

THE STORY

READ THE STORY. EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE.



AS YOU READ CHAPTER 19

Journal your answers to these questions as you read through the chapter this week. You may wish to read one day and journal the next, or spread the questions over the whole week. Bible readings that correspond with this week's reading can be found at www.woodlandschurch.com.

1. How did the 70-year exile from the Promised Land affect the ways in which the people of Israel responded to God? Have you experienced personal changes as a result of a tragic circumstance in your life?
2. When the temple was re-established, some were overjoyed and some were heartbroken because the new temple was no match to the glory of Solomon's temple. According to Haggai's second message (p. 267-68), how can we miss God's call in the present when we linger on the past? Where have you seen this happen in your life? What resolved your fears?
3. What did Israel's enemies do to undermine their efforts to rebuild their temple (p. 265-66)? When have you experienced a similar situation where someone tried to undermine something important to you? How did you respond?
4. Read page 266 and list the reasons the temple work had ceased. When the Israelites were weary, what did they begin to focus on? Do you struggle with misplaced priorities when you are weary? What are some ways you can refocus when this happens?
5. Haggai, the prophet, encouraged the people to get back to work on the temple building project that had stalled for 16 years (p. 266). Are there areas of your spiritual growth that have stalled out? Is there someone you could partner with to hold yourself accountable in this area? Pray about it and take action.
6. Review Zechariah's message of hope and promise. What did God promise the Israelites he would do? List the ways they were to respond to God's grace (p. 268-70). Zachariah claimed that people of other nations would see the Lord's work through the Israelites and, therefore, seek out the Lord themselves. Read Matthew 5:13-16. How is your life a sign – a light – for others to see God's work in this world?

PRAYER

God,

Thank you, thank you, thank you for being a God who delivers Your people. May I never take lightly your deliverance of me. Let me cling to Your rescuing arms so tightly that You define my whole being. Now that You have brought me back to You, may I never want to be anywhere else, but shaped in Your love. Amen.



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