Hymns: Conv. Theme hymn – #266 / “A Little While” – #7

Word count: 5788

Haggai 2:6,7 – N Seattle March 2025 – 60

***Introduction***

Our convention theme text is particularly well chosen for the times we live in. Haggai 2:6,7:

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;

And 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.

For an overview of our discourse, first we’ll look at the context of our theme text, next we’ll examine the elements of the prophecy and their symbolic meanings. Then we’ll look at current and recent events for fulfillments of the prophecy. Lastly, we’ll draw some character lessons for us today, in the exhortations of Haggai, as we see the unfolding of God’s plans and purposes in real time according to the words of verses six and seven.

***The Context of Haggai 2:6,7***

Haggai lived and wrote his prophecy about fifteen years after the return of Israel from their captivity in Babylon, made possible by the decree of Cyrus the Great of Persia in 536BC. The land lay in ruins as a result of the Babylonian conquest. Homes, villages and fields were destroyed by the invaders, and even the glorious temple built by Solomon was not spared. To look upon the remains of what was once the glory of the Israelite Kingdom for hundreds of years must have broken the hearts of those now returning, especially those old enough to have seen the magnificent temple with their own eyes as young children, before they were taken away to Babylon.

The book of Haggai is short – only two chapters. Let’s begin by reading Haggai 1:1-11:

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.

Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house [the Temple] lie waste?

Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

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

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.

Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye 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 upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

Remember the phrase, “Consider your ways” which appears twice in this passage. We’ll return to it at the end of our talk.

Here God rebukes the returnees for not having their priorities right. They said, “Let’s rebuild our houses and farms first, and then we’ll see what we can do with the temple.” The word “ceiled” in verse 4 means, as you probably guessed, the ceiling of a house. Now, a simple house wouldn’t have a ceiling. It would have a roof, of course, and if you were inside the house and looked up, you’d see the rough and crude wood beams that supported the roof. To spend the time, effort, and money to construct a ceiling, with perhaps some decoration, to cover the roof supports, was to add a bit of luxury and even extravagance to the house, which God through Haggai rebuked. Spend less time building fancy houses for yourselves and spend more time rebuilding my house was God’s message to the people.

So God stymied their efforts in the words of verse 6. The remainder of chapter one tells how God stirred the hearts of Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest to undertake the more important work of rebuilding the temple. And the spirit of the people was stirred as well.

Haggai chapter two records how God encouraged the work and the workers, particularly in verses 4 and 5. Haggai 2:4,5:

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:

According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

Here God says to the now refocused builders that he is with them and reminds them of a dramatic time in their history when he was with them before – the time of the Exodus from Egypt. Now God could have referenced any number of times he was with Israel and encouraged them, but he picks the Exodus, from more than a thousand years earlier. Why the Exodus? I think it was more for our benefit in our studies of this prophecy in our day than it was for Israel back then.

Remember two events that happened at the time of Exodus. One of them is mentioned in verse five – the inauguration of the Law Covenant. The second is mentioned in verse six, which we read earlier – a shaking of the earth. What happened in conjunction with the giving of the Law to Israel through Moses? Mount Sinai shook with smoke and fire. Exodus 19:18:

And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

So, there are two things at the time of the Exodus which God referred to Israel at the time of the building of the Second Temple – the inauguration of the Law Covenant, and the shaking of Mount Sinai. Shaking, smoke, and fire. Shaking, smoke, and fire. I think you can see where I’m going with this. So, let’s get there.

***The Elements of the Prophecy and their Symbolic Meanings***

In Haggai 2:6 we find these elements of his prophecy:

-Yet once

-It is a little while

-I will shake (these five things)

-The heavens

-The earth

-The sea

-The dry land

-All nations

-The desire of all nations shall come, and lastly,

-I will fill this house with glory

Hebrews 12:26 gives us an important insight into the meaning of the phrase yet once. Let’s read Hebrews 12:26, speaking of God at the time of the Exodus, and then in Paul’s day:

Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

Notice the addition of the word “more”. Yet once more. Here Paul confirms Haggai’s prophecy as being applicable to the last days by adding the word “more”. There will be only one more shaking, in addition to the shaking of Mt Sinai in Moses’ day, and then the desire of all nations will come.

The meaning of that phrase, “it is a little while” has evolved over the years. In the original Hebrew, it meant a short time – quickly. Today it sometimes means an indefinite, perhaps longer time like when Kathie asks me when I’m going to do that job she told me about, and I reply, “in a little while”.

The word shake is Strongs number 7493, and it means to undulate, as the earth, sky, etc, particularly through fear, and this word is translated, “make afraid, move, shake, quake, and tremble”. The meaning of shake here is trouble, turmoil, and in four of the five shaken things, destruction.

