

INTRODUCTION 引言

Vision will determine our direction. A person with dreams can look beyond the current situation and see the goal. Some of you have visited the Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota before. It features the faces of four former U.S. Presidents: Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt and Lincoln. Artist Gutzon Borglum started this magnificent work in 1927. It took his team fourteen years to complete. Someone once asked a worker, “How did Mr. Borglum know that Mr. Lincoln was in that rock?” The answer is simple. It is because of his vision. He could “see” what others could not. In our study today, prophet Haggai was also a man of vision. He was among the first wave of Israelites returning to Jerusalem from Persia. The year was 537 BC. God fulfilled His promise to bring His people back after seventy years of exile. King Cyrus of Persia followed a policy of tolerance to treat his captives. He allowed them to go back to their country of origin and to practice their own religions. Cyrus even gave the Israelites money to rebuild their temple. They put back the altar soon after they arrived in Jerusalem. The priests resumed animal sacrifice. Several months later, the foundation of the temple was laid. But due to some problems the project was stopped. Prophet Haggai motivated his people not to give up. Our church also needs a reconstruction process. I am not talking about the renovation of our building, but our hearts. Since the pandemic, our church has been in a survival mode. Ministries are cut back and attendance drops. What worry me the most is your relationship with the Lord and with each other. Our church badly needs a spiritual revival. We can invite some renowned speakers to preach a few uplifting messages. We can gather some Christian bands to play awesome music. After that, then what? You see, true revival has to come from the inside. A fancy restaurant cannot guarantee a good appetite. Sermons and music will be like entertainment if we do not have a hunger for spiritual growth. True revival has to begin from each of us.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. This is Now 目前的困難

Let us look at three snapshots from the book of Haggai. The first picture is what I call “This is Now.” The Israelites faced some barriers in their project. God spoke to the prophet in Haggai 1:2 – **This is what the Lord Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come for the Lord’s house to be built.’”** The book of Ezra tells us that the Israelites encountered some opposition from their enemies. First, some descendants from the ten northern tribes of Israel disturbed the work. They were the offspring from mixed marriages between the Jews and foreigners after Assyria conquered the northern kingdom. They worshipped Jehovah plus other gods. There was a second issue besides that. Some government officials questioned who gave those refugees permission to rebuild their temple. They reported the matter to king Darius. He then ordered the project be stopped until someone checked the record. Due to those two problems, the Israelites figured it might not

be the right time to build the temple. However, God revealed the true reason for the delay. Look at 1:4 – “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?” Those Jews returning home had to start from nothing. It was reasonable to build houses for their families. The problem was their priority. It was wrong for them to pay attention to their needs while neglecting the work of God. Students need to study and employees have to work. But if you are too busy to read the Bible and attend church meetings, then you need to ask the Lord for wisdom to adjust your priority. The use of time or money reflects our hearts to the Lord. An incorrect mentality can spread to others too. In chapter 2, Haggai conveyed another message from God with an analogy. A person carrying some consecrated meat would not make other food it contacts holy. However, a person can spread defilement to other objects after he touches a dead body. Then Haggai continues in 2:14 – “So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,’ declares the Lord. ‘Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled.’” The point is that it is difficult to influence others with your good behaviors. But it is much easier to copy others’ bad examples. I call it “contagious complacency.” Let us face it: we can get lazy when we are too relaxed. It is hard to get up early on a Sunday morning to attend church at 9:30 when others are not doing it. Besides, there are extracurricular activities, grocery shopping, laundry and yard work on our weekend schedule. Spiritual growth needs a lot of self-discipline and determination. The “this is now” mentality can affect us. It happens when we remain at home for too long during these two years. The Council has decided to fully reopen our church on Friday. Is your family ready to come back? We are not only facing a medical or political issue. Satan is waging a spiritual warfare at us. He attacks us with fear. He only wants us to focus on the what-ifs. What if I get the virus? How will that affect my study, my job and my family? Fear will paralyze us. We determine that it is not the right time to go out. The time has not come to revive our church. The question is what does it take to make us fully ready? We should protect ourselves in order to protect other church members. We ask God for wisdom to make plans based on calculated risk. For instance, traveling by air is safe because accident is quite rare. But ultimately, the key is to put God first. Then we can step out in faith despite the current obstacles and future unknowns.

