

16. 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 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

Haggai 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:

People will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from the fearful presence of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty when he rises to shake the Earth (Isa 2:19).

Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the Earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the Lord Almighty, in the day of his burning anger” (Isa 13:13).

The fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the Earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground (Ezek 38:20).

It will be the greatest earthquake that has occurred since man was on Earth. See also Isaiah 29:6 and Revelation 6:12, 11:13, 16:18. It is part of 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 the restoration of the Lord’s temple in his day. He knows that the second temple is inferior to the first one built by Solomon, but he is here 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 when the Lord fills it with his glory during the Messianic reign of peace (Ezek 43:4-7). KJV and NIV translate Haggai 2:7 as “I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come.” However, the verb ‘come’ is plural, so ‘treasures’ or “desirable things” is more appropriate. The Messiah will come at this time, but he is not the desire of the nations. True, there will be believers in all nations, but the nations at that time are rebelling against God. In the following verse, the Lord says that the silver and the gold are his, referring to the treasures that will glorify the temple.

Haggai 2:6 is quoted in Hebrews 12:26 and the writer interprets it as a future event when Christians inherit the kingdom: “Once more I will shake not only the Earth but also the heavens.” The words “once more” indicate the removal of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire” (Heb 12:26-29). This shake-up begins with

worldwide earthquakes that destroy the world as we know it and results in a transformed world, not only physically, but politically and morally also. The silver and gold that the world's kingdoms covet for themselves will now be brought to Jerusalem as offerings for the millennial temple.

Zerubbabel, the Lord's signet ring

Haggai 2:20-23

When the Lord descends to defeat the rebels at the battle of Armageddon, he will shake heaven and earth and overthrow all the kingdoms of the Gentiles. He will defeat the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens and he will 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" (Hos 2:22), compare, Zech 14:13, "On that day people will be stricken by the Lord with great panic. They will seize each other by the hand and attack one another."

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 that 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, as stated in Matthew 1:12. Jesus, the descendant of Zerubbabel, will be the Lord's signet ring, he will be his regent on Earth during the millennium.