

Live Pure Lives

Key Verse: *“Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.”*
—Haggai 2:19

Selected Scripture:
Haggai 2:10-19

THE MESSAGE DELIVERED

by the Prophet Haggai was intended to wake Israel from indifference to their covenant with God. They had become complacent toward their religion. Their energy had become consumed in providing for the comforts of their homes, gardens, and other earthly things, while the Lord’s Temple lay desolate and neglected. However, by responding positively to Haggai’s message, they demonstrated a willingness to repent that few of the other prophets experienced. Indeed, many prophets were rejected, or even killed, when hearing unpleasant news sent by God. Jesus himself attested of this: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee.”—Matt. 23:37

Israel’s response to Haggai provides a valuable lesson in how we are to live our lives. God had made a covenant with Israel wherein he commanded them to obey him. The covenant was clear and simple. If Israel obeyed the Lord they would be blessed. If they disobeyed the Lord they would be punished. (Deut. 28:1-42) We see an example of their disobedience and punishment during the time of Haggai’s prophecy.—Hag. 1:5-11

Speaking to the church in Rome, the Apostle Paul

describes how God provided his love toward Israel: “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”—Rom. 10:1-3

Limited by their fleshly imperfections, it was impossible for Israel to keep the provisions of the Law Covenant. Paul continues, however, explaining how we might live up to our covenant relationship even though we, too, are imperfect in the flesh. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, . . . That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”—Rom. 10:4-6,9,10

Israel was expected to live pure lives if they were to receive God’s promised blessings. The same is to be true of us. We, however, have the imputed merit of our Master’s sacrifice. “Even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: . . . that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”—I Pet. 2:21-25

Let us give thanks for the reassurance given to Israel through the prophecy of Haggai, and be confident that God will bless us even more so if we live pure lives. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10 ■