

Ezekiel & Daniel

*Life Group
Study Guide*



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How to Use this Study Guide

This guide was written as a companion to our Life Group study in Ezekiel and Daniel this winter, beginning in January and continuing through the first week of April. We've prepared this guide in hopes that it will encourage you in your daily walk and prepare you to engage well as you study with others in your Life Group.

Each week's lesson contains a brief overview of the week's passage, and then five days worth of study. Each day, you will find a short introduction, some questions to get you thinking about the text, and then challenges to apply the text and pray for God to use it in your life. A careful reading of the day's passage and answering the questions should take most people about 15-20 minutes a day.

However you use this guide, our prayer is that it would continually drive you to make the study of God's Word a regular habit. May the Lord richly bless and sustain you as you meditate on His Word.

The Study Guide Team



Introduction

By Pastor Jason Hall

Many people enjoy traveling – seeing the sites, meeting new people, discovering new cultures. Not as many people enjoy the rigors of travel, like long car or plane rides or sleeping in a strange bed.

Can you imagine what it would be like to sleep in a strange bed, in a strange town, in a new country, *for the rest of your life*? Today, many in our world have experienced this, as record numbers of refugees have fled civil wars in the Middle East in recent years. The Israelites of the 6th century B.C. also lived this tragedy through a time we know today as the Exile. Thousands, perhaps even millions, of Israelites were removed from their homeland in Judah and forcibly migrated to Babylon and its surrounding regions. This tragedy should not have been a surprise to the people, however. God's prophets had been warning them, for decades and even centuries, that such a thing would come to pass if they did not repent.

The Exile was God's means of necessary and difficult, but loving, correction for His people. Part of God's grace to them was that prophets continued to share with them God's love and His plan in this time of Exile. Ezekiel and Daniel were two of those prophets, and their writings are the subject of our study this quarter. In these prophecies and stories, we'll see lament and hope, pain and promise, as God's purpose for the Israelites and all nations becomes increasingly more apparent.

We're going to spend 12 weeks walking through these prophets together. For Ezekiel, we'll look at some key passages that give us a sense of the book's overall message, but we won't read every chapter. In Daniel, we'll concentrate on the story of Daniel's life that dominates the first two thirds of the book. While we will certainly see God's judgment on sin, we'll also notice the ever-present grace of God in bringing His good purposes to fulfillment on behalf of His people.

Our study guide team and Life Group leaders are praying for you as you study these books. May we all be strengthened in courage and challenged in our faith, for in many ways, we live life as strangers in a strange land as well.



Ezekiel opens with a dramatic view of God in all His glory descending in what seems to be an angelic chariot. This vision of His glory will motivate Ezekiel as he ministers among some of the most challenging soil in Israel’s spiritual history. At His appearance, Ezekiel immediately fell to his face in reverent fear. But, as one theme we will see throughout the book, God repeatedly and quite literally snatched Ezekiel to his feet and gave him the task to reach hard-hearted people.

His commission from the Lord is to minister among the Israelites in exile, which God calls a rebellious house. His work is indeed cut out for him, but the Lord has chosen a stout prophet. Ezekiel’s name could mean either “God strengthens” or “God hardens.” That is the case in Ezek. 3:9 when God says “I have hardened (in Hebrew *hazak* like his name *ezeke*) your forehead” so that he can withstand the abuse and difficulties of his ministry among these rebels.

Prepared by Jase Brown

Day 1: Ezekiel 2:1-5

At the end of Ezekiel 1, Ezekiel is face down in fear of the glory of the Lord. But in Ezek. 2:1-2, God commands him to stand on his feet. He doesn't even wait for Ezekiel's obedience to this command. Instead, the Holy Spirit enters him and forcibly moves him to his feet. Being physically moved will become a regular occurrence for the prophet. God sends him to these rebellious people, and then introduces another major theme for the book. In Ezek. 2:5 God says that after Ezekiel has spoken to them, "They will know that a prophet has been among them."

When God forcefully moves Ezekiel around what could this be communicating to the exiles?

Why does Ezekiel use the plural in verse 3, "nations of rebels?" Does this mean Ezekiel's message is broader than just the exiles from Jerusalem?

Why does God include the phrase "They will know..." in verse 5? What is He trying to say?

Apply: In Jeremiah's day rebellion meant denial of sin and the coming judgment. In Ezekiel's day it meant denying the goodness of God in the face of His judgment. Yet the Lord is ever patient with us whether we listen or not. As we read through this book, Ezekiel is still among us, still asking if we will heed the Word of the Lord.

Pray: Lord, far too often I let my pride or selfishness crowd out your plain and simple commands. Please keep me attentive to your Word and in step with your Spirit.

Day 2: Ezekiel 2:6-10

God's instructions for Ezekiel become a bit more descriptive, saying that living with the people he will encounter will be like living among thorns or sitting on scorpions. But God encourages Ezekiel to not be afraid saying again two more times that Israel is a rebellious house. After encouraging him, God gives Ezekiel the first of his prophetic acts. He asks Ezekiel to eat a scroll. But this is no ordinary scroll. Often scrolls only had writing on one side. This scroll had lamentation and mourning written on both sides, meaning it was packed full of distressing messages.

What do the thorns and scorpions represent? What sort of road is Ezekiel about to walk?

How is it possible for Ezekiel to be fearless with this kind of news to deliver?

What does the content of the scroll indicate about God's message to the exiles?

Apply: Like Ezekiel, we have been called to speak God's Word. Christian history is full of rejected prophets, and we need to be prepared to walk that same road. We seek solace in the Lord knowing that He will be our joy and our defender.

Pray: God Almighty, I trust in you regardless of what this life may bring. I know you love me, and I know you will soon restore all things. Fill me with your Spirit so that I may be a faithful witness for you.

Day 3: Ezekiel 2:8-3:3

Continuing from yesterday, the command to eat the scroll is the command to internalize God's Word. Even though the contents – lamentation and mourning – seemed bitter, they taste sweet like honey. Before he could minister, Ezekiel needed both a spectacular vision of God's glory and a deep internalization of his Word. His ministry flows out of both experiences as Ezekiel undertakes the difficult task of convincing the exiles of their sin and need for repentance.

Would you be as swift to obedience as Ezekiel in the face of such an absurd request as eating a bunch of paper? How about in the everyday commands that make perfect sense?

God commands Ezekiel to first eat and then go speak. How will internalizing the Word help Ezekiel in the rest of his ministry?

How can God's Word be simultaneously bitter and sweet? Have you experienced this in your life?

Apply: Through Bible study, meditation, and Scripture memorization we internalize the Word. This is a major component of spiritual formation. In so doing we transform our minds and shepherd our hearts. Like Ezekiel, we need to be changed if we are going to preach about God's life-changing power.

Pray: Lord Jesus, I pray you would create in me a craving to devour your Word. I pray that you continue to use it to make me a sharper tool in your hand.

Day 4: Ezekiel 3:4-11

In this second commissioning of Ezekiel, there are some important differences. Here the Lord says that He has not sent Ezekiel to a foreign land. If He had, He says, “Surely they would listen to you.” Also, similar to eating the scroll, God asks Ezekiel to receive in his heart all His words that he will say. There is a play on words here that was briefly mentioned in the introduction. In verses 5-9, whenever the word “hard” is used it is the same root as the beginning of the name “Ezekiel.” It’s as if Israel and Ezekiel will be two rams butting heads.

The foreigner’s speech is hard, but Israel’s heart is also hard. What is the parallel between the foreigners and Israel that God is making?

Do you find yourself consistently witnessing to a particular person only to be met with stubborn obstinance?

Based on verse 11, what is Ezekiel’s duty: Conversion or proclamation? What does that mean for us and our witness?

Apply: As we minister, we will likely face plenty of opposition and discouragement. We have to stay strong and not grow weary of doing good. The Lord is in charge of the increase, and we are called to be faithful. Do not be discouraged if the Lord has given you a difficult ministry. Instead, praise Him for the joy of being a part of the kingdom work.

Pray: Father, I ask you for supernatural endurance so that in everything I may finish the good works that you have assigned to me. Keep me focused on you rather than my circumstances so that I may walk in humble joy.

Day 5: Ezekiel 3:12-15

Even in the midst of this overwhelming display of angelic worship, Ezekiel is bitter and angry. He wrestles with his commission for seven days. It is possible that these seven days have another meaning as well. Seven days was the length of time that Jewish relatives mourned the death of a loved one. It was also the length of time that it took to consecrate someone to the priesthood. Perhaps Ezekiel meant for his readers to understand one of these two things with his period of silence as well.

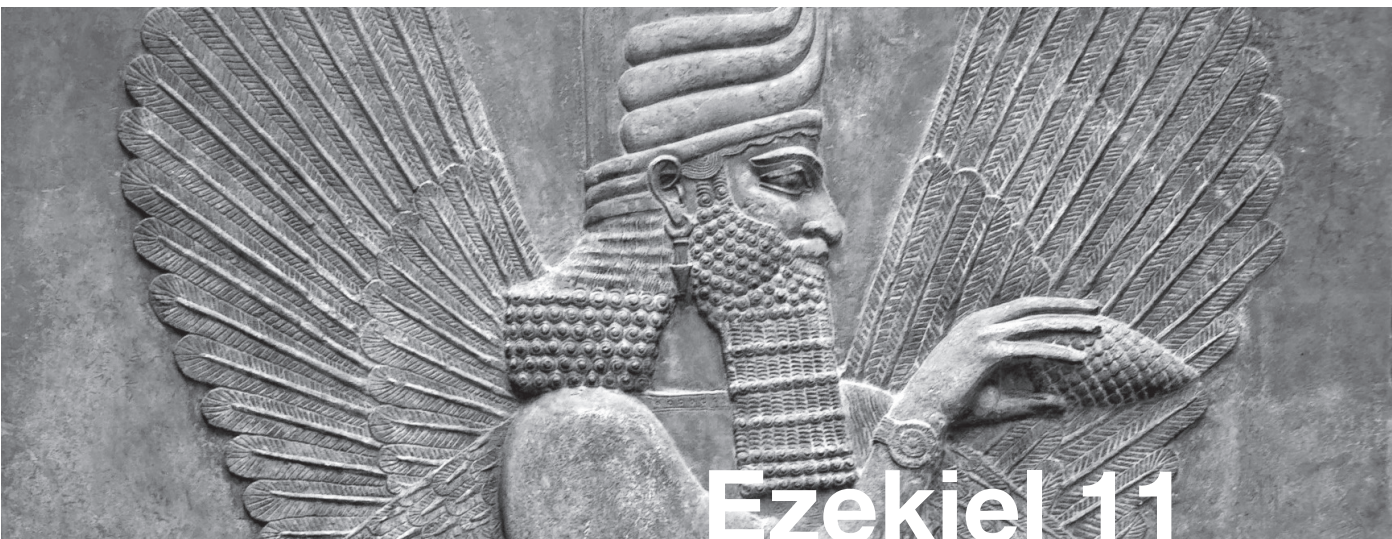
If we take Ezekiel's silence to mean mourning, then what would he be conveying to those around him?

What if his silence was his consecration to ministry? What would he be conveying then?

Have you ever wrestled with something God has asked you to do? How did you settle this in your heart?

