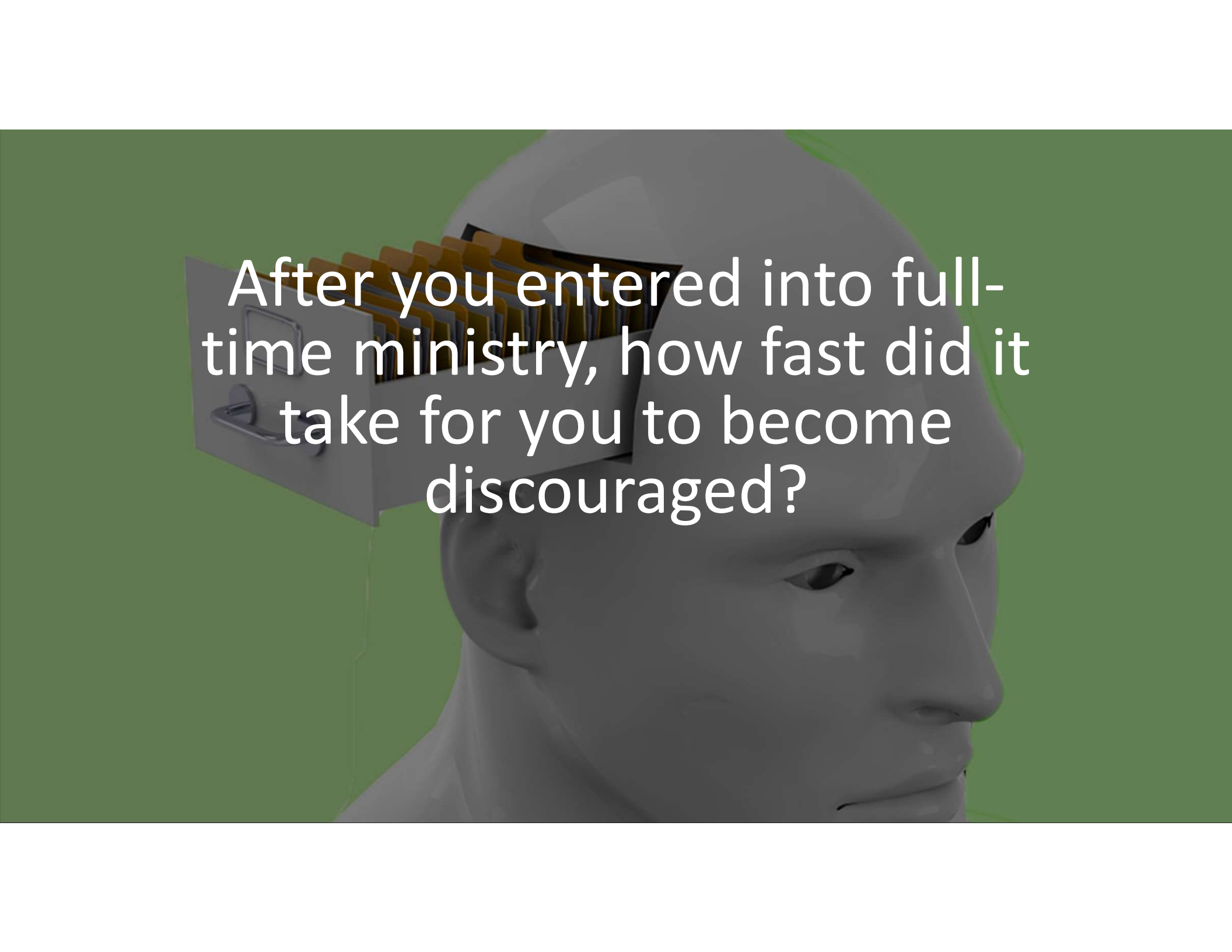




God's Word To The Discouraged Workers

Haggai 2:1-9

<http://staffmtg.syfc.org.sg/>



After you entered into full-time ministry, how fast did it take for you to become discouraged?

9th May 1994



Dear

I have been in YFC for one month. That month had predominantly been a sorrowful one, with occasional snapshots of joy. But I am glad that my first month began in this way, for I believe it will set the right perspective for me to enter the ministry. The two critical events for the month of April were the mission trip to Penang and the staff-volunteer-alumni retreat.

