

Haggai 2:1-9

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[0 : 00] Good morning. It's a joy to be here this morning.

When David first told me I'd be up March 6th, I said, what's the text? And he said, we're in the book of Haggai. And I said, Haggai? When was the last time I read Haggai?

I actually looked at him in all seriousness, thinking he was joking to me. But lo and behold, we find ourselves this morning in Haggai chapter 2. And just a brief prayer, and then we will make our way. Father, would you, during these next moments, incline our ears to you. Would you open our eyes to the wonders of your word.

Not the word itself, but ultimately who the word points us to, namely your son. And so during this time, would you exalt your son. Make him known, make him aware to us, and so that we may exalt and worship him.

[1 : 17] We ask these things for Jesus' sake. Amen. A month had transpired since they had been summoned to work on the temple of the Lord, the house of their God.

Their spirits had been infused with divine energy. They were accompanied by the presence of the Lord, according to chapter 1, verse 14 and 13. The text alludes to this newfound zeal, a heart-filled passion, a fearful awe that resulted in obedience to complete the massive undertaking of reconstructing a temple that had been decimated.

On the 24th day of the sixth month, they had commenced with great enthusiasm, only to receive a second message less than a month later. Their strength apparently had dwindled.

Their zeal had diminished. Another word from the Lord was required. The issue was multifaceted. The people who had returned from captivity from Babylon to the promised land were committed to rebuilding the temple, but they faced an onslaught of outward, outside threats.

The book of Ezra records for us that the people who were dwelling amidst the land discouraged them to build. They made them afraid to build. They actually bribed counselors to apparently deceive them and frustrate their purpose.

[2 : 48] Ezra tells us the people were filled with fear, for the outside opposition was fierce, severe, and overwhelming. They had these external pressures bearing down on them to prevent them from continuing to build.

So Ezra records for us that foundation was laid, and 16 years, the longest renovation project, actually some of ours might exceed 16 years, but here was a renovation reconstruction project that had lasted for 16 years.

The people had built houses for themselves, but no work was being done on the Lord's house. And so Haggai was summoned to rebuke and challenge the people.

We left our text two weeks ago with the people reassessing their priorities, resulting in them coming and working on the house of the Lord. It would seem that all would be well, and it would be completed without further difficulty, but here we are, a month later, and arguably a larger nemesis arises, in addition to the external threats.

If external pressures were not inhibiting enough, internal pressure began mounting from among their own. And you see that because it's hinted at in Haggai chapter 2 verse 3.

[4 : 06] Who left among you saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it like nothing? Is it as nothing in your eyes? It would seem that the elderly in their midst, those who had witnessed the former temple, began to mutter and express disapproval.

The new building paled in comparison with the original. It was an inferior temple. The image provided by Ezra is enlightening, and it's incredibly vivid, because when the foundation was first laid, you have a celebration.

But in this celebration, you actually have the elders of the people of Israel weeping and wailing and crying. It gives us a hint as to why construction may have suspended for 16 years.

In some way, the weeping was justifiable. The new temple would never be like the old. They didn't have the resources to pay skilled craftsmen that King Solomon imported from foreign countries. They surely could not even fathom the possibility of lining the entire interior wall, ceiling, ground with gold. They lacked the resources to import the finest cedar from across the sea.

[5 : 31] The new building wouldn't have the intricate open flower carvings upon the wood walls. However, the greatest lack in the new temple would not be the missing intricacies, the gold ornate carvings, or the glistening floors.

It would be the absence of arguably the most treasured possession of the people of God, namely the Ark of the Covenant. It was the Ark that God Himself said, I will meet you there between the two cherubim.

There I will speak to you. And so the question arises as they rebuild. They're asking, where would we meet God?

Where could the Lord meet His people? Where does the Lord speak? And so we find ourselves at that juncture this morning.

We come to the text this morning, we will see how God lifts the spirits of a discouraged people. If Haggai 1 was primarily concerned with the priority of gospel work, Haggai 2 will be shown to be concerned with the persevering in gospel work.

