

October 16 Su Reading 289 — Haggai 2:1-9 — Work, for I Am with You!

¹ *In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet,* ² *“Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say,* ³ *‘Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?’* ⁴ *Yet 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. Work, for I am with you, declares the LORD of hosts,* ⁵ *according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.* ⁶ *For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land.* ⁷ *And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts.* ⁸ *The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts.* ⁹ *The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.”*

The Boss — God is an encourager and motivator in this passage. In obedience to God’s command, the people began to work on building the temple. Some of the old timers, however, remembered the beauty of Solomon’s temple, and the new structure going up seemed insignificant to them (*“Is it not as nothing in your eyes?”*—v. 3). But God’s challenge to them was to *“be strong”* (v. 4). This was the first of three commands to them, and it seems to be aimed at turning them away from outward appearances. To them, it was the size and the beauty that was of most importance, but that wasn’t God’s view. The Lord’s second command was *“Work”* (v. 4). Keep at it, no matter how unimportant it seems! When I was in college, I took a tour of a factory that made garden hoses. I was struck by the fact that one worker’s only job was to pick metal hose ends out of a bin and stand them on their end on a moving conveyor belt. How unimportant he must have felt! Do you know that someone in your church volunteers to go through all the seats in the building every week to make sure that the seat pockets are supplied with welcome cards and pencils? That might seem like an insignificant task, but what you are doing is not as important as Who you are working for. In fact, in the same sentence of God’s command to work, the reason is given: *“...for I am with you, declares the LORD of hosts”* (v. 4b). Your Boss will give you encouragement, energy, and purpose for your work. It is important to notice here, that God doesn’t promise to do the work for us, but only to help us do the work ourselves. God’s third command is, *“Fear not”* (v. 5), and the same kind of reason is given: *“My Spirit remains in your midst.”* Don’t worry about the apparent insignificance, the lack of beauty, not getting noticed, etc. God is with us. That is all we need.

[Little Is Much When God Is in It - YouTube](#)

Does the place you’re called to labor,
Seem too small and little known?
It is great if God is in it,
And He’ll not forget His own.

Little is much when God is in it,
Labor not for wealth or fame;
There’s a crown, and you can win it,
If you go in Jesus’ name.

— Kittie L. Suffield (1924)

In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, ² “The LORD was very angry with your fathers. ³ Therefore say to them, Thus declares the LORD of hosts: Return to me, says the LORD of hosts, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. ⁴ Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.’ But they did not hear or pay attention to me, declares the LORD. ⁵ Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? ⁶ But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? So they repented and said, ‘As the LORD of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us.’”

⁷ On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, ⁸ “I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses. ⁹ Then I said, ‘What are these, my lord?’ The angel who talked with me said to me, ‘I will show you what they are.’ ¹⁰ So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, ‘These are they whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth.’ ¹¹ And they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, ‘We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.’ ¹² Then the angel of the LORD said, ‘O LORD of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these seventy years?’ ¹³ And the LORD answered gracious and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. ¹⁴ So the angel who talked with me said to me, ‘Cry out, Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. ¹⁵ And I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little, they furthered the disaster. ¹⁶ Therefore, thus says the LORD, I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy; my house shall be built in it, declares the LORD of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. ¹⁷ Cry out again, Thus says the LORD of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.’”

Return ... Repent ... Restore — Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai, delivering God’s message to His people at the end of the Babylonian captivity. God first issued an invitation: “*Return to me, says the LORD of hosts, and I will return to you*” (v. 3). This was the whole purpose of their exile: to bring them back to God. That call of God continues to this day as He beacons people to come to Him. At least a significant number of the Hebrews responded positively: “*So they repented*” (v. 6), acknowledging that God had dealt with them justly. Part of repentance is turning away from sin, while the other part is turning toward God. There is another element, however, included here, which is admitting that God is right: “*As the LORD of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us*” (v. 6b). That shows a necessary attitude of humility in repentance: I was wrong and God was right. God then responded to this Jewish remnant in a loving, gracious way: “*...the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem*” (v. 17). God invites (“*Return*”), man responds (“*they repented*”), and God restores (“*comfort...choose*”).

Back to the Bible, the true Living Word,
Sweetest old story that ever was heard;
Back to the joy-life my soul longs to know,
Bethel is calling, and I must go.

Back to Bethel I must go,
Back where the rivers of sweet waters flow,
Back to the true life my soul longs to know,
Bethel is calling, and I must go.

