



The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc.

NUMBER ONE IRON OAKS DRIVE • PARIS, ARKANSAS 72855

COMMENTARIES

EXPOSITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

HAGGAI

by John Gill

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth*
— Psalm 60:4

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INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI

This part of sacred Scripture is in some Hebrew copies called “Sepher Haggai”, the Book, of Haggai; in the Vulgate Latin version, the Prophecy of Haggai; and, in the Syriac and Arabic versions, the Prophecy of the Prophet Haggai. His name comes from a word^{f1} which signifies to keep a feast; and, according to Jerom^{f2}, signifies festival or merry; according to Hillerus^{f3}, the feasts of the Lord; and, according to Cocceius^{f4}, my feasts: and the issue of his prophecy answered to his name; by which the people were encouraged to build the temple, whereby the feasts of the Lord were restored and observed; and a particular feast appointed for the dedication of the temple. The notion entertained by some, that he was not a man, but an angel, founded on (~~<301B>~~Haggai 1:13), deserves no regard; since the character there given of him respects not his nature, but his office. Indeed no account is given of his parentage; very probably he was born in Babylon; and, according to Pseudo-Epiphanius^{f5} and Isidore^{f6}, he came from thence a youth to Jerusalem, at the return of the Jews from their captivity. The time of his prophecy is fixed in (~~<300B>~~Haggai 1:1) to the second year of Darius, that is, Hystaspis; which, according to Bishop Usher, was in A. M. 3485 or 519 B.C.; and in the sixty fifth Olympiad; about 520 B.C.; and about seventeen or eighteen years after the proclamation of Cyrus for the Jews to return to their own land. Jerom says this was in the twenty seventh year of Tarquinius Superbus, the last of the Roman kings. Haggai was the first of the three prophets, that prophesied after their return; and all his prophecies were within the space of four months, and have their dates variously put to them. Of the authority of this prophecy of Haggai there is no room to question; not only because of the internal evidence of it, but from the testimony of Ezra, (~~<5024>~~Ezra 4:24 5:1,2 6:14) and from a quotation out of (~~<300B>~~Haggai 2:7,8), by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, (~~<8123>~~Hebrews 12:26). The general design of this book is to reprove the Jews for their negligence in building the temple, after they had liberty granted them by Cyrus to do it, and to encourage them in this work; which he does by the promise of the Messiah, who should come into it, and give it a greater glory than the first temple had. The name of this prophet is wrongly prefixed, with others, to several of the psalms, especially those, called the Hallelujah psalms, in the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, as (~~<4801>~~Psalms 112:1

138:1 146:1 147:1 148:1). Where he died is not certain; very probably in Jerusalem; where, according to Pseudo-Epiphanius and Isidore^{f7}, he was buried, by the monuments of the priests; but, according to the Cippi Hebraici^{f8}, he was buried in a large cave, in the declivity of the mount of Olives.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI 1

This chapter contains the first sermon of the Prophet Haggai to the people of the Jews, directed to Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest; the date of which is fixed, (^{<5000>}Haggai 1:1). It begins with a charge against that people; saying the time to build the house of the Lord was not come, (^{<5000>}Haggai 1:2) which is refuted by the prophet; arguing, that, if the time to panel their dwelling houses was come, then much more the time to build the Lord's house, (^{<5000>}Haggai 1:3,4). They are urged to consider how unsuccessful they had been in their civil employments and labours, which was owing to their neglect of building the temple; wherefore, if they consulted their own good, and the glory of God, the best way was to set about it in all haste, and with diligence, (^{<5000>}Haggai 1:5-9) yea, even the famine, which they had been afflicted with for some time, and which affected both man and beast, sprung from the same cause, (^{<5000>}Haggai 1:10,11). This discourse had such an effect upon the governor, high priest, and people, that they immediately rose up, and went about the work they were exhorted to; upon which the prophet, by a special message from the Lord, promises his presence with them, (^{<5000>}Haggai 1:12-15).

Ver. 1. *In the second year of Darius the King*, etc.] That is, of Persia; he is spoken of as if he was the only king in the world; and indeed he was the then greatest king in it; and therefore is emphatically called “the king”. This was not Darius the Mede, as Genebrard; who was contemporary with Cyrus, and partner in the kingdom; nor Darius Nothus, as Scaliger, and those that follow him; since the second year of this Darius was, according to Cocceius, who follows this opinion, one hundred and thirty eight years after the first edict of Cyrus; and so Zerubbabel and Joshua must exercise their office, the one of governor, the other of high priest, such a term of years, and more, which is not credible; and some of the Jews in captivity must have lived upwards of two hundred years; even those who saw the temple in its first glory, before the captivity, and now behold it in Haggai's time, in a very different condition, (^{<5000>}Haggai 2:3). It seems therefore more probable, according to Josephus^{f9}, and others, that this was Darius

Hystaspis, who was chosen king by the nobles of Persia, upon his horse's neighing first as Herodotus^{f10} relates: the second year of his reign was about seventeen or eighteen years after the proclamation of Cyrus; during whose reign, he being much engaged in affairs abroad, and the reign of his successor Cambyses, the enemies of the Jews, encouraged by the latter, greatly obstructed the building of the temple, and discouraged them from going on with it; but when this king came to the throne, things took another turn, being favoured by him; for Josephus^{f11} relates, that, when a private person, he vowed, if ever he became king, whatever of the holy vessels were in Babylon, he would send to the temple at Jerusalem; and upon solicitations made to him, the Jews were encouraged to go on with the building of it:

in the sixth month; the month Elul, answering, to part of August, and part of September; which was the sixth, reckoning from the month Nisan:

in the first day of the month; which was the feast of the new moon:

came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet; or, "by the hand of Haggai"^{f12}; by his means; he was the instrument by whom the Lord delivered his word; the word was not the prophet's, but the Lord's; and this is observed, to give weight and authority to it:

unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel: the same who is called Salathiel, (⁴⁰¹²Matthew 1:12 ⁴¹⁸⁷Luke 3:27) according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, he was the grandson of Salathiel; though rather Salathiel seems to be his uncle, he being the son of Pedaiiah his brother, (¹¹⁸⁷1 Chronicles 3:17-19) however, he was his heir and successor in the government, and so called his son; (see Gill on "⁴⁰¹²Matthew 1:12"):

governor of Judah; not king; for the country was under the dominion of the king of Persia, and Zerubbabel was a deputy governor under him; so the apocryphal Ezra calls him governor of Judea, "And also he commanded that Sisinnes the governor of Syria and Phenice, and Sathrabuzanes, and their companions, and those which were appointed rulers in Syria and Phenice, should be careful not to meddle with the place, but suffer Zorobabel, the servant of the Lord, and governor of Judea, and the elders of the Jews, to build the house of the Lord in that place." (1 Esdras 6:27)

and, according to Josephus^{f13}, he was made governor of the captive Jews, when in Babylon, being in great favour with the king of Babylon; and, with

two more, were his body guards; and he was continued governor by the Persians, when the Jews returned to their land:

and to Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest; who is called Jeshua, and his father Jozadak, (^{<SR>}Ezra 3:2) his father was carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar, (^{<SR>}1 Chronicles 6:15) now, to these two principal persons in the commonwealth of Judea was the word of the Lord sent by the prophet; the one having the chief power in civil things, and the other in things ecclesiastical; and both had an influence upon the people; but very probably were dilatory in the work of building the temple; and therefore have a message sent to them, to stir them up to this service:

saying: as follows:

Ver. 2. *Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts*, etc.] Of armies above and below; whom all ought to reverence, honour, and obey; who was able to support his people in building his house, and protect them from their enemies, which should have been an encouragement to them; and to punish them for their neglect of it, which might have deterred them from it. This preface is made, to show that what follow were not the words of the prophet, but of the Lord; and therefore to be the more regarded, and the truth of them not to be doubted of:

saying, This people say; repeating the words of the people of the Jews to Zerubbabel and Joshua, that they might observe them, and the wickedness and ingratitude in them. “This people”, lately brought out of the captivity of Babylon, and loaded with various blessings and benefits; and not a few of them, but the generality of them, the body of them, expressed themselves after this manner, when pressed to build the temple:

The time is not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built; suggesting that the seventy years of Jerusalem and the temple lying in ruins, reckoning from the destruction of them in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, were not yet fulfilled; or rather intimating that it was not the time in Providence, since they had been forbid and hindered in former reigns from going on with the work; or, since it had been a time of famine and distress with them, it was not a time fit and convenient to carry on such a service; and though they did not lay aside all thoughts of it, yet they judged it right and proper to defer it to a more convenient time, when they were better settled, and in a better capacity to engage in it.