Apply: Sometimes the most difficult part about obedience is the dread of facing the decision. Our faith always becomes more real when it begins to cost us something. It's at those times that we need to remind ourselves of Whom we serve and, like Ezekiel, gain a fresh vision of the glory of the Lord. May our awe at His power and majesty be the gas in our tanks to further obedience.

Pray: Lord, I know I have often wavered in my faithfulness, but you are always faithful. You are worthy of any loss I have to suffer for your name's sake. Create in me a heart of steadfast obedience to the praise of your glory.



As we turn the page to chapter 11 of Ezekiel, we quickly notice that the Lord is not happy with Jerusalem's inhabitants, particularly with its leaders. One of these leaders will drop dead in the middle of Ezekiel's prophecy! Why is God so angry with them? Throughout the book of Ezekiel, the Lord calls the people of Israel rebellious, stubborn, and hard-hearted. One striking scene that reveals the depths of Israel's sin occurs in chapter 8 when Ezekiel is ushered into the temple. Where worship of the one true God should have been found, Ezekiel witnessed only idolatry. Scholar Iain Duguid summarizes the extent of the wickedness: "Their sin extends from outside the city gate to the inner courtyard of the temple itself. It involves both men and women, even the seventy elders...It includes idolatry from all sorts of surrounding nations (Canaan, Egypt, and Babylon) and involving all kinds of gods...This is unified, universalized religion, the ultimate multifaith worship service. From the Lord's perspective, however, the picture is one of abomination piled on abomination." As a result, the glory of the Lord departs the temple in chapter 10.

Despite the putrid state of Jerusalem, the inhabitants arrogantly exalt themselves as the chosen elite because they were exempt from an earlier exile. They believe God has rejected the scattered exiles while they are safe within His chosen city. However, the prophecy in chapter 11 will turn the tables. Judgment is coming for those who think they are safe in the city. It will be swift and brutal. But salvation is coming for those in exile who turn their hearts to the Lord. It will be sure and beautiful.

Prepared by Robin Hall

Day 1: Ezekiel 11:1-4

If you look at Ezek. 10:18-19, you will see the glory of the Lord as it exits the temple and then resides above the cherubim at the entrance of the east gate of the temple. This gate is where we find Ezekiel at the beginning of chapter 11.

How does Ezekiel come to be at the east gate of the temple? Who else does he see there?

Ezekiel mentions two leaders in particular in this passage. Of what two activities does God pronounce them guilty in verse 2?

What does God call Ezekiel to do in response to these wicked officials? Note the word that is repeated for emphasis in verse 4.

Apply: Based on the context of the rest of the chapter, it appears that the leaders believe they are the choice “meat” allowed to remain in the pot (while the exiles are the less appetizing parts of the animal that have been removed). What is clear is that Ezekiel was called on to confront this false counsel. What are some of the sources of bad counsel that we must contend with today?

Pray: Father, open my eyes to the lies and half-truths that I believe daily. Give me understanding of your Word that I may be able to stand firm in the truth and be a light for truth wherever I go.

Day 2: Ezekiel 11:5-13

To better understand the prophecy given to Ezekiel in this passage, read the passage through a few times and then read its fulfillment in 2 Kings 25:1-7 (also, Ezekiel 12's prophecy gives further details). The prideful people believe they will be safe in the city of Jerusalem. Yet, God decrees that the actions of the leaders will lead to many deaths in the city, with the leaders, ironically, meeting their judgment outside the city.

The Lord doesn't just know the false things said in Jerusalem. What else does He know (verse 5)?

What details do you learn about the Lord's judgment from these verses? How and where will He judge them? Whom will God use to execute these judgments on them?

Finally, why is God judging them (see verse 12 and Ezek. 8:6-10, 14-16)?

Apply: This passage ends with the death of one of the leaders whose name, Pelatiah, means "the Lord rescues." Ezekiel recognized this sudden event as God's judgment on a false leader and wondered if anyone would be spared from God's wrath. Had His people's guilt taken them beyond the reach of God's gracious rescue? Do you ever wonder if you are beyond hope? Do you, like Ezekiel, run to God with your hopeless thoughts?

Pray: Father, you search our hearts and know our anxious and hopeless thoughts. We confess that if left to ourselves, there truly would be no hope because of our sin and selfishness. But blessed be your merciful name that you have "caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!"

Day 3: Ezekiel 11:14-18

The pride of the inhabitants of Jerusalem is most evident in these verses. They claim in verse 15 that those in exile are far away from the Lord (because they are far from the temple in Jerusalem), while the inhabitants of Jerusalem who escaped early exile are the true chosen ones left to inherit the land. God's response to this taunt (and to Ezekiel's question in verse 13) gives both clarity and hope to the exiles in Babylon.

Look at the beginning of verse 15, where the Lord uses multiple names for the exiles — those the Jerusalem inhabitants are taunting. List all of these names below.

According to verse 16, who is responsible for removing and scattering the exiles? Though far from the temple in Jerusalem, what sanctuary has been made available to them?

How does God respond to the claim from those in Jerusalem that the exiles have forfeited their possession of the Promised Land (verses 17-18)? How does this prophecy also answer Ezekiel's question from verse 13?

Apply: Pride is a tricky sin because we often cannot see it until it leads to our downfall. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were quick to judge the exiles while thinking they were in the right. Examine your heart (often!) for evidence of pride and a judgmental spirit.

Pray: Lord, I am quick to exonerate myself while condemning others in my heart. Please forgive me and give me a humble heart that enables me to receive your grace and extend your grace to others.

Day 4: Ezekiel 11:19-21

God's grace upon grace shines brightly in this part of Ezekiel's prophecy. The Lord promises not to make an end of Israel (as Ezekiel had feared, verse 13), but that is not all. He then promises to re-gather them to the land of Israel, but His promises do not end there. He also promises to give them a new heart and a new spirit so that they can obey the Lord. And if that isn't enough grace, they will also forever belong to the Lord as His chosen possession.

What led to the stony, hard-heartedness of the Israelites? Read Zech. 7:8-14.

Go back and underline or note all of the “I will’s” of verses 17-20. How do these promises contrast with God’s promise in verse 21?

For what purpose did God give His people a heart of flesh in place of a heart of stone? Look at verses 19-20 (see also Jer. 31:33-34 and 1 Pet. 2:9-10)?

Apply: Is there evidence in your life that your heart of stone has been replaced with a heart of flesh? If not, cry out to the Lord for a new heart today - a heart of faith in Christ and love for His people.

Pray: Create in us, O Lord, a new heart that we may “flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22).

Day 5: Ezekiel 11:22-25

In chapter 10, we saw the glory of God leave the temple and come to rest just outside its gate. This is where we found Ezekiel, as well, at the beginning of the chapter, and where he received this prophecy. However, neither the glory of God nor His prophet will remain in this location by the end of the chapter.

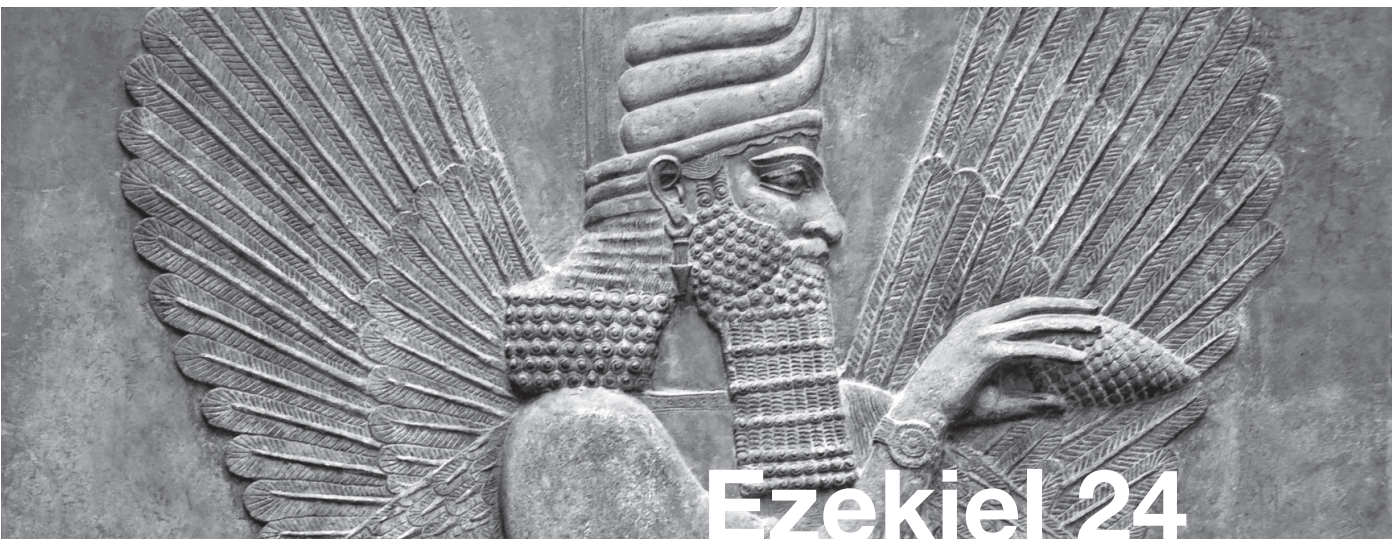
To what location does the glory of the Lord move? Why do you think this move away from the city is significant, based on what you have learned so far from this chapter?

What significance does this location have for future prophecy fulfillment? Read Zech. 14:4-11.

Where do we find Ezekiel at the end of the chapter? What is he doing?

Apply: No one wants to receive bad news about their home town. Ezekiel, however, had to deliver terrible news about the destruction that was coming swiftly and surely to Jerusalem. But he also had very, very good news for them as well...news of hope and salvation like they could never imagine! We, too, have bad news...and very, very good news to deliver today. Be faithful to speak truth today – of the ugliness of sin and the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Pray: Father, open our eyes to opportunities to share the gospel today. Help us keep our eyes up, knowing that Jesus is coming back soon! May this urgent reality motivate us to use our time wisely.



Our study this week is the final prophecy regarding the fall of Judah and Jerusalem. God had sent prophets, one after another, to warn the people that unless they repent, judgment is coming. And now Ezekiel is prophesying that judgment time is finally here. He gave this prophecy on the day when Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 24 is divided into two parts consisting of two parables: the parable of the cooking pot (verses 1-14) and the parable at the death of Ezekiel's wife (verses 15-27). The parable of the cooking pot consists of three sections, each introduced by "Thus says the Lord God." The first section is a parable about a cooking pot (verses 3-5). The following two sections (verses 6-14) are divine interpretations of the parable.

God informs Ezekiel that his wife will die in the second part of the chapter. The prophet is asked to be a sign to the people by how he reacts to the death of his wife. This must have been very painful for Ezekiel, yet he faithfully obeys and does precisely what the Lord commanded him to do. The chapter ends with Ezekiel's mouth opening (verses 25-27). He will be able to speak freely, and from now on, he will be speaking hope about the restoration of God's people.

Prepared by Pastor John Nyota

Day 1: Ezekiel 24:1-5

God instructs Ezekiel to record the date of the prophecy he is about to give. This is the beginning of the end. This marks the darkest hour for the nation. There will be so much bloodshed, the city and the temple will be destroyed. The day would be remembered later in Israel's history.

Why does God ask Ezekiel to record this date (verses 1-2)? See also 2 Kings 25:1; Jer. 52:1-5.

