December 7–13: Haggai; Zechariah 1–4; 7–14 "Holiness Unto the Lord"

Introduction

After the Persians defeated the Babylonians, the king of Persia gave the Jews permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple and the city walls.

Haggai and Zechariah were among the prophets who returned to Jerusalem. They encouraged the Jews to obey the Lord's commandment to rebuild the temple, but the people were slow to respond to this calling.

Commandment to Rebuild the Temple

Haggai urges the people to examine their priorities and make rebuilding the temple their primary concern.

Hag 1:3-7
3 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,
4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?
5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.
6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.
7 Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.

What was missing from the people's lives that kept them from finding satisfaction despite their efforts to prosper?

(Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste)

Terence M. Vinson
"Somewhat hidden in the Old Testament book of Haggai is a description of a group of people who... got it wrong by not placing Christ at the center of their lives and their service. Haggai paints some thought-provoking word pictures as he reprimands these people for staying in their comfortable houses instead of building the Lord's temple....

"Don't you love those descriptions of the futility of prioritizing things of no eternal consequence above the things of God?" (CR, Oct. 2019)

We can't expect to find true joy in our temporal blessings when we neglect our spiritual responsibilities and fail to keep our covenants.

The Lord promises to bless the people if they are obedient and complete the rebuilding of the temple.

Hag 2:6-7,18-19,22
6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;
7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider it.
19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.

22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

How will the Lord bless His people for making the temple a priority?

Spiritually:	(I will fill this house with glory)
Materially:	(from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn?... from this day will I bless you)
Protection:	(I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen)

The Lord promises to help the work move forward as they diligently carry it out.

Zech 6:15
15 And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

As we learned in our study of Ezra, when the people finally made rebuilding the temple a priority, the Lord greatly blessed them.

Jerusalem in the Last Days

Zechariah describes events that will take place in Jerusalem in the latter days. However, his account can be confusing because he does not present these events in chronological order. The Doctrine and Covenants, on the other hand, provides a summary of these events in chronological order.

D&C 45:47-53
47) Then shall the arm of the Lord fall upon the nations.
48) And then shall the Lord set his foot upon this mount, and it shall cleave in twain, and the earth shall tremble, and reel to and fro, and the heavens also shall

shake.
49) And the Lord shall utter his voice, and all the ends of the earth shall hear it; and the nations of the earth shall mourn, and they that have laughed shall see their folly.
50) And calamity shall cover the mocker, and the scorner shall be consumed; and they that have watched for iniquity shall be hewn down and cast into the fire.
51) And then shall the Jews look upon me and say: What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet?
52) Then shall they know that I am the Lord; for I will say unto them: These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God.
53) And then shall they weep because of their iniquities; then shall they lament because they persecuted their king.

The Lord will gather the Jews from the many nations where they have been scattered and bring them back to Jerusalem.

Zech 2:10-12
10 ¶ Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.
11 And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.
12 And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.

Could you make a case that this prophecy has been or is being fulfilled in our day?

After the Jews return to Jerusalem, all nations will come into conflict with them.

Zech 12:2-3
2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.
3 ¶ And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

How will Jerusalem become a source of trouble and conflict for the nations of the world?

Could you make a case that this prophecy has been or is being fulfilled in our day?

Neal A. Maxwell
"The Middle East has been at the intersection of human history so many

> times! Yet in our time the words of Zechariah are especially descriptive, saying that Jerusalem is to be 'a cup of trembling' for 'all the people round about" and "a burdensome stone for all people'" (CR, April 1988)

During this initial period of turmoil, Christ will fight on behalf of Jerusalem.

Zech 9:13-17
13 When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.
14 And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.
15 The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.
16 And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.
17 For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.

> Could you make a case that this prophecy has been or is being fulfilled in our day?
>
> (filled the bow with Ephraim
> and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning
> The LORD of hosts shall defend them)

One way the Lord will defend Jerusalem is by raising up two prophets who will perform mighty miracles to protect the city.

