

An In-Depth Book-by-Book Study of the Bible

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

EZEKIEL,
DANIEL:
FAITH UNDER FIRE

BIBLE STUDIES
FOR THE DEAF

EXPLORE
THE BIBLE

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Send questions/comments to
Explore the Bible: DEAF
Nashville, TN 37234
By email to
explorethebible@lifeway.com

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Accepting Christ?



Kevin Bryant

Hello, my name is Kevin Bryant. I live in Clearwater, Florida, with my wife, Bernice. We have three grown children, two sons and one daughter. God has blessed me with a nice home and a wonderful Christian wife.

When I was a little boy, I went to the Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis, Missouri. It was an oral school. I lived at home with my parents, and every day we would drive past a cemetery. At night, I would lie in bed and think about when I would die. I was afraid to die. I told my mom that I was scared because I didn't know what would happen to me when I died. My mom told me not to worry. She said I was young and would grow up and be fine.

I didn't feel satisfied. I became older and went to the Missouri School for the Deaf for middle school and the Florida School for

the Deaf for high school. I learned sign language at those schools. Later, I moved to New Orleans to attend Delgado Jr. College. At that time my life was full of sin because I hung out with people who went the world's way. I followed their bad influence. When I finished school, I moved to Clearwater, Florida. I continued to live in sin.

Two friends invited me to come with them to Calvary Baptist Church. I watched the Deaf choir practice and met the choir director. She asked me to join the choir. One month later, in July, 1979, the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf met at Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center in Florida. I went to SBCD with the Deaf choir and other friends from church.

I listened to the teachers and preachers. During fellowship time, I listened to people as they talked about Jesus in their lives. After SBCD, I went home and felt restless. The Lord was tugging at my heart. Every night for a week I could not sleep because God was pulling at my heart.

After church on Sunday night, I went to a restaurant with my friends who were the directors of the Deaf Ministry at Calvary Baptist Church. They explained to me that Jesus loves me. They told me how to be saved. They told me I did not need to be afraid to die.

Jesus touched my heart. Right there in the restaurant I accepted Jesus as my Savior. Now, I am not afraid of death. I know Jesus is with me, and I will be with Him for eternity. John 3:16 says if we believe in Jesus, we will have everlasting life.

I was an HVAC Engineer for more than 20 years. Now I am trained as a video graphics artist. God has allowed me to serve Him in my hearing church as a deacon,

Bible teacher, licensed pastor, and an evangelist.

Are you afraid of death? You don't need to be afraid to die. You know Jesus is in Heaven, and you can live with Him forever if you accept Him. God loves you. John 5:25 says, "the time is coming and is already here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will have life."

How to Use the Personal Study Guide

Use your Bible to read all the verses. Read from your favorite translation. These lessons may be used for weekly Bible Study and reading at home.

Read **Accepting Christ?** on page four to learn how to become a Christian. If you are already a Christian, show this to a friend.

The **Lesson Material** outline gives verses for you to read in your Bible.

The **Bible Truth** will help you to understand the lesson better.

What These Verses Tell Us explains in a few words what the lesson teaches. Read it first to help you understand the lesson.

Meet the Writer tells you a little bit about the person who wrote all the lessons for the quarter.

Before you read each part of the lesson, read the Bible verses for that part. Study the lesson and the verses to find the answers to the **Study Questions**. Write your answers and bring them to the Bible study.

The **Leader Guide** is for the teacher, but you may want to read **Dig Deeper!** for additional study related to the lesson.

Pray for your teacher, members of your Bible class, and lost Deaf people. Pray for God to use you to share Christ with other people

EZEKIEL, DANIEL

*Faith Under Fire***Comparison of the Two Prophets, Ezekiel and Daniel**

Jewish captives were taken from Jerusalem to Babylon three times. Daniel went in the first group about 605 B.C. Ezekiel went in the second group, about 597 B.C.

Old Testament names often had a special meaning. *Ezekiel* means “strengthened by God.” This is a good name for him because Ezekiel often needed to be reminded how his strength came from God.

Ezekiel was still a young man when he was taken captive during the reign of Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:10-16). Daniel was taken in the first captivity during Jehoiakim’s reign, about eight years before Ezekiel (Daniel 1:1-7).

Daniel’s experience was a little bit like Joseph who was a prisoner in Egypt, and God used him to interpret dreams for the Egyptian pharaoh (Genesis 41:1-40). Daniel interpreted dreams for King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:1-49).

Ezekiel and Daniel both prophesied about the same time as Jeremiah, but the three prophets were not at the same place. Jeremiah was an old man who spoke to the Jewish remnant in the land of Israel, the ones who were not taken to Babylon. Daniel spoke in the court of the king of Babylon. Ezekiel spoke to the captives who had been brought to the rivers of Babylon.

The Work of the Prophets

“The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets, telling in advance about the sufferings of Christ and about the glory that would follow those sufferings. The prophets tried to learn about what the Spirit was showing them, when those things would happen, and what the world would be like at that time” (1 Peter 1:11).

The Prophecy of Ezekiel

Ezekiel was the prophet of the glory of the Lord. Three prophets of Israel spoke when they were away from the land



of Israel: Ezekiel, Daniel, and John (in the New Testament). Each wrote a vision of the future (called an apocalypse). They used highly symbolic language, but they saw the bright light of victory and held the highest hopes for God's people. Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord leave Solomon's temple, and he saw the return of the glory of the Lord in the future. Ezekiel looked beyond his time to the sufferings of Christ.

The Prophecy of Daniel

We know more about Daniel as a man than we do about any other prophet. He gave us a personal account of his life from the time he was carried captive to Babylon in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, which was about 605 B.C. (Daniel 1:1), until the first year of King Cyrus, which was about 536 B.C. (Daniel 1:21). Daniel's life and ministry bridged the entire 70 years of the Jewish captivity in Babylon. At the beginning of the book, Daniel is a boy in his teens, and at the end he is an old man of 80 or more years. Here is God's estimate of the man: "Daniel, God loves you very much" (Daniel 10:11).

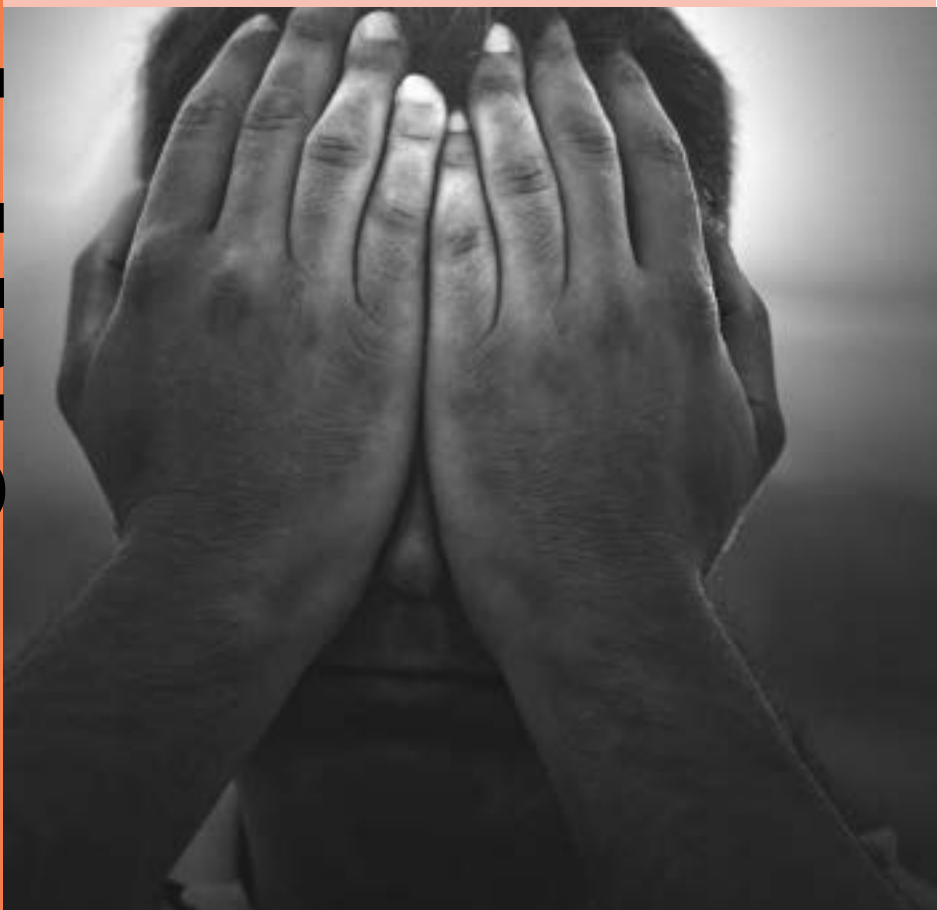
We can see Daniel's faith in his praise song in Daniel 2:20-23. With a faith like that, he did not need to worry about what other people thought or did.

Most of Daniel's prophecies were directly concerned with the Gentile nations. The notable exception is Daniel 9, which concerns a period of time in the future identified as the 70 weeks. One of the more famous experiences for Daniel was his interpretation of the dream for King Nebuchadnezzar. No one else could do this, but God gave Daniel the interpretation.

Daniel prophesied about political issues as well as spiritual matters. His book gives the final outcome of events and issues that are at work in the world today and answers the question, "Who will rule the world?"

Chapter 7 in Daniel begins the prophetic section and outlines history from Daniel's day, past our day, and on to the end of time and the return of Jesus Christ.

UNIT 1



CRISIS OF FAITH

Ezekiel 1:1–32:32

The five lessons in this unit show it is important for us to look to the Lord when we experience challenges to our faith. The lessons are from the Book of Ezekiel, after the Israelites were taken away as slaves to Babylon (about 586 B.C.).

These lessons tell about Ezekiel's **vision** of God's **glory**, his call to be a **prophet**, his vision of false idols in the temple, his warning to Jewish leaders who worshiped idols and were personally responsible for leading the people to sin.

We will also learn how God used the death of Ezekiel's wife as a picture of the coming judgment on the people of Israel. The last lesson in this unit is about Ezekiel's **prophecy** and his grief for the king of Tyre because of his selfish pride.

These lessons will encourage us to look to the Lord during difficult times, stay near Him, and desire to do His will in times of personal **tragedy**.

Meet the Writer

Tim Bender is pastor of the Louisville Baptist Deaf Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He is also the pastoral missionary to the Deaf for the Kentucky Baptist Convention and a church planting missionary for the North American Mission Board. Tim is a graduate of California Baptist University in Riverside, California, and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, California. Tim lives in Shepherdsville, Kentucky. He and Lindy Sue have been married since 1973. Tim is very active in the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf and is financial secretary for the World Congress of Deaf Baptists. Tim enjoys reading, fishing, gardening, traveling, and raising Yorkshire Terriers. He has written several times for LifeWay in the past.



When Your World Crumbles



**Background
Study Verses:**
Ezekiel 1:1–7:27

Lesson Material:
Ezekiel 1:1-3; 1:28–2:5;
6:7-10

Bible Truth
God can use difficult
times to help us grow
in our faith.

Many years ago my wife, Lindy, and I were members of First Baptist Church of the Deaf in Portland, Oregon. Each time I entered the church I saw a map of Oregon on the wall, and the words: “5,000+ Deaf in Oregon. Who will tell them about Jesus?” Each week that map gave me a burden to tell Deaf people about Jesus.

For some time, I knew Jesus was calling me to be a pastor. One time, during a revival, I felt someone put a hand on my shoulder. I turned to see who it was. No one was there. I asked my wife if she put her hand on my shoulder. She said, “No.” I asked people behind me if they touched me. They also said “No.” I knew it was the Lord.

After much prayer, I obeyed His call, and we moved to California where I could attend college and seminary.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Dealing with Life Interrupted (Ezekiel 1:1-3)** – Near a river in Babylon, Ezekiel saw visions of God and knew God was with him.
2. **Seeing God’s Awesome Glory (1:28)** – Ezekiel saw an awesome vision of God’s power and he heard God’s voice.
3. **Empowered for Mission Improbable (2:1-5)** – God filled Ezekiel with His Spirit and sent him with a message to the stubborn people of Israel.
4. **Making Sense of Disaster (6:7-10)** – God told Ezekiel disaster was coming because of Israel’s sins. God would let a small group renew their relationship with Him.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Where did Ezekiel have a vision of God?
2. What are some things Ezekiel saw in his vision?
3. What did Ezekiel hear during his vision?
4. What did God want Ezekiel to tell His people?
5. Why was God sending disaster on His people?

Today’s Lesson

Today we begin an exciting study of one of the great prophets of the Old Testament. A **prophet** was a person who spoke for God. Some prophets told about the future, but others were more like our preachers today.

This quarter we will study two of the prophets, Ezekiel and Daniel. Read about Ezekiel and his **prophecy** in the introduction on page six and also in the Leader Guide material in the back of this quarterly. This will give you a good background for our study for the next few weeks.

Find Jerusalem and Babylon on the map on the last page of this quarterly. This will help you see where these lessons are located. On a modern map you can locate Jerusalem. Babylonia was located in the area now called Iraq.

The title of this lesson is “When Your World Crumbles.” The word **crumble** means “to fall apart, or **collapse**.” Sometimes things do not happen as we hope. When things crumble we may become discouraged and want to give up. Difficult times can include personal struggles to find a job, health problems, a death in the family, or a **disaster** like a fire, flood, tornado, or hurricane.

Difficult times may include loss of health, finances, relationships, freedom, or life. The Bible teaches us God is present with His people at all times and uses difficult times to help His people grow in their faith.

1. Dealing with Life Interrupted (Ezekiel 1:1-3)

¹It was the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month of our captivity. I was by the Kebar River among the people who had been carried away as captives. The sky opened, and I saw visions of God.

²It was the fifth day of the month of the fifth year that King Jehoiachin had been a prisoner.

³The Lord spoke his word to Ezekiel son of Buzi in the land of the Babylonians by the Kebar River. There he felt the power of the Lord.

WHEN WE EXPERIENCE
INTERRUPTIONS, WE
NEED TO RESPOND WITH
THANKSGIVING AND
HUMBLY SUBMIT TO GOD
WHEN HE REVEALS HIS
PRESENCE, HIS GUIDANCE,
AND HIS DIVINE WILL TO US.

Verses 1-2. Ezekiel's life was interrupted. He was a young man when the king of Babylon conquered Jerusalem and took the Jewish king and many other people as slaves in Babylon.

The Kebar (or Chebar) River was a large canal that carried water from the Euphrates River to the city of Babylon and returned the water to the river.

Verse 3. Ezekiel was about 30 years old and had been in Babylon a little more than five years when God spoke to him. He said he felt the power of

the Lord. When we experience interruptions, we need to respond with thanksgiving and humbly submit to God when He reveals His **presence**, His guidance, and His divine will to us.

Do you remember the date you accepted Jesus as your Savior? Do you remember other dates when God spoke to your heart? Those are very special days.

Has your life been interrupted at some time? Perhaps you felt your life was interrupted if you were taken from your home to the state residential school for the Deaf. Many Deaf adults tell stories about how frustrated and frightened they were, and no one was able to explain to them why they were in that place. Perhaps you moved because of a job change. Some older Deaf adults have had their lives interrupted because of health, or the death of their spouse, or many other reasons.

Ask God to show you, as He showed Ezekiel, that He is with you, wherever you are.

2. Seeing God's Awesome Glory (1:28)

²⁸The surrounding glow looked like the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day. It seemed to look like the glory of the Lord. So when I saw it, I bowed face down on the ground and heard a voice speaking.

Verse 28. You can read all about Ezekiel's **vision** in verses 4-27. The word **glory** in this verse means "the strong holy presence of God." Ezekiel felt God's **presence** and felt unworthy to stand before Him. He lay down with his face on the ground to show honor and respect to God. God wanted Ezekiel to know He was with him and His people. Ezekiel said he heard a voice speaking.

Not many people today report visions like this. We have God's Word, the Bible, to reveal God to us. And we have the Holy Spirit within us to help us understand. We do not need a great vision to know what God wants. As you study God's Word, He will show Himself to you. Many times you will read some verses and **realize** you have just learned some great truth about God. Praise Him for revealing Himself to you.

GOD TOLD EZEKIEL TO
DELIVER HIS MESSAGE TO
PEOPLE WHO MAY
NOT LISTEN.

3. Empowered for Mission Improbable (2:1-5)

¹He said to me, "Human, stand up on your feet so I may speak with you."

²While he spoke to me, the Spirit entered me and put me on my feet. Then I heard the Lord speaking to me.

³He said, "Human, I am sending you to the people of Israel. That nation has turned against me and broken away from me. They and their ancestors have sinned against me until this very day.

⁴I am sending you to people who are stubborn and who do not obey. You will say to them, 'This is what the Lord God says.'

⁵They may listen, or they may not, since they are a people who have turned against me. But they will know that a prophet has been among them."

Verse 1. God spoke to Ezekiel and told him to stand up. God spoke and His Spirit entered Ezekiel. In the same way God did to Ezekiel, He wants to lift us up and strengthen us with His words. It is important for us to read God's Word each morning to be lifted up and strengthened for the day.

Verses 2-3. While God spoke to Ezekiel, His Spirit entered Ezekiel, and he was able to understand what God planned to do. God said the people of Israel and their ancestors turned against Him and broke their relationship with Him.

Verses 4-5. God told Ezekiel to deliver His message to people who may not listen. God told Ezekiel the people would hate him for preaching about the coming judgment. But, when those things happened just like God said, then the people would know Ezekiel was a true **prophet** sent from God.

