

## The Shaking, The Suffering & The glory 18 April 2020

The current state of the world has left us wondering and we ask ourselves what is going on? I am not going to endeavor to answer this question, however, as I have been praying and studying the Word, revisiting some of the scriptures speaking of the end times; they give us a glimpse of understanding. When reading Matthew 24, Jesus speaks about destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and how it will be rebuilt in three days. Jesus also speaks about signs of the end of the age in verses 6-8, “And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup>For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup>All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.” ESV

The image of the Temple plays a significant role in the redemption story. From the Old Testament to the New Testament we see a parallel between the Temple of God representing His presence among His people and how the Temple also represents the people of God. This theme culminates in the book of Revelation with deeper understanding of the Temple.

When studying the book of Haggai, we learn about the Temple of God being destroyed. The word of the Lord came to Zerubbabel, the Governor of Judah, Joshua the Priest and the People by the hand of Haggai the prophet to rebuild the temple. The people were reluctant and saying it is not yet time to rebuild the Temple. God was not pleased by this and we read in verse 4 to 5 “Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses, while this house lies in ruins? <sup>5</sup>Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. <sup>6</sup>You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.” <sup>7</sup>Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Consider your ways. <sup>8</sup>Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the LORD.” ESV

The essence of this word is, consider your ways. The blessing of the Lord is not with you because you have prioritised your own wants before the Lord. Remember the Temple is just a symbol. The question for us is, how have we prioritised the things of this world before our God? The Israelites responded with repentance. Verse 12 ESV “Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD.” The words of 2 Chronicles 14:7 after the dedication of Solomon’s Temple rings a bell, “if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” ESV

We stand in the gap as the children of God to repent, pray and seek His face may the Father hear from Heaven and heal our world. May I appeal that we prioritise prayer and may we lament and cry before our God for His intervention.

The prophet continues with the prophesy in chapter 2 of Haggai, verse 4-8 “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,** <sup>5</sup> according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. **Fear not.** <sup>6</sup> 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.** <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup> **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.’”

Work for I am with you. Rebuild, for I am with you. The Lord of Host is with us. The Sovereign Lord is with us. He says work, rebuild, you are not alone, I am with you. He also says Fear not, Be strong.

God is shaking the heavens and the earth, the seas and the dry land. He is shaking ALL the earth. God is shaking everything that can be shaken. The shaking is so that the treasures of all the nations shall come in to the house of the Lord. The treasures of this world already belong to Him, its time they are used to glorify Him. God says, then, I will fill my house with glory. His magnificence, His beauty and His splendour. The glory the latter house, the latter temple shall be greater than the glory of the former house. This house will have peace.

God is shaking everything that can be shaken, **His kingdom cannot be shaken** and things that cannot be shaken will remain. In Hebrews 12:26-27 we read that “At that time His voice shook the earth, but now He has promised, “Yet once more **I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.**” <sup>27</sup> This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates **the removal of things that are shaken**—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. <sup>28</sup> Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup> for our God is a consuming fire.” ESV

In this hour, in this season, God is shaking our idols. He is shaking the places where people draw their identity and security. This is so that we can worship Him alone. Let us offer to God acceptable worship, not half-hearted worship, but whole-hearted worship. Let us come before Him with reverence and awe. Let us be careful of familiarity, for our God is a consuming fire! Jesus speaks about a person who hears His words and puts them into practice is like a wise man who builds his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. The current covid-19 global pandemic and the economic crisis downturn are a great test of how we have built over the years and the months before. If you have built on the rock, you will stand and not be crippled by fear and swallowed by anxiety. May this be a wakeup call to all of us take the Word, prayer and fellowship seriously.

**The big question is what are you building and how are you building it? Will it survive the storms of life and will it survive testing by fire?**

When we study the Word, when we pray & preach the gospel, when we gather for fellowship & serve, we are building on solid ground. Psalms 125:1-2 NIV “Those who trust in the Lord

are like Mount Zion, **which cannot be shaken but endures forever**. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and forevermore.” We are surrounded, God got us.

**1 Corinthians 3:10-17 ESV** “According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. <sup>11</sup> For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. <sup>14</sup> If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? <sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.”

Our bodies are God’s Temple and God’s Spirit dwells in us. How are we looking after God’s property? Jesus also referred to His body as a Temple. We read in John 2:18-22 “So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” <sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” <sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” <sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup> When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.”

From where we started Jesus speaking of the destruction of the Temple, His body and soon after He speaks about the signs of the end of the age and He says, these are but the beginnings of birth pains. It’s not yet the end, it’s the beginning and then a clincher ... Matthew 24:14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” ESV  
There is no need to explain this verse, if we truly understand the purpose for which God created us, the gospel should take priority over everything. No end until all have heard, every tongue, every tribe, every nation. This is how the temple gets restored. First the shaking, then the restoration.

The beginning of birth pains, the shaking, then restoration. Revelations 21:22-26, gives us deeper meaning of the Temple. It says there is no temple in Heaven because God and Jesus are the Temple. The city does not need the sun nor the moon for the glory of the Lord gives it light and its lamp is the Lamb, Jesus, the light of the world. Kings of the earth will bring their glory on to it. Just the Haggai’s prophecy that nations will bring their treasures into God’s temple and God’s glory will fill the Temple. Revelation 21:22-26 “And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, <sup>25</sup> and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> They will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. <sup>27</sup> But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

This text brings us to this conclusion, the destruction of the Temple, Jesus on the cross & our suffering are achieving for us an eternal weight of glory that far outweighs them all (2 Cor. 4:17). In the letter to the Galatians, Apostle Paul writes, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

The Bible says, if we suffer and endure with Him, we will reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12).  
First the cross then the crown!

"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."

**1 Peter 5:10 ESV**