

Is Christ Your Desire?

Haggai 2:6-9

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1/26/14

Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

I. Introduction and Background:

- A. In the 2nd Chapter of the book of Haggai, there is an unmistakable prophecy of the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, in which He is referred to as the “desire of all nations.” In keeping with that, the title of this morning’s message is in the form of a question I would like everyone to consider. “Is Christ Your Desire?” Is this One, the Lord Jesus Christ as referred to in Haggai 2, verse 7 as “the desire of all nations,” truly your desire?
- B. Of the 12 Minor Prophets, there were only 3 who preached or prophesied after the Jews had returned from the Babylonian captivity, Haggai being one of those three. It’s actually believed that Haggai was born while the Jews were in captivity.
- C. Allow me to share a little history relevant to Haggai’s prophecy. The Babylonian captivity lasted 70 years. Now it was about 19 years after the Jews had been taken captive that their temple (which was built under the leadership of Solomon) was destroyed. Interestingly, Haggai’s prophecy was delivered about 19 years following their return. So by that we know it had been about 70 years since the first temple (Solomon’s temple) had been destroyed and by this time, the rebuilding of the temple was already underway.
- D. Haggai’s prophecy can be summarized as both (1) a reproof of the Jews for their negligence and delay in having stopped work on the temple as well as (2) an encouragement and word of comfort to them in having resumed that work. And this encouragement comes from God’s assurance that, in spite of the physical contrasts that could be made in comparing the magnificence of Solomon’s temple to the smaller one now being rebuilt (which unlike Solomon’s temple would not be overlaid with gold and have all the treasures of David adorning it and would not house many of the former items such as the Ark of the Covenant with the mercy seat) – in spite of those physical contrasts, God assures them that actually this rebuilt temple would be more glorious. And we will delve into that this morning.
- E. Our primary focus today will be on verses 6-9 of Haggai 2; however, in order to appreciate these verses within their fuller context, let’s begin back in verse 1.

II. Verses 1-5:

- A. Verses 1-3: *In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying, ²Speak 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, ³Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? <referring to Solomon’s temple> and how do ye see it now? <this temple being rebuilt> **is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?***

1. It's apparent there were those still alive who had seen Solomon's temple in all its glory. And here the all-knowing God, through the Prophet exposes their thoughts, the comparisons they were making between the splendor of Solomon's temple and the more modest one they were currently constructing. And seeing it as nothing by comparison with the first, they were disheartened.
2. Ezra wrote of this as we read in Ezra 3:12 saying, "***But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:***" The older ones wept while the younger ones were excited. But we learn from Haggai that even the younger ones perhaps had become discouraged or else the influence of the older ones had prevailed because these comparisons had hampered their progress.

So God, through His prophet continues in verse 4 of Haggai 2 saying...

B. ***Verses 4-5: Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: ⁵According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.***

1. Here he commands them to be strong, not in their own abilities, but just as we're told in Ephesians 6:10b, "...***to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.***" The real beauty of the temple (even Solomon's) was not in the size and materials of the building but in the presence of the Lord who had covenanted with them, beginning with their father Abraham but made even clearer when they came out of Egypt as He assured them that He would be with them, not if they did this, that or the other, but solely because He had so determined and promised. The Old Covenant with the nation Israel was a conditional covenant by which the obedience or disobedience of the nation affected their temporal circumstances. But not so with this covenant of grace.
2. He's reminding them of His unconditional promises as found in that everlasting covenant of grace wherein all of salvation was conditioned, not on their doing, but solely conditioned on the doing and dying of the Word of the covenant ("Word" with a capital 'W') which was in the beginning (the Creator) and was with God and was God – the Word that was made flesh, Jesus the Savior who would come and dwell among us. God through Haggai is telling them to go back to work, but not in order to be blessed by that which they could construct, but because they are blessed in that He is with them. Here we have the LORD – the triune Godhead who saves: We have God the Father speaking through His prophet, the WORD covenanted (God the Son), and the presence of God the Holy Spirit all set forth as the source of their strength. And now to our primary text, beginning in verse 6 we read...

