

There Will Be Glory After This!

Haggai 2:1-5, Acts 17:24-28, Romans 10:17, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Slide 1

Last week we learned that Haggai encouraged the people to consider their ways and reprioritize their lives.

We found that misguided priorities led the people of God away from their assignment causing the work on God's house to be neglected for 16 years.

Then, after Haggai's first message, the whole nation repented and returned to work with the first order of business being to secure the needed materials in order to start building again.

What we need to understand from Haggai is that the enemy of our souls works continuously to pull us away from our God-given assignment.

What Satan fails to do through misguided priorities and outward opposition, he tries to accomplish through discouragement.

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A long time ago, there was a rumor that the devil was going out of business. He was selling his tools to whomever bid the most for them.

One night he opened his doors to his customers and showcased all his tools: hate, jealousy, fear, deceit, and many more.

But there, in a dark corner of the room, was a very old, harmless-looking, worn-out object. It looked as if it had been used throughout eternity and it had the highest price of all.

Somebody asked the devil what that instrument was and why it was so expensive.

"Discouragement," answered the devil. "It's the most expensive tool because it's the one I use most on people. When nothing else works, I can enter slowly in their minds and hearts without them noticing. Once I'm there and get them discouraged, I can do whatever I want with them. This tool is so worn because I've been using it since the dawn of humanity, and it works with everybody."

"Very few people know this tool belongs to me. When they get discouraged and lose hope, they blame themselves or other people and the world around them," laughed the devil.

"Sometimes, they even blame God. People hit obstacles in life, they encounter problems, but when they get discouraged, when they lose hope, that's just me doing my job."

This second message of Haggai was sent to combat the high level of discouragement among the people.

The people who returned from Babylon were made up of young and old. In fact, it included many who could still remember the former temple and temple worship with all its beautiful form, rituals, and glory.

The former temple had a glorious history which drew people from all over the world.

The floor was black and white marble, the walls were the finest cedar overlaid with pure gold, the curtains were made of fine linen with embroidered work.

The veil was made of woven materials nine inches thick, and all the instruments of the temple were forged and beaten from fine gold and silver.

The returning exiles had nothing. They had no fine gold or silver, no fine linen cloths, or embroidered works.

The temple that they were building was only a shadow of its former glory. They were discouraged and started to lose hope, but then God sent a word of encouragement.

His Word did several things for His people:

- It reminded them that He was with them
- It reminded them not to allow their past to rob them of their future
- It reminded them not to allow comparisons to blind them and hinder their work.
- It reminded them that their success didn't depend on what they didn't have, it depended on what they had, the Presence of God.

They had to renew their minds. Why? Because a renewed mind sees differently. What you see makes all the difference in the world.

Renewal is the process of shedding the old and putting on the new. As we come to know God, our minds are renewed in accordance to the knowledge of Him. In Romans 12, Paul speaks of this.

Romans 12:2, *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Slide 3

Now, listen to God’s questions in Haggai 2:3, *“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?”*

The most important influence on our lives is our perception. How we see and what we see in our own heart and mind is important. The opinion of others has only limited influence.

We’re discouraged or encouraged by how we see things. The Israelites saw their building efforts as no match to Solomon’s temple.

They saw limited resources, inferior materials, and ill-prepared laborers.

Yet, God was pleased with them doing the best they could with what they had, but their strong memory and proud hearts wouldn't allow them to be pleased.

Ezra 3:12, "But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy."

The work had begun well, and the foundation was completed. Yet the older saints were overcome with disappointment and discouragement.

The younger crowd celebrated the foundation but were discouraged by the opposition.

The older Jews were using the wrong standard for measuring success. God doesn't use worldly standards to measure the accomplishments of His people.

God measures His people by their faithfulness to their God-given assignment.

God saw that the people were discouraged and disappointed, so He tells the people to get to work since *"I am with you."*

Haggai 2:4, "But now be strong, Zerubbabel," declares the Lord. 'Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the Lord, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the Lord Almighty."

Sometimes we may be tempted to quit or to give up because the church changed, the crowds changed, the music changed or even attendance has changed, but God wants us to be strong and work.

Today's music is different, commitment seems shallow, prayerlessness prevails, salvation seems like an empty confession, society is more self-centered, and materialism seems to have taken over, yet all is not lost.

Our hope is in God! A renewed mind sees differently; and a renewed heart believes differently!

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Listen to God's command again.

Haggai 2:4-5, *"But now be strong, Zerubbabel," declares the Lord. 'Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the Lord, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the Lord Almighty. 'This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.'"*

As people of God, we must trust in God's promises and in God's power to provide every need. These Jewish believers had history with God.

After 430 years in Egypt, God kept His promise. After 70 years in Babylon, God kept His promise. No matter how long and no matter what must be done, God will do what He promised.

The command was to *"Be strong, all you people of the land," declares the Lord, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the Lord Almighty. 'This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.'"*

What we believe inspires us to take courage. What we believe inspires us to keep on working and move forward without fear!

It's true that these Jews lacked many things: gold, silver, fine linen, supplies and support, but they had the one thing they needed. They had the presence of God and the power of God active among them.

God's everywhere, but He doesn't always manifest His presence. Remember, faith in God drives out fear and intimidation. God has promised to be with us just like He promised to be with the Israelites.

We have the presence of God as we face every trial. If God is for us, He's more than the world against us! We have God's word on it. God has not changed His mind.

An agreement had been made, prayers have been answered, and God is committed to the success of His project.

Haggi 2:7-9, "I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory," says the Lord Almighty. 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the Lord Almighty. '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."

How we see makes the difference. What we believe determines our actions. And because of this, we'll experience the manifested Glory of God.

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Simeon and Anna saw the manifested Glory of God firsthand.

Luke 2:27-32, "Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."

When we renew our minds and faith in God's Word and recommit ourselves to our assignment, how can we fail?

How can we fail to do God's work if He's with us? If He's with us, peace is with us, power is with us, and nothing can stop us but ourselves.

So, the promise of God was fulfilled. The earthly temple was completed, even though it was only a type and shadow of the reality God promised.

Then, years later, God fulfilled His promise by sending His Son, the real temple of God, Jesus Christ, who shed His own blood to purchase redemption for the world.

We must renew our minds and hearts, for we're a part of God's glorious Church. We're not perfect, but we're being perfected. We belong to God. He gives us life and breath and health and strength and everything else.

Acts 17:24-28, "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else."

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'"

The challenge is to take courage and journey on. Jesus makes two powerful statements in John's Gospel:

John 4:23-24, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

John 9:4, "As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."

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Conclusion

Though the earthly temple was important, it pointed to something more important--Jesus. Christ Himself is our dwelling place, and we're charged to work while it's day.

We're not to allow discouragement and disappointment to stop us. We're called to continue to work. We're called to take courage and be strong.

God's presence is with us, His power is available, His promises are sure. He's a covenant keeping God and we can depend on Him.

Haggai's point is that our choices matter, and the faithfulness and obedience of God's people is part of how He has chosen to work out His purposes in the world.

This surprising reality should motivate us to continue working in humility and to be determined in our actions as we live in the hope of the manifestation of God's glorious Kingdom.

God sends renewal to our minds and hearts as we embrace His promises.

We must see His vision because what we see makes the difference; what we believe determines our actions and finally, what we will experience is the manifested Glory of God.

We must raise our level of hope and begin to believe God's promises. On calvary, Jesus paid the sin debt, removed every obstacle out of our way.

Regardless of the circumstances, in this place we have peace with God, peace within, and peace with others.

John 14:27 Jesus said, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

Our story ends in victory!