

Live Pure Lives

Haggai 2:10-19

SS Lesson for 06/15/2014

Devotional Scripture: 1 Peter 1:14-17

OUTLINE

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Key Verse: Hag 2:19

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson admonishes us to **Live Pure Lives**. The **study's aim** is to compare and contrast the effects of the people's impurity on their "success" with the impact purity and impurity have on people's successes and failures today. The **study's application** is to identify areas in our lives where purity is compromised and make a plan for change. (*From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*).

Key Verse: Hag 2:19

19 Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.' "

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Haggai called on the people to remember their previous economic disaster which came because they disobeyed by not rebuilding the temple. For the third of five times (1:5, 7; 2:15, 18 [twice]) the people were challenged to give careful thought to (lit., "set their hearts on") their disobedience (before they started rebuilding) and the consequences of their sins. As stated in 1:6, their harvests were again (2:16) said to be short in quantity. Grain had decreased 50 percent (from 20 measures to 10) and the grape harvest had decreased 60 percent (from 50 to 20 measures of juice in the wine vat; cf. 1:10-11; 2:19). Again God claimed responsibility for this condition: I struck... the work of your hands (cf. 1:9, "I blew [it] away"). Blight (crop disease) and mildew are linked in several passages that deal with divine judgment for disobedience (cf. Deut. 28:22; 1 Kings 8:37; 2 Chron. 6:28; Amos 4:9). Hail also occurs in many judgment passages (Ex. 9:25; Isa. 28:2; 30:30). For an agricultural society such punishments were catastrophic to the economy and to survival. The Lord reminded the nation of its failure to respond to His chastening hand (you did not turn to Me) just like the failure of an earlier generation (Amos 4:9). After citing God's present chastening on Israel for her past disobedience, Haggai urged the people to remember the renewed temple construction as the beginning of present blessing. They were to give careful thought to (lit., "set your hearts on"; cf. 1:5, 7; 2:15) the day when they laid the temple's foundation. From the day of this third message (in the ninth month) they were to look back three months ("the sixth month," 1:14-15). The drought of divine judgment had already affected the year's harvest so that their barns were already emptied of the sparse harvest. They had neither staples (seed, or grapes, or olives) nor luxuries (figs and pomegranates). To this too they were to give careful thought. But things would now be different, for the Lord promised, From this day on I will bless you. Their faithful obedience in continuing to rebuild would enable them to experience God's blessing.

Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The concept of the outline of the lesson came from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary and from the points revealed by the study of the Scriptural text.

Verse	Phrase	Commentary
2:14	Then Haggai answered and said, " 'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the Lord, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean	Defilement
2:19	Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.	Blessedness

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Today's lesson continues our studies of Haggai's challenge to God's people to complete the rebuilding of the temple. Of course, following a plan is essential in rebuilding a temple (or any structure for that matter). But God's people also

needed to embrace his plan for rebuilding their lives and shaping them according to his master design. Leaving captivity in Babylon to return to the promised land was an important step; leaving spiritual captivity to return to God was another. As was the case with last week's lesson, today's Scripture text begins where the previous week's ended. Therefore the lesson background of those two lessons is the same for this one, so that information need not be repeated here. Instead, we will take a brief look at the wider context of the Persian Empire of Darius I (reigned 522-486 BC), within which the Judeans of today's study lived. According to the Greek historian Herodotus (484-425 BC), Darius gained the Persian throne by intrigue and assassination following the death of Cambyses. As a result, the leaders of various provinces in the Persian Empire viewed the kingship of Darius to be illegitimate, so the years 522-518 BC, during which time the prophet Haggai ministered, saw Darius occupied with putting down rebellions. With so much going on at the time, it's easy to imagine that Darius was not in the mood to have "just one more thing" on his plate when he received the letter described in Ezra 5. His strongly worded response in Ezra 6 left no doubt regarding his viewpoint on the rebuilding of the temple: it had to proceed! The royal treasury was to support the project; anyone found opposing the effort was subject to the death penalty. (We take care to note that Darius I is not the same Darius of Daniel 5:31-6:28.)