Ver. 3. *Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet*, etc.] This is a second prophecy, distinct from the former; that was delivered to the two governors, setting forth the sentiments and language of the people concerning the building of the temple, which was left with them to consider how just it was; but this is sent to the people themselves, expostulating with them about the folly and ingratitude of it:

saying; as follows:

Ver. 4. [*Is it*] *time for you, O ye, to dwell in your panelled houses*, etc.] They could not only find time, leisure, and convenience to build houses to dwell in; but to wainscot them, and line them with boards of cedar, as the Targum; as bad as the times were complained of; and could sit in them, indulging themselves in luxury, ease, and sloth; and why then was it not a fit and convenient time as well to build the house of the Lord in?

and this house [lie] waste? or, “and shall this house lie waste?” or, “when this house lies waste?”^{f14} not indeed in its rubbish and ruins, as it was demolished by the Chaldeans, and left; but with a bare foundation, laid some years ago; and ever since neglected; the superstructure not carried on, and much less built up to be fit for service; and therefore might be said with propriety to lie waste and desolate, being unfinished, unfit for use, and no regard had unto it. David was of another mind, (~~1000~~2 Samuel 7:2) and truly religious persons will be more concerned for the house of God than for their own houses.

Ver. 5. *Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts*, etc.] The Lord God omniscient and omnipotent, that saw all their actions, and could punish for them; since they were so careful of their own houses, and adorning them, and so careless of his house; he would have them now sit down, and seriously think of these things, and of what he should further observe unto them:

Consider your ways; their sinful ways, and repent of them, and forsake them, particularly their ingratitude before observed; and their civil ways, their common ways of life; their labour, work, and business, they were continually employed in; and observe the event of them; what success they had, what these issued in; whether there were not some visible tokens of the divine displeasure on them, which rendered all their attempts to support and enrich themselves and families vain, and of no effect: and they would do well to consider to what all this was to be imputed; whether it was not

chiefly owing to this, their neglect of the house of God; and this he would have considered, not in a slight cursory way; but with great earnestness, diligence, and application of mind: “put”, or “set your hearts upon your ways”^{f15}; so it may be literally rendered.

Ver. 6. *Ye have sown much, and bring in little*, etc.] Contrary to what is usually done; the seed that is sown is but little, in, comparison of what springs up, is reaped, and gathered into the barn; which commonly affords seed again to the sower, and bread to the eater; but here much land was tilled, and a great deal of seed was sown in it; but a thin crop was produced, little was gathered into the barn; a blessing being withheld from the earth, and from their labours, because of their sins, which they would do well to think of, and the cause of it:

ye eat, but ye have not enough; what the earth did yield, and which they gathered in, they made food of, and ate of it; yet it was not sufficient to satisfy their hunger; or it was not blessed for their nourishment; or they had a canine appetite in judgment given them, so that they were never satisfied: or, it was “not for fulness”^{f16}; they were not filled with it to satisfaction, but still craved more; and yet, it may be, durst not eat more, if they had it, lest they should want the next day:

ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; or, “not to inebriation”^{f17}; it was not sufficient to quench their thirst, much less to make them merry and cheerful: the vines produced such a small quantity of grapes, and those so little wine, that they had not enough to drink, at least could not drink freely, but sparingly, lest it should be all spent before another vintage came:

ye clothe you, but there is none warm; or, “but” it is “not for heat to him”^{f18}; to anyone; so rigorous the season, so extreme the cold, that his clothes will not keep him warm, even though the climate was, naturally and usually hot:

and he that earneth wages earneth wages [to put it] into a bag with holes; or, “pierced through”^{f19}; if a man is hired as a labourer, and gets much wages, and brings it home, and lays it up; or if he trades and merchandises, and has great gains by it, and thinks to amass great riches; yet, what through losses, and the dreariness of provisions, and the many ways he has for the spending of his money, it is as if he put it into a bag full of holes, and it ran through as fast as put into it; signifying hereby that all his pains and labour were in vain.

Ver. 7. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.*] What they have been; what has been the consequence of them; and to what the above things are to be ascribed. This exhortation is repeated, to impress it the more upon their minds; and to denote the importance of it, and the necessity of such a conduct; (see Gill on “^{<3005>}Haggai 1:5”).

Ver. 8. *Go up to the mountain,* etc.] Or, “that mountain”^{f20}; pointing either to Lebanon, to cut down cedars, and bring them from thence for the building of the temple; or Mount Moriah, on which the temple was to be built; and thither carry the wood they fetched from Lebanon, or were brought from thence by the Tyrians:

and bring wood; or, “that ye may bring wood”; from Lebanon, or any other mountain on which wood grew, to Mount Moriah:

and build the house; the temple, whose foundation was already laid, but the superstructure was neglected: now the Lord would have them go on with it immediately, out of hand, with the utmost diligence, alacrity, and vigour; and not desist till the whole building was completed:

and I will take pleasure in it; as a type of Christ, for whose sake he was so desirous of having it built; into which he was to come, and there appear as the promised Saviour. It signifies, moreover, that the Lord would not only take pleasure in the temple built, but in their work in building it; which would be acceptable to him, being according to his mind and will; and that he would take pleasure in, and accept of them, being worshippers therein, when they worshipped him in spirit and in truth in it; and in their services, sacrifices, prayers, and praises, being rightly offered; and that he would forgive their sins, and be propitious to them for his Son’s sake, the antitype of the temple:

and I will be glorified, saith the Lord; by his people here, and by the worship and service they should perform: or, “I will show myself glorious”^{f21}; that is, show his glory, causing his Shechinah to dwell here in glory, as the Targum is. The Jews observe, that the letter **h** is wanting in the word here used, which numerically signifies “five”; hence they gather that five things were wanting in the second temple, the ark, the Urim and Thummim, the fire from heaven, the Shechinah, or the divine Majesty, and the Holy Ghost.

Ver. 9. *Ye looked for much, and, lo, [it came] to little*, etc.] They looked for a large harvest, and very promising it was for a while; but in the end it came to little; it was a very small crop, very little was reaped and gathered in: or, “in looking”, ye looked “to increase”^{f22}; your substance; had raised expectations of making themselves and families by their agriculture, and by their plantations of vines and olives, and by their trade and merchandise; and it dwindled away, and came to little or nothing; their riches, instead of being increased, were diminished:

and when ye brought [it] home, I did blow upon it; when they brought into their barns or houses the produce of their land, labour, and merchandise, which was but little, the Lord blew a blast upon that little, and brought rottenness and worms into it, as Jarchi; so that it was not a blessing to them, but a curse. So the Targum interprets it,

“behold, I sent a curse upon it:”

or, “I blew it away”^{f23}; as any light thing, straw or stubble, or thistle down, are blown away with a wind; so easily can the Lord, and sometimes he does, strip men of that little substance they have; riches by his orders make themselves wings, and flee away; or he, by one providence or another, blows them away like chaff before the wind:

Why? saith the Lord of hosts; what was the cause and reason of this? which question is put, not on his own account, who full well knew it; but for their sakes, to whom he speaks, that they might be made sensible of it; and in order to that to introduce what follows, which is an answer to the question:

because of mine house that [is] waste; which they suffered to lie waste, and did not concern themselves about the rebuilding of it: this the Lord resented, and for this reason blasted all their labours:

and ye run every man unto his own house; were very eager, earnest, and diligent, in building, beautifying, and adorning their own houses; taking care of their own domestic affairs; sparing no cost nor pains to promote their own secular interest; running in all haste to do any thing and everything to increase their worldly substance; but sat still, were idle and slothful, careless and negligent, about the house of God and the affairs of it.