[6 : 51] The question the Bible will answer for us this morning is, how does God lift the spirit of a discouraged and faint and weary people? Put more personally, or personally, Lord, I'm tired.

I'm discouraged. I'm weary. I'm beaten. Battered. Bloodied. And my heart has nearly given up. How can I persevere? There's three coat hooks I'd like to hang our time on this morning. We persevere by remembering God's presence.

We will persevere by recounting the past. And lastly, time permitting, we will persevere by remaining confident of the future. Remember His presence.

Persevere by remembering His presence. The assurance of the Lord's presence underpins the entire book of Haggai. It's mentioned first in 1.13 and now in 2.4. The assertion is that the Lord was present with His people.

[7 : 52] Despite not having the ark, He was present. Because of His presence, the people were stirred to work. And He was still with them.

Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people are given five or three imperatives. They are to be strong three times repeated in the text.

They are to work, and they are not to fear. The task they are undertaking is a supernatural task. The biblical language echoes throughout the corridors of the Old Testament.

When you hear the word, be strong, you think of stories like Joshua, and the people as they come to the precipice of the promised land, and there's giants in the land. And the Lord says, be strong. But right after, He says, I will never leave you, and I will never forsake you. My presence is there with you. As if to imply, you cannot be strong if I am not with you.

[8 : 53] Again, you hear the language of be strong. As David is winding down, his lifetime span is concluding, and he turns to Solomon, and he gives him all the plans, and he gives him all the layout, and everything, and he says, build the house.

And the text explicitly says, David says to Solomon, be strong, and courageous, and do the work. He will not leave you, or forsake you, until all the work is done.

In other words, Solomon would be successful in constructing the first temple because the Lord was with him. The presence of the Lord would bring about the accomplishment of the construction.

The Bible asserts that the presence of the Lord is with his people. His work would be accomplished because he was there. It's interesting, as you think about this theme of presence, there's a very, I think a pretty well-known story of Moses and his interaction with God.

It's Exodus 33, I believe. It's a very bold ask by Moses. Moses saying, God, I want to see your glory. Show me the glory. The story goes, you're not going to see my glory.

[10 : 14] I'm going to hide you behind a rock, and then I'm going to cover you with my hand, and you're going to see my backside. But before that, there's a very important dialogue that happens that many of us forget because the Lord is actually upset with his people.

And he says, I can't go with them. They're to leave Sinai and go into the promised land, and God says, I'm not going to go with this people. There's no way I'm going with this people because I will utterly obliterate them.

He is so frustrated, so fed up with the people's lack of faithfulness. And the exchange continues. Moses says something very fascinating. He says, Lord, if you're not going with us, I'm not going. And then he adds this. It's so fascinating. He says, Lord, if you're not going with us, how are we to remain distinct?

I, speaking of Moses, and your people from every other people on the face of the earth. And what Moses is saying there is what sets aside, sets apart the people of God from all other people is that the presence of the God rests on the people of God.

[11 : 38] It will, it has to rest on the people of God. That you and I are set apart from every other people based on this sheer fact.

God is with you. He is your entourage. He is your constant bodyguard. He is your faithful companion. He will not withhold His presence from you.

Presence is so, oh, I, for time's sake, I don't want to unravel it. But think about presence in the garden. Adam and Eve were present with God.

The Lord walked with them in the cool of the day. You think about outrageous statements like Jesus makes before returning to heaven. He says, go and make disciples and fast forward. He says, surely I am always with you to the end of the age.

And you fast forward to Revelation 21 and 22 and there we are. Innumerable in number. God among His people.

[12 : 43] His presence marks His people. The presence of God is the source of strength for His people. We cannot be strong. We cannot do the work.

We cannot be fearless without His presence. Therefore, His presence serves as an impetus for our action. The rebuilders of the temple are able to persevere in their work because the Lord is with them.

They were not only to remember God's presence among them, but they were to secondly recount their past. They were to recount their past. The return exiles were in some sense already dwelling on the past.