Verse 5 describes the attack by the Babylonians metaphorically. What metaphor does Ezekiel use?

Read Zech. 8:18-19. Many years later, after God restores the people to the land, God says the fast days, when they fasted in memory of the fall of Jerusalem, to be days of joy and gladness. They are to celebrate God's salvation and faithfulness. What do you learn about God?

Apply: God disciplines us, not to give us a hard and miserable time, but because He loves us. He wants us to repent and get back into fellowship with Him. Are there unconfessed sins in your life? What are you doing about it?

Pray: Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting.

Day 2: Ezekiel 24:1-8

God instructed Ezekiel to tell the people a parable about the cooking pot (verses 3-5). The second part of the passage (verses 6-8) is the interpretation of the text. The time for repentance has passed, and now God is about to bring judgment on His people.

What does the pot represent (verse 6)? The meat represents the inhabitants of the city. What is going to happen to the city and its inhabitants?

Why is the city about to be destroyed (verses 7-8)?

The people provoked God's wrath to take vengeance in verse 8. Read 2 Chron. 36:15-16; Ps. 86:15; and Ps. 103:8-12. What do you learn about God's patience and grace toward His people?

Apply: God is very gracious with us and full of mercy. He doesn't deal with us according to our sins. He will always forgive us when we repent because He is a faithful God. What's your response to our God?

Pray: Oh God, may I meditate on your grace and mercy towards me. And may this lead me to love you even more and be obedient to your leading.

Day 3: Ezekiel 24:9-14

Today's passage is a continuation of the interpretation of the parable of the cooking pot. God reiterates that the time to act is now. The corruption and rot ran so deep that both the pot and its contents must be destroyed. We see again God's response to the bloodshed in Jerusalem.

What is God's response to the bloodshed in the city (verses 9-11)?

In verse 13, God says, "I would have cleansed you," implying He had offered the people opportunities to repent. According to Deut. 4:23-24; Deut. 8:11; Ps. 119:11; and 2 Chron. 24:18-19, how had God offered to cleanse them?

Read John 1:11-12; John 3:16; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 4:12; and 1 John 1:8-9. How has God offered us cleansing today?

Apply: God has saved us, given us the Holy Spirit and His Word to continue His work of sanctification in our lives.

Pray: Lord, I pray that I will hunger and thirst for your Word and seek to obey what you are teaching me.

Day 4: Ezekiel 24:15-24

Today's study is about an event that must have been the most painful in Ezekiel's life. God tells Ezekiel that He's about to take away his wife with one blow. Ezekiel becomes a sign to the people by how he reacts to his wife's death.

The Lord uses the following parable to speak to His people through the death of Ezekiel's wife. How does Ezekiel respond to the Lord's instructions regarding the death of his wife (verse 18)?

It's important to note that the passage doesn't say God put Ezekiel's wife to death as a lesson to His people. Maybe she contracted a disease and died suddenly. God doesn't promise us that we will not face suffering in this life. From the following verses, what do you learn about suffering: Ps. 23:4; 2 Cor. 12:1-9; Heb. 12:7; and James 1:2-4?

Read Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:16-17. What attitude should we have towards suffering? Who should we look up to and why (Heb. 12:2-3)?

Apply: Jesus fully understands all kinds of suffering we are going through or will ever face. He suffered much more than we will ever suffer. We should stay close to Him and seek His guidance, praying that He will be glorified through it all.

Pray: Lord Jesus, I pray that you will work all things in my life for good, including tough times. May I seek your leading, knowing that this life's sufferings cannot be compared with the glory that will be revealed in me.

Day 5: **Ezekiel 24:15-27**

As expected, the people find it unusual that Ezekiel doesn't show any signs of mourning the death of his wife. And Ezekiel uses this occasion to let them know that God was going to take away from them the delight of their eyes, just like He took Ezekiel's wife.

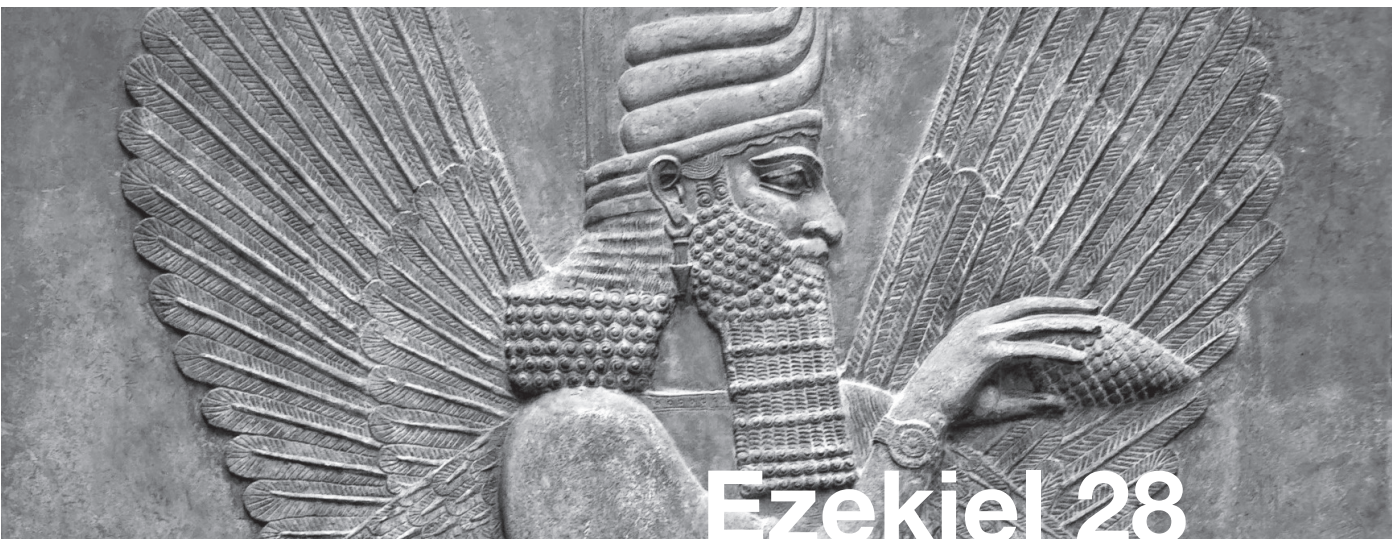
What was the delight of the people's eyes that the Lord is about to take away from them (verses 19-21)?

How are the people supposed to respond (verses 22-24)?

Read verses 25-27. After the fall of Jerusalem and the news of its destruction reach the exiles, Ezekiel's mouth will be opened. He will no longer be dumb. What is Ezekiel asked to do, and what will be the result (verse 27)?

Apply: God allows suffering into our lives so that we can grow in our faith and our knowledge of Him.

Pray: Lord, thank you for your grace even while I suffer. I pray that my attitude will not be one of questioning but of asking what you are teaching me through this trial.



God spoke through Ezekiel bringing messages of both doom and hope to the people of Judah. Ezekiel preached the coming judgment of God and called the people to repentance. As the people were taken into exile, Ezekiel reminded them to hope in God's promise of restoration. Ezekiel also prophesied against Israel's enemies and neighbors. Even though God sometimes uses unbelievers for His purposes, they are not exempt from God's justice. The Lord's judgment of the nations should have encouraged the remnant in exile, and it paves the way for the restoration of Israel as God's people. God would still honor His promise to Israel made through Abraham.

In our passage this week, Ezekiel delivers the third message against Tyre, but this time it is explicitly directed at the ruler. The passage begins with a stinging indictment and a devastating punishment, followed by a lamentation that exposes the pride, greed, and idolatry that runs rampant in the world system even today. Then there is a similar prophecy against nearby Sidon, and then the passage ends with words of hope and restoration for Israel.

Prepared by Mike Greene

Day 1: Ezekiel 28:1-26

To get an even better overview, you may find it helpful also to read Ezekiel 26 and 27. Pay particular attention to the similarities among the prophecies for Tyre and Sidon and for the region and its ruler. Note that Sidon was a nearby city, and Tyre was the capital of the region. It is common to find them mentioned together, and the ruler of Tyre was held accountable for both. Tyre was thought to be impregnable, and Tyre's political allies and trading partners would be shocked at her destruction.

Consult a map in the back of your Bible or in a biblical reference book to locate Tyre and Sidon. How might their locations be a factor in their role in the world economy? What is their relation to Israel?

What bad influence did Tyre contribute to Israel noted in 1 Kings 16:29-34? How did she contribute to the spiritual and moral decay in Israel? While not specifically mentioned in Ezekiel 28, can you see the cascading effects of worshipping pagan gods?

What similarities do you see between our study passage and how the world system operates today?

Apply: Despite what the culture says, there is a connection between worship and how we live. What you love the most is what you will worship. Ungodly rulers will result in ungodly nations.

Pray: Father, I pray that you will raise up leaders in our country who will bring glory to you. Forgive us for our corporate sins, for our culture has failed to give you the thanks and praise you deserve. May we be found faithful.

Day 2: Ezekiel 28:1-10

Through Ezekiel, the Lord delivers His indictment against the “prince of Tyre.” His punishment is a violent and shameful death that God Himself will bring at the hands of foreigners. As noted in earlier chapters, Tyre will face destruction. Now we see that God is also holding the leader of Tyre personally accountable.

What are the charges against the leader of Tyre? According to Ezek. 26:1-6, what else is Tyre guilty of, and what is God’s stated purpose for this judgment?

In verse 7, the Lord says, “...I will bring foreigners upon you...” Refer to Ezek. 26:7 to identify these foreigners. What might that speak to the Israelites in exile in Babylon?

The text says that the leader of Tyre increased his wealth through wisdom and understanding. What is wrong with that? Was it wrong for him to use wisdom to acquire wealth? The context should give you the answer, but look at Deut. 8:17-18 and see how that affects your response.

Apply: It may not always look like it, but God will hold leaders accountable for their actions. It is the Lord who gives us the ability to create wealth. He is the giver of all good things.

Pray: Lord God, you are our Creator and the giver of all good things, even the gift of life. We praise your name. Help your people to stand firm in faith rather than following after the world’s ways.

Day 3: Ezekiel 28:11-19

The “prince of Tyre” is now referred to as the “king of Tyre.” The Lord calls on Ezekiel to offer a lamentation. What follows is often debated. Is it an allegory, a metaphor, or something more specific? Regardless of the interpretive difficulties, there is a clear message about the motives behind the world system.

What is a lamentation? If you are not sure, look it up in a dictionary. What does the offer of a lamentation say about the heart of God?

Some suggest that references to Eden imply that the text is talking about Adam, or the connections to perfection imply some ideal man. What specific things do you see in the text that make both of these views improbable? Whom do you think the text is referring to?

How do these descriptions compare to the charges in verses 1-10?

Apply: Rather than complain or be complacent, God’s people must stand firm in faith and pray for others, especially our leaders and influencers.

Pray: Look up Ps. 20:7 and 2 Pet. 3:9. Make these your prayer today.

Day 4: Ezekiel 28:20-24

The prophecy now turns to Sidon, a nearby city in the same region, closely allied with Tyre. Since Tyre was the capital of the region, her leader would be held accountable for the sins of Sidon. Sidon would also suffer severe judgment but was not wholly destroyed. Tyre would surrender to Nebuchadnezzar and be defeated; however, Tyre would be completely destroyed later by Alexander the Great, never to be rebuilt. Everything happened just as the Lord said it would.

