

## WEEK THIRTY-SEVEN INTRODUCTION

The glory of the Lord returns to the renewed temple and His presence with a renewed people in the closing chapters of Ezekiel. Where the sin of the people caused God's glory to depart Jerusalem and their own exile to Babylon, God's grace triumphs with renewal ensuing. Though Ezekiel presents difficulties to modern readers, the message of the gospel shines through for the patient and diligent. God saves and God restores.

The book of Daniel records another episode for the exiled people. Daniel ministers from approximately 605 B.C. to 536 B.C. He serves in the royal court of the Babylonian king and survives the transition into the Medo-Persian empire. The book of Daniel breaks roughly into narrative stories, six across chapters 1-6, and apocalyptic visions, four recorded in chapters 7-12. The book is also bilingual. Daniel utilized both Hebrew (1:1-2:4a and 8:1-12:13) and Aramaic (2:4b-7:28). Dale Ralph Davis likens the book of Daniel as "a realistic survival manual for the saints."

## KEY SCRIPTURE

*And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever.*

—Daniel 2:44 ESV

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**The departure of the Lord's glory from the temple (Ez. 10:18) and from Jerusalem (Ez. 11:22-23) demonstrates the removal of God's presence with His people. The destruction of the temple seems to seal this fact. The temple represents more than an environment of human worship. The temple represents the Lord's presence with His people. In that light, what significance do you see in Ezekiel's vision of the new temple in Ezekiel 40-44?**

**According to 40:1, Ezekiel's vision of the new temple is given to him in 573 B.C., around 20 years after his initial vision by the Chebar canal recorded in chapter 1. How is his vision in chapter 43 like the previous vision? How is the outcome different?**

In Ezekiel 47, the vision includes a stream of water which flows from under the new temple. In verses 3-5, the trickling stream becomes an uncrossable river. What happens around this river? What happens to the sea when the river flows into it (v. 8)? Wherever the river flows, transformation ensues. Think about this river in light of the rivers described in the beginning (Gen. 2:10-14) and end of the Bible (Rev. 22:1-5), what do you see?

Daniel and his friends are dragged into exile in 605 B.C. (Dan. 1:1). Try to place yourself in their experience. What would it feel like to be forcefully dragged from your home and the visible expression of God's presence, the temple? How does Daniel live in light of God's unchanging power and presence, even as he declares to Nebuchadnezzar in 2:28, *there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries?*

Daniel's life and ministry instructs us on how to live by faith in a time and place which are not our home. But what example can you see in Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3? In what ways is their circumstance different from our own? In what ways is it similar? Where do you see hints of the gospel truth of God's saving presence?

**How does God humble Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4? How does God humble Belshazzar in chapter 5? How does the Lord demonstrate His true sovereignty as being greater than Darius in chapter 6? How should these episodes shape our thinking about those in leadership in our own country? Who rules and reigns? Who saves and delivers? Where should your trust and confidence reside?**

**What great truth and hope does Daniel receive in chapter 12:1-3? Where do you see this truth expanded in the rest of Scripture?**

**BE A DOER OF THE WORD**

“Be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

**-Ezekiel 3:18 ESV**

**Where do you receive pressure to reject Christ or to compromise God’s word? Certainly, there are pressures in our culture, but think specifically for you. Where are you pressured or tempted toward compromise? How will you find courage? How will you demonstrate courage in that precise spot?**