



After many of the Jews had returned to Judah from exile in Babylonia, they built themselves expensive houses but had to struggle to make a living. Haggai told the people that if they put God first and rebuilt the temple, God would richly bless them.

Rebuild the Temple

1 On the first day of the sixth month of the second year that Darius was king of Persia, the LORD told Haggai the prophet to speak his message to the governor of Judah and to the high priest.

So Haggai told Governor Zerubbabel and High Priest Joshua[>] 2-5 that the LORD All-Powerful had said to them and to the people:

You say this isn't the right time to build a temple for me. But is it right for you to live in expensive houses, while my temple is a pile of ruins? Just look at what's happening. ⁶You harvest less than you plant, you never have enough to eat or drink, your clothes don't keep you warm, and your wages are stored in bags full of holes.

⁷Think about what I have said! ⁸But first, go to the hills and get wood for my temple, so I can take pride in it and be worshiped there. ⁹You expected much, but received only a little. And when you brought it home, I made that little disappear. Why have I done this? It's because you hurry off to build your own houses, while my temple is still in ruins. ¹⁰That's also why the dew doesn't fall and your harvest fails.

¹¹And so, at my command everything will become barren—your farmland and pastures, your vineyards and olive trees, your animals

and you yourselves. All your hard work will be for nothing.

¹²Zerubbabel and Joshua, together with the others who had returned from exile in Babylonia, obeyed the LORD's message spoken by his prophet Haggai, and they started showing proper respect for the LORD. ¹³Haggai then told them that the LORD had promised to be with them. ¹⁴So the LORD God All-Powerful made everyone eager to work on his temple, especially Zerubbabel and Joshua. ¹⁵And the work began on the twenty-fourth day of that same month.

The Glorious New Temple

2 ¹⁻²On the twenty-first day of the next month, the LORD told Haggai the prophet to speak this message to Governor Zerubbabel, High Priest Joshua, and everyone else:

³Does anyone remember how glorious this temple used to be? Now it looks like nothing.

⁴But cheer up! Because I, the LORD All-Powerful, will be here to help you with the work, ⁵just as I promised your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt. Don't worry. My Spirit is[>] right here with you.

⁶Soon I will again shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. ⁷I will shake the nations, and their treasures[>] will be brought here. Then the brightness of my glory

will fill this temple. ⁸All silver and gold belong to me, ⁹and I promise that this new temple will be more glorious than the first one. I will also bless this city[>] with peace.

The Past and the Future

¹⁰On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, the LORD God All-Powerful told the prophet Haggai ¹¹to ask the priests for their opinion on the following matter:

¹²Suppose meat ready to be sacrificed to God is being carried in the folds of someone's clothing, and the clothing rubs against some bread or stew or wine or olive oil or any other food. Would those foods that were touched then become acceptable for sacrifice?

"Of course not," the priests answered.

¹³Then Haggai said, "Suppose someone has touched a dead body and is considered unacceptable to worship God. If that person touches these foods, would they become unclean?"

"Of course they would," the priests answered.

¹⁴So the LORD told Haggai to say:

That's how it is with this entire nation. Everything you do and every sacrifice you offer is unacceptable to me. ¹⁵But from now on, things

will get better. Before you started laying the foundation for the temple, ¹⁶'you recalled what life was like in the past.' When you wanted 200 kilograms of wheat, there were only 100, and when you wanted 50 jars of wine, there were only 20. ¹⁷I made all of your hard work useless by sending mildew, mold, and hail—but you still did not return to me, your LORD.

¹⁸Today you have completed the foundation for my temple, so listen to what your future will be like. ¹⁹Although you have not yet harvested any grain, grapes, figs, pomegranates, or olives, I will richly bless you in the days ahead.

God's Promise to Zerubbabel

²⁰That same day the LORD spoke to Haggai again and said:

²¹Tell Governor Zerubbabel of Judah that I am going to shake the heavens and the earth ²²and wipe out kings and their kingdoms. I will overturn war chariots, and then cavalry troops will start slaughtering each other. ²³But tell my servant Zerubbabel that I, the LORD All-Powerful, have chosen him, and he will rule in my name.>

Notes

Phrases enclosed in half square superscript brackets (‘[’]) are those that are difficult to translate from the original Hebrew with great certainty. Consequently, the English rendering given should be understood as only one possible way of translating such texts.

▷ **1.1** *Governor ... Joshua*: Hebrew "Governor Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and High Priest Joshua son of Jehozadak."

▷ **2.5** *My Spirit is*: Or "I am."

▷ **2.7** *their treasures*: Hebrew "what they most desire."

▷ **2.9** *city*: Or "temple."

▷ **2.23** *rule in my name*: The Hebrew text has "be my signet ring."