

## **“The Story” Study – Daniel, Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah**

### **Class 10: Chapters 18-19**

#### **Chapter 18: Daniel in Exile:**

1. DVD – Session 18
2. Chapter 18 Highlights: This chapter includes several key accounts from the book of Daniel:
  - a. Honoring the LORD with what they ate: Daniel chapter 1
    - i. Daniel, along with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, had been selected to receive special food and training in order to eventually serve in the king’s palace. **“But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food...”** (250).
    - ii. Since God had caused the royal official who was over them to show them favor, he went along with a ten-day plan of them eating only vegetables. At the end of the time, they were healthier than the others who ate the king’s food.
    - iii. Even when God’s Word doesn’t make sense, it is best for us to follow it!
  - b. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream about a statue: Daniel chapter 2
    - i. Under the penalty of death the king demanded of his wise men, **“...tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me”** (251). But they answered, **“There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks!”** (251).
    - ii. When Daniel heard of the great dilemma, he asked his friends to pray and the LORD revealed the dream and its interpretation to Daniel that night. Then Daniel, when he spoke to the king, gave all the glory to the God of heaven!
  - c. The fiery furnace: Daniel chapter 3
    - i. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship a statue of the king, even when threatened with the furnace, they refused and trusted in the LORD!
    - ii. Even though the furnace was made **“seven times hotter than usual”** and **“the strongest soldiers”** died while throwing them in, **“the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them”** (255-256).
  - d. Daniel and the lion’s den: Daniel chapter 6
    - i. Daniel, a foreigner, was about to be appointed as second in line to the king. The others were jealous so they tried to trap Daniel by making it illegal for anyone to pray to anyone other than the king. Even when Daniel heard of the new law, he continued to pray to the LORD. Even though the king favored Daniel, he had no choice but to throw him into the den.
    - ii. Early the next morning the king said, **“Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?”** (259) Daniel was unharmed, and gave all the glory to God! Then those who schemed against him were thrown in and all their bones were crushed!

## Chapter 19: The Return Home

1. DVD – Session 19
2. Chapter 19 Highlights: This chapter includes some of the exiles returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, the city, and the walls:
  - a. The LORD moved King Cyrus to make this decree: “The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you--may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:2-4).
  - b. So anyone could go – some did, about 50,000, but many did not, and those who went were even given the supplies they needed to complete their task. When we are doing the LORD’s will, He will provide what we need!
  - c. They put God first by rebuilding the altar and laying the foundation for the house of God, so their worship could resume. Some greatly praised the LORD, but others, who had seen the glorious temple built by Solomon, wept because this second temple was so inferior to the first temple.
  - d. When people living near Jerusalem began to oppose the work, the work was hindered for about six years and stopped completely for another ten years (266). Then the LORD raised up Haggai the prophet to encourage the work to resume.
  - e. The LORD said this through Haggai: “Give careful thought to your ways. <sup>6</sup> You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it” (1:5-6). Then He explained why: “Because of my house... remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house” (1:9). Are there ways in which we are maintaining our own homes and yards, while neglecting the LORD’s house and property?
  - f. During Haggai’s ministry, the LORD raised up Zechariah, a prophet and priest, to encourage the work and to put the rebuilding of the temple in the proper perspective – “...it’s a sign and symbol of something greater coming” (268). In other words, the sacrifices pointed to the reality of sin and the coming of the Promised Savior; even the temple, God’s dwelling place, pointed ahead to the day when He would dwell within all who know Jesus as their Savior!
  - g. Zechariah also had much good news to proclaim: “The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people” (8:12).
  - h. Then, when people near Jerusalem tried to stop the work, the LORD granted the opposite; those people were commanded to not interfere and to provide whatever was needed for the work; those who did not comply would be put to death!
3. Assignment: Read chapters 20-21, we will meet on Thursday, May 26 at 7:30.