

Haggai 2 — God's Presence, God's Shaking, God's Promise

1. Encouragement for the Discouraged Builders

Haggai chapter 2 verses 1–3

“In the seventh month, on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying: ‘Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?’”

About a month after the people had resumed work on the temple, discouragement set in. Some of the older men could still remember the splendor of Solomon’s temple before it was destroyed by Babylon. As they looked at this new structure—smaller, simpler, and far less impressive—their hearts sank.

Ezra tells us that when the foundation of this second temple was laid, the young people shouted for joy, but the older ones wept because they remembered what had been lost (see Ezra chapter 3). The noise was a mixture of celebration and lament. That emotional tension is the backdrop for God’s word through Haggai.

God asks:

“Who among you remembers the former glory? And how does this one look to you now? Isn’t it almost nothing in comparison?”

They were obeying, but they were discouraged. They compared the present work to the past, and it felt small and insignificant.

2. “Be Strong... and Work, for I Am With You”

Haggai chapter 2 verse 4

“Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,” says the LORD; “and be strong, Joshua... and be strong, all you people of the land,” says the LORD, “and work; for I am with you,” says the LORD of hosts.

God does not dismiss their discouragement—He speaks straight into it:

- Be strong, Zerubbabel.
- Be strong, Joshua.
- Be strong, all you people.
- And work.
- For I am with you.

The difference-maker is not the size of the building or the level of visible glory. The difference-maker is the presence of God.

Haggai chapter 2 verse 5

“According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!”

God reminds them of His covenant faithfulness. Just as He was with Israel when they came out of Egypt, He is with them now. His Spirit remains among them. That reality is greater than the loss of outward splendor.

3. A Coming Shaking and a Greater Glory

Haggai chapter 2 verses 6–7

“For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts.”

God lifts their eyes beyond their immediate situation to something much bigger.

He speaks of a future shaking of heaven and earth and all nations. The writer of Hebrews quotes this passage and applies it to a final, climactic shaking, where God removes what can be shaken so that what cannot be shaken may remain (see Hebrews chapter 12). In other words, everything temporary and fragile will one day fall away.

Then God says “they shall come to the Desire of All Nations.” Many believers throughout history have understood this as a reference to the Messiah—the One every human heart ultimately longs for, even if people do not realize it or even resist Him. We may chase money, pleasure, power, or recognition, but the deepest hunger of the soul is for the living God, revealed perfectly in Jesus Christ.

Haggai chapter 2 verses 8–9

“‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says the LORD of hosts.”

Solomon’s temple glowed with gold and precious materials. This new temple was modest. Yet God says the glory of the latter temple will be greater than the former—not because of its architecture, but because of the Presence that would one day enter it.

Centuries later, Jesus Christ—God in the flesh—would walk in that temple. The One who shed His blood on the cross for our sins, and whose resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord, stood in that very place. No amount of gold could compare with the glory of the Son of God standing in His Father’s house.

God also promises: “In this place I will give peace.”

True peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of Christ.

4. Holiness, Defilement, and Misplaced Priorities

Haggai chapter 2 verses 10–13

“On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month... the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying, “If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?”’ Then the priests answered and said, ‘No.’ And Haggai said, ‘If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?’ So the priests answered and said, ‘It shall be unclean.’”

God gives Haggai a little “object lesson” using the law of holiness and uncleanness:

- Holiness is not contagious.
Holy meat in a garment does not make other food holy just by touching it.
- Uncleanness is contagious.
If someone who is unclean touches something, that object becomes unclean.

Sin spreads more easily than holiness. You cannot make yourself holy by hanging around holy things, but you can easily defile your life by compromise.

Haggai chapter 2 verse 14 NKJV

“Then Haggai answered and said, ‘So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,’ says the LORD, ‘and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.’”

They were back in the land, involved in temple work, but their hearts had been drifting. Their wrong priorities—putting themselves first and God second—had infected everything they did. Their offerings were contaminated by self-centeredness.

5. “From This Day I Will Bless You”

Haggai chapter 2 verses 15–17 NKJV

“And now, carefully consider from this day forward... before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the LORD... When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten; when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were but twenty. I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me,” says the LORD.

God asks them to look back and connect the dots. Their efforts had been frustrated. Their harvests were smaller than expected. Their work seemed cursed. God had been using these hardships as a wake-up call, not to crush them, but to turn their hearts back to Him.

