

Introduction To The Literal And Free Translations Of Obadiah, Nahum, And Haggai¹

By Theodore F. Stern

There are many literal translations of the Bible, so many in fact that it would seem both unnecessary and without benefit to make another. A literal translation, however, does not always satisfy the one who is searching for the Truth. For although literal translations put the original foreign words into their proper English equivalents, they do not in many instances convey the original thought with its original force and color. To do this it becomes necessary to exert a certain amount of freedom in translating. In so doing one is not forced to give up the belief that the original words are God's inspired words. Rather this conviction is the very motive for seeking to express in the English language the identical thoughts that the original words conveyed. The idiom peculiar to each language makes it necessary to translate freely when thought and content are one's chief concern. Anyone who has done translating knows this is not an easy task. It requires special God-given gifts. Not everyone possesses these gifts. Among this group your essayist finds himself. Yet an effort has been made and it is hoped that it may prove of some benefit, perhaps in encouraging the more gifted to apply their ability to the work of rendering the original Biblical language into an English form which is correct in content even though not literal in word.

The fifth verse of Luther's stirring Easter hymn and its translation is a good illustration of what has been said in the foregoing.

*Hier ist das rechte Oster-lamm,
Davon Gott hat geboten;
Das ist hoch an des Kreuzes Stamm,
In heisser Lieb' gebraten;
Das Blur zeichnet unser Tür.
Das hält der Glaub' dem Tode für;
Der Würger kann uns nicht mehr schaden.
Hallelujah.*

Richard Massie has masterfully rendered this into English verse thus:

Here the true Paschal lamb we see,
Whom God so freely gave us;
He died on the accursed tree—
So strong His love—to save us.
See, His blood doth mark our door;
Faith points to it, Death passes o'er,
And Satan cannot harm us. Hallelujah.

¹ These translations of three Minor Prophets were originally presented to the Fox River Valley Conference by the Rev. Theo. F. Stern. The essayist informs us that in his literal translations he "sought only to set down the Hebrew equivalents without much concern for English," a method which undoubtedly can be followed with good results when supplemented with the explanatory remarks of the essayist, but which does not make for good reading. In order, therefore, to present our readers with a translation that would make for somewhat better reading, the undersigned undertook a literal translation that does not always follow the Hebrew word order and imitate the Hebrew idiom. The free translations, which represent the main part of this article, appear here as presented by the author to his conference. The few instances where we cannot fully agree with the author's interpretation are referred to in footnotes. —Ed.

As beautiful as this English translation is, one would still never dare to say that it comes up to the original. For in the German verse lies captured thought and emotion that can't be rendered into English, not English prose nor English poetry. Least of all will any of this latent treasure of the original be released by a literal translation. How utterly foolish does not a literal translation sound:

Here is the right Easter lamb,
 About which God has bidden;
 That has been high on the cross' stem
 In hot love fried;
 That blood marks our door.
 That faith holds in front of death;
 That strangler can't hurt us any more. Hallelujah.

It seems to me that it would be far better to try to convey the original heart-warming thoughts to the English mind in a prose translation something like this, where phrases such as "fried in hot love," "the cross' stem" and other quaint expressions are made more intelligible to the English or American mind:

Jesus is the true Passover lamb. It is of Him that God speaks in the ceremony of the Old Testament Passover. This lamb, Jesus, was roasted, so to speak, in the burning suffering on the cross where God's wrath was spent against sin and His infinite love for us was made known. It is the blood of this lamb which is now sprinkled on the door posts of our hearts. That is, faith holds His blood before the angel of death, which forces death to give up its strangle hold on us. Praise ye the Lord.

Here, too, we have lost something of the original, viz., the beautiful form. But it is better to lose the form and retain the precious content, than to keep the form in a poor imitation that does not convey the original writer's thoughts.

This by way of introduction to my translations of the prophets Obadiah, Nahum, Haggai to explain my freedom from the text. The prophets, including Haggai, were poets. They wrote in Hebrew. They wrote beautifully. The people for whom they wrote originally understood their fine poetic thoughts and words. But the form and content both cannot be retained in translation. Here I would try to give you the content of their words, which are as timely now as when they were first spoken.