Sometimes God calls us to go to strange places to serve Him. He may lead us to go to places we do not want to go, to people we do not want to be with, to people who do not want us to be with them, and to serve Him far away from our family and friends. But, when God calls, we must obey and go wherever He leads us.

Deaf church members should go to church to learn, but also to become empowered to lead and teach others what they learn. We need to use our spiritual gifts and abilities. Many Deaf and hard of hearing men and women feel called to become pastors, missionaries, and leaders. Is the Lord calling you to serve Him? Will you obey and go wherever He leads you? Will you train and send others to serve the Lord?

**THE ISRAELITES WOULD
UNDERSTAND GOD
PUNISHED THEM BECAUSE
THEY BROKE THEIR
AGREEMENT WITH HIM.**

Lindy and I never dreamed the Lord would call us to Kentucky. We thought we would always live in the western part of the United States. We moved to Kentucky in 1988. We have learned to love Kentucky and the people. We are not sorry we moved here. Sometimes we miss our family and friends. Sometimes we visit family members in Colorado, Texas, Oregon, and California. If God calls us to move again, we will obey and go wherever He leads. Will you obey God's call?

Whatever God calls you to do, He will give you the power and strength to do it. If you feel God calling you to do something more than you are doing for Him now, just say, "Yes." You know God will give you what you need to do His work, even if the mission seems impossible.

4. Making Sense of Disaster (6:7-10)

⁷"Your people will be killed and fall among you. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

⁸But I will leave some people alive; some will not be killed by the nations when you are scattered among the foreign lands.

⁹Then those who have escaped will remember me, as they live among the nations where they have been taken as captives. They will remember how I was hurt because they were unfaithful to me and turned away from me and desired to worship their idols. They will hate themselves because of the evil things they did that I hate.

¹⁰Then they will know that I am the Lord. I did not bring this terrible thing on them for no reason.”

Read the words Ezekiel wrote from 2:6 to 6:6. This will help you understand what he is writing about in verses 7-10. God told Ezekiel to do four strange acts to show His judgments.

God told Ezekiel to get a brick and write “Jerusalem” on it (4:1-3). God told Ezekiel to lie on his left side for 390 days (4:4-8). God told Ezekiel to cook bread over body waste (4:9-17). And God told Ezekiel to cut off his hair and divide it (5:1-17).

Verses 7-10. God said people would be killed while worshiping false gods. Some of God’s people would live and be sent away to other nations. In other nations, they would remember how they disobeyed and hurt God. The Israelites would understand God punished them because they broke their agreement with Him.

On July 3-7, 2012, the National Association of the Deaf had a convention at the International Convention Center in Louisville, Kentucky. On the last day, almost 10,000 people attended the DeaFestival, sponsored by the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. That week, the Kentucky Baptist Conference of the Deaf (KBCD) had a booth, supported by the North American Missions Committee of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf (SBCD), and the Kentucky Baptist Convention. They gave each person a “Find It Here” bag with evangelism materials inside. They also had a KBCD clown walking around the exhibit hall doing tricks.

Some people thought we were doing strange things. We did not mind because we knew we were planting the gospel. We prayed for each person we talked with. We prayed they would be saved and tell others about Jesus.

Are you facing a confusing situation? Perhaps it is something in your work, or your family, or your church. Ask God to help you understand. Talk with your pastor or some faithful Christian friend. God will help you make sense out of whatever you are facing.

What About You?

Have you ever felt God's **presence** during difficult times in your life? How did God help you through those difficult times? What did you learn about God during those difficult times?

Is God calling you to serve Him in some special way? Is He calling you to move away from your family and friends to another city, state, or nation to serve Him? Are you willing to do foolish things to tell other people about Jesus?

Applying the Lesson

1. List three difficult times in your life.

2. List three things you did, with God's help, during those difficult times.

3. List three things you learned about God through the difficult times.

A verse to remember: "Then they will know that I am the Lord" (Ezekiel 6:10).

When Idols Tug at Your Heart

Background Study

Verses:

Ezekiel 8:1–14:23

Lesson Material:

Ezekiel 8:3b-4,10-12;
14:1-6

Bible Truth

God's people must love only Him. They must not have idols in their hearts.



Years ago, members of a Deaf church called a very godly Christian man to be their pastor. A few weeks later, the pastor discovered the members were not true believers. They pretended to be Christians. They were a religious club, not a real Bible believing, Christian church. The members followed the ways of the world, living in sin, committing adultery, lying, gossiping, drinking, and other evil things. The members had hate, anger, bitterness, jealousy, selfishness, and pride in their hearts. They did not want to learn God's Word and change.

The pastor did not give up; he prayed for them, loved them, visited them, taught them God's Word, and hoped they would change their ways. Five years later, the Lord called the pastor and his wife to serve in another state. Sadly, now that Deaf Church is closed because the members refused to remove the idols in their hearts and obey Jesus.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **What's in Your Temple? (Ezekiel 8:3b-4,10)** – Some religious leaders came to visit Ezekiel. During their visit, Ezekiel saw the temple in Jerusalem in a vision. He saw God's glory and many idols in the temple.
2. **Do We Think God Is Unaware? (8:11-12)** – In his vision, Ezekiel saw the religious leaders secretly offering sacrifices to idols in the temple. They thought God could not see them.
3. **What's So Wrong with Idols? (14:1-5)** – God said He would punish the religious leaders for serving idols.
4. **What's the Way Out? (14:6)** – God commanded Ezekiel to tell the people they must turn away from worshiping idols.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In his vision, what place did God's Spirit show Ezekiel? (verse 8:3)
2. In his vision, what did Ezekiel see in the temple? (verses 8:4,14)
3. The religious leaders came to visit Ezekiel. Where were they from? (verse 14:1)
4. What did God say would happen to the religious leaders?
5. What did God command Ezekiel to tell the people they must do? (verse 14:6)

Today's Lesson

The title of today's lesson is "When Idols Tug at Your Heart." *Idols* are what we love and cherish more than God. He wants us to love, serve, and worship only Him (Matthew 22:37). The word **tug** in the title of this lesson means "to pull." Every day, we are pulled in different directions. We are pulled to live for ourselves or for God. We are pulled to live in the flesh or in the Spirit. We are pulled to spend time with God or hurry to work, school, or an appointment.

Through the years, I have visited with many Deaf people in their homes. Many of them tell me they have little or no interest in spiritual things. They say they do not feel the Holy Spirit tugging at their hearts. They say they don't have time for God and church. They say they are too busy working, taking care of their family, going to school events, and other things. I ask them, "Who controls your schedule? Who puts things on the calendar?" If people truly love God, they will find time for God and church.

1. What's In Your Temple? (Ezekiel 8:3b-4,10)

³He took me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance to the north gate of the inner courtyard of the Temple. In the courtyard was the idol that caused God to be jealous.

⁴I saw the glory of the God of Israel there, as I had seen on the plain.

¹⁰So I entered and looked, and I saw every kind of crawling thing and hateful beast and all the idols of the people of Israel, carved on the wall all around.

Verses 3b-4. Some religious leaders came to Ezekiel's house to visit with him. These religious leaders represented the people from Judah who were taken into captivity in Babylon.

Apparently the elders, or leaders, realized Ezekiel was God's **prophet**, so they came to him to understand what God wanted to say to them.

During their visit, Ezekiel had another **vision**. He saw God's **glory** and the Spirit took him to see the temple in Jerusalem. Read verses 5-9 to understand the rest of Ezekiel's vision of the temple in Jerusalem. This vision continues through chapter 11.

Verse 10. In his vision, Ezekiel saw a secret room in the temple. This secret room was near the Holy of Holies. In the secret room, Ezekiel saw many images of idols on the walls. He saw images of crawling creatures, animals, and idols the people of Israel worshiped.

Remember, an **idol** is anything or anyone we love more than God. It is what we love with our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Idols can be things like our job, house, sports, television, movies, books, and music. Idols can be people, like our family or friends.

If we are honest with God, His Spirit will show us any idols we have in our lives. For Christians, our body is where the Holy Spirit lives. There should be no place for idols in our hearts. And we should use our body to honor God. Paul said, "You should know that your body is a temple for the Holy Spirit who is in you. You have received the Holy Spirit from God. So you do not belong to yourselves, because you were bought by God for a price. So honor God with your bodies" (1 Corinthians 6:19). See also 1 Corinthians 3:16.

How can you identify what you place first in our life? Look at your calendar and your check book. What do you give your time and money

AN IDOL IS ANYTHING
OR ANYONE WE LOVE
MORE THAN GOD. IT IS
WHAT WE LOVE WITH OUR
HEART, MIND, SOUL,
AND STRENGTH.

for? Do you see a need to change your priorities and give God first place in your heart and life?

2. Do We Think God Is Unaware? (8:11-12)

¹¹Standing in front of these carvings and idols were seventy of the elders of Israel and Jaazaniah son of Shaphan. Each man had his pan for burning incense in his hand, and a sweet-smelling cloud of incense was rising.

¹²Then he said to me, “Human, have you seen what the elders of Israel are doing in the dark? Have you seen each man in the room of his own idol? They say, ‘The Lord doesn’t see us. The Lord has left the land.’”

**GOD SEES EVERYONE,
BUT HE SEES US AS
INDIVIDUALS. WE ARE
RESPONSIBLE PERSONALLY
TO GOD FOR OUR SIN.**

Verse 11. In the same **vision**, Ezekiel saw 70 religious leaders of Israel offering incense to the images on the walls. Each religious leader was worshiping an image in his own dark private room or area. These religious leaders were elders and counselors who gave advice to the king of Israel.

Verse 12. The religious leaders thought God had abandoned the people of Israel. These leaders led the people away from God.

We need to **resist** the temptation to think God does not know or does not care if we love Him with our whole heart or not. People often say, “God understands, He will forgive if we sin.” This saying is a lie. When we do this, we tempt God to accept our sins and show us more kindness, grace, and mercy.

In his vision, Ezekiel saw many people worshiping idols, but he named one of the men. This reminds us how God sees everyone, but He sees us as individuals. We are responsible personally to God for our sin.

Do you have some sin in your life you think no one knows about? God knows. And God will judge each of us for every sin—public sin or private sin.

3. What’s So Wrong with Idols? (14:1-5)

¹Some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat down in front of me.

²Then the Lord spoke his word to me, saying:

³“Human, these people want to worship idols. They put up evil things that cause people to sin. Should I allow them to ask me for help?”

⁴So speak to them and tell them, “This is what the Lord God says: When any of the people of Israel want to worship idols and put up evil things that cause people to sin and then come to the prophet, I, the Lord, will answer them myself for worshiping idols.

⁵Then I will win back my people Israel, who have left me because of all their idols.”

Read chapters 9–13 for the rest of this story about Ezekiel’s **vision**. Notice how often he wrote, “This is what the Lord God says!” You are reading God’s Word and God will speak to you. Your sin may not be the same as those in these verses, but God will make you aware of your sin. Listen to Him!

Verse 1. Another group of religious leaders came to visit Ezekiel. These were not the same leaders mentioned in Ezekiel 8:1. The other group represented the people of Judah. These leaders represented the people of Israel. They pretended they wanted to hear a message from God through Ezekiel. They thought they could fool Ezekiel.

**IDOLATRY PUTS A
STUMBLING BLOCK
IN OUR RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD AND OTHERS.**

Verses 2-3. God told Ezekiel these leaders worshiped idols and set up evil images that made the people of Israel sin. God said it was not right for them to come and ask Him for help. The leaders were mocking God by asking for His help. In their hearts they secretly loved their idols more than they loved God.

Verse 4. God told Ezekiel to tell the religious leaders His answer. God would punish everyone who worshiped idols and set up evil images that made the people sin. There were images of idols everywhere in Israel. False prophets and religious leaders were encouraging the people to worship many pagan gods. A **pagan** is someone who worships many gods, not one God. The Ten Commandments required the Jewish people not to worship any other gods (Exodus 20:3-5).

Verse 5. God said He would send enemies and very difficult times to destroy the idols and bring His people back to Him. If we truly love and worship God we will want to stay away from **idolatry**. We will understand idolatry puts a stumbling block in our relationship with God and others.

God can use hard times to get our attention and make us think. We can choose to worship only Him with our whole heart, or we may continue worshipping our idols. What do you choose?

Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters. The person will hate one master and love the other, or will follow one master and refuse to follow the other” (Matthew 6:24). In the Old Testament, God said, “Know for sure that you will be punished for your sin” (Numbers 32:23).

Today, in America, we do not worship idols like Ezekiel wrote about. But we do have things we place ahead of God in our life. It may be easy for us to say, “What is so wrong with not reading my Bible?” “What is so wrong with (you name the sin)?” Anything we put ahead of God in our life is sin. We must turn from it and turn back to God.

4. What’s the Way Out? (14:6)

“So say to the people of Israel, ‘This is what the Lord God says: Change your hearts and lives, and stop worshiping idols. Stop doing all the things I hate.’”

Verse 6. God told Ezekiel to tell the religious leaders they and the people must repent of worshiping idols and evil images. The word **repent** in this verse means to return, turn away, or turn back. God wanted the people to stop worshiping idols, go back to Him, obey Him, and worship Him as the true God.

After Solomon built a beautiful new temple and dedicated it to God, God told him about the future, “Then if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves, if they will pray and seek me and stop their evil ways, I will hear them from heaven. I will forgive their sin, and I will heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Romans 1:23-24 says, “They traded the **glory** of God who lives forever for the worship of idols made to look like earthly people, birds, animals, and snakes. Because they did these things, God left them and let them go their sinful way, wanting only to do evil.” When God’s Spirit shows us we are hiding idols in our hearts, we need to **confess** them, give them up, turn away from them, remove them from our lives, and give our whole heart back to God.

What About You?

What are you hiding in your heart? What do you love and cherish more than God?

Is **idolatry** hurting your relationship with God? Is idolatry hurting your relationship with others? Are you trying to be a Christian and a **pagan** at the same time?

Will you ask God's Spirit to identify the idols you have in your heart? Will you **confess** them, ask God's forgiveness, and remove them from your heart and life?

Pray for other people you know who may have idolatry in their hearts and lives.

Applying the Lesson

We can give spiritual sacrifices to God. Draw a line to match them:

Spiritual Offerings	Scripture
Life	Romans 15:16
Saving the Lost	Hebrews 13:15-16
Giving	Philippians 4:18
Praise and Doing Good	Psalms 141:2
Broken Spirit	Psalms 51:17
Prayer	Romans 12:1-2

(Answers: Life – Romans 12:1-2; Saving the lost – Romans 15:16; Giving – Philippians 4:18; Praise and Doing Good – Hebrews 13:15-16; Broken Spirit – Psalm 51:17; and Prayers – Psalm 141:2.)

A verse to remember: "Then he said to me, 'Human, have you seen what the elders of Israel are doing in the dark? Have you seen each man in the room of his own idol? They say, 'The Lord doesn't see us. The Lord has left the land'" (Ezekiel 8:12).

When You Want to Blame Others



Background Study

Verses:

Ezekiel 15:1–19:14

Lesson Material:

Ezekiel 18:1-4,21-23,25-27,30-32

Bible Truth

All people are responsible for their own sins. God will give new life to people who turn away from their sins.

Many years ago, a Deaf man was arrested for kidnapping and abusing his girlfriend. In court, the Deaf man tried to say it was not his fault. He said when he was young, his father made him drink liquor and physically abused him because he was Deaf. He told the judge it was his father's fault, not his fault. He said he had emotional problems because his father hated him for being Deaf. He did not fool the judge. He was sent to prison for his crimes, not because he was Deaf, and not because his father abused him.

Many people are like that Deaf man. They blame others when they do wrong and suffer. They refuse to take responsibility for their own sins and actions. Sometimes we suffer when others do wrong to us, but we are responsible for our own sins and actions. God wants us to take responsibility for our sins.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Who's to Blame? (Ezekiel 18:1-4)** – The people of Israel blamed their parents and grandparents for their sins.
2. **What to Do? (18:21-23)** – The people needed to accept responsibility for their sins and turn away from their sins.
3. **What's Right? (18:25-27)** – God said if the people do what He says, He will forget their sins and let them live.
4. **What Could Be? (18:30-32)** – If the people turned away from their sins, God would put a new heart and spirit in them.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who did the people of Israel blame for their sins?
2. Who was responsible for the sins of the people?
3. What did God say the people must do to live?
4. What did God say He would do if they turned away from their sins?
5. Who is responsible for your sins?

Today's Lesson

This lesson is about Ezekiel's message from God to the people of Israel about their personal responsibility for their sins.

Parents often hear their children say, "It's not my fault!" Young people and adults sometimes blame others when things go wrong or when hard times come in their lives. They try to cover it up and make it look like they did not make the mistake or do the sinful act.

Some people avoid personal responsibility for sins and say they are not as bad as other people. They try to deny the seriousness of their sins by questioning what the Bible says about right and wrong.

This lesson encourages us to accept responsibility and turn away from our sins. This lesson will help us **realize** God is always right and fair, and He wants to forgive us.

1. Who's to Blame? (Ezekiel 18:1-4)

¹The Lord spoke his word to me, saying:

²"What do you mean by using this saying about the land of Israel: 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, and that caused the children to grind their teeth from the sour taste'?"

³As surely as I live, says the Lord God, this is true: You will not use this saying in Israel anymore.

⁴Every living thing belongs to me. The life of the parent is mine, and the life of the child is mine. The person who sins is the one who will die.”

