



# BIBLE IN A YEAR 2020

**ZEPHANIAH**



**THE WORLD  
MUST REBOOT**

**HAGGAI**



**FILL THIS HOUSE  
WITH GLORY**

# Thursday October 22: Zephaniah and Haggai

The world must reboot. Today Bern Leckie writes:

## What did I like about today's reading?

These prophets are neighbours in the Bible but separated by about a century of turmoil for God's people. Zephaniah warns of coming judgement, including exile for the people of Jerusalem, while Haggai addresses the people who return and have started to rebuild.

Looking at these together, I like that we can see whether the exile caused God's people to learn lessons which set them straight with God. (Spoiler alert: no.) But I love that we also get a sense of the scope of God's plan. It was never simply to deal with one nation but to alert the world: there is something wrong. Business as usual is not OK. It cannot and will not be sustainable.

Zephaniah expresses this as an amplification of the threat people in Judah already feel. They have already been warned about what to expect if they break covenant with God and seen what happened as the northern part of Israel fell to Assyria. Life as they know it could be over. It's a threat we know, from other prophets, that they have been trying to minimise and shrug off. But God goes the other way. He enlarges his scope to leave no room for thinking this is just a problem for the worst people in Judah. Instead, "the whole earth will be consumed" by God's fire. That is an astonishing, scary picture of judgement – it seems to include us!

But look again at the fire. Does it only destroy? Not according to Zephaniah chapter 3 – it purifies. God warns of massive change because evil is unacceptable in his world, but there is hope. Life will not end but be rebooted and renewed, with religion replaced by relationship.

So do we see this in Haggai's time, after the exile? Sadly not. People are still centred on their own priorities and God's house "remains a ruin" while everything else is rebuilt. But if God has promised a break from the old system, removing "all who mourn over the loss of your appointed festivals" (Zephaniah 3:18), why rebuild the house of worship?

God knows that Judah has limited resources and cannot recapture the temple's "former glory" with what they can do. But I love how God asserts his ownership of the whole earth, just as David affirmed, "we have given you only what comes from your hand," on completing the original temple. The point is not to build to impress God, but to recognise God above all, prioritise relationship with him, and so be able to see his glory and credit him for provision.

## What did it show me about Father God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?

God applies the same principle to the world, not only some chosen people. He wants everyone to know that life and good things come from him. When we ignore him, he needs us to know that injustice, evil and suffering at each other's hands are the natural consequences. God promises to intervene to stop this and offers hope of better life in relationship with him.

## What am I going to do differently as a result?

Thank God that we know more about this new life because of Jesus, and take a fresh look at the things I believe are mine, remembering that they are from God and best used to glorify him.

## Who am I going to share this with?

Other people I follow Jesus with and, if a chance comes up, some clients who like things I do. I would love God's role in my life and our world to be visible to them too.