

A Development of a Political Theory in the Post-Exilic Prophecy of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8

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Abstract:

In this paper, I argue that Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 present an ideology of the 'Restoration' of the traditional institutional system exhibited in the Deuteronomistic political concepts. This paper argues that both of these texts serve the same end: the adoption and adaptation of the pre-exilic institutional structure to the 'novel' polity of the post-exilic community. This can be seen as the re-formation of the Deuteronomistic constitutional elements by a political body within the polity of institution of the post-exilic prophecy. We see the articulation of powers along lines of institution where the office of prophecy legitimizes pre-existing societal power structures. The argument bears relevance for the development of political ideas of the post-modern world in the 21st century. Thus, in the paper, the politics in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 will be illuminated through political ideas of the post-modern world where the centralized authority of individuality is decreased in favor of collective bodies of power.

How can we develop a political theory which includes the determination of what is politics in the post-exilic community? How can we picture the struggle between rival groups for control of the post-exilic community leadership? What politics can possibly be produced out of the specific political situations of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8? Can we uncover implications of such a study for political theory, including the ways by which the reading of the texts of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 have had a bearing on the political traditions of the world of the 21st century?

The discussion of the political ideas in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 describes the powers of the priesthood, the Davidic descendant, and the institution of prophecy. And, in the post-exilic community, the politics including prophetic, priestly, and political

leadership was seen as mainly related to the “Temple Community.” The Temple provided the central power base of the politics of the post-exilic community. The problem was that the community had lost their first Temple and remained without the central Temple in Jerusalem for decades. Thus, there is little doubt that, after returning from the exile, the religious and political leadership of the post-exilic community were focused on the building-project of the ‘Second Temple.’

As we read through the book of Ezekiel and the book of Ezra, the issue on the power relations surrounding the Temple becomes very complicated especially when it comes to the rival groups for control over the temple politics. We see, from these texts, the unavoidable conflicts between a group which represents the Zadokite priestly line who would mostly consist of ‘returnees’ from Babylon, and another group, which are mostly composed of ‘remainders’ in the Land of Israel. We may see that these biblical texts allude to the serious conflicts between the ‘returnees’ and ‘remainders.’¹

In the midst of this confusion and frustration over the temple-rebuilding program, two prophetic figures appeared in the post-exilic community as ‘supporters’ and ‘spokesmen’ of the political program of the temple-building project. They are the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah. According to the texts, Haggai and Zechariah played a crucial role of catalyzing the building project. Thus, the community seemed to overcome the initial conflict and confusion that they had faced after the return from the exile, and they successfully dedicated their Second Temple in 515 B.C.E.

My initial question is still in effect: how can we develop a political theory which

¹ We may see the ‘pro-golah’ (‘returnees’) position in the earlier prophecy of Ezekiel. And the book of Ezra explicitly refused to permit “the people of the land” (Ezra 4:1-22) to cooperate with the ‘returnees’ in their building efforts. See Paul Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), pp. 228-40.

includes the determination of what is politics in the post-exilic community? Furthermore, how can we imagine the politics of the post-exilic community through the prophetic roles of Haggai and Zechariah?: What prophetic roles would Haggai and Zechariah have played in the community conflict in order to make the temple-building program successful? Thus, in this paper I am seeking to develop a political theory of the post-exilic community through the lens of the prophetic activities of Haggai and Zechariah. Furthermore, this paper is an attempt to draw a picture of the relation between the post-exilic prophecy in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 and the Deuteronomistic political concepts reflected in the post-exilic community by Haggai and Zechariah.

There is little disagreement that the texts of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 share the same historical background under the post-exilic era, and are involved in the same project of rebuilding the temple under Persian rule.² According to the text, Haggai begins his ministry in the sixth month of the second year of King Darius,³ and concludes in the ninth month of the same year.⁴ Similarly, Zechariah 1-8 begins in the eighth month of the second year of King Darius,⁵ and concludes in the ninth month of the fourth year.⁶ The common use of a chronological structure in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8, of course, supports the idea of a connection between the two prophetic figures.