What specific things does the Lord intend to accomplish by His judgment? (HINT: see verses 22-23).

What does the text say will be the benefit for Israel?

According to the text, what is God's ultimate purpose in bringing judgment against Sidon?

Apply: No matter how strong or powerful or wealthy we may think we are, God is infinitely more. There is no security apart from a personal relationship with the Living God. When the Lord Jesus returns, all will know that He is God.

Pray: Lord, reveal your glory and your holiness in your church so that our world will know that you are God.

Day 5: Ezekiel 28:25-26

A message of doom for the surrounding nations ends with hope for Israel. The Jews would hear these words while they were in exile in Babylon. Every nation deserves God's judgment, even Israel, but Israel is the only one that God promised to preserve and restore. God is uniquely just and merciful at the same time, faithful to keep His promises.

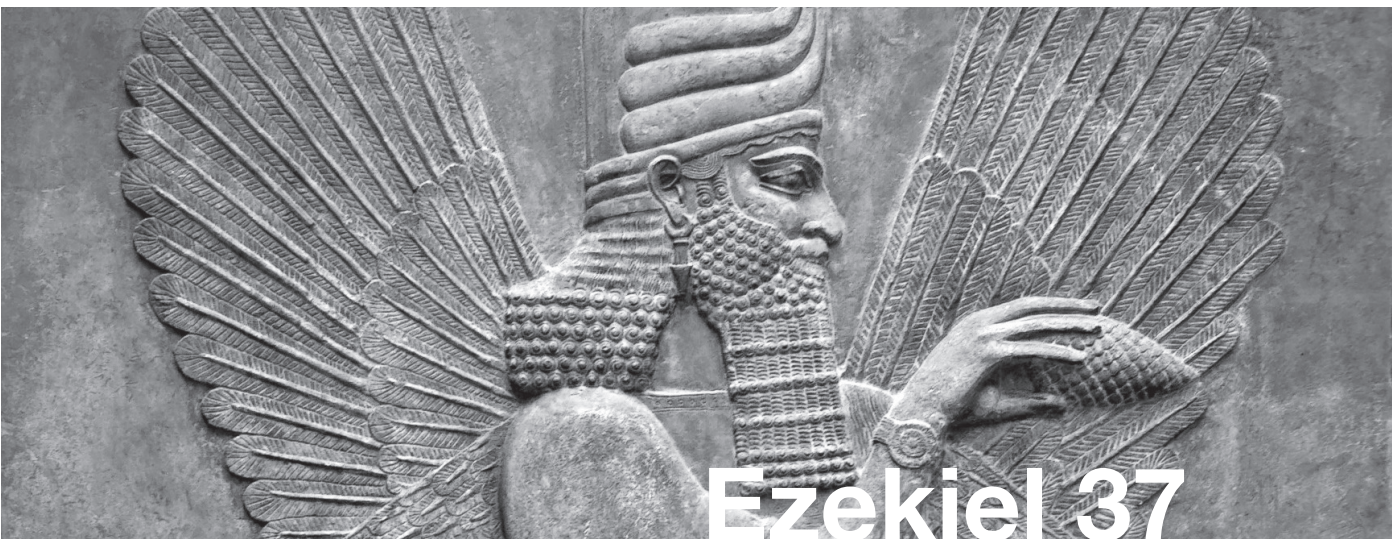
As the Lord brings judgment on Israel's enemies and neighbors, what are the benefits for Israel? What does this say about the nature of God?

What specific descriptions does the text give for a restored Israel? How might this have encouraged the exiles in Babylon?

Israel became a country again in 1948. Does this text describe life in Israel today? Does Israel occupy all of the land that was promised? When will this promise of regathering and restoration be fulfilled?

Apply: Be glad that the promises of God are not contingent upon our performance. God is faithful even when we are not. Despite their failures, God is keeping His promises. Be careful not to place your faith in things that God didn't promise.

Pray: Lord, we pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Thank you for the finished work of Christ, the forgiveness of sin. Thank you for your promise to establish a new heaven and a new earth.



Ezekiel 37 was written to hurting people far from home. They were under the judgment of God, living in a time of mourning and confusion. In this well-known passage, Ezekiel is given two prophecies to relate to the people. These visions brought renewed hope and promise to the nation that God would restore them. They speak of healing and the Lord's continued undeserved kindness. They were surely an encouragement.

A few things are highlighted as you look at the passage more closely. God is gracious and kind even when we don't deserve it. He does this for His glory and renown among the nations. He is a miracle-working, promise-keeping God who deserves our time and praises. Ezekiel was a faithful prophet, immediately obeying what the Lord asked him to do. There are themes of return to the land, unity of Israel, and purity.

Prepared by Candi Powers

Day 1: Ezekiel 37:1-6

In this passage, Ezekiel has a vision of dry bones and is asked by the Lord to be obedient in prophesying what he sees.

Look at verses 1-2. Who is speaking? Describe where he is and who brought him there.

What is God's question to Ezekiel and Ezekiel's answer? Why do you think he answered that way?

What is God's stated purpose behind this prophecy?

Apply: Ezekiel's response to God's question in verse 3 shows faith in God's power to accomplish the impossible and willingness to submit to God's wisdom in bringing about what is best. Do you trust in both God's sovereignty and wisdom? Are you willing to give Him complete control instead of trying to take over and do what you think is best?

Pray: Lord, give me faith to believe that you can do the impossible. Increase my faith. Please also give me the patience to wait on your timing. Help me trust your wisdom and love as you work in my life.

Day 2: **Ezekiel 37:7-10**

In the previous verses, Ezekiel was commanded to prophesy. Here he obeys and gets to see what God does.

What is the difference between a bone, sinew, flesh, and skin? What was still missing?

What did God ask Ezekiel to prophesy?

What was Ezekiel's response when God told him to prophesy? What happened when he obeyed?

Apply: Ezekiel was willing to obey when God asked him to do something out of the ordinary. Is there something out of the ordinary you feel like God is telling you to do? Are you immediately obeying with faith as Ezekiel did?

Pray: God, it's so neat how you work to do things that seem impossible to me. Please help me to walk in fellowship with you so that I can discern the way you want me to go. Keep me consistent in spending time in the Bible. Help me respond with immediate obedience to what you reveal through your Word.

Day 3: Ezekiel 37:11-14

In these verses, the Lord reveals to Ezekiel the meaning of the prophecy of the dry bones.

What do the bones represent?

What things did the Lord promise them?

What is the stated purpose of what the Lord will do? How sure is this prophecy's fulfillment?

Apply: God was so gracious and patient in how He dealt with His people in the Old Testament. Here we see Him once again giving hope and promises to His exiled people who had been disobedient to His Word. He is also gracious and patient with us so that we know He is the Lord. Take a few minutes to reflect on some of the ways God has been patient and gracious to you.

Pray: God, you are a gracious and patient God, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and kindness. Thank you for being patient with me even as I fail to honor you as Lord fully. Praise you for your grace and kindness to me. Enable me by your Spirit to overflow with that grace and patience toward those around me. Do all this for your glory so that people will come to know you as their Lord.

Day 4: **Ezekiel 37:15-23**

These verses explain another of Ezekiel's visions. It connects to the previous vision by again giving a renewed hope for the restoration of Israel.

What was Ezekiel told to do?

What was the meaning of his actions?

What promises does the Lord make in verse 23? What do you notice about the character of God?

Apply: Here, we see a holy God working to purify the nation of Israel. This same God works today in our lives to bring about purity and holiness. What sin do you need to confess today? How can you praise the Lord for being your God?

Pray: Thank you for your Spirit working in my life to bring purity. Thank you for cleansing me from my sins through your work on the cross. Thank you for caring for me enough to make me your child and for being a personal God.

Day 5: Ezekiel 37:24-28

The promises to Israel continue in these verses giving the people a renewed hope for the future.

What specific things does God promise to the people? How could you categorize the promises into groups?

What words and ideas are repeated in verses 24-28? How do you see these same themes in other passages of Scripture?

What is God's purpose in fulfilling these promises?

Apply: God has made numerous promises to His people throughout history. These promises can be trusted because God always keeps them. What is a promise from Scripture that has encouraged your heart? If you haven't already, consider committing that verse or passage to memory.

Pray: God, thank you for your promises and how they encourage me in good and hard times. You are different from everyone else in that you always keep your promises. Thank you for being a truthful, trustworthy, promise-keeping God.



The first half of Daniel primarily recounts stories of Daniel and his friends, while the second half records prophecies and visions Daniel saw about God's plans for the future. The first half is widely known among Christians and even non-Christians – who could forget Daniel and the lion's den or his friends in the fiery furnace? When seen in the broader context of the book of Daniel and the even broader context of the entire Bible, these stories display the sovereignty of God not only over those individual circumstances but over all events and people.

Daniel 1 introduces four individuals God would use to prove His sovereignty and mighty power. They lived almost their whole lives exiled from the Promised Land, separated from their families, and in service to two foreign kings. Yet, as this passage shows, they chose to remember God's sovereignty despite the exile, separations, and difficult situations. The resolutions they make in chapter 1 set up the first half of Daniel.

Prepared by Stef Dowd

Day 1: Daniel 1:1-4

In Daniel's day, Israel was conquered by King Nebuchadnezzar, inaugurating the Babylonian exile. The Babylonians' goal, when conquering a people, was to leave no trace of them but rather to convert them into being Babylonian. This kind of assimilation or "education" is quite visible in Daniel 1.

When the Babylonians captured Jerusalem, what were the first items that were stolen? What was done with them? Read verse 2. How does this reflect the Babylonian goal mentioned above?

The "vessels of the house of God" were placed in the house and treasury of Nebuchadnezzar's god. What could this placement mean to the Israelites who had been taken into exile?

In verse 2, Daniel states that the Lord gave the king and vessels of God to the Babylonians. What does this say about Daniel's view of the sovereignty of God?

Apply: Even with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Christians will constantly struggle with a temptation to worship something other than God.

Pray: Sovereign God, I allow myself to be drawn toward the worship of created things rather than you. Please make me keenly aware of specific sins that need to be confessed and repented of so that I may grow in Christlikeness.

Day 2: Daniel 1:5-7

God desires that His people be set apart from those who are not His people. This occurred under the Law through restrictions and precise instructions concerning food. Personal names, which usually represented an attitude toward God or a happening within a person's life, were another way God's people were set apart.

What do you think was the Babylonians' goal in changing the food and drink of their captive young men?

Who is the central figure in verse 5? What does this say about Nebuchadnezzar's sovereignty?

Using a study Bible or trusted website, choose one or more of the four youths and find the meaning of his Hebrew name and contrast it with the meaning of his Babylonian name.

Apply: Thus far, during their exile, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah have submitted to the earthly king, remembering it was their heavenly Sovereign who had given the king authority. Do you struggle with submitting to an authority God has in place? Do you choose to see submission to an earthly power as an act of submission to divine authority?

Pray: Father God, thank you for being perfectly just and trustworthy. Please help my struggle to submit to the earthly authority you have placed me under. Whether my struggle is inward or outward, remind me that you, my perfect Sovereign, are always watching and ready to give me the grace needed to submit.

