



**Discouragement, Encouragement, And the Future
A Promise of Future Glory for the Temple
Haggai 2:1-23**

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The hardest thing to do, I have learned, is to go back. I remember the church my grandparents took me to and how big it was and how full of people and the booming youth ministry they had that I really wanted to be a part of. I wasn't a Christian, but they looked like they had fun and we had just moved there so making friends would be good. We were only there for only a year though and I was 7.

After becoming a believer, I went back to visit that church and see my grandparents. It smelled musty. The carpets were showing age, Sunday morning did not see the building full anymore and most ministries were going away.

It wasn't like I remembered. We all have that happen. Things change and places we remember are now gone or have changed. But we still remember it like it was, or the enhanced version of it in our minds eye.

Imagine having to come back to a destroyed city and a destroyed building, with rubble everywhere, and you volunteered for this. Now you are being asked to clear the rubble and rebuild what used to be there. The only problem is, most of those who are to do the work, have no idea what it used to look like because they never saw it.

All they must go on are the memories of those who had seen it years ago, and the building plans and specifications that were designed with the help of the Persian Empire.



The original Temple was built, based on plans designed by King David and King Solomon. It took 7 years to build (1 Kings 6:38). It had been maintained and refreshed several times and plundered several times as well.

By the time of final destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, it was nowhere near what it had been. The Spirit, gone (Ezekiel 10 & 11).

We already know based on our study of the minor prophets that the Temple, just prior to it being destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, was a place of idolatry and compromise. Most of the gold and silver had already been stripped off to pay off Assyria or Babylon. Worship was done by rote and the shekinah glory that at one time prevented the priests from entering the holy place, now was only a memory.

But the years do things to the memory.

As the rebuilding of the Temple begins, those who are there and remember it from 70 years ago, reflect.

Ezra 3:10–13

“When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments were stationed to praise the LORD with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, according to the directions of King David of Israel; and they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel.” And all the people responded with a great shout when they praised the LORD because the foundation of the house of the LORD had been laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of families, old people who had seen the first house on its foundations, wept with a loud voice when they saw this house, though many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people’s weeping, for the people shouted so loudly that the sound was heard far away.” (NRSVue)

That was the situation 16 years ago when work first began, and then paused because of attacks from the enemy. Haggai has reenergized the people.

They are in Jerusalem because they wanted to serve the Lord and rebuild the land. They are the remnant.

In a place that once saw hundreds of thousands gather together for one of the festivals, now there is only 50,000 or so. The Temple has had the foundation stone laid and some of the work has been done.

About 4 weeks ago, the work restarted. Work teams were determined, logistic teams began the process of moving building materials into the work area, and with the scaffolding and other forms now in place, the work is beginning to become visible.

These are His people doing the work and the Lord knows that there are still a few who remember.

We know that God is with the people. He told them that 4 weeks ago when they took seriously the word given to them by Haggai.

Because they have returned to Him in faithfulness and he is with them, God intends to meet their needs. They all know one the names given to God at this very place by Abraham, Jehovah-jireh. God will provide.

We see that and think predominately only in the physical sense. When we do, we forget the events behind the name. Those events involve the request by God in Genesis 22 to sacrifice Isaac.



Abraham knew God would either resurrect or provide a substitute in the place of Isaac being sacrificed. He was not worried; he had arrived at the place in his life where he was faithful. When God said to stop and showed him the ram there on the hill, God provided.

God not only provided physically a substitute, which He would do later with His own Son Jesus, but He also provided peace. He removed the emotional and psychological issues Abraham was no doubt going through. He supplied peace, He supplied a faith that was so secure now that Abraham knew that he knew that he knew God was with him.

He is Jehovah-jireh. A great deliverance took place here. "Even if we were to translate Jehovah-jireh as "the Lord doth provide" rather than "will provide," it would be Abraham's testimony to the fact that Jehovah is a God who always provides; that as He provided then He would also provide in the future—deliverance from death, the oil of joy for the ashes of sorrow and mourning, blessings for obedience, even though obedience be made perfect through sufferings. The naming of the place Jehovah-jireh was meant to be proverbial of this very thing—"as it is said to this day." (Stone 1944, 64)

Because He is the God who will provide, He comes to address His people as they begin the work. Yes, where God guides, God provides. They all know that, but there is that issue of those who remember what the Temple used to look like and the angst they are feeling over this.