It is in fact interesting that the texts convey that these two prophetic figures

² In answering “what is the relation between Haggai and Zechariah 1-8?”, the authors of two recent commentaries propose two different explanations of the relation between these two prophetic texts. On the one hand, Carol and Eric Meyers argue that these two prophetic books were originally a single book, edited by the same final redactor. On the other hand, David Peterson suggests that Zechariah 1-8 was a literary ‘response’ to the book of Haggai and therefore, Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 were edited at different times by different redactors. See Carol Meyers & Eric M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, pp.xliv-xlviii, and D. L. Peterson, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, p. 124.

³ 520 BCE; See Hag. 1:1.

⁴ 520 BCE; See Hag. 2:10, 20.

⁵ 520 BCE; See Zech. 1:1.

⁶ 518 BCE; See Zech. 7:1.

started their prophecies in almost the same time period. As mentioned above, in the midst of conflict and confusion over the temple-building project, these two prophetic figures worked as supporters of the significant political agenda of the contemporary community. Haggai and Zechariah would have shared their foremost contemporary issues in the post-exilic community leadership, and supported each other's political point of view regarding the temple-building program.

So, we see not only the chronological overlap between their prophetic ministries, but also the same political agendas shared through their prophetic activities. Interestingly enough, the activities of these two prophetic figures are deeply rooted in the role of legitimating a specific political and religious line under a specific human reform program. Zech. 3:8 says that "Now, listen, Joshua, high priest, you and your colleagues who sit before you! For they are an omen of things to come: I am going to bring my servant the Branch." In this verse, the promise revolves around the "Branch." Joshua is told that the LORD is bringing an 'individual' that is designated with a term that bears 'messianic' implications,⁷ and in this case, the term becomes unusually 'political.' Zechariah and his audience in the post-exilic community would have been already familiar with the term, "Branch," which implies messianic connotations, and that the reference here is to none other than the Davidic descendent, "Zerubbabel," in this context.

With this vision, Joshua was also anointed by the prophetic proclamation. In Zech. 3:7, Joshua is told that his position of power will be retained only as long as he is faithful to God. It is interesting to read 6:11-13 in this context because, while one would

⁷ Compare with Isaiah 11:1 and Jeremiah 23:5. "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a *branch* shall grow out of his roots." (Isa. 11:1); "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous *Branch*, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land." (Jer. 23:5).

expect the future kingly figure to wear a crown, the crown intended for the high priest may point to Joshua's elevated position in the new polity of the post-exilic community. Except for this verse in Zechariah, the word 'crown' has never been used for priests in the Hebrew Bible, but is used only to refer to political authority.⁸ This is a unique use in Zechariah, which may reflect the certain political agenda of the post-exilic prophecy.

Bringing in a specific individual, "Zerubbabel," and the crowning of a specific figure, "Joshua" are certainly not seen as a typical/classical phenomenon of prophecy in the Israelite tradition since prophecy had originally arisen in Israel as an independent power from religious and political entities.⁹ Israelite prophecy had usually been in tension with rulership – kingship and priesthood – in Israel. Thus, it is important that Haggai and Zechariah were not following the independent stance of the classical prophets in ancient Israel. The classical prophets tended to maintain a tension with the institutions of the temple and royal court. However, Haggai and Zechariah, using the forms and phrases of prophetic hope and promise, and also exercising the prophetic functions of appointing the king and sanctifying the priesthood, performed their prophecy in the service of a specific political program.¹⁰

In this service of a specific political agenda, the prophets said that this is the time for mercy and compassion of Yahweh. And this proclamation, in fact, became the crucial step of catalyzing the rebuilding-temple project which would have been delayed for years after their return from the exile. For the community with no central ruling authority, the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, gave a specific human office the divine sanction as a

⁸ C. M. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, p. 351. Cf. Antonios Finitis, "Zechariah 1-8 and Millennialism," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 47:1-4, p. 95.