The former glory of the first temple isn't as great. It is far better than the one we have now. The old was better. The new was insufficient. It was what they experienced in the past that was leading to their despondency.

Yet the past in many ways becomes one of the very means of motivation and their ability to be strong, do the work, and to fear not. In addition to the Lord's presence, they were to recount the promises that He had made according to chapter 2, verse 5, particularly the covenant.

[13 : 55] He calls them to recount Him bringing them out of Egypt and recall the covenant that He had established with them. It's interesting to think about this.

The dates of Haggai are very important because if you start reading the backstory, if you have cross-references in your margins, you'll see that Haggai chapter 2, verse 1 is cross-referenced with Leviticus chapter 23.

And what's interesting is during this time, the people were in celebration mode. It was the Feast of Tabernacles. It was the Feast of Booths recorded in Leviticus 23.

The celebration was to highlight the harvest, but it was also to do this. The people of Israel, according to Leviticus, were mandated to dwell in booths or tents for seven days.

All the Israelites shall dwell in these tents so that the generations may know that I, the Lord their God, made the people of Israel dwell in tents when I brought them out of Egypt.

[15 : 04] The picture is vivid. Chapter 1, Haggai. The people are living in paneled houses while the Lord's house is in ruins. Here in chapter 2, the people have moved out of their paneled houses into these tents.

And they are encouraged to rebuild the house of the Lord. Yet they're disappointed dwelling on their inability and weakness, uncommitted to the work and filled with fear.

They had missed all the meanings of the festivities. They were delivered once in the Exodus. They were delivered twice again in the exile. They were brought back to the promised land by the mighty hand of God.

And they were to celebrate. But they were not celebrating. Instead, here's the scene. Their houses were completely remodeled. The floors had been done and polished.

The double-pane windows had been installed. The appliances replaced. The renovations had been done. The bathroom was this quiet sanctuary. The bedroom was a refuge. The family room was this warm, inviting, conducive, hospitable environment.

[16:06] All the luxuries of a newly fashioned home are behind you for a week. And now, here you find yourself sleeping on an uneven, rocky floor. Ventilation is poor.

Lighting is dreary. Comfort level is low. Now imagine, little Johnny comes up. Dad, why do we have to live in this tent?

I want to sleep on that top bunk you made for me. Little Susie comes up to Dad and says, Dad, it kind of smells here.

And it's very dirty. There's no toys in this crummy tent. How was Dad to respond and to reply?

He was to say this, you shall say to your son, we were once Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and the Lord showed us these signs and these wonders great and grievous against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household and he brought us here that he might bring us into the land that he swore to give our fathers.

[17:22] And the Lord commanded us to do these things, these festivities, these statues so that we would fear him for our good always that he might preserve our very lives.

the festival they were celebrating was a means of remembrance, of recounting the deliverance that the Lord had accomplished. See, the Lord through Haggai is summoning the people to recount their history, to look back into their recollection and recall the entire Exodus experience.

In the same way the Lord was present and available to them, he is faithful and present and available to us now. This flashback to the Exodus from Egypt was designed to demonstrate the continuity of the Lord's activity in the lie of Israel.

The Lord was not done with Israel. He was far from it. He was continuing his work in the temple's reconstruction. The people are exhorted to recount their history and in so doing be reminded of the Lord's presence and power in their deliverance.

We likewise are people who recount history. Is that not what takes place this morning? I anticipate the day when my oldest daughter, Carissa, comes up to me and says, Dad, why do you go to the front and eat the cookie and drink the juice?

[18:49] Oh, Carissa, let me tell you, your father is not as good as you perceive him to be. I was a slave to sin.

I was seeking my own way. I was earning my own righteousness. I wanted to be approved by all men. But during one evening and arguably a very poorly put on Christmas show, I found myself in tears, Carissa.

And she would say, why were you crying? Because the Lord captured me. And he seized me. And he said, I have, you are mine. I have given my life for you.

