

Consider Your Ways!

5- Zerubbabel- the Chosen Signet Ring

March 13, 2022

Haggai 2:20-23

20 Then the word of the Lord came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying,

21 "Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, 'I am going to shake the heavens and the earth.

22 '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, everyone by the sword of another.'

23 'On that day,' declares the Lord of hosts, '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 hosts.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit; Amen.*

Now "*Christians*" are wicked sinners, upon whom God has "set His Love"- before the Foundation of the world. So, the only difference between these sinners and everybody else- is that, in spite of their wickedness- these rebels have been chosen to be saved. And that means God the Holy Spirit will draw (drag) them to Jesus- so He may, by God's Grace, purchase them.

So, based on nothing that they did for themselves- these sinners have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth and now have eyes that see; ears that hear; and a heart that is both willing and able to believe. And these sinners have been forgiven of all Sin and have also been made Righteous (Justification) by Faith alone. And this is what many people mean when they say, they have been "saved".

But after they have been "bought and paid for" by the Lord Christ- these elected sinners begin to believe and practice certain very specific things. And the "*certain things*" that Christians believe- is called, "*Orthodoxy*"; while the "*certain things*" that Christians practice- is called, "*Orthopraxy*".

Now before Salvation- Christians, like everybody else- are Lost. They are just like all lost people- in that they sin with impunity; and they rebel against God

and His Word with great delight. But after they have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth (receiving new spiritual Life) and have been “justified” (forgiven and made Righteous)- *Christians* (little Christs) endeavor to love God; and to find the fullness of their own Joy- by obeying the Commands of Jesus; and the Commands of the Spirit of Jesus that are found in the Bible.

But that Effort to obey *gladly*- is hindered by the World; the Flesh; and the Devil. And so, the success that Christians have in actually obeying God- with Joy- varies from one “*Believer*” to the next. And these Christians are also subjected to Trials; Persecutions; Afflictions; and various other Tests- that are specifically designed by God the Father to prove beyond any doubt that these individuals have, in fact been saved and to so change them- that they may share in God’s Own personal Holiness- a process that the Bible calls, “Sanctification” (**Hebrews 12:10**).

And in His Mercy and Wisdom- God has established several “*Means of Grace*”- which act as conduits from God to us- so that those who have already been justified may become “**strong in the Lord and in the Strength of His Might**” (**Ephesians 6:10**). These are “*Spiritual Disciplines*” that will strengthen us; encourage us; empower us; remind us; and help us to “*keep on keeping on*” in this amazing Drama of “Perseverance.”

And as we avail ourselves of these “*Means*” – we will “**see the Goodness of the Lord in the land of the living**” (**Psalm 27:13**). And among these “*Means*” are:

- Prayer Meetings
- Bible Studies
- Godly Fellowship
- The Lord’s Table
- Baptism
- Fasting
- Service to Others

So, as Christians endeavor to love God- we find that part of our Love for God is called, “*Right believing*” or “*Orthodoxy*.” And this is true because we know that false Teaching or False Beliefs are not only dishonoring to God- but they are also destructive to us. So, we are willing to cast off *any* “Belief”; or *any* “Doctrine” that Scripture proves is false. And we are willing to embrace any Belief or Doctrine that Scripture affirms.

So, we are constantly struggling against the lusts of our Flesh (which is empowered by the fallen world System and the devil), by the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; to be humbly and joyfully submitted to the Authority of

Scripture in our daily Life- all to the Glory of God! And part of us finding the fullness of our own Joy through striving to obey Jesus is called, “*Right Living*” or “*Orthopraxy*”.

And we have found out that we have no more of a Right to *believe* whatever we want to- than we do to *live* anyway we choose. Because those who “do what is right in their own eyes” are proving beyond any doubt that whatever Salvation experience they think they had- was false.

But that means that the “flip side” is also true; and it is just as much a Sin to “believe” *wrongly* as it is to “do” *wrongly*. But Christians have been called to love the Lord our God with ALL our Hearts; with ALL our souls; and with ALL our Strength. But we have also been called to love God with ALL our Minds as well. And so, the “*Life of the Mind*”- what we feed our Minds on and with- is crucial to our loving God. So, what we think; and why we think it; what we believe; and why we believe it- is part of this Love for God.

So, we see that what we believe translates into how we live our lives. And so, our daily lives proclaim what we truly believe.

