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The Rebuilding of the Temple

by Ernest L. Martin Ph.D., 1979, 1996

Edited by David Sielaff, 2009, June 2022

Read the accompanying "[June 2022 Newsletter](#)"

Then read the June 1, 2022 Commentary, "[Background of the Zerubbabel Temple.](#)"



This article presents Dr. Martin's information about the rebuilding of the Temple of God in Jerusalem after the destruction of the Solomonic Temple. As Isaiah 44:28–45:13 prophesied, a Persian King named Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem from exile and rebuild the Temple at the same location as the Solomonic and (later) Herodian Temples. This Zerubbabel Temple was the "second" Temple of God. It was not beautiful, but functioned according to the Mosaic Law as a site for sacrifices to YHWH. Here is Dr. Martin's lecture from 1979, updated by him in 1996.

Dr. Martin: The lecture I wish to give today I titled "The Rebuilding of the Temple," and I am talking about the Temple in Jerusalem. If a person would ask what represents one of the major prophetic events associated with the Second Coming of Christ, whether in the Old or New Testaments, it would be about this matter of rebuilding a Temple in the city of Jerusalem. The Bible makes it clear that such an event must take place if prophecy is going to be fulfilled the way that Christ, especially, and the apostles said that it will happen.

All of us are aware of the Olivet prophecy given in Matthew chapter 24. It gives a thumbnail sketch of what was to occur over a period of a generation. How long is a generation? It could be I suppose 30 years. Maybe it is longer.¹ Within a period of "**this generation**" (Matthew 24:34) certain things were to take place according to Christ and He told His apostles about that some 1,900 years ago. In fact, He gave the Olivet Prophecy two days before He was crucified.

One of the last things the apostles were interested in, knowing that something was going to happen near that Passover period, was they wanted to know when the Kingdom of God would emerge on the earth. Obviously the Kingdom of God had to have a King. The king the apostles were looking for at the time was the one standing in their midst. That person was Jesus Christ. Obviously, He had not been glorified yet. He was approximately 33 years of age at the time. He had about a 2½ year ministry² according to the Gospel of John,

¹ Dr. Martin's research before he died in January 2002, led him to conclude that the generation spoken of in Matthew chapter 24 might be longer than 30 or 40 years. He was nearing completion and wrote up the evidence at the time of his death. It may be as long as 100 years. I published that article, "[The 'Great Generation' and Modern Prophecy](#)" in December 2002. DWS

² Between 1979 and 1996 Dr. Martin came to understand that Christ's ministry was not 3½ years but was 2½ years. DWS

and here were these apostles in the last days of His life on earth. They asked some fundamental questions regarding the End Time. When will the end of the age appear. Would it occur in the age in which they were living? When will the Kingdom of God come on earth, the kingdom that Israel was looking for? That is what they wanted to know, and Christ begins to teach them about those events.

How Will the Gospel Be Preached to the World?

We are very aware of the whole prophecy. We have gone into it many, many times. I do not want to go into it entirely, but I do want to go to Matthew 24:14 which speaks about:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

• **Matthew 24:14**

The Gospel of the Kingdom, according to Christ, will go forth into all the world. It will be a witness. What is “preaching of the Gospel”? Who will do it? Are we told here how it will be accomplished? No. We are told in the Book of Revelation that near the end of the age, just before Christ comes back to earth an angel from heaven will do some preaching.³ That may be part of the answer.

There is another way that the kingdom message could be given throughout the entire earth and that is through the ministry of two people who will be in Jerusalem associated with the rebuilding of the Temple. The Bible calls them the two witnesses. Do they have a connection to the Gospel that will be **“preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations”** (Matthew 24:14)? Who are those two witnesses? Will they have a worldwide ministry? The answer is yes, in a manner of speaking, because when they are killed finally by the beast and the false prophet, they will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for a short time:

“And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts [presents] one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.”

• **Revelation 11:10**

Clearly the witness of these two men will go out into the entire world. I do not know why it should be assumed that Ernest Martin or anybody else living at the present time must be the agent or agency for getting out the Gospel of the Kingdom. It can be done very easily, and Christ tells us how:

“When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso reads, let him understand): Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains ...”

• **Matthew 24:15–16**

“Whoso reads, let him understand” means, whosoever reads Daniel, let him understand. This abomination of desolation, exactly what is it? We do not know for certain. An historical abomination was an offering placed upon the holy altar within the Temple in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes about 168 BC.⁴ We are presently a long time after Antiochus Epiphanes, of course. Christ is talking about a future (to when He was speaking in 30 AD), a time in their future when there will be another holy place in which an abomination can be placed. To have a holy place you must have a Temple. Clearly. At that time:

³ An angel will have a message for all kingdoms, all peoples, all tongues on the earth. Revelation 14:6–7:

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting [eonian] gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice,

‘Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’” ELM

⁴ Christ was referring to an abomination that would occur yet future to His time. Therefore, Antiochus’ abomination was not what Daniel was referring to. That is the point Jesus was making. In fact, it had not yet happened in Paul’s time either (2 Thessalonians 2:3–5). DWS

“Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house.”

• **Matthew 24:16–17**

We know the rest of it. The only thing I am interested in is to show that for an abomination of desolation spoken by Daniel to stand in the holy place, there must be a holy place for it to stand in! That makes sense to me. Of course, at present there is no Temple in Jerusalem. The Book of Daniel talks quite a great deal about a Temple in Jerusalem in chapters 7, 8, and 9, but also in chapters 11 and 12.

