

Introduction: Sign a piece of paper with a permanent marker. What is this?

We sign documents frequently in life. Most every time you make a purchase at a store, you will be asked to sign a receipt. Every time you turn in an official document (be it an application, a release form, an agreement, a church covenant, whatever), you sign your name to the bottom of that document.

When you write a note or a letter, you sign your name. What does a signature communicate? I think we would agree that it says we are placing our stamp of approval on the veracity of everything that document says. It is our commitment to uphold that which has been communicated.

Here's what I love about where we are going in Haggai 2:10-23. What we have here, is further instruction with further promises, and it will all be sealed with the signature of God. This signature holds implications not simply for what Haggai communicated to Israel in the 6th century B.C., but it holds great importance for us today! This morning we are going to dive into the topic . . .

“Holiness of Heart & The Blessing of God” Haggai 2:10-23

Timeline . . . Exiles returned, started to rebuild, faced opposition, and rather than continuing to build the temple, the house of God, they decided to build their own paneled houses. They misplaced their priorities and so God called them to Consider their ways and Get to work! They can do so with confidence because God is with them. Still, we can see they needed to be instructed to continue prioritizing God.

The Point: Prioritize God through holiness, reflection, and hope in his Messiah.

Verses 10-14 will first tell us to . . .

I. Honor God by cultivating heart holiness (2:10-14).

God has always desired that his people reflect his holiness. “Be holy for I am holy.” (Leviticus 11:45) And holiness always begins on the inside. So to talk about heart holiness is really speaking in a redundant manner, because there is no other kind of holiness. Sadly, God's people were not living holy lives.

Read 10-14

- This message is delivered on December 18, 520 B.C. two months after the message in the first part of chapter 2 and three months after they got serious about rebuilding the temple.
- The audience for this message is the priests.
- The rebuilding project is not going well. As these verses tell us, there is something more than the rebuilding of the temple that is at center stage. God was interested in rebuilding their hearts. He wanted hearts of devotion. He hearts that put him first, that worshiped him above all. God's greater concern was not the physical condition of the temple, but the spiritual condition of their hearts.
- BUT apparently, the people wrongly concluded that mere contact with the would be temple could make them clean before God, even when they continue to live in their sin.

Holiness is not Contagious

- Verses 11-12 tell us that it was a practice of the priests to carry the consecrated meat from the offerings in their robe. But that “holy meat” (meaning it was set apart as blessed by God), it did not make anything else it touched holy. Holiness did not transfer from the meat to other objects it touched.
- Here's the point: Just because you are associated with holy things does not make you holy.

- . So you came to church this morning? I'm really glad you are here. I hope you will be back next week and the week after that, but simply coming to church does not make your heart right with God.
- . You prayed. 76% of Americans say that "prayer is an important part of my daily life."
- . You read your Bible, attended a Small Group (we call them Community Groups), _____
- . None of those things, as wise and helpful as they are, will bring the Spirit's transforming power if our hearts are not in it.
- Please, please, please, do not assume that because you arrived at church today, you are all set for eternity.
- Please do not conclude that because you pray and believe God exists, and even do a number of nice things for others means that you are truly in with God.

T: Verses 11-12 teach us that a holy thing cannot make a person clean. There is no such thing as outside-in transformation. In other words, perform this act and you will be made right. BUT now look at *Verses 13-14*

- *If someone were to touch a dead corpse, they were considered unclean, and until they went through proper purification rituals, everything they touched became unclean as well.*
- *Now, the point is the opposite. If what they do on the outside does not come from a clean inside, a clean heart, then what they do is not clean.*
- Whatever they do and whatever they offer to God is unclean because their heart is unclean.
- So, even though they have begun to obey the Lord by working on the temple, their work is unclean because of sin in their lives.
 - . Practical. You can sing songs and pray prayers, and walk by me on the way out and say, "That message was dope.. It was banging. You should preach that again next week."
 - . BUT if it is not coming out of a pure heart, that has been changed and is amazed by the gospel, it is not true worship.
- We can engage in holy activities with unholiness in our hearts.
- **How do you know when your heart is in something?**
 - . **Anticipation.**
 - . **Jubilation.**

T: Do you see the danger here?

- Jesus put it like this in the strongest words in the Sermon on the Mount: **"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" (Matthew 7:21-23)**
- Have you ever assumed your apparent "spiritual acts" somehow made you approved before God?
- Listen, it's only through Christ that who we are and what we do becomes acceptable to God. Why?
- Because Jesus is the true temple (John 1:14; 2:21). He embodied holiness.
- And this will amaze you: Now, everyone who belongs to Christ is a holy temple through him.
- **"For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:18-22)**
- Q: If the church is a holy temple, how does that change our relationships inside the church and outside the church?
- Our greatest desire should be to live lives that reflect Christ to the world, both to one another in the church and to those who are not yet believers in Jesus.

T: Verses 10-14 remind us that God is looking for people whose hearts are fully committed to him.

