

**Prophet
Haggai 2:1-9**

- In the second year of King Darius,
¹in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month,
the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai, saying:
- ²Speak now to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah,
and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest,
and to the remnant of the people, and say,
- ³Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory?
How does it look to you now?
Is it not in your sight as nothing?
- ⁴Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD;
take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest;
take courage, all you people of the land, says the LORD;
work, for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts,
- ⁵according to the promise that I made you
when you came out of Egypt.
My spirit abides among you; do not fear.
- ⁶For thus says the LORD of hosts:
Once again, in a little while,
I will shake the heavens and the earth
and the sea and the dry land;
- ⁷and I will shake all the nations,
so that the treasure of all nations shall come,
and I will fill this house with splendour,
says the LORD of hosts.
- ⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,
says the LORD of hosts.
- ⁹The latter splendour of this house
shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts;
and in this place I will give prosperity,
says the LORD of hosts.

Reading the Prophet this Week

Haggai speaks in 520BCE –
In fact, this bit is from October 17, 520BCE
The writer says so, Ezra 5:1 and 6:14 confirms it

It's a century after Josiah's reform,
Then Babylon's waves of siege and exile
The loss of Solomon's temple, a ruin in 580's BCE

It's 18 years since Persia beat Babylon and let exiles return,
1 year since a better funded group returned to build
1 month since the foundation stone was laid

It's pretty concrete, endorsing the business plan, fundraising
Luther thought it was old news, since 70CE destruction
It's not like the other prophets of justice or morality, eh?

Here's a vision of a 'house of God' promising presence,
Inviting gifts from scattered nations to recentre
Just when we'd de-centred in the people and book

It's not a king and nation state vision,
This is peak Persian power, Samaria governs Judah
Not political, but sacred power promised

Here's the pep talk for the remnant returned,
Before the building gets going,
Contrasted with past glories

European settler people claimed this text in a 'new world'
20th century people built CE wings, Crystal Cathedrals
What do we build, as if starting not ending?

Where to you see God working –
How does the church building contribute to our response
Celebrate, nurture, serve, mend, heal...
Architects or engineers may differ!

Gospel
Luke 20:27-38

27 Some Sadducees,
those who say there is no resurrection,
came to him ²⁸and asked him a question,

‘Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies,
leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow
and raise up children for his brother.

²⁹Now there were seven brothers;
the first married, and died childless;
³⁰then the second ³¹and the third married her,
and so in the same way all seven died childless.
³²Finally the woman also died.

³³In the resurrection, therefore,
whose wife will the woman be?
For the seven had married her.’

34 Jesus said to them,
‘Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage;
³⁵but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and
in the resurrection from the dead
neither marry nor are given in marriage.

³⁶Indeed they cannot die any more,
because they are like angels and are children of God,
being children of the resurrection.

³⁷And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in
the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord
as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

³⁸Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living;
for to him all of them are alive.’

Reading the Gospel This Week

We’ve reached a point of merger –
Matthew 22:23-33 and Mark 12:18-27 match Luke
I’ll let the variations go this time...

Sadducees, a sect among Jesus’ Jewish people,
Who deny resurrection metaphysics
Ask a provocative question to prove their point

From Deuteronomy 25:5-6 and Genesis 38:8,
A custom of *chalitzah* inheritance for a childless widow
Ensuring brothers would marry or provide for her

Speculating: who’s her spouse in heaven?
Response: marriage in this context, differs in that
Beyond finite time and space, it’s likened to angels

The further argument is even weirder for us:
Theophany to Moses in the burning bush
Was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

From a God’s-eye-view, all are equally alive?
Whether we live or die – is this our God?
Which challenges to ontology or metaphysics matter?

Why would Jesus dignify this argument?
Why would all 3 gospels repeat the story?

We’re not building a nation state, or a temple cult –
So what’s the ultimate legacy beyond us, each/all?

By the time gospels are written, 2nd Temple is gone in 70CE
Even in Jesus’ time, Rome rules, Israel’s over
What survives, ultimately, in domestic or public identity?

We don’t talk in metaphysics or ontology,
Nor in naïve magic realism of enchanted universe –

Another way at this: who, or what, would you die for?
What loyalty transcends short term calculation, to form identity?