

but the explanation is in the words later in the verse. The proud leaders will have been taken away and the ones remaining will have a feeling of satisfaction toward God because of their renewal of freedom in their own country.

Verse 12. *The afflicted and poor people* were the ones who had been mistreated by the princes and false prophets. These were to be restored to their native land so that they could resume the holy service.

Verse 13. *The remnant* are the ones designated in Ezra 2: 64. *Shall not do iniquity* is the prediction that idolatry will have been eradicated from the practices of the people by the effects of the captivity. The other good things mentioned in the verse were to result also from the purifying effects of the captivity.

Verse 14. *Daughter of Zion* is an endearing term for Jerusalem and her people. She is bidden to sing and rejoice and that is because her people were to be released from the Babylonian captivity.

Verse 15. *Taken away thy judgments* refers to the reversal of the state of servitude that had been imposed upon the nation for its sins. The enemy (Babylon) was overthrown and God's people were relieved from the oppression.

Verse 16. Zion was a special spot in Jerusalem that was used as the headquarters for the kings. The return from captivity was to bring joy again to the place.

Verse 17. The success of Zion was to be assured by the presence of the Lord who had never ceased to love His people. He is mighty and will enable the nation to express its joy by singing the Lord's praises.

Verse 18. *Solemn assembly* pertains to the national gathering in the name of the Lord. All such meetings had been discontinued during the captivity.

Verse 19. *Undo all that afflict thee* denotes the overthrow of the heathen who had oppressed Israel. *Her that halteth* refers to the nation of God that had been held back by the chastisement from proceeding in the regular services of Jerusalem.

Verse 20. The gist of this verse is in the words *when I turn back your captivity*. The exile in Babylon was decreed by the Lord as a punishment upon his people for their sin of idolatry. When that event had accomplished

the Lord's purpose it was decreed and predicted that the nation would return home.

HAGGAI 1

Verse 1. The reader should consult the book of Ezra, especially the last part of the 4th and first part of the 5th chapter; that will throw much light on the book we are studying. The Jews had been given authority by the king of Persia to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem but they had let the work cease for various reasons. Then the prophets were used by the Lord to stir up the people and shame them for their selfishness in being more concerned with their own affairs than they were with those of the Lord. After the prodding by these prophets the workers upon the building resumed their task. The reference in Ezra is very brief but our present book will give us a fuller view of the situation. The date of the book is given as the second year of Darius who was king in the Medo-Persian Empire at that time.

Verse 2. This verse reveals the excuse that was given by the people why they were not going on with the work of the temple. It was the age-old attempt at defence by saying it was not the right time yet, or that "there is plenty of time yet."

Verse 3. This was the word of the Lord although the people received it at the mouth of the prophet who was His inspired spokesman.

Verse 4. Haggaï chides them with their inconsistency because they were interested in their own personal affairs instead of the Lord's. They were building homes for their personal use and allowing the Lord's house to lie waste.

Verse 5. As a means of arousing them to a sense of their real position before God, the prophet calls their attention to some circumstances in their affairs that should have indicated to them that something was wrong.

Verse 6. The general subject of this verse is that almost everything in their personal occupations was having very little success. Those were the years when God sometimes punished his people with temporal reverses of various kinds, and their experiences were along that line.

Verse 7. Calling attention to their unrighteous ways, the prophet proceeds to tell his people what they should do to regain the good will of the Lord.

Verse 8. The temple was constructed of various materials such as stone, metal and wood. The wood was to be obtained from the mountains because the valleys did not produce it. They were told that by taking this interest in the work of the Lord they would glorify Him and their conduct would be pleasing in the divine sight.

Verse 9. The prophet backs up the exhortation of the preceding verse by resuming the thought expressed in verse 6. The key to the subject is in the words *because of mine house that is waste*. They could not make the plea of inability for work, for they were at that very time running *every man unto his own house*.

Verse 10. Moisture from above and fertility from the earth had been withheld from their crops as a punishment for their neglect of duty.

Verse 11. This verse sums up the general shortages they had suffered in about all the departments of their industrial and agricultural life. Of course they knew they had been thus restricted but they acted as if they thought it had been by accident. Hence the Lord informs them that He had called for all of their afflictions.

Verse 12. The exhortation of the prophet had the desired effect. It is interesting to note that in their obedience it includes the words of the prophet with those of God. It was as if it should be, for when God inspires a man to deliver an order to the people it comes with as much authority as if He spoke directly to them.

Verse 13. When the people showed a willingness to obey the Lord, the prophet encouraged them by assuring them that the Lord was with them.

Verse 14. *The Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel*. The context shows what means the Lord used to do this stirring, for it was through the mouth of the prophet. When God does anything through the words of an inspired spokesman it is equivalent to doing it direct and will have the same result as if done in such a manner.

Verse 15. The date of the events of this chapter is made more specific than it was in the first verse by giving the particular day of the month; the 24th.

HAGGAI 2

Verse 1. This chapter begins about a month later than the close of the preceding one. In that time the work on the temple has gone forward to

the point of getting the foundation laid. That made it possible to see something of the appearance of the completed building when that time came.