And all of this is true because God didn’t save us so that we could merely escape Hell and go to Heaven. Now we *will* escape Hell; and we *will* go to Heaven. And we rejoice in that! But we have also been chosen to do here on earth- BEFORE entering into Heaven that which the Apostle Peter was “moved” to write in **1Peter 2:9**:

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

And so, each day, we endeavor to “*proclaim the Excellencies*” of Jesus Christ. So, we speak of Jesus’ Love and His Mercy and His Truth and His Righteousness. And we proclaim His virgin Birth; His sinless Life; His perfect Ministry; His vicarious (substitutionary) Death; and His bodily Resurrection to as many people as possible every day. Because faith in Jesus; and in His finished Work will take a black heart; and wash it with red Blood; and make it whiter than snow.

And as we read and study the Bible- we discover the breathtaking Attributes of God, the Almighty- like His Omnipotence; His Omniscience; His Omni-Presence; His Immutability; His Wisdom; His Love; His pristine Character that won’t allow Him to tell a lie.

And we also discover the Tri-unity of God- that this one, single God- is eternally manifested in three distinct Persons of God the Father; God the Son; and

God the Holy Spirit. And from that we rejoice in what the writer wrote in **Hebrews 1:2b-4**, that Jesus was:

... appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

... so, God the Father looks across from Himself (**John 1:1b**) and He sees His Own perfect Qualities reflected back to Him from the Face of His Son- and He loves what He sees. And two things are absolutely rock solid about this: The Father loves the Son with such a depth of Love that we cannot even fathom it. Nobody on earth has ever seen Love manifested to the extent that the Father has toward His Son. And that is because nobody pleases God like Jesus.

So, as we ponder all that the Scriptures teach about Jesus- we see the amazing Truth that Jesus never had a beginning. As God the Son- Jesus always existed. About 1,000 years before He took on flesh, King David wrote this about Jesus and God the Father in **Psalms 110:1**:

The LORD said unto my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

So, in his limited and vague way- based on the partial and unfinished Revelation that the incomplete Covenant gave him- David was saying that God the Father said to God the Son, *"Sit at My right Hand until I make Your enemies a Footstool for Your Feet."* And from that- we know several things like:

- Jesus was invited to "sit down"- meaning His Work and Ministry was finished.
- Jesus Work and Ministry was finished because ALL that God the Father sent Jesus to do- was accomplished
- Jesus was invited to sit down at God the Father's "Right Hand"- signifying a Place of Strength, Power, and Authority
- Jesus' Invitation to "sit down" in that Place of Power, Strength, and Authority is only temporary- it will only be true until ALL of God the Father's enemies become a Footstool for His Feet
- The term, "Footstool" has to do with not only bringing utter Defeat

to your enemy- but also doing it in such a way that brings public Humiliation to him.

- Not only will satan and all his Works be utterly defeated- but all those, who satan uses to continue satan's Work in the earth, will also be defeated and humiliated.

... and all of this will fulfill what the Prophet saw in **Habakkuk 2:14:**

For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea.

... which is simply a way to say that Jesus wins. Totally. Completely. Fully. And satan loses. Totally. Completely. And Fully.

And this will happen BEFORE Jesus comes back. In fact, the Reality that this has not yet happened- is what keeps Jesus away. So, the Church will *continue* to be built by Jesus- until ALL of those who have been chosen to be saved- Jews or Gentiles- are saved.

And as God's elect are saved- they will then be baptized. And as the Scriptures take hold on them- they will begin to walk on the "*Highway of Holiness*"- that straight and narrow Path that is reserved for ONLY those who have been redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb. And the Prophet saw this from a distance about 600 years before Jesus was born- and he wrote this in **Isaiah 35:8-10:**

8 A highway will be there, a roadway, And it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, But it will be for him who walks that way, And fools will not wander on it.

9 No lion will be there, Nor will any vicious beast go up on it; These will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk there,

10 And the ransomed of the Lord will return And come with joyful shouting to Zion, With everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, And sorrow and sighing will flee away.

And so, in every area of earthly existence- God's people will *overtake* the evil one and his followers in the earth- and we will begin to take over or rule over the earth. So, Engineering; and Politics; and Business; and Farming and Homemaking; and Education and Medicine; and Music and Finance and the Military; and every single earthly category of existence will be *dominated* by those, who have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth. And that means that satan and ALL his followers will become the *minority*; and by the Grace and

Power of God, the Almighty- the Redeemed will *systematically* transform those Disciplines- so that ALL of God's enemies will become a Footstool for His Feet.