Verses 1-2. The people of Israel blamed their suffering on their parents’ sins. God said the same thing through the **prophet** Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:29-30; Lamentations 5:7). The Jewish people often used this old saying. This saying made people think their parents and grandparents did something wrong in the past that caused their children and grandchildren to sin. God said this saying was not true.

Verse 3. God told Ezekiel to tell the Jewish people they must stop using this old saying as an excuse for their sins. God said they must stop blaming their parents and grandparents for their sins. Each person is responsible for his own sins. He cannot blame other people.

**EACH PERSON IS
RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS
OWN SINS. HE CANNOT
BLAME OTHER PEOPLE.**

Someone in our family may set a pattern for sin, such as alcohol abuse. We are responsible when we accept that pattern for ourselves and do that sin. Some people think they must be like their mother or father. This is not true. We do not need to do wrong things like our parents did.

In the Book of Acts, Saul persecuted, imprisoned, and killed many Christians before he met Christ. The Lord changed him (Acts 9:1-21). He changed his name to Paul. Paul felt he was the chief of sinners and not worthy of salvation (1 Timothy 1:15-16). God forgave and saved a bad sinner like Saul. He can do the same for you.

Verse 4. All living creatures belong to God. Parents and children belong to God and are responsible to Him. Those who sin must die. The Bible says, “The payment for sin is death. But God gives us the free gift of life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Today many people blame their parents, grandparents, or someone else for their emotional problems, bad habits, and sinful ways. Some people go to court and blame others when they do wrong. Some people blame the government, schools, and community leaders for their problems and bad habits. Some people blame tobacco, alcohol, food, television, movies, and many other things. The Bible says all people have sinned (Romans 3:23). No one always does what is right (Romans 3:10).

When we sin, we must **confess** our sin to God, ask Him to forgive us, and turn away from our sins. God promises He will forgive our sins and make us right with Him again if we confess (1 John 1:9). The word confess means “to acknowledge, recognize, plead guilty, or agree.” When the Holy Spirit shows us we have sinned, we need to agree; to tell God

He is right and we are wrong. We must personally **confess** our own sins to God. No one can do it for us. A minister, pastor, elder, priest, or rabbi cannot do that for you.

2. What to Do? (18:21-23)

²¹“But suppose the wicked stop doing all the sins they have done and obey all my rules and do what is fair and right. Then they will surely live; they will not die.

²²Their sins will be forgotten. Because they have done what is right, they will live.

²³I do not really want the wicked to die, says the Lord God. I want them to stop their bad ways and live.”

Verses 21-23. God said people who turn away from their sins, obey Him, and do what is fair and right, will be forgiven and live forever. We must turn away from our sins to faith in Jesus Christ.

Do you see the difference in this section and the one above? Two truths are very important for us to remember.

1. God will punish sin. 2. God will forgive everyone who repents and turns from their sin. The decision is yours. You can be punished for your sin, or you can admit your sin to God, **repent**, and be forgiven for your sin.

IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN,
BUT YOU HAVE STRAYED
AWAY FROM CHRIST, TURN
BACK TO HIM TODAY.

3. What's Right? (18:25-27)

²⁵“But you say, ‘What the Lord does isn't fair.’ Listen, people of Israel. I am fair. It is what you do that is not fair!

²⁶When good people stop doing good and do wrong, they will die because of it. They will die, because they did wrong.

²⁷When the wicked stop being wicked and do what is fair and right, they will save their lives.”

Verse 25. The people complained and said God should not forgive those who turn away from their sins. God said He was always fair. God is holy and perfect. God said the people were unfair and unjust to others. People are not holy and perfect. Only God is holy and perfect.

Verses 26-27. God said people who turned away from Him to sin were wrong. Those who continued to do wrong would die. Those who decided to stop being wicked and evil, and decided to do what is fair and right would live forever. God will forgive and save those who want to live for Him (Romans 3:26).

A true believer cannot lose his salvation. Those who truly believe in Jesus for salvation will not fall away from following Christ (1 John 2:19).

Soon after I became a Christian, I strayed away from the Lord. I did not know how to be a Christian. I did not know how to read my Bible and pray. No one had time to help me. Later I met a Deaf girl in high school. She told me about a Deaf church that had a Bible study for Deaf women taught by the pastor's wife.

Two weeks later, I met the pastor's wife. She prayed with me and helped me turn back to the Lord. Soon after that, I joined the Deaf church and was baptized. The Deaf girl also joined the church and was baptized. I am thankful to the Lord for leading me to the right people.

If you are a Christian, but you have strayed away from Christ, turn back to Him today. Ask your Bible teacher or a **mature** Christian friend to pray with you and help you.

**GOD SAID HE WOULD
GIVE THEM A NEW HEART
AND A NEW WAY
OF THINKING.**

4. What Could Be? (18:30-32)

³⁰“So I will judge you, people of Israel; I will judge each of you by what you do, says the Lord God. Change your hearts and stop all your sinning so sin will not bring your ruin.

³¹Get rid of all the sins you have done, and get for yourselves a new heart and a new way of thinking. Why do you want to die, people of Israel?

³²I do not want anyone to die, says the Lord God, so change your hearts and lives so you may live.”

Verse 30. God said He would judge the people of Israel for what they did. God promised to let the people live if they turned away from their sins. The Lord promises to let us live, today, if we turn away from our sins, obey and follow Him.

Verse 31. God said He would give them a new heart and a new way of thinking. He asked why do you want to die. It is foolish for us to continue sinning and die when God can forgive us and give us new life forever.

Verse 32. God does not enjoy seeing people die. He wants people to turn away from their sin and live forever. God wants all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4).

The Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf supports a ministry called Deaf Prison Ministries Network. This network provides information about how to minister to Deaf people in prison. It helps pastors and churches minister to Deaf people when they get out of prison. It helps them find sponsors, jobs, places to live, and churches. Several Deaf men and women have become Christians through this wonderful ministry. Only God knows what is in a person's heart.

Do you know someone who has recently turned from sin to Christ? Be a good friend to that person and help him know how to be a true follower of Jesus. If you have strayed away from Christ, let your friends in your Bible study group help you turn back to Him and walk with Christ every day.

If you have never trusted Jesus as your Savior, do it today. The Bible is clear about what we need to do to become saved. Read these verses in your Bible.

1. Admit your sin. "Everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's glorious standard, and all need to be made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift" (Romans 3:23-24a).

2. You must understand how sin leads to eternal death (separation from God). "The payment for sin is death. But God gives us the free gift of life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

3. You must believe in Jesus as your Savior. "If you **declare** with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved. We believe with our hearts, and so we are made right with God. And we declare with our mouths that we believe, and so we are saved" (Romans 10:9-11). Of course we know it means the same to say we speak with our signs as well as with words.

Talk with your Bible teacher and pastor today, and let them show you how to have eternal life through Jesus Christ.

What About You?

Do you agree that you are responsible for your sins?

Have you ever blamed someone else when you did something wrong? Did you accept responsibility for doing wrong? Did you ask the person to forgive you for blaming them?

Did you ask God to forgive you for blaming another person? How did you feel after confessing and asking forgiveness?

Pray for yourself and those you know are struggling with blaming others.

Applying the Lesson

On a piece of paper you will keep very private, list two or three people you have blamed for things you have done wrong (parents, friends, others).

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

First, tell God you know you are responsible for your own sin. Ask God to forgive you. Promise to turn from that sin today.

Then, pray about telling that person you were wrong to blame them. If they are still in that sin, encourage them to ask God for forgiveness and turn from that sin.

Ask the Lord to bless them, their family, their pastor, and their church.

A verse to remember: "But suppose the wicked stop doing all the sins they have done and obey all my rules and do what is fair and right. Then they will live; they will not die" (Ezekiel 18:21).

When Tragedy Hits Home

**Background
Study Verses:**
Ezekiel 20:1–24:27

Lesson Material:
Ezekiel 24:15-27

Bible Truth

God is in control.
We can trust Him to
prepare us and help us
when we experience
difficult times.



There was a Deaf woman, Joan, who injured her back working as a nurse's aide at a rehabilitation hospital. Her family doctor ordered X-rays and other tests. He said her back injury was very serious, and she must stop working until her back healed. He recommended physical therapy and a back brace. He said it would be a long and difficult time until she got better. After several weeks of therapy, Joan's back did not improve. She went to a back specialist. The specialist asked her many questions and ordered more X-rays and tests. After seeing the results, he told Joan and her husband, Mark, that she needed back surgery. He told them to think about it and let him know if she wanted the surgery. Joan and Mark talked to their pastor and other people who had back surgeries. They prayed and listened for the Lord's guidance. When we need to make difficult decisions, God will help us find the right answer.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Listen for God's Guidance (Ezekiel 24:15-18)** – God used the death of Ezekiel's wife to show destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.
2. **Seek to Know God Better (24:19-24)** – Destruction of the temple would make the people think of God again.
3. **Trust That God Is in Control (24:25-27)** – Ezekiel's ability to speak again would be a sign God was in control.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why did God want Ezekiel's wife to die?
2. What did God tell Ezekiel to do after his wife died?
3. What would destruction of the temple make the people do?
4. What would be a sign that God was in control?
5. Did Ezekiel obey the Lord?

Today's Lesson

This lesson is about the death of Ezekiel's wife. God used her death to show His coming judgment on Israel. God told Ezekiel not to mourn, and not to grieve before the people. God used Ezekiel's **tragedy** to teach about Himself and His will.

Several years ago some thieves broke into a Deaf church and stole a little bit of money from one of the desks. They also took some other things. None of it had much value, but to destroy their fingerprints, they set fire to the church office. A large part of the church was destroyed.

When things like that happen, we can remember these words, "Let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, because we have been made free from a guilty conscience, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. Let us hold firmly to the hope that we have confessed, because we can trust God to do what he promised. Let us think about each other and help each other to show love and do good deeds. You should not stay away from the church meetings, as some are doing, but you should meet together and encourage each other" (Hebrews 10:22-25).

God may allow difficult times for you, your family, and your church. Are you prepared for difficult times?

1. Listen for God's Guidance (Ezekiel 24:15-18)

¹⁵Then the Lord spoke his word to me, saying:

¹⁶“Human, I am going to take your wife from you, the woman you look at with love. She will die suddenly, but you must not be sad or cry loudly for her or shed any tears.

¹⁷Groan silently; do not cry loudly for the dead. Tie on your turban, and put your sandals on your feet. Do not cover your face, and do not eat the food people eat when they are sad about a death.”

¹⁸So I spoke to the people in the morning, and my wife died in the evening. The next morning I did as I had been commanded.

Verses 15-18. This lesson tells about the death of Ezekiel's wife. Ezekiel loved his wife and enjoyed looking at her. God told Ezekiel He was going to let his wife die. Ezekiel had to be prepared not to mourn in front of the people when she died. God told Ezekiel he must mourn alone, quietly. The death of Ezekiel's wife was a sign the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed (Ezekiel 24:1-2). Sometimes the Lord wants us to mourn alone, quietly with Him.

IF WE OPEN OUR HEARTS
TO GOD, HE WILL HELP
US TO BE READY TO FACE
DIFFICULT TIMES.

The next morning, Ezekiel told the people God said his wife would die and he must not grieve in front of them. Ezekiel's wife died that evening. Ezekiel obeyed what God told him to do. The people did not understand, even after Ezekiel told them his wife would die and he would not be able to mourn in front of them.

Ezekiel remained faithful to God when his wife died. Ezekiel did not forsake the people of Israel when difficult times came to him. If we open our hearts to God, He will help us to be ready to face difficult times.

Destruction of the temple would make the Jewish people think about their relationship with God again. God said He would prepare His people and give them strength when those difficult times came. This lesson encourages us to come near and trust God when difficult times come in our lives.

After much discussion and prayer, Joan and Mark agreed the Lord wanted her to have surgery on her back. She had surgery two weeks later. In fact, she had to have many operations. Through the years, God used Joan's injury to show His love, grace, wisdom, mercy, and power. Joan and Mark learned to trust Him and know He is always in control. “We know that in everything God works for the good of those who love him. They are the people he called, because that was his plan” (Romans 8:28).

What about you? Do you have some difficult things in your life? Have you asked God to show you His will in all that happens? We do not always understand why bad things happen, but we do know God is always in control. He is always right.

2. Seek to Know God Better (24:19-24)

¹⁹Then the people asked me, “Tell us, what do the things you are doing mean for us?”

²⁰Then I said to them, “The Lord spoke his word to me. He said,

²¹“Say to the people of Israel, This is what the Lord God says: I am going to dishonor my Temple. You think it gives you strength. You are proud of it, and you look at it with love and tenderness. But your sons and daughters that you left behind in Jerusalem will fall dead by the sword.

²²When that happens, you are to act as I have: you are not to cover your face, and you are not to eat the food people eat when they are sad about a death.

²³Your turbans must stay on your heads, and your sandals on your feet. You must not cry loudly, but you must rot away in your sins and groan to each other.

²⁴So Ezekiel is to be an example for you. You must do all the same things he did. When all this happens, you will know that I am the Lord God.”

Verses 19-24. The people asked Ezekiel to explain the meaning of his wife’s death and how he had expressed sorrow. Ezekiel said they would

**THE PEOPLE WOULD
THINK ABOUT THEIR
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
AND KNOW HIM AS THE
TRUE GOD AGAIN.**

react the same way when they saw the destruction of the temple. They would be shocked and not be able to express their grief.

God said when the destruction of the temple happened, the people would mourn and know the Lord did it. They would know it was God who allowed the very difficult time to come.

It is difficult to understand the meaning of these verses. Why did God not want the people to mourn? One way to understand this is how God wanted the people to turn back to Him. If they turned to God, they would be joyful. They would not mourn.

Later, the people would think about their relationship with God and know Him as the true God again. If we are willing to come near to God

and trust Him during hard times, He will use our **testimony** and example to help others trust and know Him.

When Joan hurt her back, Mark was a student, earning a small salary at a part-time job. The Lord used several church members to help Joan and Mark. They learned to depend on the Lord during that difficult time. They began to know God and their Christian brothers and sisters better. They began to really understand the words in Proverb, “Trust the Lord with all your heart, and don’t depend on your own understanding. Remember the Lord in all you do, and He will give you success” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

**GOD CAN USE DIFFICULT
TIMES LIKE THOSE TO GET
OUR ATTENTION, KNOW
HIM BETTER, AND LEARN
TO TRUST HIM.**

When you have serious problems, what do you do? Do you get mad at God? Do you blame other people? Or do you turn to God and to Christian friends for comfort and help?

3. Trust That God Is in Control (24:25-27)

²⁵“And as for you, human, this is how it will be. I will take away the Temple that gives them strength and joy, that makes them proud. They look at it with love, and it makes them happy. And I will take away their sons and daughters also.

²⁶At that time a person who escapes will come to you with information for you to hear.

²⁷At that very time, your mouth will be opened. You will speak and be silent no more. So you will be a sign for them, and they will know that I am the Lord.”

Verse 25. The Jewish people were very proud of the temple in Jerusalem. They thought God would never let it be destroyed. They also were very proud of their children. They thought God would not let anything bad happen to their temple or their children.

God said because the people of Israel had forgotten Him, He would let the king of Babylon and his army come to destroy the temple, kill the children, and take many of the people away to live as slaves in other nations.

God said after the temple was destroyed, a **messenger** would escape to tell Ezekiel what happened to the temple and the children in Jerusalem.

Verses 26-27. Three years after this **prophecy**, a man came from Jerusalem to tell about the destruction of the temple (Ezekiel 33:21).

It may have taken six months for this person to travel from Jerusalem to Babylon. This gave proof to the truth of Ezekiel's **prophecy**. Up until that time, the people refused to believe him or even listen to him.

On September 11, 2001, America was attacked by terrorists. Planes were hijacked and crashed into the Twin Towers in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and a field in Pennsylvania. When this very difficult time came to America, people were shocked. They grieved and comforted one another. They began thinking about God and attending church again. Do you remember what happened on September 11, 2001? Where were you when you saw the news? What was your reaction?

God can use difficult times like those to get our attention, know Him better, and learn to trust Him. Many people come to faith in Jesus Christ during those difficult times. We need to pray for people who go through difficult times, and pray for them to trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

When a bad time comes in our life, we often want to ask God, "Why?" "Why is this happening to me?" Sometimes we say this as, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Sometimes we know why, but often we do not understand why such things happen.

It is not easy to understand these verses in Ezekiel. We don't understand why God let Ezekiel's wife die. Ezekiel told the people at that time, and continues to teach us today, to trust God no matter what happens. God has reasons for letting things happen. It is always something that can bring honor and **glory** to Him. Often it is something that can help other people know God and trust Him. We must simply say, "Here am I, God. Use me to honor your holy name."

What About You?

Have you ever experienced a truly difficult time in your life? How did you feel during that difficult time?

Who comforted and helped you during that difficult time?

What did you learn during that very difficult time? How can you use what you learned from your difficult time to help others?

Applying the Lesson

People face grief in different ways. Check the statement if this how you truly feel.

When difficult times come in my life,

- I become angry.
- I become angry with others.
- I blame others.
- I become angry with God.
- I use drugs and/or alcohol.
- I become depressed.
- I trust God.
- I am drawn closer to God.
- I know God is in control.
- I talk to my pastor or Christian friend.
- I am able to help others.
- I can identify with Christ.

Now, underline the statement if it is a way you can honor God in a time of difficulty.

A verse to remember: "So Ezekiel is to be an example for you. You must do all the same things he did. When all this happens, you will know that I am the Lord God" (Ezekiel 24:24).