Ver. 10. *Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew*, etc.] Or, “therefore over”, or “upon you”^{f24}; where should be a stop; that is, because, of your neglect of the house of God; therefore upon you, and upon you only, and not upon other nations, the heaven is restrained from letting down the dew: or, “therefore I am against you”^{f25}; for the above reason, and which the following things show; and sad it is to have God to be an enemy, and against a people! or, “for your sake”; so the Syriac version, to which sense is the Targum,

“therefore for your sins;”

and so Jarchi, “the heaven is stayed from dew”; none descends from it; the Lord, who has the ordering of it, will not suffer it: to have the dew fall upon the earth in the night season is a great blessing; it makes the earth fruitful, revives the corn, plants, and herbs, and causes them to flourish and increase; and to have it restrained is a judgment:

and the earth is stayed [from] her fruit; from bringing forth its increase, which is the consequence of the dew being withheld.

Ver. 11. *And I called for a drought upon the land*, etc.] Upon the whole land of Judea; as he withheld the dew and rain from falling on it to moisten it, refresh it, and make it fruitful; so he ordered a vehement heat to dry and parch it; and directed the rays of the sun to strike with great force upon it, and cause the fruits of it to wither; and which is done by a word of his; when he calls, every creature obeys. There is an elegant play on words, which shows the justness of such a proceeding, that it was according to the law of retaliation; they suffered the house of God to lie **brj**, “waste”, and therefore he calls for **brj**, a “wasting” drought, to come upon their land:

and upon the mountains; where herbage grew, and herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were fed; but now the grass through the drought was withered away, and so no pasturage for them, and in course must perish:

and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil; that is, upon the grain fields, and upon the vines and olive trees; so that they produced but very little grain, wine, and oil, and that not very good, and which was not satisfying and refreshing; at least there were not enough for their support and comfort: now these three things were the principal necessities of life in the country of Judea, and therefore a scarcity of them was very distressing:

and upon [that] which the ground bringeth forth; whatever else not mentioned the earth produced, as figs, pomegranates, and other fruit:

and upon men, and upon cattle; who not only suffered in this drought, by the above said things it came upon; but by diseases it produced upon them, as the pestilence and fever among men, and murrain upon the cattle:

and upon all the labour of the hands: of men; whatsoever fields and gardens, trees and plants of every kind, that were set and cultivated by them. Of this drought, and the famine that came upon it, we nowhere else read; but there is no doubt to be made of it.

Ver. 12. *Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest*, etc.] Here follows an account of the success of Haggai's prophecy; with what power and efficacy the word of the Lord by him was attended; how it at once reached and affected the hearts of princes and people, and brought them to obedience to the will of God. The governor and high priest are mentioned first, as being the principal persons, and who very probably first declared their sense of their former neglect, and their readiness to do as they were directed; which was setting a good example to the people, and doubtless had some influence upon them:

with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God; not the two leading men in church and state only; but all the people that came out of the Babylonish captivity, who were but a remnant; a few that were left through various calamities they had been exposed unto; these, one and all, signified how willing and ready they were to do the work of the Lord enjoined them: or, "they heard the voice of the Lord"^{f26}; by the prophet, very attentively and seriously; and received and regarded it, not as the word of men, but as the word of God; and determined to act according to it:

and the words of Haggai the prophet; or, "and for the words of Haggai the prophet"^{f27}; because of them, considering them as coming from the Lord himself:

as the Lord their God had sent him; regarding him as having a mission and commission from the Lord to deliver them to them:

and the people did fear before the Lord; perceiving that he was displeased with them for the neglect of his house; and that this drought upon them was a chastisement and correction for this sin; and fearing lest his wrath

should continue, and they should be more severely dealt with, on account of their transgressions.

Ver. 13. *Then spoke Haggai the Lord's messenger*, etc.] Which some render "angel"; hence sprung that notion, imbibed by some, that he was not a man, but an angel; whereas this only respects his office, being sent of God as an ambassador in his name with a message to his people: he now observing what effect his prophecy had upon the people; they being convinced of their sin, and terrified with the judgments of God upon them, and fearing that worse still would attend them; in order to revive their spirits and comfort them, spake the words unto them which follow: and this he did

in the Lord's message unto the people; not of his own head, nor out of the pity of his own heart merely; but as a prophet of the Lord, having a fresh message from him to carry a promise to them for their comfort and encouragement:

saying, I [am] with you, saith the Lord; to pardon their sins; to accept their persons; to remove his rod from them; to assist them in the work of building the temple, they were now willing to engage in; to protect them from their enemies, and to strengthen them to go on with the work till they had finished it; a short promise, but a very full one: it was saying much in a little, and enough to remove all their fears, to scatter all their doubts, and to bear them up, and through all discouragements.

Ver. 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*, etc.] He roused them up from that sleep and sloth in which they were before, both the governors and common people; he wrought in them both to will and do; or a willing mind to do his work in building his house; he gave them a spirit both of industry and courage; he enabled them to shake off that sluggish disposition they were attended with, and that fear of men which possessed them; he inspired them with zeal and resolution to enter upon the work at once, and pursue it with close application; the Lord only could do this:

and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God; the governor and high priest came to direct and oversee, encourage and animate the people by their presence and example; and the people to do the

several parts of service that belonged to them, according to their genius and employment.

Ver. 15. *In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month*, etc.] Or, “in the four and twentieth of the month, in the sixth”; in that sixth month before mentioned, (^{<3000>}Haggai 1:1). On this day they came and worked; not the sixth from Tisri, for the Jews had two ways of beginning their years, which would have answered to part of February; and, therefore, chose by some interpreters as being a proper time to begin building; but no regard is had to the fitness of the season, but to the order of the Lord; but the sixth month from Nisan, and answers to part of August; for so the months are reckoned in the prophecy of Zechariah, who began to prophecy the same year as Haggai did; (see ^{<3000>}Zechariah 1:1,7) (^{<3000>}Zechariah 7:1) this was three and twenty days after the prophecy was delivered out; during which time they might be employed in cutting of stones, and sawing and hewing of wood, as Jarchi suggests, and preparing for work in the temple:

in the second year of Darius the king; (see Gill on “^{<3000>}Haggai 1:1”). Here some begin a new chapter, but wrongly; since, if these words do not belong to the preceding, there would be a contradiction in joining them with the beginning of the next.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI 2

This chapter contains three sermons or prophecies, delivered by the prophet to the people of the Jews. The design of the first is to encourage them to go on with the building of the temple, though it might seem to come greatly short of the former temple, as to its outward form and splendour. The time of the prophecy, (^{<ST00>}Haggai 2:1) an order to deliver it to the governor, high priest, and all the people, (^{<ST00>}Haggai 2:2). A question is put concerning the difference between this temple and the former; between which it is suggested there was no comparison; which is assented to by silence, (^{<ST00>}Haggai 2:3) nevertheless, the prince, priest, and people, are exhorted to go on strenuously in the work of building; encouraged with a promise of the presence of the Lord of hosts, and of his Word, in whom he covenanted with them at their coming out of Egypt, and of the blessed Spirit, and his continuance with them, (^{<ST00>}Haggai 2:4,5) and, the more to remove their fears and faintings, it is declared that in a very short time a most wonderful thing should be done in the world, which would affect all the nations of the earth; for that illustrious Person would come, whom all nations do or should desire; and, not only come into the world, but into that temple they were building, and give it a greater glory than the former; yea, a greater glory than if all the gold and silver in the world were laid out upon it, or brought into it; which being all the Lord's, could have been easily done by him; but he would give in it something infinitely greater than that, even the Prince of peace, with all the blessings of it, (^{<ST00>}Haggai 2:6-9) then follows the second sermon or prophecy, the time of which is observed, (^{<ST00>}Haggai 2:10) and it is introduced with some questions concerning ceremonial uncleanness, by an unclean person's touching holy flesh with the skirt of his garment; and other things, which is confirmed by the answer of the priests, (^{<ST00>}Haggai 2:11-13) the application of which is made to the people of the Jews, who were alike unclean; they, their works, and their sacrifices, (^{<ST00>}Haggai 2:14) and these are directed to consider, that, during the time they had neglected to build the temple, they were attended with scarcity of provisions; their fields and vineyards being blasted with mildew or destroyed by hail, and their labours

proved unsuccessful, (^{<3025>}Haggai 2:15-17) but now, since they had begun the work of building, it is promised they should be blessed with everything, though they had nothing in store, and everything was unpromising to them; which is designed to encourage them to go on cheerfully in their begun work, (^{<3028>}Haggai 2:18,19) and the chapter is concluded with the last discourse or prophecy, the date of which is given, (^{<3021>}Haggai 2:20) an instruction to deliver it to Zerubbabel, (^{<3021>}Haggai 2:21) foretelling the destruction of the kingdoms of the heathen; and the setting up of the kingdom of the Messiah, of whom Zerubbabel was a type, precious and honourable in the sight of God, (^{<3022>}Haggai 2:22,23).