Verse 2. The Lord then gave the prophet instructions to call the attention of the builders and the people to the work as it then appeared.

Verse 3. There were people living who had seen the temple that was destroyed by the Babylonians. They were asked to make the comparison, and it was suggested that they would conclude the present building to be inferior to the first one. This event of comparison is given more detailed notice in Ezra 3: 12.

Verse 4. This verse begins with the word *yet* which indicates that God did not profess to regard the present building as actually as good as the other. However, He encourages them to be of good cheer and promises them to be with them in the work.

Verse 5. The same God who brought Israel out of Egypt and sustained them with His spirit, is the one who has led them through the trials just now going on and will continue to lead them if they will obey.

Verse 6. Following a practice we have before seen with the prophets, the Lord has Haggai to leap from a fortunate event in the history of fleshly Israel to one of spiritual Israel or the church. This and the following three verses deal with that subject, and the imagery is drawn from the literal shaking of Mt. Sinai when the Mosaic system was given to the people of Israel. After that shaking had subsided it left remaining the organized institution that was to serve the people through that dispensation. Now the Lord predicts that one more great shaking will occur that will affect *the heavens and the earth*.

Verse 7. Desire of *all nations* was to be fulfilled when the Gentile as well as the Jew would be offered the same benefits. *This house* refers to the house of the Lord composed of Christians (Hebrews 3: 6).

Verse 8. These material substances used to make the literal temple all belonged to God. Likewise the materials composing the spiritual temple all belong to him according to 1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20.

Verse 9. *Glory of the latter house greater than the former*. This was predicted of the church which is the

greatest organization that God ever placed on the earth. We need not be uncertain about the above application of this noted prophecy, for Paul makes that use of it in Hebrews 12: 26-28.

Verse 10. About two months later than the preceding verse the Lord gave another message to the prophet. Inspiration is not a condition that is settled upon a man as if it were a part of his natural faculty. When God wished to have any revelation made known He would call the spokesman into the service and inform him just what he was to say. That is why we are told that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1: 21).

Verse 11. The priests were the men who had supervision of the altar services and hence were acquainted with the requirements of the law. The prophet was given the present message to them for the purpose of explaining why the Lord was making his severe complaints against the nation.

Verse 12. *Holy flesh* means that kind that had been selected and prepared for the altar according to the demands of the law. But while holding that flesh in his skirt before reaching the altar he comes in contact with these other articles that had not been consecrated. The priests admitted that it would render that flesh unholy.

Verse 13. The ceremonial law regarded a dead body as unclean and everything that touched it was so. Even the people in general knew or had known that such was the stipulation in their instructions that came from the Lord through Moses.

Verse 14. Having reminded them of the provisions concerning cleanness as they pertained to individual items of the service, Haggai makes comparison to the state of the nation. The services that were being attempted might have been legal in themselves, but the nation had come in contact with that which was unclean which rendered the whole procedure unholy. (See note offered at Isaiah 1: 10, volume 3 of this Commentary.)

Verse 15. This verse asks them to take a view of their history going back to the time before any work had ever been done on the temple.

Verse 16. The points he wishes to have them recall are those pertaining to their temporal disappointments. This subject was treated previous to this chapter as may be noticed in the comments on some earlier verse.

Verse 17. They are reminded of the stubbornness that the nation manifested in spite of these chastisements from the Lord, which was the reason they had been doomed to spend a period in captivity under a foreign power.

Verse 18. The prophet brings the review down to the present date.

Verse 19. He reminds them that not only did the corruption of the past years cause them to be sent into captivity, but since that event their neglect of duty had brought about these shortages in their crops down to that very date. Notwithstanding all this, if they will begin *NOW* to serve the Lord faithfully they will be blessed.

Verse 20. On the same date as the foregoing message the Lord gave the prophet one to deliver unto another important person in the congregation.

Verse 21. Zerubbabel was *governor* in the sense of being captain or leader in the work of the temple (Ezra 1: 1-4; 3: 8; Nehemiah 12: 1). This message was a repetition of the prediction shown in verses 6-9 concerning the "shaking" that God was going to do.

Verse 22. The comments on that passage shows the prediction to have reference to the church or kingdom of Christ. The present verse adds the specific prediction that God would *overthrow the throne of the kingdoms*. This is the same prediction that is meant in Daniel 2: 44 concerning the perpetuity of the kingdom of Christ.

Verse 23. *In that day . . . make thee as a signet*. The last word is defined in the lexicon as, "a signature-ring." It has been rendered also by "seal" elsewhere in the A.V. The thought is that when Zerubbabel performs his full duty of completing the work of the temple, he will be accepted by the Lord and his work will have the divine approval. And as a prediction in the nature of a type, when the Lord does the "shaking" predicted, those who carry out the work of the new kingdom will have the approval of "the God of heaven" who had set up the kingdom according to Daniel 2:44.

ZECHARIAH 1

Verse 1. This book begins two months later than the beginning of the preceding one. It takes up the same subject, however, that of the negligence of the Jews in the work of the temple. The reader should consult my comments on the first few