Haggai 2:1–4

"On the twenty-first of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying, 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison? But now take courage, Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD, 'take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,' declares the LORD, 'and work; for I am with you,' declares the LORD of armies." (NASB 2020)

By this time, anyone who is left, including Haggai if he is in that number, is pushing, or over 80. "Perhaps it was just that greybeards (they must all have been septuagenarians) have a habit of idealizing the past, and these men had forgotten the degradation of Temple worship which Ezekiel had described (Ezek. 8)." (Cundall 1974, 483)

This can be tiresome after a while. I interned in a church like that. I completely understand why you simply stop trying, it stops the talk.

I became convinced I was indeed incapable of making any changes, nor was I capable of bringing back the good old days. Since that was what I was being told all the time, after prayer, I went elsewhere.

Here is the thing, in ministry, there are always those who like it the way it used to be. The hard thing to face, it will never be like that today.

God is aware what that would do to the morale of those doing the work. This came up 16 years ago per Ezra and must also now be in the process of becoming a thing this time around as well, time to address it before it gets too far.

In terms of timing, when we compare the calendar to the timeframe given by Haggai, we see that we are coming near to the end of the Feast of Tabernacles. Just as last time, everyone has gathered.

"The Feast of Tabernacles was a particularly apt setting for his message. It served as a time for remembering the great deeds of God in the past, and an important aspect of the celebration was the fact that the people were required to live outside in shelters for seven days, recalling the wilderness wanderings of Israel before they entered the land (Lev. 23:33–43)...It would also have been a natural



occasion to remember the dedication of Solomon's Temple, which had taken place at this same feast (1 Kings 8:1–3)." (Duguid 2010, 38)

As they remember, and some tell the story of the old Temple, they start looking at the work in progress and begin to wonder if it could ever even come close to the former glory. Unless you have a good imagination, seeing something being built and looking at it in the early stages can be a bit of a downer.

But in the middle of the Feast, there are the stories floating around about the "good old days" in the old Temple. Some are beginning to wonder about the task they signed on for.

God is going to nip this problem in the bud.

Haggai 2:4 "But now **take courage, Zerubbabel,**' declares the LORD, '**take courage also, Joshua** son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and **all you people of the land take courage,**' declares the LORD, 'and work; for I am with you,' declares the LORD of armies." (NASB 2020)

The Temple is far from being done. If they build to the specs of Ezra 6:3, it will be larger than Solomon's Temple. But that point has not arrived yet. "and this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king." (Ezra 6:15, ESV) That is still 4 years away.

The new Temple would never be like the old one. The Ark of the Covenant is missing to begin with. Unlike what some may have been thinking, this is not the Temple for the Messianic age either. But when you make comparisons, you begin to be a bit discouraged. Lots to do.

When the prophecies of an Isaiah or an Ezekiel were remembered, according to which the new temple was to surpass the former one in glory, it would be almost sure to produce gloomy thoughts, and supply food for doubt whether the time had really come for rebuilding the temple, when after all it would be only a miserable hut. In this gloomy state of mind consolation was very necessary, if the hardly awakened zeal for the building of the house of God was not to cool down and vanish entirely away. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 481)

There were some who were hoping this would be the Temple as described by Ezekiel, that is not the case.

Haggai encourages the leaders and the people to be strong and take courage. He says that three times. The people are being encouraged to be strong. The word here is **חֲזָק** (hazak) which "denotes a frame of mind which enables one to pursue or initiate something with fervor and diligence." (Verhoef 1987, 98)

Don't be disillusioned but join together and work. Work by the way is not a suggestion but is in the imperative, it is a command from YAHWEH to the people. He wants them to compare this Temple with the previous one. There is something very special about this Temple that never was involved with the Temple built by Solomon.