2. This is How 必經的過程

God’s people looked at the “now.” But God encouraged them to follow through the plan. He told the Israelites the “how” to reach the goal. Step one is to **reflect**. Look at 1:5 – **Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways.”** The phrase “give careful thought” is repeated five times in the 38 verses of this book! The Israelites had to reflect on their attitude. The passage says they had a tough life after they returned to Jerusalem. They worked hard in the field, but the harvest was not ideal. Then there were bad weather and drought. Some people might wonder if they made a wrong decision to leave Persia. God wanted them to realize that they had problems because they did not put God first. The same thing can happen to us. Do you find fulfillment in your job? You spend long hours but still do not get a lot done. Perhaps your colleagues, computer or experiment does not cooperate. To our church coworkers: do you have joy in your ministries? Or does it feel burdensome like a second job? It is a good time for you to reflect on your value. For whom

we do things is more important than what we do. There will be contentment if we do everything for God's glory. When our heart is right with God, then our hands will follow. Besides reflecting on the mentality, step two is simply to **resume** God's work. God told His people in 1:8 – **“Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the Lord.** God told them to chop some wood and continue the building. They would rejoice when they were doing something that brought joy to God. This time they obeyed. Then we come to step three: the Israelites also **recall** God's promises. Read 1:13 – **Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: “I am with you,” declares the Lord.** They were facing a monumental task. In addition to the physical work, they also had to deal with the enemies' psychological tactics to frustrate their plan. But God told them: “I am with you.” The Lord further encouraged them in 2:4 – **“But now be strong, O Zerubbabel,’ declares the Lord. ‘Be strong, O Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the Lord, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the Lord Almighty.”** God repeated the same statement “I am with you.” He also added three times “be strong.” Very often, we can easily be discouraged when we feel that we are alone in a battle. We need to recall those two statements too. “Be strong. God is with you.” Here is a plain mathematical formula to keep in mind: one plus infinity is still infinity. God will be on our side when are on His side. But how can we be sure that a certain plan is God's will? We can learn a few things from this story. First, it has to be consistent with Biblical principles. The temple was for people to worship God. A church is set up for two major goals: to build up believers and to reach out to non-believers. Hence, resuming church ministries is definitely God's will. Second, there will be joy when we work with God. There will be difficulties. Breaking through the stagnant situation from the past two years to foster spiritual growth is not easy. But God will be with us. Brothers and sister: be strong! The Israelites resumed their work. The book of Ezra tells us that they finished the temple in five years.

3. This will Wow 將來的榮耀

While the Israelites could only see the “now,” God told them the “how” to continue their work. Thirdly, God stated that in the future the temple would marvel people with a “wow!” Look at 2:6-7 – **6 “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. 7 I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord Almighty.”** This is the most difficult part in the whole book to understand. The phrase “in a little while” does not necessarily mean very soon. It can refer to any time in the future. Next, if we interpret shaking literally, then it is about a catastrophic event. The author of Hebrews confirms it when he quotes the passage in 12:26-27: **26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” 27 The words, “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken – that is, created things – so that what cannot be shaken may remain.** Here the word “heavens” refer to the sky. In the context, the author recalls that God shook mount Sinai as He gave Moses His Law. Exodus records that on that day there were lightning, thunder, smoke and earthquake. But one day, God will shake the whole world when Jesus comes back. Jesus told His

disciples that there will be worldwide disasters right before His return. The author of Hebrews says after everything temporary is shaken away, what remains is God's unshakable Kingdom. Going back to the book of Haggai. God said when He shakes the whole world, then "the desired of all nations will come." The phrase can be understood as "the One all nations desire." It points to none other than our Lord Jesus. Some five hundred years later, Jesus walked into the temple. God appeared in a human form to visit His house. But the best has yet to come. God said in Haggai 2:9 – **“The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the Lord Almighty.”** God reminded His people that what mattered was not the structure or the materials. Ezra said that some older Israelites cried after the temple foundation was laid. They remembered the first temple, which king Solomon decorated with precious metals. The rebuilt temple might be a smaller wooden house. Though less appealing, the temple will be glorious because of God's presence. It is like an ordinary object auctioned for a high price because some celebrities used it before or signed their names on it. A towel Elvis used to wipe his sweat or a book with Martin Luther King's autograph will be sold for a lot of money. God would once again fill the temple with His glory. This second temple was renovated and expanded in 19 BC by king Herod. Unfortunately, the temple was eventually leveled by the Romans. The site is later occupied by a Muslim mosque. Some Bible scholars believe that the temple will be rebuilt again before Jesus' return. We shall see if that may come true. But the key thing is not about the structure. The place is significant because who lives in it. God chose to meet His people in the temple. Likewise, God calls this place His home. We come here every time to have fellowship with other believers. Moreover, we together also have fellowship with God. His presence will fill this building with His glory.