When Pride Turns to Greed



Background

Study Verses:

Ezekiel 25:1–32:32

Lesson Material:

Ezekiel 28:1-5,11-

13a,14-19

Bible Truth

God wants His people to be humble. Pride makes people act selfish, do evil things, and bring God's judgment on them.

Dave was Deaf and felt called to preach to Deaf people. While he was in seminary he became pastor of a Deaf church. Because the Deaf church was not able to pay him a large salary, he had to work at another part-time job. After graduating from seminary, Dave became very proud. He did not like to visit Deaf people who were less educated than he was. He stayed in his office to chat online with his friends. He became jealous of other Deaf pastors who had more members attending their churches. He wanted the church to grow, but he did not want to do the work. He did not listen when other pastors tried to offer him advice. Later Dave was asked to resign from his position because his selfish pride kept him from his duties as pastor. Our lesson today is about a king who had self-filled pride.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Portrait of Selfish Pride (Ezekiel 28:1-5)** – God told Ezekiel to tell the king of Tyre he would be destroyed for his selfish pride.
2. **Folly of Selfish Pride (28:11-13a,14-15)** – Ezekiel said words of sorrow for the King of Tyre and compared him to Satan.
3. **Result of Selfish Pride (28:16-19)** – God would destroy the king of Tyre, the same as He destroyed Satan.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What was the sin of the king of Tyre? (verse 2)
2. Did the king of Tyre think he was wise? (verse 3)
3. How did the king of Tyre become rich? (verse 14)
4. Why did God want to destroy the king of Tyre? (verse 17)
5. Who did God compare the king of Tyre to? (verse 13)

Today's Lesson

This lesson is about Ezekiel's warning to the king of Tyre. Ezekiel said bad things would happen to the king because he was very selfish and had too much pride. Many Bible teachers believe Ezekiel was using the king of Tyre as a picture of Satan. Tyre was a beautiful, prosperous seaport city. Satan often uses beauty to make his plans attractive to us. This lesson teaches us not to let selfishness and pride control our hearts.

1. Portrait of Selfish Pride (Ezekiel 28:1-5)

¹The Lord spoke his word to me, saying:

²“Human, say to the ruler of Tyre: ‘This is what the Lord God says: Because you are proud, you say, ‘I am a god. I sit on the throne of a god in the middle of the seas.’ You think you are as wise as a god, but you are a human, not a god.

³You think you are wiser than Daniel. You think you can find out all secrets.

⁴Through your wisdom and understanding you have made yourself rich. You have gained gold and silver and have saved it in your storerooms.

⁵Through your great skill in trading, you have made your riches grow. You are too proud because of your riches.”

This chapter is about God's coming judgment on the people of Tyre and their leaders (28:1-19). Read these verses to understand how God used Ezekiel to speak against many nations. This helps us remember how God is in control of all the world all the time. These nations did not become strong without God's approval and help. God often used one nation to discipline another.

The kings of Tyre led the people to become selfish and proud. They led the people to desire wealth and power over those who did business by sea. Everyone wanted more wealth and more power.

Ezekiel said it was the king of Tyre's fault for leading the people to have a wrong attitude about wealth and power. As parents and church leaders, we need to teach our children and Christian brothers and sisters to have good and proper attitudes about wealth and power. Wealth and power are not evil, but they often lead people to become evil.

**WE CAN AVOID SELFISH
PRIDE IF WE DESIRE TO BE
HUMBLE AND THINK, ACT,
AND SERVE LIKE JESUS DID.**

Verses 1-5. In these verses, God told Ezekiel to show the king of Tyre a picture of his self-filled pride. Past kings and people of Tyre had become very selfish in their trades with other nations. They were clever and took advantage of other nations in business agreements. They didn't care if they were stealing and hurting

other nations. As God's people, we need to be careful and honest in our relationships with other people.

The king and people of Tyre were very rich and enjoyed receiving honor and praise from other nations. They thought they were wise and were like gods (28:2,6). They refused to humble themselves and loved having unlimited wealth. They thought they were better and wiser than other nations.

As Christians, we may have self-righteous pride. We may think we have the right to criticize and judge people who are not right with God. Only God has the right to criticize and judge people; we do not have the right. If we judge others, God will judge us. Jesus said, "Don't judge others, or you will be judged. You will be judged in the same way that you judge others, and the amount you give to others will be given to you" (Matthew 7:1-2).

Like Dave, in our introduction, we may not want to fellowship with people who are not like us. We can avoid self-filled pride in our heart if we know the characteristics of the flesh (self) and the characteristics of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26). We can avoid selfish pride if we desire to be humble and think, act, and serve like Jesus did. "The Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many people" (Mark 10:45). See also Philippians 2:5-11.

2. Folly of Selfish Pride (28:11-13a,14-15)

¹¹The Lord spoke his word to me, saying:

¹²“Human, sing a funeral song for the king of Tyre. Say to him: ‘This is what the Lord God says: You were an example of what was perfect, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

¹³You had a wonderful life, as if you were in Eden, the garden of God.

¹⁴I appointed a living creature to guard you. I put you on the holy mountain of God. You walked among the gems that shined like fire.

¹⁵Your life was right and good from the day you were created, until evil was found in you.”

Verses 11-13. God told Ezekiel to sing a funeral song for the king of Tyre. God decided He must destroy the king, the people, and the city of Tyre. God was not going to change His mind.

God said the king of Tyre was like Adam in the beautiful Garden of Eden. Before Adam sinned, he was wise, perfect, and beautiful; and he had everything he needed. Read the rest of verse 13 and see the list of jewels owned by the king of Tyre.

SELFISH PRIDE MAKES US
LOOK BAD IN THE EYES OF
OTHERS. IT HURTS OUR
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
AND OTHER PEOPLE.

Verses 14-15. Until he became **corrupt**, the king of Tyre had a good relationship with God. The city of Tyre was a beautiful place that honored God until selfishness and pride came into the hearts of the king and the people.

When selfish pride comes into our hearts we will think and act like the people of Tyre. We need to recognize our sin, **confess** it, ask God's forgiveness, and turn away from self-filled pride when it comes into our hearts. “If we confess our sins, He will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrongs we have done” (1 John 1:9).

Like Dave in the Introduction, we can be fooled by selfish pride. Selfish pride makes us look bad in the eyes of others. It hurts our relationship with God and other people. If we are selfish and think only about ourselves, other people will not feel comfortable with us and will not want to be around us. Selfish pride leads to a very lonely life.

When I was a young Christian, I struggled with selfish pride. I was proud because I graduated from high school. I was proud because I had a good job. I was proud because I had a beautiful wife. I was proud because

I owned a nice house. I was proud because I had a nice new pickup truck. I was proud because I knew how to build and fix things. I was proud because I was a member of a Deaf church. And I was proud to be a Sunday

School teacher to Deaf children and youth. And I was proud to be a deacon in a Deaf church. And I didn't know I had a problem with pride.

BECAUSE THE KING AND PEOPLE OF TYRE BECAME CRUEL AND SELFISH, GOD SEPARATED HIMSELF FROM THEM AND TOOK AWAY THEIR WEALTH.

After graduating from college, I went to seminary to receive more training to become a pastor. The seminary classes were very hard for me. I did not have interpreters. I had to lip read what my professors said, and I depended on other students to give me copies of their

class notes. The Lord used this time to teach me patience, to show me how to work with hearing people, and how to give up my selfish ways and pride. Sometimes I still struggle with selfishness and pride. God wants us to give up our selfish pride and grow spiritually. He wants us to be like Jesus.

3. Result of Selfish Pride (28:16-19)

¹⁶(God said to the king of Tyre) “Because you traded with countries far away, you learned to be cruel, and you sinned. So I threw you down in disgrace from the mountain of God. And the living creature who guarded you forced you out from among the gems that shined like fire.

¹⁷You became too proud because of your beauty. You ruined your wisdom because of your greatness. I threw you down to the ground. Your example taught a lesson to other kings.

¹⁸You dishonored your places of worship through your many sins and dishonest trade. So I set on fire the place where you lived, and the fire burned you up. I turned you into ashes on the ground for all those watching to see.

¹⁹All the nations who knew you are shocked about you. Your punishment was so terrible, and you are gone forever.”

Verses 16-17. Because the king and people of Tyre became cruel and selfish, God separated Himself from them and took away their wealth. God brought punishment on the king of Tyre. God said He would punish the king and people of Tyre as an example to other kings and nations.

Verses 18-19. The king and people of Tyre became dishonest in their places of worship, their relationship with other nations, and with God. They became proud of their beautiful city and wealth.

They used God's gifts in selfish ways—to get more wealth and power, and for self-worship. God said He would destroy the city of Tyre with fire. The city would become ashes and be gone forever. The nations who did business with Tyre would be shocked to see God's terrible punishment on Tyre. History tells the story of the fall of Tyre. It did happen, just as God said. The nation was powerful from about 1500 B.C. until it was conquered by Alexander the Great in 312 B.C.

God may withhold His blessings on us if we have too much selfish pride. Sometimes God lets things happen to us so He can correct us and teach us lessons. No one likes for their parents, or God, to discipline them. But how can we know we are doing wrong if no one tells us and disciplines us?

In 2003, when Saddam Hussein was leader in Iraq, many people living in Iraq asked the United States to help save their families who were suffering. They were concerned because their family members were arrested, put in jail, tortured, and killed for not supporting Saddam and his government.

Saddam supported terrorism. Representatives from America tried to talk with Saddam and warn him what would happen if he refused to surrender. Now Saddam is gone and the people of Iraq are free.

Selfish pride leads to destruction. God desires to bless us. When we honor God and reject selfish pride, we will have a right relationship with Him and others.

What About You?

Is it all right to be proud?

Do you struggle with selfish pride?

What are you doing to overcome your selfish pride?

What happens to people with self-filled pride?

What can you do to help others to overcome their selfish pride?

Applying the Lesson

Beauty can lead to self-filled pride. A shapely physical body, lovely home, good education, good paying job, attractive car, or new clothes can make us feel we are better than others. But pride makes us unattractive to God and other people. We must use the beautiful things we have to welcome people into our lives, not push them away.

Write about a time when you struggled with selfish pride and how God helped you overcome it. Or write about a problem with selfish pride you have now. How can you overcome that pride?

A verse to remember: "Your life was right and good from the day you were created, until evil was found in you" (Ezekiel 28:15).



UNIT 2

HOPEFUL FAITH

Ezekiel 33:1–48:35

The three lessons in this unit tell about Ezekiel's messages of hope and **restoration**. Believers are encouraged to have faith in the Lord because He gives hope. These lessons are about the Lord's promise to save His people from slavery in other nations and give them a new Shepherd-Ruler. Ezekiel's **vision** of the dry bones is a picture of the Lord's promise to bring back His people under a new agreement. In a vision, Ezekiel saw the **glory** of the Lord return to the temple in Jerusalem.

These lessons will help us think about what God has done for us. We can show **confidence** and hope in the Lord when we thank Him for the freedom we enjoy under Christ's lordship. We can learn to trust the Lord more to give us new life and purpose in Christ. And we can learn how to worship the Lord with respect and obedience.

Hope of New Freedom

**Background
Study Verses:**
Ezekiel 33:1–35:15

Lesson Material:
Ezekiel 34:2b-6,11-
16,22-24

Bible Truth
Even when people
fail spiritually, God
will continue to save
lost people and
give them spiritual
freedom in Christ.



Two days ago, on July 4, Americans celebrated Independence Day. Congress approved the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. It was a written statement saying the 13 American colonies declared themselves to be independent states and no longer part of the British Empire. Thomas Jefferson was selected to write the original draft of the document. The **Declaration** was a formal explanation of why Congress voted on July 2, 1776, to **declare** independence from Great Britain. After the Declaration of Independence was written, approved, and signed, many people fought and died for our freedom. Most of the men who signed the Declaration of Independence were godly, Christian men. We need to give thanks to God for using these brave men, our forefathers, to declare our right to be free. God wants to give all people freedom to live and follow His purposes in life.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Why Is Rescue Required? (Ezekiel 34:2b-6)** – God criticized the selfish leaders of Israel for not taking care of His people.
2. **What Does Rescue Involve? (34:11-16)** – Like a good shepherd, God will bring His people back to their land and give them a new and safe life.
3. **Who Provides Rescue? (34:22-24)** – God said He will give the people a shepherd from the family of David to save them and lead them.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who did God tell Ezekiel to prophesy against? (verses 1-2)
2. Why did God criticize the Jewish leaders? (verse 2)
3. What did the Jewish leaders fail to do? (verses 3-6)
4. Like a good shepherd, what did God say He would do for His people? (verse 11)
5. Who did God say He would send to save His people? (verse 23)

Today's Lesson

This lesson is about God's promise to bring His people back from a faraway land and give them a new Shepherd. God said He would give His people a new kind of freedom. This lesson encourages us to thank the Lord for the freedom we have in Christ.

1. Why Is Rescue Required? (Ezekiel 34:2b-6)

²Prophesy and say to them: "This is what the Lord God says: How terrible it will be for the shepherds of Israel who feed only themselves! Why don't the shepherds feed the flock?"

³You eat the milk curds, and you clothe yourselves with the wool. You kill the fat sheep, but you do not feed the flock.

⁴You have not made the weak strong. You have not healed the sick or put bandages on those that were hurt. You have not brought back those who strayed away or searched for the lost. But you have ruled the sheep with cruel force."

⁵The sheep were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for every wild animal.

⁶My flock wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered all over the face of the earth, and no one searched or looked for them."

Verses 2b-3. In the past, evil kings and leaders took advantage of God's people. God criticized the selfish leaders of Israel for not taking care of His people. Ezekiel said the leaders of Israel were like evil shepherds. They took care of themselves. They did not take care of their people. The leaders got what they wanted, but they did not give the people what they needed. The priests did not lead the people to worship God, but they gave them heavy religious restrictions. The rulers received the taxes but did not use this to make the towns a better place to live.

Verses 4-5. The leaders failed to help and protect the poor, weak, sick, crippled, homeless, and lost. The leaders forced the people to give them what they wanted. They neglected to do their religious duty as leaders.

Verse 6. The leaders did not watch and protect the people. The people were like sheep who wandered all over the hills and mountains. The leaders did not send anyone to look for the people and bring them back. The leaders had no love and concern for their people. They stole from their people to become wealthy.

God said He would remember those leaders who were responsible. As God's people, we should show love and mercy to people who need help and people who are without Christ.

Many young people are like sheep without a shepherd. Many parents, teachers, and leaders in America are not good examples to children and young people. They are not teaching children and young people about the Bible. They are not teaching them how to love and obey God. They let children and young people do whatever they want. Children today are like sheep without a shepherd. In most homes they are not being disciplined to obey their parents and obey God.

**GOD CRITICIZED THE
SELFISH LEADERS OF
ISRAEL FOR NOT TAKING
CARE OF HIS PEOPLE.**

2. What Does Rescue Involve? (34:11-16)

¹¹“This is what the Lord God says: I, myself, will search for my sheep and take care of them.

¹²As a shepherd takes care of his scattered flock when it is found, I will take care of my sheep. I will save them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day.

¹³I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries. I will bring them to their own land and pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines, and in all the places where people live in the land.

¹⁴I will feed them in a good pasture, and they will eat grass on the high mountains of Israel. They will lie down on good ground where they eat grass, and they will eat in rich grassland on the mountains of Israel.

¹⁵I will feed my flock and lead them to rest, says the Lord God.

¹⁶I will search for the lost, bring back those that strayed away, put bandages on those that were hurt, and make the weak strong. But I will destroy those sheep that are fat and strong. I will tend the sheep with fairness.”

Verses 11-12. Ezekiel said God would come like a good shepherd comes to save his sheep from a lion. God would rescue the people from their evil leaders. The evil leaders were like fat sheep who pushed away the weak sheep to get what they wanted.

Verses 13-15. Like a good shepherd, God will search for His people, gather them together, bring them back to their land, and give them a new and safe life. Ezekiel’s words gave hope to the Israelites. God would bring them back to their home. Later, Jesus said that He is the good shepherd and would die to save His sheep (John 10:1-30).

Verse 16. God would do the opposite of what the evil leaders did. God said He would judge and punish those who hurt and neglected His people. We can know God is always at work saving lost people and giving His people strength during difficult times.

In America, sometimes we elect or **appoint** the wrong people to serve in public offices. We may select people who say they want to help and protect us, but they do not keep their word. Wrong leaders are like fat sheep making innocent, weak sheep suffer so they can get what they want.

Most of us like to complain about our leaders without stopping to **realize** they were elected by us. As Christians, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us when we vote for our leaders. We need to pray and make informed, wise choices, the best we can. Then we need to pray for and support those who were elected or appointed (1 Timothy 2:2-4).

3. Who Provides Rescue? (34:22-24)

²²“So I will save my flock; they will not be hurt anymore. I will judge between one sheep and another.

²³Then I will put over them one shepherd, my servant David. He will feed them and tend them and be their shepherd.

²⁴Then I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David will be a ruler among them. I, the Lord, have spoken.”

Verse 22. God said He would rescue His people to renew His name among the nations again. Other nations would know God is the true Lord and ruler of the universe.

Verses 23-24. God said He would send a new leader from the family line of David. This new leader would not be an earthly king. He would be like a shepherd chosen by God to lead His people. He would do all God wanted him to do and bring the people back to Him.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell us how God kept His promise. God sent a new leader, like a shepherd, to lead His people. This new leader and shepherd was Jesus. Jesus was from the family line of David (Matthew 1:1-17). Jesus came to show us the way back to God. “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. The only way to the Father is through me” (John 14:6).