From our study of symbolic prophecy throughout the Bible, we’ve come to understand the meaning of the five things that are shaken in Haggai chapter two. I’ll list the symbolic meanings of the five things, but notice how the first four are connected in pairs of contrasting opposites: heavens and earth, sea and dry land.

On page 318 of volume One, Pastor Russell gives us a guide to understanding symbolic prophecy:

Throughout the Scriptures, earth, when used symbolically, represents society; mountains represent kingdoms; heavens, the powers of spiritual control; seas, the restless, turbulent, dissatisfied masses of the world. Fire represents the destruction of whatever is burned--tares, dross, earth (social organization), or whatever it may be.

So, using this guide and other writings in the Harvest Message, we can identify these symbols as follows:

Heaven – the powers of spiritual control, specifically the nominal church systems. On Reprint page 5161 we read, “Not the heavens of God’s residence, but the ecclesiastical heavens, the church institutions.”

Earth – the powers of earthly control, civil governments – the contrasting opposite of the powers of spiritual control.

Seas – the restless, turbulent dissatisfied masses of mankind and their activist organizations, who often resort to violence and illegal actions to advance their agendas.

Dry Land – the contrasting opposite of seas – the stable segments of society, satisfied with the way things are, which in our day includes the middle and upper classes and their organizations – corporations, banks, and so forth.

The fifth and last thing to be shaken is All Nations. It has no contrasting opposite like the previous four, because it includes everyone else not part of the heavens, earth, seas and dry land. These are the common, ordinary people who muddle through each day, bearing up under their burdens for them and their families and loved ones. They’re not rich or powerful, nor are they protesting in the streets in support of one cause or another. They are just ordinary people waiting and hoping for better times, and their desire will come.

***Current and Recent Events Fulfilling Haggai’s Prophecy***

More about that later, but now let’s look at each of the five things shaken in the light of current and recent events and see if we can identify the fulfillment of their symbolic shaking.

***Heavens Shaken***

First is the heavens – the nominal church systems. How have the nominal church systems been shaken. Well, when literal heavens shake, we usually think of thunder, which gives us a clue that when the symbolic heavens are shaken, symbolic thunder will be involved. Let’s read two scriptures talking about the same time period as Haggai’s prophecy. First Psalm 77:18: The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven:

Next Revelation 14:2: And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder:

And what did that voice of thunder declare? Revelation 18:2,3:

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon [that’s the symbolic heavens of Haggai 2:6, the nominal church systems, Catholic and Protestant] Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

We know from our studies of the Harvest Parallels that this declaration went forth in the year 1878. And we don’t have to look very hard in history to find example after example of the fulfillment of these two prophecies in Haggai and Revelation. Here is a short list, and I’m sure you could add many more.

In the 1970s, a scandal involving the Vatican Bank was brought to light although no Vatican clergy or officials were ever convicted of a crime. Since then, the secretive financial dealings of the Catholic church have been under increasing public scrutiny.

In the 1970s, 80s and 90’s Child sexual abuse in Catholic and Protestant churches was rampant but hidden behind coverups. In 2002, the now famous Spotlight article in the Boston Globe newspaper exposed the enormous scale of the evil that had gone on for decades. Other exposés quickly followed resulting in criminal prosecution of guilty priests and civil lawsuits against the churches themselves, followed by multi-million-dollar settlements designed to keep the perpetrators and the details of their actions from being revealed in court proceedings.

Probably the most secretive proceedings of the Catholic church is the conclave – the meeting of Cardinals to elect a new Pope. There are no public accounts of the process, but whispers of political machinations and deal-making abound. [IS POPE FRANCIS DEAD?]

All of these revelations remind me of the text in Isaiah 28:17:

Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place

But beyond all the crime, corruption and political machinations that mark the nominal church systems today is the simple fact that the churches no longer even pretend to hold up the standard of God’s righteousness as a way of life. The Ten Commandments are more like guidelines. Moral relativism is the current thinking today. The Bible says all unrighteousness is sin. But the Pope recently said, when pressed on the subject of homosexuality, “Who am I to judge?”

I recall hearing an interview with a Catholic woman who was asked if all the scandals shaking her church had shaken her faith. She replied, “I haven’t lost my faith in God, but I have lost my faith in my church.” When I heard those words, I smelled the smoke of a tare burning.

