

## THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

### Lesson 3, Chapter 2

Let's open Haggai chapter 2 by summing up chapter 1. The focus is clearly the Temple that still lay in ruins after close to 2 decades of the Judeans returning to their former homeland. Their former homeland is now but a Persian province called Yehud, and the area is not quite what Judah used to encompass, however it is approximately the same. Even so, only a fraction of the former Jewish residents had come home, or ever would, preferring instead to remain where they were or exploring other nations for better opportunities for their families.

The returning Jews (an anachronistic name that is NOT what they called themselves) actually referred to themselves as Judeans...meaning residents of Judah as opposed to identifying as being from the tribe of Judah. Tribalism has long ago faded away into national identity. From their perspective, they were the rightful owners and residents of the land. Keep in mind that Judah did not include the former Northern Kingdom of Ephraim/Israel that was scattered around Asia and Northern Africa a couple of centuries earlier by the Assyrians. The majority of former Judeans that had been hauled off unwillingly by the Babylonians to Babylon had by now died off due to age. It was mostly their children, and their children's children who were returning to Judah. Apparently there were a handful of quite elderly Judeans coming back that were children when they left, so they had some memory of the splendor of Solomon's Temple prior to its destruction.

The returning Judeans mainly had the idea of reclaiming family lands, orchards and vineyards. But what they met upon returning were new residents, such as the Samaritans, that had moved in and taken over these often-vacant farms and fields. They brought with them the Samaritan form of religion that included the corrupted Samaritan version of the Torah, and the equally corrupted Samaritan worship practices, all of which collided head-on with those of the Judeans. Needless to say, things did not go well.

The Persians made a good-faith attempt to allow all the former states that Babylon had conquered more independence than the Babylonians had allowed. So, the Persians selected the Judean Sheshbazzar as the governor over their province of Yehud. He, along with the High Priest, attempted to rebuild the

Temple but got no further than getting the foundation laid due to the constant interference of the Samaritans, and the lack of funds, and then the lack of interest from those returned Judeans. A few years later the Prophet Haggai is introduced. He brings an insistent message from Yehoveh to get the Temple project (that had laid dormant for 15 years) going again.

Apparently, even though there was no Temple, the Altar of Burnt Offering that was on Temple grounds had been put back into operation. Sacrificing was happening again. Perhaps this is one of the several reasons why the returned Judeans had lost interest in rebuilding the Temple. After all, probably the primary religious concern of the Judean people was to sacrifice in order to have their sins forgiven (something that had been impossible for the previous 70 years). However, we learn that God did not accept their sacrifices, nor did He accept their ambivalence at not making rebuilding the Temple priority number one. A reasonable question to ask is why this was so important to Yehoveh. Wasn't the Temple merely a building?

I'll not go into depth, because I answered that question in some detail in the previous lesson. Briefly, the Temple in Jerusalem was where God designated that He would make His earthly abode and make visitation there. This is where fellowship between God and His chosen people were to occur. But more, the Temple is at the heart of the Covenant of Moses. The Temple (at first the Wilderness Tabernacle) was ordained by God, in detail. It was where the Priests operated. Fully one-third of the entire Law of Moses is about priestly duties and Temple matters.

The Temple is, and has remained, crucial to the Hebrews to this day (as it should). It is the gentile Constantinian Church that has, as part of it's the-Church-has-replaced-Israel underlying doctrine, determined that the Temple no longer has value and that the constant hope of rebuilding the Temple that has extended into the 21<sup>st</sup> century is wrong minded and an offense to God. This is a false narrative. Haggai and Zechariah emphasize the critical necessity of the Temple, and then Ezekiel in the final 8 chapters of his Prophetic book go into exacting and extensive details of the building of the Temple that will be in use during the 1000-year reign of Christ on earth. It is time that Yeshua's followers understand this, repent of this false doctrine, and realize that the Temple is not

merely a God requirement, it is the visible symbol of the ongoing relevance of the Covenant of Moses. The fact is that God on earth, Messiah Yeshua, is going to make the Millennial Temple His palace.

With that, open your Bibles to Haggai chapter 2.

### **READ HAGGAI CHAPTER 2 all**

Chapter 2 contains 3 more oracles from God, given through Haggai. These occur in the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> months of the Hebrew calendar year, still in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of King Darius of Persia's reign. The first of the three opens the chapter, and Haggai records that it came on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month. Think on that day for a moment. This is the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles... Sukkot... that is the grandest day of the entire feast. This fact is the context of the oracle and would have been at the forefront of every Judean's thoughts.