Day 3: Daniel 1:8-16

Daniel and his friends knew they would be immersed in Babylonian culture and history for three years. The purpose of this “education” was to make them Babylonians. As we saw yesterday, they did submit to all the requests the earthly authorities asked — their names were even changed! In this passage, they resolve to honor the heavenly Authority above all.

Describe Daniel’s demeanor while expressing his resolution. Is he angry, confident, disrespectful, etc.? What words or tone in the text brought you to this conclusion?

Why did the “chief of the eunuchs” listen to Daniel?

Whom did the eunuch fear? According to his actions, whom did Daniel fear? How did those fears affect their actions?

Apply: Every story has a turning point that changes the rest of the story. In verse 8, Daniel’s resolution to glorify God through obedience is that point for the four youths. Have you come to the turning point of salvation in your life?

Pray: I praise you, Lord, for being sovereign over all turning points in all of history, including those in my life. I resolve to live to glorify you while acknowledging that it is only with your help that I can fulfill that resolution.

Day 4: Romans 5:15 and 11:5-6; 2 Corinthians 9:8 and 12:9

At various times and with perfect consistency, God offers His “favor” to those He chooses. This is not God “doing someone a favor” but instead extending His grace to them. This begs the question, what is grace? Is it an attribute of God or an act of God? How does one receive grace? The apostle Paul uses the word “grace” 86 times in his writings, and in a few of those, we will look for an answer.

Read Rom. 5:15-16 and 11:5-6. How is grace described? Who is it for? Why is it needed?

Does this seem like an attribute/quality found in Jesus? Can you think of an example?

Read 2 Cor. 9:8 and 12:9. How is grace described? Who is it from? What is its purpose?

Apply: Daniel had God’s favor. In other words, God acted in grace toward Daniel by giving him favor with the eunuch. Grace is both an attribute of God and an action God takes on behalf of His children. If you are a Christian, when has God’s grace (whether as an attribute or action) been evident in your life?

Pray: God, I praise you for your grace in my salvation and daily life. You treat me better than I deserve, and you are ready to help me at any time. Please help me to draw near to the throne of grace.

Day 5: **Daniel 1:17-21**

For three years, Daniel and his friends were trained to become Babylonians; yet, because of God's favor, they successfully challenged their diet regimen and maintained their identity as part of God's chosen people by keeping part of the Law. God blesses obedience. While they are not taken out of Babylon, God continues to bless and provide for these youths.

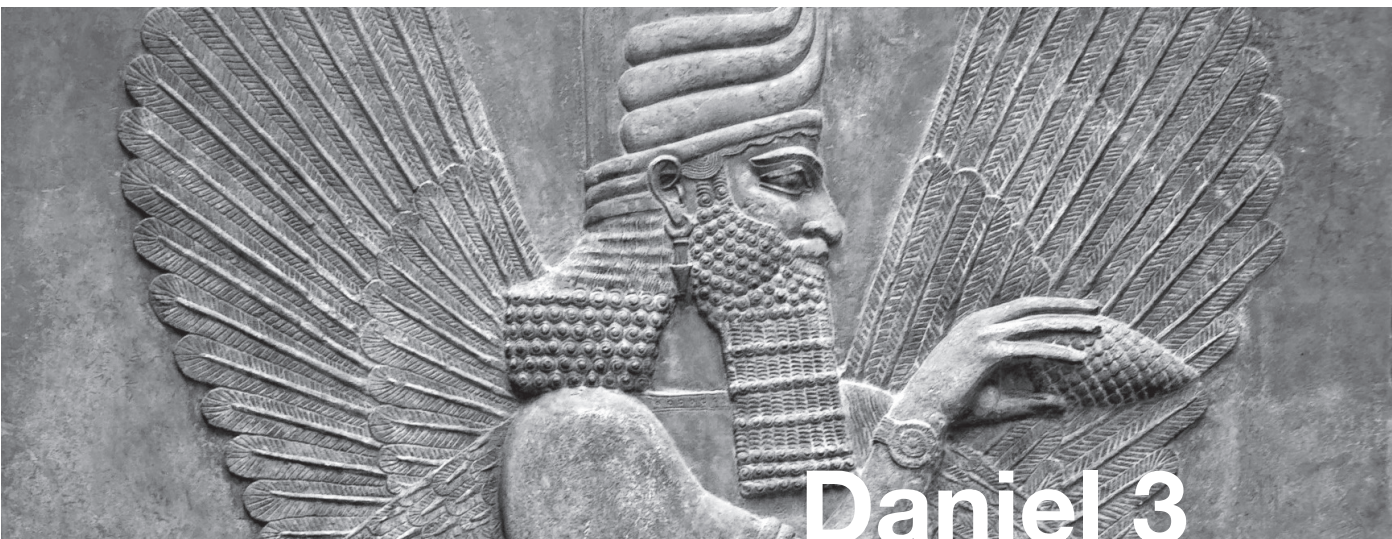
How does God continue to show favor and give grace to Daniel and his friends?

How were the Babylonians successful when the time of “education” was over? How had the youths been successful?

Why does Daniel emphasize that the youths were “ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters” in the kingdom? What does that prove?

Apply: Through Jeremiah, God calls His people “to seek the welfare of the city” they had been exiled to. Daniel and his friends did this. As a Christian, how are you seeking the welfare of those around you? Are your good deeds accompanied by the Gospel message?

Pray: Lord God, sovereignly place people around me I can bless by sharing the Gospel. May my life, actions, and words reflect my identity in you.



Sometime in your life, you have probably asked, “Why does God allow suffering?” Why do we go through pain and adversity? There are several answers. Sometimes hardship is God’s chastening. When we are not walking with Him as we should, He steps in as a loving father and disciplines us, bringing us back to Him. Sometimes we suffer because we live in a fallen world filled with sin and brokenness. Yet sometimes God allows us to suffer that through our suffering, we might encourage others to speak the Word of God without fear (see Phil. 1:12-14).

In Daniel 3, we encounter three young faithful Jewish men who endured great hardship that God used to reveal Himself to the most powerful Gentile kingdom in the world. The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is a story we all know well. This week, as we walk through this chapter, consider how the experience of these three men helps us examine our faith and determine whether we have the kind of authentic faith that can be tested and bring glory to God.

Prepared by Jamie O'Brien

Day 1: Daniel 3:1-7

At the close of chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men. Daniel remained in the king's court while Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were made administrators over the province of Babylon (Dan. 2:46-49). As we pick up the narrative in chapter 3, we are not told how much time had passed, but what we do know is that despite Nebuchadnezzar's experience with the One True God in chapter 2, he commissioned the construction of a ninety-foot-tall statue made of gold.

Who had gathered at the plain of Dura around Nebuchadnezzar's golden image? What were they commanded to do when the music started to play? What was the penalty if they disobeyed?

How did the people respond to the king's command?

For the Hebrews in the crowd, this response was not an option. What commandments would this have violated (see Ex. 20:3-5)?

Apply: The crowd believed the king and his herald, so they obeyed. The three Hebrew men believed the commandments of God, so they disobeyed. Everyone lives by faith; the difference is the object of that faith. What, or who, is the object of your faith?

Pray: Dear God, I thank you for the example of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who honored you no matter the hardship and challenges they faced. Give me strength, courage, and wisdom when confronted by godless men. Thank you for the blessed hope in my Lord and Savior Christ Jesus.

Day 2: **Daniel 3:8-18**

Three men in the crowd stood tall and refused to bow when everyone else bowed low. Their faith was in the living God and in the Word that He had spoken to the Jewish people. They knew the history of their people. They were confident that the Lord was in control, and they had nothing to fear.

What was the king's response when he heard that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down and worship the image (verse 13)?

In verses 14-15, what two questions did the king ask Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to pay homage to Nebuchadnezzar's statue and come before the king, what testimony do they give (verses 16-18)?

Pray: Faith means obeying God regardless of the feelings we may have inside of us, the circumstances around us, or the consequences before us.

Pray: Dear Heavenly Father, true faith is not frightened by threats, impressed by the crowd, or swayed by superstitious ceremonies. True faith believes your Word to us. True faith rests in your perfect will. Help me stand firm in my Lord and Savior Christ Jesus.

Day 3: Daniel 3:19-25

Following Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's decision, Nebuchadnezzar's temper got the best of him. Proud and powerful men don't like to be disobeyed.

What was Nebuchadnezzar's response to the men's testimony (verse 19)?

What happened to the king's men when they cast the three Hebrew men into the furnace (verse 22)?

What happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego because of their faithfulness to the Lord (verses 19-20 and 23-27)?

Apply: God honored His servants' obedience to Him by rescuing them and displayed His glory by even walking among them in the fire.

Pray: Dear Lord, no matter what I go through, you are always with me. You are my confident assurance in times of trouble. Fill me with your Spirit, Lord. Help me to obey and proclaim your Word boldly.

Day 4: **Daniel 3:25-30**

His question, asked only moments before, “What god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?” is now answered by the king who asked it. Significantly, the king praised the men for their exclusive worship of their God. Unlike the rest, they were not willing to serve or worship any other god but the One True God.

What did the king see when he looked into the furnace (verses 25-26)? Why was he so astonished?

Confronted with the glory of God, how did the unbelieving pagan king respond (verses 28-29)?

How did the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego impact Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom (verses 28-30)?

Apply: The experience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego must have encouraged their faithful countrymen and brought conviction to those who were compromising with the enemy. How might your obedient faith impact those around you?

Pray: Dear Father, thank you for the steadfast witness of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their trust in you was firm. Teach me, Lord, to be like them. Help me to stand firm in Christ Jesus no matter what comes my way.

Day 5: Daniel 3:1-30 (Review)

The prophet Isaiah writes, “Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction” (Isa. 48:10). The Lord did not spare Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace; He allowed them to be subjected to this trial at the hands of godless men. But, in His faithfulness, the Lord was present with them in the midst of the trial, and He brought them safely through it. The fiery trial of these faithful men sent a strong message to their people. The Lord their God was still on His throne.

How do you think walking in the fiery furnace affected the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? How do you think they felt as they were being put into the furnace?

How did God reward the faithfulness of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (verse 30)?

How might the fiery trial of these three faithful men have encouraged their fellow Jewish exiles, King Nebuchadnezzar, and the kingdom of Babylon?

Apply: By one act of faith three Jewish men became witnesses of the One true and living God to the entire pagan nation of Babylon. Faith defined: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

Pray: Dear Lord, thank you for the witness of these three faithful men. Even in the midst of difficult trials they were faithful. I pray Father that you would increase my faith because your will and plans are perfect.



What would it be like to be king of the world? Only a few men have come close to ruling the whole world, and one of them was Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. How does an arrogant, pagan king who follows a demonic religion with many false gods come to rule over all other nations of the known world, including God’s own chosen people? One humble Hebrew servant, who trusted in the true and living God, had the answer. God is sovereign over the world He created, and He works all things ultimately for His glory. In Daniel’s prayer in chapter 2, he said of God, “he removes kings and sets up kings.” Daniel believed in God’s sovereignty because he had seen His hand upon the lives of his faithful friends and himself.

Daniel loved God and spent time with Him in prayer every day (See Dan. 6:10). He trusted that God had a good and right plan, even though the circumstances sometimes did not make sense. Long before it was ever written, Daniel believed in Rom. 8:28 - “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

As we study Daniel 4 this week, take some time to meditate on the sovereignty of God and how He has worked in difficult situations of your life to bring you closer to Him while working things out for your good.

