

Call of Jeremiah

1 Sunday
August

Jeremiah 1-3
Heart of the Passage:
Jeremiah 1; 2:13-19



Overview: For centuries prophets had come to God's people with the ultimatum, "Shape up or God will ship you out in judgment." But their message fell on deaf ears and stony hearts. At last it is time for God to demonstrate that His words are no idle threat. He selects a messenger—Jeremiah, the tenderhearted son of a priest of

Anathoth—to announce that Judah's condition is terminal. For their idolatry and indifference, the people will reel in judgment at the hands of the Babylonians.

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
Jeremiah's Call	Judah's Condemnation	Jehovah's Challenge
"Get Ready!"	"Remember!"	"Return!"

To err is human, but when the eraser wears out ahead of the pencil, you're overdoing it.



Your Daily Walk: Have you ever watched a sand castle begin to crumble as the tide advances? It's a study in erosion. First the foundation is undermined. Then the walls begin to sag. Finally the entire structure comes crashing down.

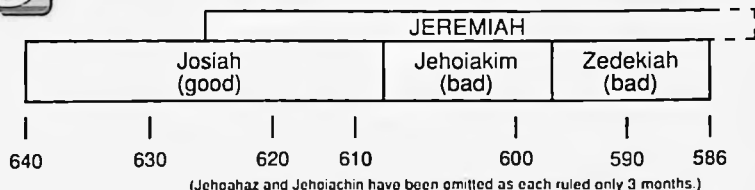
Erosion is like that . . . even in the Christian life. A habit that you once considered unthinkable is grudgingly tolerated. And what you tolerate is all too soon condoned . . . then endorsed . . . then openly promoted as acceptable in God's eyes.

It's such a subtle thing, this erosion. Subtle . . . yet devastating. It happened in the nation of Judah. Perhaps it's happening in your life as well. In your personal life . . . your business ethics . . . your use of money . . . your relationship with your spouse or children. And while you are free to ignore the presence of erosion, you are not free to escape its consequences, for they are as sure as the Word of God.

Are you toying with defection or defilement in your Christian life, confident that God's patience will last? Then hear what God says by reading the penetrating reminder in Exodus 34:6-7.



Insight: The Span of Jeremiah's Ministry (1:1-3)



Judah's Faithlessness

Monday

August

2



Overview: Today's section paints a word picture of the coming Babylonian invasion. You can almost hear the hoofbeats of the horses, the war cries of the invading Chaldeans, the screams of anguish from God's people as they experience the deadly consequences of their rebellion. But the cure is no worse than the disease, for Judah has even forgotten how to blush (6:15) in her zeal to pursue every kind of loathsome activity and proud indulgence.

*Jeremiah 4-6
Heart of the Passage:
Jeremiah 5*

Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
Disaster from the North	Pollution from Within	Punishment from Without
Chaldea	Corruption	Calamity



Your Daily Walk: What would you think of a doctor who, upon discovering a tumor buried deep in your body, responded, "Take two aspirin and you'll be just fine"? How about a fireman who responded to a three-alarm fire by saying, "It will probably burn itself out soon enough"? Or a policeman who, upon arriving at the scene of a burglary, merely shook his head and said, "Boys will be boys"?

In each case, the response is inappropriate to the situation. Tumors demand surgery; fires need to be extinguished; lawbreakers must be punished for their lawless deeds.

And therein lies a parable. Ours is a day in which we have lost sight of the seriousness of sin. Character defect . . . error in judgment . . . slip of the tongue . . . moment of weakness—call it what you will, God's Word plays no such semantic games. Any transgression of God's law is sin (1 John 3:4), and the payment due for falling short of God's glory is death (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

God looked in vain for one person in the city of Jerusalem who stood for justice and godliness in Jeremiah's day (5:1). Will He find it any different in your city today? Confession and commitment—there is no better way to turn your world around! If God were to look in your town (and He is doing precisely that), what would He find?



Insight: "Now Hear This (Did You Hear Me?)"
If something is important, it bears repeating. And the fact that Babylonia was destined to become God's avalanche of judgment upon wicked Judah is repeated in Jeremiah's prophecy 164 times!

It doesn't take such a great man to be a Christian; it just takes all there is of him.

Dear Friend,

Have you ever felt the terrible frustration of watching someone you love ignore the truth of their situation and plunge headfirst into disaster? Have you stood by helplessly while a spouse, a child, a co-worker, or a friend asked your advice—and then deliberately ignored it?



Dr. Bruce Wilkinson is Founder and President of Walk Thru the Bible, a worldwide publications, seminars and video ministry.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel were prophets who knew exactly what it was like to be ignored. For over forty years Jeremiah had tried to get the attention of Judah. But both the people and the leaders refused to listen to God's messenger. They disobeyed God's laws and broke their covenant with Him—but they never expected the consequences that followed. God allowed the Babylonian army to capture and subdue His people.

Likewise, Ezekiel had the difficult task of convincing his fellow Jewish exiles that there was no hope of their returning to Judah in the near future. Only after their beloved Jerusalem was destroyed did they begin to understand the magnitude of God's judgment upon their nation—and their part in it.

This month as you observe the faithfulness of these Old Testament prophets, take heart. Though your loved ones may ignore your advice and your warnings now, they may turn to you for comfort and consolation when things go wrong. God's Word is never sent in vain.

Bruce H. Wilkinson

Bruce H. Wilkinson
President & Executive Editor
Walk Thru the Bible Ministries

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JEREMIAH

On the time clock of history, Judah is only seconds away from destruction as God calls Jeremiah to the task of preaching repentance to an affluent, self-satisfied people. In the book bearing his name, Jeremiah challenges his countrymen to recognize their errors and repent. For more than 40 years, the sinful nation is deaf to Jeremiah's repeated warnings until it is too late. The Babylonian army arrives; vengeance falls; and God's justice and holiness are vindicated.

Focus	Prophecies to Jews	Prophecies to Gentiles
Divisions	Call of Jeremiah Condemnation of Judah Conflicts of Jeremiah Consolation from Jeremiah Consistency of Jeremiah	Condemnation of Nine Countries Consummation of Jerusalem's Judgment
	1 2 25 26 29 30 33 34 45 46	51 52
Topics	Ministry Message Misery	Vengeance Vindication
	Jeremiah's Sermons	Jeremiah's Sorrows
Place	Judah	Babylonia
Time	About 40 Years	

Worthless Worship

3

Tuesday

August

Jeremiah 7-10
Heart of the Passage:
Jeremiah 8



Overview: Idolatry and hypocrisy have permeated every fiber of Judah's national life. People, prophets, and priests alike practice worthless worship in haughty indifference. But through Jeremiah, God delivers a ringing indictment. Their nation—with all its outward splendor—will be reduced to a heap of ruins because of the people's arrogance and idolatry. At the thought of Judah's imminent "divine surgery," Jeremiah weeps unashamedly for his hardhearted countrymen.

Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10
Dangerous "Safety"	Foolish "Wisdom"	Treacherous Tongues	Senseless Statues
Complacency	Folly	Perjury	Idolatry

*As long
as your
conscience is
your friend,
never mind
about your
enemies.*



Your Daily Walk: A bird flies thousands of miles over unfamiliar terrain to avoid winter's cold. A salmon swims vast distances to return to its place of birth. A hunting dog tracks and retrieves its prey, never having been taught those skills.

What do these phenomena have in common? They are all examples of instincts at work: those God-given aptitudes that cause creatures to respond in ways they were never taught.

Just as there are natural instincts which God has placed within you for your physical well-being, so too there are spiritual "instincts" to guard your spiritual health. You'll read about one in 8:4-9, the instinct that pricks your conscience when you sin, prompting you to respond, "What have I done?" Like the warning light on your dashboard, that instinct alerts you to the presence of a problem.

But you must take the next step. Judah responded by ignoring the warning. Are you in danger of doing the same? Even the swallows of Capistrano know better than to ignore their God-given instincts. Pick one of the divine nudges you are feeling right now and respond obediently to it.



