

Renewed by His Spirit

Haggai 2:1–9



WHEN MICROWAVES WEIGHED A HUNDRED POUNDS, I built a cabinet for ours. My wife asked me to make it strong enough to hold the expensive oven. I did. Liz and I still use it. But it doesn't look like a fine, finished cabinet. Amateur work. So it's in our basement holding a small freezer.

Ever start a project and find its quality wasn't what you hoped?

The exiles came home and started to rebuild God's temple. But their building looked puny and unimpressive. Solomon's temple was a grand design. Discouraged, they wondered if it was even worth the effort. So God spoke—bringing renewal through his Spirit.

Let's see what the prophet Haggai said to God's people.

Strengthened to Start

God didn't begin with a pep talk. He asked honest questions: "Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Is it not in your sight as nothing?" (Haggai 2:3)

God gave them space to be honest. The new temple didn't measure up to Solomon's. Old folks remembered gold, cedar, and splendor, and this temple fell short.

But God didn't shame them. He met them where they were. Starting anew often means accepting things will be different.

Your beginning may not resemble past glory or match another's success. That's okay. When his Spirit is present, God works with what we call "nothing."

Yet he strengthens us to start again.

Sustained by the Spirit

A turning point came. Three times God commanded: "Take courage." To the governor, the priest, and the

people: “Take courage.” The Lord said, “...work, for I am with you, says the Lord of hosts...” (Haggai 2:4). “Take courage.”

God reminded them of the exodus: “...according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My spirit abides among you; do not fear” (Haggai 2:5). They had smelled the smoke of Sinai, the sweetness of manna, the dust of the desert, and still, his Spirit remained.

Here’s the key to renewal: “My spirit abides among you” (Haggai 2:5). Not their skill. Not their plans, resources or numbers. God’s Spirit alone was adequate.

This is how we’re sustained in God’s work—not by gritting our teeth, but by depending on his Spirit’s power and presence. The Spirit who hovered over creation, who used prophets and kings, who raised Jesus from the dead abides with us.

Feeling inadequate doesn’t mean you are. It means you’re ready. Renewal begins when you trust God’s Spirit to carry you.

A Secured Future

Then God lifted their eyes beyond their circumstances. “Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the Lord of hosts” (Haggai 2:6–7).

The returnees worried over resources. God reminded them: “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts” (Haggai 2:8). He owned everything. Their short budget wasn’t a problem for him.

When God starts a project, he provides for it.

Then came a stunning promise: “The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts...” (Haggai 2:9). Greater than Solomon’s temple? Not in gold or cedar, but in something more valuable.

The new temple will one day welcome the Messiah. Jesus will walk its courtyards, teach in its walls, cleanse it, and call it his Father's house. In this temple, God's glory will appear, not in gold or cedar, but in human flesh. "God with us," Emmanuel, will bring a splendor greater than architecture. And in this temple, God fulfills his promise: "I will give prosperity." What's prosperity? It's peace, wholeness, and restoration of heart and mind to him.

His pattern of renewal hasn't changed. He knows your struggles. He calls you to courage based on his ability, not yours. He empowers you by his Spirit. And he secures a future beyond what you imagine.

TAKE COURAGE. Not because you're strong enough, but because God's Spirit is with you. He helped discouraged builders in Jerusalem, and he'll give grace to your faithful steps today.

So where's God inviting you to begin again? Not in your strength but guided by his Spirit.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Amen

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