

Small Group Discussion Questions for Jan 13

Introduction to Haggai

Series: “Think Again”

Ice Breaker – Share an expectation you have for 2019. Something new or different that you think might be coming this year.

Or if you have access, go to www.thebibleproject.com and watch the video overview of the book of Haggai.

This sermon and discussion provides the background for the book of Haggai, a post-exilic prophet. We need to understand the 70 years of captivity and what happened when the Jews returned to Jerusalem in order to grasp the importance of Haggai’s messages. If you send out the questions to your group ahead of time, make sure to take out the guiding “answers” included here in parentheses. Enjoy the journey!

1. **Read Jeremiah 25:1-11.** Why did the people of Judah end up in captivity in Babylon? (Because of their stubborn sin and rebellion against God). But God also promised to bring back a remnant (Jeremiah 29:10). How would the exile prepare the remnant to return to the Promised Land? In other words, how would captivity change their hearts? Give some examples of how God uses “exile” experiences in our lives.
2. **Read Jeremiah 29:10-14.** This passage includes a favorite verse for many Christians (v.11). What do many people want this verse to mean for them? (A guarantee that God is planning their personal prosperity). But in the context of the exile, what is God actually promising His people? (That exile is part of His plan but that His ultimate desire is a restored relationship). How does this promise encourage you in your daily walk?
3. **Read Ezra 1 and 3:1-3, 8-11; 4:4-5, 24.** The work of rebuilding the Temple started off great but when opposition arose, the work halted. Why would God allow this trial to come when the people were trying to be obedient? (It was a test of faith and priorities). Why did they allow this opposition to stop them from obeying God? (Fear, lack of focus, etc). How does God use trials in our lives? (James 1:2-4) Give some examples.

Action Steps:

1. If you’re in a time of exile, ask God to awaken your desire for Him. Use Scripture each day to remind yourself of His desire to be in relationship with you.

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2. If you're going through a faith test, ask God to give you joy and perseverance in the midst of that test and to be thankful that He loves you enough to work on your faith.