

## PostExilicProphets 21-05-13a

Welcome to the Thursday night study at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 13th of May 2021 and we're in the book of Haggai chapter 2. Haggai chapter 2. If you need to find Haggai, just find the end of the Old Testament, go back two books and another page and there you are. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Haggai chapter 2. This is God talking to post-exilic Israel through his post-exilic prophets, Haggai and Zechariah. At this point, soon Malachi will join them. And the topic is the dwelling place of God.

A topic very pertinent to us. It leaves me almost speechless how our studies intertwine without any real malice or forethought on my part, but we have just seen this past Sunday and the last two Sundays, the Lord Jesus in his discussion with Peter talking about the foundation rock on which he is going to build his assembly. And here in Haggai, God is talking to Israel about the foundation on which they should be building his temple.

And so both in the Old Testament and in the new, the presence of God, the dwelling of God with his people comes prominently into view in these two studies in particular. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our investigation of this passage and we'll get started. Father, it is such an impressive and a wonderful truth that the Lord Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us.

And we amazingly are able to enjoy your presence in our midst, in our hearts because of the work that he accomplished on our behalf in securing our salvation, accomplishing redemption and reconciliation, propitiation, the restoration and regeneration that grants to us eternal life and the privilege of entering your throne room and representing ourselves under the high priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that as we look at this portion of your word this evening, that the Holy Spirit, whom you also have granted to us as a presence and a power in our hearts, will make these things clear, help us to see their pertinence and their application in our lives moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day in the relatively brief time that remains to us before the return of the Lord Jesus and our entrance into that eternal state where if we qualify, if we are faithful and obedient, we will stand in your presence. We pray these things in amen.

Just by way of quick reminder, events go by so quickly that sometimes I feel like it takes a little bit of time to get our head back inside the word of God and the place where we are in it. Israel through neglect, through apathy, through indifference, through active disobedience and rebellion found itself outside the covenant blessings of God that were secured first through Moses and then Joshua and then the days of the judges and down through King David and Solomon and then through disobedience and idolatry and distraction and defection. You have the kingdom, the 10 tribes going out under the Assyrians in 721 BC.

Later, beginning in 605 BC, this is the actual beginning of the captivity. The first captives are taken away from the land and the land loses its independence in 605 with Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion. What is 605 minus 70? If you go 70 years forward, you find yourself in the year 535 and it is around that time frame, 535-536, when the first returnees come to the land and begin to rebuild and restore that which was destroyed in Jerusalem.

We started looking at that last week and let's take a quick trip over to the book of Ezra. We looked at several portions of this, but go to Ezra chapter 3. You can see lists of the captives who returned to Jerusalem there in chapter 2. There's a great long list. The whole chapter is nothing but a roster of the sons of Haggab and so on coming in, listed as the people of the province who came back from captivity of those who have been carried away whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his own city.

That's chapter 2 verse 1. So you get to chapter 3, when the seventh month had come. This is the seventh month. You may recognize the seventh month.

This is Haggai's prophetic month. Remember he's talking in the seventh month. Well, this is seventh month far earlier.

This is the seventh month, as near as I can tell, this is the year 536 B.C. 536 B.C. And it's going to kick over to 535 when the civil calendar trips over, you know, Rosh Hashanah, the head of the year and so on. So in preparation for the 535th year, 70 years after the first captives were hauled away out of the land, you have these events. The seventh month had come.

The children of Israel were in cities. The people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem. Joshua the son of Jehoshadak and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren arose and built the altar.

They built the altar so that they could offer sacrifices and get ready for Rosh Hashanah, get ready for the Day of Atonement, get ready for the Feast of Tabernacles. Then in verse 8, in the second month of the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Joshua the son of Jehoshadak and the rest of the brethren of the priests and Levites began work and appointed Levites from 20 years old and above to oversee the work of the house of the Lord. Now, watch closely, pay very close attention here.