Many Christian leaders in America say we have lost respect for God and dishonored His name. They say we have become an embarrassment to God and to other nations. They say we no longer have faith in God. This is all true. Christians need to stand up for what they believe and be an example of godly people to their family, friends, and neighbors.

As Christians, we need to be thankful to God for keeping His promise to save lost people and set them free from sin and death. We should give thanks to Him for sending His Son Jesus to be our Good Shepherd, Lord, Master, and Savior.

In the Introduction, you read the story about the Declaration of Independence. Like the Jewish people, God rescued the people of the 13 colonies. The colonists put their faith in God and prayed for Him to lead them to begin a new nation. They wanted other nations to know God is the true Lord and ruler of the universe. God heard their prayers and gave them wisdom and strength to start a new nation. Many children and young people do not understand what God did for America. We need to pray for America’s leaders to come back to God, honor Him, and put their faith and trust in Him again.

In the same way God wants to rescue His people, we need to understand how our church is responsible to reach out to people who are lost. Think of ways your church can help people who are hurting and people who are lost in sin.

**GOD SENT A NEW LEADER,
LIKE A SHEPHERD,
TO LEAD HIS PEOPLE.
THIS NEW LEADER AND
SHEPHERD WAS JESUS.**

What About You?

Can you answer these questions? What is freedom? What kinds of freedom are there? What is political freedom? What is religious freedom? What is spiritual freedom? Who can set us free from the power of sin?

Are you telling your children, family members, friends, and neighbors about God and His Word? Are you telling them how Jesus suffered and died on the cross for them? Are you telling them about Jesus the Great Shepherd?

Are you willing to be a shepherd for the people near you? Can you tell them how to have real hope and freedom in Christ?

Or are you like the evil leaders in our lesson today, caring only about yourself?

Applying the Lesson

Give thanks to the Lord for the freedom you have in America.

There are countries where Christians are persecuted. It is illegal to own a Bible, to share your faith in Christ, to belong to a Christian church, or to teach your children about Jesus. Those who boldly follow Christ face harassment, arrest, prison, torture, and also death.

Christians in these countries continue to meet for worship and to witness for Christ. Pray for the gospel of Jesus Christ to be sent to the Deaf and hearing in these nations. Pray for the churches in these nations. Pray daily for your brothers and sisters in Christ in these countries.

Visit the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Church website (www.imb.org/main/pray/prayerrequests/prayerline.asp), and sign up to receive daily missionary prayer requests by e-mail.

A verse to remember: "I will save my flock; they will not be hurt anymore. I will judge between one sheep and another. Then I will put over them one shepherd, my servant David. He will feed them and tend them and be their shepherd. Then I, the Lord, will be their God" (Ezekiel 34:22-24).

Hope of New Life

**Background
Study Verses:**
Ezekiel 36:1–39:29

Lesson Material:
Ezekiel 37:1-3,
11-14,23-28

Bible Truth

God gives new life to all who come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ.



When Benjamin was young, his father died from cancer. It was hard for him to accept his father's death. He taught Benjamin how to be a man with fishing, gardening, and building and repairing things. At his father's funeral, Benjamin was afraid to go near his casket. He wondered where he was now and what would happen to him when he died. Benjamin asked his mother where his dad was now. She said she hoped he was in heaven. Benjamin asked her about death. She was a Christian and tried her best to answer his questions. Later, when Benjamin's mother was away, he was watching television. He found a channel showing a Billy Graham crusade that was closed captioned, and he knew he must watch it. Billy Graham explained how Benjamin could have a new life in Christ.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Possibility of New Life (Ezekiel 37:1-3,11)** – The Lord showed Ezekiel a valley full of bones and asked Ezekiel if the bones can live again.
2. **Process of New Life (37:12-14)** – The Lord promised He would give His people new life, bring them back to their land, and put His Spirit in them again.
3. **Portrait of New Life (37:23-28)** – The Lord said new life for His people would include freedom from idolatry, forgiveness of sin, faithful obedience, everlasting security, and peace.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What did the Lord show Ezekiel in a vision? (verse 1)
2. What did the Lord ask Ezekiel? (verse 3)
3. What did the Lord tell Ezekiel to do? (verse 12)
4. What did God say he would put inside the people of Israel? (verse 14)
5. What did the Lord promise to give His people? (verse 25)

Today's Lesson

The word *hope* in the title of this lesson means “to look forward, to expect something good in the future, and to know God will provide.” It is more than just crossing our fingers and wanting things to be better. This lesson encourages us to trust the Lord to give us new life and purpose in Jesus Christ.

1. Possibility of New Life (Ezekiel 37:1-3,11)

¹I felt the power of the Lord on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and put me down in the middle of a valley. It was full of bones.

²He led me around among the bones, and I saw that there were many bones in the valley and that they were very dry.

³Then he asked me, “Human, can these bones live?” I answered, “Lord God, only you know.”

¹¹Then he said to me, “Human, these bones are like all the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope has gone. We are destroyed.’”

In chapter 36, God promised to bring His people back to their land and bring back their good name to other nations. This chapter is about new hope for God's people.

Verse 1. In a **vision**, God's spirit led Ezekiel to a valley. This was an old battleground where thousands of soldiers had died and were left unburied. The bones were very dry, easily broken, and white from the sun.

Verses 2-3. After Ezekiel looked at the bones, the Lord asked him if the bones could live again. Ezekiel saw what the Lord did in the past and did not doubt what God could do in the future.

God commanded Ezekiel to preach to the bones. In verses 4-10, Ezekiel began to preach. While he was preaching, he heard a noise and saw the bones move and join to one another. Then he saw flesh and skin grow on the bones. Ezekiel noticed there was no life in the bodies. The Lord told Ezekiel to preach to the winds and tell them to enter each body. When the winds came, each body became alive.

Verse 11. The Lord told Ezekiel the meaning of the dry bones. He said the valley of dry bones was a picture of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). He said the Jewish people felt like dry bones. The people were discouraged and did not look forward or expect something good from God to happen in the future. The people felt God had forgotten them and left them forever.

God knew how the people felt. He said the people felt like dead, dry bones because their hopes, dreams, honor, **glory**, and their place as a nation had been taken away and buried in another nation.

Today many people in some nations feel like the people of Israel did during Ezekiel's time. Many nations have been destroyed by politics, religion, war, drought, floods, storms, earthquakes, disease, and evil leadership. People in these nations live one day at a time, hoping for a better future.

As Christians, we can help people without hope to know God cares about them and wants to help them. We can show them God loves them, wants to save them, and wants to give them a new hope and new life in Jesus Christ.

In the Introduction story, Benjamin watched Billy Graham on television. Billy Graham used God's Word to show Benjamin he could have new life forever.

That is always God's message. He promises peace and eternal life to anyone who believes in Jesus as Savior.

AS CHRISTIANS, WE CAN
HELP PEOPLE WITHOUT
HOPE TO KNOW GOD
CARES ABOUT THEM AND
WANTS TO HELP THEM.

2. Process of New Life (37:12-14)

¹²“So, prophesy and say to them, ‘This is what the Lord God says: My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves. Then I will bring you into the land of Israel.

¹³My people, you will know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and cause you to come up from them.

¹⁴And I will put my Spirit inside you, and you will come to life. Then I will put you in your own land. And you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it, says the Lord.”

Verses 12-14. God told Ezekiel to tell the people of Israel how He would take away their feelings of death, give them new life, bring them back to their land, and put His Spirit in them again. When this happened, God’s people and other nations would know it was the Lord who did this mighty work. God said He always keeps His promises.

As believers, we can tell others how God is able to give them new life, bring them out of spiritual death, put His Spirit in them, and give them strength to live their new life in Christ.

Benjamin knew in his heart what Billy Graham said was true. He knew he needed Jesus in his life. At the end of his sermon, Billy Graham gave an invitation. He prayed and showed Benjamin how to accept Jesus. That night Benjamin kneeled and asked Jesus to come into his heart. After he prayed Benjamin knew he would go to heaven if he died.

Do you have that kind of peace and true hope? If you want a new life in Christ, see the article “Accepting Christ” on page four of this quarterly, or talk with your Bible study teacher or pastor.

3. Portrait of New Life (37:23-28)

²³“They will not continue to make themselves unclean by their idols, their statues of gods which I hate, or by their sins. I will save them from all the ways they sin and turn against me, and I will make them clean. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God.

²⁴My servant David will be their king, and they will all have one shepherd. They will live by my rules and obey my laws.

²⁵They will live on the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land in which your ancestors lived. They will all live on the land forever: they, their children, and their grandchildren. David my servant will be their king forever.

²⁶I will make an agreement of peace with them, an agreement that continues forever. I will put them in their land and make them grow in number. Then I will put my Temple among them forever.

²⁷The place where I live will be with them. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

²⁸When my Temple is among them forever, the nations will know that I, the Lord, make Israel holy.“

In verses 15-22, God told Ezekiel to take two sticks and write “for Judah” on one and “for Joseph” on the other. Then He told Ezekiel to put them end to end and hold them in his hand to make it look like they were one stick.

Verse 23. The object lesson with the two sticks meant in the future the Lord would gather His people who were sent to far nations and bring them back to their land again. Israel and Judah would become one nation again.

Verse 24. God said in the future a descendant of David would be king over Israel and lead them like a shepherd. This leader would be a political and religious leader. He would make sure the people followed God’s rules and obeyed His laws.

Verses 25-26. The people of Israel would be able to live and stay in the land forever. God wanted to make an everlasting agreement of peace with His people.

Verse 27-28. God said He would build and live in a new temple and be with the people of Israel. Other nations would know the Lord God is in Israel and would respect Israel as God’s holy people.

Did this **prophecy** come true? People who study the Bible believe Ezekiel wrote about things far into the future. God spoke about the time when Jesus will come to earth again. All of us who trust Jesus as Savior become God’s chosen people. Ezekiel wrote to people who were God’s special people, the Jews. But when Jesus came and died on the cross, He made it possible for all of us to become God’s chosen people. The prophecies from Ezekiel mean when the Lord returns, He will love and protect all of His people (all believers) as a spiritual nation.

When we believe and accept Jesus Christ, we are restored to the family of God. We can know God will keep His promise to give us new life in Christ. We can be **confident** God’s salvation will be greater than we can imagine.

**WE CAN TELL OTHERS HOW
GOD IS ABLE TO GIVE THEM
NEW LIFE, PUT HIS SPIRIT
IN THEM, AND GIVE THEM
STRENGTH TO LIVE THEIR
NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.**

What About You?

Do you know where you will go when you die? Do you have hope for a new life in Christ?

Are you walking in a new life with Jesus every day? Are you thankful for your new hope and new life in Christ?

Are you telling others about your hope and new life in Christ? Are you showing others how to have hope and new life in Christ?

Applying the Lesson:

If you have not yet accepted Jesus, talk with your Bible teacher or a **mature** Christian. Ask them to show you what the Bible says about becoming a Christian.

If you are a Christian, write your Christian **testimony** below. Use a separate sheet of paper if you need more space. Practice telling your Christian testimony in five minutes or less. Use this outline:

1. My life before Christ:

2. How I accepted Christ:

3. My life with Christ now:

4. How Christ has helped me since I was saved:

A verse to remember: "I will be their God, and they will be my people..." (Ezekiel 37:27).

Hope of New Worship

Background

Study Verses:

Ezekiel 40:1–48:35

Lesson Material:

Ezekiel 43:1-12

Bible Truth

Real worship leads us
to live holy lives.



In 1993, I had a dream. In my dream I saw an old gray hallway and an old wooden door with an old sign that had strange writing on it. I wondered why I had the dream. I didn't tell anyone about the dream. In 1995, my wife, Lindy, and I went on a mission trip with a team from Kentucky. We visited a small Baptist church with a Deaf ministry in Tver, Russia. With a Russian-English interpreter, the pastor invited me and another member of our team to his office. The old hallway, door, and sign on the pastor's office door were the same ones in my dream! I told the pastor about my dream. He cried and said he had been praying for someone from America to visit him. It is very special when God gives a vision like this. And it is always to bring glory to Him, as it did that day in Russia.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **The Lord: Deserving of Worship (Ezekiel 43:1-5)** – In a vision, Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord return to the temple. This made him lie face down in awe.
2. **Repentance: Doorway of Worship (43:6-9)** – The Lord told Ezekiel He would live forever in the temple if His people turned away from idols and wicked living.
3. **Holy Living: Design of Worship (43:10-12)** – The Lord told Ezekiel to write new plans for the temple and show it to the people. The emphasis of the temple would be holiness.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What did Ezekiel see in his vision? (verses 2-3)
2. What did Ezekiel do when he saw the vision? (verse 3)
3. What did the Lord say He would do if the people turned away from idols and wicked living? (verses 7-9)
4. What did the Lord tell Ezekiel to draw (write down) and show the people? (verse 11)
5. What would be the emphasis of the new temple? (verse 12)

Today's Lesson

1. The Lord: Deserving of Worship (Ezekiel 43:1-5)

¹Then the man led me to the outer east gateway,

²and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. It sounded like the roar of rushing water, and its brightness made the earth shine.

³The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when the Lord came to destroy the city and also like the vision I had seen by the Kebar River. I bowed face down on the ground.

⁴The glory of the Lord came into the Temple area through the east gateway.

⁵Then the Spirit picked me up and brought me into the inner courtyard. There I saw the Lord's glory filling the Temple.

In Ezekiel 40:1-3, the **prophet** was taken in a **vision** to the temple in Jerusalem. He saw a man with some tools measure the temple wall. People who study the Bible believe this man was an angel sent from God.

It may have been the angel Gabriel who came to Ezekiel earlier. Read chapters 40–42 to see more of this vision and all the things this man showed Ezekiel.

Verse 1. In Ezekiel 10:1-19, Ezekiel saw a **vision** of the Lord leaving the temple. Now, in chapter 43, this man led Ezekiel to the east gate of the temple and Ezekiel saw the Lord returning to the temple.

Verse 2. Ezekiel heard the Lord coming like a roaring river and a bright light, like the sun coming up in the east. The word **glory** means “the strong **presence** of God.”

Verse 3. Ezekiel felt unclean and unworthy to be in the Lord’s presence and lay face-down on the ground. Like Ezekiel, when we are in the presence of the Lord, we feel unclean and unworthy.

Verse 4. Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord come into the temple area through the east gate. The Bible says in the last days the Lord will return from the east. Jesus said, “When the Son of Man comes, he will be seen by everyone, like lightning flashing from the east to the west.” (Matthew 24:27).

In many churches, the main entrance faces east in preparation for the Lord’s return. This comes from the symbolism of the sun rising in the east.

Verse 5. Next, God’s Spirit brought Ezekiel into the inner court of the temple. He saw the Lord’s glory fill the temple.

Some people come into the church on Sunday morning, and they are unprepared to worship the Lord. They come with their mind on the things of the world. They judge and criticize other people who are there. They chat with their friends and talk about other people during the worship time. When people do these things, they steal God’s glory. They take other people’s attention away from God.

At our church, we encourage people to worship the Lord from their hearts. They may choose to watch and not sign the songs. All of these things are ways we can show our worship. All of these are good, as long as we work together to honor Him. We need to remember God wants us to worship Him in spirit and in truth, with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength.

My favorite time of the year is when I am able to attend the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf. I enjoy seeing old friends and meeting new friends. I enjoy the workshops and fellowship. I enjoy seeing Deaf and hearing people from different states and nations. I enjoy seeing people worship the Lord in different ways from their heart. Our methods may be different, but we have the same spirit of worship in our hearts.

**GOD WANTS US TO
WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT
AND IN TRUTH, WITH ALL
OUR HEART, MIND, SOUL,
AND STRENGTH.**

When we come to worship, we must do our best to show honor and respect to God because He is always watching. Jesus said people who worship God, must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

When you go into God's house, is your heart ready to worship Him?

2. Repentance: Doorway of Worship (43:6-9)

⁶As the man stood at my side, I heard someone speaking to me from inside the Temple.

⁷The voice from the Temple said to me, "Human, this is my throne and the place where my feet rest. I will live here among the Israelites forever. The people of Israel will not make my holy name unclean again. Neither the people nor their kings will make it unclean with their sexual sins or with the dead bodies of their kings.

⁸The kings made my name unclean by putting their doorway next to my doorway, and their doorpost next to my doorpost so only a wall separated me from them. When they did their acts that I hate, they made my holy name unclean, and so I destroyed them in my anger.

⁹Now let them stop their sexual sins and take the dead bodies of their kings far away from me. Then I will live among them forever."

Verse 6. In the inner court, Ezekiel saw the **glory** of the Lord fill the whole temple. The man stood beside Ezekiel. This may have been an angel assigned to guard the sacred places in the temple, such as the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place.

The Holy of Holies symbolized the throne of God. It was where God lived and **reigned**. The Ark of the Covenant was in the Holy of Holies. Inside the Ark of the Covenant were the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod, and a jar of manna (Hebrews 9:1-5). Ezekiel heard the Lord speak from the Holy of Holies.

Verse 7. Bodies of many kings were buried near the temple in Jerusalem. The kings were buried in tombs and separated by a wall. The Lord told Ezekiel sexual sins and tombs would no longer be allowed after the temple was restored. This was a violation of the Lord's holy place and made the temple unclean.

Verse 8. God said the kings made His name unclean and made Him angry. They did not honor and obey God when they were alive. God did not want people to think the evil kings were His servants.