Insight: The Valley of Slaughter (7:30-34)
Tophet literally means "altar" or "fireplace." It was where child sacrifices were offered to the heathen deity Molech—a practice outlawed by Josiah (2 Kings 23:10) and repudiated by God (Jeremiah 7:31). The valley of Hinnom later became the city dump where fire burned continuously to consume the rubbish. As such its name became a synonym for hell (Mark 9:47-48).

Judah's Broken Covenant

Wednesday

August

4



Overview: God instructs Jeremiah to take a linen girdle (a tight-fitting belt or sash) and bury it by the Euphrates River. Later he is told to dig it up again. The result is predictable: one ruined girdle, unfit to wear any longer. And the parallel is painfully clear. Selected by God for a place of intimate fellowship (just like the girdle), Judah would now be cast away in judgment for her corruption.

Jeremiah 11-15
Heart of the Passage:
Jeremiah 13

Chapter 11	Chapter 12	Chapter 13	Chapters 14-15
A Broken Promise	A Bitter Complaint	A Rotten Girdle	A Backslidden People
"Why Do the Righteous Suffer?"		"How Will the Unrighteous Suffer?"	



Your Daily Walk: Moses, the servant of God, and Samuel, the first prophet in Israel. What do these two great men of the Old Testament have in common?

The answer may shock and disturb you. God declared that their combined prayers would not be sufficient to avert the disaster soon to come upon rebellious Judah (15:1).

There is a time to pray . . . to repent . . . to come to God on your knees. But there is coming a day when it will be too late to pray—for yourself or another.

Today you have the freedom to seek God or to avoid Him, to acknowledge your need or to sidestep the issue. Today many people may be praying for you: your spouse, children, parents, friends, minister. And you may choose to scoff at those prayers. But the alternative to getting *right* with God is getting *left*—waking up to a day in which even Moses and Samuel could not move God in prayer on your behalf.

Isaiah 55:6 states, "Seek . . . the LORD while he may be found." And when you obey that command, you'll find a wonderful promise waiting for you in Hebrews 11:6!



Insight: Jeremiah, the Audio-Visual Expert

The rotten girdle (13:1-11) is just the first of 10 audio-visual tools Jeremiah uses to communicate his message. Can you identify the others found in these passages?

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 13:1-11 _____ | 19:1-13 _____ |
| 13:12-14 _____ | 24:1-10 _____ |
| 14:1-9 _____ | 27:1-11 _____ |
| 16:1-9 _____ | 32:6-15 _____ |
| 18:1-6 _____ | 43:8-13 _____ |

Procrastination is both the thief of time and the grave of opportunity.

The Prophet and the Potter

5 Thursday
August

Jeremiah 16–20
Heart of the Passage:
Jeremiah 16; 18:1–10



Overview: Jeremiah himself becomes an object lesson to his nation, for his very life models the reality of what is soon to befall Judah. The prophet is commanded to remain celibate and avoid funerals and feast days—a daily reminder to his countrymen that they will soon experience involuntarily what Jeremiah is called to experience voluntarily. Loss of family, comfort, and joy await God’s rebellious people—a message that is finally heard . . . and results in beatings and imprisonment for the faithful prophet of God.

Chapter 16	Chapter 17	Chapter 18	Chapter 19	Chapter 20
Celibate Servant	Shameless Sabbath	Patient Potter	Broken Bottle	Imprisoned Prophet
Rebuke				Rejection

*It costs to
follow Jesus
Christ,
but it
costs more
not to.*



Your Daily Walk: True or False: Salvation is a free gift (before you answer, read Ephesians 2:8-9).

True or False: Discipleship is a costly pursuit (before you answer, read Luke 14:25-33).

For Jeremiah, following God and obeying His will involved paying an enormous price: the price of lost comfort, restricted freedom, and personal sacrifice (16:1-13). Jeremiah willingly endured some unusual restrictions in order to accomplish a unique mission in life.

Similarly, Christ urged those who would follow Him as His disciples to sit down first and count the cost. Salvation is a free gift, but discipleship is a costly pursuit.

What might that cost involve for you? Perhaps it means giving up a lucrative business . . . a cherished ambition . . . the applause of the crowd. Whatever it is, you will discover it by asking and answering this question: “What is there in my life today that is complicating the possibility of my following in the footsteps of the Master?” Let God speak to you from Jeremiah’s example. Then if spiritual surgery is necessary, give God the freedom to use the scalpel of His Word on your life. Discipleship is often painful, but it is always profitable.



Insight: Searching the Heart, Trying the . . . Reins? Funny how words change their meanings. The Hebrew word translated “reins” (17:10) literally means kidneys—a figure of speech for a person’s innermost being or mind. When God tests the reins, He is looking at the deepest motives and thoughts.

Last Chance for Judah's Leaders

Friday

August

6



Overview: Time is running out for Judah. Already a growing sense of doom grips the nation. Popular opinion regarding the prophet of God stands at an all-time low. But even that cannot deter Jeremiah from his appointed task: declaring to leaders and lay persons alike God's displeasure with their conduct.

Moving from the nation in general to the nation's leaders in particular, Jeremiah singles out three kings for judgment before turning his attention to the Messiah-King who will restore righteousness and justice on the earth. The nation will lie desolate for 70 long years when the wrath of God is finally poured out upon His wayward flock.

Jeremiah 21-25
Heart of the Passage:
Jeremiah 21-22

Chapters 21-22	Chapter 23	Chapter 24	Chapter 25
Bad News for Jerusalem	Righteous Branch for Judah	Two Baskets of Figs	A Bowl of God's Fury
Sermons		Signs	



Your Daily Walk: Everyone knows the name of the President of the United States. But can you name three members of his cabinet? Do you know who your state governor is? Your mayor? Your state senators? Your congressional representative?

It is difficult to pray for someone you do not know by name. And it is difficult to pray fervently for someone you do not know personally. But those are your specific responsibilities: to offer "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and . . . thanks . . . for kings, and for all that are in authority" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Your refrigerator or kitchen cupboard would make a fine "prayer prompter" if you attached the names (and better yet, the faces) of several elected officials. Pray for one or more each time they come to mind. If you are tired of reading about scandals involving politicians (and such scandals are as old as Jeremiah's day; see 22:11-30), there is no finer "preventive medicine" than the faithful prayers of godly citizens!

Most every nation has the government it deserves.



Insight: The Worst Kept Secret in Town
 The duration of the Babylonian captivity was a matter of public record. Jeremiah prophesied its length, not once but twice (25:11-12; 29:10). Later while Daniel was living in Babylon, he would read Jeremiah's prophecy, check his calendar, and conclude that God was going to restore His people to their own land after 70 years of captivity (Daniel 9:1-3).

Conflicts of Jeremiah

7/8

Sat.–Sun.

August

Jeremiah 26–29
Heart of the Passage:
Jeremiah 26–27



Overview: Jeremiah's messages of judgment arouse strong opposition, especially in the palace. During Jehoiakim's reign, Jeremiah is threatened with a death sentence. While Zedekiah rules, Jeremiah dons a wooden yoke to portray the importance of Jerusalem surrendering to the yoke of Babylon—and thereby arouses the denunciation

of the false prophet Hananiah. In the midst of this turmoil, Jeremiah sends the exiles in Babylon a letter of encouragement urging them to settle down for an extended (and predicted) period of captivity.

Chapter 26	Chapter 27	Chapter 28	Chapter 29
A Plot to Kill	A Picture to Warn	A Prophet to Refute	A People to Inform
Jehoiakim	Zedekiah	Jeremiah	Exiles

The man who lives by himself and for himself is liable to be corrupted by the company he keeps.



Your Daily Walk: Is your yoke on straight? Take a moment and read about it in Matthew 11:28-30. How does it compare with Jeremiah's experience?

Jeremiah's yoke was a heavy wooden implement made of straps and crossbars, representing the harsh domination of Babylon. Jesus' yoke symbolizes His relationship with His disciples, a fellowship of joy and rest. Jeremiah's was a heavy, lonely burden; Jesus promised to share the burden with His followers.