Verse 9, Joshua with his sons and brothers, Camille with his sons, the sons of Judah arose as one to oversee those working on the house of God, the sons of Hinnadad with their sons and the brethren of the Levites. Look at verse 10, the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord. This is 535, 534, if it's the second year coming back, depending on how they count the years, you know that there's this whole controversy about accession years, do you count the whole year if any part of the year is in there and so on.

So, it's a little bit fuzzy. We'll just say that this is 534 for purposes of argument. It doesn't really

matter.

God doesn't make an issue out of this, but He is going to mention this event in our Haggai passage. So, look at it in Ezra 3.10, the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord. The priests either stood or were stationed in their apparel with trumpets.

Levites, sons of Asaph with cymbals, praised the Lord according to the ordinance of David, king of Israel. They sang responsibly, praising the Lord and giving thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His mercy endures forever toward Israel. This is from Psalm 136.

All the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. This is a big day. It's a big deal.

Everybody is shouting and singing, praising the Lord responsibly and quoting scripture. It's a big, big deal. There is an adrenaline rush.

There is a huge assembly as of one man here doing this thing. So, you would expect that with such auspicious beginnings, this house would go up, be built, be finished, and be a place presence of God in very short order, right? However, comma, return now to Haggai chapter 2. We saw the insertion last time between verse 9 and verse 10 of the first prophecy of Zechariah. In between verse 9 and 10 of Haggai chapter 2, insert Zechariah 1, 1 through 6. It reminds me of what Paul says to the Galatians, O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? You were running well.

Who hindered you? What happened? You started off with a sprint, but you didn't even make it to the stretch. You didn't fade in the stretch. You never made it to the stretch.

You started off with a big sprint and then things came to a crashing halt. You hit a little bit of opposition and you quit. Remember that? We covered that last time.

They began well, but then people started writing letters back and forth and decrees came down and everybody said, Oh, well, it's a decree. We've got to quit. And nothing was done for upwards of 15 years because we are now down in Haggai to 520 BC.

They returned 536, began the work in 535, 534, somewhere in there. And now for 15 years or more, there's some dispute about the dates. We don't need to quibble.

It's not important. What's important is look at the gap of time. This is enough time to have a child, raise them to adulthood and have them get married and have kids of their own.

It's like a generation passing nearly half a 40 year generation. So we saw on the 24th day of the ninth month, this is now verse 10 of Haggai chapter two on the 24th day of the ninth month, go back to chapter two. It began in the seventh month on the 21st day of the month.

We're in that same year, 520 ish. We had the seventh month. You go to Zechariah chapter one and you have the eighth month of the second year of Darius.

Now we're at the 24th day of the ninth month, 24th day of the ninth month, put a star by it. God is going to quote this date. God is going to quote it coming up.

The word of the Lord came by Haggai. Haggai has been prophesying. Zechariah has now appeared and prophesied.

And you remember his message, return to me and I will return to you. It's a fresh voice. It hits with fresh impact.

That was Zechariah one, three, return to me and I will return to you. Verse four, turn from your evil ways and your evil deeds. Notice now this is after Haggai prophesies.

This is after chapter one where they heard Haggai and in three weeks, they really went elbows and knees and got the building and getting ready for the day of atonement and the, you know, the day of atonement and the feast of tabernacles, right? Big noise. That's the end of chapter one. The people's obedience is highlighted in my new King James.

Zerubbabel and Joshua and all the people listening to the words of Haggai, the prophet. God says, look, I'm with you. Let's get her done.

So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel and the spirit of Joshua, spirit of all the remnant of the people. This is verse 14, chapter one. They came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God on the 24th day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius.

Notice 24th day of the sixth month, seventh month is when the big feasts hit, right? So in the seventh month on the 21st day of the month, that's where chapter two begins. So they, what has happened in between chapter one and chapter two of Haggai? What has happened? The three big feasts of the seventh month. There are seven major feasts in the feast schedule of Israel ordained by God.

You've got a couple of others tossed in there, you know, Hanukkah and, and, uh, and such, but in terms of what God ordained, there are seven feasts, four in the spring, three in the fall. Do you remember the spring feasts? 14th Nisan Passover next day, feast of unleavened bread that goes for eight days. Eight is the number of renewals starting over circumcise a baby boy on the eighth day and so on.