CONCLUSION 結論

True revival has to begin from each of us. God does not want us to pay attention only to the "now." The pandemic may never end. No one knows what the future may hold either. God has told us the "how" for revival. We need to go back to Him. Revival of our church does not rely on our programs or coworkers. It depends on each of our participation. God will bring about a breakthrough when we submit to Him. He will surprise us with a "wow." God is able to do wonderful things in our church. Whether or not outsiders will say "FCBC is a wonderful church" is unimportant. What we truly want to hear should be "Your God is a real God!" Brothers and sisters: it all depend on your vision. What you see is a twenty-some year-old aging building and more than two-third of its members are middle-aged and above. But do not lose sight of the Almighty God who calls us to this place. He has the power to turn something superficial into supernatural.

INTRODUCTION 引言

視野決定我們的方向。一個有夢想的人，可以超越現狀，看到目標。我們中間有些人參觀過南達科他州的拉什莫爾山國家紀念碑。在那個山上有四位美國前任總統的像，他們是華盛頓、杰斐遜、羅斯福和林肯。藝術家博格勒姆 (Gutzon Borglum) 於 1927 年開始了這項偉大的創作。他的團隊花了 14 年時間才完成。曾經有人問一個工人：「博格勒姆先生怎麼知道林肯先生在那塊石頭裡頭的？」答案很簡單。那是因為他的視野。他可以看到別人看不到的東西。在我們今天的經文中，先知哈該也是一位有視野的人。他是第一批從波斯返回耶路撒冷的以色列人之一。那是公元前 537 年。神實現了祂的應許，在流亡七十年後把祂的子民帶回來。波斯王塞魯士對俘虜實行寬容政策。他允許他們返回故鄉並信奉自己的宗教。塞魯士甚至給以色列人錢來重建他們的聖殿。他們到達耶路撒冷後不久就修復了祭壇。祭司們便恢復動物祭祀。幾個月後，聖殿根基也鋪好了。但由於一些阻礙，工程停止了。先知哈該激勵他的同胞不要放棄。我們的教會也需要一個重建過程。我說的不是大樓的翻新，而是重建我們的心靈。自疫情以來，我們的教會一直處於生存模式。事工減少，出席率下降。我最擔心的是你與主以及彼此之間的關係。我們的教會非常需要屬靈的復興。我們可以邀請一些有名的講員宣講一些振奮人心的信息。我們可以找一些基督徒樂隊來演奏美妙的音樂。聚會完了，然後呢？真正的復興必須來自內心。高級的餐廳不能保證你胃口大開。如果我們不渴望靈性成長，信息和音樂就會像娛樂一樣。真正的復興必須從我們每個人開始。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. This is Now 目前的困難

讓我們看看哈該書的三個剪影。第一幅圖像是目前的困難。以色列人在他們的計劃中遇到了一些障礙。神在哈該書 1:2 對先知說話：**萬軍之耶和華如此說：「這百姓說，建造耶和華殿的時候尚未來到。」**以斯拉記告訴我們，以色列人遇到了一些敵人的反對。首先，以色列北部十個支派的一些後裔擾亂了這項工程。他們是亞述征服北國後猶太人和外邦人通婚的後代。他們敬拜耶和華和其他神明。除此之外還有第二個問題。一些政府官員質疑誰允許這些難民重建他們的聖殿。他們把事情報告給大利烏王。然後他就下令停止工程，直到有人檢查記錄。由於這兩個問題，以色列人認為當時可能不是建造聖殿的合適時機。

