

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for
July 28, 2024

*"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you
have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me" – John 5:39*



trinityreformedct.org

“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Psalm 50:1-6

Leader: The Mighty One, God, the LORD, has spoken,

People: And summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Leader: Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,

People: God has shone forth.

Leader: May our God come and not keep silence; Fire devours before Him,

People: And it is very tempestuous around Him.

Leader: He summons the heavens above,

People: And the earth, to judge His people:

Leader: Gather My godly ones to Me,

People: Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.

Leader: And the heavens declare His righteousness,

People: For God Himself is judge.

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – John 1:14-17

***Hymn #349** (red hymnal) – *“O Thou Who the Shepherd of Israel Art”*

Scripture Readings:

Deuteronomy 18:18-22 = Rules for Prophecy

Hebrews 1:1-2:4 = God's Final Word is in Christ

Ancient Creedal Reading – Apostles Creed (pg#845 in the red hymnal)

Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]

[Gifts labeled “Deacon's Fund go to aid those in need in the congregation.]

***Doxology #731** (red hymnal)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Sung Psalm #85B** (see insert below) – “I’ll Hear What God the LORD Will Say”

Prayers of the Church & Lord’s Prayer (sins)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Reformation Creedal Reading – Savoy Declaration (1658 AD), 1.1.

Leader: *Although the light of nature, and the works of creation
and providence do so far manifest the goodness,
wisdom, and power of God,* Ps 19:1-3
Rom 1:19-20,32
Rom 2:1,14-15

People: **As to leave men inexcusable;**

Leader: *Yet they are not sufficient to give that
knowledge of God, and of His will,* 1Cor 1:21;
1Cor 2:13-14

People: **Which is necessary unto salvation.**

Leader: *Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times,
and in divers manner, to reveal Himself,* Heb 1:1

People: **And to declare that His will unto His Church;**

Leader: *And afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating
of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and
comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh,
and the malice of Satan and of the world,* Prov 22:19-21
Is 8:19-20
Luke 1:3-4
Rom 15:4

People: **To commit the same wholly unto writing:**

Leader: *Which makes the Holy Scripture* Matt 4:4,7,10
2Tim 3:15

People: **To be most necessary;**

Leader: *Those former ways of God’s revealing His will unto His people* 2Pet 1:19
Heb 1:1-2

People: **Being now ceased.**

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Haggai 1:1-2a

***Gloria Patri #735** (red hymnal)

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.*

Sermon – “Thus Saith the LORD”

(A Sermon Series on The Book of Haggai)

***Hymn #156** (red hymnal) – “O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”

***Benediction** – Numbers 6:24-26

All are welcome for Fellowship & Food downstairs after Worship!

Announcements

- The church is thinking of staffing a table at the **Grange Fair** on Saturday, **August 10th**.
Is anyone interested in manning the table for a few hours? If so, please see Pastor Doug.
- Pastor Doug would like to thank:
 - Karen Griska for her work on the church sign.
 - The Gabelmanns for hosting the pool party at their house.
It was a very enjoyable time of fellowship.
 - Jon Haulenbeek for preaching during my vacation.
 - The deacons for putting in the Grange flowers.
- The Elders and Deacons are trying to think of a **local charitable outreach** TRC could do, either for someone in the church, or someone / something in the community - If you have any thoughts, suggestions, or requests, please see Pastor Doug.
- There are **Bibles** and "**Basics of the Faith**" pamphlets about various theological topics free if you are interested.

