

The Church as the Signet Ring of God (Haggai 2:20-23) by Rev. Tom Aicken

On the same day that Haggai uttered his third prophecy he uttered his fourth, which would also be his final prophecy. He had told them earlier about the shaking of the nations. Anything and everything that is not built on the Rock, on Christ Jesus, will be overturned, pulled to pieces and swept away. The Jews of the Restoration, just having experienced the Babylonian Captivity, were frightened by this. They thought that they would never be able to survive another shaking like that.

Because the Lord is compassionate to His people, He sends Haggai to explain again what this shaking of the nations will be about. This time, He tells them that He will shake and destroy the nations, but that, in doing so, He will protect and preserve His Church. Please note: Israel has no ongoing significance as a nation in all this; that Israel was destroyed in 70 A.D., and the present Israel was created in the aftermath of World War II. Israel as the Church, on the other hand, the Israel of God (see Rom. 11 and Gal. 6), does have eternal significance.

There are 4 lessons which may be drawn from this prophecy of Haggai:

1. Just as Jews will be reached, in part, through a ministry of provocation (see Rom. 11), so Gentiles will be reached, in part, through political turmoil, bloodshed and economic uncertainty; that is what we learn here in Haggai 2.
2. Wars and revolutions are ugly, but these are intended to work out God's designs of His sovereign grace and mercy to a lost and perishing world. It is so often when their world comes crashing down around them that unbelievers see Christians to have a hope which they want and are now prepared to ask about.
3. Unbelievers, beware! Sinners need to flee to Christ for refuge. John 3:36, "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
4. "I will overthrow," says the Lord, "every one by the sword of his brother." Notice, God uses evil to destroy evil, and has made even the wicked for the day of evil (Prov. 16:4).

V.23 is clearly the gem of this final prophecy. The Lord reassures the individual believer, "I will make you a signet ring." Believer, you are guarded with very special care, and the Lord will not let you fall into the wrong hands! But let's look beyond the individual, and consider the Church. The best protection for Canada, even more than a strong military arm, is to have a faithful Church which cries out to the Lord. Beloved, let's be the kind of church that our country needs so desperately! Let's be the pillar and ground of the truth to all the communities around us!