然而，神揭示了延遲的真正原因。看 1:4：「這殿仍然荒涼，你們自己還住天花板的房屋嗎？」那些回國的猶太人是要從零開始。為自己的家人建造房屋是合理的。問題是在於他們的優先次序。他們只關注自己的需要卻忽視神的工作是錯誤的。學生需要學習，雇員需要上班。但如果你忙到一個地步沒時間讀聖經和參加教會聚會，那你就需要主賜智慧來調整你的優先次序。時間或金錢的使用反映了我們對主的心。錯誤的心態也會傳染給他人。在第 2 章，哈該用一個類比傳達了來自神的另一個信息。一個人攜帶一些聖肉不會把它碰到的其他食物變成神聖的。然而，一個人在接觸一具屍體後，他可以將污穢傳播到其他物件上。然後哈該在 2:14 中繼續說：「耶和華說：這民這國，在我面前也是如此；他們手下的各樣工作都是如此；他們在壇上所獻的也是如此。」重點是，很難用你的好行為影響他人。但是學習別人的壞榜樣要容易得多。我稱這個為「傳染性的自滿安逸」。讓我們面對現實：當我們太放鬆時，我們會變得懶惰。在其他人不做的情况下，你很難在星期天早上 9:30 去教會。此外，我們週末的日程安排還有課外活動、買菜、洗衣服和打理庭院。屬靈成長需要大量的自律和決心。只看到目前的困難的心態會影響我們。當我們在這兩年中呆在家裡太久時，就會發生這種情況。同工會已決定在周五全面重新開放我們的教會。你的家人準備好回來了嗎？這不僅是衛生或政治的問題。撒但正在向我們發動屬靈爭戰。他用恐懼攻擊我們。他只希望我們想到最壞的情況。如果我感染了病毒怎麼辦？這將如何影響我的學習、我的工作和我的家庭？恐懼會使我們裹足不前，使我們認為現在不是外出的合適時機，復興教會的時候尚未來到。問題是：什麼時候我們才算做好充分準備？我們應該保護自己，以保護其他教會成員。我們祈求神賜予智慧，根據預計的風險制定計劃。例如，坐飛機旅行是安全的，因為很少會發生事故。但歸根結底，關鍵是要把神放在首位。然後，我們可以超越當前的障礙和未知的將來，滿懷信心地邁出去。

2. This is How 必經的過程

神的子民只注意目前的困難。但神鼓勵他們要完成計劃。祂告訴以色列人達到目標必經的過程。第一步是**反思**。看 1:5：現在萬軍之耶和華如此說：你們要省察自己的行為。「省察自己的行為」這句話在這卷書的 38 節經文中重複出現了五次！以色列人必須反思他們的態度。經文提到他們回到耶路撒冷後過著艱難的生活。他們在田裡努力工作，但收成並不理想。再加上惡劣的天氣和乾旱。有些人可能會懷疑他們離開波斯的決定是否正確。神希望他們意識到他們碰到困難，是因為他們沒有把神放在首位。同樣的情形也可能發生在我們身上。你在工作中找到滿足感嗎？你花了很長時間，但仍然無法完成很多事情。也許你的同事、電腦或實驗不配合。我們教會的同工：你在事奉中有喜樂嗎？還是你覺得好像在做第二份工作那麼辛苦？現在是你反思自己價值的好時機。我們為

誰做事比我們做什麼更重要。如果我們為神的榮耀而做任何事，就能有滿足感。如果我們的心向著神，我們必然有相應的行動。除了反思之外，第二步就是恢復神的工作。神在 1:8 節告訴祂的子民：你們要上山取木料，建造這殿，我就因此喜樂，且得榮耀。這是耶和華說的。神告訴他們去砍一些木頭，然後繼續建造。當他們做神喜悅的事情時，他們自然也會有喜樂。這一次，他們服從了。然後我們來到第三步：以色列人也回想神的應許。閱讀 1:13 – 耶和華的使者哈該奉耶和華差遣對百姓說：「耶和華說：我與你們同在。」他們面臨著一項艱鉅的任務。除了體力勞動之外，他們還要應付敵人的心理戰術，挫敗他們的計劃。但神告訴他們：「我與你們同在。」主在 2:4 進一步鼓勵他們：耶和華說：「所羅巴伯啊，雖然如此，你當剛強！約撒答的兒子大祭司約書亞啊，你也當剛強！這地的百姓，你們都當剛強做工，因為我與你們同在。這是萬軍之耶和華說的。」神重複了同樣的話「我與你同在」。他還說了三次「當剛強」。很多時候，當我們覺得自己在孤軍奮戰時，很容易氣餒。我們也需要回想那兩句話：「當剛強。神與你同在。」這裡有一個簡單的數學公式需要記住：一加無窮大仍然是無窮大。當我們站在神那邊時，祂就會站在我們這邊。但我們如何確定某個計劃是神的旨意呢？我們可以從這個故事中學到一些東西。首先，它必須符合聖經的原則。聖殿是供人敬拜神的。教會的建立有兩個主要目的：建立信徒和接觸非信徒。因此，恢復教會的事工也肯定是神的旨意。其次，當我們與神一起工作時，自然會有喜樂。當中可能會遇到困難。要突破過去兩年的停滯再掀起復興絕不容易。但是神一定會與我們同在。弟兄姐妹：當剛強！於是以色列人恢復他們的工作。以斯拉記告訴我們，他們在五年內完成了聖殿。

