

CHAPTER 10

Ezekiel and Daniel

In this chapter we are ready to consider the last of the major prophets: Ezekiel and Daniel. Both of these men lived during the exile (see chapter 9), that is, they lived during the Babylonian Captivity. Let us turn our attention first to the book which Ezekiel wrote.

Ezekiel—Sin, Judgment and Future Glory

Ezekiel was a young priest (Ezekiel 1:3) who was carried away to Babylon during the reign of King Jehoiachin. You can read about this deportation in 2 Kings 24:10-16. Even though Ezekiel was a priest, he was never able to serve in the great temple which was in Jerusalem. He was taken away to Babylon, and later the Jerusalem temple was destroyed. But God's Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 1:3) was on this man, and he became a great prophet of the Lord in a foreign land!

We learn in Ezekiel 1:3 that Ezekiel was in the land of the Chaldeans (this is another way of saying the land of the Babylonians) by the river Chebar. Chebar was a canal located near the city of Babylon. Ezekiel was about 900 miles away from his homeland. Many other Jews were there with him, and Ezekiel had an important ministry to these captives.

Ezekiel lived at the same time as two other famous men. He lived at the same time as Daniel and he even mentions Daniel in his book. Can you find Daniel's name mentioned two times in Ezekiel chapter 14? Verses: _____ Can you find Daniel's name mentioned in Ezekiel chapter 28? Verse: _____ Daniel lived in the city of Babylon where he served the king. Ezekiel also lived at the same time as the prophet Jeremiah, although these two men were separated by 900 miles. Ezekiel was carried away captive into Babylon but Jeremiah remained in the land of Judah with the "poorest people of the land" (2 Kings 24:14).

Ezekiel's Message

Ezekiel had a message from God for "the whole house of Israel" (see Ezekiel 39:25). He was God's voice to the whole nation. What kind of a nation was it? In Ezekiel chapter 2, how many times do you find the words "rebellious, rebelled"? _____ Whether these people would hear or refuse to hear (Ezekiel 2:5,7), Ezekiel was to bring them God's message, and they would know that there had been a _____ among them (Ezekiel 2:5).

Why was Ezekiel's book needed? What purpose did his message have? Actually there were three main purposes:

1. To keep before the people their great sins which had made God's judgment necessary

God's people need to see sin as God sees it. The Jewish nation had turned away from God and had disobeyed God's commands. The Babylonian Captivity was not an accident. The Babylonians were sent by God to punish the Jewish people and to cause them to repent of their sins and turn back to their God.

Who were the guilty ones? **Everybody!** In Ezekiel 22:23-29 there are four P's to remind us who the guilty ones of the nation were:

- 1) The **P**rophets (these were false prophets)–verses 25 & 28
- 2) The **P**riests (the religious leaders)– verse 26
- 3) The **P**rinces (the nation’s rulers)– verse 27
- 4) The **P**eople of the land–verse 29

Because of their sins, what must God do (Ezekiel 22:31)?

The false prophets were giving the people false messages. They were saying, "Thus saith the Lord!" when the LORD had _____ spoken (Ezekiel 22:28). These prophets were telling the people that even though they were taken away into Babylon, they would soon be returned to Jerusalem and the city of Jerusalem would not be destroyed. This was a message that the people wanted to hear, but this was not God’s message. Ezekiel gave the people the **true message** even though they did not want to hear it. In the early chapters of his book Ezekiel made it very clear that God’s judgment would come. As things turned out, Ezekiel was **right** and the other prophets were **wrong**. Twelve years after Ezekiel had been in Babylon he received word that the city of Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians (Ezekiel 33:21).

Was God unfair to bring such judgment upon the nation? The book of Ezekiel makes it very clear that God was right in what He did because this was exactly what the nation deserved. Many of the Jews were saying that God was not fair (Ezekiel 18:25,29; 33:17,20) but God’s answer to them was this: "Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not _____ (not fair): but as for them, _____ is not equal" (Ezekiel 33:17). In other words, the problem was not with God, the problem was with them! God was not to blame; they were!

