

HAGGAI

THE ARGUMENT

Haggai is the first prophet that appears in the name of the Lord of hosts, to awaken, reprove, direct, exhort, and encourage both the governor, high priest, and people, returned out of captivity, to the restoring and settling the worship of God, to the rebuilding the temple, whose foundations, together with the altar of burnt-offering, had been laid seventeen or eighteen years ago; but the finishing of the temple prohibited by Cambyses all the time of his being viceroy to his father Cyrus, and during his own reign; and neglected near two years in Darius Hystaspes's time, through the covetousness of many, the coldness of some, and the cowardice of others among the Jews, who were all bent on their own private concerns, and pleaded it was not time to set about the building of God's temple, and who in all probability would have deferred it much longer had they been let alone: now therefore the Lord doth, in zeal for his own glory, and in mercy to his people, send his servant Haggai to awaken them to their duty, which was this, the building the temple, and restoring the pure worship of God. He reproves them for neglecting this; tells them this sin was the cause of the penury and scarcity which afflicted them these fifteen or sixteen years past; assures them that, so soon as ever they begin the work, their ground, their cattle, their vines and olives, should wonderfully increase their store; promiseth God's presence with them, and with it a supply of gold and silver, which are his, and he will, as he did by the bounty of Darius and the contributions of others, bring in to them; and though the external glory of this temple were less than that of the first temple, yet this second temple should exceed the first in glory for so much as their expected, longed-for, and the blessed Messiah should appear in it. All which, as they were weighty arguments in themselves considered, so, through the co-operation of the Spirit of God, they prevailed with his hearers, who set about the work; and when opposed by their enemies, who sent to Darius to solicit him to renew the prohibition, he on the contrary confirms and enlargeth their charter granted by the grand Cyrus, and annexeth severe penalties on all that dare hinder this work; all which particularly,

and at large, are set down in the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra. And so in four years' time the temple is finished, the feast of dedication is celebrated, and the final issue answers to the name of the prophet who, sent of God, set it forwards, Haggai, who hath his name from the word that signifieth a feast, as if we should call him Festivus. He closeth all with a close prediction of many and long wars and seditions to come among the Gentiles, to the overthrow of the enemies of the Jews.

HAGGAI CHAPTER 1

The time when Haggai prophesied, #**Hag 1:1**. Haggai reproveth the people's delay in building the temple, #**Hag 1:2-6**. He inciteth them to set about it, #**Hag 1:7-11**. He promiseth them, being forward of themselves, God's assistance, #**Hag 1:12,13**. The work is set forward, #**Hag 1:14,15**.

Ver. 1.

Darius: of this name there were seven, Darius Medus, Hystaspes, Longimanus, Nothus, Ochus, Arsames, Codomanus; one before Cyrus, viz. that Darius which is distinguished from the other by Medus, the Mede; the next Darius was son of Hystaspes, and third king of Persia, (if we leave out Smerdis the cheat, who on Cambyses's death counterfeited the true Smerdis, slain by Cambyses's order, got into the throne, but was discovered and slain at seven months' end,) of whom the text speaketh; unless you can think Joshua high priest through one hundred and forty-four years, and some considerable number of Jews to have lived one hundred and ninety-six years, and the returned captives to have wanted a temple for one hundred and twelve years at least, which incredible things attend them who will have this Darius to be Nothus.

The king; as being the greatest of that time, and by way of eminency above others.

In the sixth month; Elul, answering to part of our August and September.

The word of the Lord; the command or direction what they should do, and reproof for what they had omitted to do.

Haggai: we read nothing of his parentage or country in the Scripture; he doted that thought him an angel.

The prophet; inspired, sent, approved, and assisted of God in his office.

Zerubbabel; whose name speaks either his birth in Babylon, or his interest and power there as some conjecture: probably his birth in Babylon might be ground of trusting him with the government of Judah, to which he had right.

Son of Shealtiel; adoptive son to Shealtiel, being of the royal line, probably he was the chief branch thereof, uncle to him; but by nature, or by generation, son of Pedaiah; or else there were two Zerubbabels, sons of two brothers, Pedaiah and Shealtiel.

Governor of Judah; appointed to this by the Persian king, under whose power the Jews were now fallen, and at whose pleasure governors were placed or displaced over the remnant returned out of Babylon, and once at last settled in the land of Judah.