3. This will Wow 將來的榮耀

雖然以色列人只看到目前的困難，但神告訴他們重建必經的過程。第三，神說將來聖殿的榮耀會讓人驚嘆。請看 2:6-7：6 萬軍之耶和華如此說：「過不多時，我必再一次震動天地、滄海，與旱地。7 我必震動萬國；萬國的珍寶必都運來，我就使這殿滿了榮耀。這是萬軍之耶和華說的。」這是全書最難理解的部分。「過不多時」不一定意味著很快會發生。它可以指將來的任何時間。接下來，如果我們按照字面來解釋震動，那麼它是指災難性的事件。希伯來書的作者書中的 12:26-27 引用這句話時證實了這一點：26 當時他的聲音震動了地，但如今他應許說：『再一次我不單要震動地，還要震動天。』27 這再一的話，是指明被震動的，就是受造之物都要挪去，使那不被震動的常存。這裡的「天」指的是天空。在上下文中，作者回憶說，當神將律法賜給摩西時震動了西奈山。出埃及記記載那天有閃電、雷聲、煙霧和地震。但是有一天，當耶穌回來時，神會震動整個世界。耶穌告訴祂的門徒，在祂回來之前將會有全球

性的災難。希伯來書的作者說，當一切短暫的東西都被震去之後，剩下的就是神那不可動搖的國度。回到哈該書。神說，當祂震動整個世界時，「萬國的珍寶必都運來」。這句話可以理解為「萬國所羨慕的那一位」。它指向的不是別人，乃是我們的主耶穌。大約五百年後，耶穌走進聖殿。神以人的形像出現在祂的屬靈居所。但是好戲在後頭。神在哈該書 2:9 節說：「**這殿後來的榮耀必大過先前的榮耀；在這地方我必賜平安。這是萬軍之耶和華說的。**」神提醒祂的子民，重點的不是結構或材料。以斯拉說，一些年長的以色列人在聖殿奠基後哭了。他們想起了第一座聖殿，所羅門王用貴重金屬裝飾了那座建築物。重建的聖殿可能是一座較小的木屋。雖然不那麼起眼，但是由於神的同在，聖殿會充滿榮耀。它就像一件普通的物品，因為一些名人使用過它或是在上面簽了名而變得值錢。貓王用來擦汗的毛巾或有馬丁路德金親筆簽名的書可能會賣很多錢。神會再次以祂的榮耀充滿聖殿。公元前 19 年，希律王對第二座聖殿進行了翻修和擴建。不幸的是，那座聖殿最終被羅馬人移為平地。後來，該地點被一座穆斯林清真寺所取代。一些聖經學者相信聖殿會在耶穌再來之前重建。我們拭目以待，看看這是否會成真。但關鍵不在於結構。那個地方很重要，是因為誰住在裡面。神選擇在聖殿裡與祂的子民相遇。同樣，神稱這個地方為祂的家。我們每次都來這裡與其他信徒相交。而且，我們在一起也與神有交通。祂的同在使這座建築物充滿祂的榮耀。

CONCLUSION 結論

真正的復興必須從我們每個人開始。神不希望我們只關注目前的困難。疫情可能永遠不會結束。也沒有人知道未來會怎樣。神已經告訴我們復興必經的過程。我們需要回到祂的身邊。我們教會的復興不是依靠事工或是同工。乃是取決於我們每個人的參與。當我們順服神時，神便會帶來突破。祂會給我們一個意外的驚喜。神能夠在我們的教會中做奇妙的事情。外面的人是否會說第一華人浸信會是一所很棒的教會並不重要。我們真正希望聽到的評語應該是：「你們的神是一位真神！」弟兄姐妹們：這一切都取決於你的視野。你看到的是一座二十多年歷史老化的建築物，超過三分之二的成員都是中年以上的人。但不要忘记呼召我們到這個地方的全能神。祂有能力將一些簡單的事物變成超自然的東西。