Verse 9. God commanded the people to stop doing sexual sins in the temple and remove the dead bodies of the kings. God said He would be with His people forever if they obeyed Him.

We please God and honor Him when we **repent** of our sin and worship Him with our hearts. We know God is perfect, holy, righteous, mighty, and

everlasting. We know we are opposite of God; we are sinners, not perfect, not holy, not right with God, weak, and we can die. When we **repent** of our sin, we can truly worship God.

I like to be prepared to worship the Lord on Sunday. I like to rest on Saturday evening. I go for a walk alone, review my Sunday school lesson and sermon, pray for my church members and their families, pray for the church leaders and their families, pray for my wife and her family, get my clothes and materials ready for Sunday morning, and go to bed early. When I get up on Sunday morning, I am ready to worship God.

How do you prepare to worship God? Let God show you how to prepare your heart to worship Him.

3. Holy Living: Design of Worship (43:10-12)

¹⁰“Human, tell the people of Israel about the Temple so they will be ashamed of their sins. Let them think about the plan of the Temple.

¹¹If they are ashamed of all they have done, let them know the **design** of the Temple and how it is built. Show them its exits and entrances, all its designs, and also all its rules and teachings. Write the rules as they watch so they will obey all the teachings and rules about the Temple.

¹²This is the teaching about the Temple: All the area around the top of the mountain is most holy. This is the teaching about the Temple.”

Verses 10-12. The Lord told Ezekiel to write new plans for the temple and show it to the people. The emphasis of the restored temple was holiness. Everything must be perfect. The builders must carefully learn the plans and rebuild the temple.

We show our commitment to live as God’s holy people when we worship Him. True worship gives us a new desire to obey God and His Word.

When I was in high school I took classes in drafting. My favorite class was architectural drafting. I enjoyed making houses and landscapes from poster board and wood, using exact measurements from my drawings. I wanted everything to be perfect!

Later, the Lord called me to be a pastor to the Deaf. I still want to do my best when I teach, preach, and help people. I want to do my best because the Lord has given me gifts and talents to use for His **glory**. I want to do my best because He is holy and worthy of my honor, respect, and obedience.

What About You?

Have you ever had a dream or **vision** you felt was from God? Did it come true? More often, God uses His Word to help us know His will for our life.

Do you prepare yourself to worship God? Does God speak to you when you worship Him? Does God let you feel His **presence** when you worship Him?

Do you use the talents and gifts God has given you to lead others in worship? Do you encourage your family members and friends to truly worship God?

Applying the Lesson

List three ways you can prepare to worship God on Sunday mornings, or in your daily quiet time.

List three things you can do while worshiping God in public worship or your own quiet time.

List three things you need to do after you worship God (activities God leads you to do).

A verse to remember: "I saw the Lord's glory filling the temple" (Ezekiel 43:9).



RADICAL FAITH

UNIT 3

Daniel 1:1–12:13

Read about the **prophet**, Daniel, and his writing in the Introduction to the quarter and also in the Introduction in the Leader Guide.

The six lessons in this unit teach us to have strong faith in the Lord when we face temptations. The lessons come from the prophet Daniel's experiences in the king's palace in Babylon and Daniel's visions of the **tribulation** and eternal future. The **prophecy** about the future in the Book of Daniel is much like the Book of Revelation in the New Testament.

These lessons encourage us to show deep faith in God by:

1. refusing to accept spiritual **compromise**;
 2. continuing to be faithful to God in dangerous situations;
 3. humbly and honestly warning others about God's judgment against sin;
 4. practicing and strengthening our prayer life;
 5. living confidently for the Lord every day not knowing when the end times will come; and
 6. being prepared for increasing tribulation as Christians.
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Draw the Line

**Background
Study Verses:**
Daniel 1:1-21

Lesson Material:
Daniel 1:3-5,8-10,12-15,17-19

Bible Truth
God is pleased when
His people decide
to live strong
Christian lives.



On April 16, 2010, an electrical fire started on the third floor of the Deaf Bible Training Center in Kiev, Ukraine. The fire destroyed the dormitory rooms, classrooms, and a large meeting room. A two-story attached building with a kitchen, dining area, and office had minor damage. Thankfully, no one was hurt. Some people thought the Center could not be rebuilt. Soon after the fire, representatives from the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf (SBCD) and the International Mission Board (IMB) met with Oleg Stralkovski, the director of the training center. They gathered information, took pictures, and developed a plan to help. It would cost about \$150,000 to rebuild and refurnish. They collected over \$60,000 by 2012, and many people have gone to help. This is a test of faith with many difficulties. They continue to rebuild, while trusting the Lord for wisdom. You can see pictures of this training center at www.sbcDeaf.org. To find the pictures and updates, scroll to the bottom of the homepage and click on, “Rebuilding Continues.”

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Evaluate What Others Demand (Daniel 1:3-5)** – Daniel was part of a group of young Jewish men sent to Babylon. They were selected and trained to serve the king of Babylon.
2. **Act Boldly on Principle (1:8-10)** – Daniel decided he would not make himself spiritually unclean with the king’s food and drink. He boldly showed humility and wisdom and did what he believed was right.
3. **Be Prepared for Tests (1:12-15)** – Daniel and his friends asked permission to eat only vegetables and drink water. At the end of ten days, they were healthier than the other young men.
4. **Trust God for Wisdom (1:17-19)** – God gave Daniel and his friends knowledge and wisdom. Because of their wisdom, the king decided to select them as servants in his court.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why were Daniel and his friends sent away to Babylon? (verse 4)
2. Why did Daniel and his friends refuse the king’s food and drink? (verse 8)
3. What did Daniel and his friends eat and drink for the test? (verse 12)
4. What did God give Daniel and his friends? (verse 17)
5. What did the king do with Daniel and his friends? (verse 19)

Today’s Lesson

This lesson is about Daniel’s refusal to follow the plans the Babylonians had for training young men to serve the king. Daniel believed it was important to be faithful while living in a foreign nation and not do anything against God’s laws.

This lesson teaches us to draw the line against spiritual agreement with the world. To draw the line means to set a limit and not go beyond that limit. Paul wrote, “Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you. You will know what is good and pleasing to Him and what is perfect” (Romans 12:2).

Christians face temptation every day. We are tempted to disobey God’s Word and follow the ways of the world. Our culture encourages certain behaviors that are not approved in the Bible. Christians need to pray for wisdom to recognize when it is wrong and have courage not to dishonor God. God promises to help us when we are tempted (1 Corinthians 10:13).

1. Evaluate What Others Demand (Daniel 1:3-5)

³Then King Nebuchadnezzar ordered Ashpenaz, his chief officer, to bring some of the men of Judah into his palace. He wanted them to be from important families, including the family of the king of Judah.

⁴King Nebuchadnezzar wanted only young Israelite men who had nothing wrong with them. They were to be handsome and well educated, capable of learning and understanding, and able to serve in his palace. Ashpenaz was to teach them the language and writings of the Babylonians.

⁵The king gave the young men a certain amount of food and wine every day, just like the food he ate. The young men were to be trained for three years, and then they would become servants of the king of Babylon.

Verses 3-5. Daniel was one of many young Jews taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in 605 B.C. The Babylonians took Daniel away from his family, home, the city of Jerusalem, and anything that gave him security in life. Daniel and his friends were from the tribe of Judah. King Nebuchadnezzar chose the young men based on their appearance, intelligence, and abilities.

Daniel and the young men were forced to learn Babylonian (another word for this is **Chaldean**) literature and language. They were given fancy food and wine like the king. Daniel and his friends were given new names.

As Christians, we must not let any activity or opportunity conflict with our beliefs. If it does conflict, we must be strong, even if it makes other people upset or angry with us. Jesus said if we love (listen to or follow) others more than Him, we cannot truly honor Him. “Those who love their father or mother more than they love me are not worthy to be my followers” (Matthew 10:37).

2. Act Boldly on Principle (1:8-10)

⁸Daniel decided not to eat the king’s food or drink his wine because that would make him unclean. So he asked Ashpenaz for permission not to make himself unclean in this way.

⁹God made Ashpenaz, the chief officer, want to be kind and merciful to Daniel,

¹⁰but Ashpenaz said to Daniel, “I am afraid of my master, the king. He ordered me to give you this food and drink. If you begin to look worse than other young men your age, the king will see this. Then he will cut off my head because of you.”

Verse 8. Daniel decided he would not make himself spiritually unclean with the king's food and drink. He refused the food and wine because they were not prepared according to the Jewish rules. The food may have included animals considered unclean under Hebrew law. The food may have been used for **idol** worship. Daniel did not want to break the Hebrew law (Leviticus 11:1-47 and Deuteronomy 14:1-21).

Ashpenaz was the king's chief officer and the person responsible for training the young men. Daniel asked for permission not to make himself unclean because of his religious beliefs. God made Ashpenaz want to be kind and show mercy to Daniel.

Verses 9-10. Ashpenaz was afraid Daniel's plan would fail and the king would notice. He ordered a guard to watch Daniel and his friends.

When God's Spirit shows us how an activity, demand, opportunity, or cultural expectation is wrong, we need to stand up for what we believe, like Daniel did, even if it will make others upset or angry with us.

Have you had an experience like this? Maybe your employer expects you to drink alcohol with customers, or he wants you to cheat on your reports to the government. Can you stand up for your Christian principles? Ask God for wisdom and strength to be obedient. Ask God to help you find a way to be a good employee without doing something you believe is against God's laws.

3. Be Prepared for Tests (1:12-15)

¹²Daniel said to the guard, "Please give us this test for ten days: Don't give us anything but vegetables to eat and water to drink.

¹³After ten days, compare how we look with how the other young men look who eat the king's food. See for yourself and then decide how you want to treat us, your servants."

¹⁴So the guard agreed to test them for ten days.

¹⁵After ten days they looked healthier and better fed than all the young men who ate the king's food.

Verses 12-13. Daniel asked the guard to let them eat only vegetables and drink only water for ten days. The diet may have included grains and bread made from grain. These were common in the diet of a poor Jewish family, but probably much less than these young men may have eaten regularly. At the end of the ten days the guard could compare Daniel and his friends to the other young men.

Verses 14-15. The guard agreed to test them for ten days. At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his friends looked healthier and stronger than the other young men who ate the king's food. Because Daniel and his friends were healthy, the guard let them continue their special diet.

If we decide to live a strong Christian life, we need to understand we may face many tests of our commitment and faith. When we do, we can ask God for wisdom and strength to obey Him. God will provide what we need.

4. Trust God for Wisdom (1:17-19)

¹⁷God gave these four young men wisdom and the ability to learn many things that people had written and studied. Daniel could also understand visions and dreams.

¹⁸At the end of the time set for them by the king, Ashpenaz brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁹The king talked to them and found that none of the young men were as good as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So those four young men became the king's servants.

Verse 17. For three years God gave Daniel and his friends wisdom and the ability to learn the language and writings of the Babylonians. Daniel was able to understand and interpret visions and dreams.

Verses 18-19. When all the young men had completed their training, they were brought before the king. The king was impressed with Daniel and his friends' knowledge and wisdom. He appointed them to serve in his court as special attendants. They were ten times better than all the fortune tellers and magicians (which may mean both real science and superstition) in his kingdom.

We can be **assured** God will give us the knowledge, wisdom, and strength we need to live strong Christlike lives. We will be able to **resist** the temptation to accept spiritual **compromise**. God will work through our strong faith to show His **glory**.

The fire that destroyed the Deaf Bible Training Center in Ukraine was not an accident. God had a purpose for the fire. People in Ukraine, Europe, and other nations all over the world heard about the fire. The Lord brought Deaf students from other nations to learn at the center. The center continues to train Deaf men and women to become leaders, pastors, and missionaries. Some of them are now pastors and missionaries in other nations. You can see pictures of the Deaf Bible Training Center on the SBCD website at www.sbcDeaf.org by scrolling to the bottom of the homepage.

Do you trust God to give you wisdom to live for Him? God has given us many skills, much knowledge, and other tools to do His work. Sometimes all we need is the wisdom to know how to use what God has given us. Pray for your pastor and other church leaders. Pray for God to give them wisdom to do the work God has called them to do.

What About You?

Who are your strong Christian friends and family members?

Has anyone tempted you to give up your Christian beliefs? What did you do when you were tempted to give up your beliefs?

What are some ways you can **resist** the temptation to give up your beliefs?

Applying the Lesson

Think about a time when someone tempted you to give up your Christian beliefs. What did you do?

List some ways a Christian can be tempted at work, in the community, or in business with someone. Ask God to help you recognize when this happens and give you courage and wisdom to follow His leadership.

A verse to remember: "Daniel decided not to eat the king's food or drink his wine because that would make him unclean. So he asked Ashpenaz for permission not to make himself unclean in this way" (Daniel 1:8).

Risk Everything for God

**Background
Study Verses:**
Daniel 2:1–3:30

Lesson Material:
Daniel 3:1,8-12,15b-
18,24-25,28

Bible Truth

God is with His people in difficult times and uses their faithfulness to glorify His name.



Abdul is a Christian in a nation in the Middle East. Many of his Christian friends have been arrested, physically abused, and killed for their faith in Jesus Christ. He broke the law when he changed his religion. It is illegal for Abdul to own a Bible, to share his faith in Christ, or to teach his children about Jesus. He and his Christian friends continue to meet for worship and witness for Christ. Pray for the gospel of Jesus Christ to be spread in strict nations like Abdul's. Pray often for your brothers and sisters in Christ and their churches in these nations. Some Christians in America have experienced job, education, and housing **discrimination** because of their faith. Some Christian schools, community centers, and hospitals are forced to do things against their beliefs. Christians can be sure God will use their boldness and faithfulness as a **testimony** to others.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Decide to Serve Only God (Daniel 3:1,8-12)** – When the king of Babylon built a giant statue of himself, he required all his leaders to bow down and worship it. Three young Jewish men refused.
2. **Resist All Pressure to Falter (3:15b-18)** – The king gave the three young men another opportunity to bow down to the statue. Again, they refused. They believed God would save them if He desired.
3. **Trust in God’s Presence and Power (3:24-25,28)** – King Nebuchadnezzar was amazed when he saw a fourth person walking, unharmed, in the fire with the three young men. He praised God and honored the three Jewish men for their boldness and faithfulness.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who was the king of Babylon? (verse 1)
2. What did the king build to honor himself? (verse 1)
3. What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to do? (verse 12)
4. What happened to them because they refused to worship the statue? (verse 15)
5. What did king Nebuchadnezzar do after he visited the fiery furnace? (verse 28)

Today’s Lesson

This lesson is about God saving Daniel’s friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, from a fiery furnace. God is faithful when His people go through dangerous and threatening situations. We can know God will be faithful to us in difficult times.

1. Decide to Serve Only God (Daniel 3:1,8-12)

¹King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet high and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the area of Babylon.

⁸Then some Babylonians came up to the king and began speaking against the men of Judah.

⁹They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever!

¹⁰O king, you gave a command that everyone who heard the horns, lyres, zithers, harps, pipes, and all the other musical instruments would have to bow down and worship the gold statue.

¹¹Anyone who wouldn’t do this was to be thrown into a blazing furnace.

¹²O king, there are some men of Judah whom you made officers in the area of Babylon that did not pay attention to your order. Their names are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They do not serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up.”

Verse 1. Nebuchadnezzar had his workers make a very large gold statue of himself. His statue was about 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. The statue was more than 15 times larger than a real person! The statue was probably carved from wood and then covered with gold.

Nebuchadnezzar called all his leaders in Babylon to attend a special dedication service. He wanted the entire Babylonian empire to worship his god. The leaders may have come from far away nations such as India and Ethiopia because they were from different nations and languages (Daniel 3:7,29).

Verses 8-11. Men from Babylon spoke against the men from Judah. They greeted the king and reminded him about the command he gave the people. The leaders and people were commanded to bow down and worship the statue when they heard the sound of musical instruments. Those who refused were thrown into a blazing furnace.

Verse 12. The men from Babylon said some men from Judah did not obey the king’s command. They said the men did not serve the Babylonian gods and did not worship the golden statue of Nebuchadnezzar.

As Christians, we must worship and serve only God. Others may not like our **devotion** to God or may try to use it against us. Some Christians in America experience **discrimination** at their job or school, or when they want to buy or rent a house. Some Christians are denied certain rights because of their faith. Many are not allowed to pray, read their Bible, or witness at their school or work place. Some cannot wear clothing or jewelry with Christian designs on them at work or in school.

We need to be careful and understand what causes discrimination against us. When we know it is because of our faith, we must ask God to give us wisdom and strength to stand for Him, and have a positive witness to the people around us. If your children face discrimination at school, help them see how they can stand for Christ.

2. Resist All Pressure to Falter (3:15b-18)

¹⁵“But if you do not worship it, you will immediately be thrown into the blazing furnace. What god will be able to save you from my power then?”

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, saying, “Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves to you.

¹⁷If you throw us into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from the furnace. He will save us from your power, O king.

¹⁸But even if God does not save us, we want you, O king, to know this: We will not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”

When Nebuchadnezzar heard that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the statue, he became angry and ordered them brought to him for questioning. Nebuchadnezzar questioned them and gave them another chance to bow down to the statue. It seems Nebuchadnezzar truly did not want the Jewish young men to suffer. He wanted them to follow his command. He probably did not think this was an important issue. It should be easy for the young men to go along with the king's command.

WE CAN FACE TESTS OF
OUR COMMITMENT TO
GOD WITH CONFIDENCE.
THE LORD WILL USE OUR
FAITHFULNESS TO HONOR
AND GLORIFY HIS NAME.