Joshua; a type of the great Deliverer; one Joshua leads them into Canaan, another restores the temple.

Josedech; whose name did portend good to this people, and bespoke God's righteousness; his father Seraiah was high priest and slain by Nebuchadnezzar.

The high priest, by lineal descent according to the law, chief of power in church matters, as Zerubbabel was chief in civil things: to these the prophet is sent to stir them up to the building of the temple.

Ver. 2.

Thus speaketh, by way of reproof, and to awaken the drowsy Jews; he who knew their heart tells them what they both thought and spoke.

This people, whom mercy preserved in, redeemed out of Babylon, and brought into their land on purpose to build the temple. This people, whom Cyrus by proclamation sent to do this, who seemed to long for a temple when they were in Babylon.

Say; discourse thus among themselves, and discourage all that were forward. The time is not come; the proper season of

rebuilding the house of God seems to be not come, for since the prohibition by Cambyses in the days of Cyrus, and through all the time of Cambyses, and in the first year and part of the second of Darius, we have no commission to do it, but are required not to do any thing in this affair without further order, #Ezr 4:21.

Ver. 3.

Then; when the people were thus sluggish, made excuses, and delayed doing their duty, then at that time came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet: see #Hag 1:1.

Ver. 4.

Is it time? you think it full time to build your own houses, you judge it seasonable enough to lay out much cost on adorning them, what pretence can you make that it is not seasonable to build my house?

For you, Jews, who were by a king (that knew not your God) sent to build my house, you unthankful and forgetful ones.

To dwell; to settle yourselves securely, and for continuance with stateliness.

Ceiled; searched and with cedar wainscot, curiously carved and covered, and as richly adorned as if you were full of treasures.

Houses: it seems to intimate some of them had more than one house, a city and a country house, and whilst God's house lay waste; they thus lavish out their wealth on private worldly conveniences, but grudge the charge on God's house. Can you thus live without a temple, an altar, a sacrifice, and yet cannot live without stately houses? Do you owe so much to yourselves, and so little to your God? so much to your bodies, so little to your souls?

Lie waste; in its rubbish, or in bare, naked foundations without any superstructure.

Ver. 5.

Now therefore; or,

And now, or, *But now*, Heb.; it is time for you to consider, to set your heart to that I propose.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts; the great God speaks, hearken therefore.

Consider your ways; ponder well the course you have taken and the success of it, what you have designed, how you have succeeded, what care, and what disappointment, what labour, and how fruitless your labour hath been; consider how you have carried it toward God, and how God hath carried it toward you.

Ver. 6.

The prophet doth help them, or directs them what in particular they ought to consider, and so debateth it with them: Your labour, care, and charge hath been great in ploughing and sowing, that you are sensible of; but what harvest have you had? O, your barns have been far from full, you have reaped and brought in little; this is evident to all.

Ye eat, you feed on the fruit of your labour and product of the earth,

but ye have not enough; but what you eat doth not nourish you, it doth not suffice; you are hungry and meagre still.

Ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; the like emptiness and unprofitableness in your drink; your water quencheth not your thirst, your wine does not refresh your heart or revive your spirit; or you dare not eat or drink sufficiently for fear you should not have enough, lest your store should fail you.

Ye clothe you, but there is none warm; your wool and flax is not what it used to be, sufficient to defend you from the cold, it will not warm you.

He that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes; who labours or trades to gain and lay up loseth all his labour, it runs from him as money put into a purse or pocket that hath no bottom, that cannot hold it. This fruitless labour you will soon discern, if you consider your ways: and what think you may be the cause of this?

Ver. 7.

See **#Hag 1:5**. Debate it with yourselves, both as to what is already past, and what will be for time to come; it hath not been a

chance, or an evil which none can tell whence it proceeds, it is from your neglect of God, his temple and worship.

Ver. 8.

Go up, delay no longer, speed ye up to the mountain; Moriah, or Zion, better Lebanon, where best and greatest store of cedars were to be had, whence came the goodly cedars which built Solomon's temple, #1Ki 5:14,15, and where they had (before the building was forbidden) furnished themselves, #Ezr 3:7.

Bring wood; provide all sorts of lumber for this future edifice.

Build; go on with the work, the foundation whereof hath been laid some years, but the superstructure omitted.

The house of God, the holy temple.