And it is during this time that the Prophecy of Jesus will come to pass when He said this in **Matthew 13:41&42:**

**41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,
42 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

So, Jesus Himself will send His angels to gather out of God's Kingdom all who are evil and unsaved and those who are a stumbling block will throw them into Hell. And when will that happen? When Jesus comes back. Look at the Parable of the Tares and the Wheat that Jesus gave from **Matthew 13: 24-30:**

24 Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

25 "But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away.

26 "But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also.

27 "The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

28 "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?'

29 "But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them.

30 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

Now this is one of those rare Parables that Jesus actually explained. So, to see what Jesus meant by what He said, please look at **Matthew 13:36-43**

36 Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

37 And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,

38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one;

39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.

40 "So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.

41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,

42 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

43 "Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Now notice that Jesus said here in verse 39 that the Harvest- the time *when* this Parable will come to pass- is:

... the end of the age ...

And also please notice WHEN the Tares will be gathered up and thrown out of God's Kingdom from verse 30. Jesus said,

Allow both [the Tares and the Wheat] to grow together until the harvest [the End of the Age]; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers [the Angels], "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."

Jesus Himself said here that the Tares will be bound in bundles and burned- FIRST! So, according to Jesus- the saved will NOT be removed from the earth first- the Tares will. So, any "Rapture" that exists will consist of removing all of the Tares out of the Kingdom- which is here on the earth.

Now I realize that most people in the modern church have been taught that the saved will be "removed" or "raptured" out of this earth *first-* before the "**Man of Lawlessness**" is allowed to dominate the earth for a while (**2Thessalonians 2:3&4**).¹ But Jesus didn't believe or teach that. He believed and taught that the Tares- the fake believers- those who look like they're saved, but who have NOT been converted- they will be removed from this earth- FIRST! And then the Wheat- the true and genuine Believers- the true Church- will be gathered up and placed into the Father's Barn- at the 2nd Coming of Jesus to this earth (**Matthew 13:30; 1Thessalonians 4:13-18**).

¹ 1Thessalonians 4 depicts the 2nd Coming of Jesus and NOT a Rapture of the Church.

And this is how the “*Gentle*” (i.e. *the Meek/saved*) will inherit the earth (**Matthew 5:5**). And that is why the Apostle Paul wrote this about the 2nd Coming of Jesus to this earth in **Ephesians 5:25-27**:

**25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,
26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,
27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.**

So, at the End of the Age- King Jesus, Who said in **Matthew 28:18**,

... All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

... will achieve total and complete Victory over satan; and every human, who lived their lives in rebellion to God and was in league with satan. And every single enemy of God (including the “last” enemy- Death) will be utterly defeated and vanquished and publicly humiliated and in that way- they will be turned into a Footstool for His Feet. So, at His Coming- there will be NOTHING that is NOT put under the Lord Christ.

And this is what the writer was talking about when he wrote **Hebrews 2:5-9**:

5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.

6 But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM?"

**7 "YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;
8 YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET."**

For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.

9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

... and all of this is taking place during the time of the “*Great Shaking*” that God through the Prophet promised in **Haggai 2:6,7& 21**.

So, *part* of what is going on during this “*Great Shaking*” that Haggai saw- is that *in, by, and through* the auspices of the infinitely superior New Covenant (that has overtaken and utterly replaced the inferior Old Covenant)- ALL of God’s enemies are being confronted; they are being systematically overtaken; they are being utterly defeated; and they are being publicly humiliated! And this keeps with the way Jesus utterly defeated satan and publicly humiliated him from **Colossians 2:11-15** that says,

11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

... and all of this will happen AFTER Jesus died and rose again but BEFORE and DURING His 2nd Coming.

Now the time frame AFTER Jesus’ Resurrection but BEFORE His 2nd Coming is called, the “*Church Age*” or the “*Last Day*” or the “*Last Days*”. And as of this morning, we are approximately 22 years into the 3rd Millennial of the “*Church Age*” or the “*Last Days*” now.

But interestingly, God the Son was also instrumental in bringing about *partial* fulfillments of God’s Word; and was used to bring Hope and Encouragement to God’s people BEFORE He was born of a virgin and became, “Jesus”.

So, there are several “sightings” or “appearances” of God the Son on the earth in the Old Testament BEFORE He was born as a Man. Now this is a bit deep, so hold onto your hats.

We have to try to grasp the Reality that God- in all three of His “Persons” have *always* existed. God was never created Himself and there was never a time that God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit didn’t exist. So, God always has been; and always will be. He is truly, “*I AM*”. But even though that is

true- Jesus was born of a virgin- in the very *same* natural way that ALL human babies are born. And He was born at a particular point of time in History.

