

## *Promised Land 2 Study and Discussion Questions*

### *Lesson Thirteen: The Restoration Period – Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*

Read Ezra 1:1-8; 2:68-70; 3:1-4, 8-12; 4:1-4, 24; 5:1-5, 17; 6:1, 7-10, 12, 14-16; 7:1-28; 9:1; 10:1-4, 10-11, 16-17.

- 1) From your reading, identify the following individuals:
  - a) Cyrus the Great (also see 2 Chronicles 36:22, Daniel 1:21, Isaiah 44:28, 45:1, 13)
  - b) Haggai and Zechariah
  - c) Zerubbabel (see also Haggai 1:1; 2:2, 21)
  - d) Jeshua (also called Joshua; see also Haggai 1:1; 2:2, 4)
  - e) Ezra (include information about his mission)
  
- 2) To what is Ezra 1:1 referring when it says, "...in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah" (see Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10-14; Daniel 9:1-2)?
  
- 3) In which God-assigned task have you faced opposition and, at times, even come to a standstill? How does the book of Ezra encourage you to respond in such situations?

#### Skim the two chapters of Haggai.

- 4) Summarize Haggai's message:
  - a) To whom was it delivered (see Haggai 1:1, 2:1-2, 2:20-21)?
  
  - b) What was the essence of Haggai's message, according to chapter 1?
  
  - c) What was the impact of Haggai's message, according to chapter 1?
  
- 5) According to Haggai 2:3-8,
  - a) why were the people of Jerusalem discouraged?
  
  - b) how did the Lord answer their discouragement?

- 6) In what way does Jesus' exhortation in Matthew 6:33 reflect Haggai's message? How might you shift your own priorities so that God's kingdom and righteousness are what you seek first?

Zechariah chapters 1-8 are historical in nature. In particular, chapters 1-6 describe eight visions given to Zechariah during one night for the purpose of encouraging the Jews of Zechariah's day who were rebuilding the Temple. The culmination of these visions was the crowning of Joshua at the end of chapter 6. Chapters 9-14 are eschatological in nature, meaning they are prophecies about events that will take place in the future.

- 7) Read Zechariah 3:8 and 6:9-13, recalling the identity of Jeshua/Joshua from Question 1.
- a) In what sense was Joshua "symbolic of things to come" (see also Isaiah 4:2)?
  
  - b) Which two offices would "the Branch," whom Joshua prefigured, unite? See Zechariah 6:13 with Hebrews 7:24 and Revelation 19:16.
- 8) *Messiah* is a word derived from the Hebrew, meaning "Anointed One." The equivalent Greek (New Testament) word is *Christ*. What Messianic event is predicted in the following verses in Zechariah?
- a) Zechariah 9:9 (see Matthew 21:1-11)
  - b) Zechariah 11:12-13 (see Matthew 26:14-15, 27:3-10)
  - c) Zechariah 12:10 (see John 19:34, 37)
  - d) Zechariah 13:7 (see Mark 14:27, 50)
  - e) Zechariah 14:4 (see Acts 1:9-12)
  - f) Zechariah 14:6-8 (see Revelation 20:5, 21:1 – 22:5)
  - g) What do you notice about the order of these events, as foretold by Zechariah?
- 9) Which of the following verses will you choose to apply to your life today and how will you do so: Zechariah 1:3, 4:6b, 8:13b, 10:1?

Read Nehemiah 1:1-4, 11b; 2:4-6, 11-12, 17-20; chapter 4; 6:5-9, 15-16; 7:5a; 8:1-3, 8-10; 9:1-3, 32-38; 10:29; 11:1-2, 20; 12:27; 13:6-9, 25, 28, 30.

**10)** Extrabiblical historical records confirm that Sanballat the Horonite was the Governor of Samaria. Conduct some Bible research by examining 2 Kings 17:24-33 (as a reminder about the identity of the Samaritans), Ezra 4:1-5 (to recall how the Samaritans had been rebuffed by Zerubbabel), and Nehemiah 6:5-7 (to discover why Sanballat felt threatened). Then, look ahead to Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4, reading verses 9 and 19-26. Record items from this research that you find interesting or helpful.

**11)** Which verses and phrases in Nehemiah 4 talk about the way in which the work on the wall of Jerusalem was conducted?

**12)** What do you learn from Nehemiah 4 that will help you carry out God's work?

A few years after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Jews had fallen into a spiritual stupor, unaware and uncaring about the emptiness of their worship. Malachi prophesied at that time, posing a series of rhetorical questions, which he then answered. His purpose was to confront the Jews with their apathy and stir them to worship their loving and holy God, as He deserved.

**13)** With what two very personal issues did Malachi confront his fellow Jews in Malachi 2:14-16 and 3:7b-12? How would these issues relate to properly worshipping God?

**14)** Read Malachi 4:5. Following this prophecy and a period of roughly 400 years of Biblical silence, the last Old Testament prophet ministered on earth and Malachi's prophecy was fulfilled. Who was that prophet and what do you learn about his role from Matthew 17:10-13, 14:3-5, 10; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 1:11-17, 7:24-28; and John 1:6-8, 15, 23, 3:27-30?

**15)** The warnings of the prophets were stern, yet they also foretold a wonderful hope.

**a)** Try to discern what hope was being offered in each of the following passages:

1. Micah 4:1-4
2. Micah 5:2, 4-5a
3. Micah 7:8-20
4. Isaiah 2:2-4
5. Isaiah 9:6-7
6. Isaiah 53:2-12
7. Isaiah 65:17-25
8. Jeremiah 23:5-6
9. Jeremiah 31:33-34
10. Ezekiel 36:24-28
11. John 14:2-3

**b)** Read Romans 15:4, 13. How will your life today be different if you choose to “overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (be as specific as possible to your own life and circumstances)?