I have taken sin's penalty on your behalf and secured your eternal destiny. And so when I eat that cracker and drink that juice, Carissa, I'm remembering that Christ did that for me.

In my place condemned he stood so that I may go free. Is that not what Paul did? I mean, when Paul is standing before kings, we think of it evangelistically.

[20:11] He wants to preach the gospel. But in doing that, he actually tells his story over and over and over again. It's almost laborious. The book of Acts records it, oh, three, maybe four, four times.

Like, we only need the story once. But what is happening there, I believe, is every time you recount your redemption, it's evangelistic, but there's something about it that restores your soul.

Recount the past. The Lord enables his people to persevere by exhorting us to remember his continual presence. to recount the past, and lastly, to remain confident of the future.

Beginning in the sixth verse, we witness a change in tenses. Verses one to five are largely done in the present tenses, but in verses six through nine, the Lord begins to unveil the future, a future that is outlandish, I would say outlandish, extravagant, and blessed.

The text is given here to assure us that the Lord will provide for his house in a glorious manner. The people wanted to be enamored with gold, wood carvings, intricacies.

[21:25] They were seeing things with their physical eyes, but the biblical principle remains, we are people marked by faith. You're not necessarily going to see what he's about to promise.

The link between the present and the future in this passage is found in the cosmic shaking, a divine earthquake of sorts. It's worthwhile to note that it is cosmic, thorough, and global in nature. The text goes as far as to say it spans not only heaven and earth, dry land, and water. The shaking is thorough in the sense that none of the created order is excluded from it, and it's going to be experienced by all.

And so the question we have to ask is what is this shaking? What is this shaking? I grew up in the second promised land, California, and so the first 21 years of my life I spent there, I went to school out there and everything, and I remember growing up in elementary, I mean as far as I remember, every level of school, early in the year there would be two things you have to do.

One, you have to pack this emergency preparedness kit. For us, it were, my wife and I were talking about it, so you had to pack this lunch that could endure the entire year to anticipate if there was an earthquake, you would have food to eat.

[22 : 50] And so, it was great because at the end of every year, you're like, I get to eat my earthquake preparedness kit, and so you have the beef jerky and the fruit cups that none of it expired. So that was a highlight as a child growing up in California.

But the second thing you had to learn is what to do during an earthquake. So here in the Midwest, there's basements where you find refuge. But during an earthquake, you're taught to drop or duck and find cover.

And I looked it up more online. They've actually elaborated on it, and you're supposed to hold. So it's drop, cover, and hold. So you're supposed to drop, ideally underneath a desk or a table, something that is very secure.

You're supposed to cover, cover your head or your neck, and then hold on the table because if the table moves, then you're bumming. But I recall those drills vividly because earthquakes, though fun, can be terrifying.

They are terrifying. They're terrifying in the sense that everything that humanity, all the architecture, buildings, everything is founded on the fact and the assumption that the earth never moves.

[24 : 16] And so when the earth moves and buildings fall and bridges collapse and roads undo themselves, it actually is a humbling reminder that we are not God at all.

They undermine humanity's confidence, they are unpredictable, they are untamable, they are supernatural. Earthquakes disturb the natural order of the world.

And in our closing moments, I want to make this case. When the Bible writers use ideas like earthquakes, they are often attributing them to God.

Now, I want to put a disclaimer because people, I'd say foolish people, I'd say, oh, when there's an earthquake, God is judging. No, that's actually a very poor understanding.

So I want to say that up front. But many times when the Bible records the earth quaking, it is to show us God's power foremost in redemption.

[25 : 29] should. This Haggai is actually pointing back to Exodus. The people are brought into the promised land. They're sitting at the foot of Mount Sinai.

And the Lord unveils himself on them. The text actually says the people tremble, and then the mountain itself trembles as an earthquake.

earthquake. We begin to see that earthquakes are, they, well, let me just read this. It is, they are divine in this sense.

The result of shaking magnifies God and depicts his act of rescue and redemption. I want to give us a snapshot of how this is used. Psalm 18, David is filled with distress that he says, I cried out in my distress, I called upon the Lord.