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

We are deeply immersed in a culture with no absolutes about right and wrong, truth or lies, and many other aspects of humanist thinking. Humanists think that there is no such thing as a holy God and a righteous, pure life. To them, everything is fuzzy. They want everyone to relax and love everybody, they believe everybody lies, and they feel that it is an everything-is-OK-if-you-do-not-hurt-anybody-else world. The hope for this week's lesson is that we all will come to see that God is holy, perfect, and pure. He has spoken to us in clear terms. Living a pure life is a command from God that He will enable us to keep if we are willing. In our previous lessons, we saw that the children of Israel had become very materialistic and were not obeying the Lord in rebuilding His house. Once they decided to obey Him and began to rebuild the temple, God began to bless them and give them what they lacked. The path of least resistance is to go along with the culture and mind-set in which we find ourselves immersed. In addition to the unsaved world, serious Christians may find themselves surrounded by nominal Christians who say they believe in the Lord but do not walk with Him. In this lesson, we hope to see the correct mind-set and worldview of the obedient Christian. We want to govern our thinking and actions according to the principles God has given us. In the culture of our day, we are constantly being reminded not to judge others. Such comments usually arise when we mention that some activity or statement is not right according to God's Word. The common thought is that there are no absolutes, no absolute right and wrong. But we can be discerning without being judgmental.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Defilement (Hag 2:10-14)

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

11 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying,

12 If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?' " " Then the priests answered and said, "No."

13 And Haggai said, "If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?" So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

14 Then Haggai answered and said, " 'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the Lord, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.

Commentary on uncleanness (from Unger's Bible Dictionary)

Uncleanness. Although sin has its origin and its seat in the soul, it pervades the whole body as the soul's organ, bringing about the body's dissolution in death and decomposition. Its effects have spread from man to the whole of the earthly creation, because, having dominion over nature, he has brought nature with him into the service of sin. God has also made the irrational creature subject to "futility" and "corruption" on account of man's sin (Rom 8:20-21). "It is in this penetration of sin into the material creation that we may find the explanation of the fact that from the very earliest

times men have neither used every kind of herb nor every kind of animal as food; but that, while they have, as it were, instinctively avoided certain plants as injurious to health or destructive to life, they have also had a horror naturalis (i.e., an inexplicable disgust) at many of the animals, and have avoided their flesh as unclean. A similar horror must have been produced upon man from the very first, before his heart was altogether hardened by death as the wages of sin, or rather by the effects of death, viz., the decomposition of the body; and different diseases and states of the body, that were connected with symptoms of corruption and decomposition, may also have been regarded as rendering unclean. Hence, in all nations and all the religion of antiquity, we find that contrast between clean and unclean, which was developed in a dualistic form, it is true, in many of the religious systems, but had its primary root in the corruption that had entered the world through sin" (K. D., Com., on Lev 11). This contrast between clean and unclean was limited by Moses to three particulars: (1) food; (2) contact with dead bodies, human and animal; (3) bodily conditions and diseases. The law pointed out most minutely the unclean objects and various defilements within these spheres, and prescribed the means for avoiding or removing them. Here the subject will be treated as follows: (1) causes of uncleanness; (2) disabilities of uncleanness; (3) purification from uncleanness. *Causes of Uncleanness.* Certain foods, contact with a dead body, and certain bodily conditions and diseases rendered a person ceremonially unclean.

Purification from Uncleanness. The regulations with respect to defilements and their corresponding purifications were not prescriptions framed with a view to the cultivation of cleanliness, tidiness, and decency-not merely sanitary regulations-but they were of a religious nature, having as their object the cultivation of holiness and spiritual life. It was owing to the well-understood connection between defilements on the one hand and sin and its consequence death on the other that the Levitical purification rites ranked side by side with the sacrifices and that they formed, quite as much as the latter, an integral part of the Mosaic ritual. The term "purification," in its legal and technical sense, is applied to the ritual observances whereby an Israelite was formally absolved from the taint of uncleanness, whether evidenced by any overt act or state or whether connected with man's natural depravity. The necessity of purification was extended in the post-Babylonian period to a variety of unauthorized cases. Cups and pots, bronze vessels, and couches were washed as a matter of ritual observance (Mark 7:4). The washing of the hands before meals was conducted in a formal manner (v. 3), and minute regulations were laid down on this subject in a treatise of the Mishna entitled Yadaim. What may have been the specific causes of uncleanness in those who came up to purify themselves before the Passover (John 11:55), or in those who had taken upon themselves the Nazirite's vow (Acts 21:24,26), we are not informed; in either case it may have been contact with a corpse, though in the latter it would rather appear to have been a general purification preparatory to the accomplishment of the vow. In conclusion it may be observed that the distinctive feature in the Mosaic rites of purification is their expiatory character. The idea of uncleanness was not peculiar to the Jew. But with all other nations simple ablution sufficed-no sacrifices were demanded. The Jew alone was taught, by the use of expiatory offerings, to discern to its full extent the connection between the outward sign and the inward fount of impurity.

