

The Story Chapter 19 The Return Home



Discussion Questions

1. When you've been gone from home for an extended period of time (like on vacation) what are the first things you have to do when you get back? Why do you have to do those in particular?
2. Why, essentially, were the Jews in Babylon in the first place?
3. What prompted the return home for many Jews?
4. Cyrus' proclamation instructed the Jews to do what in Jerusalem? What do you suppose motivated the king to do this?
 - a. Spiritually?
 - b. Politically?
 - c. Economically?
5. Isn't it amazing that the articles taken from the temple in Jerusalem had been stored and preserved in Babylon for these decades in exile? Why do you think they were kept?
6. What was the first thing rebuilt in Jerusalem? What is the significance of completing this project?
7. When the foundation was laid for the new temple there were two responses.
 - a. What was the response of the younger generation?
 - b. What was the response of the older generation?
 - i. Which one do you think was most "correct" & why?
8. Why did Zerubbabel & Joshua refuse the help of the surrounding leaders/people? What did they say to them? What would you have done if you were presented with a similar proposal?
9. What did these 'enemies' do to frustrate the rebuilding of the temple?
10. For six years after the temple foundation had been laid, little to no work was done. What do you think was the thought of the average returnee from Babylon:

- a. About worshipping God in His own temple?
 - b. About their leadership?
 - c. About their neighbors?
 - d. About their place in the Persian kingdom?
11. Haggai was called and he had some strong words for the people of Jerusalem – what were the essentials of what he said?
 12. Have you ever been so “busy with your own house” that you neglected your church? What shook you out of that preoccupation?
 13. What did God do to show He was serious about the temple being rebuilt? Why do you think this was important:
 - a. For God?
 - b. For the People?
 14. What was the encouraging message that Haggai gave to the people who were disillusioned with the grandeur of the new temple?
 15. While the temple and worship there is important what did the prophets in chapter 19 tell that it was a symbol of?
 16. How encouraging is it to hear the message “I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God.”?
 - a. What could hearing (*and believing*) this type of message do for Christ followers today?
 17. The Lord “determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah” –
 - a. What stops God when He’s determined to do something?
 - b. Immediately following this statement is a list of acts God encouraged the people to do – what were they?
 18. What does the presence and approval of God do for Jerusalem- according to Zechariah’s prophecy?
 - a. Do you see a similar pattern in the church today? If yes, how?
 19. Have you ever been tattled on? What were the circumstances?
 - a. What does it feel like to know you were in the right, but then assumed you were doing wrong?
 - b. Were you ever vindicated by those in authority (*or are you still bitter about the whole thing*)?
 20. What were the instructions from Darius to Tattenai concerning the temple rebuilding project? What were the consequences if they didn’t comply with those instructions?
 21. This second temple actually had a longer span of usage than Solomon’s temple, and it was the temple that Jesus went to.
 - a. When have you observed something that wasn’t as flashy or ornate being actually more enduring and useful?
 - b. Where do you know God to dwell on Earth today?
 22. What would you say is the net result of the return of the Jews from Babylon?