

The Desire of All Nations

BY PASTOR DAVID GUZIK

The new "Guest Teacher" column will feature different Calvary Chapel teachers each issue.



“And I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,” says the LORD of hosts. “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,” says the Lord of hosts.

Haggai 2:7-8

The book of Haggai begins a new period of biblical history, speaking to the Israelites after the 70-year Babylonian captivity. Jerusalem and the temple had been conquered and destroyed by the Babylonians and had lain in rubble for two generations. As the former exiles and their descendents trickled back to Jerusalem, they had a difficult task in front of them. First they had to rebuild the temple—a job filled with discouragement.

The first temple was built at the height of Israel’s ancient glory under Solomon. No expense was spared in making a magnificent temple unto God. Yet these returning exiles were acutely aware that they were rebuilding with limited resources, in both money and labor. They had a huge, discouraging job in front of them—especially because they felt that even their best would never be as good as Solomon’s temple. After all, King Solomon spent the modern equivalent of \$5 billion to \$8 billion building the first temple.

That is why God wanted to encourage Israel through the prophet Haggai. In this passage, God assured the discouraged builders of the once-glorious temple that their work would have a unique glory, making it even greater than Solomon’s temple. The marble and mortar of this second temple might be less than Solomon’s, but the greatness of a temple is not measured only in marble and mortar.

This second temple would be greater than the first because in it, “They shall come to the Desire of All Nations.” Through the centuries, most see this as a prophecy of the Messiah coming to this temple rebuilt in the days of Haggai and Ezra. This under-

standing began with the ancient rabbis and continued among Christians, and fulfills the promise of filling the “temple with glory.”

While Jesus never visited Solomon’s temple, He did visit this second temple some 400 years after the time of Haggai. Jesus’ presence gave this second temple a unique glory: He is the true Desire of All Nations, even if the nations themselves do not know it. When the world cries out for a true reformer to bring real justice, they unknowingly cry out for Jesus.

If the world could consolidate all her wild wishes in one request; if every true humanitarian could condense their philosophies and extract true wisdom—it would all come down to this: *Send us a God-made man.* This is exactly what we have in Jesus. The unaware nations grope in the dark, but Jesus truly is “The Desire of All Nations.”

Knowing that Jesus is the Desire of All Nations also encourages our missionary work. This is true in two ways: First, we are

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confident that the nations desire Jesus even when they are not aware of this desire. This sleeping desire among the nations assures us that there is an audience for the Gospel wherever we go. Second, *we* desire Him for all nations. This desire drives us to continue missionary prayer, support, and labor.

God gave hope to the temple-rebuilders in a second way. He assured them, “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine.” Even though they didn’t have much money for the building project, they didn’t need to be discouraged. They were to boldly trust the God who owned every resource and then give generously.

Hudson Taylor, groundbreaking missionary to China in the second half of the 19th century, experienced this principle early in life. As a young man, he preached in boarding houses in the poor slums of London. A poor man asked Taylor to come back to his room and pray for his wife who had suffered complications from childbirth and was near death. The man had no money and couldn’t afford to pay a priest to come perform last rites. Taylor went to the man’s room and found the heartbreaking situation—several children, the afflicted mother, and a two-day-old baby living in filth and squalor with no food or money. Taylor knew he had a half a crown in his pocket that would meet their needs, but it was all the money he possessed. He began to speak to the family about God when the Lord spoke to his own heart: “You hypocrite! Telling these unconverted people about a kind and loving Father in heaven, and not prepared yourself to trust Him without your half a crown.” Taylor wished that he had two shillings and a sixpence, and he would gladly have given them one shilling plus the sixpence—but all he had was one

half a crown. He was taken aback but decided to lead the family in the Lord’s Prayer. As soon as he said the words “Our Father Who art in Heaven,” the Lord convicted him of his hypocrisy again. He struggled through the prayer under tremendous conviction and then gave the father the half-crown piece. That provision met the needs of the family, and Taylor came again to the assurance that all the silver and gold in the world belongs to God, and He takes care of those who trust Him as a loving Father.

This was valuable assurance to the builders in the days of Haggai and also for us. God will bring glory to our lives and work with the presence of Jesus. God, when trusted as a loving Father, will supply us out of His great, unseen resources. Thank Him for it today.



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