

# Christ In All The Scriptures

## Haggai

### Introduction

When Haggai is read it is observed that the only apparent term referring to the Lord is, “Desire of all Nations” (Hag. 2:7). However, since there is a debate as to whom this term really refers to, I will consider the Lord in a different way. There is no doubt for many He is the longed for One as in the Old Testament they oftentimes spoke about His coming to be the glory of Israel and to lighten the Gentiles. This is the understanding Simeon had (Lk. 2:31-32).

To appreciate the grace of God as manifested in Malachi, it is important to consider the spiritual condition of the people of God. The decree to rebuild the walls and temple had been given years previously. With zeal they began the building, but in the passing of time the building of the temple had been drastically reduced to being almost forgotten about. It had become a “one day we will get to building it”. They had forgotten priorities and had been and were taken up with their own things and the result was, the things of God were left undone. There was another personal national spiritual situation in that they were so deeply anesthetized by sin that they were ignorant of how far they were from God and the seriousness of their complacency. Yet, God in grace, through the ministry of Malachi, Zerubbabel and Joshua, the people were exhorted to build the temple. How gracious of God to spare them when they had almost forgotten Him, taking His blessings but no time for Him.

### What is Grace?

Taking a snapshot view, mercy and grace are both manifestations of the pity, compassion, and love of God. Mercy is more than God not imputing to me the punishment for my rebellion. Sin cannot be ignored. It is the perfection of God in not withholding the punishment I deserve, but righteously imputing it to another who, of His own volition, took my place as my substitute. Grace does not just release me from the guilt and affliction due to sin, but righteously offers and bestows salvation and all that goes with it. The scriptures inform us, “For by grace are ye saved through faith” (Eph. 2:8), “Christ died for our sins” (1 Cor. 15:3), and “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins”, that is mercy; and “to bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18), that is grace. No lips can tell either in one language or a combination of every known and forgotten language the riches of the mercy and grace of Divine Persons.

But, God’s mercy and grace was multiplied in that they committed the most insulting wickedness. Wilfully they had gone and worshipped other gods, offered their children in sacrifices, and this was not a once happening but multiple times. To the masses God’s law meant nothing, the glory of having the true God was of no account, and His promises of a coming Messiah were just words on a page. Yet, God pleaded with them to return to Him. Like them, how many times have we repeatedly sinned and yet gently He calls us back to Himself? The manifestation of God in Haggai is grace.

### God’s Grace in Christ

Passing over several hundred years, when the fulness of time was come God sent forth His Son to show His grace as it had never been seen before. God came down, not for a brief visit, not in the appearance of a human being, but actually became a babe in Bethlehem. The scriptures record, “the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (Jn 1:17). Never was and never will be the grace of God be shown so wondrously as when He gave, put forth His Son to be the sacrifice for sin, which leads to the questions:

- a) Was there any human being ever on earth who deserved such a display and gift of grace? The answer is a resounding “NO”! The Holy Spirit used the holy Apostle Paul to gather fourteen scriptures from the sacred canon which was divided into two groups of seven. The first group reported God’s critique of man universally. The first seven reveal the totality of my indifference to Him:

*“What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh*

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*after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Rom 3:9-12).*

- b) The second group of statements reveal the totality of my sinful nature, the opposite to that which God is:

*“Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3:13-18).*

- c) To such undeserving sinners as Israel was (for they were no different from us and in Romans the Holy Spirit was giving His judgment on Jews and Gentiles) God demonstrates His grace:

*“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom. 4:6-10).*

Grace had been shown to humanity when the Lord came into this world “to seek and to save” (Lk. 19:10) and again, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

As with every attribute of God, and consequently every meditation on Divine Persons, the individual is led into paths of unfathomable truths. Pondering the grace of God the individual is stopped in their tracks as they muse on the fact that the man who was wounded and slain at Calvary was God. Ungraspable it stands, God cannot die yet the man who died was God and the man who shewed and will for all eternity, bear in His body the marks of His wounds and evidence of His death is God.

Without His vicarious sufferings divine mercy and grace could never have been demonstrated. Divine love would never be known, the grace which gives us a place before God would be a vain hope; and a secured redemption, justification, reconciliation would be meaningless words.

### The Cry of The Lord For Man’s Forgiveness

Gazing on the Lord as He hung on Calvary’s cross we read His prayer which wondrously displays His grace. “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34).

- a) Did they not know what they were doing? On one level “Yes” but on another level “No”. They knew they were having a man crucified, but they did not know in an understanding who they were crucifying. Because of their spiritual blindness (Eph. 4:18) they acted in ignorance. Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit, preached saying to the Jews, “And (you) killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses . . . . And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers” (Acts 3:15, 17).

Many years ago in Africa lived an exceedingly wealthy man who was also the judge in the area. It was discovered that some of his jewellery was going missing and he did two things. A decree was made that when the thief was caught they would receive forty lashes. To catch the thief he had a police officer hide in a little room from where he could see everything. One day the door of the treasure house opened and in came the Judge’s mother. Working stealthily she removed some of the jewellery, she was the thief. When brought to court her son sat on the bench and asked his mother if she was guilty. She acknowledged her guiltiness. Now what will happen? If he gives his own mother the sentence of forty lashes, where is the love? If he lets her go, where is the justice? Deliberately taking off his robes and upper clothing he went to the judgment area and received the lashes, the decreed judgment for her. On the last stroke he died. The mother was forgiven at the price of the death of another.

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This is what was partly entailed in this prayer of the Lord but He secured grace so that: “As He is, so are we in this world” (1 Jn. 4:1), not as He was but as He is, in perfect manhood before God and by the grace of God we are “accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6) and have received the blessedness of “forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:7). How truly David described the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying:

“Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered”  
(Rom. 4:7)

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**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.  
John 16:13**

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