In Second Thessalonians chapter 2 the apostle Paul writes about the time of the end. He also mentions a man of sin, a son of perdition, calling himself God, seating himself in the Temple of God, as God (verse 4). This man of sin, the son of perdition is called **“the wicked [one]”** later in 2 Thessalonians 2:8–10. For him to do that just prior to the second coming of Christ there must be a Temple in existence for this man to sit in, and for an **“abomination of desolation”** to be put in the holy place. This man of sin will be destroyed in flaming fire at the second coming of our Lord.

Some people say that this is the Temple of the *ekklesia* (John 2:21 and 1 Corinthians 6:19, for two examples). Have you ever seen a man of sin sit in the *ekklesia*, being a body of human people? That is rather odd. The single body also of a Christian is called the Temple of the Holy Spirit, but can you imagine a man of sin sitting inside a single Christian and calling himself God? That is rather odd as well. But can you imagine a Temple existing in Jerusalem as in the time of Solomon, and in the time of Christ in Herod’s Temple, and a man coming and sitting therein? Most certainly you can.

Return To The Two Witnesses

In Revelation chapter 11 it mentions the two witnesses referred to above. Verse 1 speaks about taking a measuring rod, a reed, and in the Book of Ezekiel when a reed was taken in hand, associated with priests, it was for the rebuilding of a Temple.⁵ The two witnesses in my view are to have a part in rebuilding the Temple which will exist just prior to the second coming of Christ.

Who are these two witnesses? They are called the **“sons of oil”** (Hebrew of Zechariah 4:14.). They are called the people of the oil, like the olive trees that stand on either side of the holy altar in Jerusalem. These are men. In the Old Testament Book of Zechariah they are identified with two individuals, at least in type. One was Zerubbabel the governor of Judea and a descendant of David, but not a king, of course. The other was Joshua the high priest who was associated with him back in the 6th century BC. The two witnesses have something to do with the rebuilding of the Temple. The two witnesses also have something to do with Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest going back about 520 years before the birth of Christ.

So, a Temple will be in existence, since the two witnesses are no doubt associated with the building of this Temple somehow. One is identified with Zerubbabel in some ways and the other with Joshua the high priest in some ways, both back in the late 6th century BC.

Haggai’s Description of the Zerubbabel Temple

Let us look at a book of the Bible that deals entirely with a rebuilding of a former Temple. The Temple that Zerubbabel and Joshua were to build was not the same Temple to be built just prior to the second coming of Christ. That is quite true. After all, there will be 2500 years interval between the two Temples, so let us not confuse them. On the other hand:

- [1] The manner in which the Temple was built back at the time of Haggai,
- [2] the specificity of days on which the orders were given to build it, and

⁵ The Ezekiel Temple is also future to us. It will be built after Christ returns and will last for 1,000 years, to be supplanted after that time by the New Jerusalem that will come from heaven (Revelation 3:12 and all of Revelation chapter 21). For our time, there will be a Temple built before Christ returns. Temples to come: (1) in Jerusalem before Christ returns that the antichrist shall desolate, (2) Ezekiel’s millennial Temple, and (3) New Jerusalem to come to the new earth from heaven. DWS

[3] certain prophecies telling them to build it; all could have significance for a rebuilding of the Temple in the future near to us today.

I say this in speculation; I am not certain. Once we start talking about specific “days” for the future, I must use the word “speculation.” I personally consider these to be actual specific days on which prophesied future events will occur. It is very good and wise that we understand it that way, but we should keep our eyes and ears open to what the Bible says. As we get closer to the time when Christ will intervene in world affairs, events regarding the rebuilding of the Temple will become clearer.

Could we have some reflection of that future Temple, as far as building it is concerned, in a former rebuilding back around 520 BC? Since the two witnesses, being the “**sons of oil,**” are identified or associated with Zerubbabel the governor of Judea and Joshua the high priest living back at that time (and they dealt with the building of another Temple), perhaps there could be some relevance to their experiences. We who are interested in foundational material should certainly be aware of all aspects of a subject.

The Book of Haggai is totally devoted to the matter of rebuilding a Temple. It is also associated with Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest, who are associated with the two witnesses (clearly the Book of Revelation says that). Haggai is third from the last book of the twelve Minor Prophets and it contains three prophecies with the dates precisely given.

Examination of Haggai

The Book of Haggai was written after Cyrus allowed the Jews to go back to rebuild Jerusalem. They had not yet begun to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, but Haggai is prophesying along with Zechariah (his contemporary) at the time the Jews were expecting results from the 70-years prophecy of Jeremiah, the rains of heavens to come down, of glory, of goodness, of righteousness, of peace, and universal prosperity.

Many Jews who returned from Babylon to Judea were beginning to gripe about it all. Not only were they complaining because the prophecies were not being fulfilled according to what they thought Jeremiah said, but indeed they were being cursed by God. They were being cursed with almost every type of difficulty you could imagine except for one thing; they were not in captivity. Haggai begins to teach:

“In the second year of Darius the King, in the sixth month [the high summer] in the first day of the month, came the word of YHWH to Haggai the prophet, under Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech the High Priest, saying ...”

• *Haggai 1:1*

Note the date on which the first prophecy of Haggai was given. This first prophecy occupies the first 11 verses: **“In the second year of Darius the king ...”** I am interested in the month that it took place and on the day of the month that it took place.⁶ For some reason or other, Haggai was given this prophecy at a particular day of the month and Haggai wants it clearly understood when it was given. The date has to do with the reasons for building a new Temple. A Temple was built back then, but did it have some reflection of the rebuilding of the Temple at the end of the age? We will see.