Now that they had resumed the rebuilding of the temple and restored God to first place, He calls them to mark this day.

Haggai chapter 2 verses 18–19 NKJV

“Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month... Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.”

Nothing has sprouted yet. No harvest is visible. But God makes a promise in advance:

“From this day, I will bless you.”

Here is a polished and refined version of your sentence:

Not because they earned it by their works, but because they turned their hearts back to Him and placed His purposes first. This was not a matter of earning merit—it was the posture of their hearts.

This is a timeless spiritual principle:

When we put God first, He takes responsibility for our needs.

When we push Him to the margins, we find ourselves always short.

6. A Future Shaking and a Chosen Signet

Haggai chapter 2 verses 20–22

“And again the word of the LORD came to Haggai... saying, ‘Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying: I will shake heaven and earth. I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms. I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them; the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.’”

Once again God speaks of a coming global shaking—a time when political powers, military strength, and human empires will collapse. Kings, armies, and systems that seem unshakable will fall. God alone will stand.

Haggai chapter 2 verse 23

“‘In that day,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,’ says the LORD, ‘and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,’ says the LORD of hosts.”

The signet ring was the king’s seal—his symbol of authority and ownership. God promises to make Zerubbabel like a signet, a chosen instrument in His redemptive plan. Zerubbabel appears in the genealogies of Jesus Christ (see Matthew chapter 1 and Luke chapter 3), underscoring that God’s purposes for Israel, the line of David, and ultimately the Messiah, were still intact even after exile and judgment.

There has been much speculation about how Zerubbabel’s role may connect to future events, but the main point here is clear:

Human kingdoms will crumble. God’s purposes will stand.

God’s chosen King—Jesus Christ—will reign.

Practical Application for Believers

Haggai chapter 2 presses several questions into our hearts:

1. Are you discouraged because your present work seems “small”?
You may look at your service, your ministry, your influence, and think, “It’s nothing compared to others.”

God's word to you is:

- *Be strong.*
- *Keep working.*
- *I am with you.*

2. Are your priorities in order—or upside down?

- Are you investing more in what can be shaken than what cannot?
- Does your schedule show that God comes first—or that He gets the leftovers?

3. Is there an area of compromise that is quietly contaminating everything else?

- Sin spreads; holiness does not spread automatically.
- You cannot stay clean by being near holy things; you must walk with a holy God.

4. Do you believe God can turn things around “from this day”?

You may feel like you are in a season of shortage—financially, emotionally, spiritually. Haggai does not promise instant wealth, but he does show that when God's people return to Him and put His purposes first, He steps in with favor, provision, and blessing in His way and His time.

A Loving Challenge to Believers

God's repeated word in Haggai is: “Consider.”

- Consider your ways.
- Consider your priorities.
- Consider what you are building with your life.

If everything you own and everything you have built were shaken to the ground, what would remain?

- Your career can be shaken.
- Your possessions can be shaken.
- Your health can be shaken.
- Even your plans for ministry can be shaken.

But your relationship with Jesus Christ, your obedience to His word, your investments in eternity—those things cannot be shaken.

Let this passage move you to realignment:

- Put Christ at the apex of your life.
- Put God's kingdom above your comforts.
- Put obedience above convenience.

An Invitation to Non-Believers

If you have never surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, Haggai's message carries a sober warning and a gracious invitation.

God says He will shake heaven and earth and all nations. Everything temporary will collapse. That includes every false hope we lean on—our goodness, our religion, our accomplishments, our status.

But in the midst of that shaking, God points you to the “Desire of All Nations”—the One your heart is truly longing for: Jesus Christ.

- He shed His blood on the cross to pay for your sins.
- He rose from the dead, and His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord.
- He offers you forgiveness, a new heart, and a place in God's family.
- He promises to be with you—now and forever.

You do not have to clean yourself up first.

You do not have to fix your life before you come.

You come to Him as you are, and He begins the work of cleansing and rebuilding from the inside out.

If you are ready, you can respond to Him in simple, honest prayer, something like this (your own words are best, but this may help):

*“Lord Jesus, I know that I have sinned and gone my own way.
I believe that You shed Your blood on the cross for my sins
and that You rose again, proving that You are God, Savior, and Lord.
I turn from my sin and place my trust in You.
Take first place in my life.
Make me new, and teach me to live for You.
I put my life in Your hands. Amen.”*

If you truly trust Him, He receives you.

And in a world that is being shaken, you will belong to a kingdom that cannot be shaken.