

Lesson 111 - CHRIST, THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS *Haggai*

(Hag. 1:1-2) - Haggai was a prophet to the restored remnant of Judah who returned to Jerusalem from the 70-year captivity in Babylon. His name means “festive” or “festival of the Lord,” and marked that the return of the nation to Jerusalem was to be a celebration of worship and praise to the Lord God of Israel. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were all sent back to Jerusalem as God’s prophets. Haggai and Zechariah returned with the first group under Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest. Malachi came in the second group under Nehemiah. Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther give us the historical record of the return. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi give us the prophetic record of the return.

When the people arrived in Jerusalem, they found the city in ruins and the temple totally destroyed. The Lord sent them back to rebuild, first, the temple (re-establish worship), and, second, to rebuild the city. They began the work to rebuild the temple and in two years laid the foundation. This temple was smaller than Solomon’s temple, but the work went rapidly, then, they quit working for three reasons: (1) They were disappointed that in their eyes it was not as grand as Solomon’s temple; (2) they wanted to build houses for themselves; (3) they had opposition and hostility from Samaritans, outsiders, who wanted to get involved. The project began in 536 B.C., and it was abandoned for 15-16 years. The Lord sent Haggai and Zechariah to urge the people to continue to build the temple (*Ezra 5:1-2*).

(Hag. 1:2-11) - Haggai’s message was that nothing should cause us to neglect the glory of God in salvation by His grace through Christ. He described the vanity of life without God, without Christ. Even though this second temple was not as impressive as Solomon’s temple, and even though it was lacking (no Ark), it still represented and typified the glory of God in the salvation of sinners by the blood of Christ, our great High Priest and the Lamb of God slain for our sins and to establish righteousness for us. Herein is the glory of God as He provides in Christ all that we need for salvation and eternal glory.

(Hag. 1:12-15) - Here we see the power of God in bringing the people to repentance and inspiring to get on with rebuilding the temple and reestablishing the worship of God. Here is a picture of salvation for the people of God: Zerubbabel is a picture of Christ our King; Joshua is a picture of Christ our High Priest; and Haggai is a picture of Christ our Prophet. The remnant of the people (the elect of God) “*did fear before the Lord.*” They came to respect and revere God in their thoughts and hearts. This is a picture of sinners being brought to faith in Christ and repentance of dead works.

(Hag. 2:1-4) - A month later the work on the temple stopped again, because the people became discouraged as the present temple seemed so plain and small compared to Solomon’s temple (*Ezra 3:12*). Again, the people missed the fact that the glory of the temple was not in physical beauty but in the presence of the LORD and the glory of the Lord as the temple typified the Person and work of Christ.

(Hag. 2:5) - The continued presence of the Lord was not wrapped up in the building but in the promise of the EVERLASTING COVENANT OF GRACE all conditioned on the promised Messiah. Its glory was all about Christ in His glorious Person and the glory and power of His finished work on Calvary to bring forth righteousness by which God justifies His people by imputing Christ’s righteousness to us.

(Hag. 2:6-9) - This is a prophecy of the Messiah. Again, the beauty of the temple was in what it pictured in the coming of Christ and the salvation of His people, the true, spiritual temple

of the Lord. This shaking is God intervening and interjecting Himself into the world and speaks of the entrance of God in human flesh into the sinful realm of men. This would mean the abolishment of the Old and the establishment of the New Covenant. It would mean the removing of something not stable and bringing in of something that cannot be shaken (*Heb. 12:25-29*). All of this would be fulfilled in the coming of Christ (*Heb. 10*). Notice in *verse 7* how the Messiah is identified as “*THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS*.” It is not that all people of all nations would desire Him as LORD and SAVIOR. By nature (as we are born spiritually dead and depraved), none of us desire Him. We desire our own way of salvation which is a way of death (*Prov. 14:12; 16:25*). But this means that God’s elect in all nations, Jew and Gentile, will be brought by God to desire Him as their one and only Lord and Savior. They will be brought to see their need of salvation by God’s grace, their need of righteousness which they cannot produce, their need of forgiveness by His blood. And they will be brought to see that their need can only be satisfied in the glorious Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Matt. 5:6; cf. John 14:6*). *Verse 9* speaks of Christ Himself and His church. The glory of salvation of sinners by God’s grace in Christ far exceeds the earthly and temporal glory of any earthly temple (*2 Cor. 3:1-11*).

(Hag. 2:10-19) - Haggai’s question for the priests had to do with the laws of cleansing under the Old Covenant. Remember, the law was given to expose their sinfulness unto death and to drive them to the Lord for mercy as revealed in the blood sacrifices which all pictured Christ. This issue of cleanliness was intended to show them their need of cleansing by the blood of atonement for which the temple was to be built. The temple was a visible testimony to the uncleanness of all men by nature and the only way a sinner can be made clean - THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST! In *verses 15-17* the prophet tells them to consider the temple itself from its very foundation. Our cleanness and acceptance with God are to be found in the Person and work of Christ that was portrayed in all the sacrifices and the priesthood connected with the temple. *Verse 19* describes the promise of future blessings that can only be realized by the coming of Christ, the accomplishment of His work of righteousness for His people.

(Hag. 2:20-23) - Haggai’s conclusion was addressed to “*Zerubbabel*,” the governor, who is a type of Christ, the King and Governor of His people. In Zerubbabel, the line of Judah and of David was preserved according to the promise of God that Messiah would come through them according to the flesh. “*I will shake the heavens and the earth*” - This is God intervening and interjecting Himself into the world by the coming of God the Son in human flesh without sin. It involves Christ’s work of dying on the cross, putting away the sins of His people, establishing the righteousness by which God justifies His people, overthrowing the kingdom of Satan, and calling His people from all over the world unto Him as their one and only Savior and Lord (*John 12:31-32; 16:8-11*). Christ will prevail over all His enemies!

Verse 23 speaks of Zerubbabel as a type of Christ. The name “Zerubbabel” means “sown in Babylon.” In His human nature, and even though He Himself was not, and never would be, a sinful man, Christ was sown (born) into the fallen, sinful, and cursed world. Zerubbabel was the son of “Shealtiel” whose name means “I have asked of God.” Christ is the gift of God to His people, and in and by Him, we have the gift of salvation, righteousness, forgiveness, and eternal life (*John 3:16; Rom. 8:32*). A “*signet*” is a seal whereby something is marked (identified). Christ is that One whom God the Father has sealed (*John 6:27*). He is that One by whom all the blessings of grace are sealed to His people in regeneration, by the gift of his Spirit (*Eph. 1:13*). Christ is Jehovah’s Servant and Signet, the seal of the covenant and the “*the express image*” of the Father (*Heb. 1:1-3*).