- ***“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.” (2 Chronicles 16:9) #2***

II. Consider your ways and the blessing of God that follows (2:15-19).

- Three times in these five verses, we see the instruction to “consider.” It means to “set your heart on your ways.” It carries the idea of serious reflection.
- Reflect. Pause. Solitude.
- One day, every 3-4 months, to spend a large portion of time with no one but God. In addition to daily devotions! [[Gloucester . . .]]
- How frequently do you find silence and solitude in order to consider your ways? We need this in the frenetic culture in which we live. It won’t happen naturally!
- Haggai wants them to consider two things

Consider that your Life before Restoration was marked by rebellion, not blessing (15-17)

- Here’s the instruction: Consider. Think about what life was like before you started the rebuild, before you got refocused spiritually and put God in his proper place: #1.
- And it would not take them long at all to say, “Oh yeah, things were not going good at all.” They were experiencing the discipline of God. God, in his grace, disciplines his children at different times and in different ways to bring their attention and devotion back to him.
- This is what he did with the returned exiles. They went for 20 measures and came away with 10. Their plants were infected with blight and even damaged by hail.
- What was the goal? We see it at the end of verse 17: “Yet you did not turn to me.”
- You persist in your apathy and rebellion. You would be foolish to continue in your sin and experience further discipline from your loving Father.
- And don’t miss this: our apathy and rebellion is primarily against HIM. You did not turn to ME.
- God is after a relationship. He made us to know him and live in harmony with him all the days of our lives.
- This was the greatest consequence of their sin, and it is the greatest consequence of our sin and apathy: the lack of a vibrant relationship with God.

Consider that your Life after Restoration will be marked by blessing.

- *Verses 18-19.*
- Now, this promise came, when? In December. What did that mean? Was their seed in the ground? Yes! Was their fruit on the tree? No!
- It had only been three months since they began rebuilding the temple. So we have the promise of a fruitful harvest to come. God is not against them. He is with them.
- Let’s acknowledge that this would have taken a measure of faith.
- App: Are there any ways God is calling you to exercise faith in his future blessing and promises?
- Verse 19 provides the promise. As they consider their ways, cleanse their hands, and keep working on God’s house, he promises to bless them.

T: A restored house will bring God’s blessing. But it is more than that... The promise to bless from that very day (v. 19) will be fully realized in the hope outlined in vv.20-23.

III. Experience eternal reward through through Jesus, the Messiah (2:20-23).

His eternal blessing will include destruction.

- The kingdom of earth, all kingdoms opposed to God and his ways will be destroyed.

- Shake - Heard this last week.. See Haggai, brought that truth on repeat. Consider your ways. Consider your ways. God is going to shake. . . The reckoning is coming. . .

His eternal blessing will include deliverance.

- There will be a house restored. David's house... (Blessing... Genesis 12:1-3 . . .)
- Timmis framework . . . Creation (Gen 1-3); De-creation (Gen 3-Mal) – We rejected the blessing of God
Creation: God created the world good and for his glory. There was shalom (complete BLESSING and complete flourishing in God's presence).
De-creation: Sin is rebellion against God and an undoing of his original design in creation. Through our sin, we have rejected the BLESSING of God and suffer the destructive consequences of our sin.

How will this blessing be restored?

- The restoration of the Messianic Line. . . Through Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel was from the house of David, Israel's greatest King.
- Remember, the Jews had been taken captive, displaced from their home and sent to exile in Babylon. From the moment of their captivity, they no longer had their own king reigning over them.
- This didn't add up, because in 2 Samuel 7:12-13, God promised David: **"I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." (2 Samuel 7:12-13)**
- Forever King. "I will build you a house for my name." Not a temple, but a dynasty, a royal lineage.
- God will do this through his *servant*. "Servant" refers to someone given a specific task. This was used to speak of David and Isaiah uses this word to describe the coming Davidic King in his servant songs (Isaiah 42, 48, 49, 53)
- And this servant will wear a ring, but not just any ring, it will be a *signet ring*.
- This is good . . . A signet ring was a ring that had a carefully crafted seal on it. Kings would wear these so they could authenticated documents. I want you to see two important things about this signet ring.
 - The signet ring communicated authority. It was much like a signature today. Signatures guarantee the truthfulness of what the document communicates.
 - The signet ring communicated authority through impression. It was a seal that represented and reflected the King.
- Listen, the coming Messiah is God's signet ring.
- In Jesus Christ, God has provided the signature of his authority. And in Jesus Christ, God has given us the full representation of who he is!
 - **"No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." (John 1:18)**
 - **"He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of his nature. . ." (Hebrews 1:3)**
- The Messiah will explain God to the world in both word and deed. Jesus is "the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of his nature."
- God guarantees he will fulfill his promises through Zerubbabel's lineage, and if we were to go read Luke 3, and the genealogy of Jesus, he is the son of Joseph, son of Zerubbabel, son of David, son of God.
- Not only is Jesus the True and Greater temple (John 1:14 & 2:23), he is also the True and Greater King.
- **Re-Creation** happens in Jesus. Through his sacrificial death and death-defeating resurrection, Jesus restores the blessing of God. And here's the even better news: this is not our final destination.
- **New Creation** will happen in Jesus. There is a day coming, a glorious day, a day that will stagger the senses, and we will dwell with God, in his new heavens and new earth, forever.

How could the people of God in that day have confidence this deliverance would come? How can we (today!) have confidence this deliverance will come?

- Answer: realizing this deliverance is not dependent on us, but is entirely dependent on God. Seven times in these four verses, the Lord is the primary mover: “I am about to shake. I am about to overthrow. I will take you. I will make you. I have chosen you.” Three times in the all-important verse 23, we see the phrase “declares the Lord.”

Conclusion:

This should move us to worship! Quoting Psalm 118, Jesus said in Matthew 21:42: **“Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’’ (Matthew 21:42, quoting Psalm 118:22-23)**

“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. . . . *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*” (1 Peter 2:4-5, 9)

Pray

We are going to sing a song called “I am Not the Same.” It is a declaration for everyone who has received the blessing of God through Jesus. “You restore the wasted years, rebuild the broken walls. Your love replaces fear. Your mercy makes us whole. Adopted. Healed. Lifted. I am not the same. I’m new creation. I am not the same anymore. I’m not ashamed. I will not be shaken (the nations will, but we are receiving an unshakable kingdom.) We are not the same anymore. This all happens through the risen Savior and reigning King, King Jesus.

Let’s stand and sing this with some excitement and passion.