The first day after we arrived in Penang, I began to question myself whether I should be involved in the mission trip. At the more basic level, whether I should be in full-time. As I reflected back, I believe such thoughts were triggered off because of a change in programme. Initially, I was responsible for a challenge meeting in one of the Malaysian schools. Due to logistical problems, the meeting was cancelled off. There I was, left with no definite task, while others were busy preparing their portion of work. I felt very lost and quite useless. I never thought I would derive so much of my sense of well-being from the things I do. Once situations get beyond my control or when I feel totally incapable, I get depressed and I want to run away to place where I can be comfortable and secure again. Such feelings remained with me even when I came back to Singapore.

YOUTH

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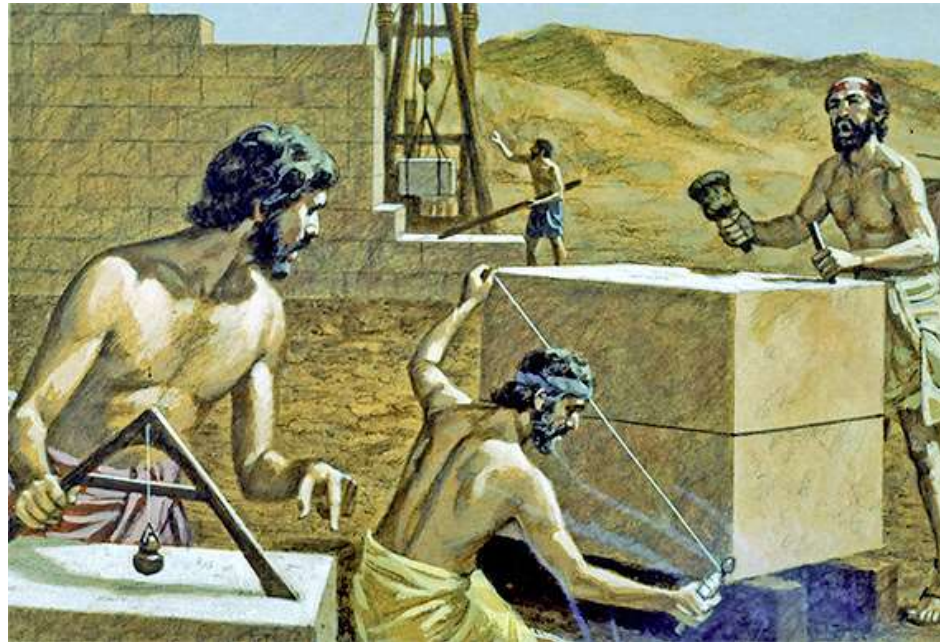
Haggai 1 (ESV)

¹ In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest:

⁸ Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the LORD.

Haggai 1 (ESV)

¹⁴ ...And they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, ¹⁵ on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.



Haggai 2 (ESV)

¹ In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet:

Haggai 2:1-9 (ESV)

¹ In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet: ² “Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, ³ ‘Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?

⁴ Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. Work, for I am with you, declares the LORD of hosts, ⁵ according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

⁶ For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. ⁷ And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. ⁸ The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. ⁹ The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.’”

Haggai 2:1-9 God's Word To The Discouraged Workers

1. The workers are discouraged (Hag 2:1-3)

- God surfaced out the issue through His three questions

Haggai 2 (ESV)

¹ In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet: ² “Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, ³ ‘Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?’

Haggai 2:1-9 God's Word To The Discouraged Workers

1. The workers are discouraged (Hag 2:1-3)

- God surfaced out the issue through His three questions
- Their rebuilding efforts seem insignificant in comparison the temple Solomon built (cf. 1 Chr 22:1-5, 14-16; 1 Kgs 6:38; Ezra 1:4-11)

1 Chronicles 22:1-5, 14-16 (ESV)

¹ Then David said, "Here shall be the house of the LORD God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

² David commanded to gather together the resident aliens who were in the land of Israel, and he set stonecutters to prepare dressed stones for building the house of God. ³ David also provided great quantities of iron for nails for the doors of the gates and for clamps, as well as bronze in quantities beyond weighing, ⁴ and cedar timbers without number, for the Sidonians and Tyrians brought great quantities of cedar to David. ⁵ For David said, "Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all lands. I will therefore make preparation for it." So David provided materials in great quantity before his death.

¹⁴ With great pains I have provided for the house of the LORD 100,000 talents of gold, a million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond weighing, for there is so much of it; timber and stone, too, I have provided. To these you must add. ¹⁵ You have an abundance of workmen: stonecutters, masons, carpenters, and all kinds of craftsmen without number, skilled in working ¹⁶ gold, silver, bronze, and iron. Arise and work! The LORD be with you!"

