Hag 2:11-23 (NIV), “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Ask the priests what the law says: ‘If a person carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, oil or other food, does it become consecrated?’’ The priests answered, ‘No.’” {13} Then Haggai said, “If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?” “Yes,” the priests replied, “it becomes defiled.” {14} Then Haggai said, “So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,” declares the LORD. “Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled. {15} “Now give careful thought to this from this day on—consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the Lord’s temple. {16} When anyone came to a heap of twenty measures, there were only ten. When anyone went to a wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were only twenty. {17} I struck all the work of your hands with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not turn to me,’ declares the LORD. {18} ‘From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the Lord’s temple was laid. Give careful thought: Is there yet any seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit. ‘‘ ‘From this day on I will bless you.’” {19} The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month: {20} “Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I will shake the heavens and the earth. {21} I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother. {22} ‘On that day,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,’ declares the LORD Almighty.”

INTRODUCTION: (text read as Scripture reading) Haggai confronts 3 Kingdom-building problems that impede God’s work: disinterest, discouragement, and dissatisfaction! Our humanity is their source, God’s intervention is their solution. While this isn’t an exhaustive list, this prophecy tells us how these 3 specific problems of Kingdom-building arise and how they are resolved.

How did dissatisfaction arise? The temple re-building had re-started, but economic conditions were unchanged. God’s people had reversed their behavior, but God had not reversed their situation. They expected 3 months of obedience to reverse 16 years of neglect, and God didn’t let that happen. He wanted to show them the real problem: they were...

I. Still Working with Defiled Hearts, v.10-14
A. To address their dissatisfaction with the way things were going, God used some questions, “Ask the priests what the law says...”
1. God used common knowledge to lay down common ground— (His ultimate intent is always clear and redemptive communication.)
2. To win debates it’s ideal if we can get opponents to confess the points we’re trying to make [Socrates was a master of this kind of questioning, never losing an argument; and Jesus used the same method, asking questions to get people to state the truth He wanted them to know.]
B. Look at the questions God had Haggai ask— v.12-13. If a person carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, oil or other food, does it become consecrated?”’ The priests answered, “No.” Then Haggai said, “If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?” “Yes,” the priests replied, “it becomes defiled.” — God wanted them to know that:
1. Holiness is non-transferable:
   a. Kingdom-building work doesn’t make us holy. [Jesus in our hearts makes us holy, but it doesn’t automatically make our actions holy.]
   b. God’s people were dissatisfied with slow outward progress (God wanted them to be concerned about their inward growth.)
2. On the other hand, what is defiled does defile what it touches.
   a. Sin, if allowed a home, destroys both the home and the whole...
III. Waiting for a Divine Destiny, v.20-23
A. Haggai, previously addressing everyone, now turns to Governor Zerubbabel, telling of the end times, when He will shake the heavens and the earth toppling kingdoms and shattering the world’s armies.

B. Why given just to Zerubbabel? (He was from David’s line, and the end-time promises were to be fulfilled by a descendent of David:)

1. What was David’s promise? 2 Sam 7:12-13. When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (Solomon built a temple, but his kingdom fell).

2. In v.23 God told Zerubbabel, “I will make you like my signet ring, I will make you like a signet ring on my finger, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (Solomon built a temple, but his kingdom fell).

CONCLUSION:
–This end note of Haggai’s prophecy is the beginning note for us, for it announces the Messiah. But the song isn’t finished. It points to a future destiny, when David’s Son, the Messiah, will return with power as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Nothing we do can bring it about: that day—like all of God’s blessings—will come entirely by God’s grace.

–Meanwhile, we have before us the work of Kingdom-building, as we avoid the attitudes of disinterest, discouragement and dissatisfaction that impede it. These problems are overcome when we put our hearts completely into the work of building His House, remembering that our obedience to Him is obligated, but His blessing upon us comes entirely by His grace.