The Jews had just come back from the Babylonian captivity. They were given permission to rebuild the city of Jerusalem by Cyrus the Great some 18 years before. Here they were, having lived in Jerusalem and built up the city somewhat in the nation of Judah for about 18 years, and they had not started to rebuild the Temple. The Temple in the Bible is known as God’s dwelling place. That is where He lives on earth. People were to pray toward the Temple. They were to look upon God as residing in that Temple. Indeed, the Bible makes it quite clear that the physical Temple here on earth is nothing more than a replica of God’s divine palace which is in heaven. All the compartments of the Temple, the furniture of the Temple, the ministers of

⁶ I am not here so much interested in the year the prophecy was given, although that is important. The second year of Darius was 18, perhaps 20 years, after Cyrus gave permission for the Jews to go back to Judea and Jerusalem. The prophecy was given about 520 BC, way before the time of Christ. *ELM* For the passages listing the prophetic dates in Haggai and Zechariah, see my March 2009 Commentary, “[Haggai and the Temple.](#)” Then read Dr. Martin’s detailed article, “[Book of Haggai, Time Prophecies.](#)” *DWS*

the Temple (the priests), all are ramifications or reflections of divine powers or divine things in the heavens.

God through Haggai is addressing the two most important men, as far as authority is concerned, amongst the Jews who returned from Babylon, and they had not rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem. They started building the city of Jerusalem and other towns. Zerubbabel represented civil government and Joshua the high priest represented divine government.⁷ Obviously this message filtered down to all the population who were helping rebuild the city of Jerusalem and their own homes after the 70-year captivity by the Babylonians.

Many of those Jews who came back from Babylon to Judea were beginning to gripe about it all. Not only were they complaining because the prophecies were not being fulfilled according to what they thought Jeremiah said, but indeed they were being cursed by God. They were being cursed with almost every type of difficulty you could imagine except again for the important fact; they were not in captivity.

A message came to Zerubbabel, a son of David and to the house of Aaron, Joshua the high priest. The message had to do with the rebuilding of a Temple.

“Thus speaks YHWH of hosts, saying, ‘This people say, The time is not come, the time that YHWH’s house should be built.’”

• *Haggai 1:2*

As prophesied in Isaiah 44:28 (“**Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, You shall be built; and to the temple, Your foundation shall be laid.”**), Cyrus had given them permission back around 539 BC, to go back to Jerusalem and to Judea and build up the land again. It had been vacant for the 70-year period. It was devastated, dilapidated in every way, and they were back trying to rebuild it up. They had been in the land for years rebuilding their own houses, but had not touched one block of stone to rebuild that Temple.

“Then came the word of YHWH by Haggai the prophet, saying, ‘Is it time for you, O you, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house [YHWH’s house, the Temple] lie waste?’”

• *Haggai 1:3–4*

The phrase “**cieled houses**” means houses with ceilings. “Ciel” means heavens, to keep the heavens away from you, the rain, and all of that. They are living in their built houses, is what he means. You have houses to live in and they are not too bad, but “**this house,**” the house of God, “**lie waste.**” Haggai is complaining to the two top men in Judea at the time, the governor, and the high priest. You are dwelling in your own houses, but “**this house lie waste**” and you have been in the land some 18 years and have not begun to rebuild the Temple. That is what it says in paraphrase.

Verse 5 “**Now therefore thus says YHWH of hosts; ‘Consider your ways.’**” I am emphasizing the word “your” in this verse; it shows where the problem is. True, the 70 years ended. For 18 years they had been in the land, true. But they were saying it was not time to build the Lord’s house. Now that is reasonable to a certain extent. They knew that God lived in heaven, and He obviously did not need anything like they did. But here is Haggai saying, “**Consider your ways.”** Look what had happened to them:

“You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but you have not enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earns wages earns wages to put it into a bag with holes.”

• *Haggai 1:6*

That was the condition of these Jews for the past 18-year period. Imagine what the Jews thought, God had said He would come back to us. What would you have thought if you had the prophecies of Jeremiah, Isaiah, and others in your midst, particularly Jeremiah where he says, after a 70-year period you will have an expected end? You will have beauty. You will have peace. All the captives will come back to Jerusalem. Everything

⁷ If there was a kingship available in Judea at that time, we would find that Zerubbabel could very well have been king. But there was no kingship. The kingship disappeared with the last king of Judah, and it is made quite clear in the Book of Ezekiel that there would never be another king of David reigning on this earth until the Messiah would come. *ELM*

will be beautiful and wonderful. Yet for the last 18 years they were in great difficulty. They were complaining to God about it. Some people might say, why not gripe? God says hard times will end after 70 years, but we are not receiving these good things.

God says through His prophet Haggai, **“Consider your ways”** in verse 5. They did not want to start the Temple because, why should they build the house to God when He was not fulfilling His promises? To be blunt, it came down to that. God was clear through His prophets in this matter. After 70 years things would happen, but He also made it quite clear in Haggai that the promises were not happening. What is going on? Is God not keeping His word?

“Thus says YHWH of Hosts, ‘Consider your ways [He says again as in verse 5]. Go up to the mountain, bring wood,⁸ build the house [God’s house], and I will take pleasure in it and I will be glorified,’ says YHWH. ‘You look for much and lo, it came to little.’”