Once again God says He is with the people. "... 'and work; for I am with you,' declares the LORD of armies." (Haggai 2:4b, NASB 2020)

This Temple, the one they are working on, will literally have God come into it. The one predicted in Isaiah 7:14.

His name will be Immanuel, which means, God is with us. God has told the people doing the work this twice now, that He is with them, and unknown to them, this building they are constructing will indeed have God in it and He will truly be with them, in the person of Messiah.

But the shekinah glory is not there as it was in the first Temple. YAHWEH points out that is not an issue.



He reminds the people of a promise He made when they left Egypt.

Haggai 2:5

“As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, **My Spirit remains in your midst; do not fear!**” (NASB 2020)

His Spirit is still among the people They needed to hear that. The assurance of the Spirit being there with them is an assurance that God is still working with His people, He is not done with them yet.

One quick point about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We see He is among them. The difference between this OT perspective and ours today is this, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, He is not around you, He is in you and will never leave.

John 14:16–17

“Then I will ask the Father, and **he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever**—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you.” (NET 2nd ed.)

This Spirit is still working in Israel (“in the midst of you”); therefore they are not to fear, even if the existing state of things does not correspond to human expectations. The omnipotence of God can and will carry out His word, and glorify His temple. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 483)

Haggai 2:6–9

“For this is what the LORD of armies says: ‘Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD of armies. ‘The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,’ declares the LORD of armies. ‘The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of armies, ‘and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the LORD of armies.” (NASB 2020)

In order to get their minds off the current situation, He provides them a prophetic look into the Millennium.

We must remember what it is the Lord just did with this. He redirected the mind of the people to the future that is in store for them. When we find ourselves becoming burdened by the world and allowing the day to day to affect us more than it should, we too need to avail ourselves of reviewing what He has in store for our future as well. We redirect our mind to listen to the voice of the Lord. When we do that.

Psalms 29:9

“**The voice of the LORD** makes the deer give birth, And strips the forests bare; **And in His temple everyone says, “Glory!”**” (NKJV)

YAHWEH is moving His people to the same place. He does not want them, or us to be discouraged.

There is coming a time where He will make the Temple the focal point of the entire planet. The world will be shaken, and by the Lord referring to the heavens and the earth as being shaken, He is taking us to the Great Tribulation period and referring to that point in time when the Archangel Michael casts Satan and all his fallen ones to earth.

Revelation 12:7–12

“And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven proclaiming, “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom



of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death. Rejoice then, you heavens and those who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you with great wrath because he knows that his time is short!" (NRSVue)

That is the beginning of the end for Satan and his minions. Truly shaking both the heaven and the earth in a rebellion that will only be resolved by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The impact will be a changed world and a changed global perspective.

The entire world is shaken by the actions of Messiah and those who remain, now bring tribute to Jerusalem which is the site of the capital of the King.

Haggai 2:7–9

"I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory," says the LORD of armies. "The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine," declares the LORD of armies. "The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former," says the LORD of armies, "and in this place I will give peace," declares the LORD of armies." (NASB 2020)

The future for the Temple is more fantastic than any reminiscent of the past Temple. The future glory, intended for the remnant, which the bulk of the nation is at this point, should be enough encourage them to do the work.

This was partially fulfilled when Jesus Christ ministered in the Temple. Another way to say it, would be the ministry of Jesus Christ was the beginning of the glory to be experienced in the Temple, with more to come. The glory was indeed greater than former days. And it will be even more so in the Millennium.

It is important to note that verse 3 (note "this house in its former glory") appears to view the Solomonic temple and the second temple as one, not as distinct structures. In the same way, a future temple could be regarded as a later phase of this historical temple. (Chisholm Jr. 2002, 453)

But why "in a little while?" This sounds a lot more imminent than thousands of years off. Haggai would see this as impending because he, like all of the prophets, did not see the Church age.

By building this postexilic temple the people would help advance God's program of manifesting Himself in a central place of worship: the Solomonic temple, and the yet-future millennial temple. So their work was more than merely constructing a building; it was a spiritual work which would ultimately culminate in God's millennial program. (Lindsey 1985, 1542)

We now come to another message. Now it is December.