What makes one defiled (10-13)

Defilement is the disobedient corrupt actions (Titus 1:15-16)

15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

Defilement is the iniquity that comes from evil planning (Mic 2:1)

2 Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it.

Defilement is what comes out of the mind of sinful man (Matt 15:17-20)

17 "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? 18 But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. 20 These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'"

Defilement comes from pretending to be clean, but actually being defiled (James 3:9-10)

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

All defilement starts with some desire from within (James 4:1-3)

4 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

God judges defilement (14)

God judges the heart that is defiled (Matt 12:33-37)

33 "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. 36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

God judges the defilement coming from the sinful nature (Gal 5:19-21)

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

God judges the defilement that comes from evil desires (James 1:13-15)

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

God judges defilement when conceived temptations are full-grown (James 1:13-15)

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

God judges what's on the inside (Gal 2:6)

6 As for those who seemed to be important-whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance-those men added nothing to my message.

Blessedness (Hag 2:15-19)

15 'And now, carefully consider from this day forward: from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the Lord--
16 since those days, when one came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were but ten; when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were but twenty.
17 I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me,' says the Lord.
18 'Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid--consider it:
19 Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.' "

God punishes for defilement but He is also merciful (15-17)

God proved His great mercy with the Israelites (Neh 9:15-31)

15 In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them. 16 "But they, our forefathers, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and did not obey your commands. 17 They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them, 18 even when they cast for themselves an image of a calf and said, 'This is your god, who brought you up out of Egypt,' or when they committed awful blasphemies. 19 "Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. 20 You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. 21 For forty years you sustained them in the desert; they lacked nothing, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen. 22 "You gave them kingdoms and nations, allotting to them even the remotest frontiers. They took over the country of Sihon king of Heshbon and the country of Og king of Bashan. 23 You made their sons as numerous as the stars in the sky, and you brought them into the land that you told their fathers to enter and possess. 24 Their sons went in and took possession of the land. You subdued before them the Canaanites, who lived in the land; you handed the Canaanites over to them, along with their kings and the peoples of the land, to deal with them as they pleased. 25 They captured fortified cities and fertile land; they took possession of houses filled with all kinds of good things, wells already dug, vineyards, olive groves and fruit trees in abundance. They ate to the full and were well-nourished; they reveled in your great goodness. 26 "But they were disobedient and rebelled against you; they put your law behind their backs. They killed your prophets, who had admonished them in order to turn them back to you; they committed awful blasphemies. 27 So you handed them over to their enemies, who oppressed them. But when they were oppressed they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compassion you gave them deliverers, who rescued them from the hand of their enemies. 28 "But as soon as they were at rest, they again did what was evil in your sight. Then you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies so that they ruled over them. And when they cried out to you again, you heard from heaven, and in your compassion you delivered them time after time. 29 "You warned them to return to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, by which a man will live if he obeys them. Stubbornly they turned their backs on you, became stiff-necked and refused to listen. 30 For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you admonished them through your prophets. Yet they paid no attention, so you handed them over to the neighboring peoples. 31 But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

God's mercy endures forever (Ps 136:1-26)

1 Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. 2 Oh, give thanks to the God of gods! For His mercy endures forever. 3 Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! For His mercy endures forever: 4 To Him who alone does great wonders, For His mercy endures forever; 5 To Him who by wisdom made the heavens, For His mercy endures forever; 6 To Him who laid out the earth above the waters, For His mercy endures forever; 7 To Him who made great lights, For His mercy endures forever-- 8 The sun to rule by day, For His mercy endures forever; 9 The moon and stars to rule by night, For His mercy endures forever. 10 To Him who struck Egypt in their firstborn, For His mercy endures forever; 11 And brought out Israel from among them, For His mercy endures forever; 12 With a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, For His mercy endures forever; 13 To Him who divided the Red Sea in two, For His mercy endures forever; 14 And made Israel pass through the midst of it, For His mercy endures forever; 15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, For His mercy endures forever; 16 To Him who led His people through the wilderness, For His mercy endures forever; 17 To Him who struck down great kings, For His mercy endures forever; 18 And slew famous kings, For His mercy endures forever-- 19 Sihon king of the Amorites, For His mercy endures forever; 20 And Og king of Bashan, For His mercy endures forever-- 21 And gave their land as a heritage, For His mercy endures forever; 22 A heritage to Israel His servant, For His mercy endures forever. 23 Who remembered us in our lowly state, For His mercy endures forever; 24 And rescued us from our enemies, For His mercy endures forever; 25 Who gives food to all flesh, For His mercy endures forever. 26 Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven! For His mercy endures forever.