Both yokes stand for submission: one to a foreign conqueror, the other to a Savior's love. Jeremiah spoke to a rebellious nation about the need to yield to the enemy in order to survive. Jesus also spoke of yielding, not to an enemy but to a Friend—One who provides all that is necessary for life and godliness.

As you go about your routine today, picture yourself yoked to Jesus Christ. Take a piece of paper and make a list of things you would do differently if you knew He was yoked beside you. What problems would you turn over to Him? What worries would you forsake? What attitudes would you change? Would you talk to Him more often? Let His presence make a difference in your life today.



Insight: Did You Hear the Yoke About the King of Moab?

Jeremiah wore a yoke as a visual reminder to the nation of Judah of their approaching bondage. In addition he was instructed by God to send yokes to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Zidon, for all these nations would suffer a similar fate (27:2-7).

Consolation from Jeremiah

Monday

August

9



Overview: God's promise of restoration begins a section describing both the worst of horrors (the time of Jacob's trouble) and the best of blessings (God's new covenant with Israel). God pledges to reestablish the nation after it has been purified by the discipline of exile. As a sign of His promise, He orders Jeremiah to purchase a field that would soon belong to the conquering Babylonians. As surely as day follows night, that land would one day become part of the restored nation to be ruled by the Righteous Branch, David's messianic descendant.

Jeremiah 30-33
Heart of the Passage:
Jeremiah 32

Chapter 30	Chapter 31	Chapter 32	Chapter 33
Reprimanding a Country	Renewing a Covenant	Purchasing a Land	Promising a Legacy
Punishment	Provision	Pledge	Prospect



Your Daily Walk: Your five-year-old has just popped the question, "Daddy, Mommy, what is God like?" Write down the first 10 words that come to mind. (Even if you don't have a five-year-old, the exercise will do you good!) _____

If you had trouble describing God in simple terms even a child could understand, today's passage might help you. Few passages of Scripture present such a complete picture of God. Here you can find the God who hates sin and judges it (30:12-15), yet loves and forgives the sinner (30:18-22). You see the God of wrath (30:23-24) and the God of love (31:1-9). Above all you find portrayed the saving God who regathers His scattered flock (31:10-22) and establishes with them a new covenant (31:23-34)—a promise that rests on the sure guarantee of His sovereign power (31:35-37; 33:19-22).

Now go back and check your initial answer to the question, "What is God like?" Using Jeremiah's thoughts to help, can you express your answer in terms both simple and Scriptural? Better still, find a five-year-old to try your answer on!



Insight: A Familiar King in a Foreign Context (30:9) The reference to David reigning over the restored nation of Israel can be interpreted in at least two ways: (1) Figuratively, it may refer to the coming of Messiah; (2) Literally, it may refer to David himself being one day resurrected to reign as a regent under Messiah (compare Ezekiel 37:24-25 and Hosea 3:5).

As no place can be without God, so no place can compass and contain Him.

Countdown to Jerusalem's Fall

10

Tuesday

August

Jeremiah 34-39

Heart of the Passage:

Jeremiah 36; 39:1-10



Overview: In many ways the Book of Jeremiah deserves the title, "The Life and Ministry of a Man of God." Chapters 1-33 center around Jeremiah's prophetic sermons; chapters 34-52 deal primarily with Jeremiah's personal traumas and trials. Whether in the midst of broken covenants, burned scrolls, or brutal persecution,

Jeremiah stands true to his prophetic mission. Pleading with his countrymen to go into exile voluntarily, Jeremiah "the traitor" watches instead as they resist Jerusalem's collapse and captivity to the end.

Chapters 34-36	Chapters 37-38	Chapter 39
Problems in the Palace	Problems in the Prison	Problems on the Battlefield
Jehoiakim's Fury	Jeremiah's Misery	Jerusalem's Fall

We make our decisions, and then our decisions turn around and make us.



Your Daily Walk: You are driving down the highway when you encounter a sign that reads "Dangerous Curve Ahead." Immediately you are confronted with a choice: (1) You can observe the warning and slow down; (2) You can ignore the warning and maintain your rate of speed; or (3) You can oppose the warning and speed up. Whichever response you exercise, you will not change the truth of the sign. The curve remains dangerous regardless of whether you acknowledge the fact or not.

All three responses are illustrated in today's reading. Jeremiah *obeyed*, Judah *ignored*, and Jehoiakim *opposed* the Word of God. Each expected to "negotiate the curve." But two of the three ended up "on the rocks." This poses a painful question. If God's Word doesn't budge an inch, then what should your response be to such clear commands as these: "Be ye not unequally yoked. . . . Flee also youthful lusts. . . . Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (2 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Timothy 2:22; Ephesians 4:26)? Pick one and respond to it . . . today!



Insight: Scripture in the Making

Chapter 36 is a glimpse into the process by which God's revelation to Jeremiah achieved written form. According to verse 4, what was revealed from God to Jeremiah was spoken by Jeremiah to Baruch, and written down by Baruch in the form of a scroll. The transfer of God's words from the prophet's mind to the finished scroll was accurate (v. 18), and once written down, the Lord stood by it as His revealed Word and will (vv. 29-32).

Calamity After Jerusalem's Fall

Wednesday

August

11



Overview: Though God's people have marched into exile, God's Word continues to come through the mouth of His prophet. When Nebuchadnezzar establishes a puppet governor over the city of Jerusalem, Jeremiah chooses to remain in the city—and urges his countrymen to do the same. But after Gedaliah's brutal assassination, the surviving Jews disregard God's clear command and flee to Egypt for safety, taking the unwilling prophet with them. There Jeremiah predicts Egypt's destruction and Judah's discipline at the hands of Jehovah for knowing what to do—but refusing to do it.

Jeremiah 40–45

Heart of the Passage:

Jeremiah 42–43

Chapter 40	Chapter 41	Chapters 42–43	Chapters 44–45
Jeremiah's Release	Ishmael's Rebellion	Flight to Egypt	Forecast for Egypt
Safety	Slaughter	Disobedience	Disaster



Your Daily Walk: Think back over the last few years of your life: the joys, heartaches, traumas, and triumphs. If you knew back then what you know now, would you have been as eager to go through those years?

God is as wise in what He *conceals* as He is in what He *reveals* about the future. There is nothing that can sour your enjoyment of life *today* like a thorough knowledge of (and morbid preoccupation with) what life will bring *tomorrow*. That's one of the reasons why Jesus instructed His disciples, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34).

Jeremiah found divine strength to face ridicule, imprisonment, assassination, and even deportation—one day at a time. Look for and circle the words "Thus saith the LORD" every time you find them in chapters 40–45. Let that tenfold reminder encourage you that God has a word for you today and every day!



Insight: The Day Obelisks Became Obsolete (43:13)
Part of Jeremiah's prediction of Egypt's ruin by the Babylonians included the destruction of Egypt's places of worship. Bethshemesh ("house of the sun") is the Hebrew name for ancient Heliopolis (modern-day Tell Husn), which is near Cairo. Re, the sun-god, was worshiped there using images called "obelisks." One of the Heliopolis obelisks is now in Central Park in New York City.

Worry is wasting today's time to clutter up tomorrow's opportunities with yesterday's troubles.

The Fall of Jerusalem's Neighbors

12

Thursday

August

Jeremiah 46-49
Heart of the Passage:
Jeremiah 46



Overview: Like a majestic symphony building to a crescendo, Jeremiah closes his book with a mighty sweep of prophetic judgment. Moving from west to east, Jeremiah shows that the God of Israel rules in the affairs of people everywhere: from Egypt to Elam, Damascus to Edom. For their wicked idolatry and staunch refusal to acknowledge the one true God, Judah's neighbors would fall to enemy armies, showing that no nation is big enough to flaunt God's justice and get away with it.

Chapter 46	Chapter 47	Chapter 48	Chapter 49
Egypt	The Fall of Jerusalem's Neighbors: Philistia Moab		Ammon and Edom
Shame	Sword	Salt	Sackcloth

Example is a language everybody can read.