The Prophet Obadiah

Verses 1-10

Literal Translation

1. The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom; a report we have heard from the Lord and a messenger among the nations is sent: "Rise and let us rise against her in battle."
2. Behold, small have I made you among nations; despised you are greatly.
3. The pride of your heart has deceived you, O dweller in the refuges of Sela. A high place is his habitation. He is saying in his heart: Who shall bring me down to earth?
4. Though you build high as the eagle, and though between stars your nest is set! From there I will make you come down, is the oracle of the Lord.
5. If thieves came to you or night-robbers—how you are ruined! —would they not steal what they want? If grape-gatherers came to you, would they not leave gleanings?
6. How has Esau been searched out; his hidden things sought out!
7. Unto the border have all the men of your covenant sent you. The men with whom you were at peace have deceived you, prevailed against you. Your bread they have made a trap under you. There is no understanding in him.

8. Shall it not be in that day, is the oracle of the Lord, that I shall take away wise men from Edom and understanding from Mt. Esau?
9. Your valiant men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, so that cut off shall be every man from Mt. Esau by slaughter.
10. Because of your brother Jacob's oppression shame shall cover you and you shall be cut off eternally.

Free Translation

1. THE WORD OF GOD WHICH CAME TO OBADIAH CONCERNING THE DESCENDANTS OF ESAU. The Lord has revealed to us His intention to destroy Edom. The execution of this intention is already begun, for the whisper is growing to a shout among the heathen: "Arise! Arise! ! and make our war against Edom."
2. Behold, I shall make you small in the eyes of the heathen, and they will trample you to pieces under their feet.
3. The pride of your heart will be your downfall. Because your main city, Sela, is fortified with natural rock formations in a very high place, you say to yourself: "Who can attack me with success?"
4. But go on, build your city as high as the eagle builds his nest, or for that matter, even among the stars. For no matter how well protected you are I shall attack you with success, says the Lord.
5. How would you fare were thieves and robbers to come to you? Would they not steal only until they had enough? Or if an enemy should come into your land and be filled, would he not leave a remnant?
6. But when I come the descendants of Esau will be thoroughly uprooted and even that which is hidden will be destroyed.
7. Your own allies will drive you out of your borders. Your own friends will seduce you and cause you to fall. They will betray you for food and you will get no help from them.
8. And in that day, says the Lord, I shall also take away all wisdom and counsel from the descendants of Esau themselves.
9. Their warriors will all lose their courage and every man of that proud nation will fall in the slaughter.
10. Because you have oppressed your brother Jacob and his people, you will be put to shame and utterly destroyed.

Verses 11-18 Literal Translation

11. In a day that you stood in opposition, in a day when strangers took captive his power and foreigners entered his gates and on Jerusalem cast lots, verily you were as one of them.
12. Do not gloat over the day of your brother in the day of his disaster, and do not rejoice over the sons of Judah in the day of their destruction, and do not open your mouth wide in the day of affliction.
13. Do not enter the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; do not you gloat either over his trouble in the day of his calamity and do not lay your hands upon his property in the day of his calamity.
14. Do not stand at the cross road to cut off his fugitives, and do not cause his survivors to be shut up in the day of affliction.
15. For near is the day of the Lord upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you. That which you have done shall return upon your head.
16. For even as you drank on the mountain of my holiness, so shall all nations drink continually. They shall drink and swallow greedily, and shall be as though they had not been.
17. And in Mr. Zion there shall be deliverance, and it shall be holy. And the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

18. The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall burn and devour them; and there shall not be a survivor to the house of Esau, for the Lord has spoken.

Free Translation

11. When foreigners led Israel captive, plundering and spoiling Jerusalem, you were right with them even though you too were in danger.
12. Now don't look at your brother's plight with joy, and do not feel so tickled about the wretchedness of the sons of Judah, and do not talk so glibly about their affliction.
13. Just because calamity has come upon Israel don't think for a moment that you will benefit from his spoils.
14. You will not have a chance to cut down those whom I deliver, nor will you recapture those who escape this present affliction.
15. For the judgment of the Lord upon every nation is at hand when each shall receive a just recompense and reward for his evil deeds against Israel.
16. For as you heard my saving Word from Israel so shall all nations hear the same continually, but when they hear they will believe and be changed.²
17. And they will find Salvation in Mt. Zion and will possess the possessions of the house of Jacob.³
18. The house of Jacob and the house of Joseph will consume the house of Esau as fire consumes straw, so that not one survivor is left, because the Lord has spoken it.

