

Haggai 2:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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 בַּיּוֹם כִּי-הִוא נָאָם וְהִתְהִיבָּה) עֲבָדִי נָאָמֵן הַיְהּוָה וְשִׁמְמָתִיבָּה כִּי-בָבָב בְּפִרְתָּא נָאָם וְהִתְהִיבָּה צְבָאוֹת אֶקְפָּב זְרֻבָּבֵל בְּנֵי-שָׁאָלָתִיאֵל עֲבָדִי נָאָמֵן הַיְהּוָה וְשִׁמְמָתִיבָּה כִּי-חֹתֶם כִּי-בָבָב בְּפִרְתָּא נָאָם וְהִתְהִיבָּה צְבָאוֹת bayom hahu ne'um YHWH Tzeva'ot ekkachakha Zerubbavel ben-She'altiel avdi ne'um YHWH vesamtikha khachotam ki-vekha bacharti ne'um YHWH Tzeva'ot)—God's climactic promise to Zerubbabel uses three powerful terms:

****My servant** (עבדי/avdi)—the highest honor, used of Moses, David, prophets, and ultimately the Messiah (Isaiah 42:1, 52:13). Zerubbabel is God's chosen instrument for His purposes.

****As a signet** (מְטֹהָר/khachotam)—a seal ring used to authenticate documents, representing authority and identity. Kings sealed decrees with signet rings (Esther 8:8). God promised to make Zerubbabel like His own signet—representing divine authority. This reverses Jeremiah 22:24, where God declared He would tear off King Jehoiachin (Zerubbabel's grandfather) like a signet ring and cast him away due to wickedness. Now, in Zerubbabel, God restores the Davidic line to favor.

****I have chosen thee** (בָּחָר/בָּנֵן בְּפִרְתָּא bacharti)—the verb בָּחָר (bachar) means select, elect. God's sovereign choice guarantees His purposes. Though Zerubbabel

seems insignificant—a minor governor under foreign rule—God has chosen him for His redemptive plan. This prophecy points beyond Zerubbabel to Christ, the ultimate Davidic Son, God's chosen Servant, the perfect image and seal of God's authority (Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3). Jesus is the fulfillment of every covenant promise to David.

Historical Context

Zerubbabel led the first return from exile, laid the temple foundation, and now—after sixteen years—completed the rebuilding (516 BC). He represented the Davidic line's continuity despite exile and foreign rule. Though he had no throne, crown, or kingdom, he maintained faithfulness, and through his lineage came Joseph (Matthew 1:12) and Mary (Luke 3:27, different Zerubbabel or genealogical complexity), making him ancestor to Jesus Christ, the King of Kings.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's choice of Zerubbabel—insignificant by worldly standards but chosen for divine purposes—encourage you when feeling small or ineffective?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is the ultimate "signet"—the perfect representation of God's authority and character?
3. How do you live faithfully in your "in-between" time—like Zerubbabel between exile and full kingdom—trusting God's promises even when complete fulfillment isn't yet visible?

Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 43:10 (References Lord): Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

Isaiah 42:1 (Parallel theme): Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Jeremiah 22:24 (References Lord): As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;

Song of Solomon 8:6: Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

Matthew 12:18 (Parallel theme): 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.

1 Peter 2:4 (Parallel theme): To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

2 Timothy 2:19 (References Lord): Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

John 6:27 (Parallel theme): Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org