People love to blame everyone for everything, and they will even blame God! We do not like to face up to the fact that the person who is really at fault is "ME, MYSELF and I." We refuse to say what we should say: "**God is right and I am wrong! The problem is with me, not with God!**" The book of Ezekiel also teaches that every person is individually responsible before God. We cannot blame our fathers or our mothers or Adam or anyone else for the things we do. Every man shall stand or fall according to **his own** good or bad actions. A good father does not automatically produce a good son and a bad father does not automatically produce a bad son (see Ezekiel chapter 18). A son might be strongly influenced by his father and by others, but he must decide what kind of person he is going to be and he is responsible for the decisions he makes. I must decide what kind of a person I am going to be, and if I turn out bad, it is my fault alone. I must not blame others for personal choices and decisions which I make.

2. To give courage to the Jews during a very dark hour in their history

Ezekiel’s book contains more than just "bad news." The Jews who were living in a foreign land as captives needed a **message of hope**. It was a very dark hour for the nation. Their beloved city and temple had been destroyed by the enemy and there was nothing left but ruins. Did Ezekiel have any message of hope and comfort? Could any light be seen at the end of the tunnel, or was it all darkness?

Ezekiel’s great prophecy (especially the last part of the book) made it very clear to the Jews that a brighter day was coming. There was good news for "the whole house of Israel" (Ezekiel

39:25). The same God that can **judge** His people is the same God who can also **bless** His people. Ezekiel, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, spoke of the glorious kingdom that would someday be established on the earth. In the last chapters of Ezekiel (chapters 40-48) the prophet saw a glorious vision of the great temple that will be on earth during the millennial kingdom.

This vision of the future temple must have been very meaningful to the Jews who lived in Ezekiel's day. They knew that the Babylonians had completely destroyed Solomon's beautiful and glorious temple. There had never been a temple as great as Solomon's. And yet, through Ezekiel God encouraged the saddened Jews with a message of hope. He told them that in the future there would be a temple that would even surpass Solomon's temple in greatness. Even though the present seemed bleak, the future would be very bright!

3. To remind Israel that God would take care of her enemies

It is true that God judged His own sinful people, but God would also judge the other sinful nations as well. The middle chapters of the book of Ezekiel speak about God's judgments upon the nations (chapters 25-32). Even these people would know that God is God!

The Prophet of the Glory of the Lord

Ezekiel has been called "the prophet of the glory of the Lord" because his book has much to say about the God's glory. In the very first chapter Ezekiel saw an amazing vision of the glory of the Lord. What did he do after he saw the Lord's glory (Ezekiel 1:28)?

In Ezekiel 11:23 we learn that the glory of the Lord departed from Solomon's temple because of the nation's sins. Soon after this the temple would be destroyed by the Babylonians. In the last part of the book of Ezekiel we learn that the glory of the Lord will once again fill the temple during the kingdom age (Ezekiel 43:2). God will make known His presence in a wonderful way.

The Key Phrase

There is a phrase found in the book of Ezekiel that is repeated again and again. It is a phrase that is found almost 60 times in the book of Ezekiel:

"and ye shall know that I am the LORD"

OR

"and they shall know that I am the LORD"

A class suggestion: During class time there could be a contest to see which student can find the most verses which contain this phrase. The students can be given two or three minutes to look for these verses, and at the end of that time you can see which student has found the most. It might be best if the students started looking somewhere in the middle of the book (not at the very beginning or the very end).

God is going to make Himself known! God will make Himself known to His people and God will even make Himself known to the nations of the world! Someday everyone will know that **God is God!** Does the New Testament teach this too (Philippians 2:10-11)? _____

What Was Satan Like Before He Fell?

The book of Ezekiel has a very interesting passage about an angel who fell into sin and became Satan! This passage is found in Ezekiel 28:11-16. Did God create a perfect angel or did God create a sinful devil? _____ We can also learn about Satan's sin in Isaiah 14:12-15. If we did not have this passage in Ezekiel 28, then we would know very little about what Satan was like before he fell into sin.