I will take pleasure in it: this a very gracious promise revived, an assurance that God will dwell in it, and afford his presence there; I will meet you there, and there I will bless you, there I will accept your offerings, hear your prayers, forgive your sins, and satisfy you with the fatness of my house: much the same promise with that, #1Ki 8:29 9:3.

I will be glorified; show my majesty, and account myself glorified by you also.

Ver. 9.

Ye, O Jews, you toiled, and were at great cost, as #Hag 1:6.

Looked for much; expected, hoped, promised yourselves a great increase, a plentiful harvest.

And, lo, it came to little; but you saw, discerned, and were sensible that it answered not expectation; all dwindled into a very little, you were losers by all, went backward still.

I did blow upon it: had your little been as the righteous man's little, you might have lived on it, and rejoiced in it; but it had not such a blessing upon it; it was blasted, and so was weak, and empty, and heartless, it profited little.

Because of mine house that is waste; all this curse on your estate and labour was for your ungodly neglect of my house, leaving it waste.

Ye run; did with eagerness carry on your own particular buildings, spared not care or cost for them; you stir not a foot about my house, you run with greatest earnestness about your own.

Every man to his own house, domestic affairs and concerns, in which not one or two, or some few, but every one is culpable, scarce any free from this fault.

Ver. 10.

Therefore; for your great intolerable neglect of God, his house and worship.

The heaven, Heb. *heavens.* is stayed; shut up, sealed, prohibited; God, whose they are, hath forbidden them, they drop not one pearl of dew; and the earth must be barren, when dry without the fructifying influences of heaven.

Ver. 11.

This verse is a particular narrative of what was more generally expressed in the former verse, and all things mentioned herein are very plain.

I, your God whom you neglected, called for; commanded or willed, which is call powerful enough to bring together any of his armed soldiers, to punish rebellious and contumacious sinners.

Upon the land; either the whole land, or, in distinction to mountains. the lower grounds and valleys.

Upon the mountains; which in Canaan were fruitful in pasturage, and rich in vines, and olives, and corn; all which, for want of rain, dried up and withered, languished and came to nothing; so the condition of these people was very desolate, a just punishment for a temple desolate by their negligence.

Upon men; the very blood, humours, and constitutions of men were strangely changed hereby, and many diseases afflicted them.

Upon cattle; murrain, leanness, and death among the brute beasts.

Upon all the labour of the hands; whatever man's industry planted, as trees and plants, were under this curse, and languished, died, and were burnt up.

Ver. 12.

Then; so soon as they heard this convincing and awakening sermon.

Shealtiel; who is called *Salathiel*, #1Ch 3:17 Mt 1:12.

Joshua the son of Josedech: see #Hag 1:1.

The high priest; the twenty-fourth from Aaron, as some reckon, (Alsted. Chron.,) but the first after the captivity.

With all; either none were deaf to the Lord's reproof and counsel, or else none durst appear so, when the chief rulers in state and church were so forward in obeying the prophet.

The people; the common people, the meaner sort.

Obedied the voice of the Lord; acknowledged that it was the sovereign Lord who spake, who ought to be obeyed, because he is the Lord.

Their God; and therefore they ought to do his will, that they might receive the blessings which he, as their God, had promised to them. As God made this an argument to obedience, so do these now; We are thy people, thou art our God.

The words of Haggai: this interprets the former, the voice of the Lord was the words of Haggai, he added nothing of his own to them.

As the Lord their God had sent him; according to all for which the Lord had sent and commissioned him, or particularly in all that concerned the speedy building of the temple.

The people did fear before the Lord: this speaks the right religious frame of heart in this people at this time.

Ver. 13.

Then; when the people showed their obedience, and the willingness of their minds, then God encourageth them by his prophet.

Messenger; legate or envoy, the Hebrew word signifieth also an angel; but this is not surf, clout to prove their opinion, who dream that Haggai was not a man, but an angel in the form of a man; the word here used (arising from a word that signifieth to send, and

paraphrased by a word that primarily signifieth to send as messengers are sent) doth speak an angel from his office and work, as he ministereth before the Lord, and runneth swiftly on his errand; it speaketh not the nature or essence of angels, as they are spirits. The French version (which I use, printed at Rochelle, 1616) reads it, like ours, ambassador. So Haggai was God's messenger or ambassador to his people; no angel.