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1 Kings 6:38 (ESV)

³⁸ And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its parts, and according to all its specifications. He was seven years in building it.

Ezra 1:4-11 (ESV)

⁴ And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem."

⁵ Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem. ⁶ And all who were about them aided them with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, with beasts, and with costly wares, besides all that was freely offered. ⁷ Cyrus the king also brought out the vessels of the house of the LORD that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods. ⁸ Cyrus king of Persia brought these out in the charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. ⁹ And this was the number of them: 30 basins of gold, 1,000 basins of silver, 29 censers, ¹⁰ 30 bowls of gold, 410 bowls of silver, and 1,000 other vessels; ¹¹ all the vessels of gold and of silver were 5,400. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem.

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Haggai 1 (ESV)

⁷ “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. ⁸ Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the LORD.

Will God really take pleasure & be glorified in this temple they are building?



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- God surfaced out the issue through His three questions
- Their rebuilding efforts seem insignificant in comparison the temple Solomon built (cf. 1 Chr 22:1-5, 14-16; 1 Kgs 6:38; Ezra 1:4-11)
- The date of God's message is the same month as the dedication of Solomon's temple in 957BC during the feast of the Booths/Tabernacles (cf. Lev 23:33-36; 1 Kgs 7:51-8:2, 65)

1 Kings 8:1-2, 65 (ESV)

¹ Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. ² And all the men of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.

⁶⁵ So Solomon held the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly, from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days.

Haggai 2 (ESV)

¹ In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet:

Haggai 2:1-9 God's Word To The Discouraged Workers

2. God's encouragement: Be strong and work (Hag 2:4a)

Haggai 2 (ESV)

⁴Yet now **be strong**, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. **Be strong**, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. **Be strong**, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. **Work**, for I am with you, declares the LORD of hosts, ⁵according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

Haggai 2:1-9 God's Word To The Discouraged Workers

2. God's encouragement: Be strong and work (Hag 2:4a)

a. Because God is with them (Hag 2:4b-5)

- God covenanted to bring them into the Promised Land from slavery in Egypt and be their God and they His people (cf. Exo 6:4-8)

Haggai 2 (ESV)

⁴ Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. Work, **for I am with you**, declares the LORD of hosts, **⁵ according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst.** Fear not.

Exodus 6:4-8 (ESV)

⁴ I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. ⁵ Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. ⁶ Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. **⁷ I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God,** and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.'"

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- The tabernacle, subsequently the temple, served as a visible sign of God's presence in their midst (cf. Exo 25:8)
- In the present situation, the temple might be gone, but God's presence is still there

Exodus 25:8 (ESV)

⁸ And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.

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 - Significance:
 - God will strengthen them to do the work (Hag 1:13-14)

Haggai 1 (ESV)

¹³ Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD's message, "I am with you, declares the LORD." ¹⁴ And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, ¹⁵ on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

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- The tabernacle, subsequently the temple, served as a visible sign of God's presence in their midst (cf. Exo 25:8)
- In the present situation, the temple might be gone, but God's presence is still with them
 - Significance:
 - God will strengthen them to do the work (Hag 1:13-14)
 - His presence will bring glory to the temple (cf. 2 Chr 7:1-2; Exo 40:34-35)

2 Chronicles 7:1-2 (ESV)

¹ As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. ² And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house.

Exodus 40:34-35 (ESV)

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

Haggai 2:1-9 God's Word To The Discouraged Workers

2. God's encouragement: Be strong and work (Hag 2:4a)

- b. Because God will transform their work into something utterly glorious in the future (Hag 2:6-9)
 - God will do an astounding work
 - He will fill this temple they are building with treasures from the nation and make its latter glory far more than Solomon's temple
 - He will give peace: a restored relationship through the sacrificial system of the temple

Haggai 2 (ESV)

⁶ For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. ⁷ And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. ⁸ The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. ⁹ The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.'"

How is it fulfilled? A partial fulfilment?



King Herod started restoring the second temple built by the returnees in 20BC. The construction on the temple lasted 46 years.

Mark 13:1 (ESV)

¹ And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!”

Jesus, the Eternal Son of God, graced the compound of the temple

Mark 13:2 (ESV)

¹ And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” ² And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

We need to look elsewhere for the ultimate fulfilment of God’s assurance of the latter glory of the temple!

