

Put God First Part 04

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

“10 In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, 11 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, 12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. 13 Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. 14 Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean. 15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD: 16 Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. 17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD. 18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider it. 19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.” (Haggai 2:10-19 KJV)

We continue in this message to speak about putting God first by working out to build up His house, His church from the book of Haggai.

“10 In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,” (Haggai 2:10 KJV) Again the Lord spoke by His Word to Haggai after the people responded to the call of God to rebuild the temple. They were able to overcome their discouragement and they moved forward and started the rebuilding. Yet, there was still more that God had to speak to His people so that their lives would also be rebuilt according to God's will and God's Word. God promised blessings to those of His people who repent. Even defiled people are entitled for blessings after repentance and renouncement of sins. The people who responded to God's call to rebuild the temple of God were at that time still in sin or in contact with people who were causing them to sin. Thus God, in His message to them through the prophet Haggai, instructed them to go and ask the priest the following questions:

“12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.” (Haggai 2:12 KJV) What it means here is that having fellowship with holy people who live for God or engage in service to God will not make you holy if there is still sin in your life.

“13 Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.” (Haggai 2:13 KJV) What it meant here is that if you determine to follow God and obey Him then there are people, contacts or relationships that you need to separate yourselves from because such contacts, people, relationships, and friendships will tempt you to go back to sinning against God, or

such contacts, people, relationships and friendships will influence you to go back or to go along with them and do wrong the same wrongs they are doing and sin against God.

Such contacts are sin instigators to your life and will confuse you and deviate you from following God. You cannot say, *“Don't worry, I am strong.”* For many people have gone back to sin because they are still associating with people who pulled them back to sin. ***“33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. 34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.” (1 Corinthians 15:33-34 KJV)*** ***“14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18 KJV)***

“14 Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.” (Haggai 2:14 KJV) The Lord is saying here that if you continue to live in sin and continue with people who lead you to sin then whatever you give to God and offer to Him will not be acceptable and will not bring blessing into your life.

“15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD: 16 Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. 17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD.” (Haggai 2:15-17 KJV) God is personally calling you to repent and to be cleansed from sin; if you don't, then you will not get what you are hoping for because sin blocks the true blessing of God from reaching you. ***“16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 KJV)***

“1 In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, 2 The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers. 3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. 4 Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD. 5 Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? 6 But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.” (Zechariah 1:1-6 KJV) Zechariah gave the message of repentance to the people. His message announced God's anger for their

sins. The message of the prophet Haggai came one month after Zechariah's message. Haggai admonished the people and taught them how to repent from their evil ways. They were challenged to separate themselves from the world and to abide in God's covenant in order to be blessed. *"18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider it. 19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you."* (Haggai 2:18-19 KJV)

The Lord commanded His people to consider their ways while they were rebuilding the temple of God. Likewise you need to consider your ways and lifestyle to rebuild His temple. We are the temple of God, thus we are advised to stay separated from the world and bad atmospheres. *God is calling you to repent and to turn away not only from sin but from people, contacts and relationships that will pull you back into sin and take away the blessings that God has prepared for you and your children. "9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."* (1 John 1:9-10 KJV) *As you abide in God's Word and repent of your sins, your life and ministry will be rebuilt and God's blessing will continue to flow in you and through you as you set God and His kingdom as your first priority.*

"20 And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, 21 Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; 22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. 23 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts." (Haggai 2:20-23 KJV)

Whenever God calls people to serve Him, the enemy is also ready to attack. We cannot make excuses; instead we must face our enemies in order to win the battle. The first enemy is our own self and the sins in our life. The second enemy is the host of Satan's demons that works through people to oppose us and persecute us.

The Lord came to the prophet Haggai the second time in order to encourage the people under persecution. The Lord Himself will overturn the second enemy, the devil that will try to oppose the work of God, as He promised. *"20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."* (Romans 16:20 KJV)

Through Haggai the Word of God came to support, uphold and to encourage Zerubbabel their king to stand firm against the ongoing opposition and persecution as we can also read in the book of Ezra: *"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)

Zerubbabel was the grandson of King Jehoiachin, and he was the leader of the first group of returning exiles from Babylon. Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah and behaved as if he was indispensable to God for the rebuilding of His temple. *Certainly, it wasn't only Zerubbabel who was important to God; every follower of Christ is important for the ministry and rebuilding of His church. Indeed, God will do His best to uphold His servants and support them in times of opposition.*

As we escape the trap of sins and live our lives without compromising, we will find ourselves fighting against the power of darkness. For even Jesus was opposed by the Pharisees: *"23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?"* (Matthew 21:23 KJV) *Nevertheless, at this stage of your life and ministry, you must know that you are not alone; the Lord is with you and He is supporting you. Like Zerubbabel, each of us is a precious person not only to our immediate family, but also to the people that the Lord has entrusted under our care.*

