

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 6 Nov 2022

Sermon Title : Haggai Sermon Series
Think Again: It's Impossible

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : Haggai 2:20-23

INTRODUCTION

Our 4-part sermon series on Haggai, 'Think Again' challenges us to think again what we think we have understood but might not be aligned to what God is saying in Scripture. Today, we are to 'Think Again: It's Impossible'. Sometimes, when we are in difficult situations, even though we remember God's promises, we think it's impossible for Him to keep them. At the same time, as believers, we know it is impossible that God does not keep His word. Christmas is an example of "It is possible with God":

It was impossible for Mary, a virgin, to bear a child. It was also impossible for her cousin, Elizabeth, who was between 60-88 years old (based on the Bible and extra-Biblical sources) to be pregnant.

Maybe Mary showed on her face 'It's impossible' when angel Gabriel announced this news to her, so the angel said in Luke 1:37, "For nothing will be impossible with God". The only impossible for God is that it is impossible that God cannot do what He wishes or keep His word.

4 Prophecies in the Book of Haggai

1st prophecy – came on 1st day of the 6th month through Haggai to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, and Joshua the High Priest. The people began work on rebuilding the temple on the 24th day of the 6th month.

2nd prophecy – came on 21st day of the 7th month, through Haggai to Zerubbabel and Joshua encouraging them to work on.

3rd prophecy – came on 24th day of the 9th month to the people about importance of obedience.

The 4th prophecy came on the same day as the 3rd prophecy, on the 24th day of the 9th month to Zerubbabel.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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The Last Prophecy in Haggai (Haggai 2:20-23)

Verse 21: This prophecy is different from the one given earlier on the same day as it was specifically for Zerubbabel – God is ready to shake the sky/heaven and earth.

Verse 22: God will overthrow royal thrones and end all kind of powers, no matter how powerful they are on earth. They will not be able to stop God from overthrowing them.

Verse 23: 'On that day' (not referring to a day in that year in 520 BC but points to a day in the future or in end times), God will choose Zerubbabel as His signet ring.

What is a signet ring?

For the Israelites, instead of a seal as used by the Chinese emperor to represent his legal authority, it was a signet ring made of precious metals or stones that represents the king's full authority. Our modern world has similar 'signet rings'. A policeman can stop the traffic with his hand stretched out because of the uniform and badge he is wearing. The uniform and badge represent the authority of the government. Stretching his hand when not wearing the uniform and badge will not stop traffic because he no longer represents the authority.

Is it possible for the 4th prophecy in Haggai to be fulfilled?

The first verse of Haggai (Haggai 1:1) refers to King Darius (520 BC), an earthly authority and the book ends with God's final authority. There is an intentional design in how the book of Haggai starts and ends – that God has the final say.

Question 1 – Is it possible for God to shake and overthrow kingdoms? (Hag 2:21-22)

Question 2 – Is it possible for Zerubbabel (not even a king but only a governor under a foreign empire) to be chosen as a signet ring? (Haggai 2:23)

❖ **Jesus fulfills this 4th prophecy and is the answer to all these things.**

1. Shaking and overthrowing the kingdoms

a) The Kingdom of God

In Hebrews 12:26-27, God promises He will shake/remove things that are created or man-made. The only thing that cannot be shaken or removed is the Kingdom of God. The concept of kingdom prior to Jesus was an earthly kingdom.

- It was only when Jesus came that there was a concept of God's Kingdom, Kingdom values, attributes and culture that is very different from earthly culture.
- Jesus displays the power of the Kingdom by healing the blind, deaf, mute and raising the dead.
- He teaches about the Kingdom and lives out Kingdom values.
- He gave us a prayer to pray for this unshakable Kingdom to come.
- His Kingdom has come but is yet to be fully here.

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Disciples of Christ are people in this Kingdom that Christ has ushered in – we are in this world but not of this world. We are here to live out Kingdom values and walk out the Kingdom power to show what being in God’s Kingdom is like.

❖ **God’s Kingdom will come fully when Jesus comes again.**

b) Overthrowing the kingdoms

- 1 Corinthians 15:24-25 - A time will come when Jesus will return and all rule, authority and power not in accordance to God’s Kingdom will come to an end.
- Luke 1:31-33 – God’s Kingdom will never end, unlike all other kingdoms and power.

We are living in the end times since Jesus ascended into heaven, working with Him until He returns. Why is Jesus not coming back sooner when there is so much suffering in the world? Because of mercy – He is delaying His coming back so that more people will have time to repent. Therefore, we, the Kingdom people, need to work alongside with God to share the good news of His Kingdom.

History is filled with kingdoms coming to an end. Zerubbabel saw the Babylonian empire taken over by the Persian and they were later overtaken by the Greek and history repeats.