Upcoming Special Events

- On Saturday, **September 7th**, there will be a **picnic** for the church at the Winters' house, starting at noon. (1448 Burt Hill Rd.; Tolland, MA 01034)
- Starting on **September 1st**, Sunday **Worship** starts at **10:30 AM**.
- **Sunday School**, for all ages, **starts on September 8th**, With the following classes:
Children's Sunday School classes based on the KVB Publications curriculum.
Pastor Doug will be leading and adult study on the Westminster Larger Catechism.
Verna Aldrich will be leading a women's study on cults.
- **Tuesday Morning Study** starts on **September 10th** from 10:30 AM to noon.
It will be an introduction to medieval theology and reading through sections from Aquinas.
- **Wednesday Evening Study** starts on **September 11th** from 6:30 to 8:00 PM.
It will be an introduction about the origins of the Bible and studying 2Peter and Jude.
- On Saturday, September 21st, there will be a joint Elders & Deacons' meeting at Pastor Doug's house.
- After church on Sunday, **November 10th**, will be the **Annual Meeting**.

ONLINE RESOURCES

<i>TRC's Webpage:</i>	TrinityReformedCT.org
<i>TRC's Facebook Page:</i>	facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/
<i>TRC's Youtube Channel:</i>	youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT
<i>Pastor Doug's</i>	youtube.com/simplyreformed
<i>Youtube Channels:</i>	youtube.com/@PilgrimsOfPlunder

INTERNET PRAYER CHAIN

If you have any prayer requests you would like for, please email them to Donna Ensminger at: trcnwprayer@gmail.com. (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

LEADERSHIP

<i>Elders:</i>	Rev. Douglas Aldrich, pastor	860-379-1147	douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net
	Bob Ensminger	860-485-8738	robert.ensminger@arthurgrussell.com
	Rich Gabelmann	860-605-7852	rgabelmann0415@gmail.com
	Rev. Jonathan Haulenbeek	860-283-0224	jhaulenbeek@icloud.com
<i>Deacons:</i>	David Mattson (chair), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, Dean Winters		
<i>Clerk:</i>	Sheryl Gabelmann	<i>Music Coordinator & Treasurer:</i> Cindy Rines	
<i>Sunday School:</i>	Verna Aldrich, Mason Goodell		

Sermon Notes

Haggai 1:1-2a

“Thus Saith the Lord!”

A Sermon Series on the Book of Haggai

July 28, 2024

Introduction

- 1) One of the greatest offenses to the modern world is the Christian proclamation that God has spoken with clarity and objectively.
 - a) Not subjectively, based on our inner feelings. This the world might allow.
 - b) As Satan said to Eve in the garden, "*Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'*" - Genesis 3:1b
 - c) However, God has clearly spoken objectively (facts outside of ourselves) that must be heard, believed and obeyed.
- 2) Throughout history God has spoken in various ways. As our Confession states: "*Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; (Rom 2:14-15; 1:19-20; Ps 19:1-3; Rom 1:32; 2:1) yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation. (1Cor 1:21; 2:13-14)*" – Savoy Declaration 1.1
 - a) This is **General** (or **Natural**) **Revelation** - God speaking indirectly to us through His creation, which shows there is a Creator.
 - b) So, everyone deep down, knows that God exists, and that something is wrong (i.e. sin).
 - i) The problem isn't lack of evidence. Don't believe the atheists on this, believe God.
 - ii) The problem is the world "*suppress(es) the truth in unrighteousness*". – Rom 1:18b
 - iii) Try this question next time you talk to an atheist: "*If I could prove to you the existence of God by your standards, would you then worship and follow Him?*"
 - Every atheist I have heard reply has said: "No I would hate God and rebel."
 - Showing the real problem.
 - c) General Revelation, however, doesn't tell us how we are to be saved (i.e. Christ's Gospel).
 - d) Basically, enough information gets through to damn us but not to save us.
- 3) We need **Special Revelation** – God directly speaking to us. As the Confession continues: "*Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manner, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; (Heb 1:1)*" – Savoy Declaration 1.1
 - a) Note, the focus is God speaking to the church during the Old Covenant.
 - b) In the OT God spoke in "*sundry* (miscellaneous) *times and in divers* (various) *manners*."
 - c) For example:
 - i) Before the Fall, directly to Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden. Gen 2:16ff
 - ii) At Mount Sinai, a rare time when God spoke to all the people, Ex 19:18ff
where Moses received the Law and the Ten Commandments. Ex 20:3-17
 - d) During the early times of Israel (the Old Covenant Church) God would Ex 25:8-9,22
speak from the Ark of the Covenant which was first put inside the Ex 29:42-43
portable Tabernacle, and then in the Temple (literally a house for 1Chr 22:1ff
God) in the capitol of Jerusalem. Ps 5:7
 - e) Prophets spoke God's Word throughout the Old Testament, but especially in the later periods when Judah & Israel were governed by Jewish kings or foreign invaders.