Another name for Sukkot is the Feast of Final Ingathering, because it is when the final harvest of the current year's growing cycle is brought in. There were to be many offerings and sacrifices of the firstfruits of this harvest. But, this harvest had turned out to be a meager, if not a miserable, one. The number of sacrifices and the quality of the produce would have been visibly poor.

About a month has passed since work has begun anew to rebuild the Temple. The new oracle is addressed to everyone... the leadership (Zerubbabel, governor of Yehud, and Joshua, the High Priest)... as well as all the rest of the people. Taking into account that everyone knows this is the final day of the Feast of Sukkot... the granddaddy of all the feasts... and that they are in some way celebrating it... although in a most subdued way to the way it used to be done when the glorious Solomon's Temple was still standing... then we can understand the impact of the question God asks. He says in verse 3:

**CJB Haggai 2:3** ***"Who among you is left that saw this house in its former glory? And how does it look to you now? It seems like nothing to you, doesn't it?"***

Ouch. This rebuke almost rises to sarcasm. No matter what nation you are part of... and I'll use the USA as my example... can you imagine being taken over by a

foreign power through war, and then standing together in front of our destroyed Capital Building in Washington D.C. to celebrate July 4<sup>th</sup>, Independence Day, and God says to us: so, how does this feel to you? Is there anyone left among you who saw it before it was destroyed, and now has to see it in this far less splendid condition? What does this look like in your eyes? Does it seem like nothing?

This is no more nor less than God telling His people that this is what disobedience to Him brings, and what it looks like as a consequence. We read about this same situation in the Book of Ezra.

**CJB Ezra 3:10-13** ***<sup>10</sup> When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of ADONAI, the cohanim in their robes, with trumpets, and the L'vi'im the sons of Asaf, with cymbals, took their places to praise ADONAI, as David king of Isra'el had instructed. <sup>11</sup> They sang antiphonally, praising and giving "thanks to ADONAI, for he is good, for his grace continues forever" toward Isra'el. All the people raised a great shout of praise to ADONAI, because the foundation of the house of ADONAI had been laid. <sup>12</sup> But many of the cohanim, L'vi'im and heads of fathers' clans, the old men who had seen the first house standing on its foundation, wept out loud when they saw this house; while others shouted out loud for joy- <sup>13</sup> so that the people couldn't distinguish the noise of the joyful shouting from the noise of the people's weeping; for the people were shouting so loudly that the noise could be heard at a great distance.***

Although it seems upon a casual reading that Ezra is saying that the reason for the priests and trumpets and Levites with their cymbals are praising God, is that it is in celebration of the laying of the foundation of the Temple, that is not so. Haggai's information tells us that this celebrating had to do with observance of the Feast of Sukkot. Even so, Ezra points out that the older Judeans wept loudly in despair over the reality that all they were standing in front of was not a Temple at all but only a bare foundation. And, it was obvious by its size and construction that what would be built on top of it would be but a shadow of the magnificence of what stood before its destruction. It was the younger generation that had never seen Solomon's Temple that were wildly happy and enthusiastic. I'm sure the older generation couldn't understand the younger generation's happiness, and the younger generation couldn't understand the older generation's immense

sadness. There is an important lesson here about relativity... and I don't mean that which Einstein proposed!

It seems to be human nature that we measure success or failure, progress or stagnation, and good versus evil based on what we have personally experienced. That is, we all start with a baseline. As an example, those who were born in America a few years before, during, and then in a decade or so after WWII, have a perspective on the gender battles we see today that is based on how it was when we were young and growing up. Our baseline is much different than for those born in the past 3 decades and especially those born with the last 20 years. We, the older generation, are appalled and baffled by what we hear and see. We can't imagine that such a debate over gender identity could even occur, let alone be taken seriously. Most of us are followers of Christ (to one degree or another), believe that the Bible is the truth, and so we see such gender issues as settled and so is a matter of good versus evil. But, the younger generations... including those who claim Christ (again, to some degree or another)... see this mostly as a matter of harmless human preferences that are never settled, and has nothing to do with right or wrong, normal or abnormal, good or evil, so some even celebrate the emergence of gender fluidity and choice as a demonstration of love. It is all relative.