⁹ I think that Paul Hanson is right to say that the classical Israelite prophecy had been produced out of a self-governing power independent from priestly and kingly rulership. See Paul Hanson, pp. 240-253.

¹⁰ See Paul Hanson, p. 247.

new power structure and, finally, legitimated the specific politics of Zerubbabel and Joshua as a new cooperative leadership.

When we examine Zech. 6:9-15 more closely, we see a clearer picture of this “cooperative leadership” of Zerubbabel and Joshua. These verses start with an exhortation commanding Zechariah to take gold and silver from the returned exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, and make crowns. Verse 11 continues with no direct object: “and set [one] upon the head of the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak.” As we have seen earlier, for the issue of “crowning” Joshua, not Zerubbabel in chap. 6, many solutions have been offered by commentators. For example, Wellhausen emended the text to read “crown” in the singular instead of the plural form, and argued that it was intended for Zerubbabel, who was the Branch addressed in vv. 12-13.¹¹ However, Wellhausen missed the point that this post-exilic leadership was meant to be composed of the two figures in the text of Zechariah. Peterson disagreed with Wellhausen to say that only one crown was made, and argued that they were for Joshua, but did not signify kingship.¹² Beuken maintained the middle position, and contended that Zechariah here addressed Joshua and Zerubbabel alternately.¹³ In particular, Peterson argues that the crown(s) does not have to be royal. However, it is still hard to overlook the point that the crown does designate civil authority.

The meaning of the Hebrew word ‘*atarah*’ for crown becomes complicating when we think about the contexts of each of the different texts in the Hebrew Bible. But, this word for ‘crown’ is certainly one of the words designating a royal crown, and is used with

¹¹ For the argument, see D. L. Peterson, *Haggai and Zechariah*, p. 275.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ W. A. M. Beuken, *Haggai-Sacharja 1-8*, p.367.

that meaning in other texts of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁴

So, it seems highly likely that Zechariah concerned the two poles of the leadership by “crowning” Joshua in the text. However, the question remains in this form of “diarchic leadership”¹⁵ because obviously the name of Zerubbabel is not pronounced here in the text. The word for ‘crown’ used for Joshua is never applied to Zerubbabel in 6:11-13, and the coronation of Zerubbabel is omitted here!¹⁶ Paul Hanson insightfully suggests that the sudden, mysterious disappearance of Zerubbabel from this narrative would indicate that the political program supported by the prophet Zechariah ran into some serious difficulties in the community.¹⁷ But, in these verses, Zechariah, in fact, hastens to mention that despite this difference in status, there is going to be “peaceful understanding between the two” (6:13) and thus underlines the cooperative leadership between them (6:13).¹⁸

Without the name of Zerubbabel, one of the crowns, which is generally attributed to the political authority in the Biblical tradition, will be given to Joshua the High Priest in this context. We, as readers, may have an impression that the crown given to the high priest intends Joshua’s elevated position in this treatment of politics. However, one also needs to remember that the other pole equated with the civil authority of the Davidic descendent is presented as an actual figure to build the ‘Temple of the LORD’ in the text. Verse 12 continues, “And say to him, “Thus said the LORD of Hosts: Behold, a man called the Branch shall branch out from the place where he is, and he shall build the Temple of

¹⁴ Cf. 2 Sam. 12:30; Jer. 13:18; Ezek. 21:31; Ps. 21:4.

¹⁵ Peterson comments that “there are two persons with equal rights toward the deity entails a significant restructuring of the Judahite/Jerusalemite polity.” See D. L. Peterson, *Haggai and Zechariah*, p. 233.

¹⁶ Cf. Antonios Finitis, “Zechariah 1-8 and Millennialism,” p. 95.

¹⁷ Paul Hanson, p. 247.