Verse 15. Nebuchadnezzar said soon they would hear the musical instruments. He said if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego bowed down and worshiped the statue when they heard the music, he would release them. If they refused, they would be thrown in the furnace immediately.

Verses 16-18. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew they must not bow down and worship the statue.

They showed their **devotion** to God and knew He could save them, if He desired. If God did not rescue them, they still refused to bow down to the statue. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were not sure what God would do, but they were sure what they must do.

Kings and conquerors usually gave martyrs permission to make a statement or confession before they were killed. A **martyr** is “a person who is tortured or killed for his faith in God and His Son, Jesus Christ.” Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were willing and ready to become martyrs. They did not need to answer Nebuchadnezzar. They knew he was challenging and mocking their God.

Sometimes friends who are not Christians come to visit us on weekends. They know Lindy and I are Christians. They know I am pastor of a Deaf church and a missionary to the Deaf. They test our faith and commitment to the Lord. They tempt us to talk about other people. They tempt us to approve and accept their views and ideas about the Bible and sin. They tempt us to stay home and visit with them or go sightseeing with them. We tell them we always save Sunday to serve and worship the Lord and to rest. We invite them to go to church with us. We want to show them we love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and we love them, too.

3. Trust in God's Presence and Power (3:24-25,28)

²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar was so surprised that he jumped to his feet. He asked the men who advised him, "Didn't we tie up only three men and throw them into the fire?" They answered, "Yes, O king."

²⁵The king said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire. They are not tied up, and they are not burned. The fourth man looks like a son of the gods."

²⁸Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their God has sent his angel and saved his servants from the fire! These three men trusted their God and refused to obey my command. They were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god other than their own."

Read verses 19-23. You need to understand this part of the story. The king became angry (verse 19). He had Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego tied up and thrown into the furnace with their clothes on. He ordered the furnace to be seven times hotter, so hot that those who put the three young men in the furnace also died (verses 20-23).

Verses 24-25. After receiving a report saying the young men had been thrown in the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar went to see it. When he looked in the furnace he saw four men walking around, not harmed. And he said the fourth man looked like "a son of the gods" (verse 25). This means the fourth man looked like a spiritual being. Some Bible translations use the words, "The Son of God." This is a possible translation because of the way the Hebrew sentence is written. Some people believe the fourth person may have been Jesus. We cannot know for sure. We can know that the fourth person was sent from God to show His power and to show He is greater than any king on earth.

Verse 26. King Nebuchadnezzar went to the opening of the furnace and shouted for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to come out. He realized God had saved them and they were God's servants.

We can face tests of our commitment to God with **confidence**. We can believe He will be with us in difficult and dangerous times. The Lord will use our faithfulness to honor and glorify His name.

This lesson helps us to understand how we can be prepared to **risk** everything for God. We may not be asked to take a big risk. We can be faithful, and God will give us wisdom and strength for every small risk and **challenge** we face.

What About You?

Do you fear pain, suffering, and death?

Do you hide your faith when your family and friends come to visit you? Do you stay home and not go to church on Sunday when your friends come to visit you?

Do you trust in God's **presence** and power? Or, do you fear Satan more than God? If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit who lives in you is greater than Satan who is in the world!

Applying the Lesson

True or False:

- T F 1. Daniel and his friends are good examples of faithfulness to God.
- T F 2. Christians today have a responsibility to be faithful to God.
- T F 3. Daniel and his friends are good examples of good citizens.
- T F 4. Christians today need to be productive citizens in society.
- T F 5. The first priority of a Christian is to obey God.
- T F 6. The world wants us to say things in a way we show we are a Christian.
- T F 7. God will honor Christians for their boldness and faithfulness.

Answers: 1. T, 2. T, 3. T, 4. T, 5. T, 6. F, 7. T

A verse to remember: "If you throw us into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from the furnace. He will save us from your power, O king" (Daniel 3:17).

Tell It Like It Is

**Background
Study Verses:**
Daniel 4:1–5:31

Lesson Material:
Daniel 5:1-6,16-17,
23c-28

Bible Truth

All people are responsible for their sins. God warns us about His judgment.



A couple named Fred and Joan met at the Deaf school. After graduating from high school they married and bought a house. They each had a job. Fred worked at night, and Joan worked during the day. Later their first child was born. Two years later another child was born. Everyone thought Fred and Joan were the perfect couple. When their children were older they started having marriage problems. Fred went out often. Soon he had an affair with another woman. He told a friend about the affair. Fred's friend told him the Bible says adultery is sin. Fred refused to listen and refused to turn away from his sin. Fred's friend told Joan about the affair. Joan wanted marriage counseling; Fred did not want counseling. Fred refused to accept responsibility for his sin and give up the affair. Sin destroyed Fred and Joan's marriage. The Bible says, "The payment for sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Be Certain: Sin Corrupts (Daniel 5:1-4)** – King Belshazzar of Babylon had a feast at which he and his guests drank wine from Jerusalem temple vessels and praised pagan gods.
2. **Be Warned: God Confronts (5:5-6)** – King Belshazzar became terrified when a hand appeared and wrote a message on the palace wall.
3. **Be Humble: All Need to Know (5:16-17)** – Daniel humbly refused the king’s promise of gifts. He agreed to read and interpret the writing on the wall.
4. **Be Honest: Judgment Comes (5:23c-28)** – Daniel was honest and told the king he had too much pride and he was ignoring God. The writing meant God was going to bring the Babylonian empire to an end.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who was Belshazzar? (verse 1)
2. What did Belshazzar and his guests do at the feast? (verses 2-4)
3. What did Belshazzar see? (verse 5)
4. Who interpreted the writing on the wall for Belshazzar? (verse 17)
5. What would happen to Babylon? (verses 26-28)

Today’s Lesson

1. Be Certain: Sin Corrupts (Daniel 5:1-4)

¹King Belshazzar gave a big banquet for a thousand royal guests and drank wine with them.

²As Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver cups that his ancestor Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem. This was so the king, his royal guests, his wives, and his slave women could drink from those cups.

³So they brought the gold cups that had been taken from the Temple of God in Jerusalem. And the king and his royal guests, his wives, and his slave women drank from them.

⁴As they were drinking, they praised their gods, which were made from gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

The word **corrupt** means “wicked, or to become evil.” Read chapter 4 to follow the story of Daniel’s experience in Babylon. Chapter 4 tells about

a dream King Nebuchadnezzar had. Daniel interpreted the dream for the king. At the end of chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar gives praise and honor to God. Chapter 5, our text for today's lesson, jumps ahead in history and begins a story about Nebuchadnezzar's great-grandson, Belshazzar.

Belshazzar was the second highest ruler in Babylon. Belshazzar had **authority to appoint** a person to be the third highest ruler (5:7,16,29), not the second highest ruler like a real king could. He called himself a king, but he really was not.

Verse 1. Belshazzar liked to show off his authority as second ruler. He gave a big banquet for 1,000 guests. His guests included royalty, their wives, and slave women called concubines. Excavations at Babylon have uncovered a great hall more than 50 feet wide and 160 feet long. The banquet celebration may have been held on a major holiday in Babylon, an anniversary of the Babylonian Empire, or a **pagan** holiday.

Verse 2. While he was drinking wine, Belshazzar ordered sacred gold and silver cups brought into the banquet room for his guests. Nebuchadnezzar took the cups out of the temple in Jerusalem. These were special cups, used only in the temple. God was dishonored when the cups were used in a pagan banquet or celebration.

Verses 3-4. Belshazzar and his guests drank from the cups to praise their false gods. They mocked the God of Israel. Belshazzar was a very proud, selfish, and evil person. He did things to honor himself.

We need to remember how all people are sinners and sin causes selfish pride and wrong behavior. Because of our sins, we may become very proud, self-centered, and sinful like Belshazzar.

Belshazzar's sins began with his selfish pride. It is easy for us to become proud and then turn to other sins as if we **deserve** to enjoy such things. Look at your heart. Do you find selfish pride there? Ask God to help you get rid of it. Pride can lead to many other sinful actions.

2. Be Warned: God Confronts (5:5-6)

⁵Suddenly the fingers of a person's hand appeared and began writing on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote.

⁶King Belshazzar was very frightened. His face turned white, his knees knocked together, and he could not stand up because his legs were too weak.

The word **confront** means "to stand face-to-face with someone and accuse him of sin."

Verse 5. While Belshazzar and his guests were praising their false gods with the sacred cups, they saw a human hand writing on the palace wall.

Verse 6. Belshazzar watched the hand write a message on the wall and became very frightened. His face became white, his knees knocked together, and he could not stand up. The hand shocked his mind and his pride-filled heart.

Belshazzar gave a command to bring in the wise men of Babylon. These men may have been fortune-tellers, magicians, wizards, and wise men who tried to interpret the king's dream in Daniel 2:2. They were commanded to read and interpret the writing on the wall. If one of them could successfully interpret the writing, King Belshazzar would make him the third highest ruler in Babylon. He would be honored, clothed in purple, and have royal privileges.

When the wise men came in, Daniel was not with them. These were Belshazzar's personal and professional wise men (verse 7). Belshazzar became more afraid when they could not read and interpret the writing.

We need to be wise and careful about sin. We are responsible for our sins. God may use His Word, the Holy Spirit, other people, situations, and our conscience to warn us about our sins.

3. Be Humble: All Need to Know (5:16-17)

¹⁶“I have heard that you are able to explain what things mean and can find the answers to hard problems. Read this writing on the wall and explain it to me. If you can, I will give you purple clothes fit for a king and a gold chain to wear around your neck. And you will become the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

¹⁷Then Daniel answered the king, “You may keep your gifts for yourself, or you may give those rewards to someone else. But I will read the writing on the wall for you and will explain to you what it means.”

Read verses 7-15 for the rest of this story. The wise men from Babylon were not able to read the handwriting on the wall. Then, Belshazzar's mother, the queen, heard what happened. She came to see him and told him not to be afraid. She told him Daniel had the spirit of the gods, understanding, knowledge, and wisdom (5:11). Daniel also knew how to solve riddles and solve problems (5:12).

Verse 16. Belshazzar called for Daniel He told Daniel what he had told the other wise men, if one of them could read and interpret the writing, that person would be given purple clothing and the third highest position as ruler in Babylon.

Verse 17. After hearing what happened and the offer of a reward, Daniel told him to keep the gifts or give them to someone else. Daniel said he would read and interpret the writing for Belshazzar.

God often uses believers to help others **realize** the danger of living in rebellion against Him and under sin's control. Christians need to remember they are sinners saved by God's grace, kindness, and mercy. When we tell someone else about their sin, we need to remember to do it in love.

4. Be Honest: Judgment Comes (5:23c-28)

²³“You did not honor God, who has power over your life and everything you do.

²⁴So God sent the hand that wrote on the wall.

²⁵These are the words that were written on the wall: ‘Mene, mene, tekel, and parsin.’

²⁶This is what the words mean: Mene: God has counted the days until your kingdom will end.

²⁷Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found not good enough.

²⁸Parsin: Your kingdom is being divided and will be given to the Medes and the Persians.”

In verses 18-23a, Daniel reminded Belshazzar about his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. He said God made Nebuchadnezzar a great and powerful king. He said God took away Nebuchadnezzar's power because he became proud and stubborn. Daniel reminded Belshazzar how God rules the universe. God decides who rules over every kingdom (5:21).

Verses 23-24. Daniel told Belshazzar he should remember what happened to his ancestor Nebuchadnezzar. Belshazzar knew not to do such a foolish thing. But Belshazzar was not sorry for what he did.

Belshazzar honored gods made from gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. He and his guests honored gods that could not see or hear. His gods had no life and power.

Belshazzar should have honored God because God has power over life. He may have thought the Jewish God was dead because He did not act for 70 years. Daniel said God sent the hand to write on the wall because of what Belshazzar did.

Verses 25-28. The words written on the wall were “Mene, mene, tekel, parsin.” Daniel said Mene means the number of days until Belshazzar's kingdom would end. Tekel means to be weighed (judged) and not good enough (guilty). Parsin means Belshazzar's kingdom would be divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

It is easy to fall into the temptation to place blame on others. Christian believers need to be careful not to judge others. Daniel did not go to Belshazzar's palace uninvited. He waited until he was invited and humbly and honestly told the truth. When warning others about God's judgment against sin, we must always speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

What About You?

Do you like attention? Do you like people to praise you? Do you get upset when another person gets more honor than you?

Do you reject people who know more than you?

Are you jealous when someone does something better than you?

Do you get angry when someone tries to correct you?

Do you need to talk about sin in your life with someone you trust?

Applying the Lesson

Think about you and your church. Are you guilty of things that can hurt your church? Pride can do that, if you think too highly of yourself. Lack of trust can also hurt your church. When people fail to trust their leaders, the effectiveness of the church will become less.

Imagine what God would write on a wall to tell you about your sin? List some things you know you need to **confess** to God. Then pray and ask God to forgive you for these things. Sincerely promise God you will turn from these sins. Then tear up this paper. If God forgives you, you need to forgive yourself, also.

List some ways God confronts you about your sins or weaknesses.

A verse to remember: "Then Daniel answered the king, 'You may keep your gifts for yourself, or you may give those rewards to someone else. But I will read the writing on the wall for you and will explain to you what it means'" (Daniel 5:17).

Never Give Up on Prayer

**Background
Study Verses:**
Daniel 6:1-28

Lesson Material:
Daniel 6:3-7,10-11,
16-23

Bible Truth

**God's people grow
in their faith when
they have a strong
prayer life.**



In 2004, the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf met at Brentwood Baptist Church in Brentwood, Tennessee. During the conference a special committee met with Deaf leaders from four other nations to establish the World Congress of Deaf Baptists. The four nations were the Czech Republic, Romania, Ukraine, and the U.S. After approving by-laws, they elected officers. In 2008, the World Congress of Deaf Baptists had their first conference in Kiev, Ukraine. The theme was “We Become One.” Over 80 Deaf and hearing people from ten nations attended. Everyone shared about their nation, culture, Deaf ministries, and mission work. They sang, preached, and gave their testimonies. The delegates who were elected to represent their nation had a business meeting and elected officers. The first congress was a wonderful time of sharing and fellowship. God’s Spirit moved and touched many hearts and lives. Everyone looked forward to the next meeting of the World Congress of Deaf Baptists.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **When Big Challenges Arise (Daniel 6:3-5)** – When Daniel was going to be put in a very high position over the kingdom, leaders who did not like Daniel made plans to bring charges against him.
2. **When Faith and Culture Clash (6:6-7,10)** – The king signed an important document saying people must pray only to him for 30 days. Daniel continued to pray to God three times a day.
3. **When Personal Danger Looms (6:16-18)** – The king ordered his men to throw Daniel into a lion's den.
4. **When God's Help Is All That Will Do (6:19-23)** – When the king found out Daniel was not harmed in the lion's den, he realized God helped Daniel because Daniel trusted God.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What important document did the king sign? (verse 7)
2. Where did Daniel pray? How often? (verse 10)
3. Why did the king throw Daniel into the lions' den? (verse 10)
4. Why was Daniel not harmed in the lions' den? (verse 22)
5. Who helped Daniel to be safe? (verse 22)

Today's Lesson

1. When Big Challenges Arise (Daniel 6:3-5)

³Daniel showed that he could do the work better than the other supervisors and governors, so the king planned to put Daniel in charge of the whole kingdom.

⁴Because of this, the other supervisors and governors tried to find reasons to accuse Daniel about his work in the government. But they could not find anything wrong with him or any reason to accuse him, because he was trustworthy and not lazy or dishonest.

⁵Finally these men said, "We will never find any reason to accuse Daniel unless it is about the law of his God."

Verses 3-5. Darius the Mede became king of Babylon when he was 62 years old (Daniel 5:31). He was also called Cyrus the Persian. During his first two years as king there were various attempts to seize control of Persia. This was probably the reason why Darius set up a new type of

command over his kingdom (6:1). Darius appointed 120 governors. Daniel was one of three supervisors over the 120 governors.

Verse 3. Daniel showed he could do his work better than the other supervisors and governors. Darius was impressed with Daniel and planned to put him in charge of his whole kingdom.

Verse 4-5. The governors and other supervisors did not want Daniel to be in charge of the kingdom. They knew the only way they could prevent Daniel from being promoted was to fool the king about something related to Daniel's God.

The lesson for us is this: We will be prepared to face difficult times if we have a strong spiritual life, **consistent** prayer life, deep faith, and a desire to obey God always.

2. When Faith and Culture Clash (6:6-7,10)

⁶So the supervisors and governors went as a group to the king and said: "King Darius, live forever!

⁷The supervisors, assistant governors, governors, the people who advise you, and the captains of the soldiers have all agreed that you should make a new law for everyone to obey: For the next thirty days no one should pray to any god or human except to you, O king. Anyone who doesn't obey will be thrown into the lions' den."

¹⁰Even though Daniel knew that the new law had been written, he went to pray in an upstairs room in his house, which had windows that opened toward Jerusalem. Three times each day Daniel would kneel down to pray and thank God, just as he always had done.

Verses 6-7. The supervisors and governors were afraid they would lose their positions if Daniel was put in charge of the whole kingdom. The supervisors and governors came with their assistant governors, secretaries, counselors, and military captains to present a new law to the king. This new law would require everyone to pray only to the king. If they did not, they were to be thrown into the lions' den. The den was a cistern or pit covered by a large stone (6:17).

