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World Bible Translation Center
P.O. Box 820648
Fort Worth, Texas 76182, USA
Telephone: 1-817-595-1664
Toll-Free in US: 1-888-54-BIBLE
E-Mail: info@wbtc.com
World Bible Translation Center's Web site: <http://www.wbtc.com>

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Haggai

It Is Time to Build the Temple!

1 On the first day of the sixth month of Darius' second year as king [of Persia], Haggai received a message from the Lord. This message was for Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jehozadak. Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah and Joshua was the high priest. This is the message: ²The Lord All-Powerful says this: "The people say it is not the right time yet to build the Lord's temple.*"

³Again Haggai received a message from the Lord. Haggai spoke this message: ⁴"You people think the right time has come for you to live in nice houses. You live in houses with beautiful wooden panelling on the walls. But the Lord's house is still in ruins! ⁵Now, the Lord All-Powerful says, 'Think about what is happening! ⁶You have planted many seeds, but you have gathered only a few crops. You have food to eat, but not enough to get full. You have something to drink, but not enough to get drunk. You have some clothes to wear, but not enough to keep warm. You earn a little money, but you don't know where it all goes. It's like there is a hole in your pocket!'"

⁷The Lord All-Powerful says, "Think about what you are doing! ⁸Go up to the mountains to get the wood. And build the temple.* Then I will be pleased with the temple, and I will be honored." The Lord said these things.

⁹The Lord All-Powerful says, "You people look for a big harvest. But when you go to gather the crop, there is only a little grain. So

you bring that grain home. And then I [send a wind that] blows it all away! Why are these things happening? Why? Because my house is still in ruins while each of you runs home to take care of his own house. ¹⁰That is why the sky holds back its dew. And that is why the earth holds back its crops."

¹¹The Lord says, "I gave the command for the land and the mountains to be dry. The grain, the new wine, the olive oil, and everything the earth produces will all be ruined!* All the people and all the animals will become weak."

Work Begins on the New Temple

¹²The Lord God had sent Haggai to speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and to the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak. So these men and all the people listened to the voice of the Lord their God and to the words of Haggai the prophet. And the people showed their fear and respect for the Lord their God.

¹³Haggai was a messenger that the Lord God had sent to deliver this message to the people: The Lord says, "I am with you!"

¹⁴Then the Lord God made the people excited about building the temple. Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel was the governor of Judah. The Lord made him excited! Joshua son of Jehozadak was the high priest. The Lord made him excited! And the Lord made all the people excited [about building the temple]. So they began working on the temple* of their God, the Lord All-Powerful. ¹⁵They began this

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

You ... pocket Or, "The person who saves money is putting it into a purse full of holes."

dry ... ruined The Hebrew word "dry" is like the Hebrew word "ruined".

work on the 24th day of the sixth month of Darius' second year as the king [of Persia].

The Lord Encourages the People

2 On the 21st day of the seventh month, this message from the Lord came to Haggai: ²Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the people. Say these things: ³"How many of you people look at this temple* and try to compare it to the beautiful temple that was destroyed? What do you think? Does this temple seem like nothing when you compare it with the first temple? ⁴But now, Zerubbabel, the Lord says, 'Don't be discouraged!' High Priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, 'Don't be discouraged!' All you people of this country, the Lord says, 'Don't be discouraged! Continue this work, because I am with you!' The Lord All-Powerful said these things!"

⁵[The Lord says,] "I made an agreement with you when you left Egypt. [And I have kept my promise!] My Spirit is among you. So don't be afraid!! ⁶Why? Because the Lord All-Powerful is saying these things! In just a little while, I will once again shake things up! I will shake heaven and earth. And I will shake the sea and the dry land! ⁷I will shake up the nations, and they will come to you with wealth from every nation. And then I will fill this temple* with glory. The Lord All-Powerful is saying these things! ⁸All of their silver really belongs to me! And all of the gold is mine! The Lord All-Powerful is saying these things. ⁹And the Lord All-Powerful says that this last temple will be more beautiful than the first temple! And I will bring peace to this place! Remember, the Lord All-Powerful is saying these things!"

The Work Has Begun— The Blessings Will Come

¹⁰On the 24th day of the ninth month of Darius' second year as king [of Persia], this message from the Lord came to Haggai the

prophet: ¹¹The Lord All-Powerful commands you to ask the priests what the law says about these things: ¹²"Suppose a man carries some meat in the fold of his clothes. This meat [is part of a sacrifice, so it] is holy. What if those clothes touch some bread, or cooked food, wine, oil or some other food. Will the thing the clothes touch become holy?"

The priests answered, "No."

¹³Then Haggai said, "If a person touches a dead body, then he will become unclean.* Now, if he touches anything else, will that thing also become unclean?"

The priests answered, "Yes, that thing will become unclean."

¹⁴Then Haggai said, "The Lord God says these things, 'That is also true about the people of this nation! They were not pure and holy before me. So anything they touched with their hands and anything they brought [to the altar] became unclean!'"

¹⁵Think about the things that happened before today. Think about the time before you began working on the Lord's temple.*

¹⁶People wanted 20 measures of grain, but there were only 10 measures of grain in the pile. People wanted to get 50 jars of wine from the wine vat, but there were only 20!

¹⁷Why? Because I punished you. I sent the diseases that killed your plants. I sent the hail that destroyed the things you made with your hands. I did these things, but still you did not come to me.' The Lord said these things."

¹⁸[The Lord said,] "Today is the 24th day of the ninth month. You have finished laying the foundation of the Lord's temple. So notice what happens from this day forward! ¹⁹Is there any grain still in the barn? [No!] Look at the vines, the fig trees, the pomegranates,* and the olive trees. Are they producing fruit? [No!] But, starting today, I will bless you!"

²⁰Another message from the Lord came to Haggai on the 24th day of the month. This is the message: ²¹"Go to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah. Tell him that I will shake heaven and earth. ²²And I will overthrow many

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

pomegranates A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

kings and kingdoms. I will destroy the power of the kingdoms of those other people. I will destroy their chariots* and their riders. I will defeat their war horses and riders. Those armies are friends now, but they will turn against each other and kill each other with swords. ²³The

Lord All-Powerful is saying these things. Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, you are my servant. I have chosen you. And at that time, I will make you like a signet ring.* [You will be the proof that I have done these things!]

The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

signet ring This ring had the owner's name or design on it. The ring was pressed on clay or wax, and this proved that it belonged to the person with the ring.