

Scripture Text

Haggai 2: 10-23

Context

After having spoken to the people to stir them to abandon their personal building projects and rebuild God's house, the people respond with faith, trusting God. In this final section of the book, God speaks in two more oracles, concerning their prior defilement and their oppression under foreign rule, both of which will be dealt with by God Himself, and enable them to live for him as God's people forever.

Observation and Meaning

- What is the main point of the transference of either holiness or uncleanness? What is God trying to tell the people?
- What does the temple represent? How do we show devotion to God's 'temple' today?
- Why do you think God calls them unclean? What is the result of this uncleanness with regard to their crops?
- What changes in the passage that leads God to say that he will henceforth bless them?
- What does it mean that God will shake the heavens and the earth, and how is this connected to the promise that the 'horse and rider shall go down'?
- What had lead God's people to be enslaved to the Babylonians (and subsequently the Persians)?
- What is a signet ring, and what it mean that God will make Zerubbabel a signet ring? Who does Zerubbabel point forward to in this passage?

Big idea

God will cleanse and liberate His people to enable them to dwell before Him forever.

Connecting to the whole Bible's storyline

The temple symbolised God's presence which had been lost in the fall but restored to a people God called for Himself by His grace. The continued neglect of the temple would lead to their ruin, whilst being devoted to God's presence and purposes would lead to their flourishing. Christ has come and dwelt among us as the true temple, and now includes those who trust in Him as members of this household of God. He cleanses us and delivers us from the bondage of sin, enabling us to serve God forever. Those who are truly part of this temple are blessed in Christ, forevermore.

Sermon outline

1. The problem of being unclean
2. The problem of being governed
3. Jesus our greater Priest and true King

Application

- What has 'uncleanness' (sin) produced in your life?
- Are there any activities you have been engaged in that you thought meant you were devoted to God that you now realise don't make you holy?
- How can you be made clean?
- How does Jesus the Great King deliver you from the oppression of sin, (get specific) and therefore liberate you to be able to build His Kingdom?
- How do God's promises to Zerubbabel give you confidence to trust God and His promises today?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?
What is the situation of the author and of the readers?
Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?
Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.