We are going to learn about the power of dirt. Have you ever noticed that how hard it is to keep something clean. I have never been able to leave a clean mark on any of the walls at home.

I have, however, been given expert status in my capability of spreading dirt throughout the entire house. I am not, and never have been, Mr. Clean.

Haggai will turn this into a spiritual lesson for the nation and encouragement. He will be talking about what they had been like and the new start they now have.

Again, we have a date. "The significance that the prophet laid on this date most probably came from the event mentioned in verse 18: it was the date of the formal (re)founding of the temple." (Duguid 2010, 47-48)



Haggai 2:10–19

“On the twenty-fourth of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Haggai the prophet, saying, “The LORD of armies says this: ‘Now ask the priests for a ruling: If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and touches bread with this fold, or touches cooked food, wine, oil, or any other food, will it become holy?’ ” And the priests answered, “No.” Then Haggai said, “If one who is unclean from a corpse touches any of these things, will the latter become unclean?” And the priests answered, “It will become unclean.” Then Haggai responded and said, “ ‘So is this people. And so is this nation before Me,’ declares the LORD, ‘and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean. But now, do consider from this day onward: before one stone was placed on another in the temple of the LORD, from that time when one came to a grain heap of twenty measures, there would be only ten; and when one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there would be only twenty. I struck you and every work of your hands with scorching wind, mildew, and hail; yet you did not come back to Me,’ declares the LORD. ‘Do consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month; from the day when the temple of the LORD was founded, consider: Is the seed still in the barn? Even including the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree, it has not produced fruit. Yet from this day on I will bless you.’ ”” (NASB 2020)

Haggai has received another word from the Lord. This time it is not a major festival, but it is the apparent re-founding of the Temple. In the past two months, another prophet has begun his ministry, one which we will get to in Zechariah. “In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo saying,” (Zechariah 1:1, NASB 2020)

Zechariah began his ministry in November, Haggai tells us it is now December 18, 520 BC.

Haggai uses the occasion to obtain a formal law ruling from the Priests. The question is not one of idolatry or sin, but rather falls into the category of ritual purity, or ritual fitness – defilement.

The first question deals with holy meat, meat that had been offered as a sacrifice. Since a priest is not the one carrying the meat, it would fall into being either a thanksgiving, fulfillment of a vow or a freewill offering. If you are carrying that holy meat in the fold of what you are wearing, and you touch another food item with the clothes, will that make the food item holy? The answer is no.

So, holiness is not contagious. You do not have to worry about newly sanctified food. That is good news for those who might have that concern.

By the way, the nature of the question lets us know that even though the Temple is not completed, operations are ongoing.

So, Haggai asks a follow-on question. If someone who is unclean, ritually defiled, because they touched a corpse, and they touch any of the food items discussed in the first question, will those items become defiled? This time the answer is a yes.

Holiness is not contagious, but defilement is. Why the questions nine weeks after the encouragement of future glory? “In short, sinfulness contaminates everything and everyone, and because the Judeans are sinful people, their sin contaminates even the temple and its worship. Just because they are handling the things of God, they have not become suddenly morally pure and acceptable in God’s eyes.” (Achteimer 1986, 103)

Familiarity with the Temple, and places in the Temple were beginning to create a sense of being holy among the builders, yet they were not living any differently than before. Building the Temple, does not make you holy and now standing it back up does not give you an in.



We have the same problem, being in church, serving in church and going to all the Bible studies does not necessarily make you a Christian. Using scripture and being able to converse in God talk does not mean you know Him as savior and Lord.

Haggai brings up some of the past to help prevent this potential problem.

Haggai 2:14–17

“Then Haggai responded and said, “So is this people. And so is this nation before Me,’ declares the LORD, ‘and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean. But now, do consider from this day onward: before one stone was placed on another in the temple of the LORD, from that time when one came to a grain heap of twenty measures, there would be only ten; and when one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there would be only twenty. I struck you and every work of your hands with scorching wind, mildew, and hail; yet you did not come back to Me,’ declares the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

Haggai applies the two answers provided to him by the priests. The people thought, and this was not the first time, that their outward observances would make them holy and secure them from any of the curses. What he says though is that this people, the nation and all they are doing has been unclean. There was a dead thing in their midst making them unclean.

