

Hag 2:11-23(NIV), “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Ask the priests what the law says: {12} If a person carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, oil or other food, does it become consecrated?’” The priests answered, “No.” {13} Then Haggai said, “If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?” “Yes,” the priests replied, “it becomes defiled.” {14} Then Haggai said, “So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,’ declares the LORD. ‘Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled. {15} “Now give careful thought to this from this day on—consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the Lord’s temple. {16} When anyone came to a heap of twenty measures, there were only ten. When anyone went to a wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were only twenty. {17} I struck all the work of your hands with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not turn to me,’ declares the LORD. {18} ‘From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the Lord’s temple was laid. Give careful thought: {19} Is there yet any seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit. “From this day on I will bless you.”’ {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.”

37-02-02-Kingdom Building Problems: Dissatisfaction
defilement, deliverance, future, grace, blessing, obedience
Haggai 2:10-23

Obedience to God is obligated, but His blessing is given by grace.

INTRODUCTION: (text read as Scripture reading)

–Haggai confronts 3 Kingdom-building problems that impede God’s work,: *disinterest, discouragement, and dissatisfaction!* Our humanity is their source, God’s intervention is their solution. While this isn’t an exhaustive list, this prophecy tells us how these 3 specific problems of Kingdom-buildng arise and how they are resolved.

–How did *dissatisfaction* arise? The temple re-building had re-started, but economic conditions were unchanged. God’s people had reversed their behavior, but God had not reversed their situation. They expected 3 months of obedience to reverse 16 years of neglect. and God didn’t let that happen. He wanted to show them the *real problem*: they were...

I. Still Working with Defiled Hearts, v.10-14

- A. To address their *dissatisfaction* with the way things were going, God used some questions, “*Ask the priests what the law says...*”
 1. God used *common knowledge* to lay down *common ground*– (His ultimate intent is always clear and redemptive communication.)
 2. To win debates it’s ideal if we can get opponents to confess the points we’re trying to make [Socrates was a master of this kind of questioning, never losing an argument; and Jesus used the same method, asking questions to get people to state the truth He wanted them to know.]
- B. Look at the questions God had Haggai ask– v.12-13, If a person carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, oil or other food, does it become consecrated?”’ The priests answered, “No.” Then Haggai said, “If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?” “Yes,” the priests replied, “it becomes defiled.” – God wanted them to know that:
 1. Holiness is non-transferable:
 - a. *Kingdom-building work* doesn’t make us *holy*. [Jesus in our hearts makes us holy, but it doesn’t automatically make our actions holy.]
 - b. God’s people were dissatisfied with slow outward progress (God wanted them to be concerned about their inward growth.)
 2. **On the other hand**, what is defiled does defile what it touches.
 - a. Sin, if allowed a home, destroys both the home and the whole

neighborhood. [isolation and quarantine are recognized ways to deal with disease that are parallel to how God treats sin, to prevent it from contaminating others— Heb 12:15. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.]

- b. What God was saying was that *Kingdom-building is not a work for a heart that is defiled by sin, for sin defiles the work—v.14.* “So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,” declares the *LORD*. “Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled.”

TRANS: No debate followed this divine statement. They knew God’s will wasn’t just outward obedience, but heart-obedience. [Cain and Abel both sacrificed, but Cain was rejected. God told him in Gen 4:7, “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”] God’s gracious favor rests on the heart’s attitude. Haggai also knew that the people were....

II. Worrying about Deliverance (In v.15-19a God reviews their concern about their ongoing poverty from His past judgments on their rebellious ways.)

- A. They still worried about their natural welfare, but God’s focus was on their spiritual welfare. [Today’s “God bless America” is often a prayer of dissatisfaction with the economy, but God’s call to our nation is to turn from sin to righteousness.]— v.15, “Now give careful thought to this from this day on...” [lit., “set your heart on your roads”] (“Get back on track!”)
- B. God’s severe judgment on sin is never to be forgotten, “consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the *Lord’s temple*.”
 - 1. The disastrous results of Israel’s sins warn us of present danger – 1 Cor 10:11, These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.
 - 2. God is sovereign over history – v.17, “I struck all the work of your hands with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not turn to me,’ declares the *LORD*.” (His hand in history is redemptive! If He withholds His favor, we must ask, “Have we withheld our heart from Him?”)
- C. The price of full deliverance was surrendering the whole heart:
 - 1. God’s prescription was “From this day on ... give careful thought”
 - 2. God’s promise was (v.19b) “From this day on I will bless you.”

TRANS: God delights to bless us by grace, not because of obligations we fulfill. Yes, good works are important, but God wants them to come from a heart of true faith. As his prophecy ends, Haggai has one more message, which tells them that they are...

III. Waiting for a Divine Destiny, v.20-23

- A. Haggai, previously addressing everyone, now turns to Governor Zerubbabel, telling of the end times, when He will shake the heavens and the earth toppling kingdoms and shattering the world’s armies.
- B. Why given just to Zerubbabel? (He was from David’s line, and the end-time promises were to be fulfilled by a descendent of David:
 - 1. What was David’s promise? 2 Sam 7:12-13, When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (Solomon built a temple, but his kingdom fell).
 - 2. In v.23, God told Zerubbabel, “I will make you like my signet ring,” as a prediction of his future descendant reigning as the *Messiah*— [in both NT genealogies of Joseph and Mary: “After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,]

CONCLUSION:

—This end note of Haggai’s prophecy is the beginning note for us, for it announces the Messiah. But the song isn’t finished. It points to a future destiny, when David’s Son, the Messiah, will return with power as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Nothing we do can bring it about: that day—like all of God’s blessings—will come entirely by God’s grace.

—Meanwhile, we have before us the work of Kingdom-building, as we avoid the attitudes of disinterest, discouragement and dissatisfaction that impede it. These problems are overcome when we put our hearts completely into the work of building His House, remembering that our obedience to Him is obligated, but His blessing upon us comes entirely by His grace.