Prepared by Chuck Bounds

Day 1: Daniel 4:1-3, 34-35

In our study of Daniel 4, we will come to the final stage of a spiritual transformation in Nebuchadnezzar's heart which took place over more than 30 years. In chapter 1, Nebuchadnezzar was introduced to the true and living God of the Hebrews through the faithful witness of Daniel and his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. In chapter 2, God used Daniel to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream. In chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar witnessed God's deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace.

Read Dan. 4:1-2 and 3:13-15. How would you describe the change in Nebuchadnezzar's tone in 4:1-2 compared to his earlier decree in 3:15?

Read verses 4:3-4. List the attributes of God that Nebuchadnezzar praises.

Read Dan. 4:34-35 - Think about your own experience when you first placed your faith in God. Write a brief statement of your praise and adoration of your God.

Apply: When we let go of our pride and humbly look at the wonderful works of God, we begin to see Him as the holy and sovereign Lord of the universe. Then we can stand amazed in His presence and glorify Him with our praises.

Pray: Lord God and Heavenly Father, I praise you for being my God and for allowing me to be your child. Thank you for including me in your plan of salvation. Help me stay humble before you and help me know you better each day. Use my mouth to proclaim your glory.

Day 2: Daniel 4:4-18

In today's passage, Nebuchadnezzar relates his vivid and frightening dream, a warning from God that he could not ignore. Before his dream, Nebuchadnezzar seems to have been basking in the glory of being the most powerful man in the world (verse 4), but things are about to change. Nebuchadnezzar's dream is a warning that God is about to humble him so that he will recognize God's sovereign power and glorify Him as the true and living God.

Compare verses 4 and 5. How did Nebuchadnezzar describe his feelings before and after his dream?

Read Dan. 2:5 and 2:12. Why was it crucial that Daniel interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream?

In Dan. 4:13, Nebuchadnezzar said he saw “a watcher, a holy one, come down from heaven.” What did it mean that he saw a watcher from heaven? (see verse 24)

Apply: Nebuchadnezzar's pride kept him from knowing God. Pride is like a magic mirror that shows only our best features and hides what we do not like to see – the truth. The things we accomplish that we get puffed up about are temporal and meaningless when held beside God's sovereign power and majesty. He is worthy of our adoration, praise, and worship, and what we accomplish should be for His glory, not ours.

Pray: O Lord of heaven and earth, you are the King of kings and Lord of all. Please forgive me for being proud and attempting to take any of your glory for myself. Help me focus on faithfully serving you by serving others in a way that brings you glory.

Day 3: Daniel 4:18-27

In an earlier dream, God had shown Nebuchadnezzar that He is sovereign. Nebuchadnezzar said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries...” (Dan. 2:47). But for many more years, Nebuchadnezzar refused to let go of his pride and his pagan gods and acknowledge God as sovereign Lord. To him, God was “your (Daniel’s) God,” or “the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,” but not his own God. Today we see God’s revelation of the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream as interpreted by Daniel.

Read verses 18-19. The pressure was on for Daniel to interpret the dream. What do you suppose went through Daniel’s mind as he began to interpret the king’s dream?

The interpretation of the dream was pretty straightforward. Read the interpretation once more and summarize the dream’s meaning in your own words.

Read verse 19b and verse 27. How did Daniel express his concern for king Nebuchadnezzar?

Apply: At first glance, it seemed as though Daniel might be worried about his well-being if the king did not like what he heard. But Daniel had great faith in God. He was genuinely concerned that Nebuchadnezzar would humble himself and come to know God personally. What is your motive for sharing the truth of God’s word with your friends and loved ones? Have you put aside your own emotions and perhaps hurt feelings for the sake of leading someone else to know God?

Pray: Dear Lord, search my heart and forgive me of any pride that would keep me from glorifying you. Help me put aside any fears or hurt feelings and make me useful to lead someone else to know you. Thank you for revealing yourself to me that I may know the joy and peace of your salvation.

Day 4: Daniel 4:28-33

In today's passage, Daniel tells how God brought Nebuchadnezzar down from reigning as the most powerful king on earth to living the most humble existence as an animal. One year after having a dream that predicted what would happen, Nebuchadnezzar was driven into the wilderness to live like an animal. One minute he was admiring his kingdom, basking in his majesty, and the next minute he was living like a mad man.

Compare verse 4 with verses 29 and 30. A year had passed since Daniel had warned Nebuchadnezzar about God's coming judgment. Do you think he took the warning seriously? What kept Nebuchadnezzar from believing God?

What did the voice from heaven say was the reason for Nebuchadnezzar's madness?

What happened to Nebuchadnezzar's position as king while he was away?

Apply: God sometimes deals with our pride and sin with drastic measures. In this story, we see God's patience and mercy as he deals with an arrogant Gentile king for many years before he would let go of his pride and acknowledge God's sovereignty. Do you obey God humbly and immediately when He speaks?

ray: "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" (Ps. 139:23-24)

Day 5: Daniel 4:34-37

In our passage today, we see the story's conclusion in which Nebuchadnezzar comes to his senses, acknowledges God as the Most High God, and returns to his former power as king. This chapter seems to indicate that Nebuchadnezzar walked with God for the rest of his life. Try to imagine what Nebuchadnezzar felt when he returned to his senses, looked around, and saw the state he had been in for seven years. God humbled Nebuchadnezzar so that he could know Him and realize that He is the sovereign Lord of all.

Look at verse 34. What was Nebuchadnezzar's first reaction when God allowed him to return to his senses?

Read verses 34-35 again. How many ways did Nebuchadnezzar honor God in his song of praise?

Compare verse 37 with verses 17, 26b, and the last part of verse 32. What consistent theme do you see?

Apply: God will carry out His plans, and He uses both his children and His enemies in the process. Everyone will stand before Him, either in the righteousness of Christ or in judgment for sins.

Pray: "Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name" (Matt. 6:9). You rule over the universe. Your kingdom is from generation to generation. Nothing is impossible for you! I praise you, Lord, for loving me and allowing me to be your child. You are an amazing Father, and you are worthy of my love and obedience.



Daniel and the lion's den is a popular narrative. Why wouldn't it be? It has all the components of an exciting page-turner. There is the protagonist in Daniel, who at this time is a very old godly man; the power-hungry antagonists made up by a new ruler and corrupt, jealous officials clamoring for their place of power; supernatural preservation at the climax of the story when one may think all hope is lost; and the ending where the bad guys get exactly what they deserve, and the good guy lives on to fight another day.

Daniel 5 ended with a historic fall of Babylon. At the height of its power, the head of gold, the great empire, has fallen in a day. The Medes and the Persians entered the city, and without significant bloodshed, the whole Empire fell. This has had little impact on what God is doing with His people, specifically with Daniel, for Daniel, now over 80, rides through the power change. He was a high-ranking government official before and remained under the new rule of Darius. God's plan continues as we move into chapter 6. John MacArthur writes, "God rules in history. And nations may come, and nations may go, even our own. But God's redemptive plan as unfolded through His people will go on according to schedule."

Prepared by Nicole Caldwell

Day 1: Daniel 6:1-5

We notice that though Daniel was now very old, he could still work and be faithful to God. Under this new rule, Daniel has continued to serve and be promoted to a very high position over the region. Ultimately, this brings him envy from the other high-ranking officials, and they seek to find a way to destroy him.

Based on the context, what do you think satraps are?

In verse 3, Daniel is described as distinguishing himself by his extraordinary spirit. What is the result of this?

Why could the other administrators find no charge against Daniel?

Apply: In all areas of work and life, we should seek to conduct ourselves in a way that honors and glorifies God.

Pray: Pray through Col. 3:23-24, which says, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” Lord, help me to honor you in all that I do. May my work, my attitudes, and my actions bring glory to your name and be a testimony to the work of your Holy Spirit in my life.

Day 2: Daniel 6:6-10

In our reading today, the plan is hatched. Having found no fault in Daniel, the other rulers go to the king, imploring him to make a new law they know Daniel will not keep. They knew the only way to get him was to put his devotion to God at odds with his dedication to the king. To disobey God would ruin his testimony and integrity. To violate the laws of the land would get him prosecuted as one who would not be fully loyal to the king.

What do the high officials propose to the king?

The new law would not allow Daniel to pray to God. How many days would he have to avoid prayer to keep the law?

How does Daniel respond to the document being signed?

Apply: God has established prayer as a means by which we worship Him. Prayer must be regular in our lives.

Pray: Thank you, God, for the opportunity to communicate with you in prayer. Thank you for the privilege to worship you through prayer. Guide us to prioritize quiet prayer time and use that practice to sanctify us and grow us in Christlikeness.

Day 3: Daniel 6:10 and Philippians 4:6

The new law is signed, yet Daniel continues his practice of prayer in his home, where his open window chambers face Jerusalem. He prayed three times per day as he has previously done, and his prayers were full of thanksgiving and worship. He doesn't go home to moan at God about his predicament. No, he kneels and gives thanks to God! When his life was in danger, he prayed prayers of thanksgiving just as we are instructed to do in times of trouble.

What similarities do you see in Daniel's prayer as described in verse 10 and the instruction given in Phil. 4:6?

What does the word thanksgiving mean?

In what circumstances are we called to pray with thanksgiving?

Apply: We are instructed not to be anxious about anything, but in all things present our requests to God with a heart of thankfulness.

Pray: Thank you, God, for your word and trustworthy instruction. Thank you for the trust and knowledge that in all things, we can be thankful because we can trust your plan at work in our lives. Thank you for your goodness even in times of trouble.

Day 4: Daniel 6:11-23

The plan was made, the trap was set, and Daniel walked into it. The king probably realized that the jealous leaders had tricked him, but there was nothing that he could do about it. A decree was a decree, and it had to be carried out. The king mourns when he realizes that the law he agreed to is now used to condemn Daniel. Daniel must be thrown into the lion's den! By the providence of God, a stone is ordered over the opening, surely so that the miracle of Daniel's salvation would be apparent. In God's perfect will and power, Daniel was kept perfectly safe.

Why do you think the king was distressed?

Read Ps. 37:39. How does it relate to this passage?

Why was Daniel kept safe?

Apply: Those who trust in God shall always find Him a present help. God can shut the lion's mouth in whatever form it comes. Stand firm in your faith.

Pray: Thank you, God, for your promise to be near to those who trust in you. Help me remember when I am accused, afflicted, burdened, or blamed that you are near. I pray that I will never forget your goodness despite the circumstances surrounding me. In times of trial, help me remember Isa. 41:10, which says, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will surely help you; I will uphold you with My right hand of righteousness."

Day 5: Daniel 6:24-28

In what was probably a shocking turn of events for them, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. Their plot to destroy Daniel has brought about their demise as they perished as soon as they were thrown in. Then King Darius wrote to all the people language throughout the land, proclaiming that everyone must fear and revere the God of Daniel as a living God that endures forever.