Verses 19-21 Literal Translation

19. And the South shall seize the mountain of Esau, and the inhabitants of Shephelah shall occupy Philistia, and they shall possess the field of Ephraim and the field of Samaria, and Benjamin shall have Gilead.
20. And the exiles of this army of the children of Israel, who are among the Canaanites up to Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem, who are in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south.
21. And saviors shall arise in Mt. Zion to judge the mountain of Esau, and to the Lord shall be the kingdom.

Free Translation

19. The inhabitants of the Southland and their kin in Shephela will seize the strongholds of the Edomites and Philistines, and will possess the country of Ephraim and Samaria, while Benjamin will occupy Gilead.
20. And the exiles of Israel's army who are dwelling in Canaan as far north as Zarephath, together with the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad, will occupy the cities of the Southland.
21. But out of Mt. Zion will arise valiant men who will execute this prophecy of the Lord upon Edom, for our Lord is King over all.

The Prophet Nahum

Chapter 1

Verses 1-5

Literal Translation

² Here Obadiah undoubtedly speaks, as does Jeremiah 25:15, of the drinking of the cup of wrath on the part of the nations, and therefore his words spell destruction and not salvation for Edom and for the nations which had made themselves guilty of Edom's sin. —Ed.

³ The nations are not the ones who shall possess the house of Jacob, but the house of Jacob shall possess the possessions of the enemy nations. Cf. Keil in his Commentary on Obadiah. —Ed.

1. The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.
2. A God jealous and avenging is the Lord. An avenger the Lord and a possessor of fury. An avenger is the Lord toward His enemies and He is one who retains His anger toward His foes.
3. The Lord is slow to anger, yet great in power. Therefore He will certainly not clear the guilty. The Lord in a hurricane and in a tempest has His path, and a cloud is the dust of His feet.
4. He it is who rebukes the sea and He dries it up. Even all the rivers He causes to dry up. Withered are Bashan and Carmel, and the garden fruit of Lebanon is withered.
5. Mountains have shaken because of Him and the hills have melted with fear. The earth has lifted itself up at His presence, both the world and all dwelling in it.

Free Translation

1. The Doom of Nineveh. The Prophetic Work of Nahum the Elkoshite.
2. The Lord is an exact and righteous God, wreaking vengeance on His enemies and destroying all His foes.
3. The Lord is surely patient, but He is also sure to act. He will not refrain from punishing forever. Storms and tempests come at His command, and threatening clouds arise when He's enraged.
4. When He rebukes the sea its waters vanish, and He makes the rivers dry. Just look at Bashan, Carmel, Lebanon! How parched and withered are their fields!
5. He shakes the mountains. He levels the hills. And still the people of this world ignore Him.

Verses 6-14 **Literal Translation**

6. Before His anger who can stand? And who can stand in the burning of His rage? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken before Him.
7. Good is the Lord, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He is one who knows those who trust in Him.
8. But with an overwhelming flood He will make an end of her place and darkness shall pursue His enemies.
9. What do you devise against the Lord? He is one who makes a full end. Affliction shall not arise twice.
10. For though they are as briars intertwined and drunken as by their wine, they shall be devoured as chaff fully dried.
11. From you one has gone out that devises evil against the Lord, that counsels worthlessness.
12. Thus says the Lord: Though secure and likewise numerous, likewise they shall be shorn and shall pass away. And I have humbled you, not shall I humble you again.
13. And now I will break his yoke from on you and your bands I will tear off.
14. And the Lord has given commandment concerning you, not shall be sown of your name anymore; from the house of your gods I will cause to be cut off a carved image and a molten image; I will appoint your grave, for you are vile.

- Ch. 2 1. Behold, on the mountains the feet of one bringing good news, declaring peace. Dance, Judah, your dance. Render your free will offerings, for not will the wicked one pass through you anymore. All of him has been cut off.
2. Gone up is the destroyer against your face. Keep the fortress! Watch the way! Gird your loins! Muster strength exceedingly!

