

Put God First Part 03

Learn to Build the House of God from the Book of Haggai

“1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, 2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built. 3 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? 5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. 7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. 9 Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. 10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. 11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands. 12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD. 13 Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD. 14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, 15 In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.” (Haggai 1:1-15 KJV)

When God allowed His people to return to Jerusalem from captivity, the main purpose of their return was to rebuild the house of God, the temple in Jerusalem. They returned and started to do the work but because of certain discouragement and certain opposition they stopped rebuilding the house of God and instead they started to be busy in building their own houses. That was the situation when the Word of God came to them through the prophet Haggai: ***“2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.” (Haggai 1:2 KJV)*** God's people went away from serving the Lord because they faced opposition and they thought the presence of struggles is a sign that it is not yet time to rebuild the house of God. **But the truth is, every time we decide to follow God and serve Him we will face resistance and struggle from the devil and he will do all what he can to stop us. In whatever we plan and whatever we do we need to put God first and continue to serve Him. “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7 KJV)**

The people after they left the project of rebuilding the temple undone were fully occupied to rebuild their own houses and they became negligent toward God and toward His temple. So the call of God to them through the prophet Haggai was a call for repentance to leave what they

were busy with, to return to God and to serve Him again. The people said that the time had not yet come for the temple to be built but the Lord confronted them: ***“4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?” (Haggai 1:4 KJV)*** The Lord's challenge here is an important call for God's people to repent. **Are you busy with your life, your own job, your own family, your own study, etc, and the house of God is in ruin and the church neglected? The Lord is challenging you today to repent of your sins, to come back to Him and start to serve Him.**

Nowadays people are so concerned with their own lives, building houses, accomplishing their ambitions and become negligent toward God. In the New Testament after Jesus death on the cross for our sins we have become the temple of God. ***“19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19 KJV)*** **So if we fail to serve God and be an active part of His church then we will not be benefited at all. Being a people of God but living away from His plan will bring us calamity. We must understand that being busy with our own life and plans will not result in the blessings that God has ordained for us. If we neglect God and His temple, we will soon end up with empty hands. So let us consider God's will and give careful thought to our ways. Let us evaluate our personal life in the light of the Scriptures and see the consequences of failing to serve God and working with Him to build up His church:**

A. Lack of personal blessings: ***“6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.” (Haggai 1:6 KJV)*** Many Christians work hard but at the end nothing is left. What they are expecting does not come true because they fail God and His Church. **If you fail to serve God and fail to put God first as your priority, you will always be in need, living without contentment.**

B. Lack of success: ***“9 Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.” (Haggai 1:9 KJV)*** The final outcome of all our plans and projects will be failures if we do not keep God as our priority. **When you serve the Lord and carefully follow His instruction in doing the ministry you are building yourselves for your own present and future life. When you put God first and your heart and mind are fully occupied with Him, then the Lord Himself will lead you to do things that which will be a real foundation for a successful life and wonderful ministry.**

C. National and global economic recessions: ***“10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. 11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.” (Haggai 1:10-11 KJV)*** If you put God and His work aside you will find yourselves in a dry atmosphere. When you disobey God and turn away from Him you are failing to bring His light to the nations and the people who are around you to the place where you are. When you do not please God even your workplace, your country and your family will experience drought. Therefore be not complacent when God asks you to serve Him.

“7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith

the LORD.” (Haggai 1:7-8 KJV) God wants us to honor him in our thoughts, in our actions and in our doing:

1. Start to think correctly: “Consider your ways.” Without God you are a failure. Without God’s Word you are lost. In order for you to think correctly then control your thoughts and be submissive to God.

2. Put your best effort to serve God: “Go up to the mountain.” To go up the mountains and bring down timber you need strong determination and you need to exert much physical strength. In serving the Lord you should be willing to spend physical effort to move from one place to another in obedience to God’s call.

3. Give material things that are needed for God’s service: You are called to specifically put up or bring down what is required so that God’s ministry and His church be built up. For God’s temple to be built you are asked to, “bring wood, and build the house.”

4. Work with God in building His temple: You must put in your heart and mind to start to work with God. You need to start first to repent of your shortcomings, your wrong doings and being negligent to God’s commands. You have to renounce all your sins and start to build your life in accordance to God’s Word, so that your life will be a light for others to see God and be able to walk in His ways. “16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16 KJV) You have to be a good disciple and follower of Jesus so that the Lord will use you to evangelize and make disciples of all nations to build up His temple, the Church of God.

“Consider your ways.” Think again about what you have heard; God is concerned about your life. God wants you to rebuild your lives in order to please Him and honor Him and in return He will bless you. When you agree to go with the terms of God it is not that He will take everything from you or you will lose something. Instead, you will receive more from God than what He has already given you.

When people at the time of Haggai heard the message of God, they took heed and their hearts were stirred up to respond to the point of repentance and they turned away from their own selfish ways. They returned to God and His work and His will. And in response to the people’s obedience, the Lord gave them assurance: “saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.”

