

**Hag 2:1-9 (NIV)**, On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: {2} “Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, {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?’ {4} But 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, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the LORD Almighty. {5} ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’ {6} “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. {7} I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD Almighty. {8} ‘The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the LORD Almighty. {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.”

37-02-01-Kingdom Building Problems-Discouragement  
past, temple, comparison, encouragement, glory, kingdom  
Haggai 2:1-9

Mourning a *great* past can impede moving into a *greater* future.

### **INTRODUCTION:** (Text as Scripture Reading)

–[**People 75-85 y/o** have seen things others only hear or read about.] Haggai spoke to those who saw the glory of Solomon’s Temple and knew that this new building was nothing in comparison. *Reflection on former glory, can be a powerful source of discouragement.... HOM.idea!*

–Because God includes *the human element* in building His Kingdom, He knows there will be **Kingdom Building Problems**. In the preceding sermon, we looked at the problem of *disinterest*. Haggai’s 1st message did get the people interested, but it was discouraging for them to recall the days of former glory. What was their present progress compared to the past? Haggai addresses this discouragement in 3 ways:

#### **I. First, We Must Acknowledge Past Memories, v.1-3**

- A. God had one message for everybody: the “*governor... the high priest... the people*” (ie., Church leaders & members): “*Build the Kingdom!*”
- B. God knows how to access our feelings (using rhetorical questions):
  1. *He knows the past, and our attachment to it*: “*Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory?*” [Antiques are antiques because they were built to last; I always say, “The best movies are the old B&W ones!”]
  2. *He knows our uneasiness with the present*: “*How does it look to you now?*” [Great technology today, but *with* greater threats: computer viruses!]
  3. *He knows our despair* (He can even put our feelings into words: “*Does it not seem to you like nothing?*” (He knows how we *exaggerate* when feeling down! What we do seems “...*like nothing*” to us.)

**TRANS:** [Psychologists often begin therapy by getting clients to express feelings.] To move from *discouragement* to *encouragement*, humans need to verbalize their feelings. God wants us **to acknowledge our past**. Are we *sad* when we see churches today manifesting only a *shadow of their former glory*? *Then let’s say so!* But God doesn’t want us to stop there!

#### **II. Second, We Must Attend to Present Mandates, v.4-5**

- A. *God’s antidote* to the poison of discouragement is encouragement

– **v.4**, *But 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, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the LORD Almighty. (His encouragement comes in various ways)...*

1. As a command: “be strong” [Heb. imperative] repeated 3x; can be translated “be firm” or “take courage” (It’s as if God is saying, “The past is a closed door, but the present is open for business!”)
  2. As a commission: God calls to us (Haggai repeats “declares the LORD” 3x also), and the call is to serve: He says, “and work.”
  3. As a communion: “and work. For I am with you, declares the LORD Almighty.” – Remember what delights God? His joy is being Emmanuel [“God with us”] (a believer’s greatest source of courage and strength is “I am with you” from the mouth of God!)
- B. Believers escape discouragement by focusing on God’s abiding presence – **v.5**, *‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’ But wait a minute!*
1. Didn’t Israel miserably betray God and break that covenant?
  2. YES, but God says, “my Spirit remains among you” (they failed Him, but His love never left them, not even during Babylonian exile).
  3. The loss of courage is akin to intimidation, but God’s abiding presence is the basis of His instruction: “Do not fear.”

**TRANS:** [People in clinical depression often find healing by getting motivated and busy.] This is how God heals those with the **Kingdom-Building problem of discouragement**: “Be strong and work... take heart and build the temple, for I am with you, and the temple is the symbol of My presence among you.” But God has another way to dispel discouragement. He wants us to...

### III. Anticipate Promised Magnificence, v. 6-9

- A. Looking forward with anticipation is a proven remedy against the problem of discouragement from looking backward....
1. “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will...’” [When kids on a car trip get restless, parents say, “In a little while...”]
  2. But God’s “little while” is until the birth of Christ [517 years later] (He encourages us in the language of faith [God says the same thing when a loved one goes to Heaven, “It won’t be long, my child, until you see them again.”] Such language, spoken from His eternal lips, may sound strange, unless we are listening with ears of faith.

- B. God’s promise is this– **v.6-7**, “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and **the desired of all nations** will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD Almighty.
1. This “shaking” parallels the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai (explained in **Heb 12:26-28**, At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken--that is, created things--so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe....)
  2. Who or what is the “desired of all nations”?
    - a. Jewish interpreters, and early Christians, thought this indicated the coming of Messiah. [KJV=“Desire of all nations”]
    - b. Modern translators faced an unfaced grammatical problem: the word *desired* is singular and the verb *will come* is plural, so they translate it: “the desired things or treasures of all nations will become the glory of this temple” (making “desired” plural. But it’s NOT plural.)
    - c. I believe this strange grammar has a theological point. [In **Gen.1**, the Triune God mixes plural and singular: “God said, ‘Let us make man in our image.’”] This singular *desired* may have a plural verb to show a future reality: a plural mass of people comprising a singular Bride of Christ. The desired goal of all nations is a community of peace. God’s answer to this desire is, “I will build my church.”
- C. Discouragement and worry are dispelled when the significance of God’s promises take hold of our thinking:
1. He promises His presence: “I will fill this house with glory”
  2. He will take care of finances: “The silver is mine and the gold is mine”
  3. And He bringing something better: “The glory of this present house will be greater...” **WHY?** “in this place I will grant peace” (**HOW? The Prince of Peace is coming!**)

### CONCLUSION:

--**Mourning the past can impede moving toward the future.** God knows we only grow through the work of Kingdom-building. Past glory is not our dwelling. His present mandate is our home, as we cling to a magnificent future. As Paul said in **Phil 3:13b-14**, “...one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”