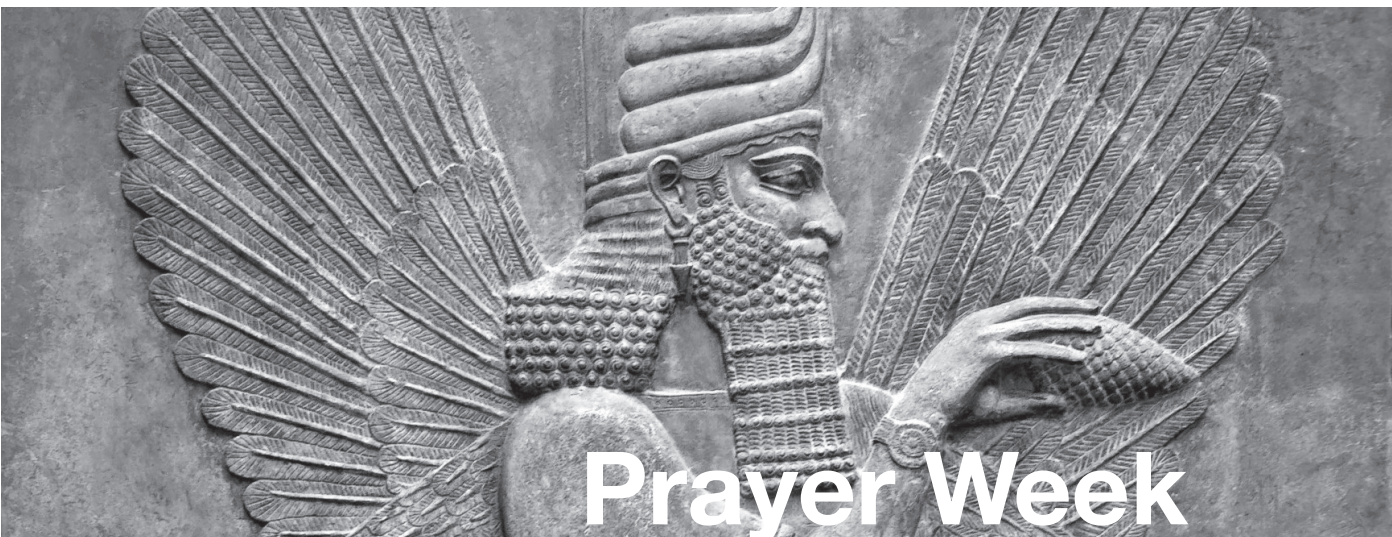
Compare this new decree with the decree at the beginning of the chapter. How are they alike? How are they different?

Who is given credit for Daniel's survival?

What six truths are proclaimed by King Darius about the God of Daniel (verses 26-27)?

Apply: Our God is a living God. He rescues and saves. He performs miracles and wonders on our behalf for His glory. He endures forever. Our God stands against the nations of the world and upholds His sovereignty.

Pray: Father God, I praise you for your sovereignty. I praise you because you are the same God that delivered Daniel, unchanging. I praise you because I know that you meet us at the point of our greatest need. I pray that you will use my trials for your glory. I pray that my suffering will be used to proclaim your glory to those around me. I pray that regardless of the rise and fall of nations, I will remember to trust you.



Prayer Week

As we look ahead to Life Group meetings on March 20, we're going to spend our time together praying for ourselves, our groups, and our church.

As we prepare our hearts this week for our time of prayer in Life Groups, we'll look back on what we've studied reflect. Feel free to use the suggestions below as you move through this week.

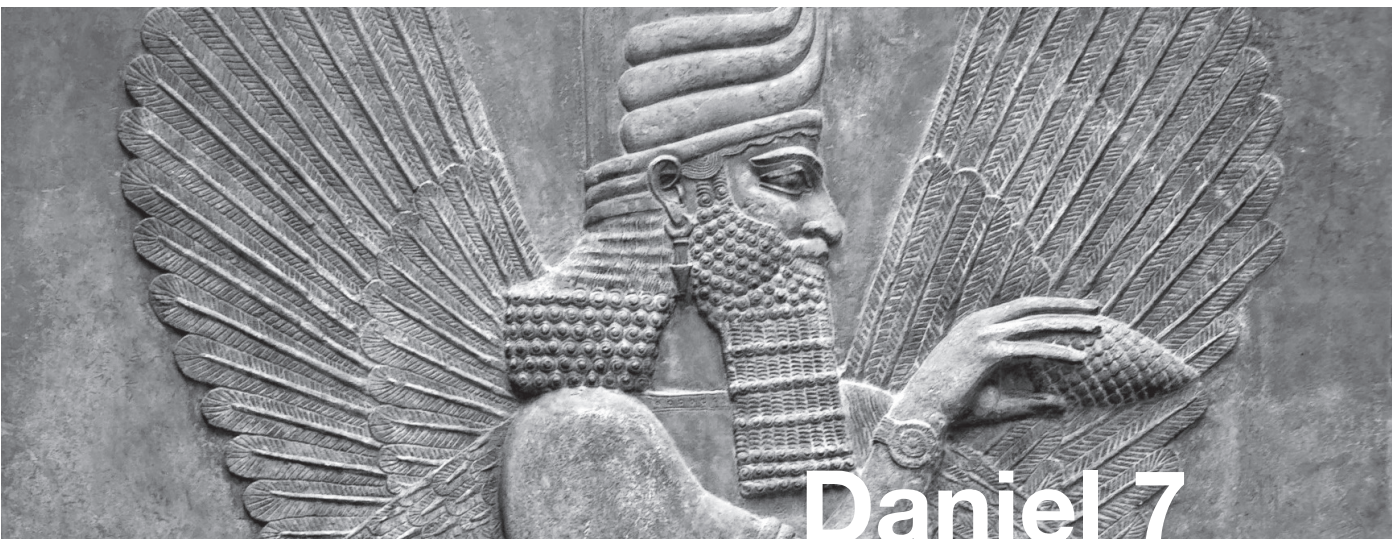
Day 1: Re-read the vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-13. Praise the Lord for His mercy in raising you to new life and giving you His Spirit.

Day 2: Re-read the story of Daniel and his friends' faithfulness in Daniel 1:8-21. Thank God that He has given you the privilege of choosing to follow and obey Him.

Day 3: Re-read the story of the fiery furnace in Daniel 3:8-30. Pray for courage to follow Jesus in every area of your life.

Day 4: Re-read the account of Nebuchadnezzar's humbling and restoration in Daniel 4:28-37. Pray that our church would walk in humility and brokenness before our Lord.

Day 5: Re-read the story of the lion's den in Daniel 6:1-28. Pray that our church and churches around the world would offer praise to God when we suffer for His name, and that persecution would result in the spread of the Gospel.



In our study of Daniel thus far, we have read of the stories of Daniel, his friends, his enemies, and the God who is Lord over them all. As we enter chapter 7, the writing shifts to accounts of apocalyptic visions that warn and reassure God’s people that He is in control and can be trusted despite circumstance. The same God who spared His people from the fiery furnace in chapter 3 and spared Daniel from the lions in chapter 6 is the same God who will allow humanity to suffer under ungodly rulers for a time until He ultimately reigns forever. Chapter 7 gives us an overview of dominion from God’s perspective. He has the power to grant dominion and take it away. In our study this week, we will experience the chaos that always comes when authority rests in the hands of men and the proper justice and eternal peace that can only come from dominion under the Most High.

Prepared by Christy Crowder

Day 1: Daniel 7:1-8

In today's passage, Daniel's vision involves forces that are seemingly out of control. We read of raging winds and seas, monsters made up of a zoo's worth of animals, and a beast so terrifying it seems to defy earthly description. Most scholars agree that the first three beasts Daniel describes represent Babylon (lion), Medo-Persia (bear), and Greece (leopard). The fourth, most dreadful beast symbolizes Rome. Through their seemingly unchecked oppression of God's people, these nations and their rulers often made life seem hopeless and impossible. Yet, if we look closely, we see the hand of a God who is sovereign and has an unstoppable plan of justice and redemption.

The dream Daniel experiences opens with chaos in nature: winds from every corner of the earth churning up the great sea. Read Mark 4:37-41 to see another account of daunting wind and waves. Who is in control in both of these passages?

Daniel's vision reminds us of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2. Re-read Dan. 2:31-40, and note any similarities you see. What ultimately happens to the kingdoms represented?

The fourth beast has ten horns, signifying great power, and then another smaller horn. This horn uproots three of the other horns. It has "eyes like the eyes of a man" and speaks "great things." Read Matt. 7:15-20. What advice does Jesus give about one speaking "great things?"

Apply: We often feel as if the storms around us are raging and that we are out of control. In these moments, however scary they may be, we must remember that our feelings will lie to us. God is in control. It is only through trust in Him and His perfect plan of redemption that we can quiet the chaos and experience peace that passes understanding (Phil. 4:7).

Pray: Heavenly Father, when my thoughts and circumstances continually knock me down like the waves of a churning sea and the monsters that seem to be in control of the world are more terrifying than ever, help me to remember your promises. Allow the helmet of salvation (Eph. 6:17) to guard my thoughts and filter out the lies of the enemy. You have already won every battle; may I rest in victory as your child.

Day 2: Daniel 7:9-10

While it may have been difficult to see how God was at work in verses 1-8, we encounter the Lord Himself in today's verses. The heavenly courtroom Daniel sees gives comfort after the distress of the beasts we studied yesterday.

Daniel describes the Lord as the Ancient of Days. His clothing, "white as snow," pays homage to His holiness. The CSB translation of verse 9 reads, "the hair of his head was like whitest wool." The image here is of the wisdom that comes with great age. Read Job 12:12-13 and note what Scripture says of this kind of wisdom.

In today's passage, we see a depiction of the Lord's refining fire. Look up Isa. 43:2 and Heb. 12:28-29. How do these references to fire help you understand the fire found in Daniel's vision in verses 9-10?

In this courtroom, with the Ancient of Days presiding and an innumerable number standing before Him in judgment, God opens "the books." Read Rev. 20:11-15 for a fulfillment of this picture. What books are being opened in this court, what is written in them, and what are the consequences?

Apply: This courtroom scene could be seen in one of two ways: Either the purifying fire and coming judgment of God are frightening, or the images of a holy, loving Heavenly Father and His desire to make all things right is comforting. Christians need not live in fear of the Lord's judgment; we can rejoice in the Lord's forgiveness of our sins through the payment Christ made on the cross on our behalf. Spend some time in prayer today, confessing your sins to Him and thanking Him for forgiveness through His Son.

Pray: Dear Lord, your holiness and wisdom mean you can be trusted. You are incapable of sinning against us, and so while we fear you in reverent awe, our salvation and the status that brings mean we need never be afraid of you. We delight in our position as those who serve you and who can approach your heavenly throne, crying, "Abba! Father!"

Day 3: Daniel 7:11-14

If the theme for this week's passage could be summed up in one word, it would be "dominion," and it comes to a head as we study today. Who has dominion? Who can give dominion or take it away? Why does it matter? Most dictionaries define dominion as control or sovereignty. Today's verses give us a chance to examine how power is distributed both in heavenly realms and on earth.

As today's passage opens, we see the beasts lose their dominion. What are some implications of this?

Scripture credits the Ancient of Days with the power to bestow dominion. In verse 14, this control is given to "one like a son of man." Jesus used "son of man" to describe Himself more than any other title. How does this title help you understand Christ's relationship to humanity?

Read Matt. 24:30-31 and Rev. 1:5-7. What is the outcome for the "Son of Man?"

Apply: Dominion is a difficult concept. We all crave control over our circumstances and yet feel overwhelmed when confronted with the responsibilities dominion brings. In Matt. 11:28-30, Jesus promises rest for those who come to Him. Lay down the burden of the illusion of power and find refreshment in a relationship with the One who has legitimate, perfect dominion.