¹⁸ Antonios Finitis, “Zechariah 1-8 and Millennialism,” p. 95.

the LORD.” (v. 12). Here, we do not fail to see the political figure receiving the divine sanction to build the Temple of Yahweh. Although the name, Zerubbabel, is omitted from the text, the figure Zerubbabel has not disappeared, but is present with the words of legitimation concerning royal authority by the prophet Zechariah: “He shall build the Temple of the LORD and shall assume majesty, and he shall sit on his throne and rule.” (v. 13a). In this unusual way, Zechariah legitimized the “Branch” as the kingly authority in the community.

In this process of legitimation, Zechariah also confirmed that the temple-building project is supported by “those far off.”(Zech. 6:15). We should notice again that 6:9-15 opens with a command to take silver and gold from the three returned exiles, Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, go to the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, and make the crowns. And in v.14, we read that the crowns would be in the Temple as a memorial to the same four people.¹⁹ With the help of some of the ‘returnees,’ the prophet plays a legitimizing role to rebuild the Temple in the post-exilic community, and reestablishes the power relations centered by Joshua and the “Branch.”

The next passage in our consideration is Zech. 4:6-14, which is the angelic interpretation of the lampstand and olive trees Zechariah had seen in vv. 1-5. Vv. 6-10a include a series of oracles about Zerubbabel (4:6b, 7, 8-10a), none of which has any obvious connections with the vision of the lampstand and olive trees shown in vv. 1-5. It appears, however, that the angelic interpretation resumes in 4:10b.²⁰

In the angelic interpretations of vv. 10b-14, the lampstand would have symbolized

¹⁹ Admittedly, in the Hebrew text, two of the names in v. 10 (Heldai and Josiah) differ in v. 14. But scholars would routinely change Helem into Heldai, and it is clearly a logical assumption that Josiah, son of Zephaniah, and Hen, son of Zephaniah are the same person. Compare *NRSV* with *TNK*.

²⁰ See Meyers, p. 45.

God, and the seven lamps were identified as “the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth” in v. 10b. In verse 11, Zechariah asks about the olive trees standing on either side of the lampstand, and is told in v. 14 that they are “sons of oil.”²¹ Most scholars interpret the phrase to mean by “anointed ones,”²² but the Hebrew word *yishar* for “oil” is nowhere else used in connection with ‘anointing’ in the Hebrew Bible.²³ Instead, it is always used in connection with wine, grain, and other agricultural products,²⁴ which signify God’s material blessing and which should be brought as tithes.²⁵

Thus, even though the word can be translated as “anointed ones” in v. 14, it seems more likely that it means “sons”²⁶ in which the case of the meaning seems to be ‘ones – in this case ‘male figures’ – sated with or full of something.’²⁷ Thus, the phrase “sons of oil” in Zech 4:14 seems to indicate that the olive trees, which are sated with oil, pour out the oil. In this image of ‘fertility,’ the two olive trees stood as symbolism of God’s chosen ones. They not only mark access to God, ‘the lampstand,’ but also the source of fertility to the land. Only the ones, who stand by the LORD of all the earth, and are sated with the ‘oil,’ are able to supply the golden oil to the dry land of the contemporary community, according to this angelic interpretation. In this way, the prophetic vision indicates

²¹ The literal meaning of the Hebrew expression, *bnei hayishar*, may be “sons of oil.” Compare with “anointed dignitaries” in *TNK*.

²² *NRSV* says “anointed ones.” And *TNK* translates as “anointed dignitaries,” but indicates that this literal meaning is “sons of oil.”

²³ Compare with Num. 18:12; 2 Kings 18:32. See Paul L. Redditt, “Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the Night Visions of Zechariah,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54.2, pp.250-254.

²⁴ e.g., first fruits, Num 18:12; fleece, Deut 18:4; produce in general, Hag 1:11.

²⁵ See Deut. 12:17; 14:23; Neh. 10:38, 39 ; 13:5, 12. Redditt, p. 251.