Ver. 1. *In the seventh [month]*, etc.] The month Tisri, which answers to part of September and part of October:

in the one and twentieth [day] of the month; being a month, wanting three days, from the time the Jews came and worked in the house of the Lord, (^{<3014>}Haggai 1:14,15) it was toward the close of the feast of tabernacles: (see ^{<0234>}Leviticus 23:34):

came the word of the Lord by the Prophet Haggai; the word of prophecy, as the Targum: this was from the Lord, not from the prophet himself; he was only the messenger sent with it to deliver it:

saying; to him the prophet, giving him orders as follow:

Ver. 2. *Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah*, etc.] Of whom, his descent and dignity, (see Gill on “^{<3001>}Haggai 1:1”). The Septuagint version wrongly renders it “of the tribe of Judah”; in which it is followed by the Arabic version; for, though he was of the tribe of Judah, this does not sufficiently distinguish him; nor does it answer to the word here used, which is expressive of his office and dignity. The Vulgate Latin version, Luther, and Castalio, omit the particle *an*, rendered “now”, which is very emphatic. The prophet is ordered to go and say what he is bid, directly, immediately, at once, without any delay; the very day before mentioned, yea, at that very instant or moment, the people being now at work, under the eye of their governor; in order to remove an offence, which might discourage them in their work, taken from the meanness of the building, in comparison of the former temple:

and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people; these, besides the two former, even the whole body of the people, the remnant that were come out of the captivity of Babylon:

saying; to the above persons, as follows:

Ver. 3. *Who [is] left among you that saw this house in her first glory?* etc.] Not taken away by death, yet alive, and dwelling among them; and who lived before the destruction of the first temple, built by Solomon; and has seen it in all its magnificence; its grand and noble structure; its stately pillars; its carved work, and decorations of gold. This shows that it was not in the times of Darius Nothus, but of Darius Hystaspis, that Haggai prophesied: those who go the former way make these men to have lived near two hundred years at least, which was greatly beyond the common time of man's life in that age; or consider these words as a mere supposition, that, if there were or had been such persons then living, this building, in comparison of the former, must have appeared mean and contemptible unto them: but the words manifestly imply that there were persons among them then living, who had seen Solomon's temple in all its glory; and who are particularly and personally addressed in the following clauses; and of whom there might be several at this time, going the latter way; for the seventy years' captivity are to be reckoned from the fourth year of Jehoiakim, in which the captivity began, and which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, (²⁴⁵¹Jeremiah 25:1,11,12) but it was not until the nineteenth year of his reign that the temple, was burnt by him, (²⁴⁵²Jeremiah 52:12,13) and the time of Haggai's prophesying being about seventeen or eighteen years after the proclamation of Cyrus, when the seventy years' captivity ended; this shows that it was scarcely seventy years from the time the temple was destroyed; and therefore it may be reasonably supposed there were several ancient persons living that could remember to have seen it; and it is certain that there were a great number of such living that returned from Babylon, who wept when they saw the foundation of the second temple laid, which was but fifteen years before this, (¹⁵¹²Ezra 3:12) some of whom, in all probability, were now alive, yea, it is certain there were, to whom the following questions were put:

and how do ye see it now? is not this that is building very different from that? does it promise anything like it? what ideas have you of it? can you conceive in your minds that it will ever rise up to such grandeur and stateliness as the former? what is your judgment, and what your sentiments

concerning it? can you think of it with equal delight and pleasure as of the former?

[is it] not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? do not you think that it is not to be mentioned, or once named, in comparison of the former temple? or that a man had as good say nothing at all, as to attempt a comparison of them? or that this building and nothing are alike? and that the one is a nonentity, as well as the other, comparatively speaking, when set in competition with the first temple? and are not you of opinion that the people had as good do nothing, and that in effect they are doing nothing, and all their labour lost, who are working in this house? no answer is returned, nor any waited for: but it is as if the Lord had said, I, who am the omniscient God, the discerner of the thoughts of men, know that these are your sentiments, and these the reasonings of your minds; and but now lest discovering these thoughts of theirs, and speaking out their minds freely as they might, which would tend to discourage the governors and the people in carrying on the work they had engaged in; the Lord by the prophet says to them, as follows:

Ver. 4. *Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord,* etc.] Take heart, be of good courage, do not be dismayed at these things; though, the building may be contemptible in the eyes of some, nevertheless go on with it manfully and vigorously; let, none despise the day of small things; for from these low beginnings great things will arise, and glorious things will follow, as hereafter predicted; (see ³⁰⁴⁹Zechariah 4:9,10) attend this, work diligently, desist not from it, continue to preside over it, and encourage the people in it; let not thine heart faint, or thine hands be slack; act the part of man, of a good man, and of a governor:

and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech the high priest; do not be disheartened at what the ancients think and say concerning this temple, in which thou art to officiate as a high priest; and as a type of him who shall come into this house, and so give it a glory the former never had; continue to give the necessary instructions to the builders, that everything may be done in proper order, and to answer their end and use in the service of the priesthood; faint not, nor be discouraged, but act according to thy character, and show thyself worthy of the office with which thou art invested; consider in whose name thou actest?, whose priest thou art, and in whose service thou art employed:

and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord; let not your hearts sink, or spirits fail, at hearing what the more ancient among you say of the difference between this and the former building, which your eyes never saw; do not desist from your work on this account, but go on with it; consider what God has done for you, in bringing you out of captivity, and into your own land, and to the enjoyment of your civil privileges; consider the obligations you lie under to build a house for God; that this is not only a piece of gratitude, and shows a sense of mercies received; but that it is for the glory of God, for your spiritual profit and advantage, and for the use and good of future posterity; quit yourselves therefore like men, and be strong; (see ^{<4005>}Joshua 1:6,7,9 ^{<4613>}1 Corinthians 16:13):

and work; that is, continue working, for they were at work; but there was danger of their leaving off working, being discouraged at what the ancient people said; and therefore they are exhorted to go on in their work, and go through it, and finish it; for so the word here used signifies, “and do”,^{f28}; that is, the work thoroughly and effectually; or, as others render it, “and perfect”,^{f29} the work begun, and leave it not unfinished. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, connect this word with the beginning of the following verse, thus, “and do the word, or thing, which I covenanted with you”, etc. (^{<3005>}Haggai 2:5); that is, observe the law, and do the commandment then given; but very wrongly: nor is it only to be considered as directed to the people, but to the prince and priest also; for they had all work to do in the house of the Lord, as all ranks and degrees of men now have in the church of Christ; of which that house was typical: the prince or civil magistrate, not to prescribe laws and rules to be observed in it, which only belongs to Christ, who is the sole Head, King, and Lawgiver; but to attend the service of it, to protect and defend it, to promote the interest of it, and distribute cheerfully to the maintenance of its ministers, and to the necessities of the poor saints. Priests or ministers of the word are to work; they are to labour in the word and doctrine; in preaching the Gospel; administering ordinances; governing the church; comforting saints; reproving vice, and refuting error: deacons are to do their work, in taking care of the poor, and minding the secular affairs of the church: and all private Christians are to work, to labour in prayer for the good of it; to hear the word, attend on all ordinances, and hold fast the profession of their faith; all which is to be done in the strength and grace of Christ, without dependence on it, or seeking justification and salvation by it; encouraged, as the Jews are here, with the promise of the divine Presence:

for I [am] with you, saith the Lord of hosts; to help in every service, and to protect from all enemies; and this makes the work and service of the Lord's house pleasant and delightful, and secures from all doubts and fears, faintings and misgivings of heart. This is to be understood of God the Father, the Lord of armies above and below; and if he is for and with his people, they have nothing to fear from those that are against them; or to be discouraged in his service. The Targum wrongly interprets this of the Word of the Lord, since he is meant in the next verse (^{<37B5>}Haggai 2:5).