4) As we see in today's sermon text.

Introduction Haggai

- 1) For the next few weeks, we will be going through this little (2 chapters) Book of Haggai about the prophecies God gave to the prophet Haggai to proclaim to Israel.
- 2) We are directly told in the text when this revelation was given to Haggai.
 - a) Haggai 1:1a – *“In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month . . .”*
 - b) In 586 BC the Babylonians had conquered the Southern Jewish Kingdom of Judah, destroying the Temple, and taking the people into captivity.
 - c) In 538 BC the Persians conquer the Babylonians and allow the Jews to go back home. (See the Books of Ezra & Nehemiah.)
 - d) The Jews return in different groups (538 BC under Zerubbabel, 458 BC under Ezra, the last group under Nehemiah in 432 BC.)
 - i) At first the people work to rebuild God’s House, the Temple, but soon for various reasons their efforts slow and eventually give up on the task.
 - ii) God sends prophets, such as Zechariah and Haggai, commanding His people to rebuild God’s House.
 - iii) Haggai, chapter 1, is set in the year 520 BC. Hag 1:1,14
 - iv) Darius is a Persian king who continues his predecessor’s (Cyrus) policy of being supportive of the Jews.
 - v) Darius even assists the rebuilding by ordering it to continue and subsidizes the restoration of godly worship in the Temple! Ezra 6:1-12
- 3) The next part of the verse describes what makes a prophet" *“the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai”*. - Haggai 1:1b
 - a) A prophet, in the biblical sense, is someone called by God to speak God’s word. Deut 18:18
 - i) It’s not about the prophet's opinion or feelings.
 - ii) It is about God’s special revelation.
 - iii) The prophet is just the vehicle, like a herald, to speak his Lord's words.
 - iv) As we read in Haggai 1:b-2a - *“the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai . . . saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts’”*
 - v) The important thing is *“the word of the Lord”* which simply *“comes by the prophet”*.
 - b) This is not a person free-styling their feelings and saying it is from God. (Which is what much of modern prophecy is about.)
 - c) It is God supernaturally giving His Word to the prophet to go and proclaim it.
 - d) Thus, the classic description of what a prophet does, he says: *“Thus saith the Lord!”*
- 4) There are strict rules for prophecy, as we heard in Deuteronomy 18:18-22.
 - a) In verse 19, the prophet's words are literally God's words. To ignore the prophet is to ignore God which brings dreadful consequences.
 - b) In verse 20, if a prophet’s words are not in alignment with what God has already spoken then that prophet is a false prophet and should be executed.
 - c) In verse 22, if a prophecy does not come true, then that prophet is false and can be ignored.

- 5) In the Old Testament God had three special offices to make sure His Word was applied.
- a) All three are listed in our text: **King, Priest & Prophet.**
 - b) The **king**, in this case the “good” pagan king Darius and the Jewish governor Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel.
 - i) The king's main job is to make sure God's word is enforced. Deut 16:18; 1Sam 8:11
 - ii) Kind of like the executive branch in the US government (i.e. the President).
 - c) Then Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high **priest**.
 - i) The priests' main job is to minister God's word as a go-between, and intercessor, between God and His people. Lev 1:5ff
Joel 2:17
 - ii) The main job of the OT priests is to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people to God to remove their sin and make them right with God.
 - d) Finally, there is our man Haggai, "the prophet".
 - i) The prophet's main job is to proclaim God's word. Deut 18:18
 - ii) To call God's people to repent and return to God's word. Jer 20:14-15
This is call "**forthtelling**".
 - iii) In biblical prophecy this is usually accompanied with proclaiming God's future judgment on His people. Jer 20:14-15
This is called "**foretelling**."
 - e) You see these both in Haggai.
 - i) The purpose of the Book of Haggai is to command God's people to rebuild the Temple, which they have neglected. Haggai 1:2b-5. (Forthtelling)
 - ii) The Lord is going to "*destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations*" in Haggai 2:20-23. (Foretelling)

What About the New Testament?

