



God's Prescence, Glory and Peace

Haggai 2:1-9 Romans 5:1-11 John 14:26-27

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Did you know that the Old Testament books of 1st and 2nd Kings were originally one document, simply called “Kings”? It is said that the Book of Kings *begins and ends* with Solomon’s Temple: it traces the history of the Temple from its *beautiful and grand construction* by King Solomon to its *utter and thorough destruction* by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, a time span of almost 400 years.

Solomon’s Temple was the pride of Israel and the sign of the Golden Age in the Old Testament Biblical narrative¹. Massive amounts of gold, silver, bronze, iron, cedar, and other woods were brought in. 100s and 1000s of men worked on the project for 7 years. It was a **MAGNIFICENT STRUCTURE**² that displayed the splendor and glory of God.

Sadly, the Israelites had a beautiful Temple, but they rejected the God of the Temple. After nearly **400 years of disobedience**, God allowed the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar to loot the Temple, burn it to the ground, and even tear up the foundation. The Temple was destroyed and the people were exiled.

70 years later, as God had promised³, He brought His People back to Jerusalem, and **they begin to rebuild the temple**. This story is told in the Old Testament books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Israelites were now poor refugees, this new Temple will be **nothing** like Solomon’s Temple --- the people had no resources. In fact, you could say that this new

¹ Solomon’s Temple marked the high point in the Old Testament. “The completion of the Temple was the culmination of God’s Old Testament plans. Israel had become a great nation; Israel had received rest in their Promised Land. The land in which they lived and the Temple in which God had His dwelling were constant reminders that the Promised Messiah would also appear.” *Kings*, AJ Wolfgramm, p.64 (WELS)

² The story of the beauty and majesty of the Temple is described in great detail in 1 Kings 5-8. Note the interesting detail in 1 Kings 6:7. The tragic end of the Temple is told in 2 Kings 24-25. The construction of the Temple is in the early chapters of 1 Kings; the destruction of the Temple is at the end of 2 Kings --> “the Book of Kings begins and ends with Solomon’s Temple”.

³ Here is an example of the promise of return from exile after 70 years: Jeremiah 29:10-11: For this is what the LORD says: “When Babylon’s seventy years are complete, I will attend to you and confirm My promise to restore you to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope.”

Temple would be like a “**shack**” compared to Solomon’s magnificent Temple⁴. The people were discouraged and down-hearted. But God spoke to His people through **Haggai the Prophet**, and encouraged them. Here is what He said:

'Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? But now be strong, O Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD. 'Be strong, O Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the LORD, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the LORD Almighty. 'This is what I promised you when you came out of Egypt. *And my Spirit remains among you. DO NOT FEAR.*' Haggai 2:3-5

God encourages His people to continue working on the Temple, and He promises that **He is with them**. God’s **presence** means that they do not have to fear. The Holy Spirit is also among them. God's **Presence & Spirit** means that He is with them with His mighty power and protection.

The same is true for you as well. God is present with you, and you do not have to fear. The Holy Spirit remains with you. He is with you with His mighty power and protection. You might not be building a Temple like the people of Haggai’s time; but you are living as a disciple, you are striving to live a holy life, you are working in your vocations, and you are engaged in a spiritual struggle against the world, your own flesh, the devil and his depraved demons. You live your life in the **Presence of God** and **filled with the Holy Spirit**! You live under His mighty power and protection! You have nothing to fear!

God’s presence means that **God knows you by name**, that **He knows the details of your life** and **He cares** – He is at work in your life with His mighty power! **YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR!** That’s good news, because there are a lot of things that can cause fear and worry, isn’t there?

- **Finances**, the economy, gas prices, and the state of the country can keep you awake at night
- **Health** issues can cause a lot of anxiety – the unknowns and the “what-if’s”
- **Relationships** can get difficult, go sideways, and create a lot of pain
- **World Events** can be troublesome: from the pandemic to the war in Ukraine to everything else

God is present with you and at work in all these things. There is no need to fear! You live in the **Presence of God** and **filled with the Holy Spirit**! You live under His mighty power and protection! You have nothing to fear!

⁴ Notice the reaction of the people to this Temple compared to Solomon’s Temple in Ezra 3:11-12: “And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. However, many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid.”

Just as God's Word through Haggai encouraged the people of his day, so too God's Word encourages and strengthens you today:

Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

God's presence in your life means that you do not have to fear, worry, or stress about life's problems! The Holy Spirit is with you! **God's presence in your life means that God knows you by name, that He knows the details of your life and He cares – He is at work in your life with His mighty power!** One of the hymns that we sang today had this line⁵ in it:

"Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed! or I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

TLH 421.3 "How Firm A Foundation"

Today, let God's *righteous, omnipotent hand* uphold you! Let God's Presence give you peace, strengthen you, and encourage you. The Holy Spirit is with you! Believe the promises of God and live with the confidence of faith. **The Lord is with you: His Spirit remains with you! He knows you by name, He is at work, and He cares about the details of your life!**

In Haggai's time, God made an *extraordinary promise* to His people: He told them that the Temple they were working on, even though it looked like a *shack* to them, will have a *greater glory* **than Solomon's magnificent Temple**. That is hard to imagine, because Solomon's Temple was so grand, majestic, and impressive; but yet, that is exactly what God promised!