So, God the Son has *always* existed. He was NOT “made” at some point after Creation. That is a false Teaching and is not true. But even though God the Son has always existed- He took on flesh; was born as fully human baby; and BECAME Jesus- around 4BC.²

Now one of the things that makes God to be God (and NOT merely a “glorified Man”)- is the fact that God is “Holy”. And over the years, people have lost sight of what it means for God to be Holy. God’s Holiness is NOT about God’s Righteousness or God’s sinlessness. Now God IS Righteous- but that is a completely different Attribute of God.

Holiness is God’s “*otherness*”. You see, God is *unique*. He is *unlike* anything else that has been made. God is *distinct* and *set apart* and *different* and truly is a “*one-of-a-kind*” Being.

And, during the Old Covenant- God’s Holiness meant that He was *distant* and *detached* from what He had made. So, God was NOT a part of His Creation. In fact, it was the effort by some of the Jews to *deny* God’s Holiness that caused God to say this in **Psalm 50:21b**:

... You thought that I was just like you ...

... but He wasn’t. And the fact they were trying to make Him to be nothing more than a glorified Man was blasphemy. But the one, true, and living God has always been completely *separate* from all that He made.

And this is why it was so breathtaking, and initially so confusing, when God determined to take on flesh and, in addition to being fully God- became fully Man- which is called, the “Incarnation”.

Galatians 4:4&5

4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

John 1:1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

² This is my best guess at the year of Jesus’ Birth- based on the change in the calendar.

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

... and that makes the “Incarnation” the greatest Miracle of all time. Because the Incarnation is the “fleshing” of Almighty God. It is the moment when God *inserted* Himself into the Creation He made- and become a part of it. So, as fully Human- Jesus was a *part* of the Created world- even though He had never been created Himself. So, Jesus was now “Immanuel”- God with us. And this glorious Reality- that God was now “with us” that we rejoice over today- was a great stumbling block to the Jews.

And I understand how this can get very confusing. But we must remember that Jesus was THE single most *unique* Being that has ever or will ever exist. The LORD Jesus was “*fully God and fully Man; in the SAME Body; at the SAME time- without conflict or contradiction*”. And Jesus was here- with us- and those who lived then could actually see Him; and touch Him- while God the Father was and always will be- invisible and separate from Man.

So, as we talk about Jesus- we MUST always be careful. Because to emphasize Jesus’ full Deity over His full Humanity- will bring us into Error. And emphasizing His full Humanity over His full Deity will also bring us into Error. Because when the Incarnation took place- when God took on flesh and became fully Man- He did NOT cease to be fully God- like you might normally think. So, Jesus had two distinct Natures in Himself at the same time:

1. Fully Deity
2. Fully Human

... and theologians call the two Natures in Jesus- the “*Hypostatic Union*”.

But unlike Jesus- we can have ONLY one Nature at a time. So, our Nature is either “Fallen” or it is “Redeemed”- but it CANNOT be both. And even though we are ALWAYS sinners- we are either “Lost” or we are “Saved”- but we CANNOT be both.

Now BEFORE Jesus was Born- the 2nd Person of the Trinity was “*God the Son*” or the “*Word*” (Gr. Logos) (**John 1:1**) who had ONLY a Divine Nature. But AFTER He took on flesh and was born of a virgin (Mary)- God the Son became, “*Jesus*”, who had two distinct Natures. And before He was born- God the Son- like God the Father- was completely separate from all of Creation. But once Jesus was born- He became *part* of the created world- even though He personally remained Holy (separate).

Now I just want to stop here and say something before we go any further. Many people try to water all of this down- supposing they can then understand it better. And the logic is that if Jesus is hard to grasp- He can’t be helpful to us. But in Reality, that is a terrible idea. We are NOT better off by “dumbing down” deep and profound Concepts that we find in the Bible. Because part of our Worship of God- is that we should *marvel* at Him. And part of pleasing God- is us “*wondering*” after Him. And part of loving God- is us being *flabbergasted* at Him. We need to always remember that God wants us to be utterly *amazed* at Who He is. Look at what Jesus Himself said about this from **John 5:19&20**:

19 "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

20 "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.

