

# THE STORY

THE BIBLE AS ONE CONTINUING STORY OF GOD AND HIS PEOPLE

## CHAPTER 19 – THE RETURN HOME

### DISCUSSION OF GENERAL QUESTIONS

- ❶ What is God saying?
- ❷ For what does this section lead me to give thanks? (See God's grace and promises!)
- ❸ What sins does this section lead me to confess? (See God's expectations for his people)
- ❹ For what does this section lead me to pray? (As you ponder the Word, what needs of heart and life for yourself and others come to mind? Consider every word you read as an invitation to turn it into a prayer you speak back to your Lord!)

**Key Events:** the exiles return to Judah under King Cyrus, rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem, the ministries of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah.

### DIGGING IN

- 1) Why did the LORD rescue the people of Judah again? Read **Jeremiah 29:10**. What had they done to receive such mercy? What have we done to receive mercy from the LORD?
- 2) When the exiles returned to Jerusalem they began to rebuild the temple and they reinstated the religious ceremonies. What were the reactions of the people when the foundation of the temple was laid? (pg 265) How can we explain such a difference?
- 3) After opposition to building the temple arose, the people turned to building their own homes and comfortable lives. Read on page 266 beginning at "Then the word of the LORD..." What did the priorities of the people reveal about their hearts? What were the consequences for their misplaced priorities? Is it wrong for Christians to live a luxurious life?

- 4) Read the second paragraph on page 267. What was the people's reaction to the word of warning spoken through the prophet Haggai? How can we explain this reaction?
  
- 5) On the top of page 268, God says through Haggai, "The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house." How is this possible since the former temple built by Solomon was much larger and more spectacular than the rebuilt temple?
  
- 6) Zechariah's message claimed that people from other nations would be attracted to the God of Israel. On page 270 the LORD said, "In those days ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'" Make a list of the ways that the Christian faith is attractive to non-believers. How can our congregation put this into practice?
  
- 7) Despite the opposition, the Jews returned and rebuilt the temple of the LORD. Why was it so important for them to do this? Where does God dwell on earth today? Read **1 Corinthians 3:16**

Chapter 20: The Queen of Beauty and Courage  
Bible Reference: Esther 1-9