

Message #5**Haggai 2:10-19**

So far in this book of Haggai, things have been really happening fast. We are just 114 days since Haggai gave his first message and things have changed. The people are doing some work and getting timber to finish things at the Temple. The problem, however, was not the work, it was the heart. It is one thing to do some work for God; it is another to really have a heart right with God. So God had Haggai take this in a new direction.

We may notice from **verse 10** that again the word of the LORD came to Haggai the prophet. God revealed another message to Haggai. **This one came on the 24th day of the 9th month.** We may recall that:

Revelation #1 - occurred on the 1st day of the 6th month (1:1).

Revelation #2 - occurred when people began working on the Temple on the 24th day of the 6th month (1:13) - 15-23 days after the first message.

Revelation #3 - occurred on the 21st day of the 7th month (2:1) - 50 days after the first message.

Revelation #4 - occurred on the 24th day of the 9th month (**2:10**) - 113-114 days after first message.

If we say that each month has 30 days, then this prophecy occurred 113-114 days after the first prophecy and it occurred exactly 90 days after the start of the rebuilding of the Temple.

Now the message Haggai had given to the people was the reason why you are not prospering is because God has withheld His blessings due to the fact that they were more concerned about their own lives and their own houses more than Him. They were God's people who had forgotten about God.

What God reveals here is this:

IT IS GOOD THAT MY PEOPLE ARE OBEYING MY WORD AND WORKING FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, BUT IF MY PEOPLE WANT MY ULTIMATE BLESSINGS THEY MUST BE CLEAN AND THEY MUST SEPARATE THEMSELVES FROM THAT WHICH IS UNCLEAN.

Getting the full blessings of God is not just about doing things. It is about being clean in the sight of God. That is exactly what God wanted His people to realize.

What we may conclude from this section is that the people were going to worship and were doing some work, but they were not clean. Their works and their offerings and their sacrifices were not seen as pure and good because they were not clean.

According to **verse 10**, God's word again came to Haggai. This is an interesting preposition "to." In 1:1 the text says the word came "by...Haggai." In 2:1 the text says it came "by Haggai," but here it says the word came "to Haggai." The emphasis of "by Haggai" means the Lord spoke by means of Haggai.

Haggai was the instrument of means by which God spoke. However, here the emphasis is on God speaking directly “to Haggai” with very personal communication.

There is a change of preposition in both the Greek and Hebrew text. The stress is God moving toward someone in a specific direction. God is emphasizing here that He really moved to Haggai and gave him this message to give to the people (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 46-47).

God is identified in **verse 10** as “the LORD” and in **verse 11** as “the LORD of hosts.” In coming to Haggai, He specifically identifies Himself as the “covenant God of Israel, the sovereign I AM” and as “the sovereign God over all things in existence, including the angelic world in heaven and everything on earth.”

Now there are three main messages that God gives Haggai to communicate here:

Message #1 - God tells Haggai to ask the priests for a ruling on two hypothetical questions.
2:11-13

The priests had a responsibility to carefully study the Scriptures so they could make judgments and rulings in life. They were responsible not only to accurately interpret the Scriptures, but they were also responsible to accurately teach the Scriptures.

Temple life was about carefully and accurately understanding and explaining the word of God. God begins this by having Haggai ask a couple of questions. It is a good way to teach. The Apostle Paul would often use questions to make a point. He does that many times in Romans. It is a good way to teach and God uses this method here.

What God does here is address the matter of ritualistic religion. There are ministers and priests who are leading people to trust more in ritualistic religious things than a real right relationship with God. This is a critical message that Haggai is communicating because it is designed to show that the people really cared about their religion, but not their righteousness. They had a religious piety about them, but they did not have real purity about them.

(Hypothetical Situation #1) - If a man is carrying holy meat in his garment and he touches something, does that make the thing he touches holy? **2:12**

Now to give a correct answer to this question, one would really have to know their stuff. In Leviticus 6:27 we read, “Anyone who touches its flesh will become consecrated; and when any of its blood splashes on a garment, in a holy place you shall wash what was splashed on.”

So what we would learn from this is that if there were a direct touch of the meat one would be holy. But the question here is what about an indirect touch.

What is described here in this question concerns meat that had been dedicated to God and was being carried in the fold of the garment. Somehow the garment carrying the meat came in contact with another food item - cooked food, wine, oil or any other food. Haggai's question is would the thing the garment touched make what it touched holy?

The priests answer was "NO."