... and look at what the Apostle Paul taught will happen when Jesus comes back to this earth in **2Thessalonians 1:6-10a**:

6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,

7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,

8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed

But there were a few times under the Old Covenant- BEFORE He was born of a virgin- that God the Son was manifested in the earth as other men- or even other objects. And these manifestations of the pre-incarnate Christ are called, “*Theophanies*” or “*Christophanies*”. For example, in **Genesis 18:1-33**, it says that God appeared to Abraham. And, at first, God was confronting Abraham and Sarah about whether they truly believed what God had told Abraham back in **Genesis 17**. But then the conversation turned toward the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah- as Abraham pleaded with God about how many righteous men would be enough to stop the Judgment. And then verse 33 says,

As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the Lord departed, and Abraham returned to his place.

Now, you may want to split hairs and say, “*But that was God appearing to Abraham and NOT Jesus.*” And I would agree with you except for two things:

1. Jesus *is* God
2. What Jesus said in **John 8:56-59**:

56 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

57 So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

So, in verse 56, Jesus clearly said,

Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

... and this happened in both **Genesis 17&18** in a “Pre-Incarnate appearance of Jesus” (Christophany).

But when the Pharisees mocked Him, and rejected His comment- Jesus replied by saying,

... before Abraham was born, I am."

Now Jesus was not using incorrect grammar here- He was now going way beyond a Christophany and was linking Himself to the "*Tetragrammaton*", which was the Statement God Himself made from the burning bush to Moses, in **Exodus 3:14:**

... I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

... and to prove that this is what Jesus was saying- look at the reaction the Pharisees had to Jesus' Statement in **John 8:59:**

Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Other Theophanies or Christophanies occurred in **Genesis 2:21&22; Genesis 4:3&4; Genesis 5: 22&24; Genesis 6:9; Genesis 7:16; Genesis 16:13; Genesis 21:20; Genesis 26:24; Genesis 25:22b&23; Genesis 28:13&15; Genesis 35:1; Exodus 33:11; Numbers 24:4&16; Deuteronomy 31:15; Judges 6:12; Judges 13: 3, 10,&21; 1Kings 11:9; The Acts 2: 25-28; and Hebrews 11:27.**

Now there are at least two things to keep in mind here:

1. All of the main heroes in the Old Testament (i.e Enoch; Noah; Abraham, etc.) are a pre-incarnate "type" of Christ. They represent one or more of the Characteristics of Jesus.
2. Even inanimate objects in the Old Testament represent Jesus. According to **1Corinthians 10:4-** the Rock that followed the Israelites as they journeyed through the wilderness for 40 years; and from which Moses got water- was actually a Christophany of Jesus. And Noah's Ark; The Tabernacle of David; The Bright and Morning Star; the Rose of Sharon; the Lilly of the Valley; the Sabbath; and even the Temple in Jerusalem itself were all "types" of Christ or Christophanies.

Now we must remember that the Old Covenant was NOT an End to itself. At no time was the Revelation of God complete within the Tenets and the Commands and the Ordinances and the Framework that we read in the Old Testament. There was ALWAYS MORE! The Old Covenant itself was a "Means" to much better End. It was NEVER the End itself. Because the End is the Person and Work of

the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember in **Luke 24**- Jesus told the men on the road to Emmaus that everything in the Old Testament was about Himself.

So, as we have already found out- the New Covenant is an infinitely *superior* Covenant; based on infinitely *superior* Promises; brought about by an infinitely *superior* Sacrifice; offered by an infinitely *superior* High Priest.

And because that is true- we understand or interpret the Old Testament by what the New Testament says. Because as great and as powerful as those Signs; Symbols; and Types were- at no time did any of these Christophanies come close to the Magnificence and the Glory of Lord Jesus Himself. That was reserved for the Son of David; the Son of Man; the Son of Mary- Jesus, the Christ, Who was born at a specific time in History. And when Jesus was born- God actually *inserted* Himself into His Own Creation and for the first time God became a part of what He had made.

And so, even though Jesus was fully God- He bled. And even though He was with God in the beginning- He died. And even though He was fully Deity, Jesus wept; and got hungry; and ate food; and was tired; and He slept; and He could only be in one physical location at a time. And all of these Limitations were the result of Jesus being fully Human- Yes! But they were also because Jesus was now a part of God's Creation and was no longer distinct from it.

And so, even though Jesus was God in every aspect- He HAD to submit Himself to His Father's Will. Jesus NEVER spoke a single word or did a single thing- that was His Own original idea. He HAD to perfectly obey His Father's Will at all times; and could ONLY act within that. And Jesus HAD to always be perfectly led by God the Holy Spirit. So, Jesus NEVER acted alone. He was ALWAYS subordinate to both God the Father and God the Spirit.