Your Daily Walk: Chances are you've never visited Egypt. And it's for certain you will never travel to Philistia, Moab, Ammon, or Edom. (Why? Take a look at 47:4; 48:2; 49:2, 10. Then check a world map or globe.)

But you can still profit from their sad examples! Here is a sermon-in-a-sentence from three extinct nations. Which nation represents a problem you are currently wrestling with? Circle the name of the nation, along with its one-verse epitaph. You might even want to display the verse in a prominent place in your home or office. Let it remind you often that "Project Prevention" in the Christian life involves growing *wiser*, not merely *older*, in your relationship with God.

Moab: *"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully [dishonestly]" (48:10).*

Ammon: *"Wherefore gloriest thou in . . . thy flowing valley, . . . that trusted in [thy] treasures?" (49:4).*

Edom: *"Thy terribleness [prestige] hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart" (49:16).*

Have you learned a lesson they overlooked?



Insight: The Bottom Line

Question: What is the fundamental reason why Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, Elam, Babylon, Israel, Judah, and many other nations in world history were destroyed? **Answer:** Because they magnified themselves against the Lord (48:42).

The Fall of Babylon and Jerusalem

Friday

August

13



Overview: Babylon, the last and greatest enemy of Judah, will suffer the same fate as the rest of Judah's ungodly neighbors. "And Chaldea shall be a spoil. . . . It shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues"

(50:10, 13). But Jeremiah concludes his prophetic masterpiece with a note of hope. Though Jerusalem has fallen as predicted, her king, Jehoiachin, is shown unexpected kindness in Babylon. In the restoration of this covenant-breaking king, Jeremiah pictures the future restoration of covenant-breaking Judah by her covenant-keeping God.

Jeremiah 50-52

Heart of the Passage:

Jeremiah 52

Chapter 50	Chapter 51	Chapter 52
Dirge of Babylon	Daughter of Babylon	Downfall of Jerusalem
Judah's Foe		Judah's Fall



Your Daily Walk: The tragic words of chapter 52 sound the death knell for God's people. Surely their end has come; the nation is finished; the curtain has closed on the checkered history of Judah. After all, only a handful survive the holocaust.

But suddenly, like a lighted match in a blackened room, the reader sees a flicker of hope. Jehoiachin—wicked, corrupt, but the all-important link in God's promise of a perpetual dynasty for David—becomes the beneficiary of a "government pension" in Persia (52:31-34). God is not dead; Judah is not doomed; God's promises live on! And those promises become the faith-sustaining influence in the lives of two young deportees: Daniel and Ezekiel.

Time cannot erase the promises of God; circumstances cannot dim them; wicked kings cannot destroy them. But *you* can effectively nullify them if you don't claim them! A good promise to begin with would be Hebrews 13:5. And a good time to begin would be right now.



Insight: A Chill Wind Out of the North (50:9)
In 539 B.C. Babylon fell to Cyrus the Persian without a fight. But Cyrus did not destroy the city. Later, the city revolted and Darius Hystaspis captured it and destroyed its walls. From that time the city decayed and declined until, by the third century B.C., it was little more than a desert. Not until the nineteenth century A.D., however, would archaeologists finally uncover its desolate ruins!

More people would learn from their mistakes if they weren't so busy denying them.

Weeping over a Wasteland

14/15

Sat.–Sun.

August

Lamentations 1–5
Heart of the Passage:
Lamentations 3



Overview: In Lamentations the Prophet Jeremiah turns to poetry to express his deepest feelings and emotions over the tragic fall of Jerusalem. The book consists of five exquisitely written poems, the first four in acrostic or alphabetic fashion. Each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, with the exception of chapter

3, where three verses are given to each letter. The prophet begins by weeping over Jerusalem in the midst of her desolation and destruction. But through his tears, Jeremiah turns his heart to view the sovereign God behind it all. As he considers God's control of human affairs, Jeremiah is able to shout victoriously, "Great is thy faithfulness" (3:23). After a final rehearsal of Jerusalem's siege, the prophet intercedes for the restoration of the nation after its punishment is complete.

Chapters 1–2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
Jerusalem's Desolation	Jeremiah's Deliberation	Jerusalem's Defeat	Jeremiah's Desire
God's Chastening and Control			God's Character

*Pity weeps
and runs
away;
compassion
comes to
help and
stay.*



Your Daily Walk: Congratulations! You have just completed one of the longest and least-read sections of Scripture—Jeremiah and its sequel Lamentations. Though often passed over, these portions contain some crucial principles for living. Take a moment to think through the material you have covered the past two weeks. What are some of the lessons you have learned from "the weeping prophet"? Here are some suggestions to help you get started:

1. God's judgment is sure, though not always immediate.
2. God doesn't promise freedom from difficulties, but He does promise strength to go through them.
3. God stands by His promises regardless of what people may do.

Now it's your turn. Call up someone who is (or should be) using this devotional guide, and share a principle from your study of Jeremiah's writings. Or drop us a note and share your "gem"!



Insight: Poems That Cry
In addition to being in acrostic form, Lamentations chapters 1–4 were composed using the so-called limping meter—a cadence reserved for funeral dirges. How appropriate for Jerusalem and the weeping prophet, Jeremiah!

EZEKIEL

Prophecy among the Jewish exiles in Babylonia during the last days of Judah's decline, Ezekiel's ministry is similar to that of Jeremiah. But while Jeremiah delivers a chilling message of destruction, Ezekiel offers a warning message of reconstruction. Jeremiah is a man of tears; Ezekiel, a man of vision. And those visions stretch all the way from horrible condemnation of Judah's faithless leaders and godless foes to hopeful consolation regarding Judah's future restoration.

Focus	Judah's End										Judah's Enemies			Judah's Future								
Divisions	Ezekiel's Call										Judgment East & West			New Temple for Israel								
	Sins and Sorrows			Signs and Sermons			Parables of Judgment		Swords and Signposts		Judgment on Egypt			Watchman on the Wall		Gog and Magog		New Worship for Israel				
	1	6	7	11	12	15	16	19	20	24	25	28	29	32	33	36	37	39	40	43	44	48
Topics	Before the Fall (592-587)										During the Fall (586)			After the Fall (585-570)								
	Prophecies of Judgment													Promises of Restoration								
Place	Babylonia																					
Time	About 22 Years																					

Ezekiel's Vision and Call

16

Monday

August

Ezekiel 1-6

Heart of the Passage:

Ezekiel 1-2



Overview: Six hundred miles from Jerusalem lives Ezekiel, another of God's hand-picked mouthpieces. Ezekiel is called by God to preach both judgment and hope to the early Judean exiles in Babylonia. Because his prophetic assignment is so unenviable, God first gives Ezekiel a most unusual vision of His greatness and glory.

Fortified with a fresh glimpse of his great God, Ezekiel launches into his difficult task: explaining to the exiles why Jerusalem will fall and why the nation will spend the next seven decades in Babylonia.

Chapter 1	Chapters 2-3	Chapters 4-5	Chapter 6
Ezekiel's Vision	Ezekiel's Commission	Judgment Visualized	Judgment Explained
The Prophet		The Prophecy	

Life without purpose inevitably falls prey to the perverted ways of the uncommitted life.



Your Daily Walk: How many times a day do you put into practice a "thus saith the Lord" principle? You know the kinds of situations: You're tempted to gossip . . . or you feel yourself losing control of your temper . . . or you're confronted by a close friend who is caught in the quicksand of a deep personal problem . . . or you feel like telling a half-truth (which, in reality, is a whole untruth).

How do you tackle those and countless other sticky situations? Do you just ignore them and hope they'll go away? Do you share your own thoughts and wisdom on the subject? Or do you do what God told Ezekiel to do: "Go, get thee . . . unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, 'Thus saith the Lord GOD' " (3:11)?

This devotional guide can help you walk through the Bible, but how much of the Bible are you allowing to walk through you . . . in your thoughts, habits, speech, and conduct? Put these words on an index card for quick reference: "God said it, I believe it, I will do it, and that settles it." Then today, with God's help, translate a "thus saith the Lord" into a "thus saith my life."