And the psalmist responds in this way. The earth reeled, it rocked, the foundations, the mountains trembled and quaked. And then, the conclusion of the psalmist, he sent from on high, he took me, he drew me out of many waters, he rescued me.

[26 : 40] David called out in distress, the Lord heard, the earth shook, and David was delivered. Again, the psalmist in Psalm 77, on the day of trouble, he seeks the Lord, and then he begins to recount this glorious picture of the Exodus, and this is how the psalmist describes it.

The crash of thunder in the whirlwind, the lightnings lit up the world, the earth trembled and it shook, the way through the sea, your path through the great waters, your footprints weren't seen, you led your people like a flock.

The Exodus experience is actually equated to this trembling, or this shaking, or this earthquake-like language. Deliverance, the deliverance of God's people, is described in this shaking theme. When we look at the biblical text, a strong correlation can be drawn between shaking and salvation. When the earth reels, God is actually redeeming. And you begin to see that in the New Testament, because you know the story of the Philippian jailer.

Because Paul and Silas are stuck in jail, and they're singing songs, and everyone's listening, and the text makes it very clear that there's an earthquake. Their chains and shackles are undone.

[27 : 51] The jailer is about to take his own life, and Paul says, hey, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, we're all here. And what does that earthquake, or what did that earthquake result in? The salvation of the jailer and his entire household.

And don't let us forget, as that Roman centurion and his crew stood beneath the cross they had previously mocked and scorned Christ.

And there, in that moment, the veil tore, the earth shook, and the Bible makes it very clear that they declare truly that man is the Son of God.

When the earth shakes, God saves. And so what you begin to see here in Haggai is God is extending his hand to save.

Well, fast forward, the shaking ushers in a three-fold promise. The listeners are to be so confident in what is being proclaimed, that God stamps his name on every statement that is made in verses 6-9.

[29 : 00] You'll see it, the Lord of hosts is his name. The title occurs 300 times in the Bible, five of them here. It is as if God is saying, I am the guarantor of what I am about to say.

It is poor writing, really poor literature, but it enhances the promise. The Lord of hosts is guaranteeing this future.

He is the Lord of armies. He is the Lord of all the heavenly hosts. One author goes, he says, he is the Lord of all that is all powers, seen and unseen, in the universe, and in heaven.

And he makes these promises. One, he promises that all the treasures or treasures from all nations will be ushered into this temple. You see in verse seven, the treasures of nations shall come in.

The silver is mine, the gold is mine, according to verse eight. He promises treasure in his house, then he promises glory, that exceeds the former glory, and then he assures them of peace.

[30 : 08] So these promises were made, and you and I are left wondering, what happened to this second temple? What happened? What became of it? Were the words of Haggai ever fulfilled?

Well, you come to the New Testament, you begin to see the temple became a place of commerce, of exchange. In all likelihood, it was the center of all of Israel's economy, Israel's Wall Street.

Mark 11. The disciples will assert in Mark 13, that this building is marvelous, and it's wonderful, probably helped to be rebuilt by Herod the king.

And was there peace? Yeah, there was peace. Because when Jesus looked over the city, he acknowledged that they were deceived, that the peace they thought they had was not really the peace that they needed.

So yes, in some sense, in the New Testament, you begin to realize these promises came true. But along comes this man named Jesus, and he does something that will trump everything that has happened already.

[31 : 22] Because he comes into the temple, the center of all Israel's trade, and he flips the tables. Get out of here. This is my father's house. And then he looks upon the marvelous temple, and he says, and as the disciples say, wow, this thing is so beautiful, so wonderful, so glorious, he spoke of its destruction, and he assured them that you destroy this temple in three days, I will rebuild it.

It's actually the accusation that probably got him his death sentence. And there he overlooks the city of Jerusalem, and he cries, and he laments, saying, hey, if you only knew the peace that I bring. And Jesus comes on the scene, and he says, you're looking for treasure, you're looking for glory, you're looking for peace, it's found in me. I supersede all of this.