Now with all this in mind- I want you to look closely at what God instructed the Prophet to speak in **Haggai 2:21&22**:

21 "Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, 'I am going to shake the heavens and the earth.

22 '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, everyone by the sword of another.'

Now as we have already discovered, Haggai was looking far into the future, when God would bring about a climactic Shaking in the earth as the First or the Old Covenant was completed and in, by, and through Jesus Christ and His finished

Work- God would bring in the Final or the New Covenant! And that is what Haggai sees here in this great Shaking.

But then finally, look at the last inspired and inerrant words that God gave to Haggai to speak:

On that day,' declares the Lord of hosts, '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 hosts.

Now a “signet ring” was the ring that was used to seal important documents. They magistrates would drop hot wax onto the document and then the king (or his designee) would force his signet ring into the wax- so the imprint on the ring would transfer to the wax. And so now the document was “sealed” by the king or his official representative. And, under penalty of law- nobody could “unseal” the document except the person to whom it was sent.

So, it was the official seal- made by the signet ring- that allowed *everybody* to know that this document was very important and was from the king himself. And this is the idea behind what the Apostle Paul was teaching in **Ephesians 1:11-14**, that says,

11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Verse 13 tells us that we have been “sealed” in the same way that legal documents were sealed. But instead of God using a “signet ring” like was used by most documents- the spiritual signet ring for us- that proved that we belonged to Jesus- was the Holy Spirit Himself- who was promised (by Jesus) that he would come to us and dwell in us- forever!

And because the Holy Spirit now dwells inside of us- we bear godly fruit- which is the unmistakable Proof that we belong to Jesus.

So, Haggai is speaking on God’s behalf to Zerubbabel that he would be a type of a “signet ring”.

Now look closely at the beginning of verse 23. Haggai began this Prophecy by saying, “*On that day*”. And this is simply another way of saying, “*At that time*” or “*During that time*”. But what “*Time*” is Haggai referring to? Verse 21 & 22 gives us the Answer:

21 "Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, 'I am going to shake the heavens and the earth.

22 '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, everyone by the sword of another.'

This speaks of a violent time where God is overthrowing the Old Covenant and bringing in the New. Every time God made a monumental change in redemptive History- He always likened it with war and with battle and with soldiers and destruction. And that is what Haggai is speaking of here.

So, Zerubbabel, who was a direct ancestor of David, was NOT the promised Messiah himself (as many thought). But God would use this man as a “type” of Christ (Christophany) to help usher in the final, full, and completed Revelation of God in the New Covenant. Here is what John Calvin said about this in his Commentary on Haggai:

“The writer of **Hebrews** also rightly interprets this passage, when he teaches us, that this prophecy properly belongs to the Kingdom of Christ. (**Hebrews 12:26.**) There is therefore no doubt, but that the Prophet means here something special, when he introduces God as saying, ‘*Behold, I shake the heavens and the earth.*’ God then does not speak of his ordinary Providence, nor simply claim to himself the government of the heaven and of the earth, nor teach us that he raises on high the humble and the low, and also brings down the high and the elevated; but he intimates, that he has some memorable work in contemplation, which, when done, would shake men with fear, and make heaven and earth to tremble. Hence, the Prophet no doubt intended here to lead the Jews to the Hope of that Redemption, some prelude of which God had then given them; but its fullness could not as yet be seen — nay, it was hid from the view of men: for who could have expected such a renovation of the world as was effected by the coming of Christ? When the Jews found themselves exposed to the wrongs of all men, when so small a number returned, and there was no kingdom and no power, they thought themselves to have been as it were deceived. Hence the Prophet affirms here, that there would be a wonderful Work of God, which would

shake the heaven and the earth. It is therefore necessary that this should be applied to Jesus Christ; for it was, as it were, a new creation of the world, when Christ gathered together the things scattered, as the Apostle says, in the heaven and in the earth. (**Colossians 1:20.**) When he reconciled men to God and to angels, when he conquered the devil and restored life to the dead, when he shone forth with his own righteousness, then indeed God shook the heaven and the earth; and he still shakes them at this day, when the gospel is preached; for he forms anew the children of Adam after his own image. This spiritual regeneration then is such an evidence of God's power and grace, that he may justly be said to shake the heaven and the earth. The import of the passage is, that it behoved the Jews to form a conception in their minds of something greater than could be seen by their eyes; for their redemption was not yet completed.”³

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

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