

## BLESSINGS OF PURITY & PROVISION UNDER GOD'S CHOSEN RULER

PASTOR MARC D. WILSON, ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, LAS CRUCES, NM

### Haggai 2:10-23 (John 13:1-11)

*Lord, let your continual pity cleans and defend your church, and because it cannot continue in safety without your aid, protect it by your help and goodness for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.*

-BCP Collect for Trinity 16

It is 520 BC, and God's remnant of the people Exiled in Babylon have returned to Jerusalem. While they initially began to rebuild God's temple by laying the foundation, opposition led to discouragement. Subsequently, they abandoned God's work of rebuilding the temple for 16 years during which time the remnant of God's people became preoccupied with decorating their own houses. God's work on God's House was neglected and forgotten. Nevertheless, God was with His People as He promised. He heard them and knew their improper priorities, and He intervened in their lives to thwart the productivity of their self-centered and self-reliant work. He sent His messenger Haggai to speak to His People. Through Haggai, God exhorted His People to give careful thought to their ways in relation to their priorities. God commanded His People to put building His temple at the top of their To-Do List. Because, God is with His People and stirred their spirits, they wisely responded to God's Word in obedience, and, when they became discouraged by the appearance of "nothingness" with which they had to work, God reminded the remnant of His People that He was with them. Encouraged and empowered by God Who is with His People, they could be strong and work toward building a New International House of Peace with greater glory than even Solomon's temple.

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But, will God’s People who failed to engage in building the temple, the same remnant of God’s People whose unfaithfulness to God led to the temple’s destruction by the Babylonians in the first place; would they have a place in this New Glorious House of God? After all, their own misplaced self-centered priorities led to God’s continued cursing on their agricultural productivity in the Land. Will God bless their wise obedience with His promised provision, or will their disobedience make everything they do unclean and deserving of God’s continued cursing upon their work? Is there any hope for God’s unclean people in His New House amid His greater glory? The Good News is, “Yes”!

God promises **Blessings of Purity and Provision Under His Chosen Ruler**. This is the encouraging Good News from God to His People in these last two messages from the prophet Haggai.

### **1. The Third Message:**

#### **a. God Will Bless Defiled People (Verses 10-19)**

##### **i. What causes defilement? READ Verses 10-14**

1. Using Levitical, priestly language regarding temple sacrifices and ritual purity and impurity (which we’ll come back to), Haggai illustrates the pervasiveness of defilement among this remnant of God’s People, and this is connected to neglecting the building of God’s House. The People’s defilement was related to their negligence. Consecration, on the other hand, involved effort. By neglecting to put forth the effort involved in building God’s House, the place where ritual cleanness could be realized, God’s People were defiled. Because they were defiled, everything they did and touched would be defiled.

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- ii. What are the consequences of defilement? **READ**  
Verses 16-17, 19a
  1. Because the returned Jews failed to be engaged in God's work of building His House, all the work they engaged in to provide for themselves and their own homes was cursed. They reaped very little of what they sowed for themselves.
  2. These are typical of God's Promised Covenant Curses under the Mosaic Law for His People when they were unfaithful to Him in the Land of Canaan. God would refuse to provide for them; because, they trusted in themselves and did not return to God.
- iii. What must God's People do? **READ** Verses 15 & 18.  
Give careful thought to what things were like before they wisely responded in obedience to God's command to build His House.
  1. Giving Careful thought to Our Ways is what opened up our study of Haggai. Such consideration is something we must continually do in light of God's Word and our priorities, so we may put forth the effort to serve God with the strength He gives.
- iv. What does God promise to do? **READ** Verse 19b
  1. Key Lesson: Wisely Responding to God's Word in Obedience with a Desire to Work for Him will result in Blessing.
    - a. We learn that Jesus, alone, was perfectly obedient to God the Father in this way; therefore, those who put their trust in Christ's wise obedience on our behalf receive the fullness of God's promised blessings in and through Him.

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### 2. The Fourth Message:

#### a. God's Chosen Ruler Will Govern God's International House of Peace (Verses 20-23)

- i. Same Day – Second Message: **READ** Verses 10 & 20
- ii. **READ** Verses 21-22 Like we had previously in verses 6-7, the “shaking of the heavens and the earth” is the LORD’s coming that brings about cosmic overthrow of all the proverbial Edomites and Babylonians; those “foreigners” opposed to God and His People.
- iii. Then, God will enthrone His Chosen Servant over this New International House of Peace with a greater glory than even Solomon’s temple. **READ** Verse 23
  1. But, why is this message addressed to Zerubbabel in verse 21, and why is Zerubbabel, God’s chosen ruler; God’s signet ring (which basically means God’s ruler with His royal stamp of approval)? Did God establish His International House filled with His great glory when Zerubbabel and Joshua completed building the temple?
    - a. No, but Zerubbabel was the Davidic Governor of God’s People, and Zerubbabel, like Joshua the High Priest in Zechariah 3:8, was a man symbolic of things to come. Just as Jesus is the promised servant Branch in fullness, so, too, is Jesus the promised Davidic King, God’s Anointed Ruler, in fullness.
    - b. Zerubbabel, the Davidic Governor, like Joshua, the High Priest, were types, or foreshadows, of Christ Who ushers in God’s promised greater glory for all peoples of the world.

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This is very Good News for us who have sinful pasts that made us unclean and deserving of God's. God the Father sent His Son, the Servant Branch, to die for our thoughtless negligence that made us unclean. Jesus cleanses us from our impurity by His shed Blood on the Cross. Christ's death was applied even to the uncleanness of God's faithful remnant back in 520 BC. After Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciples could look back when Jesus, their Lord and Teacher, washed their feet and declared them clean as read from *John 13:1-11* this morning. The Disciples could look back and realize that that humble act of Jesus pointed to the greater act of His cleansing by His shed Blood on the Cross (cf. *John 15:1-4*).

As we understand from today's passage and the Levitical code, defilement was contagious, and it infected anything that touched it. Such outward defilement served as a reflection of defiled hearts that neglect to love God. To further illustrate: If something was consecrated (made clean, holy), such as sacrificial meat in *verse 12*, and it touched something common, the holiness of that meat would NOT be transferred to the common food. However, if a defiled person touched something common, then the common food became defiled as illustrated in *verse 13*. Impurity was contagious; not holiness.

Yet, with Jesus' Coming, there is a great reversal. Rather than the contagious defilement under the Mosaic Law, Jesus' coming brings about a "contagious holiness". Have you caught Jesus' holiness? *Luke 7:36-50* (vs. 48 = sins forgiven; vs. 50 = faith has saved); *Luke 8:40-48* (vs. 48 = faith has healed one who is viewed as unclean and impure). Both unclean women may now, through faith in Christ, go "in peace" into the Father's House (*Haggai 2:9*); because, they have been purified by Jesus Who has the power to forgive sins, which truly defiles us in the

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eyes of a Holy God. Jesus enables us to be holy as God is holy, and, in Christ, God fulfills His promise to be present among us, so that He may be our God and we His sanctified, holy, pure people.

AMEN