- III. Verses 6-7: ***“For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; ⁷And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.”***
- A. This is a prophecy of the coming Christ as I’ll prove in a few moments by the New Testament commentary on this passage. Here the invincible Lord of hosts declares that in a little while, He will shake the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the dry land. It would be 500 years later before this would be fulfilled by Christ, the desire of all nations, who would come to this earth and take into union with His Deity a sinless humanity to save His people from among all nations. But 500 years is just a little while for an eternal God of whom we’re told a thousand years are as one day. And “a little while” may allude to the fact that Israel, having now returned to their homeland from their captivity, was in the final stage of their history before the abolishment of the Old Covenant by way of Christ’s arrival and fulfillment of that law and all that had been pictured therein.
- B. This ‘shaking’ spoken of here refers to the setting up of Christ’s kingdom in the world by His incarnation and subsequent accomplishment on the cross in establishing righteousness – the very merit which God has imputed to those whose sins were imputed (or charged) to Christ – the righteousness by which He justifies them, declaring them to be not guilty, but righteous in His sight. And God’s people for whom Christ lived and died were those chosen from among every kindred, tongue, tribe and nation – from among all the nations of the earth, the good news of the Gospel no longer being constrained to the chosen nation of Israel – chosen to be temporally blessed under the terms of that temporary Old Covenant economy.
- C. We know that Haggai is prophesying of Christ from the context of Hebrews 12 where Haggai is quoted. There, beginning in verse 24, we read, ***“And to Jesus <so we’re talking about Jesus> the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.<Abel’s blood offering merely testified of (and typified) the blood of the Lamb of God – Christ’s future offering of Himself. So he says in verse 25...> ²⁵See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. <i.e. – Him that speaks through that which He accomplished by His shed blood> For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:<And quoting from Haggai saying...> ²⁶Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. ²⁷And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:***

This is speaking of the abolishment of the Old Covenant and in the book of Hebrews we're told the blood of these animals could never save, as they merely had typified the One whose blood alone would truly atone for sins in full and final payment of the just penalty due unto them. Christ abolished the Old Covenant by fulfillment of all which that law required and all that its ceremonies pictured. So that which could be shaken (such as those man-made temples that were destroyed) is removed to bring in that which can never be shaken – that which is everlasting, a kingdom that reigns through His perfect, everlasting righteousness and as such, cannot be moved.

- D. Time won't permit us to turn to all the scriptures where we are told God has shaken the earth. But it's interesting to recall that God shook the earth when he brought the Jews out of Egypt. He shook the heavens and earth at Mount Sinai when He gave Moses the Law with thunder and lightning and earthquakes. It's believed He shook the sea and the dry land to make lanes through the Red Sea and to cause streams to flow out of the rock.
- E. Haggai's prophecy of the coming of the desire of all nations and the shaking associated with that reminds us of the wondrous things that were done in the heavens, earth, and sea, at the birth of Christ and at the culmination of His obedience unto death on the cross. Recall at His birth a new star appeared in the heavens which guided the wise men from the east. And the multitude of angels descended from the heavens and sang Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men. And then at His death, the heavens were darkened and there was an earthquake. And lastly it also is prophesied that there will be a shaking that will take place at the Lord's second coming. This is all in keeping with the victory and the certain glory that accompanies the desire of all nations, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- F. So clearly, Haggai's "desire of all nations" refers to the Savior who came some 2000 years ago and did away with the old to establish the New Covenant – the establishment in time of the terms of the everlasting covenant of grace – that which cannot be shaken because it is totally conditioned on the almighty, eternal Lord of hosts. In Hebrews 10, verse 4, we're reminded that by the ceremonies of the Old Covenant which took place in the temple – that by the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats it was not possible to take away sins. Then in the following verses 5 and 6 Christ declares that the Father had prepared Him a body because God's holy justice could not be satisfied by the burnt offerings and sacrifices of the temple. This is repeated in verse 8 and picking up at verse 9 of Hebrews 10 we read, "***Then said he, <Christ> Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second***". As we read in the Hebrews 12 passage quoting Haggai, He removed that which could be shaken that those things that cannot be shaken would remain – a kingdom that cannot be moved.
- G. Now back in Haggai 2:7, notice he refers to this "desire of all nations" as "this house" which God will fill with glory! This is speaking of Christ as the temple Himself wherein (and by whom) we behold the glory of God.

Continuing in verse 8 of Haggai 2 God adds...

