

The Baby That Shook the Nations

Haggai 2:6-9

Introduction – It's almost funny. Modern evangelicals, in their misplaced desire to be 'one of the guys' in our culture, continue to try to weaken the antithesis, whether it be through dumbed-down revival meetings, Jesus-junk for our contemporary converts, or universalistic statements that all religions from Abraham are worshipping the same God. But unbelievers can still smell the strong-whiskey of the gospel no matter how much we water it down. Despite our attempts to make Jesus a 'user-friendly' Savior, the King County Executive still won't let the King of kings into his offices. Herod knew well and good that the little Baby wrapped in swaddling clothes was a threat and attempted to destroy any remnant of that manger scene.

Shake the Nations (v6, Heb 12:26-28) – The earth shook at Sinai, but the writer of Hebrews teaches us that Haggai pointed to the removal of the Old Covenant administration, the destruction of the temple (the one being built in Haggai's day) and the old sacrificial system, as the shaking of the heavens and the earth.

During Christ's Life – The heavens and the earth are shaken when God comes in the flesh. A new star appears at Christ's birth, the sun goes dark, the rocks split, and the dead are raised at His death. The veil in the temple is rent. During Christ's life, He displayed His supreme authority over every visible and invisible power.

Imagery in Shaking – Certainly, more than these physical signs are meant in this passage, as we have already seen in the use of the passage in the New Testament. Why the imagery of shaking? Political and religious systems never naturally bow to the infinite, exclusive, and final authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jew and Gentile are all under sin and no one turns to God in honest repentance on their own. The baby Jesus along with his true followers are the smell of death to those who are perishing. Things have to be shaken up. Jesus brings peace, but He doesn't come in peace.

The Desire of All Nations (v7) – If the AV translation should be used, then '*the Desire of All Nations shall come*'. Why is He referred to as the '*Desire*'. He is the Choice One, the Elect of the Father, and the One whom all turn to when the Holy Spirit grants new hearts. And so it can also be said that they come to the Desire of All Nations (Matt 2:9-11).

Eternity in Their Hearts – It can also be said that in each culture, there is a dim, hidden hope of reconciliation with our Maker, and for One to come who will bring the Truth and bring peace. The dispersion of Jews into the world on several occasions has caused many cultures to hear and imitate the stories of Creation, the Fall, and the hope of redemption.

A Temple Full of Glory (vv7-9, Luke 2:25-32, John 2:13-22, 1 Pet 2:4-8) – This second temple is where baby Jesus is brought by his parents. He will return there and teach as a boy and later, as a man, cleanse this temple, for it is His.

He is the Temple – The prophesy is not just for that physical temple, which is simply a type of the body of Christ. And then Peter teaches us that we are the temple, the house of God being built.

Silver and Gold – When Haggai preached, those who had seen the first temple were weeping over the lack of glory in the second (v 3). But the antitype lacks nothing in glory or victory (Psalm 2:8, Isaiah 60:5-6, Matt 28:18).

"Before the Lord takes possession of his people, and in order to it, 'He shakes the heavens and the earth.' Their former views of God and of themselves are altered by a light which penetrates the soul. All that they have been building in religion, till then, is shaken and overturned. Their vain hopes are shaken to the foundation. This concussion makes way for the perception of His glory as a Savior. In this day of His power they are made willing to throw open the gates of their hearts, that the King of glory may enter." – John Newton.

Is the Desire of All Nations the object of your chief desire? Then a Christmas celebration of victory is in order.

Conclusion – Try, if you like, to hide in the Christmas traditions as mere sentimental trimmings. In the end, nothing masculine (including your boys) will remain. Or turn and celebrate Christmas in all of its triumph (light over darkness, the 'old' man gone and the 'new' man put on, the outpouring of gifts and the new wine of the new covenant, or the Jubilee from debt and work, just for starters). But remember, when you mention the triumph of 'the Desire of All Nations', it won't be received without a fight. "He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove..."

