

# 17. HAGGAI

520 BC

Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in 586 BC. After the seventy-year exile and the overthrow of Babylon by the Persians, Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, issued an edict, allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. The prophet Haggai encourages the Jewish leaders, Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the priest, to complete the temple restoration despite the Gentile opposition. In chapter 2 Haggai prophecies about the millennial temple declaring that the latter glory of the Jerusalem temple will be greater than the former.

## **The future shaking of sky and earth** (Hag 2:6-9)

The Lord shook the earth the first time at Sinai when he descended upon it and the mountain quaked (Exod 19:18). That was a local event and the people there were afraid. However, the future shaking will occur when the Lord descends in glory and power upon the Earth at his second coming and that won't be local. The shaking will embrace the heavens and the Earth, including the sea, the dry land, and all nations. If the shaking was only mentioned here, you might take the meaning figuratively, but great worldwide earthquakes at the end of the age are spoken of several times by the prophets:

When the Lord arises to shake the Earth, people will flee from the terror of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground (Isa 2:19).

Therefore I, the Lord Almighty, will make the heavens tremble in my wrath and the Earth will shake from its place, in the day of my great anger (Isa 13:13).

The fish, the birds, the wild animals, every creature that moves on the ground, and all the people on the face of the Earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will crumble, the cliffs

will collapse, and every wall will fall to the ground (Ezek 38:20).

This, the greatest seismic activity that will occur since man was on Earth (Isa 29:6, Rev 6:12, 11:13, 16:18), is God's judgment on rebellious mankind. Haggai mentions this shaking again in 2:21-22 and adds the result; the overthrow of the power of kingdoms and nations. He added that their armies would kill each other, as also predicted by Zechariah, who speaks of the same event (Zech 14:13).

But Haggai is mainly concerned with restoring the Lord's temple in his day. He knows that the second temple is inferior to the first one built by Solomon. He is prophesying about a greater temple when the treasures of the nations will be brought in (Isa 60:5-7, Zech 14:14, Rev 21:24-26) and the Lord fills it with his glory during the Messianic reign of peace (Ezek 43:4-7).

I will shake all nations, and the precious resources of all nations will come, and I will fill this temple with glory, says the Lord Almighty. The silver and the gold is mine (2:7-8).

The Messiah will come at this time, but he is not the desire of the nations; the silver and the gold is. The nations of the millennium are unbelievers who rebelled against God and survived to live on (Zech 14:16).

Haggai 2:6 is quoted in Hebrews 12:26-29 where God says:

Once more I will shake not only the Earth but also the heaven ... When he says, 'once more,' that tells us that God will remove what can be shaken, what has been made, so that what cannot be shaken will remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us thank God and worship him acceptably with reverence and respect, for our God is a consuming fire.

The writer of Hebrews interprets this passage as a future event when Christians inherit the kingdom. This shake-up begins with worldwide earthquakes that destroy the world as we know it and it results in a transformed world, not only physically, but politically and morally. Man's infrastructure will disappear and the silver and gold that the

world's kingdoms covet will now be brought to Jerusalem as offerings to adorn the millennial temple.

### **Zerubbabel, the Lord's signet ring** (Hag 2:20-23)

When the Lord descends to defeat the rebels at the battle of Armageddon, he'll shake heaven and earth and overthrow all the kingdoms of the Gentiles. He'll defeat the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens and he'll annihilate the power of national governments on earth by overthrowing their military forces. Horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother (Hag 2:22). Cf. Zech 14:13: On that day, the Lord will strike people with great panic so that they seize each other by the hand and attack each other.

Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, is highlighted because he was a descendant of King David and an ancestor of Jesus. On that day the Lord will make him like a signet ring because he has chosen him. A signet ring has letters carved into it and is used as a signature. As it is *on that day* in the future, the promise to Zerubbabel is that the coming Messiah will be a descendant of his (cf. Mt 1:12). Jesus, the descendant of Zerubbabel, will be the Lord's signet ring, his regent on Earth during the millennium.