It is the heart God is interested in, not the rituals. Just as touching a dead corpse would make one ritually unclean, allowing the corpse of the Temple to remain in the middle of Jerusalem also made the people ritually unclean and subject to the curses of the law.

The remnant, those who returned to Jerusalem with Ezra, did so with the express purpose of rebuilding the Temple and reestablishing the presence of God’s people in the land. They lost sight of that promise, but God did not.

In fact, they should have known it as they went about doing business in and around Jerusalem as there was not enough food or wine to meet the basic needs. That is a curse result and is intended to drive the one who has it happening to them back to the Lord, yet that was not happening until they were addressed by Haggai.

This is not intended to be a rebuke. Haggai is reminding the people of where they came from. They repented three months ago and moved towards the work. Now here we are in December, and the formal re-launching is taking place.

Because of their faithfulness, God, through Haggai, has more encouragement for them. But first He needed to remind them of the recent past.

This is important for all who are doing a work even today.

Preparation for the work the Lord has called you to, in some cases, takes time to complete. I remember being in Bible School with those who were so burdened for the lost, that they felt like they were wasting time in Bible School. Some actually dropped out because “the rapture was so close.”

I recently listened to someone who was in missionary aviation talking about how long it took for them to reach the point where they were now in the field doing what the Lord was leading them to do, ten years.

The Lord has called all of us to some ministry that only we can do, and for some of us, there is a lot of preparation required to be ready to do what He has called. Becoming a physician does not happen overnight. Neither does becoming a plumber, or a scientist. God calls us to a work that is specific to each of us. Never lose sight of that.



Here, Haggai is bringing it all back to the point that the people first decided to return and rebuild. They made a good start but listened to the enemy and were also hindered by actions of the enemy using others. But now they are back to the work.

The pre-work has now been completed. Operations were in full swing at the Temple sight and now, so was the construction.

Yes, there were shortages in the past, but the Lord was disciplining. Now the work is being done and Haggai has another word of encouragement for them.

Not only is God with you, not only does this Temple have an incomprehensible glorious future, but all the shortages you have encountered, He will deal with them.

Haggai 2:18–19

“Do consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month; from the day when the temple of the LORD was founded, consider: Is the seed still in the barn? Even including the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree, it has not produced fruit. Yet from this day on I will bless you.” (NASB 2020)

The people have planted the grain, it is all out there. The answer to Haggai is a no, the seed is not in the barn. It is way early to determine what kind of a crop they will have next year. Haggai is telling them; you haven't seen anything yet.

There will be a dramatic transformation in their fortunes from curse to blessing now that the rebuilding work on the house of the Lord has recommenced. Whereas in the past 'the vine, the fig, the pomegranate and the olive tree', the four key fruit-bearing trees, have not returned a good harvest, from now on the Lord's blessing will be evident in their fruitfulness. (Duguid 2010, 52)

Haggai is letting the people know that because of their faithfulness, blessing will return, and it is going to be visible in the crops starting the day he talked to them.

Haggai 2:20–23

“Then the word of the LORD came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, “Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, ‘I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. And I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and the horses and their riders will go down, every one by the sword of another.’ ‘On that day,’ declares the LORD of armies, ‘I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, My servant,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you,’ ” declares the LORD of armies.” (NASB 2020)

Our clock has not moved, another word has been revealed to Haggai on the same day as his discussion about the upcoming crop.

This time he is instructed to talk to Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel is of the line of David and is in the genealogy of Joseph that we see in Matthew 1. That is the line through Solomon, that at Jeconiah, was cursed by God in Jeremiah 22:30 and declared that no one from that line would ever again sit on the throne.

Jeremiah 22:30

“The LORD says, “Enroll this man in the register as though he were childless. Enroll him as a man who will not enjoy success during his lifetime. For none of his sons will succeed in occupying the throne of David or ever succeed in ruling over Judah.”” (NET 2nd ed.)