IV. Verses 8-9: ***“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. ⁹The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.***

- A. Remember they were comparing the gold and treasures of Solomon’s temple with the latter house (the one they were rebuilding). Here God reminds them that everything belongs to Him. If they filled this temple with silver and gold they would only be giving to God what is already His. As we’re told in I Cor. 10:26, ***“For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.”*** All that we have belongs to Him and we are to be good stewards of it and serve Him with it, but it’s all His. We merely have use of His things for a time. So God doesn’t need that which is already His (the silver and gold and splendor of Solomon’s temple) to honor Him. His honor and glory is all wrapped up in the “desire of all nations” who would come and through whom God would give peace – reconcile sinners unto Himself.
- B. In later years, the rebuilt temple was enriched by Herod but it never compared to the appearance or outward glory of Solomon’s temple. But unlike Solomon’s temple, Christ would grace this latter house with His very physical fleshly presence – the presence of the God-man, Immanuel, meaning God with us. You will recall that 8 days after His birth, Mary and Joseph took Christ to Jerusalem to be circumcised in accordance with the Old Covenant law and was presented in this very temple. Later He would grace its presence when just 12 years old and we’re told He astonished the doctors He conversed with there with His understanding and answers to their questions. He later preached and worked miracles in this very temple and it was there that He drove out those He found buying and selling. And in Acts 5 we’re told that in this temple Jesus Christ was preached daily.
- C. So it was necessary that Christ would come in fulfillment of this prophesy while this latter house remained standing. Present day Jews who still look for a Messiah to come should consider from Haggai that the Messiah had to come while this rebuilt temple still stood in fulfillment of this prophesy, but that temple has long since been destroyed. The Messiah came while it still stood. While on earth, Christ said of Himself, ***“...Behold a greater than Solomon is here”*** (Lk. 11:31b). He is the glory of this latter house and there is also greater glory in the hearts of those He indwells by His Spirit as living temples – far more glorious than Solomon’s temple which simply pictured and foreshadowed Christ and His redemptive glory, which is made known to those born of the Spirit.
- D. And then God through Haggai says ***“...in this place will I give peace.”*** Now during the time this rebuilt temple stood, the Jews had anything but peace. So we know this speaks of the peace that Christ, the Prince of Peace, would make between God and the everlasting objects of His love, mercy, and grace by His doing and dying on the cross in their place, as their Substitute. I’ll say a bit more about this peace in a few moments but for now...

V. The Desire of All Nations: Now think with me about Haggai's description of Christ as "the desire of all nations." We know from Romans 3:11 that in the natural state in which we are born, God declares: "***There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.***" None seek Him by nature yet God, through Haggai, calls the Lord Jesus Christ "the desire of all nations." So what are we to make of this description of our Lord? I think there are 2 ways in which we might understand this, consistent with the whole of scripture.

A. First, consider the transition that would be made with Christ's coming and ending the Old Covenant by His fulfillment of it. This shook things up. As we've seen so extensively in our Romans study, there was a huge transition made in the early church as Christ commanded His disciples to go now into all the world, the Gospel being spread to the Gentiles for the 1st time, no longer constricted to the nation Israel as it was under the Old Covenant. Often in the New Testament, the word "world" is used to emphasize that the salvation of sinners is not restricted to the nation Israel, but to God's chosen people from among all nations. Under the Old Covenant, only the Jews had the temple and the truth of salvation in the promised Messiah as typified by all aspects of their temple worship. But the Bible declares that Christ came to save sinners from among all the nations of the earth – the "Israel of God" as the scripture so calls those chosen from all eternity to be blessed for all eternity in Christ, in their Substitute and Savior. God's elect, His chosen people from among all nations, in each of their respective lifetimes are given His blood-bought gift of faith whereby Christ is revealed to them so as to become all their hope and desire – Him whom to know is life eternal.

B. Secondly, consider this description by thinking about what it means to desire something.

1. We all have desires. We desire our children (and later on our grandchildren) to grow up, get a good education, become successful in all their endeavors, be happily married, etc. Those of us who believe God's Gospel have a strong desire that our friends and loved ones all come to belief of the Gospel, knowing that to be the evidence of their being blessed by God for all eternity in Christ. Most of us desire good health and wealth and happiness and contentment for ourselves and others and the list can go on and on. We desire that which we feel or sense a need for. But our desires are not always fulfilled. We may sense a need or want for something but don't know how (or have the means) to make that happen. We may give it our very best but even at that, our desires often remain unfulfilled. So much is completely out of our control.

