

Haggai 2:10-19 Purity

The story of Haggai begins when Nebuchadnezzar's forces attack the city of Jerusalem and destroy the temple. Nebuchadnezzar takes the priests hostage and many of them are executed. About 50 years later Cyrus sits on the throne. God stirs his heart and he sends the exiles back to their homeland to build a temple for their God just as Isaiah had prophesied beforehand.

Under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem laid the foundation of the temple. But progress soon ceased and the people turned inward. For 16 years, the temple had been in ruins until Haggai comes on the scene in 520 B.C. His ministry only lasted 3 and a half months but in that time Haggai called the people to prepare themselves for the presence of God by completing the work on the temple.

1. This was crucial because the temple was where the manifest presence of God resided.
2. So, when God instructed the people to build, or prepare, the temple, He was in essence instructing them to prepare for the presence of God.

There were several things that needed to be addressed if they were to adequately prepare themselves and the temple, for the presence of God.

1. In the first message Haggai addressed the people's **priorities**.
2. In the second message he addressed their **perseverance**.
3. Now, this morning, we see him address their **purity**.

READ/PRAY

If we are to adequately prepare ourselves for the presence of God, we must pursue purity!

1. Psalm 24:3-4 *Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.*
2. Matt 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

There are three things that we can learn from this portion of Haggai about purity.

I. The Power of Impurity v10-14

1. Impurity Resists Purity v10-12

- a. The question is, will the impure thing touched by the pure be made holy?
- b. The answer is no. Impurity resists purity.
- c. Just because an impure thing comes in contact with a pure thing, it is not made pure.
 1. Coming to church does not automatically render you pure
 2. Being raised in a Christian home does not automatically render you pure
 3. Having Christian friends does not automatically render you pure
- d. You cannot reform or repair this heart. You must replace it!
- e. Impurity resists purity

2. Impurity Corrupts Purity v13

- a. If a person who is ceremonially defiled through contact with a dead body comes in contact with a garment containing a sacred meat, there would be transfer of impurity.
- b. More concisely than anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible this sermon makes the point that impurity is more easily contracted than is purity.
- c. It is like a destructive malignancy.
- d. 1 Corinthians 15:33 *Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."*
- f. Impurity spreads and corrupts purity if left unchecked.
- g. A little leaven leavens the whole lump!

3. Impurity can disguise itself as Purity v14

- a. The children of Israel were building the temple!
- b. They had actually been working on it for 3 months.
- c. Still the Lord refers to them as "this nation" signaling his displeasure.
- d. Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled.
- e. But why? They were obeying!
- f. The Lord proclaimed, though they were doing right, they were not right!
 1. As a result of their spiritual impurity, they were contaminating everything they came into contact with.
 2. God demanded inward change, not just outward obedience
- g. Impurity is deceptive
 1. Impurity is so deceptive because those whose hearts are impure can still DO all the right things.
 2. They can dress the right way
 3. They can walk right and talk right and act right and still not BE right.
 4. Matt 23:25-28 *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*
 5. We are called to be, not just do
 6. It is not so much about what we say or what we do...it is about who we are.

II. The Price of Impurity v15-19a

- A. The impurity of the people was costly
 1. Sin carries with it a price
 2. In verse 16 Haggai reminds the people of the conditions that existed before the work began.
 - a. The grain harvest had been reduced by a staggering 50%.
 - b. The grape harvest had been decimated to an even greater degree,
 - c. The wine making reduced by an astounding 60%.

B. The blame was placed on natural disasters

1. The crops were Scorched with blight
2. The crops were Soaked until they mildewed
3. The crops were Stormed upon until they were destroyed
4. And the Lord takes credit for all of these problems. He was the cause of their problems!
5. He said, you can blame me...but I blame you!
6. This was not a pointless act of hatred.
7. It was an effort to awaken them out of their sin. *“Yet you did not turn to me.”*

C. Impurity has a high price

1. Both Temporally
2. And Eternally

III. The Promise of Purity v19b

A. There is good news...but from this day on I will bless you.

1. They had been purified!
2. Zechariah, who prophesied in the same time and place as Haggai made an example of purity out of Joshua
3. Zech 3:1-5

B. THE GOSPEL You can be made pure, not because of what you do or don't do, but because of what God does

1. Just like he cleansed Joshua and the people of Haggai, he can and will cleanse you
2. 2 Corinthians 5:21 *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
3. Turn from your sin / Trust in Him alone / and be transformed
4. That Gospel is needed, not only by the lost, but by those who are saved as well!
5. 1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

C. Jesus on the Cliff Illustration

Isaiah 38:17 *Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back.*

Micah 7:19 *He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*

Psalms 103:12 *as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*

Isaiah 43:25 *I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.*

Conclusion:

If we are to be prepared for the presence of God, we must re-order our priorities. We must persevere when the going gets tough. And we must pursue practical purity while relying on the only one who can really purify us: Jesus Christ.