- 1) What about the New Testament?
- 2) In the New Covenant church, we do not have (earthly) **kings** or **governors**.
 - a) We do have elders that govern the church, as we just heard about in Titus. 1Tim 3:1-7
 - b) There is clearly a much more democratic element in the New Covenant. Thus, the people are much more involved. Matt 18:17
Acts 6:2
 - c) As Congregationalists we believe the final say is with the local church.
 - i) Why?
 - ii) *Question*: Do we have priests in the New Covenant?
- 3) Yes! All (Christians) are **priests**!
 - a) 1Peter 2:5 - "*you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*"
 - i) 1Peter 2:9 - "*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*"
 - ii) As per Old Testament prophecy. Ex 19:6; Is 61:6; 66:21; Rev 5:10

b) How are we all priests?

- i) Because we have been covered by the once for all perfect sacrifice through the ministry of the once for all perfect High Priest! Rom 12:1
Heb 7:26-10:25; 13:5
1Pet 1:2,19
- ii) Revelation 1:5b-6 - "*To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood — and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*"
- iii) We don't have to go through earthly priests, instead our spiritual acts of worship are spiritual sacrifices already pleasing to God because they have been covered by Christ's blood!

4) How about prophets? Are there prophets today?

- a) Well, that gets more complicated, and there is much debate about that.
- b) Some, like Pentecostals and Charismatics, believe that not only prophecy is common, today but it should be the norm in the church.
- c) Our tradition (Reformed, with much of historical Protestantism) believes prophecy has ceased.

Back to the Savoy Declaration, 1.1 – "*afterwards (i.e. after the Old Covenant), for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: (Prov 22:19-21; Luke 1:3-4; Rom 15:4; Matt 4:4,7,10; Is 8:19-20) which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; (2Tim 3:15; 2Pet 1:19) those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased. (Heb 1:1-2)*"

d) Note what the Confession states:

- i) This speaking is to God's people, it is for the Church.
- ii) God's Special Revelation gets written down in the 66 Books of the Bible, which we go by in the New Covenant.
- iii) Scripture is the final means of communicating God's word and is superior.
- iv) The Old Testament ways of God speaking have "*ceased*".

5) Why has it ceased?

- a) Because Scripture is superior!
 - i) It is "*better*", "*more sure*" and "*most necessary*".
 - ii) It is more objective, clear and universal.
- b) The Lord Jesus shockingly told His Apostles during His earthly ministry: "*it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (the Holy Spirit) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.*" – John 16:7b
- c) Note the proof text the Confession uses: Hebrews 1:1-2 – "*God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.*"
 - i) The "last days" in Hebrews is not first and foremost about the world blowing up in the popular sense of the meaning of apocalypse.
 - ii) It is about with the earthly ministry of Christ, and His sending the Holy Spirit, special revelation in the narrow sense, has ceased.