• *Haggai 1:7–9*

In other words, things were not too nice for them. They had their houses, but the land was not producing very well. Why was it not producing wealth? Going on to verse 7: **“Thus says YHWH of hosts; ‘Consider your ways”** He had just said that back in verse 5. Now God through Haggai repeats it. Your ways are causing this situation. God is angry with you because you live in your houses, and you have not started to build My house. That makes sense. What would you have looked for after 70 years if the prophecies said all the blessings were going to come? **“You looked for much,”** but what happened? God’s prophet comes right out and plainly tells them how to rectify the situation: **“bring wood, build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified”** (verse 8).

They had a reason to look for much. Anyone who reads the prophecies of Jeremiah, given a little over 70 years before, will understand that after 70 years captivity you will come back to Judea, and you will have an abundance. That is what it says in Jeremiah. But look what is happening. They are not experiencing abundance at all. But God says, **“consider your ways.”**

“You looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I did blow upon it [I cursed it]. Why? says YHWH of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and you run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.

And I called for a drought [1] upon the land, and [2] upon the mountains, and [3] upon the corn, and [4] upon the new wine, and [5] upon the oil, and [6] upon that which the ground brings forth, and [7] upon men, and [8] upon cattle, and [9] upon all the labor of the hands.”

• *Haggai 1:9–11*

The Middle East and Palestine has been subjected to droughts from time to time. In this period of 18 years, instead of having much as they expected, they were in drought conditions. It was very, very difficult. The people were griping. I suppose some would say they had a right to do so. They said it was not time to build the house of the Lord. They were not going to build the house to God when He seemed not to fulfill His prophecies. On the other hand, God said He was doing these evils so they would consider their ways and put first things first.

That is quite an indictment against these Jews. Eighteen years after they returned to the land they were suffering and felt they should not be suffering, at least according to the prophecies of Jeremiah. We know now, according to Haggai, why they were suffering. They had not yet taken a spade to turn a clod of ground to rebuild the Temple of God.

What is this entire prophecy about? The Temple of God, and rebuilding it. It is most interesting that it is given on the 1st day of the 6th month. He says, going back to verse 2, the people were saying, well, the time has not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built.

⁸ That probably means the mountain of Lebanon where all the cedar trees are. *ELM*

I am perfectly convinced myself that in the future, when the rebuilding of the Temple in existence prior to Christ's second coming begins, when it will start to be rebuilt, I can just imagine the people at that time saying, "It's not time to build yet. The time is not here. There are not any reasons to build the Temple."

It seems almost impossible at the present time that a Temple could ever be built in Jerusalem, does it not, given the present religious and political conditions in Jerusalem? There are all types of factors against it. Would they say, "Well, the time is not right yet"? I think they might.

Perhaps we have something here that is not so foreign to modern times as we might imagine. However, I readily admit that this goes back to 520 BC approximately and it is not absolutely referring to modern times. There is one thing that I have had to learn over the years studying history. The environment may change, and we are living beyond the industrial revolution, in the space age, in the age of telecommunications on a vast scale, as we all know. But the emotions of people, the desires of people have not changed since Adam. We really are all the same when you get down to it. What was happening back there at the time of Haggai no doubt has some kind of reference to us today in some ways. Look what happens:

"Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of YHWH their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as YHWH their God had sent him, and the people did fear before YHWH.

Then spoke Haggai YHWH's messenger in YHWH's message unto the people, saying, 'I am with you, says YHWH.' And YHWH stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of YHWH of hosts, their God, In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king."

• *Haggai 1:12–15*

Note the time period in verse 15: the 24th day of the 6th month. Haggai first received a prophecy at the beginning of the 6th month, 1st day. Then verse 15 says that the people responded and began working on the 24th day of the month. That is a 24-day period. What happened in those 24 days? They were discussing and making up their minds to get the timber and the stones and lay the foundation stone of the Temple.

It says at the end of verse 14: they **"did work in the house of YHWH of hosts,"** so they got busy gathering things together, making designs, plumbing all the lines out. Now they had to go to the mountain for cedar trees and they had to get and cut stones.

Haggai Chapter 2

They made ready to lay the foundation and build the house, and it had a smaller dimension than the one in the time of Solomon.⁹ A month later Haggai receives another prophecy:

"In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of YHWH by the prophet Haggai, saying, ..."

• *Haggai 2:1*

How many of us recognize what day that was as far as the Hebrew calendar is concerned? It is the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The 15th of Tishri is the first day and the 21st is the last day of Tabernacles.¹⁰

It is most interesting that this takes place on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Tabernacles depicts

⁹ To be clear, the Holy Place and Holy of Holies were the same dimensions as in the Solomonic Temple, but the outer sanctuary was smaller. *DWS*

¹⁰ There was one day beyond that was called the octave, the 22nd day of Tishri. It is most interesting that on the first day of Tabernacles they would have offered 13 bullocks. On the second day, 12 bullocks. On the third, 11 bullocks, then on down until they got to this day right here, and they offered 7 bullocks. You add all these up from 13 down to 7 and you get 70 bullocks. That is all in the Book of Numbers. The ancient Jewish interpreters reckoned that those 70 bullocks represented the 70 nations, and the Temple of God was not only for Jews and Israelites, Solomon said that all people who look toward the Temple can get blessings (1 Kings 8:41–43). *ELM*

the Kingdom of God here on this earth in the future. So, what happens?

“Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, ‘Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?’”

• **Haggai 2:2–3**

The Temple was much smaller and less ornate. God asked a question, comparing the former house to this one. The former Temple built by Solomon was a glorious building, none could ever compare to it in the world. It was small but it had tremendous quantities of gold, precious stones, decorations which made it resplendent. All was torn down and the gold was taken to Babylon. We all know about that. The entire site was in ruins. They began to build up this new Temple. On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, here comes this message: who of you saw the Temple of Solomon some 70 years before, and you now are seeing what this is going to be. There were still a few of them around.