Right? Then what? Feast of weeks, feast of Pentecost. So Passover unleavened bread, weeks, Pentecost for spring feasts, get to the fall feasts, Rosh Hashanah, day of atonement and tabernacles, those three. So in the seventh month, you start out on the first day.

That's trumpets. That's Rosh Hashanah, the head of the year, blow the trumpets. 10 days later, 10th day of the seventh month, day of atonement.

This is what's its Hebrew name? Yom Kippur, Yom Kippur, Yom Kippur, day, Yom Kippur of covering day of atonements, the day of covering. Then you have four or five days after that

Sukkot, Sukkot, you see the OT ending plural, a Sukkah is a booth. It's the feast of booths of tabernacles, Sukkoth.

So, and that goes for a week or so beginning on the 15th, right? So after trumpets, after atonement, after booths, you come to the 21st day of the seventh month. That's where you pick up in Haggai chapter two. So what was supposed to happen in those fall feasts? What do they portend? What do they foretell? What do they picture? Well, let's start at the beginning.

What do the spring feasts harbinge? What do they anticipate? First advent, Passover, unleavened bread, this time of preparation and then Pentecost, right? What are the fall feasts anticipate? Atonement, the trumpets, which is the raising of the dead atonement for Israel specifically. We already enjoy our atonement, but Israel is still in the grave. When will they reap the fruits of God's work of atoning grace? When they are resurrected, but it is during their judgment, they are raised by the trumpets.

They are judged, atonement is applied, and then they dwell. Booths anticipates God with us in the millennial kingdom. So spring feasts, first advent, fall feasts, second advent.

What does one do when one is anticipating the return of the Lord and standing before him at the judgment? Well, we talked about that. This is what God had in Haggai chapter one, right? Is it time for you to be looking to yourself and your own comfort? Consider your ways, consider your ways, consider your ways. The reckoning is coming.

The seventh month is coming. Trumpets, atonement, Sukkot is coming. Consider your ways.

Get ready. That hope ought to be a motivation. What are the three Christian virtues? Faith, hope, and love.

What is faith? It is the means. What is hope? It is the motivation. It's why we do what we do.

It is the hope of the resurrection. Without that hope, if Christ is not raised, we're not raised. If he's not raised and we're not raised, we're in our sins and we are of all men most miserable.

Hope, anticipating the future is motivation. And love, of course, is the measure. To what extent are our faith and hope active and working? Well, as an old song from the seventies said, where is the love? Where is the love? Love is the measure.

If we find ourselves unable to love in all directions, love for God, love for one another. If that's a problem, we need to go back and examine what is the matter with our faith and our hope. Consider your ways.

If we're healthy, love is a natural result. We love because he first loved us. And in faith, in obedience, in anticipation, out of the joy that is set before us, we endure the way the Lord Jesus did.

Love is the measure. So Israel has just now been through, these returnees to Judah have just

been through the seventh month. They have been exhorted, commanded by God to consider their ways by the prophet.

So now on the 21st day of the month, the three feasts are over. They're dismantling the booths. They're heading back to their cities and so on.

And the word that comes echoing to their necks as they leave is the prophecy of Haggai. Speak to Zerubbabel and Joshua. They're not going anywhere.

They dwell in Jerusalem. And to the remnant of the people, those who are still here. Who is left among you who saw the temple in its former glory? How do you see it now? How does your current experience compare with what is presented about the presence of God in history? For us, it's the scriptures.

For them, some of them could even have a living memory of it. They could certainly remember what their parents and grandparents said about it. How does it compare? Is this not in your eyes as nothing? If you have been considering the presence of God as reflected and anticipated in these three feasts that you just celebrated, and by the way, have been celebrating for the past 15 years, they're not having the desired effect because you're not motivated and you have not completed the house of the Lord.

A little bit of resistance, a little bit of affliction, and you quit. Build this house. I am with you, God says.

Be strong. I am with you, says the Lord of hosts. My spirit, verse five, remains among you.