²⁶ Meyers points to places where constructions with “son” occur (e.g., son(s) of death in 1 Sam 20:31; 26:16; and sons of wickedness in 2 Sam 3:34; 7:10). In these cases, the meaning would be ‘sons full of something.’ See Meyers, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*, p. 258.

²⁷ *Ibid.* The closest parallels to Zech 4:14 occurs in Isa. 5:1, which designates a hill as “a son of oil”(samēn), i.e., ‘very fertile.’

productivity/fertility for the post-exilic Israel. These persons are the ‘two ones’ (v. 14) through whom the whole community may become ‘fertile’ again. These are the prophetic words of legitimation about the politics of “sons of oil”:

“And I further asked him, “What are the two tops of the olive trees that pour out their gold through those two golden tubes?” He asked me, “Don’t you know what they are?” And I replied, “No, my LORD” Then he explained, “They are the two *sons of oil* who stand by the LORD of the whole earth.” (Zech. 4:12-14)

Another passage to examine is Zech. 3:1-10, a vision of the cleansing of the high priest Joshua before the angel of the Lord and the Satan. Interestingly enough, in the other seven night visions in Zechariah 1-8, the prophet does not understand what he sees, and learns their meanings from an interpreting angel. By contrast, in 3:1-10, Zechariah is fully recognizable of the action of the vision – there is no introduction to the vision, no interpreting angel, and no explanation.

So, this vision is outstanding out of the eight visions, and needs to be examined with some attention. The first consideration is the formulaic language concerned with ‘seeing.’ The visions beginning with 1:8 and 4:2 both describe the coming of the interpreting angel and employ identical formulae: ‘I had a vision and saw...’ Subsequent visions invariably employ the phrase, ‘I lifted my eyes, looked, and saw’ (1:18; 2:1; 5:1,9; 6:1), except for 3:1-10.

Interestingly, in the third vision in ch. 2, the interpreting angel leaves Zechariah in v. 3, and is told in v. 4 to return and tell the prophet that God “will be a wall of fire around Jerusalem and... the glory within it” (2:5). That instruction is not carried out in 3:1-10. Indeed, the angel does not even appear in 3:1-10. It is carried out, however, in the

subsequent vision in ch. 4; 4:1 specifically notes that the angel came again to Zechariah to wake him up. Then the vision of the lampstand came next in the sequence of visions in chap. 4.

Thus, among the eight visions in Zechariah 1-8, the vision in 3:1-5 formed an outstandingly different construction from the other seven visions, and, without any angelic appearance, Zechariah himself directly transmitted the night vision to the legitimating role of the political body centered by Joshua and the Branch in vv. 8-10. Here, interestingly, the reader sees the picture of the “diarchic politics” in an “eschatological sense.”

“Now listen, Joshua, high priest, you and your colleagues who sit before you! For they are an omen of things to come: I am going to bring my servant the Branch.... On that day, says the LORD of hosts, you shall invite each other to come under your vine and fig tree.” (3:8, 10).

These verses certainly invite the audience to hear the prophetic proclamation that Joshua and the ‘Branch’ would be brought forth out of the ‘Zecharian eschatological’ vision. The prophet connects his eschatological sense with the very concrete picture of a political idea of the contemporary community; He did not even need an angelic interpretation to explain the meaning of the vision. Zechariah proclaims himself that God confirms the political body in the community through his prophetic vision and the ‘eschatological’ fulfillment of the “pro-Zerubbabel” perspective stated in vv. 8-10.

Thus, vv. 8-10 may have a different nature in interpreting the oracle, and this text finally becomes the proclaiming verses of legitimation of the Branch, and not only

conveys the High Priest Joshua's inauguration in ch. 3.²⁸ By bringing up the theme of the Davidic descendents in the eschatological vision, Zechariah seeks to balance out the importance of the contemporary political issue with that of the prophetic eschatological tradition.