Most of them were saying this Temple in comparison was **“as nothing.”** It is little, tiny, without decoration. We do not have any gold; we do not have any precious stones. We do not have anything to put in it. All we will have are the walls and ceiling made from stone and some wood. We will have the altar. We will have everything in there, but we will not have the glory that we had before. After all they were in drought. They were in great difficulty, and they were trying to build up the land again. In Zechariah chapter 3 there is a vision of this same Joshua the high priest standing not in his pontifical robes, which were beautiful, but in rags. That symbolized how things were at that time. Then God comes to Haggai and says to Zerubbabel:

“Yet now [1] be strong, O Zerubbabel, says YHWH; and [2] be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and [3] be strong, all you people of the land, says YHWH, and work [on the Temple]: for I am with you, says YHWH of hosts: According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my spirit remains among you: fear you not.”

• **Haggai 2:4–5**

This is in a sense the beginning of a new covenant. I am not saying “the” New Covenant of Jeremiah or that covenant mentioned in the New Testament Scriptures, but YHWH says I shall start a new beginning with you, and it will be like the one which I covenanted with your fathers when they came out of Egypt. It is easy to understand verse 5, so most people should see the significance of what He is trying to say.

God says, I will start over with you people again; I will start over like I did at the time of the exodus from Egypt. That is a most remarkable statement when you get down to it.

“For thus says YHWH of hosts; ‘Yet once [once again], it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.’”

• **Haggai 2:6**

It will not happen immediately, but it will come again where He will shake the heavens and the earth. He says in **“a little while.”** The time period is not indicated but it certainly shows there is not too long to go. I suppose these people building the Temple were thinking they were building it for someone to come in the near future. Who was that someone?

Daniel said there was someone coming, a Messiah, to lead them into the Kingdom of God (Daniel 7:9–28). Could they have believed as early as that time that perhaps they were preparing the way? They had reasons for believing so back at that time, but they did not completely understand the chronology. God said:

“I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come [to the Temple]: and I will fill this house with glory, says YHWH of hosts.”

• **Haggai 2:6–7**

Remember, they were now building this house and it was as nothing. It was not a shack, it was okay, but

it did not have the gold. It did not have the silver. It was not the beautiful, magnificent Temple that would be the place for God to dwell. It just was not. Any heathen looking at it would mock it, no doubt. There was no reason to build a Temple because they could not put any silver or gold in it. They did not have any money to do it. Verse 2:8: **“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says YHWH of hosts.”** Who was going to supply it? God was going to supply it. They were not, but He would. He says the nations shall bring it in.

Verse 2:9: **“The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former,’ says YHWH of hosts ...”** There was no building greater than Solomon’s Temple, yet this one will be greater. That is what God through Haggai said. **“... ‘and in this place will I give peace,’ says YHWH of hosts.”** Period. That ends the prophecy on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Another prophecy will come soon.

Comparisons

This is a most interesting thing. This house was finally built. It was not too good at first, but it was added on to over time, and there were sometimes some desolations of it, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes some 300 years later, and then it was built up again, and desolated again by the Romans under Pompey the Great in 63 BC, and a few years later in 55 BC by the procurator Crassus.

And then King Herod came and built more of the house. In fact, King Herod had the priests go in and tear down every stone and rebuild with new stones. When our Lord came on the earth, there was a magnificent Temple, but still it was not like Solomon’s Temple. Yet there was a prophecy that said that the Temple that Zerubbabel built was to have a greater glory.

Do you know who provided back at that time the greatest glory that Solomon’s Temple never had at all? God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ walked into this Temple, preached in it, and talked in it to His apostles and to others. He was none other than Immanuel, God in the flesh.¹¹ Solomon’s Temple saw the glory of God with the great Shekinah, the great spiritual glory coming down, and it filled the whole house, and they were all amazed. But who ever heard of God Himself in the flesh entering the Temple? He never did that in Solomon’s Temple, but He did it to the extension of this one here. So we find that the prophecy shows that **“The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former”** (Haggai 2:9). It was **“greater”** indeed.

Yet there is more to this teaching than just Christ walking into that Temple in the flesh back there, because there is a Temple coming which will be even more glorious in gold and silver than even Solomon’s. It will be the millennial Temple prophesied in the Book of Ezekiel and elsewhere. It will be the grandest Temple that this world has ever seen, and all the nations will bring goods into it: gold, silver, everything. But before that happens God says:

“And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come [to the Temple]: and I will fill this house [my house] with glory,’ says YHWH of hosts.

‘The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,’ says YHWH of hosts.

‘The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former,’ says YHWH of hosts:

‘and in this place [where they will establish it in Jerusalem] will I give peace,’ says YHWH of hosts.”

• **Haggai 2:7–9**

Continual peace will last for 1,000 years, if we take the New Testament millennium into account. All that is given to Haggai on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. It refers to when the 70 bullocks have now been offered. It says all nations will have a part in this, so you begin to get the environment of what is going to happen. This again is all on the rebuilding of the Temple. The 10th verse of chapter 2 says:

“In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year [the same year as above] of Darius, came the word of YHWH by Haggai the prophet, saying, ...”