Folks, the Constantinian Church is a victim of that sort of relativity. Yet, as God pronounced to those returning Judeans, this warped mindset and its terrible consequences is all their fault. It is the result of their disobedience and not putting God first. The Church, as it has been known since late in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, is relatively far from what Yeshua prescribed to His disciples and followed Himself. The same Church, today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is relatively far from what the earliest Constantinian Church prescribed, and so even farther away from what is biblically mandated. Yet, in each stage, as the youngest of the congregation grew to become the oldest, the oldest only measured the increasing distance from what Christ actually taught relative to the baseline of their experience in their younger years and not to what the Bible tells us. It truly is the proverbial frog-in-the-kettle scenario.

My greater point is this: for the older Church going folks listening to this lesson, as bad as some of us see things now (according to that perspective) don't ever

think that we were, and are, more faithful to God and His Word to any greater extent if we have simply remained within that same institutional environment and faith mindset. Perhaps from a relative standpoint we are better, but God doesn't deal with humanity... and especially with His worshippers... from a relative standpoint. I think if Yeshua walked into any Church that we attended when we were children, He would have been just as dumbfounded and disappointed as a Church He would walk into today. Neither have much to do with obedience or faithfulness as we find it required of us in the according to what Yeshua spoke and the Bible demands.

So, those oldest Judeans... the ones weeping over nothing but a foundation that was there as they tried to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles... weren't so much weeping over their loss of relationship with God, or the sin of their distance from following His Torah in devotion, as they were in the lack of the splendor and the pride they once had in the magnificent Temple of Solomon, that was (when it was first completed) seen as one the wonders of the world. God has the answer for this problem, and we'll discuss it when we get to verse 5.

In verse 3, where we see God speaking of the Temple's former glory, this is the alternate use of the term "glory" (*kaved* in Hebrew) that we find in the Old Testament. The one we discussed in our previous lesson is a proper noun and is literally the name of a certain manifestation of God called The Glory. Here, however, glory is an adjective and describes the relative splendor of the Temple building as it used to be compared to what it is now, and is going to be, even when finished.

Therefore, in verse 4, since this realization has really hit home to Yehud's leaders and to the Elders of the Judeans, then the message from God is one of encouragement: "be strong!" That is, have courage and be fearless. The resistance of the Samaritans that the Judeans dealt with 15 or so years earlier may be less, but it is still present. So that there is no mistake, and as a means of emphasizing the message, God gives it to each leader, and to the people as a whole, separately. Yet, it is precisely the same message.

Who is meant by "people of the land"? Is it everyone in Yehud, or only the Judeans that have returned? To answer the question, we have to discern just

who it is that God places the responsibility upon to rebuild the Temple. While that primary responsibility lays on the returning Judeans (otherwise there would have been no need to wait until the exile was over to rebuilt it), at the same time those Samaritans and others cannot be entirely excluded. After all, especially the Samaritans claim Yehoveh as their God as well. That their doctrines have led them far astray is beside the point, because that's their own fault. So, yes, those living in the land and still there after the Judeans have returned are part of the group expected to rebuild the Temple...although probably not expected to be as heavily involved as the highly motivated returnees.

Verse 5 is, as they say in the entertainment business, a mic-drop. There's really little more that needs to be said, or much that could top it. I think the CJB does a poor job with this verse and mutes its impact. The KJV is more literal and more to the point.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Haggai 2:5** *According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.*

Some other Bible versions substitute the word "promise" for the phrase "the word that I covenanted", and that steers us off course. The Hebrew for word is **dabar**, and this is what we find here. And one of the words used to indicate a covenant is **karath**, which we also find here, and it means "to cut" (in covenant terminology, one **cuts** a covenant and it comes from the practice of cutting and sacrificing an animal to consecrate an agreement). By retaining the true sense of these Hebrew words, then we better understand that God is saying the Judeans are to return to the covenant He made with...who? The next words of verse 5 answers the "who" question. It was those who came out of Egypt. What covenant did God cut with the Hebrews when they came out of Egypt? The Covenant of Moses at Mt. Sinai. We need to consider deeply that this covenant binds both man and God to it; that's the very nature of a covenant. God offered the covenant and bound Himself to it; thus, it is very important to Him. This again confirms what I said in our previous lesson. The Temple is the focus and the tangible national symbol of the Covenant of Moses, and the place where God chose to have fellowship with His people. Therefore, as long as the Torah continues to exist, a Temple is a necessary element. That at times it didn't exist because it was destroyed didn't change that fact at all.