Furthermore, 'the associates' of Joshua are introduced in v. 8 without previous mention, and, of course, they should not be equated with the angelic beings in attendance that appeared in vv. 4, and 7. These associates are proclaimed as a "sign that I am going to bring my servant the Branch." (v.8b). It is likely that this scene reminds the reader of the people of "those far off" named in 6:10, and 14. In chap 6, the ones called by each different name were the 'returnees' close to the royal power.

The issue here is that the prophet Zechariah was giving Yahweh's unquestioned sanction to a particular political body, including particular priestly and royal officials. And the problem is that their prophetic longevity was dependent on the fate of that political body and the officials who served the institution.²⁹ The prophetic tradition in ancient Israel could have run without the risk of the ups and downs of a particular human institution because they acted independently from the powers of kingship and the priesthood. We see that the prophetic tradition had always had some kind of connection with the political and priestly systems in Israel, but they were not completely governed or controlled by political and religious politics. Thus, they had performed independent powers which were usually unaffected by the rise and fall of a particular religious and political institution.

This is not the case of Haggai and Zechariah. They were depending their fate

²⁸ Cf. Isa. 6:6-8

²⁹ Paul Hanson, p. 247.

upon the fate of that specific institution and those official figures, identified with Zerubbabel and Joshua, and thus were giving up the independent quality which may be defined as an essential element in Israelite classical prophecy.³⁰ Therefore, they run the risk of the rise and fall of a particular human institution, by sanctioning the specific institutional structure of the temple-rebuilding program in the post-exilic community.

In other words, the temple-building program was their 'prophetic' project for the post-exilic prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Thus, they in fact stopped the pre-exilic model of the prophetic work of counteracting a royal institution and officials. Ironically, however, they served the continuity of the institutional structures in the pre-exilic time. Thus, the project to which they dedicated themselves was to re-build the structure of the pre-exilic community through the present event. It describes the powers of the priesthood, the Davidic descendant, and the institution of prophecy.

What I argue is that this may be seen as the Deuteronomistic constitutional elements within the institutional structure of the pre-exilic community. The problem is that this political idea that arose in the community existed after they experienced the religious and political trauma of the Exile. The efforts of the post-exilic prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, to present their oracles were to re-construct the structure and system of the pre-exilic period, and they thus gave Yahweh's sanction to a particular political body, using their prophetic formulas, and adapting the eschatological visions toward the temple-building project.

The Temple would serve as the central power base, and perform as symbolism of the supreme authority of the community which had been without central power for

³⁰ I agree with Paul Hanson to say that "They (Haggai and Zechariah) were giving up the revolutionary element which was always an essential ingredient in genuine prophecy, an element stemming from a vision of Yahweh's order of mercy and justice." Hanson, p. 247.

decades. Zerubbabel is the one to succeed the Davidic line and continue the pre-exilic dynastic kingship. Haggai and Zechariah announced that Yahweh has chosen a living, contemporary figure, Zerubbabel, as a successor of the Davidic line of kingship. This was the political idealism that Haggai and Zechariah presented through the reality of the post-exilic community.

According to this politics, the Deuteronomistic institutional system in the pre-exilic period was restored in the contemporary events and figures. In that way, they institutionalized the prophetic eschatological hope in the Deuteronomistic constitutional system of the priesthood and kingship. The eschatological hope and promise, which would have long been a part of prophetic visions in the exilic-community, could have been fulfilled through the living figure, Zerubbabel, according to these ‘prophetic’ message of Haggai and Zechariah. They would say, “The wonders of prosperity and fertility of the community will be fulfilled, and now the eschaton has arrived” through this particular human office.

By confirming the specific human office of Joshua and Zerubbabel as the only proofed leadership by God, Haggai and Zechariah created the systemic structures based on the Deuteronomistic ideology for the specific ruling class. But more importantly, these prophets would attempt to maintain *their* line of prophetic tradition in Israel, which would imitate the eschatological visions of classical exilic prophecy.