Free Translation

6. But who will stand His burning rage when He consumes the kingdoms and demolishes their forts?

7. Oh, the Lord is wonderful. In trouble He is near. He cares for those who trust in Him.
8. But destruction is in store for people who ignore Him. Their mighty deeds will be forgotten.
9. O Nineveh, how can you be so unconcerned about the Lord, when He's determined to destroy you? Do you expect a warning before destruction comes?
10. You're but a briar lush with sap. You'll burn like chaff.
11. God has forsaken you. The Lord most high has sealed your doom. He has determined to destroy you.
12. Thus says the Lord: O Nineveh, you're big and strong and proud. Once did I warn you to repent. I shall not warn you any more.
13. Now I shall carry out my threat against you
14. so that no one speaks about your greatness any more, and so that your religions are recognized as false. Your grave, O Nineveh, is dug. You are vile in my sight.

Ch. 2 1. Note this message well, O Judah, and rejoice. Bring your thank offerings now, because the Lord will surely destroy Nineveh. Her people will molest you no more.

2. Now has begun her doom. You see her build defenses, raise her guard and muster many men.

Chapter 2 Verses 3-13 Literal Translation

3. For the Lord will restore the excellence of Jacob as the excellence of Israel, because the pillagers pillaged them and perverted their branches.
4. The shield of his men is dyed red, men of strength are clothed in crimson. The chariots are fire of steel in the day of his preparation, and the pikes are made to quiver.
5. In the open places the chariots drive furiously, they run to and fro in the streets. Their appearances are like the torches, like the lightnings they shall run.
6. He will remember his nobles. They stumble in their ways. They hasten to the wall thereof, and the mantelet is prepared.
7. The gates of the rivers are opened and the palace is dissolved.
8. And Huzzab is uncovered; she is led away; and her maidservants are moaning as with the voice of doves, smiting upon their breasts.
9. For Nineveh is like a pool of water from the days that she came into existence. Yet they are fleeing. Stop! Stop!! But there is no one who turns back.
10. Plunder silver! Plunder gold! For there is no end to the stores, rich with all precious vessels.
11. She is empty, yes, emptiness and waste, and the heart has melted, and wavering of the knees, and anguish in all loins, and the faces of them all have gathered ruddiness.
12. Where is the lair of the lions and that feeding-place of the young lions, where the lion walked, the lioness, the whelp Of the lion, and no one caused fear?
13. The lion ravaging enough for his whelps and strangling for his lionesses, and he filled his dens with prey and his lairs with loot.

Free Translation

3. This will not help her. Because of His promise the Lord is on Israel's side. Those who rob or corrupt Israel will be destroyed.
4. O yes, the Lord knows all about her mighty deeds and strong defenses. Her polished armor and her waving spears do not impress Him.)
5. Just let her drive those chariots that shine and sparkle when speeding through the streets.

6. The mighty men on whom she counts will fall. To the palace they will flee for safety.
7. But the palace will be washed away in a flood.
8. For it is determined. Nineveh is doomed. She will be stripped of all her glory and her wealth. Her inhabitants will be made miserable.
9. She herself will flow away like water that cannot stop.
10. All her silver, all her gold, and all her splendid glory will depart.
11. Then when she is poor her people will not be so brave. Their knees will shake, their bowels will growl, and fear will fill their faces.
12. How different it will be from now when Nineveh is like a lion's den, where brave men are produced; where everyone has everything and no one fears a thing.
13. Now everyone dwells in his house securely and is storing up fine riches without end.

Chapter 3
Verses 1-9
Literal Translation

Ch. 2 14. Behold, I am against you, is the oracle of the Lord Sabaoth, and I will burn up in smoke her wagons; and your lions the sword shall devour; and I will destroy from the earth your prey; and not shall be heard any more the voice of your messengers.