- iii) You cannot add the 28th book of the New Testament.
- iv) What further revelation could there be beyond the literal Word of God taking on human flesh, speaking directly to His church, dying for our sins, and giving us the Holy Spirit?
What else do you need?
- d) So, in the narrow sense of an individual receiving special new revelation from God that has equal weight as Scripture, has now ceased.
 - i) There are no more prophets, in that narrow sense.
 - ii) Scripture is the final revelation. You cannot go beyond what is written. 1Cor 4:6
 - iii) We are commanded to submit to the Lord Jesus' handpicked lieutenants, whose authority is now found in their writings: The New Testament. 1John 4:6
2Pet 3:16
 - iv) Because all Scripture is God breathed and inspired. 2Tim 3:16
- e) If you see large black and red banners on Congregational Churches that declare: "*God is still speaking*" flee. That is not a church but a synagogue of Satan that hates Christ and His word.
- 6) Prophecy can also be described in a broad way, in the sense of applying Scripture.
 - a) In that sense, prophecy still exists.
 - b) That is why our Puritan forefathers called preaching "*the art of prophesying*." (See William Perkins' book of the same title.)
 - c) To look at a church, see a problem or a need, and call the congregation to act biblically is prophesying in the broad sense.
 - i) It is not adding to Scripture but proclaiming and applying Scripture.
 - ii) Example: "*This church doesn't have elders & deacons, the Bible commands elders and deacons, so we need to go to an elder & deacon system, and if we obey God, He will bless us as He has promised in His word.*"
 - iii) Note, this type of prophecy is much needed and can be objectively checked by Scripture.
- 7) Can God speak to us in our thoughts, emotions, dreams, about something that is beyond, though not directly contradicted by, Scripture?
 - a) Maybe, but be very careful. Remember the Third Commandment about taking the Lord's Name in vain, which brings death. Ex 20:7
 - b) Test everything by Scripture, especially your feelings. Acts 17:11; 1Thes 5:20-21; 1John 4:1
 - c) Scripture trumps all other sources of authority.
 - d) Do not seek after visions or dreams.
 - e) Instead rest in the Word, especially as you receive it in biblical preaching and the Sacraments.
 - f) If it is not directly commanded in Scripture, you are not obligated to follow it.
- 8) For example: If a pastor comes to you and says he has had a vision that God wants us to build a new church building, be concerned.
 - a) If he had said "*I think it might be wise to have a church building*" that is okay and the congregation can have that debate about that policy.

- b) Whether a church has a building or not is a freedom issue, it is not required in Scripture, and certainly not one a church should be divided over.
- c) However, that he thinks he is having visions and putting in on the same level of Scripture, that is very problematic.
- d) Be careful, to hear about “visions” is much more worldly exciting, then simply wanting to hear Scripture correctly preached in context. Matt 24:11
- e) Because false prophets misquote Scripture.
 - i) Even Satan quoted Scripture to Christ. Matt 4:6
 - ii) Or, if a pastor misuses the teaching about the necessity of God having a house in the Old Covenant, such as found in the Book of Haggai, and falsely makes it into prophecy about demanding a new building.

Conclusion

- 1) Prophecy, and all of Scripture, is not about the individual, but about Christ. John 5:39; Luke 24:25-27
2Cor 2:2; 2Pet 1:16-21
- 2) The things of the Old Testament: the Temple, sacrificial offerings, priests, kings, and prophets, are all but shadows and figures that point to the reality we have now in Christ, because we have the clarity of the New Covenant revelation which is better for preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, by committing the same wholly unto writing; which makes the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God’s revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.
- 3) Christ’s spiritual body, God’s house on earth, is the church, the assembly of the saints. (Not a building). Eph 1:22-23; 4:12
1Cor 12:27; Col 1:18,24
- 4) **Christ is** both the perfect **High Priest** and brings the perfect **offering** of Himself, making perfect atonement for our sins. Thus, all our spiritual offerings, according to God’s Word and by His Spirit, are pleasing to Him, because we are all priests. Eph 5:2
Heb 2:17
Heb 7:24-25
Heb 9:14,28
- 5) **Christ is our King.** As Congregationalists we believe our type of government is a monarchy. We, collectively, are to hear our King as He explains Himself in His written word, both the Old and New Testament. Ps 110; Is 32:1-2,22
Acts 15:14-16
1Cor 15:25
- 6) **Christ is our Prophet.** Literally God’s Word incarnate. The Son explains the Father. John 1:18; 15:15; 20:31
1Pet 1:10-12