One more shaking of the nominal systems is worth mentioning. For hundreds of years, there were only a handful of what we could call mainstream churches – Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians and so forth, in addition to the Catholic church. But in the last fifty or so years many new churches have sprung up, often the creation of one person looking to enrich him or herself. Some of them began ministries that were broadcast on cable TV, giving rise to the term “Televangelist”. Several have been the subject of financial controversies or even investigated for fraud and corruption such as Kenneth Copeland, who bought himself a $200,000 Lamborghini (that’s a car), Joel Osteen, who purchased a sports stadium and fills it every week with his followers. He has a reported net worth of 50 million dollars, and Paula White (who was appointed last month as senior advisor to the newly created White House Office of Faith). And then there’s the most notorious one of them all, L. Ron Hubbard who began his career as a prolific writer of science fiction fantasy novels, and moved on to found the Church (so called) of Scientology. L. Ron Hubbard famously said, “You don't get rich writing science fiction. If you want to get rich, you start a religion.” And so he did. Under Hubbard’s successor, the “Church” of Scientology has been subject to repeated scandals and investigations.

Many of these phony, fabricated churches have fallen into scandal and disrepute not too many years after their founding.

The heavens have been, and are being shaken violently and the shaking will result in their destruction.

***Earth Shaken***

The second thing shaken is the earth, the ruling powers of established civil governments in contrast with the ruling powers of the established church systems. How have the civil governments been shaken?

Of course, the greatest shaking of the world’s civil governments took place in the year 1914. For centuries prior to World War 1, stable monarchies ruled most of Western civilization. But when the Gentile Times ended and World War 1 began, the earth shook. And ever since, wars and rumors of wars have continued. We could recite a list of conflict after conflict during the last hundred years, but I think there is another fulfillment of this element of Haggai’s prophecy, the shaking of the earth, in addition to the last hundred years of war after war.

When the literal earth shakes, we call that an earthquake. Earthquakes happen when the tectonic plates, or pieces of the earth’s crust and upper mantle bump into each other or rub against each other, causing fissures or cracks in earth’s crust. And that’s the end of the scientific mumbo jumbo. But the important part of this literal shaking as it relates to the symbolic shaking of Haggai 2:6 is the cracks or fissures that form on the surface of the earth during an earthquake. What might symbolic cracks or fractures in the earth represent in the context of the shaking of civil governments?

Over the past fifty years or so, and even more in the last few decades, governments around the world have become fractured, weakened, and less and less able to, well, govern. After the monarchies prior to 1914 were toppled by revolutions, the governments of many nations became an unstable succession of republics, democracies, dictatorships, coalitions, and back again, one after another. One example is Italy, which has had 69 governments since World War 2. It must be true – I read it on the internet.

Even worse than a rapid succession of ineffective government is what sociologists call a failed state – a country with no government capable of providing the basic services and security that are the responsibility of all functioning governments. Examples include Haiti and several countries in Africa where roving gangs of armed thugs terrorize the common people, who are just trying to live their lives one day at a time.

Even within relatively stable governments, like our own, fractures have appeared and are getting wider. Governing in a democracy was always the art of compromise. That notion and indeed, guiding principle, of our own government has been shaken and largely broken by the recent divisions leading to extreme polarization of political parties. Compromise with the other party has been replaced by demonize the other party. Each side says we are the true champions of democracy; the other side is a dictatorship that weaponizes government. The tyranny of the majority is in full force.

There are two things literal earthquakes do. One is to create cracks or fissures in the earth’s crust as we’ve talked about. The other is to undulate the ground, remember the definition of the word, to shake the earth up and down, often destroying roads and bridges, and reducing homes and buildings to rubble I don’t need to tell all of you how the civil governments of today have been undulating themselves over the past few months. Everyone is talking about on and off again tariffs, price increases, on and off again job losses, and up and down financial markets. The earth is indeed undulating. The shaking is getting worse, and will get worser, resulting in the destruction of the civil governments of the entire world, including here in our country.

My final comment on the shaking of the governments is one you’ve heard many times before in recent years – observe the conflict but don’t take sides in the conflict. There is no right side for us to identify and support. Stay uninvolved. I’ll talk more about that when we get to the character lessons for us in Haggai’s prophecy.

***Seas Shaken***

Our third element to be shaken is the seas. We considered how literal heavens are shaken by thunder and how literal earth is shaken by earthquakes. What causes literal seas to be shaken by tempestuous waves? Two things – most commonly strong winds as in a storm or hurricane, and less frequently, an earthquake on the sea floor which produces a tsunami. What, then is the symbolic meaning of the restless seas and their causes.

We said earlier that the shaken seas symbolize the restless activist elements of society, some of whom with good and noble intentions try to improve the lot of their fellow man, but often with harmful results. Also included in these restless activist elements of society are the troublemakers, the bad actors as they are called today, who simply want to indulge their mindless propensities for violence and destruction.