It is only through God's mercy we are saved (Eph 2:4-5)

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.

We can find mercy at the throne of God (Heb 4:16)

16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

God's grace bountifully blesses (18-19)

God displays His gracious blessings through His faithfulness (Ps 86:15)

15 But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

God displays His gracious blessings through His covenant provisions (Ps 111:2-5)

2 Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them. 3 Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever. 4 He has caused his wonders to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and compassionate. 5 He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.

God displays His gracious blessings through His justification and redemption (Rom 3:23-24)

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

God displays His gracious blessings through His covenant promises (Rom 4:16)

16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

God displays His gracious blessings through providing for us to give generously (2 Cor 8:1-2)

1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts From Hampton Keathley IV

Haggai now asks the people a question which the priests are supposed to answer. If a priest is carrying something holy and he touches something unholy, like a corpse, does that make the corpse holy? The answer is no. If the person who is unclean touches the priest, does that make the priest unclean? The answer is Yes. What is the point? Holiness does not come by contact. It is not transferable. But contact with unholiness does defile. Take sickness as an example. If you are healthy and your spouse has the flu, and you kiss them, will that make them well? Will it make you sick? What is the only exception to this? Jesus - He touched lots of unclean people - lepers, the woman with the bleeding problem, corpses, etc. They did not make him unclean. Instead, He made them clean. He healed them. This should have been a big clue to the Jewish leaders, priests, etc. of His identity.

Haggai makes his conclusion in vs 14. The Israelites were guilty of this very thing. This is why chapter 2 follows chapter 1. The "holy" rituals that the people had been performing in the past were useless because, as we have already seen in chapter 1, there was no obedience. They did not have holy hearts. **Principle** Holiness is not transferable (2:11-12) **Principle** Sin contaminates everything one does (2:13-14) You might say, "But I thought they had gotten their act together and were working on the temple?" They had but the next verse shows that Haggai is looking back to the time before they had resumed the work.

When does God's discipline start? It usually doesn't strike immediately. He allowed the Israelites to skip Sabbath years for 490 years and become very corrupt before He sent them to Babylon. When does God's blessing start? Immediately when we turn to Him. He is so gracious. Where does the idea of dependency fit in to all this? If you are depending on material things for happiness, God will take them away (vs 17) This is the same thing we saw in 1:6 and 9 in our discussion about dissatisfaction and discipline, but if you are depending on God for happiness, He will bless you and bring all the material things you need. I think motivation is important. **Principle:** Disobedience brings discipline, while obedience guarantees blessing (2:15-19)

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Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

This week's lesson from Scripture is clear: If we are unwilling to live pure and obedient lives as God directs, we cannot expect God's blessing on our lives and may experience His disciplinary action. He may strongly subtract from our success or send definite hardship. Every element of our lives must be brought under subjection to His will. We have all of Scripture and the Holy Spirit to guide us. The Lord expects to lead us in paths of righteousness for His name's sake (Ps. 23:3). We have only to trust Him and begin to obey Him to begin to see His hand in positive activity in our experiences.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. When God speaks, the wise man listens (Hag. 2:10-11)
2. Holiness is not transferable; it must be personally sought after and obtained (vs. 12)
3. A person's uncleanness impacts others as well as himself (Hag. 2:13; cf. Num. 19:22)
4. God sees the true hearts of men in spite of their outward religious deeds (Hag. 2:14; cf. I Sam. 16:7)
5. God keeps His promises, both the positive and the negative ones (Hag. 2:15-17; cf. Deut. 9:15-20)
6. God always blesses true holiness in His time and in His way (Hag. 2:18-19)