• **Haggai 2:10**

¹¹ The term “Immanuel” in Hebrew (Isaiah 7:14, 8:8) means **“God with us”** as explained in Matthew 1:23. *DWS*

We come to the 9th month, 24th day, still in the same 2nd year of Darius. This is interesting because it brings us into winter. The 7th month is the Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn. The 8th month would be a getting near October/November. The 9th month always occurs in December. Sometimes it goes over into January in our calendar today. We are getting into wintertime.

In the 9th month, which is Kislev in the Hebrew, on the 24th day of the month something happens that is most important. It is not only mentioned here, but it is mentioned elsewhere concerning the Temple:

“Thus says YHWH of hosts; ‘Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy?’ And the priests answered and said, ‘No.”

• *Haggai 2:11–12*

That was of course true. In the time of Christ they had all the sepulchers whitewashed so that at night a person would not touch one.¹² If they did so they would be unclean for seven days. Here you have a holy sacrifice, an animal sacrifice, and it becomes attached or stuck to your garment. Just because that animal sacrifice is attached to your garment does not mean everything the priest touches will be holy from then on. They answered correctly: no, it will not be holy. Verse 13:

“Then said Haggai, ‘If one that is unclean [ceremonially] by a dead body¹³ touch any of these, shall it be unclean?’ And the priests answered and said, ‘It shall be unclean.”

• *Haggai 2:13*

That also is true. That means that if any of your family touches any dead body, that person would be unclean back then for 7 days. If you touched a pencil, that pencil would be unclean. Touch a Bible, the Bible would be ceremonially unclean. Everything you would touch would be unclean. If you were a man and you touch your wife, she would be unclean. That was how it was.

“It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, ‘So is this people, and so is this nation before me,’ says YHWH; ‘and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.”

• *Haggai 2:13–14*

They were getting all the material ready to build up the Temple. They thought they were obeying the Lord. God comes and says, whatever they offer is unclean. Look at verse 15: **“And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward ...”** that is, from the 24th day of the 9th month in the 2nd year of Darius the King. Although it is not a holy day to the ancient Israelites as far as God is concerned, it was a most significant day from the point of view of the Temple in the Bible. Keep that in mind.

God says your hands are dirty, they are unclean, and I want you to pray. They had built an altar but not the Temple. What they were saying was, “We do not need the holy flesh because we are holy ourselves. We do not have to come in contact with the holy flesh. That is why we do not have to build the Temple.” But God said that was just like touching dead men’s bones because they were unclean. The whole nation was unclean:

“And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone [i.e., the foundation stone] in the temple of YHWH: Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the [winepress] for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press [of oil], there were but twenty. I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you turned not to me, says YHWH.”

• *Haggai 2:15–17*

¹² This was particularly so during the festivals when the city of Jerusalem had 2 to 5 times as many people as its normal population of around 70,000. Jerusalem was what today we would call a “convention city.” DWS

¹³ He goes, if his father has died and he has to go bury him and he has touched a dead body, you must be 7 days and wash yourself clean or you will be ceremonially unclean. ELM

God says they were gathering the material to build this Temple in a haphazard way. They were doing it, but they were not putting their heart into it. It was taking them 3 months and 24 days to get around to putting down a stone for a foundation. **God was angry.** Verse 18:

“Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of YHWH’s temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, has not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.”

• *Haggai 2:18–19*

Up to that time they had nothing but drought, bad harvests, nothing but problems. But now he says, **“from this day”** God will bless them. I point this out to you because we are coming to a period that every year you should pay attention to what happens on the 9th month and the 24th day of the month. Do you know what this 9th month of the 24th day signifies? This Temple of Zerubbabel that was eventually built was desecrated in 168 BC by Antiochus Epiphanies, king of Syria. The altar of the Temple was cleaned up by Judas Maccabaeus. The Temple was rebuilt again by his brother Simon the Hasmonean. They started the festival of Hanukkah, the **“Feast of Dedication”** mentioned in the New Testament (John 10:22).¹⁴ Hanukkah starts on the 9th month, the 25th of the month, the day after this 24th of Kislev.

Hanukkah has to do with the reestablishment of a Temple, but it really symbolizes a Temple rebuilt by clean people, a Temple that God authorizes to be proper and right before the Second Coming of Christ. He says, **“from this day,”** referring to a future time that God did not identify. When you read Haggai you would think that it meant their time, yet in the book of Malachi written about a hundred years later you find they were still in drought and still having problems. This prophecy had to do with a future time.

Let us consider it in that light. In the very first part of the prophecy in Haggai 1:5 where it says, **“Consider your ways,”** and verse 7 it says, **“Consider your ways.”** Their slovenly ways in putting themselves before God, and even in this interval of time while they gathered materials to build the Temple, they were still slovenly, and God was unhappy with them. He says, from this day forward, there will be a difference:

“... the day that the foundation of YHWH’S temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, has not brought forth: [however] from this day will I bless you.”

• *Haggai 2:18–19*

Again, that is the third time **“from this day”** is mentioned, meaning the 24th day, 9th month.

Haggai 2:20–23

“And again [later] the word of YHWH came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the [9th] month, saying, ...” (verse 20). That is yet another instance. The significance is upon this day. This prophecy comes later in the same day. Perhaps they had laid the foundation stone, we are not told, but here comes the prophecy: **“Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah ...”** (verse 21).

