

# ***Reasons for Being Strong and Taking Courage***

***International Bible Lesson***

**Haggai 2:1-9**

**Sunday, June 8, 2014**

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*“Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not” (Haggai 2:4c-5—KJV).*

*“Take courage, all you people of the land, says the LORD; work, for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts, according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit abides among you; do not fear” (Haggai 2:4c-5—NRSV).*

Though the Jews remained surrounded by powerful enemies, God commanded them to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Someday, He promised, the temple would be greater than Solomon’s temple. God would take the treasure of other nations to enlarge and beautify His temple because “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2:8). God fulfilled His promise when He used King Darius to command their enemies to pay taxes for rebuilding the temple in Haggai’s day. Later, God used King Herod to enlarge the temple. Through Haggai, God encourages His people to do His work on earth and not be afraid of others, because God is always with His people. God’s Spirit remains with His people even during those times when God must discipline His people for their own good. God’s people can take courage because God is “the LORD of hosts.” God is the Supreme Commander of thousands upon thousands of angels that He can call upon to help His people whenever He wisely decides. God also has the power to shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land and all the nations to meet the needs of His people to do His work (Haggai 2:6-7). In the Old Testament, God promised to do these things and more for His people, and He will do the same today for all who trust in God in order to obey His commands and do His will.

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## **Thinking Further**

1. Why might God have made certain that Haggai recorded the exact dates of when He spoke to Haggai?
2. When the people realized that they could not rebuild the temple to look as beautiful as the former temple, what did God tell them?
3. What reason did God give the leaders and people for taking courage as they obeyed Him and worked on rebuilding the temple?
4. Who owns the world’s silver and gold supply? Does knowing the answer encourage or discourage you? Give a reason for your answer.
5. Where is God’s beautiful temple on earth today?