

**4 – Greater Glory**  
**Pastor Joe Oakley - GFC – 1/21/24**

We are in a sermon series called Greater and today I am preaching a sermon entitled Greater Glory. I get that title from Haggai 2:9, which says:

*“The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,” says the Lord Almighty. “And in this place I will grant peace,” declares the Lord Almighty.*

A lot of people quote that verse, but many people have no clue what it is really saying. To understand it, you need to know the context of what was happening when it was written. Do you know what former house it’s talking about?

Well, let me take you on a quick journey through time. When God led the Children of Israel to the promised land, He gave Moses directions to build a tabernacle – which we call the TABERNACLE OF MOSES. Exodus 25:8-9 gives God’s command about building this tabernacle.

*Have the people of Israel build Me a holy sanctuary so I can live among them. You must build this Tabernacle and its furnishings exactly according to the pattern I will show you.*

This was a temporary tent-like structure that the Levites put up and took down as the Israelites traveled. There are many symbolic truths in the Tabernacle of Moses – everything in it was a type of Christ – it pointed to Christ. But the main thing the tent contained was the ark of the covenant.

There was a veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. And there was only one thing in the Holy of Holies – the ark of the covenant. And that was where God manifested His presence. **You see the ark did not represent God’s presence – it literally was the place where God revealed Himself on earth.** Numbers 7:89 says:

*When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony.*

The ark was where God met with Moses, then the High priest. When the Israelites came into the promised land, they put up the tabernacle of Moses in Shiloh, which was the religious capital of Israel during the time of the Judges. Joshua 18:1 says:

*The entire congregation of the children of Israel assembled at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there.*

It was there for 370 years – until the Philistines defeated Israel and took the Ark of the Covenant. God sent plagues on the Philistines everywhere the Ark went. So they sent it back to Israel. It stayed in Kiriath Jearim for about 60 years when David became king and took it to Jerusalem. He set it up in a tent we call the Tabernacle of David, where it stayed until Solomon built what we call the Temple of Solomon on the temple mount in Jerusalem. Solomon's temple was a very glorious temple and it is the former temple mentioned in Haggai 2:9.

It's called the former temple because in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, a Babylonian king named Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. His army destroyed the city, including the Temple of Solomon. All this happened because of the disobedience of God's people.

Jeremiah had prophesied this. He said that God had sent prophets for years trying to warn His people to turn from sin or they would go into captivity for 70 years. And that's exactly what happened. But God also promised to restore His people when they repented.

As always, God kept His word and brought His people back from captivity to the Promised Land. The people started rebuilding the city which was destroyed. They started by rebuilding the Temple. The book of Ezra tells about this.

After the Jews started rebuilding the Temple, they got discouraged and quit. They were discouraged because their enemies mocked them. They got discouraged because it was taking so long. They got discouraged because the temple was not as good as the old one.

They had built the altar and foundation of the Temple, but they quit before the job was finished. So God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to call the people to complete what they started.

The people were discouraged and dissatisfied because the temple they were building was not as beautiful as the one that had been torn down. God told Haggai to ask the people in Haggai 2:3-4

*“Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? But now be strong, all you people of the land,” declares the Lord, “and work. For I am with you,” declares the Lord Almighty.*

**One of the major causes of dissatisfaction is comparing.**

The people in Haggai's time were comparing the new temple with the old. This caused dissatisfaction. For us:

Comparing our jobs can cause dissatisfaction.

Comparing our pay can cause dissatisfaction.

Comparing our accomplishments with what others have accomplished can cause dissatisfaction.

Dissatisfaction can come when we compare our incomes or our spouses or our families or our looks or any number of things. Like the people rebuilding the temple, we can compare former moves of God with the current move of God. But Ecclesiastes 7:10 says:

*Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions.*

**What's the cure for dissatisfaction? Getting our eyes on the right thing.**

That's why God said through Haggai in 2:9

*'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the Lord Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the Lord Almighty."*

God says, "What you're looking at may not look like much right now, but I'm not done yet! I will put my glory on this house and it will be greater than the former house."

What you're looking at right now in your life or your finances or your marriage may not look like much – but God's not finished with you yet! Stop looking backwards at the good old days. Stop comparing yourself to others. Get your eyes on God and His vision for your future!

Haggai encouraged the people by getting them to look to the future rather than the past. Even though the rebuilt Temple would be less magnificent than the earlier one, God promised that the 'final glory of the God's House' would eclipse its former glory. Not only was its glory to outstrip the former Temple, but the Lord also promised to bring peace to the Temple court and the city of Jerusalem.

Please understand that **the full and final fulfilment of this magnificent prophecy is still in the future.** Even though the glory of the Lord entered the Temple when Jesus Himself visited during His time on earth, a day is coming when Christ will return in power and great glory. Lasting peace in the holy city will only happen when the Prince of Peace returns in the clouds of glory and sets His feet on the mount of Olives, to bring in His Millennial Kingdom of peace and prosperity. The Amplified version of Haggai 2:9 says:

*"The latter glory of this house [with its successor, to which Jesus came] shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace and prosperity," says the Lord of hosts.*

Haggai 2:6-7 says more about that greater glory.

*"For thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the Lord of hosts.*

What is the desire of all nations? Some commentators say it is the wealth of the nations that was used to rebuild the temple. But I did some extensive study on this and I believe the desire of all nations speaks of Jesus. God's Word translation says:

*"I will shake all the nations, and the One whom all the nations desire will come. Then I will fill this house with glory," says the Lord of Armies.*

All the nations do not yet know that what they desire and need is Jesus. But the Bible says that the whole creation is groaning for deliverance from the effects of sin. All nations want to know who God really is.

All nations want to know their future after death.

All those things are found in Jesus. He is the desire of all nations.