'The glory of *this present house* will be greater than the glory of *the former house*,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place *I will grant peace*,' declares the LORD Almighty." Haggai 2:9

The Temple built during Haggai's time would still be the Temple of Jesus' time; **Jesus Himself is the greater glory!** God *in the flesh*, the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, will worship, heal, and teach in this Temple! Jesus never worshipped, healed, nor taught in Solomon's Temple! But He will worship, heal, and teach in the Temple the people were building in Haggai's time. *Jesus and His glory is far greater than Solomon in all of his splendor.*

And the Lord explains even more about the "*greater glory*": **He will grant peace!** Peace with God comes through the life and death of Jesus: He is your substitute in living and dying. He lives a perfect life; He dies a sacrificial death, FOR YOU. You have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ!

⁵ Is this something you can memorize (maybe even with the tune!) to strengthen yourself in this promise?

None, not a single one, of the all sacrifices in Solomon's *magnificent* Temple could ever make peace with God nor forgive sins⁶. But Jesus' once and for all sacrifice; His life and His death, makes peace between you and God⁷. Your sins are covered over (*atonement*) by His blood shed on the cross! Your guilt is removed and you have good, clean, and clear conscience before God! Through faith in Christ, you can approach God with full, unhindered access any time you want. This is the Peace that the Messiah brings; this is the Peace that Christ has earned for you and all people. **THIS IS THE GREATER GLORY** that God promised Haggai and the people of his day.

Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God grants you peace. He speaks words of peace to you: He forgives you; God declares you NOT GUILTY of your sins; He restores your broken relationship with Him, and He renews His promises to you!

In this Temple, 500 years later, when Jesus died, there was a physical display of this PEACE WITH GOD. When Jesus died on Good Friday, the Temple curtain was torn in two. The temple curtain separated the "Holy of Holies" from the "Holy Place". The curtain separated the people from God⁸. When Jesus died, God tore that curtain in two, showing that there is no separation between Him and you because of Jesus and His death. In that Temple, the one built by the people of Haggai's time, God physically showed that He grants peace to us!!

Peace comes from God, through His Son Jesus Christ. Let the Peace of God which passes all understanding keep your heart and your mind on Christ Jesus --- believe that you are forgiven, that your relationship with God is restored, and that God cares about you!

The words of Haggai still speak to us today as much as to the people back then. God promised His Old Testament people, and you today, that

- ⇒ He is with you
- ⇒ His Spirit remains with you
- ⇒ He is at work in your life
- ⇒ And you have peace with God because of the Lord Jesus Christ! AMEN!

⁶ Every single OT sacrifice pointed forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. This is what the faithful OT people put their faith in --> the coming Messiah who forgives their sins.

⁷ This doctrine is called the "Perfect Obedience of Christ". Jesus was perfectly obedient to God the Father in His life and in His death; this perfect obedience was for you; it is "credited" to you through faith (Romans 4); and it is why God the Father can declare you righteous and justified: "not guilty!" (Romans 3:21-28)

⁸ The early Tabernacle, and the later Temples, had two rooms: the outer room was called the "Holy Place", and that is where the priests did their daily duties. The inner room, separated by a thick curtain, was called the "Holy of Holies." It was considered God's throne on earth; and no one was allowed in there (except the priest on the Day of Atonement with the blood of a sacrifice.) The curtain taught the people that their sin separated them from God. See Hebrews 9. When Jesus died, this curtain was torn from top to bottom, showing that the way to God is open; your sins are forgiven, you have peace with God, and you have unlimited access to Him!

God of Peace, we thank and praise you for the peace we have through our Lord Jesus Christ. We rejoice in the access that we enjoy with you through Christ, and the promises of your presence, power and help in our lives. Help us to trust those promises so that we may live peaceful lives in confident faith. Help us to turn to you in times of trouble and to look to you for all good things. In the peace of Christ we pray, AMEN!

"How Firm a Foundation"

1. How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He hath said Who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?
2. In every condition, -- in sickness, in health, In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth, At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea, -- The Lord, the Almighty, they strength e'er shall be.
3. "Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismayed, For I am thy God and will still give thee aid; I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.
4. "When through the deep waters I call thee to go, The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow; For I will be with thee thy troubles to bless And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.
5. "When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply. The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.
6. "E'en down to old age all My people shall prove My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love; And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn, Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.
7. "The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose I will not, I will not, desert to his foes; That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never, forsake!"

Hymn #427 The Lutheran Hymnal Text: Isaiah 43:1-7 Author: "Keen", 1787, alt Composer: Bernhard Schumacher, 1931 Tune: "Firm Foundation"

Haggai 2:1-9

On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: **2** "Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, **3** 'Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? **4** But now be strong, O Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD. 'Be strong, O Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the LORD, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the LORD Almighty. **5** 'This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.' **6** "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. **7** I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty. **8** 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the LORD Almighty. **9** 'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty."

Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ 2 through whom we have gained access(E) by faith into this grace in which we now stand.(F) And we[b] boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we[c] also glory in our sufferings,(H) because we know that suffering produces perseverance;(I) 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope(J) does not put us to shame, because God's love(K) has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit,(L) who has been given to us. 6 You see, at just the right time,(M) when we were still powerless,(N) Christ died for the ungodly.(O) 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.(P) 9 Since we have now been justified(Q) by his blood,(R) how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath(S) through him! 10 For if, while we were God's enemies,(T) we were reconciled(U) to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!(V) 11 Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.(W)

John 14:26-27

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.