

Pillar Passages – Haggai 2
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Well welcome to another Pillar Passage. Today we're going to look at Haggai 2. I encourage you, if not, that you go look at Haggai 1. But today we are going to look at the first section of Haggai 2 from verse 1 through 9.

This next prophecy from Haggai comes to him about a month after the previous one and it's addressed again to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, who is in the line of David, and to Joshua the priest. So you have the governing head and religious head of the people. The people who have returned from exile back from Babylon to the Promised Land. To the remnant.

The prophesy says this: Who is left among you (verse 3) Who is left among you who saw this house—the temple—in its former glory? There isn't many people. They were in exile for 70 years. There's not many people but some do. God knows what they are thinking and He says, "How do you see it now? Is it not nothing in your eyes? Because it is just a start. It is as if a grand mansion burned down and now we have set the foundation for a small one bedroom track home. That's how it feels.

God says, "Yet now, be strong, O Zerubbabel," declares the Lord. "Be strong, O Joshua. When you hear this, "be strong, O Joshua," it should remind us, it should remind us of something in the past. It says, "Be strong, be strong all you people of the land," declares the Lord. The echo here is from the beginning of the book of Joshua. Joshua chapter 1. Where God—before the people entered the Promised land—God repeatedly tells the original Joshua—the successor to Moses—He tell him, I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Does that remind you of anyone? Someone else in the New Testament who said that. Therefore, by believing that, by faith in *that* promise, then apply that promise in this way—be strong and courageous for you shall cause this people to inherit the land. God originally told Joshua only be strong and very courageous. The way you will do that is by being careful to do all the law. Being strong and courageous is often the simply side effect of being faithful to God's law.

This is the original exodus when God was taking His people out of Egypt, and then through the wilderness, and then to the Promised Land. Now here again we see Haggai at the end of the Old Testament we see the same language of exodus, and wilderness, and Promised Land being used here. And the same logic is here. I am with you. Therefore, I am with you, therefore—work. Work at the rebuilding of the temple. Work at the rebuilding of the temple or we could just simplify it and say work at the worship of God—of Me. Work at this. Work at making it faithful, glorious, full of joy, and bringing in the nations to join in with you. Work at worship—worship of me—because I am with you. I am with you to provide all that you need.

The reason why I have done this. The reason why I am with you is because I made a covenant with you before any of this generation was even born. When you came out of Egypt, I made a covenant with you and I keep My promises. Therefore, My Spirit is still in your midst, so fear not.

Again, just to give us a little hint as to where this is going, we see the same—the very same—logic, the same agreement in Luke 12 where Jesus promises His disciples, “Fear not, little flock, for it is My Father’s *good pleasure*—it is My Father’s joy, His delight, to give you the kingdom—the Promise Land.”

So the same logic here, “For thus say the Lord of hosts,” then there’s a prophesy, “Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heaven and the earth and the sea and the dry land,” just as I did in the exodus, “I will shake (verse 7) all the nations, so that the treasures of all the nations shall come in . . .” And what are those treasures? Well, it is silver and gold, but even more so, it is His elect, His people from among all the nations. He will shake the nations like your shaking a box so that everything comes out—everything that you want. So that all “the treasure of the nations come in. Come in where? Come into Israel. Into God’s people. “And I will fill this house with glory.” I promise to do this—His temple. Says the Lord of hosts. “The silver is Mine,” the silver of the nations out there is Mine (verse 8). “The gold is Mine,” declares the Lord of hosts, and my elect—there are already Mine.

The promise that you must live on, the thing you must bank your life on now, oh My people, is that the latter glory—that the glory that’s coming in the future of this house shall be greater than the former—than it was before under Solomon. Under Solomon, the glory that you look back to, and that you say oh I wish it could be but look at this foundation of a tract home. God says, No, no, no. I’m going to exceed that glory—far, far above what it was then. And in this place I will give peace.

Now, a comment here. Some people think that this greater glory is the temple that Jesus would have seen, and the disciples were so impressed with, the temple of Herod. And Jesus would say not one of these stones are going to be left unturned. Indeed that was true in 70 AD the Romans left not one of those stone unturned and when Herod built that temple there was no hint at all during that season of history that these treasures from the nations—the treasures of silver and gold or of people—actually came in at that time. So this passage must be looking forward to the future; to a future millennium when God will bring in all of these people from the nations. And they will come in worship. The next book, Zechariah, will speak of this, but this must be what Haggai is looking forward to here.

Now, a point of application here for us. There are many today who look at our own country and respond the way the people of God responded to the foundation of the temple as it was being rebuilt (in verse 2 and 3) and they look back at the former glory of our country—and our country has had many former glories. This is not wrong, the gospel, the church, the pursuit of God has brought with it some many good side effects in the culture of our nation—too many to be counted—so many in our culture that we have become presumptuous. We have assumed that they were our birthright when in actuality they were only the side effects of a people pursuing God and His gospel. Now we look around and see many ruins and chaos. We see cultural decline, and we long for those former days of our country.

This passage has direct application to us because the pursuit—the former glory, as I just said—was a result of the pursuit of the worship of God. It was not our birthright. It is not because

Americans are somehow exceptional in themselves. In fact, what made the United States exceptional, what has been the real American exceptionalism from the very beginning, is that we said, reading out Bibles and looking up to God, our forefathers said, what will make us exceptional is the belief that no American is exceptional. In our founding documents one of the primary principles baked into all of that is you never trust an American. And that is what made us exceptional. Every other culture said, you know, We are Romans. We are great! We are exceptional. And what made America exceptional as a great power is we were the first great power to say, We're not exceptional. Why? Because only God is exceptional. Why? Because we had our Bible open; because we were pursuing the glory of the only one who is exceptional.

So Christian, do you desire to return to that former glory? Well that former glory is coming. In the meantime, I am confident that God can again produce that former glory to an even greater degree. But it does not come by pursuing the glory. It comes by the pursuing of the worship of God.

Now is the time for all Christians everywhere to return, to repent back to a singular focus. Back to a singular desire, a singular hunger for the worship of God. To work that. To work at that but work at that by faith. By faith that this is a God who keeps His covenant. The covenant that we live under was a covenant that was cut in blood. It was cut in blood by His Son on the cross. He will fulfill all of His promises. He will *give* us the kingdom. In the hope of God keeping His promises and proving His covenant, by writing that covenant with the blood of His own Son, we may go forth into the future confident, working by faith, for the worship of this one singular exceptional God.

To put all of this another way, in closing, do you want a country that is full of the glory of God? Countries are only the product of families and churches that are filled with the glory of God. As we pursue the glory of God here, and here, and here, this are the atoms then that make up cities, and counties, and nations. If we want rebuild, we must have faith to work at this small level, this small humble level of a family and a little church, but it is from such small beginnings that God *will*—will—produce even greater glory than what came before.