I want you to notice something. Scholars have always noted that this is a complicated passage. On top of syntax issues, there seems to be a missing word... probably a verb... between verses 4 and 5. That is, verse 5 kind of just hangs in the air without much connection to what has just been said in verse 4 without an action word, and although virtually all translators and interpreters take it that verse 5 instructs about what is to be done about verse 4, that's not how we find it in the Bible. Eric Meyers says that clearly an action word is missing, almost certainly because of a copyist error. And the word he suggests is "do" because that's what is being assumed by most Bible scholars anyway. So, since this is not at all controversial, but it just adds to the clarity, here is how we ought to read this verse and take it to mean:

***Do according to the Word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt so my spirit remaineth among you; fear yet not.***

I'll clarify further. The instruction is, in plain language, **Do** the Torah. To distill it further since it's obviously not the history of Israel that we find in the Torah that needs to be done, but rather it is the following of God's laws and commands, then most specifically it means "**do** the Law of Moses". By doing that, God says His spirit will be with them. Fear not to do the instructions of the Law is the bottom line. Why would the Judeans fear doing that? Because there will be opposition, mostly from the Samaritans, who created their own version of the Torah and it bore only some resemblance to the Torah God gave to Moses. Not only that, but especially due to their long time away in Babylon, much new tradition (manmade doctrine) had been introduced.

I want to pause here to address those who call ourselves Hebrew Roots, or Jewish Roots, or Messianic, or some such similar name. It is our mutual goal to separate ourselves to some degree from the customary ways and doctrines of the Constantinian Church and instead to do our level best to return to what the New Testament calls "The Way". The Way is the first designation given to those disciples that determined to follow Yeshua's teachings and leadership. It involved a number of things including helping their brethren. But, at the core of what it meant, it was as Yeshua preached on the Sermon on the Mount, which involved this:



**CJB Matthew 5:17-20** <sup>17</sup> *"Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete.* <sup>18</sup> *Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the Torah- not until everything that must happen has happened.* <sup>19</sup> *So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.* <sup>20</sup> *For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!*

It is not my goal to demonize those who are devoted to whatever denomination you are. That said, I cannot stand with you on too many of your beliefs except for the deity and saving grace of Christ, which is the one and only way to true salvation. Manmade traditions especially since the 4<sup>th</sup> century have driven that faith well track, substantially, because it long ago ceased to reflect and agree with God's written Word and instead sought to please a Roman Emperor and his power brokers, some Roman Bishops. So, I can easily sum up this instruction in Matthew: **Do the Word I covenanted with you at Mt. Sinai.** Yeshua said in every way possible in those 4 verses in Matthew that He is talking about the Torah and more specifically about the Law of Moses because that's the part of the Torah that contains the laws and commands of God. He also says that it is the **doing** of these things that matters. Doing is obedience; not doing is disobedience. The Pharisees and the Scribes (in the CJB Sterns calls them Torah Teachers) were teaching the people mostly their doctrines and traditions. And Yeshua told His listeners that following those things was certainly not going to gain the people much righteousness, and nowhere near enough to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Even more, those doctrines and traditions that seemed so right and important to them at times directly went against the Word of God. The relationship between what we read in Haggai and what we read Christ say in this regard on the Sermon on the Mount is remarkable... but why wouldn't that be expected? What else would He say? Disobey My Father?

Over the quarter century that I have taught the Torah, I've heard every manner of retort to this teaching of Christ, from telling me that I emphasize it too much, to suggesting that Paul was the better authority on the matter, and lately to a

mindset that declares that nothing that Christ said prior to His resurrection mattered, because that event changed everything, and it dismissed everything, that He said before it. These retorts all fall to the ground and hold no water, because as strong as this statement is in Matthew in English, it is even stronger and more explicit in the Greek. The Torah remains in effect (as much as it can without a Temple and Priesthood), and we are to DO it as Yeshua's followers (as much as we *can* do in the societies in which we live). It is a huge barrier to our righteousness when we don't. So, imagine what it means for Yeshua's view of the Church that says not only to disregard the Law of Moses, but also we ought to enjoy breaking those laws and commands because that's what Jesus wants of us.