1. Woe to the city of bloodshed all full of deceit and prey; the prey departs not.
2. The sound of the whip, and the sound of the rumbling of wheels, and the horses running, and the chariots bounding.
3. The horsemen charging, and the sheen of the sword, and the sparkle of the lance, the multitude of slain, and the great number of corpses, and no end is there to dead bodies. They stumble over the bodies.
4. Because of the abundance of the harlotries of the harlot, the graceful one, the mistress of witchcrafts, who sells nations with her harlotries and families with her witchcrafts.
5. Behold, I am against you, is the oracle of the Lord Sabaoth, and I will uncover your skirts upon your face and cause nations to see your nakedness and kingdoms your shame.
6. And I will throw on you filthy garments and disgrace you and set you as a gazingstock.
7. And it shall come to pass that all your beholders will run away from you and will say: "Spoiled is Nineveh; who will pity her?" Whence shall I seek comforters for you?
8. Are you better than Thebes which was situated on the canals of the Nile? Waters are all around her, whose protection was the sea, water her wall.
9. Cush was strength, and Egypt unceasingly, Put and the Libyans have been your helpers.

Free Translation

Ch. 2 14. But lo! "I am against you," says the Lord your God. "I shall burn your defences. The sword will kill your nobles, and I shall remove from the earth the finery and luxury that you love so much. No one will ever boast about you any more."

1. O bloody city, packed with lies, deceit and ill-gotten gain.
2. The crack of the whip and the rush of a wheel, a speedy horse and a chariot ride are your delight.
3. Impressive are your horses on parade, your shining swords and sparkling spears. You kill and capture, and increase in numbers mightily. But your people lack both strength and vigor
4. because of your loose morals, luxury, and false religion which is spread to all the nations with whom you come in contact,

5. “Behold, I am opposed to you,” says the Lord your God. “Therefore I shall remove your pretty garments and reveal to people everywhere your secrets and your shame.
6. I shall clothe you in rags and disgrace you so that all who see you will abhor you
7. and avoid you. They will say: ‘Nineveh is ruined, and who cares!’ There will be no one to help you.”
8. You are no better than the mighty city Thebes so firmly built upon the Nile’s canals. The sea was her protection. Her water-ways her guarantee of safety.
9. Big Egypt and its neighbors were her allies.

Verses 10-19
Literal Translation

10. Even she was for exile, she has gone into captivity. Even her children were dashed in pieces at the head of all streets, and upon her nobles they cast lots and all her great ones have been bound in chains.
11. Even you shall drink deeply and you shall be hidden, even you shall seek refuge from the enemy.
12. All your fortifications—fig trees with ripe fruit. If they are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the devourer.
13. Behold your people—women are in your midst. Wide open are the gates of your land to your enemies, fire has devoured your draw bolts.
14. Water for the siege draw for yourselves! Make strong your fortresses! Go into the clay and trample in the mortar! Make strong the brick kiln!
15. There the fire shall consume you, the sword shall cut you to pieces, it shall devour you like the grasshopper; multiply yourselves like grasshoppers, multiply yourselves like locusts.
16. You cause your merchants to increase more than the stars of heaven. The grasshopper has spread itself and flown away.
17. Your princes are like the locusts and your war chiefs like an army of locusts sitting on the walls in a cold day. The sun has risen and they have flown away, and not is known their place where they are.
18. Fallen asleep are your caretakers, O King of Assyria, your nobles are lying quiet, scattered are your people on the mountains and are not gathered.
19. No alleviation is there for your ruin, incurable is your wound. All who hear your story clap hands over you; for over whom did not your wickedness pass continually?

Free Translation

10. But she was labeled for destruction and carried into exile. Slaughtered were her children in the streets, and her nobles bound in chains as slaves.
11. In like manner you will meet destruction. You will fade into obscurity. No fort of yours will hold against the foe.
12. Your strength will be like ripe fruit on a tree. When the tree is shaken, the fruit will fall and be consumed.
13. Behold, your people will be like women when the foe arrives. Your gates will be wide open. Fire will consume the barricades.
14. Fill up your motes with water and build your towers strong! Get busy in your brick kilns and make all the bricks and mortar that you can!
15. Fire and the sword will devour you. Increase your numbers! Fill up your fields! Abound like grasshoppers!
16. Add watchmen more than the stars! You will still be attacked and defeated.
17. Your leaders and your captains will be like locusts clustered on a wall when it is cold. The sun will rise and warm them, so they fly away to who knows where.
18. our complacent officials are luxuriantly at ease, O Nineveh, but your inhabitants will be scattered beyond gathering.