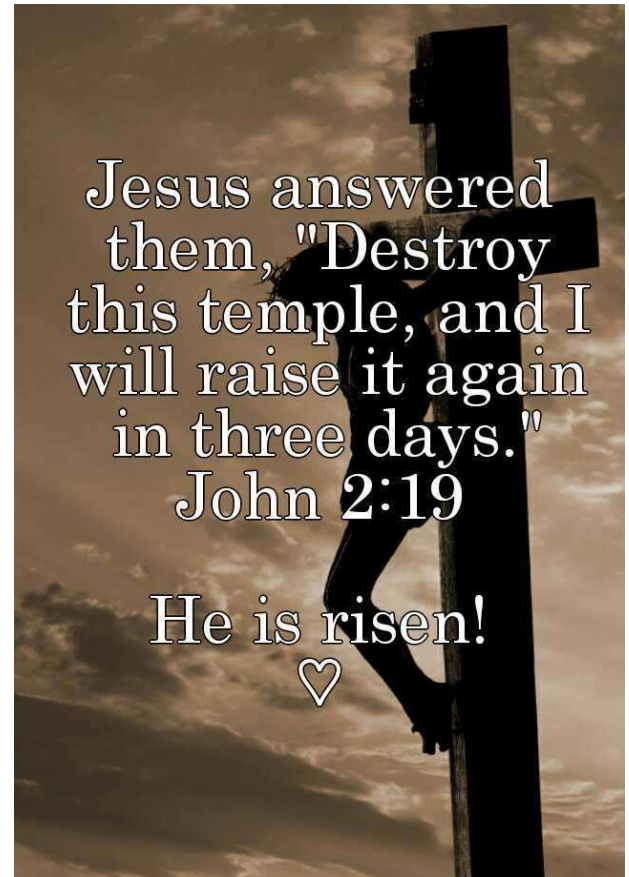
Fulfilment in the NT

1. Jesus as the temple of God (John 2:19-22)

- In Him, we meet with God and through His death and resurrection, our sins are atoned for.

John 2:19-22 (ESV)

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**” ²⁰ The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” ²¹ **But he was speaking about the temple of his body.** ²² When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.



Fulfilment in the NT

1. Jesus as the temple of God (John 2:19-22)

- In Him, we meet with God and through His death and resurrection, our sins are atoned for.

2. The Christianity community as the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-17; Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:4-5)

- Through the Christian community, non-believers get to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- In the Christian community, non-believers see the new transformed humanity by the work of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.



Applying Haggai 2:1-9

- The responsibility to build the temple of God = to build up the people of God (cf. Eph 4:11-13)
- Discouragement in the work: finding our work is of little significance




Outreach
efforts



Discipleship-
making



Standing in
society



Our stands
on issues
(e.g.
sexuality)

Applying Haggai 2:1-9

- The responsibility to build the temple of God = to build up the people of God (cf. Eph 4:11-13)
- Discouragement in the work: finding our work is of little significance
- God's assurances:
 - Jesus is with our in our evangelism and discipleship-making (Matt 28:18-20)



Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Applying Haggai 2:1-9

- The responsibility to build the temple of God = to build up the people of God (cf. Eph 4:11-13)
- Discouragement in the work: finding our work is of little significance
- God's assurances:
 - Jesus is with us in our evangelism and discipleship-making (Matt 28:18-20)
 - The Christian community will be radiant, perfected and multi-racial and multi-national (Rev 19:7-8; 7:9-10; 21-24)

Revelation 19:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has
come,

and his Bride has made herself
ready;

⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure"—
for the fine linen is the righteous
deeds of the saints.

Revelation 7:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great
multitude that no one could
number, from every nation, from all
tribes and peoples and languages,
standing before the throne and before
the Lamb, clothed in white robes,
with palm branches in their
hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud
voice, "Salvation belongs to our God
who sits on the throne, and to the
Lamb!"

Revelation 21:24 (ESV)

²⁴ By its light will the nations walk,
and the kings of the earth will
bring their glory into it,



RESPONSE

Haggai 2 (ESV)

⁴ Yet now **be strong**, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. **Be strong**, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. **Be strong**, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. **Work**, for I am with you, declares the LORD of hosts, ⁵ according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. **Fear not**.

1. What discouragements do I and my ministry face?
2. How do God's assurances in the passage encourage me and my ministry to be strong and to work?