In the Lord's message; as becometh an ambassador. in the words of his master, so Haggai delivered the Lord's message.

Unto the people; not excluding the governors; but the people are only mentioned, for that the prophet spake to the whole assembly, or because the Lord would encourage them most, who most needed encouragement.

I am with you; a great promise, and which contains all they can need or desire; it insureth God's presence always with them, and his assistance always to them, and his blessing always upon them. He will be always for, as well as always with them, and then Tatnai, Shethar-bozhal, Sanballat, and all other conspirators with them, shall not prevail to hinder the work. Such a promise as this, see #Ex 3:12 4:11-13 Mt 28:20 Ro 8:31 2Co 12:9.

Saith the Lord: this solemn attestation addeth weight to the promise.

Ver. 14.

The Lord stirred up: this is the first notable effect of God's presence with them, a sensible performance of his promise. God inclined their minds, fixed their resolutions, and inspired them with courage for this work; whereas the stoutest of them before had no mind to set on this work, now the weakest are forward to it, and bold in it.

The spirit; the heart, mind, or inclination.

Shealtiel: see #Hag 1:12.

Governor: see #Hag 1:1,

Josedech: see #Hag 1:1,12.

The remnant: see #Hag 1:12.

They came, immediately, without delay, and unanimously, without any visible dissent.

Did work; every one set their hands to it in such manner as was fit for them; governors did oversee, direct, and encourage the workmen; artificers framed and prepared, and the people all laboured. *In the house;* which was now to be built upon the old foundations, laid some seventeen years before, when Cyrus gave the Jews leave to return and build their city and temple.

The Lord of hosts; by which name he delights to be known among the returned captives; and it was a name best suited to their present state, compassed on all hands with enemies, and in perpetual danger by them.

Their God: see #Hab 1:12.

Ver. 15.

It appeareth then that Zerubbabel and Joshua, with the people, did resolve on the matter quickly; for in three weeks and three days they are at the work, as is evident; on the first day Haggai preached, #Hag 1:1, on the twenty-fourth day of the month the people are at work, #Hag 1:15.

Darius: see #Hag 1:1. Now this Darius was not Darius Nothus, but Darius Hystaspes, as will appear by considering well the following scheme of years, from the captivity to the particular years of each of these two Dariuses. Suppose we therefore the computation of these years, according to either of these schemes, it will appear that there is no likelihood this Darius in the text should be Darius Nothus.

	Helvicus.	Usher.
Captivity	3350	3398.
Temple burnt	3360	3416.
Cyrus's decree	3420	3468.
The decree of Darius, Nothus	3529 Hystaspes	3485.

This latter account begins the captivity at the fourth year of Jehoiakim. the former begins it at the first of Jeconiah's reign, as Ezekiel also doth, #Eze 1:2 40:1. Hence that difference which is

in the account of the years between the beginning of the captivity and the burning of the temple; the former account makes it eleven years, the latter makes it eighteen, for it begins seven years sooner. In what follows, we shall find both agreeing well enough to clear the unlikelihood of Darius Nothus being the king intended here.

Both accounts make the captivity to end in the seventieth year, according to the Scripture. But now the former account makes it one hundred and nine years between Cyrus's decree and Darius's decree; all which time the temple by this account lay desolate, without a prophet to stir them up to their duty of building the temple. Now is this probable? can it be reasonably supposed that the temple should so long lie waste after they were sent out of Babylon purposely to build it? or that they should be so long in that condition without a prophet? But now the latter account reckons seventeen years between Cyrus's and Darius's decree for building the temple, a space of time easily conceived likely to pass while the Jews did not build; nay, were forbidden by Cambyses, (in Scripture called Artaxerxes,) viceroy to his father Cyrus, (engaged in foreign wars,) all the time Cyrus lived after he gave out the decree, which some make more, some less, but those who make the likeliest guess, for aught I know, make it five years. Whether Cyrus, taken up with these wars, did know of this prohibition, or thought not good to take it off till he returned conqueror, I know not; but he died and left this bar on the work, which continued all Cambyses's reign, and unto the second year of his successor Darius Hystaspes. Now if this were seventeen the most, some say but fifteen, others but twelve years, it is very probable, whereas one hundred and nine years is utterly improbable. Besides this, let us view what age those many or few were of, by these different accounts, who lived to see the temple re-edified. If in Darius Nothus's time, they could be no less than one hundred and eighty-five, allowing them to be sixteen at the burning of the temple, thus; sixteen when the temple was burnt, thence sixty to Cyrus's decree, and thence one hundred and nine to Darius Nothus's decree. But by the latter account their age amounts but to ninety-five years, which appears thus; sixteen at the time the temple was burnt, thence sixty to Cyrus's decree, thence seventeen to Darius Hystaspes's decree; in all ninety-five,