19. The die is cast. Your ruin is sure. And all who hear about it will rejoice because you have oppressed all people.

The Prophet Haggai
Chapter 1
Verses 1-10
Literal Translation

1. In the second year of Darius the King, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord through Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest, saying:
2. Thus speaks the Lord Sabaoth, saying: This people, they have said, The time is not come, the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt.
3. Then came the word of the Lord by the hand of Haggai the prophet, saying:
4. Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your houses that are covered, and this house is desolate?
5. But now thus says the Lord Sabaoth: Set your heart upon your ways.
6. You have sown much and brought in little, you ate, but there is nothing for satiety; you drank, but there is nothing for quenching; you dressed, but there is nothing for heat to him, and he who labors for hire earns money into a bag full of holes.
7. Thus says the Lord Sabaoth: Set your heart upon your ways.
8. Ascend the mountain, and bring wood, and rebuild the house, and I will delight in it and be honored, says the Lord.
9. You look for much, and behold it was for little. And you brought it home and I blew it away. On account of what? is the oracle of the Lord Sabaoth. On account of my house which is in ruins, and you run, every man to his house.
10. Therefore over you have been shut up the heavens from dew and the earth has kept back her increase.

Free Translation

1. This is the Word of the Lord God which He Spoke on the 1st day of the 6th month (about Aug. 13) in the second year of King Darius through the mouth of the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua the high priest:
2. These people claim the times are too hard to build the house of the Lord.
3. But God says through the mouth of the prophet Haggai: Is it right for you to live in solid houses while the house of God lies in ruins?
5. Right now, is the time to build My house, says the Lord your God. Just pause and consider some recent events.
6. You sowed your fields to get a crop. It failed. You have not food enough to eat nor wine enough to drink. Your clothing is all threadbare and jobs are hard to find.
7. Give some thought to these conditions, says the Lord your God.
8. Get up into the hills and cut wood to build My house. I will take pleasure in it and be honored by it, says the Lord.
9. You want much but you have little. What you had is dwindling. Why? The Lord your God answers: Because My house is neglected and you all are concerned only about yourselves.
10. That's why it doesn't rain. And that's why your crops have failed.

Verses 11-15
Literal Translation

11. And I have called a drought upon the land and upon the mountains and upon the grain and upon this year's wine and upon the oil and upon that which the earth brings forth, and upon man and upon cattle and upon all the earnings of the hands.
12. And Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and all the rest of the people hearkened unto the voice of the Lord their God and unto the words of Haggai the prophet, even as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people feared before the Lord.
13. Then spoke Haggai the messenger of the Lord by the Lord's messengership to the people, saying: I am with you, says the Lord.
14. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the rest of the people; and they came and did the work on the house of the Lord Sabaoth, their God,
15. on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the King.

Ch. 2 1. In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, there came the word of the Lord through Haggai the prophet, saying:

2. Say now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the rest of the people, saying:
3. Who among you remains who saw this house in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not, compared with it, as nothing in your eyes?

Free Translation

11. I—I brought the drought upon your fields and hills so that your grain and wine and oil all failed this year. The produce of the ground, your men, your cattle, and your wages are being spoiled by Me.
12. Then Zerubbabel and Joshua and the people obeyed the word of the Lord which was brought to them by the prophet Haggai, for they feared the Lord.
13. And Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, encouraged the people with the Word of God saying: I am with you, says the Lord.
14. Thereupon the Lord imbued Zerubbabel and Joshua and the people with zeal to look after the work at the temple,
15. which they began on the 24th day of the 6th month (about Sept. 5) in the second year of King Darius.

Ch. 2 1. This is the word of the Lord spoken by Haggai on the 21st day of the 7th month (about Oct. 1):

2. Speak now to Zerubbabel, to Joshua, and to the people, saying:
3. Do you remember the extraordinary beauty of Solomon's temple? How does this building on which you are now working compare with that? Is not this one far, far inferior and less beautiful?

Chapter 2 Verses 4-13 Literal Translation

4. But now take courage, Zerubbabel, is the oracle of the Lord, and take courage, Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest, and take courage, all people of the earth, is the oracle of the Lord, and get to work, for I am with you, is the oracle of the Lord Sabaoth.
5. The word which I have covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, and my spirit is standing in your midst. Fear not.
6. For thus says the Lord Sabaoth: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will cause to shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the desert.

