



*16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

(1 Peter 1:16)

The entire Creation was conceived in the Mind of God long before His Word spoke it into being. God always makes the blueprint, and then the structure, as the Great Architect. From Genesis 1:1 to the 'Amen' of Revelations 22:21, God has made a gradually opening Revelation of His Will and Purpose for man – much like the gently unfolding petals of a rose bud. There is beauty in the rose bud at every step of its opening, but most spectacular at its full blossom. That is the beauty of God's revealing Word to man - it's beauty increasing with every leaf of the page turned in earnest inquiry and reverence.

To the carnal mind, the Word of God is not only ambiguous, but also foolishness. *18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. 20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.* (1 Cor 3:18-20) Men always attempt to reduce the glory of God to the common and vulgar level of the world and its false and dimming lights. We have reduced the worship service to a mere show of entertainment; we have brought the gutter music and lyrics of the street into the Church; and we have made the Word of God secondary to the social values of the world. That is the way of carnal man, and the Church is full of carnal men and women.

But God's Word has the purpose of revealing truth to man which He can comprehend more and more. The primitive mind of man was fixed on the physical elements of his threatening environment; so God used the physical features of man's knowing to add knowledge to knowledge. God always followed one of the cardinal rules of effective teaching – always teach from the known to the unknown and never from the unknown to the unknown, else we would all remain in darkness.

The religious rulers of Israel at the time of Jesus, and even preceding that day, remained fixed on the physical, and blind to the spiritual truths that God had been gradually revealing over the expanse of the Old Testament. Men are no different today. Their affections are on the physical, and they make the physical the center of their worship and not the reverence of the spiritual. *9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* (Heb 12:9-10)

This introduction so far may not appear germane to the introduction of the Book of Haggai, but it has everything indeed to do with the message of Haggai. The message of Haggai is three-fold. It is directed to three aspects of human labor and understanding:

1. It is a message to the hands in service;
2. To the hearts of men for wisdom;
3. To the mind for knowledge.

But the deeper things of the soul must be learned in a different manner than conventional wisdom teaches which is learning through the mind to the heart. The spiritual depth of God's Holy Word must be learned in a manner that is alien to the world – through the HEART into the Mind. It has been said: *"There is a road from the eye to the heart that does not go through the intellect."* Gilbert K. Chesterton. Chesterton may have been more accurate in that assessment that he was aware. If we liken God to a Great Magnet that draws to itself, we will admit that such a Magnet only draws those metals of like properties to its own nature. If we take on the Mind of God by the grace of His mercy, our natures will be changed: *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* (2 Cor 3:18) Great masterpieces of art are produced by men who behold and emulate the beauty of the Great Artist of the Universe – and it's Maker!

The story of Haggai is centered on the Temple, but not in the way it was viewed by the Scribes and Pharisees. The glory of the physical Temple of Haggai's day (of Zerubbabel) was far less imposing than that of Solomon, and so the one of Jesus' day (Herod Antipas) far less than that of Haggai. What message did this fact convey to believers? It was that the physical Temple represented by Solomon's craft, that of the returning exiles (temple of Zerubbabel), and that of Herod Antipas was growing smaller and smaller in grandeur. Why was this? Because the physical shadow was giving way to the consummation of the greater Holy Temple of God to come which our Lord Jesus Christ represented. Just as the Samaritan Woman at the Well had her mind fixed on the physical water at the bottom of a well, and not that Water of Life which was Christ; so, the Pharisees and chief priests had their minds fixed on a physical edifice in Jerusalem rather than the stark appearance of the Temple Personified before their very eyes! *19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.* (John 2:18-22)

Men of Haggai's time had neglected the building of the inferior physical temple just as men today neglect the worship and reverence for the Temple of God personified by our Lord. The first temple structures required the feeble labor of men's hands, but that which was to come was made without hands. *47 But Solomon built him an house. 48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, 49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith*

*the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? 50 Hath not my hand made all these things? (Acts 7:47-50) Men only learn that they must depend upon God when they have discovered that salvation is not made available through the exertions of their own hands. God's purpose in the giving of the Law was to allow the people of God to discover that they could not be righteous in and of themselves – they needed a Redeemer. Moreover, no manmade temple would suffice for the Temple of God regardless its opulence and wonderful furnishing – all of which were signs and shadows of that to come. There is a great difference in a 'House' and a Temple.*

The message of the heart to be drawn out in Haggai is that the Temple of God is Holy. If our Lord abides in our hearts, those hearts are the Temple of God and are Holy as well. *"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. (1 Cor 3:16-17) and it is written: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:15-16) Now what righteous works may the heart claim that is governed by Christ? The answer is NONE! For all of our good works result from Christ working in us. In that sense, we continually rest in our labors. The only works to which we can lay claim are those of unrighteousness – those are native to the human condition.*

We have the assurance the holy saints of God (which we who believe are) never suffer death. We merely sleep in a borrowed tomb, as did Christ, until the trumpet sounds, and the dead in Christ arise. If you do not believe in the life eternal of the saints of God, then you must reject the very Words of our Lord Jesus Christ when He said: *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?* (John 11:25-26)

False notions of the Scribes and Pharisees that a physical Temple was the purpose and end of the worship of God was evidenced in their love of the stone of Solomon's Temple, most wonderfully constructed under the sovereign decree and sanction of the Almighty God who was its Architect, and their rejection of the true Temple of God in Christ. That old Temple fell under the judgment of God, and all of man's effort to rebuild it, either by the freed exiles of Ezra's day, or that far lesser Temple constructed by Herod Antipas, always have fallen woefully short of the Holy Edifice of the original. However, that original Temple of Solomon fell far short of the glorious Personage whose Presence was manifested in the flesh by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The third message of Haggai is to the mind and rationale of the people. The Lord conveys questions to the people to CONSIDER the many things they have known to be unclean or unholy: *15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD: 16 Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. 17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD. 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 the LORD'S temple was laid, consider it. 19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you. (Hag 2:15-19)*

Today, many patriotic Americans will stake their lives on defending every word and article of the Constitution of the United States which our Godly Founding Fathers gave us; yet, these same men will be devoid of critical thought and logic when it comes to accepting corrupted bibles produced from corrupt manuscripts and texts. The manuscripts bibles they prefer – the NIV, ESV, NRSV, etc – are based on only 5% of the

manuscript evidence, and they disagree with each other in many places. However, the Received Text of the King James Bible, Geneva Bible, and other Bibles that came to us out of the Great Reformation comprise 95% of the manuscript evidence (and these witnesses agree at every critical point. I would rather believe the veracity of a multitude of witnesses than and a mere two or three who cannot agree on the details. If the Message (Bible) is changed by man, how can the messenger (His ministers) deliver a saving message? Like the Jews of Haggai's day, we have ceased to think, to believe, and to do the works of God.