which though a great age, yet not improbable at that time, though the other (one hundred and eighty-five) be improbable. Besides, how few through one hundred and sixty-nine years can distinctly remember what they saw and took notice of at sixteen, or could make that judgment of the disproportion between the two temples! **#Hag 2:3**. Or can it be supposed that Zecaraiah **Zec 1:12**) would have accounted but seventy years' desolation, when he might have more than doubled the years, and have reckoned one hundred and sixty-nine years? would not the argument thus have been more moving?

HAGGAI CHAPTER 2

Haggai encourageth the people to the work, by promise of greater glory to the second temple than was in the first, **#Hag 2:1-9**. Under the type of things holy and unclean he showeth that their sins had kept back God's blessings, which he promiseth them from that time, **#Hag 2:10-19**. God's promise to Zerubbabel, **#Hag 2:20-23**.

Ver. 1.

The seventh month, which the Hebrews called Tisri, and Ethanim, and it answers to part of our September and to part of October.

The one and twentieth day; some seven weeks after the first, mentioned in the first chapter, and about one month after they began to build, or at least prepared for building the temple.

Came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai: see **#Hag 1:1**.

Ver. 2.

Speak now; once again acquaint them with what I now impart for their encouragement.

To Zerubbabel, &c.: see **#Hag 1:1,12**.

Ver. 3.

Who is left among you? there are surely some that are of that age as to have seen the temple which our father's sins, God's just displeasure, and the Chaldean malice burnt; who are they? and where may they be found? This question implieth there were such,

and by **#Ezr 3:12,13** it appears there were many, for the cries and sobs of them equalled the shouts of the younger, who rejoiced to see the foundations of the second house laid.

That saw; took notice of it then, and remember it now, that were of such age and knowledge as to remember what was standing in its glory one hundred and fifty years ago, if some conjecture aright, but, what is nearer to truth, who remember some fourscore years past, who are about one hundred years of age.

This house; the house of God, the temple built by Solomon.

In her first glory; in the stately structure of it, in the rich adornings of it, in the unparalleled skill and curiosity of its workmanship, when it was the glory of the world.

How do ye see it now? do you see the same glorious structure going forward? have you expectation of one equal to the former temple? You cannot but recall the former to mind, and make your judgment of this by that.

Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? do you not judge this second nothing comparable with the first? you are ready to say, (in proverbial speech,) It is nothing to it.

Ver. 4.

In this juncture, though old men weep for the disproportion of the two temples, yet now be strong; be of good courage yourselves, O Zerubbabel, and thou, O Joshua, and encourage others by your example, animate each other, that all the people of the land may take heart with you.

And work; forthwith set about the building of the temple.

For I am with you, both to defend you from enemies, to supply you with necessaries, to bless and accept you: see **#Hag 1:1**.

Ver. 5.

The word; either the word of promise to give them his presence, and to carry them through all opposition, or, the Word, the Son of God, promised to them and us; so it refers to Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen.

That I covenanted with you; in solemnest manner reduced to the form and model of a covenant, that it might be sure and firm to

you, as to your fathers, in whose time I made this covenant, and with you in them.

When ye came out of Egypt; when I brought you out of Egypt, the house of bondage.

My spirit, of strength and courage, of wisdom and understanding, of zeal and fervency, to carry you through this work, remaineth among you; still doth dwell in you, shall be continued to you, and give direction and success.

Fear ye not; let no discouraging surmises settle in your mind or weaken your hands. There were as many improbabilities lay in bar to your getting out of Egypt, yet my word, covenant, and Spirit overcame all; fear not therefore, I am the same, and with you, as with your father's.

Ver. 6.

Yet once; after many repetitions and confirmations of the new covenant, one more repetition, and but one more, rests to be made.