A Man Who Not Only Spoke but Who Also Acted Out God's Message

Ezekiel did more than just speak God's message! He also acted out God's message. We can see this in Ezekiel chapters 4 and 5. Here are some of the things he did:

1. He pretended that a clay tablet was the city of Jerusalem and he then pretended to attack it in order to show what the Babylonians would soon do (Ezekiel 4:1-4).
2. He laid on his left side for 390 days and then on his right side for 40 days (Ezekiel 4:4-6).
3. He shaved his head and beard and then did different things to the hairs (Ezekiel 5:1-5). All of these things were done for important reasons. He was acting out God's message in unforgettable ways.

Today God has not told us to do the things which He told Ezekiel to do. But we should learn something from the way Ezekiel "acted out" God's truth. We need to do more than just speak God's truth; we need to "act out" and live God's truth. We need to put God's truth into action in our lives so that when people look at us they will see us "**acting out the Bible.**" We are to be "**living epistles**" and living Bibles, "known and _____ of (by) _____ men" (2 Cor. 3:2-3). When people look at your life, do they see God's truth acted out? How can you act out God's Word in school? in the neighborhood? at home with your family? at church? We should not just be hearers of God's Word, but we should be actors or doers (see James 1:22)!

Daniel – The Rise And Fall Of Kingdoms

Many of us can remember, as young children, hearing the story of Daniel in the lion's den and the story of Daniel's three friends who were cast into the furnace of fire. God is a great God who can deliver His people in wonderful ways, but there is more to the book of Daniel than these stories which are found in Daniel chapters 3 and 6.

Daniel was a young man who was carried away as a captive to Babylon about eight years before Ezekiel came there. At the beginning of the book Daniel was just a youth (probably in his teens). Jeremiah and Ezekiel were also living at this time. The Babylonians were in power. At the end of the book Daniel was an old man (80 years old or more). Joshua, the Jewish high priest, and Zerubbabel, the Jewish governor, were alive at this time. We read about them in the first part of the book of Ezra (see chapter 6 of these notes) and also in the book of Haggai. The Persians, not the Babylonians, were now in power.

Daniel the Man

Daniel was a godly and righteous man. In Ezekiel 14:14,20 God linked Daniel's name with two of the most righteous men who have ever lived, Noah (Genesis 6:9) and Job (Job 1:1). In the book of Daniel we learn important things about this man, who was "a man greatly _____ by his God" (see Daniel 10:11).

1. Daniel was a man of purpose.

"But Daniel _____ in his _____ that he would not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8). Daniel found himself in the middle of a pagan nation that did not honor God, but Daniel decided in his heart that he would honor God no matter what the people around him did. We sing the hymn, "Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone, dare to have a **purpose** firm, dare to make it known!" What about you? Have you decided to honor God even if those around you do not? What if no one else in school bows his head in prayer before he eats lunch? Should you?

2. Daniel was a man of prayer.

How often did Daniel pray and give thanks to His God (Daniel 6:10)?

_____ Because he refused to stop praying he was thrown into the den of lions! How often do you pray? Do you let anything stop you from praying?