It is most interesting that here he leaves out Joshua the high priest, a man in charge of religious matters. Zerubbabel, however, was a son of David. He was not a king because there was no kingship of David at the time, but he was **“governor of Judah.”** This prophecy goes directly to him:

“Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, ‘I will shake the heavens and the earth; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen [nations]; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

¹⁴ Dr. Martin points out in **“Chapter 30, Rebuilding the Temple”** in pp. 398–399 of his *Temples* book, there were three rededications of the Zerubbabel Temple: **164 BC** in the time of Judas Maccabaeus; **142 BC** in the time of Simon the Hasmonean; and finally in **124 BC** by Simon’s son John Hyrcanus. Each rededication took place on Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication. *DWS*

In that day [sometime in the future],’ says YHWH of hosts, ‘will I take you, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel,’ says YHWH, ‘and will make you as a signet: for I have chosen you,’ says YHWH of hosts.”

• *Haggai 2:21–23*

Period. That is the end of the prophecy and end of the Book of Haggai. There is coming a future ruler, by the name of Zerubbabel. Who is this Zerubbabel? He will be a signet [a seal, usually on a ring, DWS] in the Lord’s hand. There will come a time in the future when God overthrows and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the heathen, their chariots and those that ride in them, their horses, all the cavalry, all of that. **“In that day”** He will take Zerubbabel and He will make Him to be **“a signet”** in the Lord’s hand. Zerubbabel could do this either in the resurrection, or I suppose one of the descendants of Zerubbabel could do it. It is most remarkable that Zerubbabel is in both of Christ’s genealogies (Matthew 1:12–13; Luke 3:27, spelled “Zorobabel” in the King James Version). God will overthrow all the kingdoms of the world, bring peace into the world, and establish the peace that He said He would do at the end of the 70 years.

The time when this will finally occur is given in the book of Zechariah. In Zechariah chapter 4 it says, Zerubbabel, you have started to build this Temple and you shall finish it one of these days. The problem is, as far as we know Zerubbabel never finished building the Temple! He never put the capstone, the top, on it. When we look at the book of Zechariah, he says virtually the same thing as Haggai. He shows that during this 18-year period they had great difficulties indeed.

When a person looks at the prophecies in this period just after the Babylonian captivity, they are typical of what will occur at the end of the age just prior to the Messianic overture here on earth. While the Jews expected at the end of the 70-year period a complete overthrow of the Gentile world, the setting up of Messiah, the Temple being built, and Jerusalem becoming the capital of the world, God said, **“Consider your ways.”** For 18 years the Jews went through all types of things they felt they should not have suffered because they thought only glory and blessings should come upon them.

The Real Temple of God

The New Testament says that the capstone of that Temple was Jesus Christ Himself. That is correct. It has not been put on yet. In fact, it even says in the New Testament that the stone that the builders rejected (this goes back to the Book of Psalms dealing with this) has become the head of the corner.¹⁵ The head of the corner has not been put there yet.

What do we have here then? The Bible says that a new Temple will be rebuilt. The only historical rebuilding of the Temple that is mentioned in the Bible is the one we have been talking about here, in the 6th century BC. No Temple has been rebuilt since the Herodian Temple (an enlargement of the Zerubbabel Temple) was destroyed in 70 AD.

Who is the real Temple of God? Who is it that the Temple depicts? It is Christ Jesus. It is interesting that the first day on which this prophecy came to Haggai, about all this detail of rebuilding this Temple, the trouble they were going through to get it built, and they were saying the time was not ready, the droughts and the difficulties in the land that will be in the midst beforehand. Israel or the land of Palestine is subject to droughts and then sometimes they have abundance, but the time is coming, starting (in Haggai’s time) the 6th month, the 1st day of the month, the 1st day of Elul.

It took about 3 months and 24 days to finally gather materials to even put the foundation stone upon the Temple mount. They finally got it done, but they never really finished it. Zerubbabel did not finish it. That is quite clear; but it says that he will finish it. How he will do that is a mystery, but surely it will come some way through the power of God, if prophecy will be fulfilled, which I feel will happen.

That day in the Book of Haggai has to do with the rebuilding of a Temple. It says, **“from this day will I bless you”** (Haggai 2:19). This prophecy was given to those people of Judah some 500+ years before the birth

¹⁵ See references to **“head of the corner”** at Leviticus 21:5; Psalm 118:22; Jeremiah 48:45; Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; and 1 Peter 2:7. DWS

of Christ, but there are signs here in Haggai that certain of the prophecies have not yet been fulfilled. Zerubabel has not put the final capstone on the Temple yet. That is not the end of the story. The interesting thing is that the next day was, of course, the 9th month, the 25th day. What was the 24th? The evening of the 24th started Hanukkah. Hanukkah was the Feast of Dedication mentioned in John 10:22, which occurred in winter.

The Feast of Dedication

Josephus called Hanukkah or the Feast of Dedication or rededication, the festival of lamps. That is what the word “Hanukkah” means. They brightened up the whole countryside at night during that time with torches, with lamps, both inside and outside the houses, in the streets, in the Temple, etc. What was the Feast of Dedication all about? It was not a festival ordained in the Old Testament, that is true, but Christ gave credence to it in a certain way by appearing in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication, and He did interesting things in John 10:22–42 during that time.

The festival of dedication had to do with a rededication of a Temple. In 168 BC (some scholars say 167) Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria, came from the north and attacked the Jews. On the 25th day of the 9th month in 168 BC Antiochus Epiphanes, being a Gentile and a type of the man of sin,¹⁶ went into the Temple with his army and desecrated it. He offered swine flesh on the altar and established a pagan altar, probably to Baal Shaamim in the Temple at Jerusalem. As far as the author of the Book of First Maccabees was concerned (First and Second Maccabees are first class historical works), Antiochus desolated the Temple, with an abomination of desolation in terms of Daniel’s prophecy.