❖ **Jesus has begun shaking the kingdoms and one day all other kingdoms will end.**

2. Zerubbabel – The Signet Ring

Luke 1:31-33 says Jesus will sit on the throne of His father David. This is because God chose David and his lineage to rule and there is a direct reference to David in the genealogy of Jesus. Matthew 1 gives the genealogy of Jesus in three portions of 14 generations:

- (i) 14 generations from Abraham to David.
- (ii) 14 generations from David to exile.
- (iii) 14 generations from the exile to Jesus.

One of Jesus’ ancestors is Zerubbabel. (Matthew 1:13-16) Jehoiachin was father of Shealtiel and Shealtiel was father of Zerubbabel. (Matthew 1:12) The grandfather of Zerubbabel is Jehoiachin, so Jehoiachin is also Jesus’ ancestor in the line of David.

a) God abandoning Jehoiachin (Jeremiah 22:24)

God said He will abandon Jehoiachin, an evil king, and remove him as the signet ring and hand him over to king Nebuchadnezzar. He ruled for only about three months and God allowed Babylon to overtake Jerusalem, exile Jehoiachin to Babylon (before 586 BC), never to return. After him, no one from the line of David sat on the throne.

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God's promise to David (2 Samuel 7:16)

God promised David and his house that his kingdom will continue, and his throne will be secured forever.

If this is so, why did God abandon David's descendent Jehoiachin (Jeremiah 22:24) and then later tell Jehoiachin's grandson, Zerubbabel, that he would be chosen as the signet ring and then much later, Jesus came.

All the kings speak of the life of Jesus:

- **Jesus abandoned by God** - Jesus was always with God as the Holy Trinity even before the existence of time. But Jesus was also abandoned by God at the Cross because He was carrying the sins and evil of the world even though He was innocent.
- **Jesus the signet ring** – After Jesus was resurrected from the dead, He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me (signet ring)” and proceeded to give us the Great Commission.

The book of Haggai is centred around the rebuilding of God's temple

In Jeremiah 29:10, God promised He would restore the Israelites after 70 years of Babylonian rule. This promise/prophecy was given through Jeremiah before 586 BC. This was before the Israelites were exiled. This prophesy also speaks of the temple that will be gone.

586 BC – Nebuchadnezzar destroyed everything including the temple of God. In

538 BC – The Israelites returned to Jerusalem.

520 BC – They resumed rebuilding the temple. (Haggai 1)

516 BC – Temple rebuilding completed and dedicated to God, after 70 years!

This was a promise delivered even before the temple was destroyed and it was fulfilled as found in God's Word!

CONCLUSION

Since Jeremiah 29:10 is not impossible with God, the next verse – “For I know what I have planned for you”, says the Lord. “I have plans to prosper you, not to harm you. I have plans to give you a future filled with hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11), will certainly not be impossible for God. The promises of God may seem impossible amid our challenges, but it is exactly in those challenging times that we need to remember this verse and say, “Nothing is impossible with God”. Let us fulfil the things God has spoken to us in Haggai so God's word will be fulfilled in our lives.

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A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

- 2a. Since hearing this sermon, how have you been living out your faith believing that "It is possible with God"?
- 2b. Appoint someone to read Haggai 2:20-23 aloud slowly and reflect.
 - (i) If you were Zerubbabel, how would you feel as you listen to Haggai pronouncing this prophecy to you? What crossed your mind?
 - (ii) What do those feelings and thoughts tell you about your idea of God and your faith in Him?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. As you reflect on how God is fulfilling His prophecies through Jeremiah and Haggai progressively with the changes of world events, how has this helped to strengthen your faith in God, while waiting for Jesus to return?
 - a. What is one situation in your life now that you think, “It’s impossible” for God?
 - b. Read Luke 1:37. How does this and your reflection above help you in coping with 3a. above, or when there seems to be no way out of difficult situations in future?

4. Do you believe that Christ will return and rule as prophesied by Haggai to Zerubbabel, so God’s Kingdom will fully come on earth?
 - a. While waiting for the Kingdom of God to fully come, what is one thing you can do in the meantime, to live out a faith that shows “Nothing will be impossible with God”?
 - b. Share some concrete steps your small group can take for this coming week to live out a faith that shows ‘Nothing will be impossible with God’.
 - c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 4a. and 4b. in the following week(s) until your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies, Prayer and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

5. Share your personal experience of how God fulfilled His promises in your life and affirmed you that “Nothing is impossible with God”.

OR

Give thanks to God that God’s Kingdom will fully come when Christ returns to rule and reign.

6. Bring all that have been shared to God, asking the Holy Spirit to help you overcome your unbelief in “Nothing will be impossible for God”. Seek the Lord’s forgiveness and humble yourselves to acknowledge God’s power and ability to do as He says and wills. Pray that God will enable you, your small group and our church to live out Kingdom values and culture to show God’s Kingdom on earth so the good news of His Kingdom may be made known.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Holy Forever – Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkHqxKemCRk>
2. That’s the Power – Hillsong <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYjppzHLt2s>
3. Victor’s Crown – Darlene Zschech <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOnAMes2r5A>

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