3. Daniel was a man of the Bible.

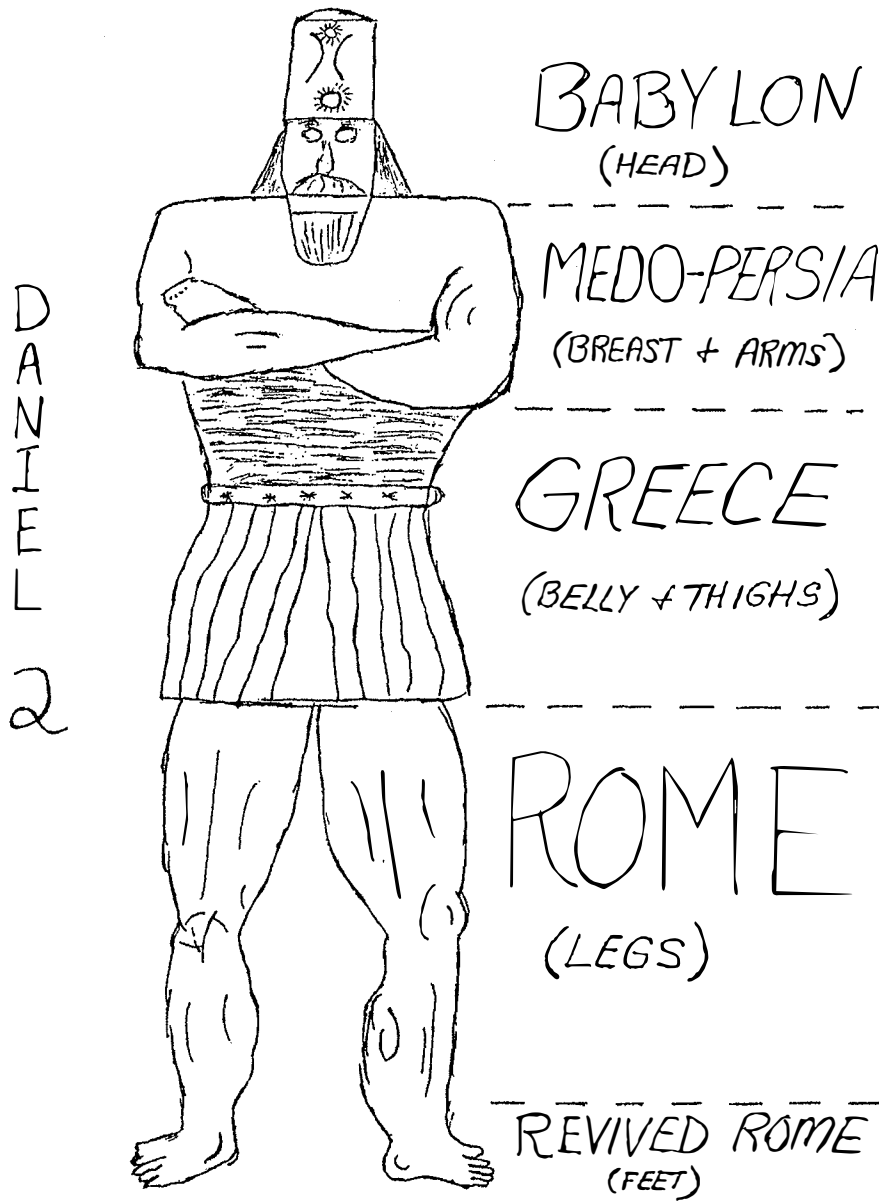
Daniel loved God's Word and he read it and believed it. In Daniel 9:2 we learn that Daniel read from Jeremiah's book and learned that the Babylonian captivity would only last 70 years. God's Word was very important to Daniel! Is it important to you?

Exalted in the Court

Daniel lived to see the rise and fall of kingdoms. He saw the fall of Judah (his own people) and the rise of the Babylonians. He also lived to see the fall of Babylon (Daniel 5) and the rise of the Medo-Persian Empire. Whatever government was in power, Daniel was always given a very high position. God's blessing was upon him (see Daniel 2:48; 6:1-3). Just as Joseph was exalted to a place of leadership and power in the court of Egypt, so Daniel was exalted to a place of leadership and power in the court of the Babylonians and the Persians.

A Book About Kings and Kingdoms

The book of Daniel is all about kings and kingdoms. In chapters 2 and 7 of the book of Daniel we find two great prophecies about the coming world kingdoms. Daniel chapter 2 describes the world kingdoms from **man's point of view**, as a great and glorious STATUE made of different metals and precious stones. This statue which was seen in the king's dream is illustrated as follows:



These same four kingdoms or world empires are seen in Daniel chapter 7 from **God's point of view** as cruel, savage, ruthless and devouring **beasts** (wild animals):

1) The kingdom of BABYLON is described in Daniel 7:4 as what kind of animal?

2) The kingdom of MEDIA-PERSIA is described in Daniel 7:5 as what kind of animal?

