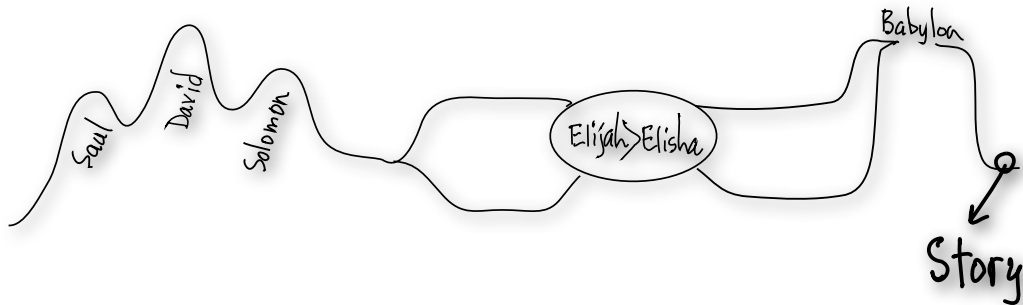


## 26– Restoration of A House with Surpassing Glory through God’s Servant

(Haggai )

### Draw out existing perspective

- If you had been among those Israelites taken away into Babylon, what would your thoughts have been about your future and the future of your people?



### Introduction and Context

The prophet Jeremiah sent a letter to some of the exiles who had already been taken captive to Babylon. The word of the Lord for the exiles was: ““When the seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,’ declares the Lord.”” (Jer 29:11)

Seventy years later Daniel begins to pray before the Lord and the Lord hears his prayer. In 538 BC the Lord moves the heart of King Cyrus of Babylon to issue a decree in fulfillment of the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah. The beginning of the decree reads:

“The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah....” (Ezra 1:2)

Daniel’s prayer for the restoration of his people, the city, and the temple are about to be fulfilled. A remnant of Israel is led back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple by Zerrubabel (Ezra 2). Upon their arrival immediate opposition arises to the rebuilding effort (Ezra 4). Their plans are frustrated. The surrounding peoples criticize and discourage the people. They become disillusioned and eventually the work on the temple foundation is stopped.

God sends his prophet, Haggai, to call the people to renewed faith and effort. In the book of Haggai, the prophet gives four words, or prophecies, to the remnant in Israel. The first three begin with a prophetic word in the form of a question; the last prophecy is a final proclamation.

The significance of this renewal and rebuilding of the Temple in the city of Jerusalem reaches its fulfillment in the final revelation of the biblical story. There we see coming out of heaven, a city and in the midst of this city is a temple, and the temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, now dwelling in the midst of his people. The nations walk by its light, the kings of the earth bring into it their splendor. The gates are never shut. The light never goes out. What God began is now complete. His story reaches fulfillment!

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### **Step 1: What is God revealing?**

 (Read Haggai)

1. There are four main prophecies given to the remnant from the Lord through Haggai. What would you say is at the heart of each prophecy?
2. What was the occasion (festival) during which each prophecy was given?
3. What is the greater message God is revealing through the work begun by this remnant?

#### **[Foundational Revelation]**

- As a people of God co-missioned in God's purpose for us on earth, His house, His purpose must have first priority over all other priorities.
- We must work in light of the future fulfillment God is bringing rather than looking back at past accomplishments.
- Faith-obedience cleanses a guilty heart and mind and opens the door to covenant blessings.
- The word of the Lord through Joshua (high priest) and Zerubbabel (ruler) to restore God's house in His city reveals a larger work of God through his chosen servant fulfilled in Jesus and his house (followers) in future generations.

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### **Step 2: Focus and Reflection**

4. What is at the heart of the 4<sup>th</sup> prophecy? How does this relate to the gospel of the Kingdom reaffirmed in the NT?
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### **Step 3: Application with Missiological Insight**

5. What must have first priority in our work among the nations?
  6. What lessons of renewal can be learned from the prophecies of Haggai?
  7. What does this book teach us about community in mission?
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## **Training Topics in the Story**

- priorities
- cleansing
- priesthood
- rulership
- authority
- glory
- house/temple/kingdom
- discouragement