Pray: Heavenly Father, forgive me for the way I try to wrestle control away from you. Help me to remember you have been victorious over every temptation I could face (Heb. 4:15-16), and you can do exceedingly more than we ask or think (Eph. 3:20). May I give you dominion and glory in my life forever, for you are surely worthy.

Day 4: Daniel 7:15-26

The Word of God is faithful to show us the glory and greatness of our God, and yet, this is often not enough to assure us. Daniel, too, was troubled by what he had encountered in the vision the Lord had given him. His response to this distress was to ask for the truth! He “approached one of those who stood there” (probably an angel) and was given clarity.

As we learned earlier in the week, many scholars identify the four beasts in Daniel 7 as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. These kingdoms have in common a penchant for violence and a lust for power that we continue to see today. Verse 18 tells us, though, these earthly kingdoms and rulers will ultimately lose their reign at the final coming of God’s eternal kingdom. Read Rev. 21:1-4. What differences do you see between conceptions of heaven and earth in our world today and the new heaven and new earth described here?

The fourth beast described in verses 19-26 is Rome, and yet much more. Read Rev. 13:1-10. Note the similarities between this passage and the description of the beasts in Daniel 7.

God’s people will undoubtedly experience many trials at the hands of this final beast before his power is “consumed and destroyed.” The afflictions God’s people face, however, are not in vain. What does 1 Pet. 1:6-7 say about the purpose of these trials?

Apply: How often do we encounter anxiety and feel overwhelmed simply because we don’t ask the Lord for guidance? We try to handle circumstances in our strength. Without the Lord’s assistance, it is easy to forget both God’s sovereignty and His unending love for us. Spend some time today in prayer, asking God to allay your fears and give you His peace.

Pray: Dear Lord, so often, the monsters of this world seem bigger than I can handle. When I try to fight them on my own, I am riddled with anxiety and feel overwhelmed. May I remember the words of 1 John 5:14: “And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” I praise you, Lord, for hearing me and answering me when I call out in need.

Day 5: Daniel 7:27-28

As we come to the end of this vision, we are assured that God has the final word. Even through troubled times, the Most High is present and ultimately victorious. He does not leave His people at the mercy of the rulers of this world. His triumph is true, and it lasts forever. If you are found in Him, your eternity is secure.

What words of comfort do you see for believers in verse 27?

How does Jer. 23:9 give us a glimpse into how Daniel may have felt when he wrote verse 28?

Read Eccles. 12:13-14. What parallels do you see between Daniel's closing thoughts for this chapter and Solomon's closing thoughts in Ecclesiastes?

Apply: We have a choice as to what we keep in our hearts: We can hold on to fear, anxiety, and anger, or we can hold on to the promises we find in God's Word. Ask the Lord today to help you cling to eternity and not to the momentary troubles of this present age. If you don't already have one, find an accountability partner to point you toward the peace and victory found in Jesus, and not settle for less.

Pray: Dear Heavenly Father, you are faithful to fulfill the promises of your Word. You have given me everything I need to be successful. Forgive me when I am too lazy, stubborn, or riddled with unbelief to live in the victory you died to secure on my behalf. I praise you for your bride, the church. Help me find people there to push me into a deeper relationship with you that I might live more fully to glorify you.



As we begin our study of chapter 9, we find Daniel doing what he has faithfully done throughout his entire life – studying God’s Word and praying (Dan. 1:17). As a reminder, in chapter 7, we transitioned from earthly events to visions unfolding as God has ordained. Though these chapters are written in apocalyptic language, which is unfamiliar to us as modern-day readers, it would have been a familiar style to the readers of that time. These last chapters record Daniel’s visions during the reigns of various kings and what they mean in the heavenly realms.

Here, in chapter 9, Daniel prays for his people after time spent studying the words of the prophet Jeremiah written 50 years previous. As he studied Jeremiah’s words, he recognized he was a living witness to these prophecies being fulfilled. His immediate response to the sovereign working of God in history is a humble plea for mercy through prayer. God answers his prayer through Gabriel: “O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding.” God graciously chose to reveal His plans to his humble, praying servant, Daniel. As believers, we too can follow the example of this faithful prophet, trusting the words of Jer. 33:3, “Call to me, and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”

Prepared by Faith Cross

Day 1: Daniel 9:1-2

Let's take a few minutes to place chapter 9 in the narrative chronology of chapters 1-6. In chapter 5, Belshazzar has called Daniel to interpret the ominous handwriting on the wall. At the end of the chapter, we see "that very night, Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. And Darius the Mede [a Perisan] received the kingdom..." (Dan. 5:30-31). Chapter 6 begins with a narrative of Darius' reign and continues with the fascinating story of Daniel in the lions' den. Sometime during this first year of Darius' reign, Daniel was spending time studying the prophecies of Jeremiah.

Read verses 1-2. How does Daniel refer to Jeremiah's writings? Read Jer. 36:1-3. What do you learn about the words of Jeremiah and why they were preserved?

Read Jer. 36:27-32. What is the Lord's response to the attempt to destroy His Word?

Look at the end of verse 2. Cross-reference this with Jer. 25:8-13, 29:10-14. Have these events come to pass when Daniel is reading these words? What would Daniel possibly be feeling reading these passages, understanding these "desolations" may be coming to an end?

Apply: John Piper says, "A promised act of God is as good as done." The Lord is faithful and true in His purposes and plans. He is also mighty and righteous to defend His words to His people. He has preserved what we need to know and determines the times when we need to hear it. Our job is to trust, faithfully study and pray.

Pray: Lord, I do not always understand your timing, and because of this, I do not always trust that you have everything under control. Grow my trust in you, Lord. I do not need complete understanding to have complete trust. Let me rest in your faithfulness through all of history: "For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matt. 5:18).

Day 2: Daniel 9:3-4

Daniel has “perceived” (verse 2) – synonyms could be comprehended, discerned, or discovered – information from his time studying Jeremiah’s prophecies. Daniel referred to Jeremiah’s writings as the “word of the Lord” (verse 2). Therefore, he trusts that what he has learned “must” come to pass. Let’s take a look at how Daniel responds to these revelations.

Look closely at verse 3 and list the verbs you note. How do these verbs show progressive involvement on Daniel’s part in the act of praying?

Note the words “fasting with sackcloth and ashes” (verse 3) and “made confession” (verse 4). Read 2 Chron. 7:14 and Ezra 9:5-6. What is Daniel’s response to the revelations he received from studying Jeremiah’s words? Is Daniel’s response biblical?

Note the language at the end of verse 4. How is Daniel beginning his prayer to the Lord? Read Matt. 6:9. Is Daniel “hallowing” the name of the Lord?

Apply: Daniel’s response to studying and learning from the word of the Lord is the same one we should have. We should turn to the Lord, seek Him more deeply, confess and grieve our sins. He begins his prayer “hallowing,” or honoring the name of the Lord. His heart is prepared to pray rightly. We can learn much from his example on the seriousness and reverence of prayer before our holy God.

Pray: Lord, I am grateful that I can approach your throne of grace with confidence (Heb. 4:16) as I pray. But let me do so with reverence, humility, and trust, remembering your awesome holiness. Open my eyes to any areas of sin so that I can confess and repent. Help me to honor your name first above all else.

Day 3: Daniel 9:5-19

Having received revelations about the end of captivity for the Israelites from his time studying, Daniel begins praying. He has prepared his heart to seek the Lord through fasting and wearing sackcloth and ashes. He has also recognized the awesomeness of His God, who steadfastly loves His people despite their continuing sin.

Read verses 5-10. Daniel repeatedly says “to us” and “to you, O Lord.” Make a side-by-side list comparing the behaviors he assigned to the Israelites and the behaviors assigned to the Lord. Does this list convict you in any way?

Read verses 11-14. Look carefully at verse 13. What does Daniel confess for his people? What could the people have “gained” if they had turned from their sins?

Read verses 15-19. Cross-reference this prayer with Moses’s prayer in Ex. 32:11-14. Are there similarities?

Apply: Though Daniel trusts that what the Lord has planned will happen, he still intercedes in prayer for his people. It is surprising to hear him confess for his people when they have not been confessing their sin for themselves. Yet this is what Jesus does for us: “And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’” (Luke 23:34). As Christ-followers, we must be people who are aware of our sin and confess. But we must also mercifully intercede for those who are still blinded and make opportunities to share the hope of the gospel with them.

Pray: Lord, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Ps. 139:23-24). Help me also to be interceding in prayer for those around me who are blinded to their sin. I thank you, Jesus, that your heart toward me is merciful and compassionate. Let me mirror this love to the world around me.

Day 4: Daniel 9:20-23

Daniel has pleaded with the Lord for mercy on him and his people for their unrepentant sin. Israel was a captive nation, victims of stronger surrounding nations. Yet what they were truly enslaved to was their sinful, unrepentant hearts. Even when their sin had brought dire consequences on the whole nation, they had still not turned to the Lord with repentant hearts, confessing their sin. Daniel was interceding for this grievous iniquity in his prayers when the Lord kindly responded.

Read verses 20-21. Who arrives with a message for Daniel? Has Daniel met him before? (See Dan. 8:15-16). Where else in scripture have we seen this angel (Luke 1:19, 26)? Is this significant?

What time of day does Gabriel arrive? Read Ps. 51:16-18. What type of “sacrifice” was Daniel making?

Read verses 22-23. What does Gabriel want to “give” Daniel in verse 22? What does he want to “tell” Daniel in verse 23? “Therefore” means “for that reason.” What was Daniel commanded to do for those reasons?

Apply: While we do not have angels physically appearing to speak to us, as followers of Christ, we do have the Holy Spirit living inside us, helping us as we pray (John 16:13). The Lord, who has demonstrated His great love for us (John 3:16), hears our prayers immediately and responds. Like Daniel, we too can receive insight and understanding when we approach the Lord with humility, repentance, and a willing spirit.

Pray: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit” Ps. 51:10-12.

Day 5: Daniel 9:24-26

In these final verses of the chapter, Gabriel shares a message which is difficult to understand. Many interpretations surround the timeline of this passage, and it would take much more space than we have here to explore them all! So, we will only spend our time focused on the larger general principles of the passage.

Note the repetition of numbers in this passage. The number seven in the Bible is associated with completion, perfection, wholeness, and fulfillment of promises. Where else in the Bible have you noted the number seven (Hint: see Genesis 1-2, Deut. 15:1-2, Matt. 18:21-22, and Revelation 2, 3, and 6)?

Look up and define the word “decreed.” Where is this word used in these verses?

In verse 24, what are the reasons the seventy weeks are decreed? (Hint: each statement in that sentence starts with “to”)

Apply: The Lord has laid out the timeline for all events in history. And these timelines and their purposes all point to one person: Jesus Christ. While there are historical fulfillments to much of what we read in these verses today, Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of all the Lord has planned. He “finished the transgression, put an end to sin, atoned for iniquity, brought everlasting righteousness, sealed vision and prophet, and anointed the most holy place” (verse 24). It was decreed before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). This is a tremendous source of comfort and hope as we navigate a world that can seem chaotic and random.

Pray: Lord, as I finish this study in the book of Daniel, let me be like him in praying faithfully, trusting your Word and your timing for all things. “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11).