Do not fear. What stopped them? What stopped them after they had laid the foundation back there in Ezra chapter three? Fear. What stops people now? What stops people from normal life right now? Fear.

And it is actively encouraged and given oxygen by those who know how to use fear to manipulate people. Do not fear. My spirit is among you.

We live by the spirit, not by the flesh. We are motivated by God, not by man. Thus says the Lord of hosts.

Once more, it is a little while, I will shake heaven and earth. Circle the word shake. It's coming up tonight.

I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and the dry land. You think man is powerful? You think man has got influence? Can man shake the ocean? Short of a nuclear blast, and even that is pathetically minuscule compared to the power of God. God can shake heaven and earth, the sea and the dry land.

I will shake all nations, he says. And here we have a textual difficulty, and the King James got it wrong. Thankfully, none of us are King James only or think the King James is inspired because

this is just flat out wrong.

You see where it says the desire of all nations and is capitalized. People say, oh, it's anticipating Jesus coming. No, it is not.

Not even close. It's not in the context. It's not anywhere else in Haggai or Zechariah.

This is not the Lord Jesus. He's not the desire of all nations. That's not what this means.

And here's how we know. I will shake all nations, and it says they shall come to the desire of all nations. That is not at all what the Hebrew says here.

There is a subject verb disagreement here. Subject verb disagreement. Desire here is singular, and you can see that come is plural.

The King James says the desire of all nations shall come, which is even wronger than what the new King James has. The new King James says they shall come to the desire of all nations, and they capitalize it as though it refers to This subject verb disagreement has been a problem going all the way back to before the time of the Septuagint. The Septuagint reverses this.

The word desire is a feminine singular construct. Come as a verb is plural. So the singular feminine desire cannot plural they shall come.

It feminine they shall come. They don't agree. So the King James is flat out messed up.

So in attempting to repair this, there have been a number of people who have said, of solutions proposed. The word here, kemdath, means that which is pleasurable. You may remember seeing in the Old Testament, sometimes it refers to Israel as the pleasant land.

You find this in talking about when the Antichrist and the armies are moving around and says the King of the South is going to come and move toward the pleasant land. That word pleasant, kemdath. It means pleasurable, pleasant, precious.

It's often used as an adjective for jewels or silver and gold. Precious, precious things. So it is a feminine singular.

So it is that which is precious. In the Septuagint, when they came to this verse, they couldn't figure out what to do with it. So in Greek, when you look at the Septuagint, desire is plural because you typically find kemdath in the plural in the Old Testament.

Most of the time where you find it, it's plural. Unless you're talking about the pleasant land. But when it's talking about treasures and jewels and things, it's plural.

So the Greek translation has the verb come in the singular and treasures in the plural. And so they construed it because they're looking at the context. This is not a bad idea.

I will fill this temple with glory. Verse eight, the silver is mine and the gold is mine and that the

nations are going to bring silver and gold, i.e. treasures. So the Septuagint translators took this as I will shake all nations and their treasures will come.

Their wealth is going to come. Their wealth, plural, is going to come. And the temple is going to be glorious because this silver and gold is going to be used to bedeck, adorn, enhance, and decorate it.

That's understandable. But here's my solution in the minute that we have left before we go to the break. What is the problem? In this large context, the immediate context is God says silver and gold is mine.

And actually the Septuagint solution, I think, is the opposite of what God is saying. He's saying it's not a matter of silver and gold. You look at this and there are people weeping because they remember the glory of the former temple.

I've mentioned this to you. Do you remember the glory of the former temple? Are there any of you left who saw the most fantastic building that has ever been built, the richest, most expensive building ever built by Solomon with this vast wealth? Do any of you remember that? How does this compare? And people say, well, this doesn't hold a candle. I mean, even when we were laying the foundation, there were people that were weeping over this 15 years ago that we're never going to be able to rebuild that.

This is such a sorry start. How can we possibly duplicate what Solomon did? And people cried over that. God says, look, I've got silver and gold.

That's not the problem. What is the problem? Look at chapter one. Consider your ways.