It is a little while; comparatively it was little; though five hundred and seventeen years from the second of Darius Hystaspes to the incarnation of Christ, a long time to us, who are short-lived, and short-sighted, but a little time compared with that between the first promise to Adam and Christ's coming; or take any other shorter period, as between Abraham or David and Christ, this last period is short, a little while.

I will shake; whether it be metaphorical or literal, it was verified at the time of Christ's coming into the world. After the return of the captivity, what with the commotions among the Grecians, Persians, and Romans, which began soon after this time, (the prophet points at this,) it was metaphorically fulfilled, all states were shaken either with invasions from abroad, or intestine dissensions among themselves: literally it was fulfilled by prodigies, and earthquakes, &c., as some have observed and recounted, at the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ.

The heavens; either states and governments of the world, or church affairs, which in Scripture are called the heavens; or the material heavens, and the firmament.

The earth, which, either figuratively or literally taken, will agree well with the text, and the history of times.

The sea; one part of that which is called earth, this lower globe.

The dry land, the other part of this inferior world; and both may, as former words, be literally or figuratively taken, and which better I do not undertake to determine.

Ver. 7.

I will shake all nations; which was literally fulfilled in the overthrow of the Persian monarchy by the Grecians, in the civil wars and succeeding troubles among Alexander's successors, the growth of the Roman power by the subduing their neighbours, and their dissensions and homebred wars, all hushed by Augustus a little before Christ's birth. These convulsions began a little after this prophecy, and continued long, in which the Jews, under the Maccabees, had their share.

The Desire of all nations shall come; Christ, the most desirable, because the most helpful to all nations, which some proselytes in all ages did come to the knowledge of, and did earnestly desire; and who was desired by all that knew their own misery. and his sufficiency to save them, who was to be the light of the Gentiles as well as the glory of his people Israel. The Messiah's coming (the Jews do own) is foretold in this text, yet will they not see how this

yet a little while is long since past, and the true Messiah long since come.

I will fill this house, which you now build, this second temple. The first had a fulness of glory in its magnificent structure, rich ornaments, and costly sacrifices, but this was a worldly glory; that which is here promised is a heavenly glory from the presence of Christ in it. He that was the brightness of his Father's glory, who is the glory of the church, appeareth in this second temple.

With glory, of my presence, preaching, healing, and comforting, saith the Messiah, the King of glory, who entered these everlasting doors, **#Ps 24:7,8**. This was before the desolation of this temple by the Romans, a demonstration that the Messiah

should come whilst this second temple stood. But now the hardened Jew seeks to evade this text.

Saith the Lord of hosts: this is a solemn sealing the certainty of the thing in this prophet, and Zechariah, and Malachi, who style him Lord of hosts near a hundred times.

Ver. 8.

The right as indisputable, the treasures of both as full and large, doubt not therefore but I will give enough to build this house; and I could beautify it with these as much as the first temple, but I intend a greater glory. I am the Proprietor, others but trustees; I have the full disposal of all.

Ver. 9.

The glory, which God intends to put upon this temple. Solomon. and a rich people, with incredible spoils taken from conquered nations, gave a glory to the first house, but God himself will give the glory of this house.

This latter house, which poor captives and feudatory governors do build, this second temple: the prophet speaks of it as if it were already a house, whereas it was now to be built. What God accounts a glory, must be somewhat better than silver and gold.

Greater than of the former; more truly glory, and in higher degrees; the least of Christ is greater glory than all the magnificence of Solomon. There were no more but two houses built by God's appointment, into the latter of which the Messiah was personally to come, as **#Mal 3:1**: therefore he came before that latter temple was destroyed, that is, 1684 years ago, when at two months old he was presented in the temple, embraced and confessed by Simeon, some seventy years before the temple was burnt by the Romans.

In this place; in my house, type of Christ, and who is the glory of it.

Will I give peace; a spiritual, internal, and heavenly peace, in pardoning guilt and destroying sin, which displeaseth God, and disquieteth man himself. Christ made peace on his cross, preached or published it to the world, and gives it to them by the power of his Spirit.

Saith the Lord of hosts; solemnly avowed by the Lord of hosts, who cannot deceive, or be deceived.

Ver. 10.

This tenth verse is an introduction to the fourth solemn discourse or sermon the prophet makes to this people, and there is nothing difficult in it but what hath been opened already.