So, to my Hebrew Roots, or Jewish Roots, or Messianic brethren or whatever name you may choose for yourselves, I say: do not fear. Don't be discouraged because we are relatively small voice in a giant pool of opposing voices. In every age there have been those who broke with the manmade traditions of the faith because they finally realized that these doctrines lead people astray, and of course those who broke with the demands of the Christian institutions were slandered and demonized by those who preferred their doctrines over God's written Word.

**CJB Matthew 15: 1-3** *Then some P'rushim and Torah-teachers from Yerushalayim came to Yeshua and asked him, <sup>2</sup> "Why is it that your talmidim break the Tradition of the Elders? They don't do n'tilat-yadayim before they eat!" <sup>3</sup> He answered, "Indeed, why do you break the command of God by your tradition?"*

Fellow followers of Yeshua, we are facing nothing different than what Yeshua and His followers were accused of. We have to deal with nothing any greater than what Yeshua's first followers had to deal with that also came from the institutional religious establishment. The fact is, Our Lord and Savior expects us to have to deal with it, and to do it takes courage, because it challenges what does not want to be challenged, because it cannot stand up to the challenge, and so with no other response available it furiously lashes back. Get used to it; it's not going to change very much.

Back to Haggai. When, in verse 5, God says that His Spirit will be with the Judeans, it is the Hebrew word **ruach** that literally means "breath" or "wind". But

it also doubles to mean God's presence in general or (at other times), an actual manifestation of God (as with the term Holy Spirit). When God's spirit is with someone, this means that an unseen divine protection is given that leads to our fears being tempered or eliminated. I have no doubt that in this verse it means God's actual presence, especially because it is all about the Temple... the place where God's presence was to reside.

I'll summarize and paraphrase what is being said. God is saying to every Judean returnee, rebuild the Temple so that My Spirit will be with you just as my Covenant with Moses provides for, and then you won't fear. And, even in sincerely doing the work of rebuilding the Temple, I will also be with you in a sufficient enough way as to tamp down your fears to enable you to complete the work no matter what kind of opposition you might face. What we ultimately realize is that verse 5 is a command, it is an encouragement, it is a promise, and it is the antidote for what has been ailing the Judeans all these many years... the lack of God's presence, and the severe consequences that lack of presence has meant for them. I cannot recommend strongly enough to appropriate this verse for yourselves. It is truly a mic-drop statement from God that leaves little left to be said. But, of course, more *is* said.

Verse 6 begins with a typical Prophetic Word formula that again announces that it is Yehoveh of Hosts who is the author of this message. As we discussed before, it is using royal court terms to indicate that the message originates by God giving it to His Divine Council in Heaven, and thereafter it goes to Haggai. I don't want to get too hung up in our thinking about the sequence of God presenting it to the Heavenly elohim, and then to Haggai, because that then introduces the element of time, something which has no existence and therefore no meaning in Heaven. And, the notion of the absence of time is (I contend) nothing we humans have any way to mentally process or visualize.

The message itself is translated in various ways due to its complexities. I don't favor the way the CJB does it, as it takes much too much liberty with the words. The most literal is the YLT (the Young's Literal Translation) that sounds a little strange to our ears but not so much so that we don't get it's meaning.

**YLT Haggai 2:6** *For thus said Jehovah of Hosts: Yet once more -- it is a little, And I am shaking the heavens and the earth, And the sea, and the dry land,*

To get the truest sense of this in a way our Western ears can hear it better, it ought to be "yet once more, in a little while..." This is what scholars call eschatological language. In real-people words, that simply means End Times vocabulary. It certainly has the sense of imminence to it; that is, the End Times event it speaks of is near. Yet, there is more to it. We need to ask ourselves a couple of questions. Was there a previous shaking (since God's words are "once again, in a little while"), and if so when was it? And, even more fundamentally, what exactly is meant by this term "shaking"?

There a couple of places to go in the Bible that can help us to understand this better. First, Habakkuk.