2. Well consider Christ as the desire of all in this sense. It's not that all desire Him, but rather that He is the desire in that He alone can fulfill things desired by every human heart. That is, all desire what Christ alone can provide and yet far from all know the Christ who has so provided so as to desire Him. For example, consider first the desire for...

- a. Immortality: We want to live forever – and that in a blissful, happy state.
 - b. Appeasement (or Relief from the Consequences of Sin): Secondly consider the universal desire to be relieved of any consequences for our sins. Everyone who is honest with themselves knows they are far from perfect, but few realize how terribly short we actually fall. This misdiagnosis of our sin problem is exposed by the remedy we mistakenly presume will take care of it – but the common denominator among all is a recognition that something has to be done to appease the just wrath due unto our shortcomings. We all desire to be delivered from the guilt and consequences of sin. When I think on this I’m always reminded of these old movies where primitive tribes in the jungle are bowing before a totem pole or offering a sacrifice to appease their concept of deity. All naturally desire that appeasement be made for their shortcomings. But only Jesus Christ can and has appeased the wrath of God for His dear children by His propitiatory (that means justice-satisfying, sin-bearing) sacrifice. Thirdly consider how...
 - c. Assurance and Peace: Everyone wants to know with assurance that their final state will be one of peace between them and their god. We truly desire an assurance or certainty as it pertains to our eternal state. We want what can’t be shaken. Often upon the death of someone we hear others remark, “He (or she) made their peace with God.” Many desire peace and they may gain a false assurance based upon that which they’ve done (or some decision they’ve made) whereby they presume to have made peace, but only God can and has made peace or reconciliation through the Peace He gave to the world (as Haggai put it)– the Lord Jesus Christ. As we read in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, ***“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”***
1. So only Christ can fulfill the world’s need for salvation and His greater glory shall not be eclipsed or shared with any other.
 - a. Acts 4:12: In Acts 4:12 it says of Christ, ***“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*** That means there is no salvation in this popular pretender called Allah. And there aren’t many different paths that can be taken to heaven from among the many different religions of the world. And listen; there is no salvation in the “jesus” that most profess to believe on. Most portray Jesus as if He were a wonderful, sinless example who died for us all, merely making salvation possible. That’s not the Savior!

That popular doctrine declares that this imagined “jesus” failed to establish peace between God and any sinner unless and until that sinner chooses to make the real difference in their own salvation by his or her decision or response. Now who gets the glory in that? Why, many imagine He died for all, including the multitudes which perish which would make Him a failure at His stated mission: He came to save His people (those for whom He died) from their sins. That would mean no reconciliation was actually made for anyone by His doing and dying. That heresy dares to suggest that His blood payment failed to purchase the souls of many for whom He died, portraying him not as a redeemer but one whose blood alone was insufficient to fully remit or pay for their sins. Solomon’s temple was more glorious than that because at least it represented and typified an effectual, true redemption through a Substitute, the shed blood of the Lamb of God. Sadly, most of modern day, so-called “Christianity” denies that.

- b. John 14:6: Jesus said of Himself in John 14:6, “*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*” So the desire for salvation will only be fulfilled in Christ. And by Him alone. He is the singular way, truth, and life. So that means it is not Christ plus something you do to seal the deal. He finished the work and God won’t share His glory with any other – and that includes me and you, the sinner.

VI. Is Christ Your Desire? So I ask all who hear this, “Is Christ Your Desire?” In other words, is He and He alone truly your Savior? In Haggai 2 the coming of the “desire of all nations” is prophesied in association with 1) an unconditional covenant, of 2) a shaking that takes place, of 3) greater glory than Solomon’s temple, and of 4) Peace being given.

- A. Have you embraced the Everlasting Covenant of Grace? If He is truly your desire, you will agree with and enter into the terms of that everlasting covenant of grace in which no part of your salvation is conditioned on anything that proceeds from you, but rather Jesus Christ fully met every condition or requirement for your salvation. Salvation is in Him alone, based upon His imputed righteousness alone – the merit of His doing and dying credited to the accounts of all who are saved, just as their sins were imputed or charged to Him that He might pay the penalty for them. Is this Christ all your desire?
- B. Has your heart been shaken? Well just as there was a shaking at Christ’s coming and again as He finished the accomplishment of salvation for His people by His death on the cross and as there will be when He comes again; likewise, there is a shaking that takes place in the heart of each sinner when Christ comes in His saving power. Has your world been shaken and turned upside down? That’s what happens when He brings a sinner to believe His Gospel so as to repent of what the wise King Solomon said was a way that seems right to a man but those are the ways which end in death (Prov. 16:25). Has your heart been shaken such that you’ve repented of ever having imagined that God could save you based upon anything you presumed to add to the mix? He upsets our apple cart as we discover we truly are at His mercy and cannot save ourselves. And in so doing, He gives us a peace that passes all natural understanding as we see the certainty of salvation in Christ the Savior. Has your heart been so shaken?