Look at chapter one. I am with you. You've got to abandon your evil ways.

Look at what I just sent Zechariah to tell you. You've got to mend your evil ways and your evil deeds. Return to me.

I will return to you. Verse four, Zechariah one, turn from your evil ways. Turn from your evil deeds.

This is 15 years after they laid that foundation stone and they still have not turned. Why is the thing not finished? Why are they living in a spirit of fear and not with the spirit of God? Evil, evil. And we're going to see this when we come back from the break.

I translate verse seven here. God says once more in a little while, because to God, a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day. Once more, I am going to shake heaven and earth, the sea and the dry land.

He doesn't say I'm going to grab you by the neck and swivel and shake you. He doesn't say I'm going to shake Israel and keep shaking you until you produce obedience and faith and consider your ways and mend them. He says, I'm going to shake everything.

I'm going to shake heaven and earth. I'm going to shake the sea where the wicked dwell and the dry land. I will shake all nations.

Remember I had you circle that shake. And when God shakes everything, you know what's going to come from all nations. God is going to shake out those who have a desire, who consider the presence of God precious.

They will come in desire. They will come because of desire. This ChemDot, if you go back and point it a little differently, is a construct and it's feminine.

You remember feminine words in Hebrew tend to represent the non-concrete. They are used for concepts. This is the concept of desire.

When you read this, it's really beautiful in Hebrew because all nations are going to come and desire. This construct word, this feminine singular construct is put right in the middle. They are going to come out of desire.

They are going to come for desire. They're going to come because unlike these people that God, even after the captivity, He cannot shake them awake. So God's going to shake out the rest of the earth.

And from all nations, people are going to come to this place out of desire because their hearts burn within them when they hear the word of God. It is their desire that is going to motivate. Hope is the motivation.

Israel has just come through the three fall feasts that are supposed to spark their motivation, and they're still not motivated. So immediately after that, God says, Haggai, and He says, you know what? I'm going to set you aside. I'm going to shake the heavens and the earth.

I'm going to shake the sea and the dry land. I'm going to shake all nations. And when I do, when I disturb the status quo, people with desire are going to come here looking for me.

They're going to come to this place that you take for granted, that you're too busy and too distracted to care about. These people are going to come because they consider my presence precious. They consider it a treasure.

They consider it a pleasure, something pleasant beyond all things. And when I shake the ground, they're not going to cower in fear. They're going to come streaming to this place.

It's the desire that God is looking for. When we come to build the dwelling place for God in our souls and in our midst and our assembly, it has to be out of desire. That desire will cause us to look to our ways and mend them where they need mending.

That desire will motivate us to avail ourselves of the cleansing grace of God, the strength of God, the power of God, the fruit of the spirit that glues us together in the unity of faith and the bond of peace. Silver and gold are mine, God says. The glory of the latter temple shall be

greater than the former.

You know why? Because it's not the glory of gold and silver. It's the glory of people who have assembled in desire. That Chemdath word is separated and it's not even connected to the rest of the sentence for a reason.

It's the gem in the setting of this whole passage. Do we have the desire? Are we asking and seeking and knocking? Why do people ask and seek and knock? Desire. It's such a beautiful word, this Chemdath.

If you can go back and look it up in a strong somewhere and see the places it's used in scripture, it's always associated with what is beautiful, what is valuable, what is pleasant, what is desirable because of its quality, because of its intrinsic worth. And God is going to look to the nations because when he comes to these returned exiles, he's not finding that desire. He stirs up leaders and people don't follow them.

There's only a remnant that even stick around. Why don't the people that have come and assembled for the feast stick around and help finish the house? They've streamed back home. Well, we had a ceremony.

We had a good time. We chanted. We sang.

We observed the sacrifices and we're gone. So God has to speak to the remnant. Well, let's pause here and take our break.

But if there's one convicting element in this entire book, this entire prophecy for us as church age believers, where is the love? If we've got it, we want to know how to express it. And that's what's coming up in the remainder of this chapter. And we'll see it when we come back from the break.