In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month; two months and two days after the third sermon, **#Hag 2:2.**

The ninth month, Heb. *Casleu*; part of our November and December. *Darius*; which Darius this was, see **#Hag 1:1,15.** Haggai: see **#Hag 1 3.**

Ver. 11.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts: the prophet comes with his double parable, or problem, but not of his own head, but in the name of the Lord of hosts.

Ask; consult with, desire the solution of the following case.

The priests; whose office bound them to study the law, and to answer all cases of conscience, their lips should retain knowledge, **#Mal 2:7.**

Concerning the law; what the law saith in the case; not what the church, but what the Scripture saith.

Ver. 12.

If one, any one, bear, carry away from the altar, or the priest's hands,

holy flesh, part of the sacrifice, legally and ceremonially sanctified, or made holy by the altar on which the whole was sanctified, of which a part is supposed to be carried away

in the skirt of his garment, in the lap of his garment, or in any other cloth or napkin, and this cloth touch any common thing,

as bread, &c., shall that common thing by such contact become legally or ceremonially holy?

The priests answered: who these priests were is not mentioned, but it is likely that there were some among the people who did by the prophet's persuasion go and propose the case, and they

received the answer as here in the negative, for neither mediate nor yet immediate touch of holy things could make common things or unholy persons holy.

Ver. 13.

Now the second case is proposed for resolution, &c.

If one that is unclean; ceremonially or legally polluted, and unclean.

By a dead body; for such touch, though at unawares, did pollute, #Nu 19:13.

Touch any of these; bread or pottage, wine, or oil, or meat.

Shall it be unclean? shall that which the unclean (by touch of the dead) doth touch become unclean, or no? Though a mediate touch of what is holy will not make holy, yet will not a mediate touch of what is polluted defile whatsoever it toucheth?

It shall be unclean; it is resolved affirmatively, It shall be polluted.

Ver. 14.

Now is the case applied. As common things touched by holy things are not sanctified, and as polluted persons touching what is clean pollute it; as holy things did not by touch and bodily application make him legally holy who was common, but a polluted person made all he touched and handled unclean; so unsanctified and polluted Jews polluted God's ordinances, while the outward performing of legal and ceremonial duties, such as bringing, offering, eating, dragging about their legal sacrifices, left them as unholy in themselves and as unacceptable to God as they were before. Somewhat more then is to be done. The soul is first to be purified, that they and we may offer up a pure offering.

So is the people; the body of the Jews, or the most part of them.

So is this nation: this ingeminateth the same thing, to intimate to us how God resenteth it, and how we should be affected with it.

Before me; in God's account, or in his sight, who seeth indeed what men are, and what their actions are.

So is every work of their hands; whatever they do in sacred or civil matters, they make a shift to pollute all by polluted hands, by leprous touches.

That which they offer there, what they do bring to the altar with impure hearts and hands, is more polluted by them than sanctified by the altar.

Is unclean; really impure; though it seem externally clean and holy, it is unsuitable to the purity of a holy God. In sanctified actions all is spoiled by unsanctified hearts. Thence it is that uncleanness is derived on their best works, and consecrated rites do not, cannot sanctify profane spirits.

Ver. 15.

And now; furthermore consider.

I pray you: he affectionately entreats them to observe.

From this day; this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, #**Hag 2:10**. And upward, through past years; trace year after year, and your successes and disappointments in them, observe all years past before you would set upon the rebuilding of the temple after you had intermitted it; some years passed, ten, or fifteen, or twenty, or forty, (or more say some,) between your surceasing from the work and beginning to rebuild.

Before a stone was laid upon a stone; the prophet meaneth either before they began to lay one stone upon another in the foundation laid in Cyrus's time, or before they began to lay the foundation of the walls of the courts and outward edifices.

In the temple; either strictly taken for the house of God, or more largely for the rest of the buildings about the house: this tacitly reproves their sloth; it was the temple they neglected, which they did long for in Babylon.

Of the Lord; so much the greater their sin, for that it was the Lord's temple was slighted.

Ver. 16.

Since those days; all that while the temple lay neglected, and you were contented with maimed and half worship, men were disappointed half in half.

When one came to a heap, which he expected would prove twenty measures, ephahs, or bushels, or what other measure you please,

there were but ten; it proved but half your hopes; thus your corn failed: but your oil much more failed, and you found but two where you expected five: this barrenness you cannot be ignorant of.

Ver. 17.

