

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

I join with the remnant as they sing your praise: “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel” (Ezra 3:11). Truly, you have done “great things” for me, and I am glad. You are a God of restoration: “Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!” (Ps 126:3, 5). You love to fill my mouth with laughter and my tongue with joyful shouting. You are good, and your lovingkindness is forever! Hallelujah!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me how the remnant experienced opposition as they labored to rebuild your temple. It came from the immigrants who were brought to Israel by the Assyrians after the fall of the northern kingdom. These people worshipped false gods, but they also started worshipping you, since they believed you to be the “god of the land” (2 Kgs 17:24–33). They eventually intermarried with the Jews, and their descendants became the Samaritans, a mixed breed both racially and religiously. When they approached Zerubbabel and offered to help, he refused because they did not worship you exclusively. This teaches me not to partner with those who claim to be Christians, but whose lives reveal that they are not truly born again (1 Cor 5:9–13; 2 Cor 6:14–18). When Zerubbabel rejected their offer, the Assyrian immigrants turned against the remnant and frightened them into stopping work on the temple. The Jews abandoned the project, and nothing was done for over 16 years. Then you sent Haggai to preach to the remnant: “You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house” (Hag 1:9). This teaches me to put your Kingdom first and seek your glory before my own. If I do, you will bless me and prosper my work. Haggai’s message shook the people out of their complacency and fear, and work on the temple resumed. Opposition continued in the form of governor Tattenai, and Zechariah joined Haggai in encouraging the people to stay the course. The people persevered, and a few months later, Darius issued a decree which commanded Tattenai to aid the remnant in their work. This teaches me that when I’m faithful to you and work hard to accomplish your will, you can turn hostility into help.

Reflection

The remnant fooled themselves into thinking that they were holy because they were working on your temple. Haggai had to remind them that it didn’t work that way; it is sinfulness, not righteousness, that is contagious (Hag 2:10–19). Am I deluding myself into thinking that I’m right with you simply because I’m involved in ministry?

Request

Father, you told the remnant not to be like their fathers who resisted your grace and scoffed at your message. Keep me from the same wickedness! Help me to welcome the prompting of your Holy Spirit.

Thanksgiving

How thankful I am that you are giving me a Kingdom that cannot be shaken! (Hag 2:6; Heb 12:28). I offer acceptable worship to you, with reverence and awe, for you are a consuming fire. Praise the LORD!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[Day of Judgment! Day of Wonders!](#)” – John Newton.

Meditation Verse: Ezra 6:14.