Once again we can go back in time some 150 years to begin our long list of examples of violent activism in the name of improving society. I grew up in Chicago which has the dubious distinction of being the birthplace of activist violence. In the late 1800s, many oppressed workers began to protest and call for better pay and better working conditions. On May 4, 1886 at one such protest rally in the Haymarket of Chicago, the police were sent to disperse the crowd. Someone threw a bomb into the cordon of policemen killing seven of them as well as a few bystanders. And so the Haymarket Riot found its place in the annals of the struggles between labor and capital. Br Russell wrote extensively about this struggle between the haves and the have-nots in Volume Four.

Fast forward through the next 150 years, marked by what seems to be an unbroken string of tension between the 1% and the 99%, often marked by violence as a means of getting attention. Since then we would add to the list Race riots dating back to, once again, my home town Chicago in 1919, on up to the Black Lives Matter movement of recent years. Political tensions in the January 6 riots. Immigration issues and the Deportation of migrants. Economic tensions in the struggles of so many to earn a living and pay their bills, sometimes resulting in workplace shootings. All these and more are the restless seas.

I said before that not only winds on the water produce turbulent waves, but also earthquakes on the sea floor which produce tsunamis. A tsunami is also a wave which is small in the deep open ocean – perhaps only a foot or two in height – an almost unnoticeable indication of the strong force below which created it. But as that small wave travels toward land, sometimes several hundreds of miles away, the water becomes shallower and shallower, pushing this small wave of water upward and increasing its height to tens of feet when it eventually strikes the beach, producing the incredible destruction we see on the video footage of the news reports. Brethren, the symbolic tsunami is coming. Be watchful. Be prepared.

***Dry Land Shaken***

The fourth element of Haggai’s prophecy to be shaken is the dry land, which symbolizes the stable elements of society, who are satisfied with the way things are, which in our day includes the middle and upper classes and their organizations – corporations, banks, trusts, and so forth. These people have had it good for many decades and even centuries.

But even stable, peaceful people are divided today along many fault lines – rich vs poor, white vs non-white, educated vs blue collar, rural vs urban, conservative vs liberal. The waves of unrest of the sea classes is crashing, like a tsunami caused by an undersea earthquake, on the beaches of the dry land and causing fear even in the previously calm and stable segments of society.

The result is a coming together of these elements of society to protect themselves and hold onto the wealth and material advantage they have enjoyed for so long. In our country in just the past few months we have seen unusual alliances between government, banks, and businesses. The shifting winds of politics and public sentiment have caused both government and businesses to halt programs like Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, abbreviated DEI from their plans and policies. Public statements and actions by the likes of Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg and others have people wondering. The restless seas are encroaching upon the dry land. And so the dry land retreats and tries to defend itself from the torrent. But the tsunami of unrest and violence will not be stopped.

***All Nations Shaken***

The fifth and last element of Haggai’s prophecy is the shaking of all nations, which includes everyone else not part of the heavens, earth, seas and dry land. These are the common, everyday people – the rest of mankind who just trying to live their lives one stressful day at a time. They are worried, scared. Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Luke 21:26.

The Hebrew word translated “nations” in Haggai 2:7 is “goy”. If you have any Jewish friends who speak a little Yiddish, you know that “goy” means Gentile – everyone who is not a Jew, everyone else. As an aside, Yiddish is a language that delights the tongue. The words and sounds are delicious. A manly man is a mensch; a hapless loser is a schlemiel; a Gentile woman is a schicksa. So, the thought of goy in this verse is that everyone else not included in the heavens, earth, seas and dry land will not escape the shaking. They, too, will experience the personal destruction of their old way of life in the preparation of their hearts to receive and embrace the new way of life under the Kingdom arrangement.

***The Good News***

Well, all of Haggai 2:6 is the bad news. So now let’s talk about the good news. The last two phrases of our convention theme text, Haggai 2:7, present the good news.

. . . and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

The desire of all nations shall come. What do the ordinary good people all over the earth want? Peace, prosperity, health, happiness, and dozens of other ideal we could list. The beauty of the kingdom is that it will provide all of them that could be added to the list plus many more that mankind can’t even imagine, chief among them the resurrection of the dead and eternal life if obedient to the Kingdom arrangement.

I can’t help but read the familiar word picture of the kingdom from Volume One page 192:

Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay--not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth's society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete.

That is the desire of all nations. It has often been said that if you ask someone to describe what they imagine heaven to be like, they describe the perfect earth in the Kingdom.

