariah to a Branch.

**Zechariah 3:8 'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.**

This is referenced back in Isaiah chapter 11, clearly referring to Jesus Christ.

**Zechariah 6:12 Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; (This is Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is building a temple.)**

**13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."**

This is what I said that Paul obviously understood and brought forward in talking to the Corinthian Church where he said, "You are God's building." It's a building program that we are involved in. So Zerubbabel is a type of Christ. As he built the second temple, so Jesus Christ is building the spiritual temple to which He will return. Paul is writing to the Church in Colossae and he's talking about a mystery. And it really is a mystery, from a human point of view.

**Colossians 1:26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.** (It's not a mystery to us.)

**27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

Jesus Christ is doing a work within each one of us. We are individually a building block for the temple to which Jesus Christ will return. It's a work that is ongoing and it's a focus that we must have. It's very easy to get wrapped up in those things that pertain to us, particularly in this environment, in this day and age. And it's very easy to put things that pertain to us first before the work that God is doing. Allowing Christ to live His life in us today has to be a paramount goal for all of us.

The glory of this latter house will be much greater than the former. The glory of Solomon's temple was beyond description. We have to look at the message of Haggai and ask ourselves and consider, which house is more important to us? Is your house more important than God's house? This is something that you and I must take time to consider! ◇