- C. Has God been glorified in your heart? Well, just as that rebuilt temple had a greater glory in that Christ came and graced its presence while it still stood, likewise His greatest glory is seen in the peace that He has made for those He saves. In 2 Cor. 4:6, true believers are told that ***“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”*** In I Corinthians 3:16, Paul wrote to believers, ***“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.”*** Oh, what glory! God’s Spirit is with His people and He gives them the knowledge of the glory of God in the face (the Person and work) of Christ. Only there do we see God’s greatest glory – His redemptive glory – how God can remain just and still save a sinner like you and me. We behold the glory of the only begotten, full of grace and truth (Jn 1:14) – a glory which those man-made temples merely foreshadowed. Has God so shined in your heart?
- D. Is Christ Your Peace? Well, as Haggai prophesied of that latter house he said, ***“...in this place will I give peace.”*** Believers are said to be the temple or dwelling place of God the Holy Spirit. Do you have that peace and certain assurance that comes from knowing that all your hope and desire for salvation has been fully accomplished by One who cannot and did not fail – the God-man Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ?

VII. Closing:

So if you seriously consider this question, “Is Christ Your Desire?” you might naturally think, “Well if what you say is true – <and believe me it is – but don’t believe me but rather see that it is so according to God’ Word> – then I can’t do anything to save myself. I’m truly at His mercy. For years I’ve thanked Him for His mercy and grace but I didn’t know I really had to have it, that my decision or response actually does nothing to determine my salvation. So if salvation is totally conditioned on Christ and His doing and dying alone, how can I know if I’m one of the ones for whom He lived, died, and arose again?”

Consider King David and his checkered past. Remember how David desired another man’s wife and so he had her husband murdered to take him out of the way so that he could have her, Bathsheba, as his own. He was an adulterer and a murderer and yet God said of him that he was a man after his own heart. How could such a sinner be described that way? Well, it was because as one of the objects of God’s everlasting, love, mercy and grace, God had chosen Him in Christ who would in time come and die in his place so that David, the sinner, could stand before God holy and unblameable, having the very righteousness of Christ imputed or credited to his account. And many years after David had lived and died, Christ, by His substitutionary death, purchased for David the gift of faith which David had received during his lifetime. God shined into David’s heart the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah. David saw how God could be just and still save an otherwise ungodly sinner such as himself.

So how did King David know that He was a beneficiary of that everlasting covenant of grace? Well, as he neared the end of his life, he told us in 2 Samuel 23:5 saying, **“Although my house be not so with God;** <Some here believe David is referring to his family and that could be although I tend to think he is referring to the house of David, as in his earthly kingdom as if to say, my kingdom is certainly not as I’m about to describe, everlasting and ordered in all things...> **yet he** <God> **hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure:**<...resulting in immortality, certainty, assurance, and peace, fulfilling these desires for David. How did he know this?> **for** <because> **this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.**” Some think that last phrase is referring to that desire not growing within his family (which may be so), but it may well be referring to the fact that the Christ child had not yet sprouted – the desire of nations had not yet come and yet, by the grace of the timeless, eternal God, David had received the gift of faith that Christ procured for him by His sure-to-happen future death on the cross. Thereby, David knew he was a party to that everlasting covenant because his entire salvation and all his desire (his entire hope) was in the One who would fulfill that covenant agreement by coming to save His people from their sins.

We’re assured of the same as we read in the Gospel of John where Christ said He would die for His sheep. He told others, “You won’t come to Me because you’re not My sheep. But He also said in John 6:37 that all His sheep, without fail, would come to Him and He would in no wise cast them out. His sheep, God’s elect from among all nations, will all come to conclude with David of old that Christ is all their salvation. Christ is all their desire! Have you so concluded? Is Christ Your Desire? I pray so.

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God’s grace found in the only infallible source, God’s word itself – the Bible.