

# The Greater Glory

Part 1 of a three-part series

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**“Yet now, be strong, Zerubbabel,’ says the LORD; ‘and be strong, Joshua ... and be strong, all you people of the land ... and work; for I am with you,’ ... For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Once more I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory ... The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of hosts”** HAGGAI 2:4, 6-7, 9a

Through the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, God gave Zerubbabel and Joshua a message of encouragement. They were rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem but were experiencing discouragement because the task seemed insurmountable. They and the people were weary, wondering if the work would ever be accomplished. It was at this time that the prophets came, reminding the people that the Lord still had much work to do and had a great plan for their future. And I believe that God has a great plan for our future as well.

You hear people forecast dark days and rough times ahead, yet this negative outlook is due to a loss of perspective. The fact is God is still at work! And I believe God’s desire is to do great things in the days ahead. I can get discouraged like anybody else, but the Lord always brings me back to the realization of what He’s presently doing and reminds me of the promises that He’s made and the things that He’s shown me.

God is still building His church all over the world, and we have a part to play in that. God has something for every one of us to do. I am approaching the future with excitement and optimism about the fresh new things that God is going to do.

There are three words in our text in Haggai that the Lord gave: First, a word of instruction; second, a word of intention; and third, a word of empowering.

## A Word of Instruction

God says to the people in verse 4, **“Yet now be strong.”** He speaks to them through Zerubbabel and Joshua, the leaders. For us today, it’s a time to be strong in our faith and have great confidence in our God—that He’s alive and well and is doing amazing things.

How do we maintain or increase our strength in these days? Well, it’s God’s Word that strengthens our inner man. In the days to come, we need to spend time in God’s Word personally, meditating on it. And collectively, we need to come together to study it because that’s where we get our spiritual strength.

It is through prayer, as we commune with the Lord, spending time in His presence, that we are empowered. As we gather for times of fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ, these are times of strengthening; this is how our faith is built up.

Paul said to the church in Ephesus, **“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might”** (Ephesians 6:10b). God calls us to be strong and tells us that we will be strengthened through His Word, prayer, and fellowship.

But then the prophets said to them, **“Be strong ... and work.”** It’s time for work. If we have a pessimistic view about the future, it’s going to weaken our hands. If we feel that nothing’s going to change, it’s just going from bad to worse, that’s not going to help us.

Jesus said in His own day, **“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working”** (John 5:17b). We could say the same thing; God is at work, and we, as

God’s people, are also to be at work—and there’s plenty to do.

We strengthen ourselves through prayer, but then, part of the church’s job description is prayer. And through our prayers, things happen in the world; things change through prayer. Do we realize that? At times, the course of history has been changed through

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prayer. The direction of nations has been changed through prayer; the course of a family can be changed through prayer; a personal life can be radically altered through prayer, and this is the work that we do as God’s people. Nobody else does this on the planet—nobody else has the right or the privilege.

Nobody else has the responsibility that we have as the church to pray; this is what we do as God’s people.

Last year I was a part of the service at St. Matthews Anglican Church in Manly, Australia. During the service they opened up in prayer, and they expanded the time to about ten minutes and prayed for many different things around the world. They were praying for the economic difficulties in the U.S. and the people who were suffering, and I remember thinking, *Wow! that’s the church; that’s what we do—we pray.*

God is alive, He is real, and He is at work today. I want to be on board for what He’s doing in my life personally and with His church all around the world. Let’s be engaged in the work of God in the days ahead. ✨