It is not possible to transfer holiness to another object indirectly.

This is something God's people really need to know today. I want to borrow an illustration I heard from Dr. S. Lewis Johnson on this point. There are many parents who have an unruly son or daughter and they don't discipline them but they think if they put them in a Christian school, the Christianity will rub off on the child and straighten them out. In other words, if they put them in a good atmosphere, they will become good. It doesn't work like that. In fact, what is likely to happen is that the bad child is likely to influence the good child. Godliness is not indirectly transferrable. The bad apple will ruin the good apples.

The question here is whether or not it is possible for some religious institution or object to transfer real holiness to a person. Could wearing a crucifix make you holy? Could being baptized in water make you righteous? Could going to church make you clean? God's answer is no. Holiness must be personal and individual and it is not transferable by some indirect connection to something religious.

(Hypothetical Situation #2) - If a person who is unclean because he touched a corpse touches the thing that was clean does that which he touched become unclean? **2:13**

The priests answer was "YES" it is possible to transfer uncleanness to another object. Purity is not transferrable, but impurity is transferable. Purity must be individual, but impurity is corporate.

We are not susceptible to holiness, but we are susceptible to evil and uncleanness. You can catch a cold from someone, but you cannot catch health from someone.

Now this must have been eye-opening to the people. They had responded to the word of God and had been rebuilding the Temple for the past 90 days. They were focused on God's house and not their own house. They were making the sacrifices that Haggai told them to make.

Now Haggai says you have another problem in that you are not clean. They thought because they had made these physical changes that it should merit immediate blessings and immediate prosperity. God says here is the problem - you aren't clean.

What God was seeing were impure people not dedicated to being pure, getting involved in His work, and just because they were involved in religion did not make them righteous. In fact, their impurity and uncleanness affected everything they touched and everything they were doing.

Message #2 - God declares His assessment of the people rebuilding the Temple. **2:14**

Now Haggai says “so” which is the first of three “so” messages in this one verse:

1) So is this people; 2) So is this nation; 3) So is every work of this people. God says what all you people need to realize and what this nation needs to realize and what your works need to realize is that it will not make you clean.

In fact, God says everything you are doing is unclean in My sight. In fact, God does not even call them “my people.” He calls them “this people” and “this nation.” He doesn’t even call them “my nation” and they are the one’s rebuilding the Temple.

Everything they were doing was defiled. The people were not pure and they were not pursuing purity. They were involved in religious work, but their religious work was polluted in the sight of God.

They had the same uncleanness they had when they forgot about God and His work and worked on their own houses. Nothing had changed in their hearts. They were involved in religious works, but they were not really interested in being clean before God.

They had their religious rituals but their religiosity was worthless in the sight of God. God viewed everything they were doing and offering as unclean.

Message #3 - God tells the people from now on obey My word and pursue that which is pure. **2:15-19**

Notice how **verse 15** begins, “but now” you need to “carefully consider” where you are in your relationship with Me. You can go to worship services and be involved in all kinds of religious works and you can make sacrifices and still be unclean and not right with Me.

This is inferential that points right back to what was just said. Now, it is time to regroup and refocus. It is time to go a different direction. God says go a different direction and I will bless you at the ultimate level.

(Admonition #1) - Start now before doing one more thing. **2:15**

Don’t lay one more stone on the Temple until you have decided to be clean. You need to realize that unholiness is transferrable, but holiness is not transferrable. It is individual. Every believer needs to ask God to convict and show where and how we have offended God. We each need to carefully assess ourselves.

(Admonition #2) - You know what happens when you are not clean. **2:16-17**

Consider what happened economically when you did not put Me first. There were serious economic consequences.

Your productivity was decreased by 50 %. You were able to only harvest ½ of what you should have harvested. You should have harvested 20 measures of grain but you could only harvest 10.

In fact, your grape and wine harvest was less than that. Your wine harvest was down 60 %. You should have been able to draw 50 measures and you could only draw 20.

God says in **verse 17**, I smote you and every work of your hand. I am the one who caused the wind and the mildew and the hail to destroy your crops and you still would not come back to Me.

(Admonition #3) - You can know from now on I will bless you. **2:18-19**

God says even though at this point you have no seed left in the barn or fruit on the vine or figs on the tree or pomegranate or olive trees, I will bless you from this day on.

God will not bless us just because we go through motions of obedience. He will bless us when our hearts and lives are clean. That is exactly what He wanted Israel and us to know.