God is aiming to build you up and to rebuild your life to give you a good future. You will see with your own eyes how God will build you as long as you are willing. God will build you as His temple and He will prosper you, lifting you up from glory to glory. But you need to yield to Him and give Him your life, your heart and mind. You need to put God first, to commit your life and all what you have to serve Him.

“1 In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying, 2 Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, 3 Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? 4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith

the LORD of hosts: 5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. 6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; 7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. 9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Haggai 2:1-9 KJV) The people responded to the call of God through prophet Haggai to rebuild the temple but they had some sort of discouragement that occupied their minds and which hindered them from proceeding to complete the work of God. Their discouragement was aroused by opposition, underestimation, fear, worry and many doubts:

A. Opposition for the rebuilding: “1 Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. 2 Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them. 3 At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shetharboznai and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall? 4 Then said we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building? 5 But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter.” (Ezra 5:1-5 KJV) When the people of God decided to obey and attend to God’s call to rebuild His temple, the devil was not happy and so he used people to discourage them. This happens to us too when we decide to follow God and obey His commands. Certainly the devil is not happy with us and would cause us problems in our work, finances, or in our family life in order to hinder us. Even Satan and his cohorts will work out and use people to discourage us. “8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.” (1 Peter 5:8-9 KJV) So when we are faced with opposition we claim God’s covenant with us and we ask the Lord to give us the wisdom to handle every situation and warfare.

B. Underestimation of capabilities: Many among those who were involved in the rebuilding of the temple had witnessed with their eyes the previous temple that had been built by Solomon before its destruction. “12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:” (Ezra 3:12 KJV) They were discouraged because they needed to start from the ground level to lay the foundation while in their thoughts was the splendor of the previous temple. They doubted how they could restore the burned temple built by Solomon. In the same manner when we respond to God’s call we possibly entertain doubts and negative thoughts in our mind that discourage us. We underestimate our capabilities and so we tend to imitate others’ ministries. Obviously we even underestimate what God can do through us! But with God we can do greater things if we are willing to obey His will and diligently follow His instruction. God has called us to rebuild our lives and He is able to help us be restored to the image and to the plan that He created us for. God can and will do exceedingly more than what we think or imagine. Like the Lord encouraged the people who were rebuilding the temple saying, “9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I

give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Haggai 2:9 KJV) Therefore, let us also be encouraged to continue to do God’s will and plan. Hence we are working with God what to be restored will be greater than what was lost. Our latter life of service will be more glorious than the previous one! Thank you Lord. Hallelujah.

C. Fear and discouragement: “4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts:” (Haggai 2:4 KJV)

1. **“be strong”**: These words are repeated three times to urge us to come out of our fear, despondency and discouragement. God wants us to fully trust Him for He will surely help us.

2. **“and work”**: God gave us hands and feet, and time and situation to put our faith into action – to work hard. “10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10 KJV)

3. **“for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts”**: This is God’s promise that He will neither leave us nor forsake us till He accomplishes what He has purposed.

“be strong, and work. for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts.” This statement is also quoted by King David to His son Solomon the day he commissioned him to build the temple of God in Jerusalem. “20 And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.” (1 Chronicles 28:20 KJV)

“Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.” Thus the Lord God is speaking to us today to do and continue His work.

“5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. 6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; 7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Haggai 2:5-7 KJV) As we come across these words, let us take God’s call to do the work He planned for us in advance to do for the glory of His temple, His church. When the Lord said, **“for I am with you”**, God is confirming His call with His covenant and promises to us and as the following:

a). The Holy Spirit is with us: “so my spirit remaineth among you”: The Lord God confirmed His call, His covenant and His promised Holy Spirit to be with us and remain in us. “In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month”, the time that God sent His Word of encouragement through the prophet Haggai was the last date of the Feast of the Tabernacle celebration. When Jesus attended the Feast of the Tabernacles, “37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet

glorified.)” (John 7:37-39 KJV) When we respond to God’s call we are willing to rebuild our life and future according to God’s Word and God’s will, the Holy Spirit will fill us and overflow through us to achieve what God has promised.

b). We need not to be afraid: “fear ye not”: As we decide to love God and obey Him fear will go away and we will find ourselves doing the work of God and living our life away from fear.

c). God will do wonderful acts and miracles for us: “Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land”: God will also confirm His calling to us with wonderful acts and miracles. As we pray the Lord will answer and do extraordinary acts so that things will work for our good and benefit to let us pursue His call to build up our life and ministry and His church in accordance to His will and plan.