— Baylus Benjamin McKinney (1931)

⁶ *Up! Up! Flee from the land of the north, declares the LORD. For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, declares the LORD.* ⁷ *Up! Escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.* ⁸ *For thus said the LORD of hosts, after his glory sent me^[fn] to the nations who plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye:* ⁹ *“Behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall become plunder for those who served them. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me.* ¹⁰ *Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD.* ¹¹ *And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.* ¹² *And the LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.”*

¹³ *Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.*

ESV Footnote

(2:8) Or *he sent me after glory*

The Apple of His Eye — This title expression is used four times in the Bible. The “*apple*” refers to the pupil of one’s eye, likely the most sensitive part of the body. In our passage for today, it refers to God’s protection: “...*he who touches you touches the apple of his eye*” (v. 8). Although God had allowed Assyria and Babylon to be “*the nations who plundered you*” (v. 8), it was like a poke in the eye to God. The people of Israel were His people; He chose them and He loved them. It is God’s nature to protect those who belong to Him. The same idea of protection is found in another use of this expression where David prayed, “*Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings*” (Ps. 17:8). God protects those He loves. That “apple” expression is first used in Deuteronomy 32:10, where God chose Israel as His people: “*He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.*” This is connected with God’s caring and His love. God not only protects us because He loves us, but He also nourishes us in a caring way. The last use of this expression speaks not so much about God’s character as it does about our own. God challenges us in Proverbs 7:2 to “*keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye.*” We are developing this attitude as we form the habit of spending time in God’s Word every day. It is becoming more valuable and precious to us.

This is a musical rendition of Psalm 17:

[Keep Me as the Apple of Your Eye - YouTube](#)

O keep me as the apple of Your eye,
Hide me in the shadow of Your wings.
Keep me as the apple of Your eye,
Hide me in the shadow of Your wings.

— Karl Kohlhasse (b. 1970)

¹ *And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep.* ² *And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.* ³ *And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its*

left.”⁴ And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”⁵ Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.”⁶ Then he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.”⁷ Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁹ “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.”^{10a} For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.

Whose Hands? — It is clear that God gave Zerubbabel the task of rebuilding the temple: “*The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it*” (v. 9). In spite of this, God said that it was, “*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts*” (v. 6). Whose hands would do the work? The hands of God or Zerubbabel? This is another example of mutual work, where God expects us to do our part, while He supplies all that is necessary to make it effective. God won’t do it without us. Depending on God should not be used as an excuse for refusing to work. We should remember that when we are faced with a challenging task. God will use us if we are willing to work hard at it. Trust Him while you work! Don’t desire to take the credit!

[To the Work! - YouTube](#)

To the work! To the work! There is labor for all;
For the kingdom of darkness and error shall fall;
And the name of Jehovah exalted shall be,
In the loud-swelling chorus, "Salvation is free!"

Toiling on, toiling on,
Toiling on, toiling on;
Let us hope, let us watch
And labor till the Master comes.

— Fanny Crosby (1820-1915)

October 20 Th Reading 293 — Zechariah 9:9-13 — Your King is Coming

- ⁹ *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*
- ¹⁰ *I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall speak peace to the nations;
his rule shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River^[fn] to the ends of the earth.*
- ¹¹ *As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.*
- ¹² *Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.*

13 *For I have bent Judah as my bow;
I have made Ephraim its arrow.
I will stir up your sons, O Zion,
against your sons, O Greece,
and wield you like a warrior's sword.*

ESV Footnote

(9:10) That is, the Euphrates

King Jesus — This passage covers a great expanse of time. It looks, first, at the return of God's people from Babylon ("*I will set your prisoners free*"—v. 11). The "*king ... coming to you*" (v. 9) in Zechariah's time would be in the form of a governor, Zerubbabel, who would lead the reconstruction of Jerusalem and its temple. This prophecy also looked forward to a time of Greek domination ("*against your sons, O Greece*"—v. 13). It was written almost 200 years before the Greeks, under Alexander the Great, would dominate the Palestinian area. They would rule there for nearly another 200 years, before the Jewish Maccabees revolted against the Greek king who offered a pig on the altar at Jerusalem's temple. And, more famously, this prophecy also looked forward to the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, just before His crucifixion (Matt. 21:1-11). This was the truly righteous and humble King of kings who was mounted on a donkey, rather than on a war horse (Zech. 9:9), and was speaking peace (v. 10). Finally, this prophecy actually extends to the future period following the Second Coming of Jesus, when "*his rule will be from sea to sea ... to the ends of the earth*" (v. 10).