It's to Jesus that God says, ask of me, and I will give the nations as your inheritance, as your heritage, the ends of the earth will be your possession, Jesus.

Therefore, all the gold, all the silver, all of creation will be yours. There is the Dutch theologian, Abraham, he's right in saying Christ can look upon the world, and he says, mine, all of it is mine, and it will forever belong to him.

[32 : 52] Is he not Christ, the one that the writer of Hebrews asserts, he is the exact representation, the radiance of God's glory? It is Christ who is crowned with glory.

Is he not the one who confronts the religious leaders and he says, hey, destroy this temple, I'll rebuild it in three days, and they say, no, no, no, no, it took 46 years to build this temple. Of course, he was referring to his own body. Haggai had a glimpse of what he was foretelling. You and I now see what he was foretelling.

In Christ is found the culmination of this future. If you are confident in Christ, then you can be confident of this future. The future of God's people is forever bound up in Christ.

And I don't have the time to say, but in your community groups, you flip to Revelation 21, and there you see a city. And the language is so beautiful.

[33 : 49] A city whose gates never close. A city who has no need of a temple. A city who has no need for light. A city who has promised the kings of the earth will usher in their glory into that city.

What kind of city is that? That's the city where Christ reigns. And that city will be yours, will be mine, filled with treasure.

The streets are gold. God takes what is cheap to him and lines his roads.

His house will be filled with his glory. There's no temple in this city, for the temple is the Lord God almighty. You can persevere in this life, in life and in gospel work, by remembering his presence, recounting the past and remaining confident of this future.

Therefore, be strong father, be strong mother, be strong sister, be strong son, husbands, be strong in giving yourself sacrificially to your wife.

[35 : 09] Wives, be strong in your support, in your service to your husband. Children, be strong as you seek to honor your parents, by obeying them.

Student, be strong as you seek to honor the Lord, by loving him with your mind. Be strong, fear not, do the work.

The world will laugh at congregations like ours who love the gospel. We are poor compared to the multi-billion dollar corporations. We contribute very little when compared to thousands of non-profits, foundations, and generous donors.

We will never be able to boast of a physical building that is an architectural wonder. Our difference to the world appears marginal. The world wants legislation.

It wants pomp and circumstance. It wants us to show them the money. And though the world wants us to show them these things, we are those who echo Peter's words and say, silver and gold we don't have.

[36 : 19] But what I have, I give it to you. Namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. And they will look back and say, Christ, what good is Christ to me?

what good is Christ to the world? And there is your moment. Oh, let me tell you about my Christ. Father, we we pause. We pause and look to you.

and recall that one afternoon where the veil was torn and the earth shook. A man died. But we know very well it was no ordinary man.

It was a man who was able to save all those who come to him. He is a man who was able to save forever all of his people. And so, Lord, as we pause and partake, we ask, Lord, we would do so knowing your presence, recounting our past and our deliverance in Christ and resting assured of a future that is certain.

[37 : 51] We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I just have to tell you Bing, when someone claps the Holy Trinity, I know sometimes that can be disruptive all they're basically saying is thank you, thank you for coming this is a congregation that is happy when we are under the word and we'll grow in health and holiness as a result well here is an invitation to the weakness of a temple in death, the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and for all who believe that his death paves the way for their salvation and if you are trusting on that alone, then we welcome you to this table if you're still inquiring about whether or not your life will be well placed in his hands and you have not committed yourself to him or to trying to live under his word to the best of your knowledge we honor where you are and just would ask that you would remain in your seat as the family is strengthened by the spiritual taking of this meal for I received from the Lord says Paul what I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread when he had given thanks he broke it and said this is my body which is for you do this in remembrance of me in the same way also he took the cup after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me just going to ask

Pastor Jackson to come he and I will serve you so you just want to make two lines down the center aisle there are receptacles on the front at the end and you can head back the outside aisles after you've taken the meal be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ God Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[42 : 39] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[45 : 09] Amen. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.