d). We receive favor from the people around us: “And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come”: The Lord will cause us to win the favor of the people around us. God’s favor in our life will touch many people to rise and support the vision that God has entrusted us to build our life and ministry and His church according to His will. God will also enable us to reach the nations with the Gospel of Jesus and the Church of God will include further languages and nationalities. “8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” (Psalm 2:8 KJV) And indeed God will enable us as His church to fulfill the great commission of the Lord. “18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20 KJV)

e). Our life will be for God’s glory: “and I will fill this house with glory”: The Lord Almighty said that He will fill His house with glory. Our bodies are the living temple of the Holy Spirit and while we obey the Lord we are being changed and transformed becoming more like Him and we will shine with everlasting glory as Apostle Paul declared, “18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:18 KJV)

f). We will be well-provided with God’s provision: “8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. 9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Haggai 2:8-9 KJV): The Lord owns everything including silver and gold, “The silver is mine and the gold is mine”. When we build our lives in Christ surely His provision will be in abundance because He owns everything. Many Christians cannot put God and His Word as their priority because they are not sure of their financial provision to be enough. When we rebuild our lifestyle according to Christ’s and His Word, and become good stewards of the things entrusted to us, the lack of money will not be experienced, instead abundant provision for physical and material needs would be there. For the Lord has promised, “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former”. Then we should also be experiencing a life and ministry progressing from better to best as we always consider God as our first priority.

My Dear and Beloved: Instead of troublesome days and difficult places God shall grant us peace as He promised, ***“and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.”*** The time of rebuilding the temple was surely full of stress and hardship especially on the part of the leaders. But the Lord has promised that as we pursue God’s plan we will have peace of mind and enjoy peace around us. ***“27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27 KJV)*** To build up a Godly lifestyle and ministry may be difficult to manage in the beginning due to oppositions and controversies but Jesus promised that He will grant us peace so that God will enable even our enemies and those who oppose us to come and make peace with us. This is the kind of peace that the world cannot give and does not understand. ***“7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7 KJV)***

Finally, God granted peace for the rebuilding of the temple and indeed what God said was fulfilled to those builders who rebuilt the temple. ***“The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts:”*** For that rebuilt temple witnessed Jesus the living Word of God walking in it and witnessed the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit in the day of Pentecost. In the same manner, as we respond to God’s call, we will witness the living Word of God instructing us, and the Holy Spirit filling us and leading our steps into the Kingdom of God. Come now to God commit your life to serve Him and do the ministry and work out with Him to build up His church. Let us pray ...

My Prayer: Father God, I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord, thank you for your encouraging Word in this message and your calling to me to come and rebuild your house and the ministries of your church. Lord I thank you for all your promises to me; the Holy Spirit, your peace and favor, your provision, protection, your presence along the way with me and with your church.

Come now to God, confess and renounce all your sins. Confess and renounce your business with your own life and house but neglecting the house of God, your selfishness, your non willingness to serve God and suffer for Him, your non willingness to be persecuted, your doubts, fears, discouragement, negative thoughts and your lack of faith and full trust on God. Lord forgive me, I repent of the following sins _____.

Lord I commit myself to put my hands and feet in your work in rebuilding your house and the ministries of your church. Lord use me, putting all my life, time, resources and strength to serve you and the good works that you had ordained for me to do. Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who committed themselves to put you first in their lives and restart to rebuild your house and the ministries of your church. Lord refill them with your Holy Spirit and use them and their spiritual gifts to serve you. Lord protect them and provide all their needs to serve you.

Lord as your church, we commit ourselves to you to continue to serve you and do the works of yours faithfully. Lord give us the spiritual gifts and talents that we need to serve you. Lord add to us workers who are willing to labor with us. We come against all the works of the devil and we rebuke it and casted out in the name of Jesus. Lord lead us to evangelize, and to make new disciples and train new workers to go and plant new Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord we pray for more people to get water baptized and receive the Holy Spirit baptism. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, ‘Multiplication in peace with implementing the

whole will of God.’ Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

Put God First Part 03. Learn to Build the House of God from the Book of Haggai. Haggai 1:1-15. James 4:7. 1 Corinthians 6:19. Matthew 5:16. Haggai 2:1-9. Ezra 5:1-5. 1 Peter 5:8-9. Ezra 3:12. Ephesians 2:10. 1 Chronicles 28:20. John 7:37-39. Psalm 2:8. Matthew 28:18-20. 2 Corinthians 3:18. John 14:27. Philippians 4:7.

Dr. Ramiz Khalaf
The Church Overseer
Church of God
United Arab Emirates
www.churchofgoduae.com
Email: thebread1@gmail.com
Mobile Tel #: 00971551902647

Note: The Bread of Life is a weekly publication from the Church of God, United Arab Emirates. For further issues and more spiritual enrichment you can visit our web site at: www.churchofgoduae.com.

Share the message with your friends.

Please share with us your view about the message and if you have any question.

If you have a prayer request, please send it to this whatsapp Number: 00971551902647, or to this email: thebread1@gmail.com.

Please send your tithes, your first fruit, and your various offerings to the church to this account

BANK NAME:
First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB)
ACCOUNT NAME:
RAMIZ BAHNAM ABBO KHALAF
ACCOUNT NO.:
1576003753162014
IBAN:
AE380351576003753162014
SWIFT CODE:
NBADAEAAACPU

Or contact me to this whatsapp Number: 00971551902647, or to this email: thebread1@gmail.com.

If you need counseling in area of your life, whether about family, children or finances, please be free to contact me to this whatsapp Number: 00971551902647, or to this email: thebread1@gmail.com.