

Shake

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Hag 2:6

(BHS)

כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
עוֹד אֶתֶת מְעַט הָיָא
וְאֲנִי מִרְעִישׁ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ
וְאֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־הַיַּבֵּשׁ:

(NCV)

This is what the LORD **All-Powerful** says:
‘In a short time **I** will once again
shake the **heavens** and the **earth**,
the **sea** and the **dry land**.’

The first line is woodenly, “For thus says Yahweh (of) hosts.” NCV chose to translate *Sabaoth* with “All-Powerful.” In the third and fourth lines you can make out heavens, earth, sea, and dry land. After having identified those words, you should be able to find “shake.” The **pronoun** in English line 2 is in Hebrew line 3. Line 2 is the hard one, “Again one little it.” Erskine’s professor Max Rogland persuasively argues, “One more thing is a small matter.” It is a small thing for God to shake up everything. Email me and I can send you his (lengthy) article.

Haggai prophesied this when the newly founded Temple turned out to be a big disappointment compared to what was lost. “Do any of you remember how great the Temple was before it was destroyed? What does it look like now? Doesn’t it seem like nothing to you?” (v3). The prophecy affirmed that this Temple had a role to play in the future history of humanity, and of the Jews in particular.

The shaking is a promise that the nations’ wealth will be shaken loose to adorn the Temple (Hag 2:7). The kingdom of God will lack nothing of value in the end. “The new Temple will be greater than the one before” (v9).

Of course, this Temple never did materially achieve the glory of Solomon's Temple, and in AD 70 it was destroyed by the Romans. In my reckoning, the only possible fulfillment of the prediction that the glory of the latter Temple will exceed the former is that the Lord of Glory himself—Jesus Christ—worshipped there. But what about the prophecy that God will shake everything up?

Christians today still look forward to that Day when God will “once more” shake all things that are shakable. Take a look at what the New Testament has to say about our verse:

So be careful and do not refuse to listen when God speaks. Others refused to listen to him when he warned them on earth, and they did not escape. So it will be worse for us if we refuse to listen to God who warns us from heaven.

When he spoke before, his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once again I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”

The words “once again” clearly show us that everything that was made—things that can be shaken—will be destroyed. Only the things that cannot be shaken will remain. (Heb 12:25 – 27)

The writer also folds into his argument Hag 2:21, “I am about to shake the heavens and the earth.” The point being made in Hebrews is that the final judgment is like a cosmic earthquake. All manmade achievements and accomplishments will be removed, and “Only the things that cannot be shaken will remain.” The strength of kingdoms and nations, their military hardware, will be overthrown (Hag 2:22), but the lineage of Zerubbabel (meaning, Christ), will remain (v23). So we have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb 12:28), if we believed the gospel that was preached to us (v25). Whew!

Think about that. Nothing that you invest your time or energy in will stand, except things that belong to God's kingdom. Do you really, deep down, believe this? I bet you struggle with it.

How do you feel when a younger man gets hired to do essentially your job—and can do it as well as you, or even better? If you feel shaken, if you feel diminished, it is because deep down you thought of your work in a way that only the Kingdom deserves.

How do you feel when you are told that your health is at hazard, and you can no longer think of yourself as essentially young? That happened to me, and I felt quite shaken. The whole room went cold and I felt sick at the news, because I was crossing a line away from “never-had-any-problems.”

We all feel shaken when this or that shakable aspect of our lives gets shaken. All this points us to the only unshakable Kingdom of God and our unshakable faith. This until, in a little while, Zerubbabel’s descendant returns for us, to usher us into our unshakable inheritance.

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!