Insight: Repetition Is the Mother of Learning
Ezekiel's style of instruction might be summarized this way: "If a point is worth making, it is worth making at least four times!" It would be easy to miss the prophet's point if stated only once, but it is nearly impossible to miss when stated four times in one chapter (6:7, 10, 13-14)! Find it and state it in your own words.

Sins and Sorrows

Tuesday

August

17



Overview: For wayward Judah, the end has come. Past sins now give way to crushing horrors as the city of Jerusalem falls in the midst of confusion and brutality. The temple, God's abode among His people, no longer houses the glory of the Lord. Judah's leaders—blind leading the blind—watch helplessly as their beloved Jerusalem turns into a seething caldron of death. Even the Prophet Ezekiel wonders how any can survive such an onslaught. But the Word of the Lord returns in warming comfort: "I will even gather you . . . assemble you . . . and give you the land of Israel" (11:17).

Ezekiel 7-11

Heart of the Passage:

Ezekiel 7; 10:1-4, 18-19;

11:22-25

Chapters 7-8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10	Chapter 11
Doom for Jerusalem	Death for the Guilty	Departure of God's Glory	Downfall of God's Leaders
Condemnation of Idolatry		Consequences of Idolatry	



Insight: A Strong Name for a Demanding Assignment
Ezekiel's name literally means "God strengthens" or "strengthened by God." And his name becomes the testimony of his life (3:8-9), for who but God could strengthen a man to deliver the crushing message of chapters 7-11 week after week . . . for more than 20 years!



Your Daily Walk: What is the longest distance you have ever walked or jogged without stopping? (If your answer is, "The distance from the couch to the refrigerator," read 1 Corinthians 9:27 . . . fast!)

There is a vast difference between training for a *sprint* (like the 100-yard dash) and training for a *marathon* (which covers more than 26 miles). It means very little to a marathon runner if he covers the first 100 yards in 10 seconds. In the long run it is the ability to stick with it mile after mile that counts. *Steadfastness*, not simply short-term *fastness*, determines the winner.

God told the Prophet Ezekiel in advance that he was running a marathon (3:4, 7-9), not a sprint. His audience would be calloused, hard of hearing, and indifferent to his message. Ezekiel would need strength for the long run.

What about you today? Your race is described in Hebrews 12:1-2. Put on your sneakers for a few minutes' walk as you ponder the marathon God has set before you and the resources He has provided in His Son—strength for each step of the way!

To get through the hardest journey, take only one step at a time, but in God's strength keep on stepping.

Signs and Sermons

18

Wednesday

August

Ezekiel 12-15

Heart of the Passage:

Ezekiel 14:12-15:8



Overview: Jeremiah used object lessons extensively in his prophetic ministry. Ezekiel uses dramatic portrayals—divine charades designed to arouse the curiosity of the people and to rivet their attention on the events soon to transpire in Jerusalem. Packing his household belongings, Ezekiel heads for the city wall, where he digs a hole and climbs through—a picture of the soon-coming deportation of the people and the loss of all they called home.

Chapter 12	Chapter 13	Chapter 14	Chapter 15
Symbols of Exile	Sins Leading to Exile Involving . . .		
	Prophets	Priests	People
Destruction	Disobedience		

A man's character and his garden both reflect the amount of weeding that was done during the growing season.



Your Daily Walk: Look around your house and see if you can find at least five things that are virtually useless: burned out light bulbs, broken shoestrings, pens with no ink, husbands watching baseball games, etc.

In chapter 15 Ezekiel likens Jerusalem to a useless vine. Vines are excellent for growing fruit, but when you stop and think about it, they are good for little else. You can't make furniture out of them, build a good fire with them, or turn them into anything particularly useful. In fact, a vine that is fruitless is practically worthless.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem were worthless to God because of their wickedness and idolatry. Planted in the land to be a testimony to His name, they failed to produce the fruit God expected from them. There was nothing left to do but remove them—a painful but necessary way for God to get across the message, "I am the Lord."

Check up on your U.Q. (Usefulness Quotient) today. Does God have free rein to produce the fruit of the Spirit in your life (Galatians 5:22-23)? Press a leaf between the pages of your Bible as a reminder that fruitbearing is not just a good idea. It is one of the reasons God has placed you on this planet (John 15:1-6)!



Insight: Famous Names in Unfamiliar Places

In Jeremiah you learned that even if _____ and _____ (who?) had prayed on Judah's behalf, God would not have listened (Jeremiah 15:1). Now in Ezekiel you will learn that even if _____, _____, and _____ had lived in Jerusalem, their presence would not have saved the city (14:14, 18, 20).

Parables of Judgment for Judah

Thursday

August

19



Overview: Using a picturesque series of allegories and parables, Ezekiel continues his dual message of horror and hope. Like an unfaithful wife, God's people have gone after other gods. They have committed spiritual adultery and prostituted their privileged position. But God's love remains ever faithful for the objects of His delight. Using illustrations drawn from nature, the prophet portrays the reasons for God's coming discipline and gives the sobering reminder: "The soul that sinneth . . . shall die" (18:20).

Ezekiel 16–19
Heart of the Passage:
Ezekiel 18

Chapter 16	Chapter 17	Chapter 18	Chapter 19
Parable of the Harlot	Parable of the Eagles	Proverb of the Sour Grapes	Picture of the Lioness
Graphic Lessons			Grim Lament



Your Daily Walk: Perhaps God's providence is nowhere more evident than in the fact that He gives parents 12 years to develop a love for their children before He turns them into teenagers!

Chapter 18 contains some sobering words for teens . . . and for God's children of all ages. It's a reminder of personal accountability—of the fact that we cannot and dare not attempt to pin the blame for today's problems on yesterday's generation.

Are you the product of godly parents? Then thank God, but don't think He will condone your willful rebellion (18:5-13). Are you the child of rebellious or backslidden parents? Don't think you can use that as your excuse for avoiding the clear and insistent commands of God's Word (18:20).

Make an appointment to take a parent or child out for a special meal this week. (Or call a family member who is out of town.) If there is a root of bitterness between you, *confess* it. If there has been indifference or a lack of accountability in your relationship, *forsake* it.



Insight: The Madness of Israel's Harlotry
You've heard the maxim: "Dog bites man, that's not news; man bites dog, that's news." A harlot who is paid for her wickedness isn't newsworthy because she isn't unusual. On the other hand, a harlot who pays those who come to her will definitely attract attention. In Ezekiel's day, Israel had become front page material. She had committed such mad, willful idolatry that God likened her to a harlot who paid her customers (16:32)!

The best way to keep teens at home is to make home pleasant—and let the air out of the tires.

Swords and Signposts

20

Friday

August

Ezekiel 20–23
Heart of the Passage:
Ezekiel 21:1–17



Overview: Ezekiel the *prophet* often becomes Ezekiel the *playwright* as he uses a number of symbolic actions to dramatize the coming despair for Jerusalem. God’s smelting furnace of wrath will refine the nation of Judah, burning away like dross her violence, immorality, and idolatry. Like an adulterous woman she has

followed the lewd example of her sister, Israel. As a result, Babylon—God’s sword of chastening—is posed to strike. God declares, “I . . . have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more” (21:5).

Chapter 20	Chapter 21	Chapter 22	Chapter 23
Reviewing Judah’s Sins	Removing Judah’s King	Parable of the Silver	Parable of the Sisters
Swords		Signposts	

Repentance may be old-fashioned, but it is not outdated so long as there is sin.



Your Daily Walk: When do you know that a punishment has accomplished its intention? (a) When the person being punished begins to cry? (b) When the person being punished responds, “Ouch!” (c) When the person being punished changes his mind about repeating a course of action?

Punishment is always *painful*. But whether or not it is *profitable* depends on the response of the offender. Repeatedly Ezekiel has tried—through pictures, parables, and illustrations—to visualize the agony of God’s chastening hand. It is a sword, a smelting pot, a caldron. But God’s underlying purpose is not to inflict pain; He is looking for repentance—a change of mind, heart, and direction regarding a sinful action. Are you being prodded, refined, or simmered today?



