



HOW DOES IT LOOK TO YOU?

November 10, 2019
Wonderful Mercy Church

Timeline for Haggai and the Former Exiles

- **587:** Nebuchadnezzar conquers Jerusalem, destroys Temple
- **537:** Babylonian exiles return to Jerusalem under Cyrus' decree, lay foundation stone for rebuilt house
- **520:** Haggai prophesies to stir the people to action
 - *August 29: Haggai's first message*
 - *September 21: the people start to rebuild*
 - *October 17: Haggai's second message*

How Does It Look to You?

- Hard: Initial stage of rebuilding (clearing debris) would have left people tired, subject to discouragement
- Harder: Their economic condition has not miraculously turned around
- Hardest: the unimpressive condition of present temple compared to the wonder of Solomon's temple

How Does It Look to You?

- **Haggai 2:3** NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

“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?”

- In their eyes, “this building and nothingness amounted to the same thing.” [Taylor, Haggai, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004): p. 151]

How Does It Look to You?

■ **Ezra 3:11b-13** THE VOICE TRANSLATION

“All the people joined in, shouting praises to the Eternal because the foundation of His temple was complete. ¹² But in the midst of those praises, the priests, Levites, and tribal leaders who remembered the first temple wept loudly when they saw it because they knew this temple could never be as grand as Solomon’s. ¹³ There were shouts of joy intermingled with cries of sorrow, and the entire ensemble grew so loud it could be heard a great distance away.”

How Does It Look to You?

- The same question comes to us in the midst of our circumstances: How does it look to you?
- Consider Jacob's experience in Genesis 28:10-17
- **Genesis 28:16-17** THE VOICE TRANSLATION
“There is no doubt in my mind that the Eternal One is in this place—and I didn't even know it! ...This place is absolutely awesome! It can be none other than the house of God and the gateway into heaven!”

How Does It Look to You?

- Stop cursing the place of your assignment; get God's perspective on your present assignment
- How do you know that the place you're at isn't in fact a gateway of heaven? You cannot trust your own eyes or perception

God's Estimate of Things is Very Different Than Ours

■ **Zechariah 4:10a** THE VOICE TRANSLATION

“Now all who have frowned on the day when only slight progress was made to reconstruct the temple will celebrate when they see the stone that centers the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel, who will survey Jerusalem.”

God's Estimate of Things is Very Different Than Ours

■ **1 Corinthians 1:27-28** THE MESSAGE

“I don't see many of ‘the brightest and the best’ among you, not many influential, not many from high-society families. Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these ‘nobodies’ to expose the hollow pretensions of the ‘somebodies’?”

Expectation: Another Word for “Faith”

- There’s a direct relationship between getting God’s perspective on your assignment and the level of your expectation
- Faith is simply the expectation that God will show up, be faithful to who He is and what He has promised, and do what He said He would

Expectation: Another Word for “Faith”

- Expectation and discouragement share this: both have predictive power, both are self-fulfilling
- **Psalm 19:25** NEW LIVING TRANSLATION
“I lie in the dust, completely discouraged; revive me by your word.”

The Lord's Twofold Word of Promise

- He gives a promise of presence (cf. Haggai 2:4-5) —
God's presence is his ministry
- He gives a promise of provision (cf. Haggai 2:6-9)

How Does It Look to You?

- How did it look to the people? Impossible! But it was actually a gateway to heaven
- **Psalm 77:19** NEW LIVING TRANSLATION
“Your road led through the sea, your pathway through the mighty waters— a pathway no one knew was there!”



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