

# His Word in Our Hearts

~ April 2021 ~

*All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,  
and he does according to his will among the host of heaven  
and among the inhabitants of the earth;  
and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"*

*Daniel 4:35 (ESV)*

## Daily Bible Reading

1	Ezekiel 1-3	Psalm 72
2	Ezekiel 4-8	Psalm 73
3	Ezekiel 9-12	Psalm 74
4	Ezekiel 13-15	Psalm 75
5	Ezekiel 16	Psalm 76
6	Ezekiel 17-19	Psalm 77
7	Ezekiel 20-21	Psalm 78:1-39
8	Ezekiel 22-23	Psalm 78:40-72
9	Ezekiel 24-26	Psalm 79
10	Ezekiel 27-28	Psalm 80
11	Ezekiel 29-30	Psalm 81
12	Ezekiel 31-32	Psalm 82
13	Ezekiel 33-34	Psalm 83
14	Ezekiel 35-37	Psalm 84
15	Ezekiel 38-39	Psalm 85
16	Ezekiel 40-41	Psalm 86
17	Ezekiel 42-44	Psalm 87
18	Ezekiel 45-47	Psalm 88
19	Ezekiel 48	Psalm 89:1-18
20	Daniel 1-2	Psalm 89:19-52
21	Daniel 3-4	Psalm 90
22	Daniel 5-6	Psalm 91
23	Daniel 7-8	Psalm 92
24	Daniel 9	Psalm 93
25	Daniel 10-12	Psalm 94

## Reading Ezekiel:

It is almost impossible to do justice to this book in this short of space. It is filled with obscure and strange visions. It is the Revelation of the OT.

The book of Ezekiel is a covenant lawsuit brought by God against the house of Israel. And at the heart of Israel's running violations of the covenant, culminating in her judgment at the hands of the Babylonians, was the fact that Israel needed to be born again. God promises to deal with this problem once and for all. He will bring them out of exile. He will sprinkle clean water upon them. He will cleanse them from all their filthiness. God will then take away their stony heart and give them a new heart, a regenerate heart.

Ezekiel was taken off to Babylon as a young man in the first captivity, which occurred in 597 B.C. The city of Jerusalem did not fall completely until a few years later, 586 B.C. Thus the first part of Ezekiel's ministry had reference to the pending fall of Jerusalem, even though he was not ministering from within that doomed city, the way Jeremiah was.

The book begins with the vision of God in "the wheels," a vision which symbolizes God's departure from the Temple in Jerusalem and indicates His presence with the exiles in Babylon. The presence of God is highly "mobile," which means God cannot be kept in some temple-box. But the God who can depart because of all the abominations is also a God who can, in His sovereignty, return. And thus, the book concludes with a glorious vision of God's return to His people.

**What can we take away from Ezekiel?** *First*, it's like a mirror in which we can see our own sin more clearly. We are like Israel in our idolatry, pride, and unfaithfulness. We won't take action to address our sin if we don't first see what's wrong with us. *Second*, we see that God has a much larger redemptive plan that He is working. Don't get lost in the hard to understand details of the visions, keep the big picture in mind. This applies to each of us, it is easy to lose perspective in the midst of life's challenges and trials. Remember God is at work, He has a plan. God is always present even in the midst of judgment and suffering, even in exile in Babylon. *Third*, see God's continued grace to the most undeserving people in spite of their sin, Israel and us.

You can divide the book into four main sections:

Chapters 1-24, prophesy of the fall of Jerusalem.

Chapters 25-33, prophesy against the surrounding Gentile nations.

Chapters 34-39, prophesy of God's grace, faithfulness and restoration, a new covenant and a new heart. God's discipline is always with a goal to restore.

Chapters 40-48, prophesy of a glorious Temple and how a restored Israel will bless the entire world.

(over)

## **Reading Daniel:**

The book of Daniel is written by Daniel while he and his people are in exile in Babylon. The book is another historical narrative that reminds us of God's universal sovereignty over all the nations of the earth, even the most pagan. The book of Daniel isn't really about Daniel, but Daniel's God, God is the hero. In this book we meet the Most High God who is sovereignly ruling over the kings and kingdoms of human history until the Messianic Son of Man consummates history and brings his people into the everlasting Kingdom of God.

"God saves a sinful and weak people; he preserves young men from impurity and old men from lions; he answers prayer and interprets dreams; he exalts the humble and humbles the proud; he vindicates the faithful and vanquishes the profane; and he rescues covenant-forsaking people by returning them to the land of the covenant" (ESV Study Bible).

The book divides neatly into two sections.

Chapters 1-6: The first has Daniel writing of himself in the third person, and it records a series of six historical occasions, in which Daniel and/or his friends are delivered and/or otherwise vindicated.

Chapters 7-12: In the second section of the book, Daniel speaks of himself in the first person, and records a series of visions relating to Israel and the surrounding nations. Daniel predicts the rise of the Greeks, and even gets as far as the Romans.

### ***What can we take away from Daniel?***

***First***, live by faith and be faithful wherever God plants you in this culture we live in. The gospel according to Daniel should give us courage against our foes, hope in our distress, and strength to persevere in hope even with no immediate solutions to the problems that get us down.

***Second***, remind yourself again and again of the folly and danger of idolatry. Another way of thinking of idolatry is the sin of focusing on the world's values, wanting what the world offers, putting the things of this earthly life above God, of seeking security, worth, value or meaning in temporal things.

***Third***, through all the strange visions of the last six chapters we are reminded: "The true God reigns!" In the end, it will not be Babylon or Persia or the United States or any other kingdom that stands. Dominion, glory, and the kingdom of God will be given to one like a son of man, and all peoples, nations, and languages will serve him (7:13-14).