Insight: Sign Language for Exiles
God told Ezekiel, “I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel” (12:6). See if you can complete the chart below which lists Ezekiel’s 10 signs designed to teach the nation 10 divine truths:

Reference	Sign	Reference	Sign
4:1-2		21:1-17	
4:3-8		22:17-31	
4:9-17		24:1-14	
5:1-17		24:15-27	
12:1-7		37:15-17	

Judgment East and West

Sat.–Sun.

August

21/22



Overview: Gloating over the fate of another is one sure way to share that fate!

Judah's neighbors, smug in their arrogance, stand next in line for Ezekiel's declaration of doom. Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre—none will escape God's wrath according to Ezekiel's vision of doom. Age-old adversaries and great commercial empires alike will topple to show the world that God's justice cannot be thwarted.

Ezekiel 24–28

Heart of the Passage:

Ezekiel 24:15–27; 28:1–19

Chapter 24	Chapter 25	Chapters 26–27	Chapter 28
Tears for Ezekiel	Terror for Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia	Toppling of Tyre's . . . Pride	Prince
Dead Wife	Deadly Warfare	Deadly "Wisdom"	



Your Daily Walk: Do you have a problem with pride?

Yes or *No* (circle one)

If you circled "No," are you proud of that fact? *Yes* or *No*

Consider for a moment these insightful words on the subject of pride—a problem not limited to Ezekiel's day:

Pride is a vice not limited to the emperors of far-flung realms.

Almost anyone, by comparing himself with those who have less talent, less success, less popularity, can emerge with a feeling of satisfaction that is the very opposite of humility.

What is the remedy for pride? You'll find the prescription in 1 Corinthians 4:7. It's the daily realization that all you are and have is a gift from God. The king of Tyre got into "pride problems" by forgetting that fact. And Ezekiel 28:12–19 shows five ways in which pride tripped up the king of Tyre. Are you in danger of being tripped as well? Then spend a few minutes reviewing these potent proverbs about pride and its pitfalls: Proverbs 8:13; 11:2; 13:10; 14:3; 16:18; 29:23.



Insight: When Ezekiel Talks, People Listen!

Tyre, located 60 miles northwest of Nazareth, was actually a double city—half on an island and half on the mainland with a channel in between. At the zenith of its power, Tyre controlled virtually all commerce on the Mediterranean and boasted colonies in Africa, Spain, and Britain. After the Babylonian siege, however, it never regained its former glory. Today, as for centuries, the once-proud city is nothing more than a bare rock where fishermen spread their nets (26:4–5, 14)—a remarkable fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy (26:14, 21; 27:36).

The person who looks up to God rarely looks down on people.

Judgment on Egypt

23

Monday

August

Ezekiel 29–32

Heart of the Passage:

Ezekiel 30–31



Overview: Ezekiel's concluding words to Judah's neighbors are addressed specifically to Egypt. The perennial enemy of God's people, Egypt would not be totally destroyed (as Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, and Tyre would be). Instead, she would be reduced to insignificance after a time of dispersion and regathering. Never again would the glory of the pharaohs shine. Egypt's wealth would be given to the Babylonians as a "reward" for carrying out God's will.

Chapter 29	Chapter 30	Chapter 31	Chapter 32
Egypt's Downfall	Egypt's Lament	Pharaoh's Downfall	Pharaoh's Lament
Judgment on Egypt			

If you don't climb the mountain, you can't see the view.



Insight: Tiny Nation, Great God

The prophet has devoted a large section, fully one-sixth of his prophecy, to a denunciation of Israel's neighbors. It may seem strange to you that so much attention should be given to pagan countries in a book written to bring encouragement to God's people in exile.

However consider the relationship of Israel to the world around her. Compared to her neighbors, she was a tiny nation only a few thousand square miles in size. But by being located on the primary Near Eastern trade routes, Israel became significant to the foreign affairs of Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, and Persia.

Ezekiel's message to these great world powers is the same message God would proclaim to the nations today. The destiny of mankind does not rest in the control of kings and queens, but in God alone. Secular historians may consider Israel of little consequence when compared with Babylonia and Egypt, the Soviet Union or the United States. But Ezekiel saw these world powers from God's perspective. Like specks of dust on the prophetic page, they would disappear from view while God's program for His people lived on!



Your Daily Walk: God has always been in the business of working with the remnant, not the majority. Do you feel you're in the minority as a Christian? The next time you're tempted to say, "I'm a nobody . . . the church has so little influence . . . I'm insignificant," think about little Israel. Like Ezekiel, get your eyes off yourself and fix your focus on God. It will do wonders for your perspective!

Watchman on the Wall

Tuesday

August

24



Overview: The fall of Jerusalem brings a significant shift in the focus of the prophet's message. Up to this point Ezekiel has declared coming calamity for Jerusalem's citizens (ch. 1–32). But now he looks ahead to the day of coming comfort for Babylon's captives (ch. 33–48). God is preparing a time of consolation—a time when He will regather, restore, and refresh His covenant people. Though the nation is presently experiencing groaning, there is coming a day of glory when even the mountains and hills, rivers and valleys will declare the greatness of the God of Israel.

Ezekiel 33–36
Heart of the Passage:
Ezekiel 36

Chapter 33	Chapter 34	Chapter 35	Chapter 36
Watchman on the Wall	Shepherds and Sheep	Edom's Doom	Israel's Delight
Duty	Denunciation	Calamity	Cleansing



Your Daily Walk: Can you think of a promise you made to someone during the past month, and then failed to keep?

Can you think of a promise someone made to you, and then went back on his or her word? _____

Can you think of a promise God made to you, and then forgot about or failed to fulfill? _____

There is a wonderful *promise about promises* stated in Numbers 23:19 and illustrated in Ezekiel 33–36. “God is not a man that he should lie.” God is not fickle or vacillating in keeping His Word. When He states, “Thus saith the LORD,” you can stake your life on it—every time! Judah did; so can you.

Are you ready to become a prospector for the promises of God? Here are some nuggets of gold to get you started. But be careful. Collecting and claiming God's promises can be contagious!

Matthew 6:14; 7:7-8

Philippians 1:6; 4:6-7, 13

Luke 6:38

2 Timothy 3:12

John 14:2-3

James 1:12; 4:7-8; 5:16



Insight: Where There's a “Will,” There's a Promise!

At least 25 times in chapter 36 God declares, “I will [do something]” on behalf of His covenant people. Take two minutes and see how many of the 25 you can discover for yourself. Then in the margin of your Bible add the reference Numbers 23:19. It's a verse that fits!

One thing you can give and still keep is your word.

Gog and Magog

25

Wednesday

August

Ezekiel 37-39

Heart of the Passage:

Ezekiel 37



Overview: Even if you have never read about it, you have probably sung about it: “The foot bone’s connected to the ankle bone; the ankle bone’s connected to the leg bone . . .” Today you will read about Ezekiel’s well-known vision of the valley of dry bones (ch. 37). This

vision perhaps best summarizes the entire message of the book. The dry bones symbolize the spiritual condition of the nation as the people languish in captivity. But even in the bleak valley of judgment, there is hope. As Ezekiel looks on, the bones begin to join themselves together, a picture of the future restoration of the nation. God will again breathe life into His people. Their present deadness because of sin and judgment will give way to future life as the nation is regathered.

Chapter 37	Chapter 38	Chapter 39
Valley of Dry Bones	Victory over Gog	
Restoration	The Attack	The Annihilation
	Rescue	

Many problems, like storms, never arrive in spite of threatening skies.



Your Daily Walk: Have you ever composed a chapter of your spiritual autobiography? There was a time when you, like those dead dry bones in Ezekiel’s vision, had no life, no hope, no purpose for living. But then you met Christ; and He picked you up, put the pieces of your life together again, clothed you with His righteousness, and breathed into you the breath of spiritual life. From that day forward you have been a different person. You have been spiritually alive—a person with limitless hope for the future.