**CJB Habakkuk 3:1-8** *This is a prayer of Havakuk the prophet about mistakes: <sup>2</sup> ADONAI, I have heard the report about you. ADONAI, I am awed by your deeds. Bring your work to life in our own age, make it known in our own time; but in anger, remember compassion. <sup>3</sup> God comes from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Pa'ran. (Selah) His splendor covers the sky, and his praise fills the earth. <sup>4</sup> His brightness is like the sun, rays come forth from his hand- that is where his power is concealed. <sup>5</sup> Before him goes pestilence, and close behind, the plague. <sup>6</sup> When he stands up, the earth shakes; when he looks, the nations tremble, the eternal mountains are smashed to pieces, the ancient hills sink down; the ancient paths are his. <sup>7</sup> I saw trouble in the tents of Kushan and the tent hangings shaking in the land of Midyan. <sup>8</sup> ADONAI, is it against the rivers, against the rivers that your anger is inflamed? Is your fury directed at the sea? Is that why you ride on your horses, and drive your chariots to victory?*

God shaking something happens when He brings chaos to that thing or even destroys it. It can also be that when God appears on earth in His fullest presence, because the sheer weight and awesomeness of His actual presence causes the earth to buckle and the cosmos to react. That's why His fullest presence on earth is necessarily the rarest of events. It is so fearsome to humans, that no one can stand before it.

Now listen to the words of the anonymous author of the Book of Hebrews.

**CJB Hebrews 12:18-29** *<sup>18</sup> For you have not come to a tangible mountain, to an ignited fire, to darkness, to murk, to a whirlwind, <sup>19</sup> to the sound of a shofar, and to a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further message be given to them- <sup>20</sup> for they couldn't bear what was being commanded them, "If even an animal touches the mountain, it is to be stoned to death"; <sup>21</sup> and so terrifying was the sight that Moshe said, "I am quaking with dread." <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, you have come to Mount Tziyon, that is, the city of the living God, heavenly Yerushalayim; to myriads of angels in festive assembly; <sup>23</sup> to a community of the firstborn whose names have been recorded in heaven; to a Judge who is God of everyone; to spirits of righteous people who have been brought to the goal; <sup>24</sup> to the mediator of a new covenant, Yeshua; and to the sprinkled blood that speaks better things than that of Hevel. <sup>25</sup> See that you don't reject the One speaking! For if those did not escape who rejected him when he gave divine warning on earth, think how much less we will escape if we turn away from him when he warns from heaven. <sup>26</sup> Even then, his voice shook the earth; but now, he has made this promise: "One more time I will shake not only the earth, but heaven too!" <sup>27</sup> And this phrase, "one more time," makes clear that the things shaken are removed, since they are created things, so that the things not shaken may remain. <sup>28</sup> Therefore, since we have received an unshakeable Kingdom, let us have grace, through which we may offer service that will please God, with reverence and fear. <sup>29</sup> For indeed, "Our God is a consuming fire!"*

There is a great deal said in this passage but we're only going to deal with one aspect of it. Clearly the author of Hebrews interpreted Haggai 2:6 as speaking about God descending upon Mt. Sinai to give Israel His covenant, and when that happened, the earth was literally shaken. The presence of God was so terrible partly because everything and everyone felt the catastrophic weight of the Great Judge and His judging will, that even left Moses quaking with dread. Then, we read in verse 26 that "His voice shook the earth...and one more time will shake not only the earth, but the heavens, too".

So, the first shaking was at Mt. Sinai upon God descending to give Moses and all Israel His Torah. But, Haggai prophesies, and the author of Hebrews believes, there will be a second shaking that is going to be far larger in scope and more

catastrophic and violent. The shaking will affect everything from the stars in the sky to the land and the sea on earth. Nothing will be left untouched. This will also be when the nations (gentile nations) are confronted and destroyed. This shaking is not some hyperbolic symbol or figure of speech; it is quite real and it is coming.

Yes, the earth shakes with regularity from earthquakes; and there is shaking in the skies with stars exploding, and meteors smashing into one another, and our Sun often having beyond violent explosions the equal of a million hydrogen bombs each time. These are but the prelude of what is going to happen because nature alone... of itself... is insufficient to cause it. Rather, the next shaking will be only the second shaking of the Lord of which we are aware; the End Times shaking that we read about in several of the Prophets, including in the Book of Revelation. The effects of it will be beyond any words or thoughts we can conjure up.

So, even though Haggai likely thought this 2<sup>nd</sup> shaking was imminent, it was not. How long before it would come? Haggai didn't know and we still don't know except that much more time has passed since Haggai's era, and the sign God gave to us of the imminent approach of the End Times has happened: Israel has returned as a nation, back on its own God-given land.

We'll continue with Haggai chapter 2 next time.