After Antiochus Epiphanes desolated the Temple, Judas Maccabees with his army was able to rout the Gentile Syrians from Jerusalem. At that time the Maccabees, who were 5 brothers, were able to restore the Temple. They did that in about 2½ years. They wanted it to be ready by the feast of Tabernacles in 165 BC, after three years, but were unable to do it at that time because the priests were not ritualistically clean. Several other factors prevented them also. They did not get around to it until the 9th month, the month of Kislev.

They decided that they would cleanse the Temple of its desolation, of its abominations, and rededicate the Temple to God (far beyond mere restoration). They decided to do it on the 9th month, the 25th day of the month, and hold 8 days of festivities in honor to God that the Temple had been rededicated. They did not do it on the 24th, that is true. They did it on the 25th day. I think they did it on the 25th for one reason, because they did not know whether that was the Temple spoken of in Haggai or not, so they put it on the 25th, and the feast went for 8 days.

The Book of Second Maccabees tells us that this was done because they were unable to keep the Feast of Tabernacles back some 3 months before because of problems. They had second Tabernacles that they kept. In fact, they called the Feast of Dedication the second Tabernacles (1 Maccabees 4:36–61; 2 Maccabees 10:1–9). The reason that the priests said that this could be done (and you will find this in 1 Kings 8:15) was that when Solomon first dedicated the Temple back almost 1,000 years before Christ, they had such joy at the Feast of Tabernacles that they decided to have another feast tacked on to it, an extra 7 days. In 2 Chronicles 30:22–26 it also says that in the time of Hezekiah they did the same thing on one occasion for the days of unleavened bread, they added an extra 7 days because they had such joy.

Because those two examples were in the Scripture the priests felt that since they could not keep the Feast of Tabernacles properly in 165 BC because the Temple was not properly dedicated, they got on their knees and asked God if He would accept their dedication (like the righteous kings Solomon and Hezekiah dedicating the Temple back then) and have a Feast of Tabernacles on the 9th month, 25th day of the month for 8 days, and so they call it the second Festival of Tabernacles. That is what the Feast of Dedication is all about.

The thing is, the word “dedication” or “rededication” is the key to the whole matter. It has to do with the reestablishment of the Temple, at least in the minds of the Jews today who look upon that festival as doing that very thing. It says in Haggai 2:7 **“I will shake the nations,”** I will do so soon, God says.

¹⁶ The Book of Maccabees certainly points him out to be **a type** of the Wicked One, the Son of Perdition. DWS

Conclusion

So, will there be a new Temple built in Jerusalem? According to the Bible, the answer is yes. Has it started already? According to the Bible it has not, to my knowledge. I know nothing about it. All I am saying is, these are interesting things for us to keep our minds open and keep watch. Exactly what will happen, I do not know.

Because the Bible makes it quite clear that there will be a Temple prior to the Second Coming of Christ, it must be started at sometime. The foundation must be laid at sometime. Some of those Scriptures in Haggai have not been fulfilled yet, according to the New Testament and according to the Scriptures in Zechariah and Haggai.¹⁷ The two witnesses seem to have points of contact with biblical personalities of Zerubbabel and Joshua. They are the “**sons of oil**” (Hebrew of Zechariah 4:14,). They will come with a measuring rod, apparently, in their hands. That has not happened yet. Let us keep our eyes and ears open because we are coming in for some interesting times.

Ernest L. Martin, 1979, 1996
Edited by David Sielaff, 2009, 2022

Addendum, “The Next Temple,” June 2022

Have you heard rumors that the Jews have everything prepared for the construction of the Temple? I remember hearing about a “prefabricated Temple” in the late 1960s, that the Temple could be constructed quickly, within months if not weeks. I even recall seeing photos of the pre-cut stone blocks that were marked for the quick construction of the Temple. Those rumors (for me) are now 50+ years old, yet such ideas keep appearing, even from some of the Jewish Temple groups.

Contrary to rumors you may have heard, even though a foundation stone may some day be laid, and a Temple may be started, the building of any Temple will take a long time before it is completed. It may take decades to construct the Temple from the time of the laying of the foundation stone until its dedication. Environmental and water considerations are substantial and cannot be ignored. Remember, the Jewish Temple is a slaughterhouse where sacrifices take place. Thousands of animals will be killed every year. Blood and animal waste must be dealt with properly.

The correct historical site of the Jerusalem Temples must be acknowledged by the world, particularly by the Jewish religious leaders. The facts about the true location will open under many parts of the Bible and history to proper understanding and symbolic recognition. No Jewish Temples were ever built on the Haram esh-Sharif, nor should they be. Perhaps the two witnesses will help settle this matter during their service.

Whatever site is chosen for the next Temple, whether above and west of the Gihon Springs where the other Temples were located, or somewhere else, there must be a massive source of “living water.” Water piped in or aqueduct water would not qualify for the ritual purity of living water, nor would cistern water. The source and quantity of water would need to be substantial. That means either:

1. A major source of water will be discovered within the permissible diameter of 500 cubits from the original Temple site for the construction of the next Temple (see “[Chapter 34, The Proper Comparisons of the Temple](#)” in Dr. Martin’s *Temples* book) or,
2. God will open a new source of water (perhaps by an earthquake) within the allowed area. The sooner the better, in my opinion, but as of June 2022 I see nothing on the prophetic horizon yet.

However God does it, I pray He will speed that day, and that “**Thy Kingdom come!**”

David Sielaff, updated 2022

¹⁷ See the extended discussion of those prophecies from the March 2008 article “[Gentile Nations and Israel.](#)” They relate closely with this discussion. DWS