

Holy War 1

HN, SS 16/11/03 am

Read: Haggai 2:10f, Revelation 6

Study: Haggai 2:20-23

Psalms: 8, 66:1-7, 75:1-4, 75:5-10

This final prophecy of Haggai speaks about overthrowing kingdoms. It speaks of overthrowing chariots, the weapons of war, along with the horses and riders – they will all fall. And further the very heavens and earth will be shaken – they will disappear. This is what the Lord said he would do as he spoke through Haggai to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah.

And what will be put in place of these kingdoms that the Lord overthrows? Yes the Lord has a plan – his plan is to install Zerubbabel upon the throne. His plan is to give all authority to Zerubbabel as is implied in making him like a signet ring. His kingdom will remain – it will not be shaken because it is an eternal kingdom, the kingdom of God.

This prophecy was spoken on the same day as the previous one – mid December 520BC (2:10). It was spoken at the site of the ruined temple in Jerusalem – probably when the foundation stone was being laid for its rebuilding. The people were looking back to former days – the glory of the temple that Solomon built. Haggai told them to look forward – *the glory of the latter temple shall be greater than the former.*

And this final word from the Lord directs their thinking to the future, even as it builds upon images from the past. These images we also find in other prophecies and finally in the revelation of John. Let us then look at these images and seek to understand them in this passage.

Judgment

I will shake heaven and earth. We have seen this image already in the previous oracle (2:6). We saw its origin in Mt Sinai when the Lord came down in darkness and tempest and the mountain quaked. We saw how when Jesus died upon the cross such phenomena were again displayed by the Lord. But the ultimate, the final shaking is yet to come. It is spoken of in Revelation. The judgments of God will come from his throne upon the heavens and the earth – thunder and lightning, darkness, earthquakes. Revelation 6:12f *the sky was rolled up – mountains and islands were removed.*

The first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no longer any sea (Revelation 21:1). John saw the new heaven and new earth – the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

The Lord will shake the heavens and the earth. This is what Haggai told Zerubbabel in 520BC.

Overthrow thrones

I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms/royal thrones, and shatter the power of Gentile/foreign kingdoms. This verse again speaks of divine judgment – judgment upon the nations, upon human institutions because of wickedness and rebellion against the Lord.

When was the first overturning and destruction of a nation in the Bible? When was the first kingdom destroyed?

Sodom and Gomorrah. The outcry against the city came before the Lord and he came down to judge and to destroy the wicked. The city was totally demolished, exterminated by the Lord, never to rise again. Only Lot and some family escaped. This picture or image remains throughout Scripture, as a touchstone as it were of divine judgment and salvation.

What is another picture or image we are given of divine judgment and salvation? Maybe you can

think of a number of others, but the overthrow of the king of Egypt and his army stands out does it not.

The mighty nation of Egypt that was oppressing the people of God – that had enslaved God's chosen ones. This mighty ruler and his army – all his chariots, the horses and the riders were overthrown by the power of the Lord in the waters of the sea. Their strength was certainly destroyed.

What about the whole conquest of the land of Canaan. This was divine judgment upon those wicked nations. Joshua was told totally destroy – to exterminate those nations. This was holy war. The Lord brought his chosen people into the Promised Land.

We see holy war with Gideon in his battle against the Midianites. He took just 300 men against this vast army. The Lord caused the enemy to turn upon themselves and destroy one another (Judges 7). Similarly Jehoshaphat saw that the battle was the Lords (2 Chronicles 20) – his few men blew trumpets and sang while the enemy destroyed and annihilated one another. Gideon and Jehoshaphat went into battle singing to the Lord and blowing their trumpets and the Lord overthrew the nations before them. What was the word of the Lord through Haggai – they will fall – *everyone by the sword of his brother.*

The Lord revealed himself to be mighty in victory in the past. And now? He has shown himself to be mighty in victory over sin and death – the enemies of the soul – by the cross of Jesus Christ. He will yet return in consummate victory over all the powers of evil – all the manifestations of evil in this fallen world.