Ver. 5. [*According to] the Word that I covenanted with you, when ye came out of Egypt,* etc.] Or rather, “with the Word, in or with whom I covenanted”^{f30}, etc. as some render it; that is, Christ, the essential Word, who was promised to the people of Israel at that time, (^{<5B15>}Deuteronomy 18:15) and in whom all the promises are, and the covenant of grace itself; and which covenant was indeed made with him from eternity, but was made manifest, or more clearly manifest, to the Jewish ancestors, when they came out of Egypt: now it is here promised, for the encouragement of the Jews to go in the work of the Lord in building the temple, that this divine Word should be with them also, to counsel, assist, strengthen, and protect them; even he who went before their fathers in the wilderness in a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night; the Angel of God's presence, that redeemed, saved, and carried them all the days of old; the Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God; and by whom all things were created at first; and who would, as since he has, become flesh, and dwell among them, and appear in this very temple they were now building; and who will be with all his churches, ministers, and people, unto the end of the world:

so my Spirit remaineth among you: or rather, “and”, or “also, my Spirit standeth”, continueth “in the midst of you”^{f31}; not only Jehovah the Father, and his divine Logos or Word, were with them; but his Spirit also, his Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Trinity, of which these words are a proof; the same Spirit which was in Moses and others in his time, for the building of the tabernacle, is now promised unto, and should continue with, the builders of this temple; as a Spirit of wisdom and counsel to direct them, and as a Spirit of might and power to strengthen and assist them: and so he is, and will be, in the churches of Christ, and in the midst of his people, to assist the ministers of the word in preaching, the people in hearing, praying, and praising; to carry on his own work in them; to be the Comforter of

them, and the seal, earnest, and pledge of their future glory; nor does he, nor ever will he, depart from them; (see ^{<2392>}Isaiah 59:21 ^{<4346>}John 14:16):

fear ye not: succeeding in the work, and finishing it; nor be dismayed at what the ancient people had said; nor be afraid of enemies, who did all they could to hinder and discourage them from going on with their work; and indeed there is no reason to fear, let the service be what it will the Lord employs his people in; if he, Father, Son, and Spirit, are with them; (see ^{<2340>}Isaiah 41:10).

Ver. 6. *For thus saith the Lord of hosts*; etc.] For the further encouragement of the builders of the temple, they are told, from the Lord of hosts, that in a little time, when such circumstances should meet as are here pointed at, the Messiah should come, and appear in this house, and give it a greater glory than ever Solomon's temple had; for that this passage is to be understood of the Messiah and his times is clear from the apostle's application of it, (^{<3025>}Hebrews 12:25,26) and even the ancient Jews themselves understood it of the Messiah, particularly R. Aquiba^{f32}, who lived in the times of Bar Cozbi, the false Messiah; though the more modern ones, perceiving how they are embarrassed with it; to support their hypothesis, shift it off from him:

Yet once, it [is] a little while: or, "once more", as the apostle in the above place quotes it; which suggests that the Lord had before done something of the kind, that follows, shaking the heavens, etc. as at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; and would do the same again, and more abundantly in the times of the Gospel, or of the Messiah. Jarchi interprets this of one trouble by the Grecian monarchy after the Persian, which would not last long: his note is,

"yet once, etc. after that this kingdom of Persia that rules over you is ended, yet one shall rise up to rule over you, to distress you, the kingdom of Greece; but its government shall be but a little time;"

and not very foreign from this sense does Bishop Chandler^{f33} render the words, "after one [kingdom] (the Grecian) it is a little while; (or after that) I will shake all the heavens", etc.; and though it was five hundred years from this prophecy to the incarnation of Christ: yet this was but a little while with God, with whom a thousand years are as one day; and indeed with men it was but a short time, when compared with the first promise of

his coming at the beginning of the world; or with the shaking of the earth at the giving of the law, soon after Israel came out of Egypt:

and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry [land]; which either intends the changes and revolutions made in the several kingdoms and nations of the world, between this prophecy and the coming of Christ, and which soon began to take place; for the Persian monarchy, now flourishing, was quickly shook and subdued by the Grecians; and in a little time the Grecian monarchy was destroyed by the Romans; and what changes they made in each of the nations of the world is well known: or else this designs the wonderful things that were done in the heavens, earth, and sea, at the birth of Christ, during his life, and at his death: at his birth a new star appeared in the heavens, which brought the wise men from the east to visit him; the angels of heaven descended, and sung Glory to God in the highest; Herod and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were shaken, moved, and troubled at the tidings of his birth; yea, people in all parts of Judea were in motion to be taxed in their respective cities at this time: stormy winds were raised, which agitated the waters of the sea in his lifetime; on which he walked, and which he rebuked; and this showed him to be the mighty God: at his death the heavens were darkened, the earth quaked, and rocks were rent asunder: if any particular earthquake about this time should be thought to be intended, the most terrible one was that which happened A. D. 17, when Coelius Rufus and Pomponius Flaccus were consuls, which destroyed twelve cities of Asia^{f34}; and these being near the sea, caused a motion there also. The apostle applies these words to the change made in the worship of God by the coming of Christ, when the carnal ordinances of the law were removed, and evangelical ordinances instituted, which shall remain until his second coming, (~~8126~~ Hebrews 12:26).

Ver. 7. *And I will shake all nations*, etc.] By changing their governors, and forms of government; which was done by the Romans, when subdued by them; and by bringing in wars among them, which produced those changes; and by civil wars among the Romans themselves, in the several nations that belonged to them, which were notorious a little before the coming of Christ: or else this was to be done, and was done, by the preaching of the Gospel, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world, when all the inhabitants thereof were shaken by it, in one sense or another; some had their hearts and consciences shaken by the Spirit and grace of God through it, and were brought to embrace it, and profess it; yea, were brought to Christ, to

yield obedience to him, his truths and ordinances; and others were moved with envy, wrath, and indignation at it, and rose up to oppose it, and stop the progress of it:

and the desire of all nations shall come; not the desirable things of all nations, or them with them, as their gold and silver; and which is the sense of Jarchi, Kimchi, and Aben Ezra; but this is contrary to the syntax of the words, to the context, (~~3188~~Haggai 2:8,9), and to facts; and, if true, would not have given this temple a greater glory than Solomon's: nor the elect of God, as others, brought in through the preaching of the Gospel; who are indeed the desire of God, he takes pleasure in them; and of Christ, whose delights have been always in them; and of the blessed Spirit, whose love to them, and esteem of them, are very manifest; and with the saints they are the excellent in the earth, in whom is all their delight: yet not they, but one far more glorious and excellent, is intended, even the Messiah, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed; and who, so far as he was known by good men or proselytes among the Gentiles, was desired by them, as by Job, and others; and who, when he came, brought all good things with him; and has all blessings in him, that may make him desirable to men, being what they want; and though he is not in fact desired by all, yet of right he should be, and to all sensible sinners he is; even above all persons and things in the whole world; on account of his excellencies and glories; his mediatorial qualifications; his names, offices, and relations; the blessings of grace in him; the works done by him; his truths and ordinances, people, ways, and worship: and when it is said, he "shall come", the meaning is, not only into the world by assumption of nature, to obtain redemption for his people; but into this temple now building, in that nature assumed; where he appeared at the presentation of him by his parents; and at the passover, when twelve years of age; and when he drove out the buyers and sellers from it; and when he often taught in it. The word "come" is in the plural number; and may denote his frequent coming thither, as well as in different respects; his personal coming; his spiritual coming; his coming to take vengeance on the Jews; and his last coming, of which some understand the words particularly:

and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts; alluding to the glory which filled the tabernacle of Moses, and the temple of Solomon, (~~1085~~Exodus 40:35 ~~1080~~1 Kings 8:10,11) but that was but a shadowy glory, this a real one; here Christ appeared in person, who is the brightness of his Father's glory; here his glorious doctrines were taught, and glorious

miracles wrought; and the Spirit of glory rested on the disciples, in his gifts and grace bestowed upon them in an extraordinary manner, on the day of Pentecost.