Zech 4:11-14
11 ¶ Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?
12 And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?
13 And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.
14 Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

> We learn more about these prophets in the book of Revelation. But…
> What do we learn about these two prophets from the Lord's description in verse 14?
>
> (These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth)

Orson Pratt
"By means of their prophecies and the power of God attending them, the nations who are gathered together against Jerusalem will be kept at bay, these Prophets will hold them in check by their faith and power. By and by these nations overcome the two witnesses and, having finished their mission, they are slain, and their bodies will lie three days and a half in the streets of the city. Then a great earthquake will take place, and these two witnesses will be caught up to heaven." (JD, 16:326)

After these two prophets are killed, Jerusalem will be overrun by its enemies.

Zech 14:2
2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Bruce R. McConkie
"All the desolation and waste which attended the former destruction of Jerusalem is but prelude to the coming siege.... In the coming reenactment of this "abomination of desolation," the whole world will be at war, Jerusalem will be the center of the conflict…. In the midst of the siege the Son of Man shall come, setting his foot upon the mount of Olives and fighting the battle of his saints." (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1: 659)

As the Battle of Armageddon rages, Christ will appear on the Mount of Olives, and the surviving Jews will be delivered.

Zech 14:4-5
4 ¶ And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.
5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

How will the Lord's appearance on the Mount of Olives change the outcome of the battle for Jerusalem?

Orson Pratt
"While they are in the very act of destroying Jerusalem, behold the heavens are rent, and the Son of God with all the heavenly hosts appears, and he descends and rests upon the summit of the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. And so great will be the power of God that will then be made manifest, that the mountain will divide asunder, half going towards

the south, and half towards the north, producing a great valley going east and west, from the walls of Jerusalem eastward.

"What next? The Jews that are not taken captive by these nations, will flee to the valleys of the mountains.... The personage they have been looking for some eighteen hundred years is the true Messiah, and now, say they-'He has come to deliver us.'" (JD, 18:65)

At that point, they will recognize Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Zech 13:6
6 And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

Zech 12:10-12
10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.
11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.
12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;

What will the Lord give the Jews that will bring them to a sure knowledge that Jesus Christ is their promised Messiah?

(I will pour upon the house of David... the spirit of grace and of supplications)

Ezekiel 36:26-28
26) A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.
27) And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.
28) And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Why do you think the Jews mourn so deeply when they recognize that Jesus Christ is the Messiah they had rejected and crucified?

Joseph Fielding Smith
“Then they will accept Him as their Redeemer, which they have never been willing to do. Then is the time as spoken of in this passage from Zechariah when… they will mourn and they will weep because they were not willing

> to accept the Son of God but accepted the teachings of their fathers and rejected their Redeemer and Messiah. Then they will fall down at His feet and worship Him. After these days will come their redemption and the building of Jerusalem." (Signs of the Times, pg. 171–72)

A fountain of pure water will begin flowing from the temple.

Zech 13:1
1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

- This fountain is likely the same spring of living water described in Ezekiel 47:1, which flows from beneath the threshold of the temple, forming a river that eventually heals the waters of the Dead Sea.

> Orson Pratt
> "A stream will break out from under the threshold of the Temple, says the Prophet, and it will run eastward, and will probably pass directly through the deep valley made by the parting of the Mount of Olives….
>
> "This is the fountain that Zechariah says is open to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of David for sin and uncleanness…. Then the Jews will receive the Gospel and they will be cleansed from all their sins by being baptized in water for their remission." (JD, 18:66)

The Lord will dwell and reign in Jerusalem, and people from all nations will come to seek Him.

Zech 8:3,23
3 Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.

23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.

Zech 14:9,11
9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

11 And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

What will change in the world when Jesus Christ reigns as King over all the

earth?

> John Taylor
> "The Lord will be king over all the earth, and all mankind literally under his sovereignty, and every nation under the heavens will have to acknowledge his authority, and bow to his scepter. He will enforce his laws, and command that obedience from the nations of the world which is legitimately his right. Satan will not then be permitted to control its inhabitants, for the Lord God will be king over all the earth." (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor, pg. 225)