Thus the Lord God who will crush Satan under our feet will fulfill His ways through us while we continue to uphold His Word and instructions and as the following:

A. Your attitude and character is very important in facing opposition: *"18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. 19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. 21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."* (Matthew 12:18-21 KJV) *As Jesus was opposed, the devil will also oppose us when we are willing to serve Christ and to rebuild our life according to His Word and plans. Yet as God's servant we avoid fights and quarrels and move away from arguments and disputes. Instead we have to keep calm, speak less, grumble not and complain not, but work hard pressing toward the goals that God has set before us to achieve. We do not focus on those who oppose or try to stop us but concentrate to extend God's love and care to those whom God is reaching out through our life and ministry.*

B. Rely on God to fight back: *God's Word is full of promises which clearly say that God will fight on behalf of His servants. "14 In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. 15 Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. 16 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. 17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."* (Isaiah 54:14-17 KJV) *"8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the*

seed of Abraham my friend. 9 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. 10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. 11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. 12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. 13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. 14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah 41:8-14 KJV)

C. Rely on God alone to accomplish His plan: In Haggai 2:20-23, there is a repeated statement from the mouth of the Lord where God is saying, **“I will”**, and as the following:

1. **“I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen.”** This means no power of darkness shall prevail against us through the lives of the non believers, for the Lord will overturn them and destroy them.

2. **“I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.”** No human power or weapon of any kind shall prevail against what God has ordained for us, for the Lord will overthrow our enemies as we put our trust on Him, for He will let them fight one another to consume one another.

3. **“will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD,”** God has promised that He Himself will take us and bring us where we ought to be.

4. **“and will make thee as a signet:”** God Himself will accomplish what He has planned for us to be in His kingdom.

Above all, what the Lord God has promised that He will do because the Lord has chosen us to build His temple; to rebuild our life according to the pattern written in His Word and His plan for us. When we decide to follow God and serve Him only, resistance, struggles, and oppositions from the devil and even from ourselves emerge. But the Lord who has called you is faithful, and in whatever you have planned to do you need to put God first and continue to serve Him. Through His message God has chosen you and is calling you to live a Godly life and to build His holy church, as Jesus Christ declared: **“16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” (John 15:16 KJV)**

My Dear and Beloved: Let us come now to the Lord and commit ourselves to serve Him in the prescribed way that we studied in His Word. Start to cleanse yourself from your sins and from the wrong relationships, friends and people who are pulling you and enticing you to sin. Commit yourself trusting God that He will sustain you and protect you from all the persecution and opposition and will provide for you all your needs so that you will continue on to serve Him. 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 Word in this message that showed me the footholds of the devil in my life and that I need to cleanse myself from the work of the flesh and from ungodly relationships that I should end up so I can continue in the way of holiness, the narrow way that you ordained for me to continue to walk through.

Come now to God and confess and renounce all your sins. Confess and renounce all the works of the flesh in your life; telling lies, stealing, fights, anger, rage, hatred, revenge, unforgiveness, grudge and bitterness, division, pride, selfishness, lack of concern toward others, envy, jealousy, murder, lust, immoralities, greed, injustice, corruption, worldliness, and your love for money and material things. Confess and renounce your fear of man and your non willingness to pass through persecution. Confess and renounce your flatteries, compromises, corruption and injustice. Confess and renounce all your stubbornness, disobedience and delay obedience. Confess and renounce your lack of faith and the doubts in your mind. Confess and renounce your lack of reading God’s Word and life of prayers. Confess and renounce your yoke with non believers, friends and in bondage with the Media, News and games. Confess and renounce your bad stewardship, your bad example and your non willingness to serve God, suffer for Him and putting Him first in your life. Lord forgive me, I repent of the following sins _____.

Lord I commit myself to put you first in my life, to refrain from my sins and all the works of flesh. Lord I commit myself to cut the following relationships and friends _____, and to be away from Media, News and games that wasting my time and corrupting my mind. Lord I put my full trust on you that you will be the one to help me, protect me from evil and provide for me and sustain me so I continue to go on and serve you in the ministry that you entrusted to me to build up your church. This is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.

Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who repented of their sins, considered their ways and committed themselves to put you first in their lives. Lord use them to serve you, help them, provide for them and protect them from the schemes of the evil one.

Lord as your church, we commit ourselves to put you first in our life and ministry. We commit ourselves to teach what we received in this message to our families, disciples and members and apply the discipline on them to be cleansed from sins and from the ungodly relationships. Lord refill us with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need in order to go on and evangelize, and 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 04. Learn to Build the House of God from the Book of Haggai. Haggai 2:10-23. 1 Corinthians 15:33-34. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. Zechariah 1:1-

6. 1 John 1:9-10. Romans 16:20. Ezra 5:1-5. Matthew 21:23. Matthew 12:18-21. Isaiah 54:14-17. Isaiah 41:8-14. John 15:16.

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

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