Ver. 8. *The silver [is] mine, and the gold [is] mine, saith the Lord of hosts.*] This seems designed to anticipate an objection taken from the gold and silver, with which the first temple was either decorated, or were in gifts dedicated to it; and which, it might easily be foreseen, would be wanting in the second temple; and in answer to which the Lord observes, that all the gold and silver in the world were his, were made by him, and were at his dispose; and therefore whatever were bestowed upon the former temple was only giving him his own; what he had a prior right to, and was no accession of riches or honour to him; and so it would be the same, let what would be expended on this; and therefore it was an article very inconsiderable, and of little significance; nor did he regard, or was he delighted with anything of this kind; and, was he so disposed, he could easily command all the gold and silver in the world together, and bring it into this house, to enrich and adorn it, without doing any injury to any person; but these were things he delighted not in; and, besides, he had a far greater glory in view to put upon this house, as follows:

Ver. 9. *The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts,* etc.] The “former”, or first house, was the temple built by Solomon, which was a very glorious one, if we consider the vast treasure of riches laid up by David, and given to Solomon for the building of it; the great number of workmen employed in it; the stateliness of the fabric, the like to which was never seen, the model being drawn by the Lord himself; the decoration of it; the vessels in it; and, above all, the glory of the Lord that filled it, and continued in it; and yet this “latter” or second house exceeded it. It must be a glory very great indeed to exceed this! The Jews^{f35} themselves own there were several things wanting in the latter which were in the former, as the “ark”, the “Urim” and “Thummim”, the “fire” from heaven, the “Shechinah” (or, as in some books, the anointing oil, and, in others, the cherubim), and the “Holy Ghost”: by one of their writers^{f36}, they are reckoned in this order, the ark, the mercy seat, and cherubim, one; the Shechinah or divine Majesty, the second; the Holy Ghost, which is prophecy, the third; Urim and Thummim the fourth: and the fire from heaven the fifth: what could there be in it to compensate the want of these, and put it upon a level, and even to cause it to excel the temple of Solomon? the excelling glory did not lie in the fabric; when the

foundation of it was laid, the old men wept, because it came so short of the other; and, as the building rose, it was in their eyes as nothing; who were better judges than later Jews, who magnify the building of the second temple; depending upon the authority of Josephus ben Gorion, who is not to be trusted: nor did it lie in the duration of it, it continuing ten years longer, they say^{f37}, than the former; which, if true, could not answer to the deficiencies before mentioned; or be an encouragement to the builders to go on in their work: nor in the riches brought into it by the Gentiles in the times of the Maccabees, which was very inconsiderable; and could never make it equal to Solomon's temple, and much less preferable to it; nor by Alexander the great honouring it with his presence^{f38}; for surely Solomon was greater than he. It remains, that what gave it the greater glory was the personal presence of the Messiah in it, his doctrines, and his miracles:

and, or "for",

in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts; not temporal peace, for there was little of that during the second temple; witness the times of the Maccabees, and the wars with the Romans; but spiritual peace, through the blood and righteousness of Christ; peace with God; reconciliation for sin, through the sacrifice of the Son of God, in whom he is well pleased; yea, Christ himself may be meant, the Prince of peace, the Man the peace, who is our peace, (³⁰⁶Isaiah 9:6 ³⁰⁵Micah 5:5 ⁴⁰⁴Ephesians 2:14) the author of peace between God and men, between Jew and Gentile; the giver of spiritual and eternal peace: him the Lord gave, "put", and set in this place, the temple, as before observed; and where the Gospel of peace was preached, and from whence it went forth into all the world. The Arabic version adds,

"peace of soul, I say, to be possessed by everyone that labours to raise up this temple."

Ver. 10. *In the four and twentieth [day] of the ninth [month]*, etc.] The month Chisleu, which answers to part of November, and part of December: this was two months and three days after the former discourse or prophecy, and just three months from the time the Jews began to work in the house of the Lord, (³⁰⁴Haggai 1:14,15 2:1)

in the second year of Darius; the same year that all the former discourses and prophecies were delivered in:

came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet; for what he delivered was not his own, but from the Lord; he was only his minister and messenger. The Vulgate Latin version, and so Munster, render it, “unto Haggai the prophet”; and indeed what is said following seems to be directed to him, and he is the only person that put the questions directed to:

saying; as follows:

Ver. 11. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts*, etc.] To Haggai the prophet:

ask now the priests [concerning] the law; whose business it was to understand it, and teach it, and to answer questions, and resolve doubts concerning it; not of their own heads, and according to their fancies, will, and pleasure; but according to the rules and instructions given in the word of God: and as this was their office, they were the proper persons to apply to; and Haggai, though a prophet, is sent to the priests to propose questions to them; though it may be not so much for his own information, as for the conviction of the priests of their impurity, out of their own mouths, and of the people by them:

saying; putting the following questions to them.

Ver. 12. *If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment*, etc.] Or, “carry” it^{f39}; from one place to another in his pockets or bags, which were in the skirts of his garments. This is to be understood of the flesh of creatures offered in sacrifice, which were sanctified or separated for holy use; part of which belonged to the priests, who might carry it in their pockets to the proper place of eating it:

and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat: which were not holy, and not separated for holy use, but were common meats and drinks: now the question upon this is,

shall it be holy? that is, if either of those common things were touched by the skirt, in the pockets of which the holy flesh were carried, whether they were made holy by such a touch, and no more remained common or profane?

and the priests answered and said, No; they were not sanctified; for though the garment itself was sanctified thereby, and might not be employed in common use till washed, (^(R12)Leviticus 6:27) yet a garment so

touched could not convey holiness to whatsoever that touched, or that touched it.

Ver. 13. *Then said Haggai*, etc.] To the priests; having nothing to object to their answer; but being satisfied with it, he puts another question:

if [one that is] unclean by a dead body; by the touch of it, (^{<01911>}Numbers 19:11):

touch any of these, shall it be unclean? that is, if such an impure person, who was so in a ceremonial sense, should touch any of the above things, bread, pottage, wine, or oil, or any meat, would not they become unclean thereby, and so not fit for use?

and the priests answered and said, it shall be unclean; which was rightly answered; for whatsoever such an unclean person touched was unclean, according to the law, (^{<01922>}Leviticus 19:22). Pollution is more easily and more extensively conveyed than holiness.