Take time today to write out a three-minute testimony of your spiritual pilgrimage: your life before you met Christ, the way in which you met Christ, and your life since you met Christ. Then share your “literary masterpiece” with your Sunday school class, pastor, or a close Christian friend. You’ll be surprised at how encouraged others will be upon reading your spiritual autobiography! (For an added challenge, share it with an unsaved friend or neighbor and watch what happens!)



Insight: Gog, Magog, and a Cast of Thousands
Ezekiel describes an alliance between Magog (a great power from the north, 38:15) and Persia (Iran), Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer (Ukraine), and Togarmah (southeast of the Black Sea). See Genesis 10 for the historical roots of these different nations.

New Temple for Israel

Thursday

August

26



Overview: Twenty years earlier, Ezekiel had been transported to Jerusalem in a vision to pronounce its doom (8:1-3). He now returns in a vision to the destroyed city to proclaim its reconstruction. Like a precise architect, Ezekiel carefully measures and records the dimensions and details. But his joy over the thought of a rebuilt temple pales by comparison with the thrill of seeing the glory of God—departed long ago in 11:23—now return to take up residence in the temple’s Holy of Holies.

Ezekiel 40–43

Heart of the Passage:

Ezekiel 40:1-4; 43:1-5

Chapters 40–41	Chapter 42	Chapter 43
Temple Court	Temple Chambers	Temple Consecration
Blueprint for Ezekiel's Temple		Glory in Ezekiel's Temple



Your Daily Walk: God has always desired to dwell in the midst of His people. Prove that to yourself!

In the Garden of Eden, what was God doing in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8)? _____

When the tabernacle was completed, what happened to show that God was there (Exodus 40:34-35)? _____

When Solomon’s temple was finished, where was God to be found (2 Chronicles 7:1-3)? _____

And what does 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 say about the temple (tabernacle, abode) of God today? _____

God’s presence is once again abiding in the midst of His people. In the Old Testament tabernacle and temple it was plain for all to see. Could that be said of your life as well? As you read the blueprint of Ezekiel’s temple, map out another blueprint. You could call this one “The blueprint for making a part of my life a showcase for God’s glory today.” Your tongue, temper, work habits, leisure time—each can show forth God’s glory.



Insight: The Significance of Mountains

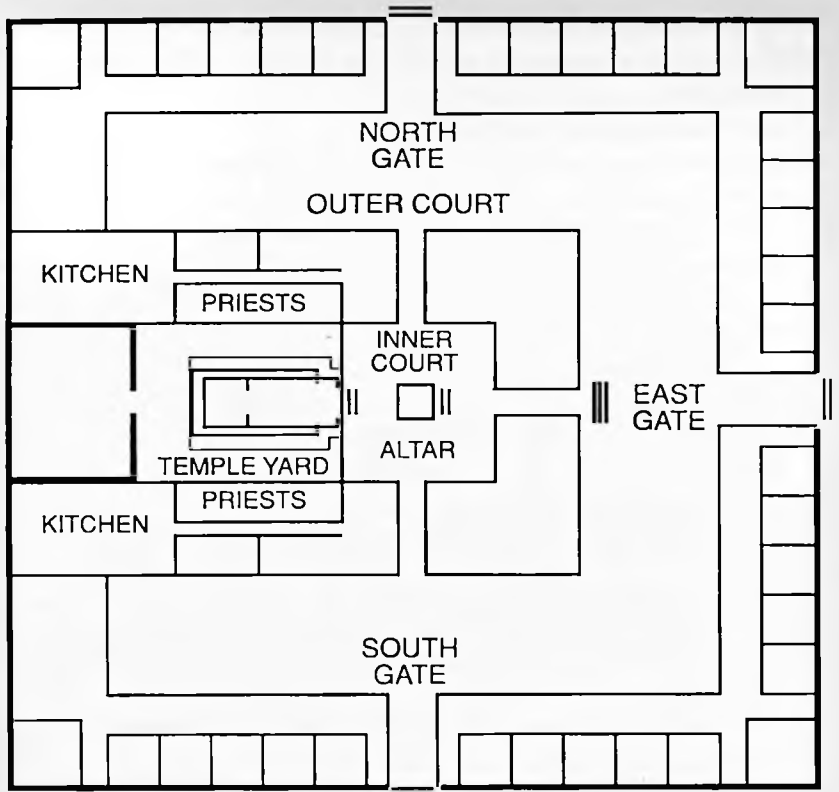
Ezekiel’s vision was on a mountain. The Law of Moses, the Sermon on the Mount, the Transfiguration, and the Great Commission all occurred on mountains. These and other events point us toward the time when Jesus will reign and the mountain of the Lord’s house will be supreme (Isaiah 2:2). Can you think of at least two other mountains mentioned in the Bible that are associated with significant events?

It’s when we rub shoulders with someone that we discover what that person has up his sleeve.



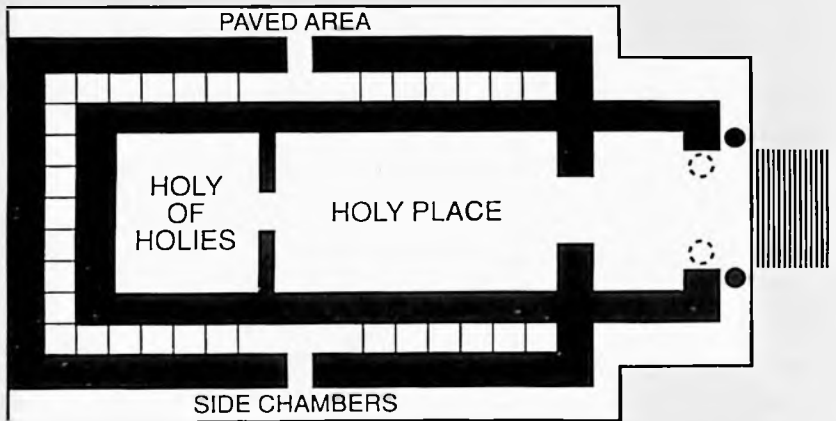
EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE BLUEPRINT

Take a tour of Ezekiel's future temple (Ezekiel 40-42)



The Temple Area

Scale in Cubits



The Temple Proper

Scale in Cubits



New Worship for Israel

Friday
August 27



Overview: The new temple Ezekiel envisions is more than a religious shrine; it is the hub of activity in the rebuilt nation! The new order of worship, much like the worship in the days of Solomon, will involve priests, Levites, sacrifices, offerings, feasts, and designated portions and places for the priesthood. In that day the nation will occupy all the territory originally promised to Israel in the covenant God made with Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21; 17:8). And over the city will hang the name, “The LORD Is There”—a reminder of the burden Ezekiel has carried throughout his life and ministry, that men and women everywhere might see and acknowledge God as the Lord.

Ezekiel 44–48
Heart of the Passage:
Ezekiel 48

Chapter 44	Chapter 45	Chapter 46	Chapter 47	Chapter 48
Priestly Service	Priestly Supplies	Priestly Sacrifices	Boundaries of the Nation	Boundaries of the Tribes
United in Service			Divided Inheritance	

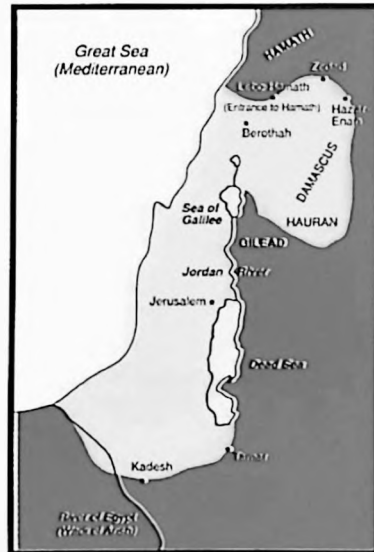


Insight: A Look at the New Land Through Ezekiel’s Eyes



Your Daily Walk: Using a measuring tape (or with the help of a floor plan), spend a few minutes reviewing the dimensions of your home: the length and width of your house; the size of your yard; the location of the doors, windows, sidewalks, and driveways. When you have finished, you will probably be the only human being who knows (or cares to know) those details.

