



THE STORY *continues...*

Join us each week as God weaves His Story into the fabric of our daily lives.

Chapter 19 The Return Home

Listen to *The Story*

*Read **Chapter 19** of *The Story**

The focal point of chapter 19 is the laying of the foundation of the temple. There is mixed emotion about this: some rejoice, some cry tears of sorrow, and some are so annoyed that they oppose the rebuilding all together.

Considering the diversity of responses to the rebuilding of the temple, attempt to summarize the importance of each person's role in this story:

- Cyrus of Persia was important because:
- Zerubbabel was important because:
- Zechariah, the prophet, was important because:
- Haggai, the prophet, was important because:

Learn *The Story*

Look for ways in which God's story and your story connect this week.

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah are contemporaries of Ezra and Nehemiah. They both prophesy from Jerusalem. Haggai is two chapters. Read Haggai and reflect on the message of this book.

Note: Haggai is broken into four messages. Try to summarize each message in your own words.

Love *The Story*

Intentionally take a step forward in faith.

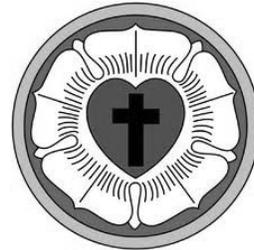
Journal time! Find a quiet place, perhaps a strong cup of coffee and give yourself at least an hour to answer the following questions.

- *Am I where God wants me to be in my life, relationships and professional work?*
 - *Am I disappointed with the life God has brought me? Is it in need of renovation?*
- *Do I live my life in such a way that it says, "Welcome home!" to those around me?*
- *What needs to change in me that will allow fellow Christians and non-Christians to feel "at home" with me as a follower of Jesus?*

Luther's Explanation

Haggai is the first prophet given to the people after the Babylonian captivity, and by his prophesy, the temple and the worship of God were set up again in Jerusalem. The exiles are at their lowest, however, and many who saw the splendor of Solomon's Temple could not imagine it being rebuilt. And yet, God speaks through Haggai to encourage them with these words: "The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house," says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty." (Haggai 1:9)

Martin Luther writes this about Haggai's words: "Many little children had been carried away into captivity, like Daniel, who lived almost until the return from the captivity. Here, too, this text indicates that there were still some survivors who had seen God's earlier house which had been so magnificently and beautifully constructed. So it did seem impossible to them that the temple could be restored. We have had the same experience. In the beginning, the preaching of the Gospel seemed foolish to us, but this is the way God declares His power. You see, at the time when we expect nothing less, when we think that everything is going to pieces, that's when the Lord is near." (*Luther's Works*, Volume 18, p. 380)



When we're at our lowest, when we've hit the bottom, it's then and there that God can rebuild our lives. In the words of the angel to Jesus' mother, Mary, "For nothing will be impossible with God." From her womb comes the New and Everlasting Temple—Jesus himself!

PROMISE

This week, cling to God's promise for you:
"Welcome Home!" From this day forward you will be
My temple."

The EXTRA Mile



We all want to feel welcomed! This week, reach out and introduce yourself to someone you do not know. Or sign-up to be a greeter so you have the chance to meet more Trinity families.