Ver. 14. *Then answered Haggai, and said*, etc.] To the priests, and before the people; and made an application of these things to them, which was the thing in view in putting the questions:

So [is] this people, and so [is] this nation before me, saith the Lord; not only those people that were present and at work at the temple, but those that were absent, even the whole body of the people; who, though they were pure in their own eyes, yet were not so before the Lord; who knew their hearts, and the spring of all their actions; what were their ends and views in all they did: as a garment carrying in it holy flesh could not sanctify other things touched by it that were common and profane, but left them as they were; so their ritual devotions, and externally holy actions, did not and could not sanctify their impure hearts, but left them as unclean as before; nor did they sanctify their common mercies, their bread, pottage, wine, and oil: and, on the other hand, as an impure person made everything impure he touched; so they, being impure in heart, all their actions, even their religious ones, were impure also, as follows:

and so [is] every work of their hands; and that which they offer there [is] unclean; pointing at the altar, which they had built, and offered sacrifice on ever since they came out of Babylon, though the temple was not yet built, (^{<01933>}Ezra 3:3-6) but all their outward religious services, and all the sacrifices they offered up, were in the Lord's account impure and

abominable, as well as themselves; coming from an unsanctified heart, and offered up with unclean hands, and without repentance towards God, and faith in Christ; and living in other respects in disobedience to God, and especially while they neglected the building of the temple; satisfying themselves with offering sacrifices on the altar, when the house of God lay desolate; which is the principal thing respected, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 15. *And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward,* etc.] This being their case, and they so polluted with sin, particularly through their neglect of building the temple; they are most earnestly and importunately entreated to “lay” it “to their hearts”, to ponder it in their minds, and thoroughly consider how it had fared with them from this twenty fourth day of the ninth month, in which the prophet was sent unto them to encourage them in their work, and upwards or backwards, for some years past: even

from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord: the foundation of the temple was laid quickly after the Jews returned from Babylon, upon the proclamation of Cyrus, (^{458BC}Ezra 3:10) but, through difficulties and discouragements they met with, they desisted from the work, and went no further; a stone was not laid upon it; or, as the Targum, a row, or course upon course, until this time: and now all the intermediate space of time between the first laying the foundation of the temple, and their present going to work upon it, the prophet would have them take particular notice of; how it had been with them, as to their outward circumstances; whereby it would appear, they had sinned, and the Lord had been offended with them.

Ver. 16. *Since those [days] were,* etc.] From the time the foundation of the temple was laid, unto the time they began to work again, which was a space of about fifteen or sixteen years:

when [one] came to an heap of twenty [measures], there were [but] ten; when the husbandman having gathered in his corn, and who was generally a good judge of what it would yield, came to a heap of it on his corn floor, either of sheaves not threshed, or grain not winnowed, and expected it would have produced at least twenty measures, seahs, or bushels; afterward it was threshed and winnowed, to his great disappointment he had but ten out of it; there were so much straw and chaff, and so little grain; or when he came to a heap of grain, wheat, or barley, in his granary,

where he thought he should have twenty bushels of it; but when he had measured it, proved but ten; being either stolen by thieves, or eaten by vermin; rather the latter:

when [one] came to the wine vat for to draw out fifty [vessels] out of the press, there were [but] twenty; by the quantity of grapes which he put into the press to tread and squeeze, he expected to have had fifty measures, or baths, or hogsheads of wine; but, instead of that, had but twenty; the bunches were so thin, or the berries so bad: there was a greater decrease and deficiency in the wine than in the grain.

Ver. 17. *I smote you with blasting*, etc.] That is, their fields and vineyards, with burning winds, which consumed them; with blights by east winds: this shows the reason of their disappointment, and that it was from the Lord, and for their sins, by way of chastisement and correction:

and with mildew; a kind of clammy dew, which corrupts and destroys the fruits of the earth; and is a kind of jaundice to them, as the word signifies; (see ^{<3049>}Amos 4:9):

and with hail; which battered down the corn and the vines, and broke them to pieces; (see ^{<1025>}Exodus 9:25):

in all the labours of your hands; in the corn they sowed, and in the vines they planted:

yet ye [turned] not to me, saith the Lord; did not consider their evil ways as the cause of all this; nor repent of them, and turn from them to the Lord; to his worship, as the Targum; or to the building of his house, the thing chiefly complained of. Afflictions, unless sanctified, have no effect upon men to turn them from their sins to the Lord.

Ver. 18. *Consider now from this day and upward*, etc.] Or forward; for time to come, as the Vulgate Latin version:

from the four and twentieth day of the ninth [month]; before observed, (^{<3020>}Haggai 2:10,15):

even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider [it]; not from the time it was first laid after their return upon the proclamation of Cyrus, but from the time they began to clear that foundation, and to build upon it; and which having lain so long neglected, the renewal of it is represented as a fresh laying of it: now the prophet, as

he had directed them to consider what adversity and calamities had attended them from the time of their neglect unto this time; so he would have them particularly observe what blessings they would enjoy from henceforward; by which it would appear how pleasing it was to the Lord that they had begun and were going on with the building.

Ver. 19. *Is the seed yet in the barn?* etc.] The seed for sowing the land, in order for the next harvest: this is by some answered in the affirmative, it was in the barn, it was not yet sown; this being the ninth month, the month Chisleu, which answers to part of our November; rather it should be in the negative, no, it was just sown; and therefore no conjecture could be made, whether it would be a good harvest, or not; yet the prophet, in the name of the Lord, promises them a good one so long before hand: for the month Chisleu, which was the ninth month, was the last for sowing, and even the first half of that; for so say^{f40} the Jews,

“half Tisri, all Marchesvan, and half Chisleu, is seed time;”

so that this being that month, seed time must have been just over; and the sense, is there any seed in the barn? no, it is sown; and so, is there any remaining in the granary for the support of families until the next harvest? they knew there were none, or very little: and yet the Lord promises to bless them, so that they should have enough:

yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth; their various fruits; this not being the time of their bearing fruit, for it was winter time; and it could not be said what they would bring forth in their season so long before hand; yet it is suggested by the prophet that they would be very fruitful; which were the principal fruit trees the land of Israel abounded with, (~~CHRS~~ Deuteronomy 8:8) and on which their comfortable subsistence depended. Kimchi observes, that it may be wondered at that the olive tree should be mentioned, because the time of its bearing fruit were the months of Marchesvan and Chisleu; but perhaps the time of its bearing fruit was delayed (as he says) because of the curse upon it:

from this day will I bless you; with plenty of all good things, in their fields and gardens, in their vineyards and olive yards; so that a difference between former and present times, and those to come, would easily be discerned, and the reasons of it.

Ver. 20. *And again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai*, etc.] Or a “second”,^{f41} time, even on the same day as the former:

in the four and twentieth day of the month; of the ninth month Chisleu, (^{s320}Haggai 2:10):

saying; as follows:

Ver. 21. *Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah*, etc.] The former discourse or prophecy chiefly related to the people, for their encouragement in building; this is directed to the prince over them, to support him under all the changes and revolutions made in the world; that he should be regarded by the Lord in a very tender manner, and his government continued, as a type of Christ and his kingdom:

saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; make great commotions, changes, and revolutions in the world, by wars, and otherwise: the Persian kingdom being subdued by the Grecian; the Grecian by the Romans; the Roman empire by the Goths and Vandals; and the antichristian states, both Papal and Mahometan, by the vials of God’s wrath poured out upon them, by means of Christian princes: such revolutions are often designed by the shaking of the heavens, especially by earthquakes in the book of the Revelation; (see ^{s664}Revelation 6:14 8:5 11:13 16:18).

Ver. 22. *And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms*, etc.] The Persian monarchy, which consisted of various kingdoms and nations, and was destroyed under Darius Codomannus by Alexander the great, who fought with him three pitched battles, and overcame him; but the thing was of the Lord, according to his purpose and will, and by his power and providence; and therefore the overthrow is ascribed to him. The Jews^{f42} say that the Persian monarchy fell by the Grecians thirty four years after the building of the temple; but very wrongly, it lasted longer:

and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; the empire of Alexander, which was a very strong one, and contained in it many kingdoms and nations, even the whole world, at least as he thought; and which was divided after his death into several kingdoms; the strength of which was greatly weakened by one another, and at last entirely destroyed by the Romans as instruments:

and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down; which may refer either to the

chariots and horses, and their riders, belonging to the Grecians, and used in their wars; or else this may describe the empire of the Romans, which in its turn should be destroyed, famous for their triumphal chariots:

everyone by the sword of his brother; by civil wars, which was remarkably true of the successors of Alexander, as appears from Josephus^{f43} and Justin^{f44}: this may be applied to all the kingdoms of this world, which will all be demolished, and be brought into subjection to Christ, and his kingdom shall be set up in the world, the son and antitype of Zerubbabel, of whom the following words are to be understood; (see ~~27B4~~ Daniel 2:44 ~~465A~~ 1 Corinthians 15:24 ~~6115~~ Revelation 11:15). Abendana interprets it of the army of Gog and Magog, who shall fall everyone by the sword of his brother.