The last element of the prophecy in Haggai 2:7 is, and I will fill this house with glory. “This house”, of course refers to, on a literal level, the literal temple that God was encouraging the people, under the leadership of Zerubbabel to rebuild. If they would build it, He would honor it with the glory of His presence. And, it literally came to pass, that the literal temple was rebuilt and dedicated and used as the meeting place between God and the nation of Israel, only to be destroyed again, during the time of the Romans in the year 70AD.

More important to our study today, is the symbolic application of this phrase. The symbolic temple in this prophecy is Our Lord and His Church. I’ll read just two scriptures. The first one is 2 Corinthians 6:16,17 which speaks of the importance of keeping ourselves pure, holy, and separate from the world:

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

The second scripture, 1Peter 2:5, speaks of individual members of the Church Class as individual stones during the construction phase of this symbolic temple:

Ye also, as lively (or living) stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up ~~spiritual~~ sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

The King James version says, “to offer up spiritual sacrifices”, but that word spiritual is not in the oldest manuscripts and is likely spurious, so I omitted it.

Note the two phases of the literal Temple Zerubbabel built at the urging of Haggai. There was the building or construction phase, and then there was the glorious phase, at the completion of the construction phase, when, as God said in Haggai 2:7, I will fill this house with glory – symbolically, the glory of the completed Church and the glory of the fully established Kingdom.

***Character Lessons for Us***

Well, my time is almost up, so Now I get to the best part – the most important part, the character lessons for us in Haggai’s prophecy. We’ve stimulated your minds, so now I want to strengthen your hearts.

My first piece of advice is to stay above the fray. Don’t wade into the restless seas and take sides in the conflict.

I like how Br Russell expressed it in Volume Six, page 607:

. . . some, we believe, have gone to an extreme in denouncing present institutions in a manner that the Lord and the apostles neither commanded nor sanctioned, nor illustrated in their words and conduct. Simply making people discontented with their present conditions and surroundings is most unwise. On the contrary, the influence, the spirit, the disposition, of the New Creation should always be toward peace; and if we cannot commend present institutions highly, neither need we specially condemn them.

The agitation of these matters in advance will be not only unavailing, but worse-- disadvantageous, injurious--both to the agitator and the agitated, breeding discontent. Amongst the children of this world there will be found plenty of agitators when the Lord's time shall come for these questions to be agitated. Meantime all the members of the New Creation will display wisdom in avoiding such questions as tend to strife and discontent . . .

End of quote.

Also, along a different line, recall the phrase in Haggai chapter one that I mentioned before. It appears twice in that chapter, “Consider your ways”. In the context, Haggai was reminding the Israelites of their priorities – go and build your necessary shelter and fields quickly, without a lot of elaborate decoration, but then devote yourselves to the spiritual pursuit of rebuilding God’s house – the Temple. And so, with that as a starting point, I’d like to close with four suggestions from our examination of Haggai’s prophecy as to how we can consider our ways and benefit with the resulting spiritual growth.

Number one is self-examination, as the phrase, “Consider your ways” suggests. Self-examination is uncomfortable because we must force ourselves to behold our flesh and its weaknesses, the spots on our robe of justification. And we wish those weaknesses and spots weren’t there. And Satan will try to magnify them in our eyes. But only by confronting our failings, seeking the Lord’s promised forgiveness, and resolve to do better will the battle with the world, the flesh and the devil be won.

Number two is the same as Haggai’s exhortation to the Israelites – touch lightly the things of this earth – our material possessions. I struggle with this as I grow older and desire less commotion and more stability in my life – my earthly life. When things go wrong with the house or car, or my plans for a smooth and uneventful day are upset, I, regrettably sometimes get upset and have to remind myself of God’s overruling providence when the car won’t start. There’s an old saying, “Life is what happens while you’re busy making other plans.” Touch lightly the things of this earth – its possessions and obligations.

Number three comes from the verses in Haggai 1:6-11 which told how the Lord impeded the Israelites efforts to build and plant by withholding abundance of crops they might otherwise have enjoyed. The lesson for us is to accept the Lord’s chastenings as being given in love and designed not to hurt or even punish, but to redirect our efforts into more spiritually profitable paths. What child is whom the father chasteneth not?

Number four comes from the verses in Haggai chapter two following our convention theme text, Haggai 2:10-14 which we didn’t read before and won’t take the time to read now, but in those verses, Haggai exhorts the people engaged in the work of building the Temple to be clean, pure, undefiled. We who are engaged in the work of building the spiritual temple must likewise keep ourselves clean from the many temptations of the world in these last days when evil is waxing worse and worse. As Isaiah 52:11 puts it, Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

It is yet only a little while until the fulfillment of all things. May we be faithful, to the end.

And may the Lord add his blessing.