3) The kingdom of GREECE is described in Daniel 7:6 as what kind of animal?

4) The kingdom of ROME is described in Daniel 7:7 as a dreadful and terrible beast!

<i>The Four Kingdoms Described in the Book of Daniel</i>		
Daniel Chapter 2 <i>Different Metals</i> (The Kingdoms From Man's Viewpoint)	<i>Four World Empires</i>	Daniel Chapter 7 <i>Different Beasts</i> (The Kingdoms From God's Viewpoint)
<i>GOLD</i>	<i>Babylon</i> 7th and 6th Centuries B.C.	<i>LION</i>
<i>SILVER</i>	<i>Medo-Persia</i> 6th and 5th Centuries B.C.	<i>BEAR</i>
<i>BRASS (BRONZE)</i>	<i>Greece</i> 4th and 3rd Centuries B.C.	<i>LEOPARD</i>
<i>IRON</i>	<i>Rome</i> 1st Century B.C. and following	<i>DREADFUL AND TERRIBLE BEAST</i>

For hundreds and hundreds of years Israel has been ruled by **beasts** (wicked Gentile powers); this is still true today as most of the Jews are living among the nations of the world. The time that the nation Israel is under Gentile rule is called "the **T**_____ of the **G**_____ " (Luke 21:24). During this time, Gentile powers will be supreme in the earth. The "times of the Gentiles" began with the Babylonian Captivity and will end when Jesus Christ returns to this world to set up His kingdom. For hundreds and hundreds of years the nation Israel has been ruled by other nations and by other peoples. The Jews have suffered greatly for their refusal to let God be their King and Ruler.

The Fifth Kingdom

The book of Daniel actually speaks of five kingdoms. There are four Gentile kingdoms (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome), but there is a fifth kingdom also described in Daniel 2:44 and 7:13-14. Whose kingdom is this?

_____ Someday God Himself will rule planet earth!

God Will Rule and God Does Rule!

Daniel wanted the Jews to know two important things: 1) God will rule the world in the future. God's kingdom will actually come to this earth and it will be the greatest kingdom the world has ever known (Daniel 2:44 and 7:13-14); 2) There was something else the Jews needed to know. God will rule in the future, but **He also rules the world today!** The Jews living in Daniel's day probably thought like this: "The Babylonians rule the world today. They are the ones who are in control. Someday maybe our God will rule the world, but today King Nebuchadnezzar rules the world!" But Daniel reminded them that God rules the world today! He is the Supreme Ruler **right now!**

A Key Verse

A key verse in the book of Daniel is found in 4:17: "to the intent that the living may _____ that the _____ ruleth in the _____ of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." See also Daniel 4:32-37, the verses which tell us about the time when King Nebuchadnezzar realized who the real KING was!). God is ruling the world today! God is in complete control! God rules over every earthly ruler, and He removes kings and sets up kings (Daniel 2:21). No one can be a king or ruler without God's permission (see John 19:11)!

Even today we need to remember that God is still on the throne of this universe. The nations around us may seem very powerful (such as the kingdoms of Russia, China, etc.), but God rules over all! We need to let this same God rule and reign in our hearts!

The Babylonians conquered Judah but they did not conquer Judah's God! God used this wicked nation to accomplish His will; then He judged Babylon (Daniel chapter 5)! Kingdoms rise and fall, but God stays on His throne forever!


Daniel and Revelation

Daniel has been called "the Old Testament book of Revelation." The prophecies found in Daniel are very similar to the prophecies found in Revelation (and also in Matthew chapter 24). In fact, without the book of Daniel it would be almost impossible to understand certain parts of the book of Revelation. The same thing is true for Matthew 24. Jesus wants people to understand the book of Daniel (Matthew 24:15) so that they will be able to understand His great prophecy found in Matthew 24. For these reasons Daniel is one of the most important prophetic books in all the Bible.