Ver. 23. *In that day, saith the Lord of hosts*, etc.] When all these kingdoms, and their thrones and strength, are destroyed; which shows that what follows cannot be understood literally of Zerubbabel, who lived not to see these things done:

will I take thee, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord; that is, the Messiah, as is owned by Abarbanel; who says^{f45},

“the King Messiah shall come, who is of the seed of Zerubbabel; and he shall be the seal of the structure, and the end of the kingdoms; as it is said, “I will make thee as a signet, for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts”; for this no doubt is said concerning the days of the Messiah:”

and another Jewish writer^{f46}, quoting the above author for the sense of this passage, and (~~3675~~ Ezekiel 37:25), adds,

“for the King Messiah he will be David, and he will be Zerubbabel, that he may be a rod going out of their stem;”

and another^{f47} on these words observes,

“without doubt this is said concerning the expected Messiah, who will be of the seed of Zerubbabel; and therefore this promise was not at all fulfilled in him; for in the time of this prophecy he was but governor of Judah, and he never rose to greater dignity than what he then had:”

indeed these writers wrongly suppose the Messiah yet to come, and whom they in vain expect; and apply this, as they do many other prophecies, to the coming of Christ in the flesh, which belong to his spiritual appearance in his churches, or to his personal coming at the last day: however, this shows the conviction on their minds of the application of this and such like prophecies to the Messiah, who may be called Zerubbabel, as he is sometimes David, because he sprung from him, was of his lineage, and because he was a type of him, in bringing the people of the Jews out of the Babylonish captivity, in rebuilding the temple, in the government of the people, and in being chosen of God, and precious; as well as a servant of the Lord, as here expressed, and which is often mentioned as a character of the Messiah, (^{<240B>}Isaiah 49:3 53:11):

and will make thee as a signet; preserve, protect and defend, love, value, and esteem, and advance to great honour and dignity, power and authority: the signet or seal on a man's right hand, being what he always wears, is ever in sight, and he is careful of; as well as is what he greatly esteems, and is dear unto him, and he highly values; and by which a prince signs his decrees and edicts; (see ^{<240D>}Isaiah 49:2) (^{<218B>}Song of Solomon 8:6 ^{<418B>}Matthew 28:18):

for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts; to be the Redeemer and Saviour of his people; to be their King and Governor, and the Judge of the world. Christ is peculiarly God's elect, and in whom all his people are chosen; he is the chosen of God, and precious, (^{<130B>}Psalms 89:19) (^{<240E>}Isaiah 42:1 ^{<400E>}1 Peter 1:20 2:4). The Targum is,

“for in thee I am well pleased;”

which is said by God the Father concerning Christ more than once, (^{<400B>}Matthew 3:17 17:5). It is a prophecy of the exaltation of Christ after he had done his work, as the Lord's servant, and especially in the latter day, when he shall be King over all the earth; all which cannot be so well applied to Zerubbabel; unless with Reinbeck we understand it of the time of his resurrection from the dead at the last day; when great honour shall be put upon him as a faithful servant, and great love and affection expressed to him; but that will be no other than what will be common to all the saints and chosen of God; Christ, in whom all prophecies terminate, and so this, is doubtless intended.

FOOTNOTES

- Ft1** -- **ggj** “festum celebravit”, Buxtorf.
- Ft2** -- Comment. in c. i. 1. So Stockius, p. 306.
- Ft3** -- Onomast. Sacr. p. 262, 779.
- Ft4** -- Comment. in c. i. 1.
- Ft5** -- De Prophet. Vita & Interitu, c. 20.
- Ft6** -- De Vita & Morte Sanct. c. 49.
- Ft7** -- Ut supra. (De Vita & Morte Sanct. c. 49.)
- Ft8** -- Ed. Hottinger, p. 27.
- Ft9** -- Antiqu. l. 11. c. 3. sect. 1. and c. 4. sect. 5, 7.
- Ft10** -- Thalia, sive l. 3. c. 84, 85, 86.
- Ft11** -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 11. c. 3. sect. 1. and c. 4. sect. 5, 7.)
- Ft12** -- **ygj dyb** “in manu Aggaei”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius.
- Ft13** -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 11. c. 3. sect. 1. and c. 4. sect. 5, 7.)
- Ft14** -- **brj hzh tybhw** “et domus ista deserta manebit?” Drusius; “quum domus haec vasta est?” Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “dum domus haec desolata est?” Cocceius.
- Ft15** -- **µkbbi wmyç** “ponite corda vestra”, V. L.; “ponite cor vestrum”, Burkius.
- Ft16** -- **h[bçl** “ad satietatem”, Calvin, Deuteronomy Dieu; “ad saturitatem”, Munster.
- Ft17** -- **hrkçl** “ad ebrietatem”, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Calvin, Deuteronomy Dieu.

- Ft18** -- **wl** **μj l** **γaw** “et non est ad calorem ei”, Deuteronomy Dieu; “sed nemo ita ut sit calor ipsi”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “ut calefiat ei”, Burkius.
- Ft19** -- **bwqn** “pertusum”, V. L. Munster, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “perforatum”, Munster, Varenius.
- Ft20** -- **rhh** “in istum montem”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- Ft21** -- **dbka** “gloriosum me ostendam”, Vatablus.
- Ft22** -- **hbrh l a** “ad rem augendam”, Grotius.
- Ft23** -- **wb y tj pn** “exsufflo illud”, Vatablus; “efflo illud”, Junius & Tremellius; “difflo”, Piscator; “diffلامي”, Drusius, Cocceius.
- Ft24** -- **μkyl [** **κt [** “propterea super vos”, Varenius, Reinbeck, Burkius.
- Ft25** -- “Idcirco contra vos”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- Ft26** -- **[mçyw** “et audivit”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Burkius.
- Ft27** -- **ygj yrbd l [w** “idque propter verba Chaggai”, Varenius, Reinbeck.
- Ft28** -- **wç[w** “et facite”, V. L. Munster, Pagninus, Montanus, Burkius.
- Ft29** -- “Perficite”, Piscator, Tarnovius, Varenius, Reinbeck.
- Ft30** -- **ytrk rça rbdh ta** “cum verbo quo pepigeram”, Junius & Tremellius; “cum verbo illo quo pepigi”, Varenius; approved of by Reinbeck, Append. Doctrin. de Accent. p. 76, 77.
- Ft31** -- **μkkwtb tdm[yj wrw** “et Spiritus meus stat in medio vestri”, Pagninus, Cocceius; “stana”, Montanus; “Spiritus quoque meus stabit in medio vestrum”, Vatablus.
- Ft32** -- T. Bab Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 2. & Gloss. in ib.
- Ft33** -- Defence of Christianity, p. 88. “adhuc unum modicum est, [sc.] regni venturi.” Akiba apud Lynam in loc.
- Ft34** -- Taciti Annales, l. 2. c. 47.

- Ft35** -- T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 65. 1. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 2. Jarchi & Kimchi in Hagg. i. 8.
- Ft36** -- Baal Aruch in rad. **dbk**, fol. 75. 3.
- Ft37** -- T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 1.
- Ft38** -- Azariah, Meor Enayim, c. 51. fol. 160. 1. Vid. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 23. 2. & 24. 1.
- Ft39** -- **açy** “portaverit”, Munster; “portet”, Varenius, Reinbeck.
- Ft40** -- T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 106. 2.
- Ft41** -- **tynç** “secundo”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; “secunda vice”, Burkius.
- Ft42** -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 30. p. 91. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 18. 1.
- Ft43** -- Antiqu. l. 12. c. 1. sect. 1.
- Ft44** -- E. Trogo, l. 13. c. 6.
- Ft45** -- Mayene Jeshuah, fol. 13. 4. Vid. & Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 67. 2.
- Ft46** -- Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc.
- Ft47** -- R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. c. 34. p. 289, 290.