The nations will be overthrown. All military forces will be as nothing before the Lord when he comes. All political and economic powers will crumble before him when he returns in glory.

Deliverance

In the midst of judging the nations the Lord will deliver his chosen people. This is implied in the shaking and the overthrowing of the nations. Lot was delivered out of Sodom; the Israelites were delivered through the Red sea. The Lord under Joshua brought his people into the land after destroying the Canaanites.

In 2 Thessalonians 1 we are told about the coming judgment of the Lord upon the wicked – those *who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*. They will be punished with everlasting destruction but those who believe will marvel at his glory.

This deliverance is tied up with the establishment of the kingdom of God. Having overthrown all the nations – every bastion of human power and authority – the Lord will establish his chosen One upon the everlasting throne.

We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. That kingdom has a king – a king will full divine authority. The risen Lord Jesus Christ said all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

What are some aspects of this deliverance and the new kingdom that we find in this passage before us?

The King

Who was Zerubbabel you may be asking. He was governor over these returned exiles. He was a descendant of David, the greatest king of Israel – the king chosen by God and a man after God's own heart. In addition to rebuilding the temple these people looked to the restoration of the Davidic kingship. Both were imperative for the re-establishment of Israel and the fulfillment of the divine purpose.

Zerubbabel features in this prophecy but later disappears. He never was established as king. The

Davidic kingship was never re-established until – when? Who is the son of David we next find in Scripture? Jesus of Nazareth – the king of the Jews. This prophecy then points to the messiah, to Jesus Christ. He is the king in whom these words of Haggai are fulfilled.

On that day

What is this day? It refers to the last day, the Day of the Lord.

Is it the first or the second coming of Jesus? Well both in a sense. The last days were inaugurated when Jesus died on the cross. It was there that he won the victory. He died and rose again, victorious over the enemy of God and man – namely Satan who had power over death.

Yet the day of the Lord is still to come in fulfillment – in consummation. Jesus will come again in all his glory and the end will come.

Servant

Zerubbabel is called *my servant*. Who else speaks about the messiah as the servant of the Lord? Isaiah in the servant songs Isaiah 42:1 – *Behold my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight*. The servant of the Lord will come and he will do the will of God. Jesus quoting Psalm 40 said *Behold I come; I delight to do your will O my God*.

Chosen

My servant, for I have chosen you said Haggai of Zerubbabel. In fact it is not that Haggai said this but that the Lord declared this. Note the repetition – repetition for emphasis of *says the Lord* in this last verse. Let there be no mistake this is the word of the Lord. *I will take you Zerubbabel says the Lord...for I have chosen you says the Lord almighty*.

The Lord will declare who is his chosen one and he will take him and set him upon the throne. He will not be a self appointed messiah. He will have divine approval. Is this not what we see with Jesus? A voice came from heaven as he was baptised, the voice of God declaring *this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased*.

Paul tells us that Jesus was descended from David according to the flesh but declared with power – the power of the resurrection – to be the son of God (Romans 1).

Signet ring

Finally we come to this bit about being like a signet ring. *I will make you like a signet ring...says the Lord*. We find in Esther 8:8 and other passages that the king had a signet ring which he used to officially seal his decrees. It was his personal seal, worn on his finger or around his neck. Whatever was sealed with the king's signet ring could not be revoked. It was the symbol of authority.

The risen Lord told his disciples just before his ascension *all authority has been given to me on heaven and on earth* (Matthew 28:18). That is an amazing claim is it not. See John 17:1 also – *you have given him authority over all flesh*. This is the fulfillment of the words of Haggai. Jesus has all authority vested in him by the Father. He is the king of kings and Lord of Lords. He rules over the eternal kingdom of God.

This is the authority with which we preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. With divine authority we go and make disciple of all nations. We call upon people to repent of their sin and believe in Jesus Christ.

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