

Put God First
(The Book of Haggai)
Part 13

“²⁰ The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month: ²¹ 'Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I will shake the heavens and the earth. ²² I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother. ²³ ' 'On that day,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,' declares the LORD, 'and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,' declares the LORD Almighty.” (Haggai 2:20-23)

When God is calling you to serve Him, you will be going to face enemies. The first enemy is yourself and the sin in your life and we spoke about that and how to deal with in the previous issue. And the second enemy is devil that will use people to oppose you and persecute you.

On the 24th day of the 9th month God sent His message to deal with the people sins and shortcoming in order to be cleansed and that what we deal with in the previous issue. And in order to help the people to deal with persecution, the second enemy, that will surely oppose the work of God *“The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month.” (Haggai 2:20-23)* The word of God came to support and uphold and to encourage Zerubbabel to stand firm against the on going opposition and persecution as we can read in *Ezra 5:1-5* *“^d Now Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the prophet, a descendant of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. ² Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak set to work to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them, helping them. ³ At that time Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates went to them and asked, 'Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and restore this structure?' ⁴ They also asked, 'What are the names of the men constructing this building?' ⁵ But the eye of their God was watching over the elders of the Jews, and they were not stopped until a report could go to Darius and his written reply be received.”*

Zerubbabel was the last king and as if it was indispensable to God to rebuild His temple without him. Not only Zerubbabel is important to God but every follower of Christ is important to God and for the ministry of the Lord. And God will do His best to uphold His servants and support them in times of opposition.

As you escape the trap of sins and living your life without compromising you will find yourself fighting against the power of darkness. Even Jesus was opposed by the Pharisees, *“Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. 'By what authority are you doing these things?' they asked. 'And who gave you this authority?’” (Matthew 21:23)* In this station in your life you must know that you are not alone, the Lord is with you and He is supporting you. Everyone of you like Zerubbabel is a precious person not only for your life but for the people that the Lord had entrusted under your care. And God’s word will show you clearly the ways of God of how to handle opposition and persecution.

1- Your attitude and character is very important in facing opposition: *“^{d8} Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ¹⁹ He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. ²¹ In his name the nations will put their hope.” (Matthew 12:18-21)*

As Jesus was opposed, the devil will also oppose you as you are willing to serve Christ and to rebuild your life according to His word and plans. God’s servant will avoid fights and quarrels and move away from arguments and disputes. Instead will keep calm, speak less, grumble and complains not, but work hard pressing toward the goals that God set before Him to achieve. Do the same as Jesus; don’t focus on those who oppose you or try to stop you but concentrate to extend God’s love and care to those whom God is reaching through your life, calling and ministry.

2- Rely on God to fight for you: God’s word is full of promises that clearly showed that God will fight in behalf of His servants, *“^{d4} In righteousness you will be established: Tyranny will be far from you; you will have nothing to fear. Terror will be far removed; it will not come near you. ¹⁵ If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing; whoever attacks you will surrender to you. ¹⁶ 'See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work. And it is I who have created the destroyer to work havoc; ¹⁷ no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me,' declares the LORD.” (Isaiah 54:14-17)* *“^{d8} But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, ⁹ I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant'; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. ¹⁰ So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. ¹¹ 'All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish. ¹² Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at all. ¹³ For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.” (Isaiah 41:8-14)*

3- Rely on God to provide for you to accomplish what He called you to do: In the passage that we had chosen *Haggai 2:20-23* there is a repeated statement from the mouth of the Lord where God said *“I will.”*

A- I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms: *No power of darkness shall prevail against you,*

B- I will overthrow chariots and their drivers: *No human power or weapon of any kind can prevail against you and what God had ordained to you to be.*

C- I will take you: *God Himself will take you and bring you where you ought to be, and*

D- I will make: *God Himself will make you what He had planned to you of plans and of blessings.*

*All the above because God had chose you to rebuild your life accord to His word and plans and to live in accordance to His ways as Jesus declared **“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.” (John 15:16)***

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 to me. Lord I commit my life and future into your hand and to serve you wholeheartedly walking in the way and the plan that you have ordained for me: fully trusting that you are the One who called me will fulfil to me all your good promises. This is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.*