The genealogy of Mary, also a descendant of David, was through David's son Nathan. Jesus is a descendant of David, but not through Jeconiah except through his adoptive father, Joseph.



Here in Haggai, YAHWEH has a word of encouragement specifically for Zerubbabel.

The Temple is being restored but it has been a journey that was much longer than Solomon's Temple. When Zerubbabel was named governor, there were dreams of all of Israel returning home, but less than 50,000 did. A remnant. He is governor of a small community that has had a recent history of crop reversals and drought. That is now all changing, and YAHWEH has a word for this man.

Once again YAHWEH goes to the future and the Tribulation time period. The power that the nations currently were holding over Israel, would at some point in the future, end.

God Himself says He is the one who is going to shake the heavens and the earth and again we are in Revelation 12. God is promising that there is a future day coming where all the power of the nations will be destroyed as well as their military might. Zechariah will talk more about that time.

Yahweh was going to shake the nations. Their power would be broken, their wealth would be brought to the restored temple. The future glory of that temple would be greater than the former, and Zerubbabel, God's servant, would become God's authorized representative on the earth. (Smith 1984, 163)

The things that Haggai told Zerubbabel, as of now, have not yet taken place. The process began with the incarnation, but the nation rejected their Messiah.

The Temple was completed in 516 BC and then remodeled by King Herod. But at any point in time, did the treasure of all the nations come into it? Have all the nations of the world been overthrown and their military might be decimated?

At a future point in time. Zerubbabel is being told, in advance, of the military takeover that will be achieved by YAHWEH at a future date. Then there is a promise for him to be fulfilled "on that day." In other words, tied in with the day of the Lord and the defeat of the worlds military powers when King Jesus returns in power.

Here in verse 23, YAHWEH calls Zerubbabel, My servant. He says, "and I will make you like a signet ring." This terminology is significant and does indeed point back to the original curse on his grandfather, Jeconiah. Let's look at the entire curse passage in Jeremiah and pay attention to the signet ring reference there.

Haggai is reporting to Zerubbabel that this message from the Lord is to let him know that God has a future for him. He will be a king at some point yet to come.

Jeremiah 22:24–30

"As I live, says the LORD, even if King Coniah son of Jehoiakim of Judah were the signet ring on my right hand, even from there I would tear you off and give you into the hands of those who seek your life, into the hands of those whom you fear, even into the hands of King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon and into the hands of the Chaldeans. I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country, where you were not born, and there you shall die. But they shall not return to the land to which they long to return. Is this man Coniah a despised broken pot, a vessel no one wants? Why are he and his offspring hurled out and cast away in a land that they do not know? O land, land, land, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the LORD: Record this man as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah." (NRSVue)

Zerubbabel may someday be invested as king. But such investiture will not depend on Yahweh's choosing him in the future. Yahweh has already chosen, or elected, Zerubbabel by Yahweh's having designated the Davidic dynasty as the appropriate means by which civil rule would be exercised in Judah. (Petersen 1984, 104)



What is being relayed to the Governor, is redemption.

YAHWEH declares that He will take Zerubbabel (and by extension, all of Israel) and make him His “chosen” one. Even more descriptive, though, He promises to make them His “signet ring.” This is a powerful reminder that God deeply loved Zerubbabel and Israel, and that God was also entrusting him with His authority, which is symbolized by the ring. This offer of authority is a step beyond forgiveness; it is a declaration of the restoration of the close relationship between God and His chosen people. God not only forgives, He not only redeems, He not only blesses, but He also restores. (Fries, Rummage and Gallaty 2015, 77-78)

Haggai starts with a nation that needs to get their priorities straight. Unlike the Judah of the past, this group of Jerusalem residents are part of the remnant. Their heart is soft, and they repent and the leadership, the Governor and the High Priest show the way.

God restores His people and promises a future that is simply amazing.

But then, before He is done, the Lord has a word for the Governor. His granddad had been cursed by God. Now, this one who was born in Babylon has been told by God, he has a future as a King serving the Lord. He has been redeemed and the curse will be no more.

That is what Jesus does, He makes all things new.

This brings us to the end of this short book. Haggai is successful as a prophet and as an encourager.

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