

How to Lose in Life - False Fear
A series on the message of Haggai: part 4 (R. Zuck)

1. Study Haggai 2:20-23. Who is Zerubbabel?

In contrast to Haggai's earlier prophecies, his fourth was directed to Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel, the leader of this group, was the grandson of Jehoiachin, the next to the last king of Judah. Jehoiachin is called Coniah in Jeremiah 22:24-28, where God said that because of his depravity in his brief three-month reign, his dynasty would be discontinued. No descendant of his would sit on the throne of David.

This probably really bothered Zerubbabel. He may have said to himself, "My grandfather's line is being discontinued. What place is there for me in God's program? How can God use me? Haggai, as well as Joshua, the priests, and all of the people had to keep encouraging Zerubbabel.

2. What period of time does Haggai refer to in his last prophecy?

On the same day that he utters his third prophecy revealing God's grace, Haggai reveals a chronologically enigmatic fourth prophecy.

What period of time is indicated by the tumultuous shaking, destruction, and mayhem suggested in this passage? There is no historical record of such natural phenomenon and widespread political upheaval that occurred during Zerubbabel's time or more recently.

The words, "I will shake," usually refer to the future and express the sovereignty of God specifically when He returns (Matthew 24:29-30, Revelation 6:12-17). So in contrast to Haggai's prior three prophecies, which had an immediate context, this last prophecy is for the future.

3. Examine Haggai 2:23. What is a signet ring and what is its significance?

A signet ring is a ring with a seal on it, which a man in a position of authority would press into a clay tablet. After it hardened, there would be a clear indication in that clay tablet that it was authentic, because it had the king's seal on it. Therefore, the signet ring was something that you didn't lose. It was very precious. Sometimes it was worn around the neck with a necklace.

Within the context of Jeremiah 22:24-28, one interpretation is that in choosing Zerubbabel as His signet ring, God restored Zerubbabel as the legal heir to the Davidic throne (Matthew 1:12).

But because the choice of Zerubbabel will not take place until Christ's return, I think God is saying to Zerubbabel that he will have special place in the millennium. I think that David will also reign with Christ in a special place, as a number of Old Testament passages indicate (Jeremiah 30:4-9; Ezekiel 34:23-24; and 37:21-25).

But what is God saying to Zerubbabel in the present? There is no need to fear. God is going to work in spite of his failures or the failures of his predecessors. God has a sovereign plan that will be carried out. And so it is with us. God can use us, because He has a place for us.

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In summary, the four messages of Haggai to us are:

1. If you have false priorities, God says, "Put Me first."
2. If you have a false perspective, God says, "Don't be comparing; I am with you."
3. If you have the false assumption that service will suffice for sanctification, God says, "Obey Me fully."
4. If you have a false fear and wonder how God can use you, God says, "Trust Me, I have a special place for you."

"There are a good many things God will put up with in the human heart, but there is one thing He will not put up with, and that is a second place." John Ruskin.