[The King Is Coming - YouTube](#)

The King is coming!
The King is coming!
I just heard the trumpet sounding
and now His face I see.
The King is coming!
The King is coming!
Praise God, He's coming for me,
— Bill and Gloria Gaither (1970)

October 21 F Reading 294 — Zechariah 12:6-14 — Him Whom They Have Pierced

⁶ *"On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot in the midst of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaves. And they shall devour to the right and to the left all the surrounding peoples, while Jerusalem shall again be inhabited in its place, in Jerusalem.*

⁷ *"And the LORD will give salvation to the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not surpass that of Judah. ⁸ On that day the LORD will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, going before them. ⁹ And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.*

¹⁰ *"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. ¹¹ On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. ¹² The land shall mourn, each family^[fn] by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by*

themselves;¹³ *the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves;*¹⁴ *and all the families that are left, each by itself, and their wives by themselves.*

ESV Footnote

(12:12) Or *clan*; throughout verses 12–14

The Pierced Angel — In the return of the Jews from Babylon to Mount Zion in the Promised Land, God promised His protection and their prosperity. Part of that protection would come through “*the house of David*” (v. 8), the royal leaders of the people. In a remarkable comparison, that “*house of David*” is said to be “*like God, like the angel of the LORD going before them*” (v. 8). In this expression, “*God*” and “*the angel of the LORD*” are equated. The “*angel of the LORD*” is “*God*.” We have seen, earlier, that this special “angel” was likely the pre-incarnate Christ, and the close comparison in our passage for today seems to confirm that. Then, in the next paragraph, the picture changes to Mount Calvary: “*...when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced*” (v. 10). When the Roman soldiers came to break the legs of the three crucified men, they saw that Jesus was already dead, so “*one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water*” (John 19:34). Then John, adding that Scripture had been fulfilled by this act, quoted Zech. 12:10. The “angel of the LORD” had been pierced for us.

[O Sacred Head Now Wounded - YouTube](#)

O sacred Head, now wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down;
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Thine only crown!
How pale Thou art with anguish,
With sore abuse and scorn!
How does that visage languish,
Which once was bright as morn!

— Paul Gerhardt (1656)

October 22 Sa Reading 295 — Zechariah 14:1-9 — King Over All the Earth

¹ *Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst.* ² *For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.* ³ *Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle.* ⁴ *On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.* ⁵ *And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.*^[fn]

⁶ *On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost.*^[fn] ⁷ *And there shall be a unique*^[fn] *day, which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light.*

⁸ *On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea*^[fn] *and half of them to the western sea.*^[fn] *It shall continue in summer as in winter.*

⁹ *And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.*

ESV Footnotes

(14:5) Other Hebrew manuscripts *you*

(14:6) Compare Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, Targum; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

(14:7) Hebrew *one*

(14:8) That is, the Dead Sea

(14:8) That is, the Mediterranean Sea

That Day — This passage looks forward to a very special day. It is mentioned six times in these nine verses. When Zechariah said that God “*will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle*” (v. 2), it sounds like the predicted battle of Armageddon in Rev. 14:14-16. The drama of the Mount of Olives splitting in half at the Lord’s coming (Zech. 14:4), reminds us of the splitting of the curtain in the temple on the day of Jesus’ death, when “*the earth shook, and the rocks were split*” (Matt. 27:51). He will return as He left. When Zechariah wrote that “*the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him*” (14:5), it reminded me that the Apostle Paul said that “*God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep [died earlier]*” (1 Thess. 4:14). That the timing of this “*unique day ... is known to the LORD*” (Zech. 14:7) was still unknown in Jesus’ time: “*But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only*” (Matt. 24:36). At that time, there will be “*neither day nor night, but ... there shall be light*” (Zech. 14:7), which sounds like the description in Rev. 21:23 of that future city that “*has no need of sun or moon ... for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.*” All of this shows the infinite knowledge and creativity of God, and His ability to make it happen. What awaits us, folks, is not just something better than we have known; it is in a different category altogether. That day will be a new day in every sense.

[What a Day That Will Be - YouTube](#)

What a day that will be,
When my Jesus I shall see,
And I look upon His face,
The One who saved me by His grace;
When He takes me by the hand,
And leads me through the Promised Land,
What a day, glorious day that will be.

— Jim Hill (1955)