But there is Someone else who knows. He’s the God who never loses track of the hairs on your head or the days of your life (Matthew 10:30; Job 14:5). He’s waiting to share your hurts and to carry your burdens. As Ezekiel learned, God cares about the smallest details of life. Share one of your “little hurts” with Him now!



God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.



DANIEL

Daniel presents a majestic sweep of prophetic history. World powers come and go, but God will establish His people forever. Nowhere is this theme more apparent than in the life of Daniel, a young Jew transplanted to Babylonia. His adventures in the palace and the lion's den show that even in exile God has not forgotten His chosen people. Daniel's dreams and interpretations of others' dreams convince Jew and Gentile alike that wisdom and power belong to God alone!

Focus	Nebuchadnezzar's Dreams		Daniel's Dreams	
Divisions	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Statue		Daniel's Faith in the Lion's Den	
	1	3 4	6 7	9 10 12
Topics	Personal Adventure Concerning Gentiles		Prophetic Visions Concerning Jews	
Place	Babylonia / Persia			
Time	About 70 Years (605–536 B.C.)			

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Statue

Sat.–Sun.

August

28/29



Overview: Daniel, Ezekiel's contemporary during the period of Judah's exile in Babylonia, prophesies concerning the role of Gentile powers in God's program for His people. The first three chapters of the book describe the spiritual integrity of Daniel and his three friends. Selected for government service, they resist the pressure to conform to their pagan environment and instead take a clear-cut stand for the God of Israel. Whether in matters of diet, truthfulness, or spiritual discipline, the four young men live out their convictions—even at the risk of their lives.

Daniel 1–3
Heart of the Passage:
Daniel 1

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
Dedication of Daniel	Dream of Nebuchadnezzar	Deliverance of Daniel's Friends
Desirable Diet	Splendid Statue	Fiery Furnace



Your Daily Walk: Some people are so indecisive, their favorite color is plaid! You ask them if they have trouble making decisions, and their response is, "Well, yes and no." Do you know someone like that?

Daniel and his friends would definitely not fit that category. Their commitments were crystal clear. Once they had "purposed in [their] hearts" to do something, they did it—fearlessly.

Not only did they make *decisive* decisions, they also made *discerning* decisions. When faced with a three-year "bachelor of Babylonia" training program, they accepted their new Babylonian names, but rejected their new (and highly attractive) diet. Why? Because it was the only part of the training program contrary to the law of God.

Divide a sheet of paper in half, labeling the left side "Things about my culture I can accept" and the right "Things about my culture I must reject." Then take a discerning look at the things your culture encourages. Like Daniel and his friends, dare to stand alone in matters where your convictions and culture clash.



Insight: What's in a (Babylonian) Name?
 Hebrew Name . . . Changed to . . . Babylonian Name

Daniel ("God's Prince")	Belteshazzar ("Bel's Prince")
Hananiah ("Mercy of Jehovah")	Shadrach ("Command of Aku")
Mishael ("Who Is What God Is?")	Meshach ("Who Is What Aku Is?")
Azariah ("Jehovah Helps")	Abed-nego ("Servant of Nebo")

It is better to die for a conviction than to live with a compromise.



Daniel's Faith in the Lions' Den

30

Monday

August

Daniel 4-6

Heart of the Passage:

Daniel 6



Overview: Perhaps when you think of Daniel, you think of a young man. But the Book of Daniel covers at least 70 years in the life of this colorful prophet of God. Before beginning your reading today, note in the margin of your Bible that, according to the best estimates, Daniel

was 76 years old in chapter 4 . . . 86 years old in chapter 5 . . . and an energetic 93 years old in chapter 6! Throughout his days, Daniel's faith shines brightly, whether interpreting a king's dream, reading the "handwriting on the wall," or taking a stand for his God.

Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
Nebuchadnezzar in the Pasture	Belshazzar in the Balance	Daniel in the Den of Lions
Downfall of the King	Downfall of the Kingdom	Downfall of a Plot

Faith is the daring of the soul to go farther than it can see.



Your Daily Walk: Who is the most powerful human ruler in the world today? (Write your answer in the margin.) Can you think of three things that person is powerless to do, in spite of his or her power?

Each of the three rulers you encounter in today's reading felt the hand of God in his life. For Belshazzar, it meant the end of his kingdom; for Darius and Nebuchadnezzar, the end of their self-worship as God's equals. When confronted by Daniel's God, all three quickly learned how puny they were by comparison.

There is perhaps no more potent power on earth than a Christian in the midst of a crisis. Both Nebuchadnezzar (4:37) and Darius (6:25-27) gave public praise to Daniel's God when they saw Daniel's stability in the midst of adversity. Do you want to bring honor to God like that too? The key is your reaction to situations where it's tough to be a Christian! The promotion you deserved (but didn't get), the speeding ticket you got (but didn't deserve), the time you did what was right (but it turned out all wrong)—those are the occasions when your faith is in the "fishbowl." Complete this sentence: "If God is to be praised in the midst of my problem, I need to respond (how?)—and with God's help, I will!"



Insight: How the Handwriting on the Wall Looked

מנא מנא תקל ופרסין

Daniel's Visions of Israel's Future

Tuesday

August

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Overview: The first half of Daniel's book centers around the prophet's personal adventures; the second half focuses on his prophetic visions. God's people, a major political and military force among the Gentiles since the days of Joshua, now find themselves under Gentile domination. But even world powers do not rise or fall without the consent of almighty God. In a remarkable collection of prophetic glimpses, Daniel sets forth both the near and distant future of God's chosen people—a future filled with purifying judgment and blessing.

Daniel 7–12
Heart of the Passage:
Daniel 9, 12

Chapters 7–8	Chapter 9	Chapters 10–11	Chapter 12
Prophecies Involving . . .			
Beasts	Weeks	Kings	Angels
Belshazzar	Darius	Cyrus	



Your Daily Walk: “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom” (Job 28:28). When Job uttered those profound words, he had no idea that one day they would provide a fitting caption to place on the life of a prophet named Daniel! Reverential awe in the presence of the One who alone establishes kings and kingdoms is surely a wise place to begin planning your life. And it's not a bad place to return for periodic checkups to make sure your life stays on target.

Daniel soon realized that standing in the presence of God makes you keenly aware of your own sinfulness. Notice his emotional prayer of confession and intercession for his people: “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name” (9:19).

Do you see God clearer as a result of your reading in the Book of Daniel? If so, then you should also have a clearer picture of yourself. Make a list of the characteristics about yourself that have come into sharper focus. Now take that snapshot to the pages of Scripture and tackle one of the areas of weakness today!

People who admit they're wrong usually go farther in life than people who try to prove they're right.



Insight: The Chronology of Daniel in Capsule Form

Kingdom:	Babylonia		Persia	Babylonia		Persia	
King:	Nebuchadnezzar	Belshazzar	Darius	Belshazzar	Darius	Cyrus	
Chapter(s):	1–4	5	6	7–8	9	10–12	

Trusting with the **HEART OF A CHILD**

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel—in all circumstances these men trusted God as a child trusts in a loving father.

Funny how God doesn't look for flamboyant lifestyles accented with whistles and bells. He doesn't look for those who are successful and self-sufficient. He looks for the one who will acknowledge his or her sin and repent. He looks for the person who will come with the faith of a little child, believing that only Jesus can save from sin.

The final criterion God will use when we stand before Him is not appearance, material wealth, or worldly success. He will get right to the heart of the matter: "Have you acknowledged that you are a sinful person who has fallen short of My standard? Have you accepted Christ's work on your behalf? Have you trusted in Jesus as your Savior?"

The Bible describes this step of faith: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. . . . For 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' " (Romans 10:9-10; 13, NIV).

To belong to God's family, you must by faith personally accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. Whether you're five or fifty, you can come to God with the believing heart of a little child. There's no other way.

If you accept Christ's invitation to new life this month, please let us know. It would be a joy to hear from you.