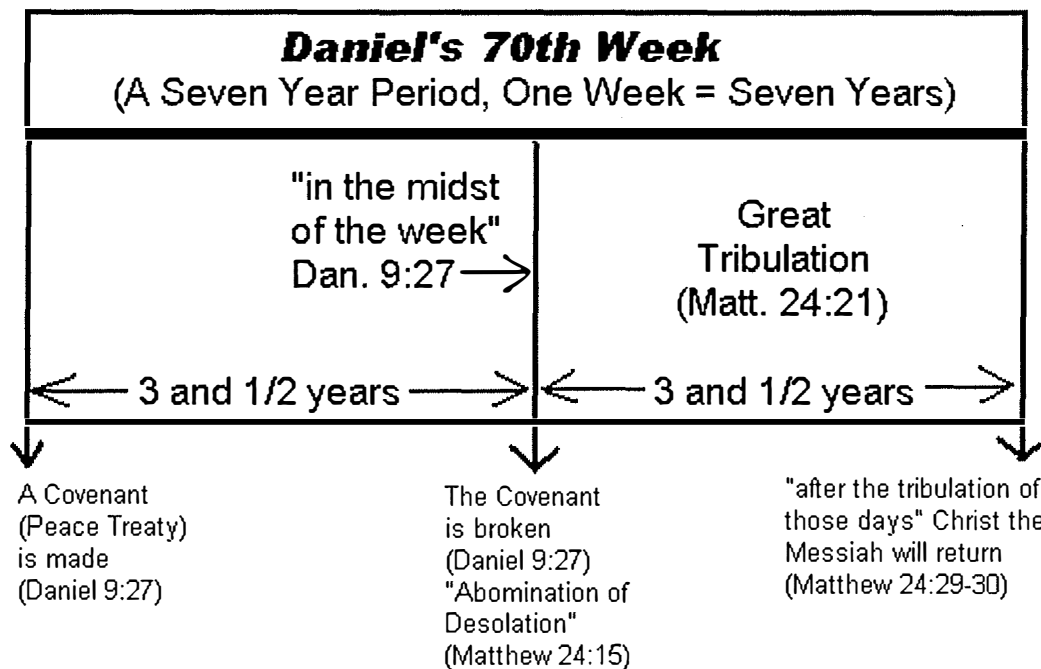
Another key verse in the book of Daniel is found in Daniel 2:22: "He (God) _____ the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the _____ and the light dwelleth with Him." God revealed some amazing things to Daniel (about future kingdoms and kings). God is the only One who can reveal the future to us and help us to understand what the years ahead will bring. It pays to be on good terms with God and to stay on the right side of God. Those who do not are in trouble!

The 70 Weeks Prophecy

One of the most important prophecies found in the book of Daniel is the "70 Weeks" prophecy found in Daniel 9:24-27. This is the only prophecy in the Old Testament which told WHEN Jesus Christ would come into the world. The Hebrew word "WEEK" refers to a period of seven. Usually we think of a week as being a period of seven days. But the week in Daniel chapter 9 is a week of seven years. This means that 70 weeks = $70 \times 7 = 490$ years. These 490 years represent the entire history of the Jewish nation until the time when Christ returns to earth. This chart may help:

<p>From the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem (see Nehemiah 2:1-8) which was given about 445 B.C., to the coming of Messiah the Prince (Daniel 9:25)</p>	<p>7+62 = 69 WEEKS OR 483 YEARS</p>
	<p>The Messiah will be "cut off" (violent death) after these 483 years (Daniel 9:26). This happened about 30 A.D.</p>
<p>The Church Age (so far about 2000 years) is not seen by Daniel's prophecy. This entire age falls in between the 69th and 70th week.</p>	

Daniel's 70th week is still in the future (see Daniel 9:27). This is sometimes called the Tribulation Period. These are the seven years before Christ returns to set up His kingdom.



Although Daniel's prophecy may seem confusing or difficult at first, remember that Jesus wants us to understand it: "whoever reads, let him _____" (Matthew 24:15). May God help us to understand the book of Daniel more and more as we grow in the Lord!

God's government should be answered by human loyalty, especially the believer's loyalty!

STRENGTH OF THE KNEELING HEART