I smote; my hand was visible in your losses, scarcity, and disappointments.

You; the persons put for their labours, their corn, vines, and olives.

With blasting; burning and scorching winds, that blasted all.

With mildew; with too much clammy moisture, that like glue cleaves to fruits, and turns to a corrupting of them.

With hail; which in these colder countries many times by its violence destroys corn, fruits, and trees, but in those countries doth it oftener. Now here was in these somewhat more of the hand of God, and so the punishment was, as more grievous, so more visible.

All the labours; in your ploughing and sowing for harvest, in planting of olives and vines for a vintage.

You turned not to me; you did not see my hand, though you felt it, you did not repent of your sinful neglect of me, my worship, and temple, nor thought of building my house.

Saith the Lord; this attested with God's own hand for witness hereto.

Ver. 18.

See **#Hag 2:15**. Make your observation from the day when you began to build on the old foundation laid many years ago in the time of Cyrus.

Consider it; let that be the precise day from which you begin your reckoning. By this the prophet excites them to believe and wait, since he doth in the name of the Lord so expressly promise a

blessing, and tells them when it shall begin to come unto them, and would have them observe how truly he speaks.

Ver. 19.

Your seed for the next harvest is yet in your barns, unsown, and no one can make any conjecture yet, whether next year's increase shall be great and blessed, or whether it shall be blasted and little; I do not speak, saith Haggai, on conjecture, but in the name of the Lord foretell and promise you, that it shall be a plentiful harvest to you. Nor have your fruit trees yet put forth, no sign yet appears what vintage you shall have, what store of wine, oil, figs, and pomegranates, which are your choice and rich fruits; but in the word of God I tell you, you shall be blessed in them all, and have a large produce, a joyful vintage.

From this day: see #Hag 2:10,15.

I will bless you, in all your labour; as before you were blasted in all because you neglected, so now you shall be blessed in all because you diligently build, the temple of the Lord.

Ver. 20.

See #Hag 2:10,15.

Ver. 21.

Speak my word, and in my name, saith the Lord.

To Zerubbabel governor of Judah: see #Hag 1:1,12.

I will shake the heavens and the earth: see #Hag 2:6.

Ver. 22.

I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms: now Babylonians are subjected to the Persian power, and this standeth on the strength of many kingdoms, and seems to be one throne secured by all the power of the known world, and can hardly be hoped to be hereafter better than an enemy and opposer of the Jews, and their restoring of the worship of God: for comfort in this case here is foretold God's overthrowing them, in case they oppose.

I will destroy the strength: this seems an explaining of the former, and a confirming it too. Though the Gentiles of many kingdoms united in all their strength, set to hinder this work, this shall succeed so contrary to their expectation, that not you, but

they shall find destruction as the end thereof; which was verified in the successive ruin of the Persian, Grecian, and Syrian kingdoms, all which oppressed the church, and were destroyed for it.

Every one by the sword of his brother: this passage foreshows that God will, by suffering civil wars to arise among these nations, ruin them by themselves, as in truth they did: now whilst those commotions and overthrows perplex and hurt the Jews, yet they were an occasion sometimes of some respite to them; their enemies were engaged on other designs, and could not mind mischief to the Jews.

Ver. 23.

In that day; during those days of troubles, wars, and destruction, and particularly towards the end of them. **I will take thee;** advance, honour, defend, and own. O Zerubbabel: personally understood it respecteth the beginning of those days. Politically understood, it refers to all those times in which God promiseth he would, and indeed did, preserve, guide, and honour such governors of his people, who were as Zerubbabel was; somewhat of which promise and performance you may observe in the times succeeding unto, and through, the Maccabees' times. Typically this refers to Christ, and the setting up of his kingdom, shadowed out by the government of Zerubbabel. My servant: the style changed seems to point to him who was God's most beloved servant, **#Isa 42:1 52:13**. The son of Shealtiel, who was one of the progenitors of the Messiah, **#Mt 1:12 Lu 3:27**. Will make thee as a signet: which is very highly valued, carefully kept, and used to confirm and ratify gifts, edicts, and patents, **#Da 6:17**. So shall the antitypical Zerubbabel, the Messiah, be advanced, loved, and inviolably preserved King, and supreme over his church, for he is the chosen One, the beloved One, in whom God was well pleased, as the Chaldee paraphrast, and **#Mt 3:17**.