



## Work Hard

The first oracle of Haggai (1:1-15) presumably spurred the Israelites to continue rebuilding the temple. In Haggai 2:1-9, God brings another oracle through Haggai to the Israelites. At this point in time, they would have been at the tail-end of the celebration of the Feast of Booths. In that Feast, “the whole population was supposed to move out of their homes to live in leafy shelters for a week in memory of the exodus wanderings.”<sup>1</sup>

It might have felt like an interruption in their zeal to rebuild the temple. Why would they pause the rebuilding of the temple, which was obviously the right thing to do, to celebrate this Feast? Wouldn't it be better if they continued with the rebuilding and finish the temple sooner? While we may not be in the same exact situation today, but there are some Christians who would ask the same questions. Why should we spend time planning and organising for church every weekend when we can spend that same effort in evangelism? How will God respond in his second oracle to the Israelites? Let's jump into the passage and see.

### Launch

- 1) What are some Christian “activities” that sometimes Christians can feel like it is hindering our evangelism of the world?

### WORK HARD

**Read Haggai 2:1-9.**

- 2) To whom is this oracle directed to? (v2) What is the difference in its recipients compared to the first oracle? (1:1)
  
- 3) According to v3, what do you think some of the elder Israelites are feeling about this new rebuilt temple compared to the past?
  - a. Why do you think it won't be as glorious as it was?

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<sup>1</sup> Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction & Commentary* (Intervarsity Pr, 1981), 49–50.

- 4) How does God respond to their disappointment of this new temple?
  - a. What phrase is repeated several times?
  - b. What else does God call them to do? (v4b)
  - c. What else have we heard this command from God? (cf. Deut 31:7, Josh 1:6-9)
- 5) What is God's reassurance to the people in v4b-5?
- 6) What does God say he will do in the future? (v6-9)
  - a. What do you think that means?
- 7) How will the glory of "this present house" be greater than Solomon's temple? (cf. John 2:13-22)
  - a. How do you think God's promise to the Israelites will help in their rebuild of the temple?
- 8) How does understanding and grasping God's future promises spur us on towards God's work today?
- 9) What future promises of God are you looking forward to?

## Conclusion

There are times when the things that God commands Christians to do that seems to hinder the work of God itself. There was an evangelist who once commented that the reason why he does not belong to a church (and therefore does not attend a weekly church service) is because they slow him down in the work of evangelism. The Israelites may have felt the same during the rebuilding of the temple. Barely a month into the rebuild, they had to pause the project for their celebration of the Feast of Booths.

However, God calls them to be strong and work, for he is with them and promises that the future glory of this present temple will be greater than anything that has come before. In the same way for us today, we are called to give ourselves "fully to the work of the Lord, because [we] know that [our] labour in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor 15:58).