Now listen to what happens after the return of Christ. Zechariah 14:16 says:

*Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty...*

Isaiah 66:18 says:

*It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.*

After the second coming of Christ, He will indeed be the desire of all nations and there will be greater glory to experience. But today, we – the members of the body of Christ – are a spiritual temple! Ephesians 2:19-22 says:

*You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. Together, we are His house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself.*

*We are carefully joined together in Him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

**Today – the temple God is building is not a building! The building is where the temple meets. The temple is the people of God,** joined together by God, built on the foundation of Jesus as a dwelling place for His Spirit! We are living stones! 1 Peter 2:5 says:

*You are living stones that God is building into His spiritual temple. You are His holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

Today, the members of Christ's Body are a spiritual Temple whom the Lord is using to forward His redemptive plans and purposes. 2 Corinthians 4:6-7 says:

*For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

*But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

What's the treasure in us? The light of the revelation of Jesus Christ. The glory of God in the face of Christ. The power of God that dwells in us. I love Dan Boerger's Interpreted New Testament which says:

*The same God – who at creation said, “Let light shine in the darkness,” has in effect said to all of us, “Let revelatory light shine in their minds” – and this has enabled us to comprehend His truth. So now we understand that when we look at the Messiah and His character, we see the glory of God Himself.*

The glory of God was seen in the temples that men built in the past. But the ultimate expression of the glory of God is found in Jesus Christ! Hebrews 1:1-3 says:

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the exact representation of His person, upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

By the way, the book of Hebrews shows us how everything about the New Covenant is better – or greater – than the old. And it's all because of Jesus! John 1:14 says:

*The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. Jesus made His tabernacle among us and revealed His glory to us.*

The New Testament word for glory is *doxa*, which means: splendor, brightness, magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, the kingly majesty which belongs to the supreme ruler  
the absolute perfection of God  
the character, nature and acts of God which He reveals to us.

The Bible ways that the glory of God was seen in Jesus:

When He turned water into wine  
When He raised Lazarus from the dead  
When He Himself rose from the dead  
When He ascended up to heaven  
Jesus is the greater glory!

**You see God is not looking for a building that would get any glory!  
God wants people who have a Passion for His Presence no matter what their church looks like.**

God's presence doesn't manifest because you have an expensive building with all the bells and whistles. God's presence manifests because the people in the building are worshipping Him and give Him glory.

At Grace experiencing God's manifest presence is very important to us. That is why we leave time in our services for God to speak and act. We wait on God. We believe that people need to experience God in church otherwise we miss the whole point. The point of church gatherings is not just to sing songs or hear a sermon; the main point is to experience the manifest presence of God together.

So how do we enter God's presence? Thanksgiving and praise precede entering the presence of God. Psalm 100:4 says:

*Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.*

Thanksgiving is the entryway - it gets us in the gate or the door. Then, praise gets us into the courts or God's presence. Praising God invites the manifest presence of God and being in God's presence is unlike anything on earth. Psalm 16:11 says:

*In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Nothing else can satisfy the longing of our soul. Not your spouse, not your children, not money, not the best vacation in the world, not having all your dreams come true, not beauty, not power...nothing - no-thing - can ever compare to the joy of the manifest presence of God.

The former house of Haggai 2 was Solomon's. And the temple of Zerubbabel was inferior to the temple of Solomon in architectural beauty. Where, then, was its greater glory? Herod built his temple on the foundations of the temple of Zerubbabel. It was no bigger and no more glorious than the former temple.

And the promise of greater glory seemed to have no fulfilment until 4 years after Herod's temple was built. Then, an Infant was brought to that temple from a stable and a manger. Here in this second temple, God Himself was manifest in the flesh. This was the fulfillment of Haggai's prophecy about the greater glory of the latter temple. The greater glory is not a building! The greater glory is the manifest presence of Jesus Christ!

Jewish rabbis say that the second temple was inferior to the first for five reasons:

1. The original ark of the covenant was missing.
2. The Shechinah presence of God appeared no more.
3. The Urim and Thummim, used for divine guidance, had vanished.
4. The holy fire, which God Himself had kindled was extinguished.
5. The Holy Spirit of prophecy spoke no longer as in times past.

This caused discouragement in the people in the work of restoration. But we should be encouraged because in Christ all these missing signs of the Divine glory were manifested and fulfilled.

He shed His blood and it was sprinkled on the mercy seat in heaven to atone for our sins. He is the manifestation of the glory of God. He is our wisdom. He spoke words of prophecy and the Holy Spirit still speaks today! This is greater glory! The greater glory is found in the New Covenant ratified by Christ's blood. 2 Corinthians 3:7-11 says:

*Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!*

The New Covenant offers a greater glory than the Old because the old only impacted Israel, but the new impacts the whole world!

The New Covenant offers a greater glory than the Old because the temples of the old were all torn down, but Jesus said that the gates of Hell will not prevail against the church!

The New Covenant offers greater glory than the Old because in the old the Holy Spirit came and went, but in the new He fills every believer!

The New Covenant offers greater glory than the Old because the Old brought condemnation, but the new brings righteousness!

The New Covenant offers a greater glory than the Old because the old brought death and the new brings life!

The New Covenant offers greater glory than the Old because in the old the glory faded, but how much greater is the glory that lasts!

The New Covenant has greater glory because it has the power to change us! Now, instead of animal sacrifices, there is the sacrifice of praise. Now, instead of law and works, there is grace and faith. Now, instead of limited, ritualistic worship, there is continual spontaneous worship.

It was now an option - a choice - for people to enter God's presence.

Before it was not even an option.

So how does God manifest His presence? By what He says and does.

By His Word, His Spirit, signs and wonders, and the gifts of the Spirit.

Can you thank God for greater glory!!!