7. And I will cause to shake all the nations and the chosen of all the nations will come. And I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord Sabaoth.
8. To me is the silver and to me is the gold, is the oracle of the Lord Sabaoth.
9. Greater shall be the glory of this latter house than of the former, says the Lord Sabaoth. And in this place will I give salvation, is the oracle of the Lord Sabaoth.
10. On the twenty-fourth of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by the hand of Haggai the prophet, saying:
11. Thus says the Lord Sabaoth: Ask now the priests for instruction, saying:
12. If a man bears holy flesh in the corner of his robe and touches with its corner food or porridge or wine or oil or any food, will it be holy? And the priests answered and said: No!
13. And Haggai answered: If one that is unclean by a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean? And the priests answered and said: It will be unclean.

Free Translation

4. But do not be disheartened because of this. Rather take courage and work diligently all of you, for I am with you, says the Lord your God.
5. My promise to send the Savior to you is still good and My Spirit is still in your midst. Be strong and of good courage.
6. I, the Lord your God, declare that it will only be a very short time yet before great things will take place in the heavens and in the earth, in the seas and in the deserts, and among all nations.
7. Then also will the gentiles rejoice, for they too will be received by the Savior who is coming. And when He comes this inferior temple you are building will be filled with a glory yet unseen by man.
8. I will decorate it with My own silver and gold,
9. so that the beauty of this temple which you are now building will be greater than the beauty of the former temple which was destroyed. For in this temple peace and salvation shall reign, says the Lord who is gracious to us.
10. This is the word of the Lord which He spoke on the 24th day of the 9th month (about Dec. 2) in the second year of King Darius through the mouth of the prophet Haggai:
11. Thus says the Lord your God: Ask the priests this legal question.
12. If a man who has holy meat in his pocket comes in contact with other food, be it raw or cooked, wine or oil, will this other food become holy? The priests answered: No!
13. Haggai continued: If an unclean person comes in contact with these things, will they be unclean? The priests answered: Yes!

Verses 14-23 Literal Translation

14. And Haggi answered and said: So is this people and so is this nation before me, is the oracle of the Lord, and so is all the work of their hands and what they offer there is unclean.
15. And now, I pray, pay heed from this day and onward—before a stone was placed upon a stone in the temple of the Lord,
16. since the days when one came to a heap of twenty (measures) and there were but ten; when one came to the winevat to draw fifty press-measures, there were but twenty.
17. I smote you with blasting and with blight and hail, all the labor of your hands; yet you were not towards me, is the oracle of the Lord.
18. Pay heed, I pray you, from this day and onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day on which was founded the temple of the Lord, pay heed.

19. Is yet the seed in the barn? And even though the grape vine and the fig tree and the pomegranate tree and the olive tree have not borne, from this day I will surely bless you.
20. Then the word of the Lord came again to Haggai on the twenty-fourth of the month, saying:
21. Speak to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, saying: I am one who is shaking the heavens and the earth.
22. I will overthrow seats of kingdoms and destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the gentiles and will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and horses and their riders shall fall, each by the sword of his brother.
23. In that day, is the oracle of the Lord Sabaoth, I will take you, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, my servant, is the oracle of the Lord, and will make you as a signetring, for you have I chosen, is the oracle of the Lord Sabaoth.

Free Translation

14. Then Haggai answered: Thus was this nation and these people unclean before Me, says the Lord, so that I could not accept their former labor and sacrifices.
15. For think back a moment to the time before you began working on My house.
16. Where you ought to have had twenty bushels of grain, you got ten, and what should have produced fifty gallons of wine, brought forth only twenty.
17. I sent rust and blight and hail into your fields and took away your jobs and did not bless you, says the Lord.
18. But now on this 24th day of the 9th month (about Dec. 2) consider. Consider, I say, since the day you began working on the house of God (about Sept. 5).
19. For although you have no grain in your barns and no grapes, figs, pomegranates or olives in store, nevertheless I will surely bless you.
20. On the 24th day of the 9th month (about Dec. 2) this word of the Lord also was spoken by Haggai:
21. Tell Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, that I shall bring about great changes in the world.
22. I shall destroy kingdoms and nations and shall cut off kings and armies with their own swords.
23. But for a guarantee of My promises I shall establish My servant Zerubbabel on his throne because I love him, says the Lord our God.