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah legitimated a specific political line to ensure, not only the restoration of the community’s welfare, but also the preservation of the life of the prophetic activity itself in the post-exilic era. In the text, Zechariah is presented as the authentic successor to the pre-exilic prophets (1:1-6; 8:9), thus carrying forward the

office of prophecy in the post-exilic community. Through the night visions, namely the re-interpretation of the high priest and the Branch, the prophetic role in the community is again activated by legitimizing the roles of the pre-exilic kingship and priesthood.

The prophetic effort to make a connection between the eschatological vision of classical prophecy and the human-rebuilding project of contemporary events would make that program, in fact, very “appealing” to the masses. We know that the dedication of the temple was successfully performed with the divine sanction given by Haggai and Zechariah. Ironically, however, the success of the temple-building project was not guaranteeing Judah to re-establish the monarchial structure of the pre-exilic time.

They attempted to imitate the construction of the pre-exilic structure. The result was neither the political system nor the prophetic stance that legitimated the system could survive in Israel in the long run. When “the eschaton had arrived” in the community, the future eschatological hope and promise in prophecy had also been quieted down in the post-exilic community. This “fulfillment” of eschatology with specific political program and institutional system ironically brought forth the decline/demise of the prophetic visionary tradition in Israel.

Again, the prophetic activity of Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 no longer provided the alternative way to succeed in the new millennium: they attempted to maintain the status quo of the pre-exilic structures, and it apparently failed to acknowledge the changes in the community nor to serve the needs of the community in a transitional period.

They were living in a new era: the post-exilic period. They lived no longer in the “romanticized” pre-exilic time. The Temple had been already destroyed. They were no longer living in the pre-exilic structure and system, and they had experienced living for

decades outside of any temple structure. In spite of the reality of the post-exilic world, they do not present the image of catastrophe in their world, but they advocate restoration of it. They had already experienced destruction of the Temple and the community. In this reality, they would say that “this is the time for restoration and rebuilding of the destructed temple.” This is the role of the prophet Zechariah to proclaim that the restoration plan follows the divine legitimating process: The seventy years of God’s anger have passed (Zech. 1:12); now is the time for compassion and prosperity (Zech. 1:16-17): “Therefore, thus says the LORD, I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion; my house shall be built in it, says the LORD of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. Proclaim further: Thus says the LORD of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity; the LORD will again comfort Zion, and again choose Jerusalem.” “On that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will take you... and make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the LORD of hosts.” (Hagg. 2:23).

Epilogue

This exegetical process intends to influence considerations of the relation between the Hebrew Bible and political theory. These political ideas in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 finally lead us to a conclusion: when the post-exilic prophets tried to re-build their politics around political and religious power, they ultimately failed to create a new environment, and to meet the reality of the community in a new era. If we attempt to imitate the structure of the pre-existed era, what would then be the result of maintaining the “old” structure in a “new” era? This imaginative question becomes serious for us living in the 21st century, presenting the ideology of a “new” millennium within the political structure of modern time.

In the post-modern era, what kind of leadership do we present in the global community of the 21st century? First of all, we need to acknowledge that we have already lost the sense of the modern ‘Temple’ in the structure of our leadership. The post-modern world does not go back to modern time, just as the post-exilic community had lost the Solmonic Temple, and could not go back to the First Temple Period, in spite of their efforts to imitate the pre-exilic structure. So, what leadership is required in our own contemporary world? Do we still need another ‘Imitated Temple,’ or do we first have to go through the reality of the ‘Lost Temple’ in the 21st century-leadership?

During the Second Temple Period, the Israelites still had to go through difficult testing within the reality of the post-exilic community. We need to remember that the office of prophecy was doomed to be ceased in the post-exilic Jewish community. What do we need when the stability of the structure, the authority of the figure, and events of the historical realm do not provide the answers for the needs of the post-exilic community? Is the post-exilic world still waiting to be fertilized with “oil”? Who can pour the golden oil from the olive tree onto the dry land? Could Joshua and Zerubbabel take on the role of the “olive Branch” for the community? Would Haggai and Zechariah do? The question remains, and is waiting to be answered.

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