The supervisors and governors fooled the king into believing the new law would help strengthen the kingdom. They also knew Daniel observed the Jewish law and he would have a problem obeying the new law.

Maybe so many people came to him, Darius did not **realize** Daniel was not there. Darius signed the law, thinking it would make everyone show their true loyalty to him. The new law could not be changed by the king (6:8,12).

Verse 10. Daniel decided to continue praying in his house three times a day, according to his Jewish custom.

Daniel prayed in an upper room in his house. Daniel did not push aside or put his spiritual life and prayers on hold because of a human law.

As believers, we must refuse to be sidetracked in our relationship with God because of worldly cultural values and practices. We are free to gather, pray, and worship here in America. In many nations the people who follow Christ can face harassment, arrest, torture, and even death. For more information, go to Voice of the Martyrs at www.persecution.com.

Do you have a personal place and time for prayer? Do you try not to let anything keep you from this regular time with God?

3. When Personal Danger Looms (6:16-18)

¹⁶So King Darius gave the order, and Daniel was brought in and thrown into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May the God you serve all the time save you!"

¹⁷A big stone was brought and placed over the opening of the lions' den. Then the king used his signet ring and the rings of his royal officers to put special seals on the rock. This ensured that no one would move the rock and bring Daniel out.

¹⁸Then King Darius went back to his palace. He did not eat that night, he did not have any entertainment brought to him, and he could not sleep.

The supervisors and governors came as a group to King Darius and told him Daniel was not obeying the new law (6:13). They referred to Daniel as "one of the captives of Judah," rather than "the man who has **authority** over us." They wanted to make Daniel look bad to the king. The king became upset and did all he could to save Daniel (6:14).

Verses 16-17. Darius had to follow the new law. Daniel was arrested and thrown into the lions' den. Darius said he hoped Daniel's God would save him. The king and his lords used their signet rings to put special seals on the cover to the lions' den. Anyone breaking the seals would be put to death. Daniel's friends were not able to throw food to the lions or hand weapons down to him. No one could move the cover and let Daniel out. Now, only God could protect Daniel from the lions.

Verse 18. Darius went back to his palace and was unable to eat or sleep that night. He may have prayed and fasted for Daniel. It is not clear if Darius was a believer. It seems that he respected Daniel and his God.

When we have a strong spiritual life, the Lord may allow us to experience difficult situations to make us stronger. "My brothers and sisters, when you have many kinds of troubles, you should be full of joy, because you know that these troubles test your faith, and this will give you patience" (James 1:2-3). Our own difficult times will help us be able to minister to others who are going through the same situations. We can

pray for God's help during difficult times, and pray for others who are going through difficult times.

4. When God's Help Is All that Will Do (6:19-23)

¹⁹The next morning King Darius got up at dawn and hurried to the lions' den.

²⁰As he came near the den, he was worried. He called out to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Has your God that you always worship been able to save you from the lions?"

²¹Daniel answered, "O king, live forever!

²²My God sent his angel to close the lions' mouths. They have not hurt me, because my God knows I am innocent. I never did anything wrong to you, O king."

²³King Darius was very happy and told his servants to lift Daniel out of the lions' den. So they lifted him out and did not find any injury on him, because Daniel had trusted in his God.

Verses 19-21. As soon as the sun came up, Darius hurried to the lions' den to see if Daniel was hurt. He called to Daniel and found him alive. Darius recognized Daniel's faith in the "living God." Daniel did not pray only once in a while. We learn from Darius' words that Daniel prayed "always."

Verse 22. Daniel praised God and told the king an angel came and closed the mouths of the lions. Daniel said the reason the lions did not touch him was because he was innocent before God and knew he did nothing wrong.

Verse 23. Darius ordered his servants to take Daniel out of the hole. He realized God helped Daniel. Daniel could not control the situation. Darius could not change his own law, but Daniel trusted God anyway.

Read the rest of chapter 6. The people who wrongly accused Daniel received the punishment they so cleverly planned for Daniel. Their wives and children were thrown into the lions' den with them. Daniel was saved by the power of prayer and God's hand.

Disciplined prayer is not praying only at the last minute, but rather continuing to pray and trust God even when we have little or no control over our situation. As we practice the discipline of prayer, we will grow in our faith in God.

The lesson for us in Daniel 6 is to keep on praying, all the time, every day, regularly, and with great faith.

What About You?

Do you have a strong prayer life? How often do you pray? Do you use a prayer list or some other plan to help you pray more effectively? Do you have a prayer partner—someone you pray with regularly? Do you pray in public?

Applying the Lesson

There are many good plans to help us have a more effective prayer life. If a plan helps you organize your prayer time, it is a good plan. One good plan uses the letters A. C. T. S.

A = Adoration. Begin by praising God for who He is. Read a psalm to help you find words to use in this part of your prayer. _____

C = Confession. When we think about how holy God is, we immediately think of the sin in our life. We must **confess** this sin and ask God's forgiveness.

T = Thanksgiving. We praise God for who He is. We thank Him for what He does. Think of all the things God has done for you recently. Keep a list of these things – big things and small things. You will rejoice every time you add something new to the list. _____

S = Supplication (Ask). Now you are ready to ask God for the things you need. Now you will ask for things according to God's will. Pray for your family, friends, and your church. Keep a list of your prayer requests and note when God answers each one. _____

If you do not have a plan for your prayer time, start one now. Find the best time and place to pray daily. Keep a prayer journal and write your requests and God's blessings.

A verse to remember: "Even though Daniel knew that the new law had been written, he went to pray in an upstairs room in his house, which had windows that opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day Daniel would kneel down to pray and thank God, just as he always had done" (Daniel 6:10).

Live to Win in the End

**Background
Study Verses:**
Daniel 7:1–8:27

Lesson Material:
Daniel 7:7-18

Bible Truth

God has shown He is the everlasting ruler, and through His Son (the Messiah) He will give everlasting victory to His people.



Three retired Deaf men met every day at the park to talk. One man said he worried much about the future and his children's future. He worried about the economy. Another man said he worried about the environment and global warming. He said he read about an ice age coming. The first man agreed and said he worried about his health and what the government will do about health insurance for his family. The third Deaf man said his friends seemed to forget God is all-powerful and controls history. He said he put his faith and trust in God, not the government, politicians, or scientists. He said he recently studied a verse in the Bible and it helped him. Jesus said, "Don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will have its own worries. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34). The Lord will take care of us if we have faith in Him and His Son, Jesus Christ.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Realize Evil Will Persist (Daniel 7:7-8)** – In a vision, Daniel saw evil kingdoms leading to the coming of the Antichrist.
2. **Remember God Is the Supreme Judge (7:9-12)** – In his vision, Daniel saw the Ancient of Days (God) in His court ordering the destruction of the Antichrist and removal of other evil powers.
3. **Serve Confidently Under Christ's Lordship (7:13-14)** – In his next vision, Daniel saw the Ancient of Days (God) give one like the Son of Man (the Messiah) authority to rule over an indestructible, everlasting kingdom.
4. **Live Securely in the Guarantee of Victory (7:15-18)** – Discouraged by the vision, Daniel asked for understanding, and God assured him God's people will receive His kingdom and possess it forever.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What did the fourth animal look like? (verse 7)
2. Who was on one of the thrones? (verse 9)
3. How was God described? (verse 9)
4. Who is described in verses 13-14?
5. Who will receive and possess God's kingdom forever? (verse 18)

Today's Lesson

1. Realize Evil Will Persist (Daniel 7:7-8)

⁷After that, in my vision at night I saw in front of me a fourth animal that was cruel, terrible, and very strong. It had large iron teeth. It crushed and ate what it killed, and then it walked on whatever was left. This fourth animal was different from any animal I had seen before, and it had ten horns.

⁸While I was thinking about the horns, another horn grew up among them. It was a little horn with eyes like a human's eyes. It also had a mouth, and the mouth was bragging. The little horn pulled out three of the other horns.

Read verses 1-6 for a background of the verses in our lesson today. In these first six verses, Daniel reported seeing three animals in his **vision**. In verse 7 he sees a fourth animal.

Bible scholars have studied these prophecies and compared them with history. In this way they have identified the nations represented by the different animals.

The first animal was like a lion with eagle's wings. The lion with eagle's wings was a symbol for Babylon.

The second animal was like a bear. The bear represented the kingdom of Medo-Persia.

The third animal was like a leopard. The leopard represented the Greek empire.

Verses 7-8. The fourth animal was not given a name. Daniel said it was a cruel, terrible, strong animal with iron teeth and ten horns. It crushed and ate what it killed and walked on what was left over. This animal was much worse than the other three animals.

The ten horns represented ten generals. The ten horns may have referred to the Roman Empire or another kingdom that would be in power before the Antichrist.

In his **vision**, Daniel saw a little horn with human eyes and a mouth that grew between the other horns. The little horn pulled out three of the other horns. This little horn loved to brag about himself (7:8). Some Bible scholars say this may have been Julius Cesar, or Nero, or the future Antichrist.

When we read this, we **realize** evil was strong when Daniel wrote and it is still strong today. We may wonder if evil will become strong enough to destroy God. No, because we know God is in control and has **authority** over evil. We know His redemptive purpose will be fulfilled, as He has shown us in history and promised in the Scriptures.

2. Remember God Is the Supreme Judge (7:9-12)

⁹As I looked, thrones were put in their places, and God, the Eternal One, sat on his throne. His clothes were white like snow, and the hair on his head was white like wool. His throne was made from fire, and the wheels of his throne were blazing with fire.

¹⁰A river of fire was flowing from in front of him. Many thousands of angels were serving him, and millions of angels stood before him. Court was ready to begin, and the books were opened.

¹¹I kept on looking because the little horn was bragging. I kept watching until finally the fourth animal was killed. Its body was destroyed, and it was thrown into the burning fire.

¹²(The power and rule of the other animals had been taken from them, but they were permitted to live for a certain period of time.)

God is called “The Eternal One” in verse 9. In other translations it reads, “The Ancient of Days.” In the Near East, advanced age is identified with honor, wisdom, and respect. The Ancient of Days means God is eternal and has been alive forever. He has no beginning or end. God will judge evil at the end of time.

Verse 9. In this part of Daniel’s **vision**, he saw thrones in a court in heaven. Daniel saw the Ancient of Days (God) come and sit on His throne as judge and king. White clothes represented majesty, holiness, and purity. White hair like wool meant honor and respect as a highly exalted king. The throne of fire refers to God’s Deity. Moses saw this in the burning bush (Exodus 3:2), and David described fire in front of God (Psalm 50:3).

Verse 10. The river of fire was a fence or border around God’s throne. No one could cross it. The river of fire flowed all the time, meaning God’s control, power, and **authority** cannot be stopped.

The thousands and millions of servants are angels who carried out God’s decisions as judge. The angels standing before God are those ready and waiting to do His work.

The books were opened. In a courtroom, the books are opened to show the record of the person on trial. This means God was ready to judge all the evil nations.

Verses 11-12. Daniel saw the destruction of the little horn and the end of his empire. The little horn bragged loudly about himself and his kingdom. The little horn tried to exalt himself above God.

The little horn was killed, his body destroyed, and burned by the fire from the Ancient of Days. The little horn may have been a reference to Rome or a Roman ruler. We are not sure who this was in the past or will be in the future.

The other animals: the lion, bear, and leopard (Babylon, Media / Persia, and Greece) were allowed to live as separate kingdoms until they were conquered by God’s people. Because God has declared defeat over evil, Christian believers can find courage to **resist** evil and trust in God.

3. Serve Confidently Under Christ’s Lordship (7:13-14)

¹³In my vision at night I saw in front of me someone who looked like a human being coming on the clouds in the sky. He came near God, who has been alive forever, and he was led to God.

¹⁴He was given authority, glory, and the strength of a king. People of every tribe, nation, and language will serve him. His rule will last forever, and his kingdom will never be destroyed.

Verses 13-14. These verses are similar to chapter 2. Daniel had another vision. In this **vision** he saw someone who looked like a person in a cloud. Some translations use “son of man.” This person was able to approach God and not be destroyed.

The son of man was led to meet God, possibly by the saints of God (Christians). The son of man is given **authority, glory,** and strength. Every nation and all people will serve Him. He will rule forever and ever and never be destroyed.

Christian believers can serve Jesus, our Messiah and Lord, with **confidence.** We know God has defeated evil and established His future everlasting kingdom through Jesus. We know He will have victory, no matter what the situation looks like right now.

4. Live Securely in the Guarantee of Victory (7:15-18)

¹⁵I, Daniel, was worried. The visions that went through my mind frightened me.

¹⁶I came near one of those standing there and asked what all this meant. So he told me and explained to me what these things meant:

¹⁷The four great animals are four kingdoms that will come from the earth.

¹⁸But the holy people who belong to the Most High God will receive the power to rule and will have the power to rule forever, from now on.

Verses 15-16. Some more interpretation of Daniel’s vision is in 7:15–8:27. Daniel was worried because he couldn’t understand the visions, and he was afraid. This was unusual for Daniel. He had been **courageous** and unafraid. In his vision he stood near someone and asked what it all meant. That someone explained it to him. We are not sure who this person was.

Verse 17. The four animals represented four kingdoms on earth. These were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. These are the same ones named in Daniel 2:39-40.

Verse 18. The “holy people” who belong to the Most High in this verse refer to holy ones, not saints. (The word holy means “chosen or set apart for service.” It does not mean perfection.) God will give them power to rule other nations. The kingdom of the Son of Man will not be destroyed, and the kingdom of God’s people will be everlasting. God has chosen His people to be His kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Christians can live without fear, and we can know someday we will participate in God’s victorious, **sovereign** rule forever.

What About You?

Do you worry about the future? Do you worry about the economy, environment, an ice age, or global warming?

Do you depend on the government, politicians, and scientists to protect and take care of you?

Or do you believe God is in control and takes care of His creation?

Applying the Lesson

In the New Testament, Jesus spoke about trusting God for everything, no matter what happens around us. Find Matthew 6:25-34. List as many things as you can find in these verses about why we must not worry about the future.

A verse to remember: "The holy people who belong to the Most High God will receive the power to rule forever" (Daniel 7:18).

Be Ready for Tribulation

Background
Study Verses:
Daniel 9:1–12:13

Lesson Material:
Daniel 9:20-27; 12:9-13

Bible Truth

God will use times of great trouble to renew His people and prepare them for eternal life.



There was a Deaf missionary couple who served God in a foreign country for many years. Their youngest child, a daughter, was born in that country. While this family was in the United States for their year of Stateside Assignment, a new leader came into power in the country where they worked. Even though this new leader was a dictator, the family planned to return and work in that country. The week before they were to go back to their home, they went to a meeting with all the missionaries in a nearby country. They were surprised to hear a news report that the dictator announced that any child born in his country “belonged” to the government. If they returned to their home, then their daughter may never be able to leave again. That week, they prayed with all the missionaries, and God led them to a different country. It was not what they expected, but God prepared the way for them, and they were obedient.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Pray for Further Understanding (Daniel 9:20-23)** – During a time of prayer and confession, Daniel received a visit from the angel Gabriel. He was told God wanted him to understand the meaning of a prophecy in Jeremiah.
2. **Prepare for Difficult Times (9:24-27)** – Gabriel explained to Daniel the meaning of 70 weeks, a prophecy related to the coming Messiah and the end times.
3. **Persist in Living for God (12:9-13)** – A divine messenger told Daniel to seal up the prophecies he received and go on living the rest of his life, promising he would be resurrected to new life in the end times.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What was Daniel doing when an angel appeared to him? (9:20-21)
2. What was the name of the angel who met Daniel? (9:21)
3. What did the angel want to give Daniel? (9:22-23)
4. What did Gabriel explain to Daniel? (9:24-27)
5. What did Gabriel promise Daniel would receive? (12:13)

Today's Lesson

The word **tribulation** in our lesson title means “a time of great trouble.” We can understand the word to mean some great difficulty in our life, or something experienced by many people.

There are different meanings and views about the Great Tribulation. Some say it was in the past, some say it will come in the future. We don't know for sure when that tribulation will come. We need to be prepared for our own difficult times while living for God. God wants His people to trust Him and know He has control over evil. God uses tribulation to help His people grow in their faith.

1. Pray for Further Understanding (Daniel 9:20-23)

²⁰While I was saying these things in my prayer to the Lord, my God, confessing my sins and the sins of the people of Israel and praying for God's holy hill,

²¹Gabriel came to me. (I had seen him in my last vision.) He came flying quickly to me about the time of the evening sacrifice, while I was still praying.

²²He taught me and said to me, “Daniel, I have come to give you wisdom and to help you understand.

²³When you first started praying, an answer was given, and I came to tell you, because God loves you very much. So think about the message and understand the vision.”

In Daniel 9:1-19, Daniel read and struggled to understand Jeremiah’s **prophecy** of the 70 years ruin of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 25:11-12).

Verses 20-23. Daniel believed he was living in the “last days” (the time before the end of life on earth). Daniel confessed his sins, the sins of the people, and prayed to the Lord for help. He asked God for mercy and forgiveness.

God sent an angel named Gabriel to give a message to Daniel. Gabriel was a high ranking angel. Angels do only what God tells them to do.

Gabriel came quickly during Daniel’s usual evening worship. He said he was sent to give Daniel wisdom and help him understand the prophecy from Jeremiah. Daniel understood Jeremiah’s prophecy enough to know it called for a spirit of repentance, but he wanted to understand more.

Gabriel said God already had an answer when Daniel first started praying. God always has an answer for us, even before we ask.

Whenever we struggle with difficult times because of our faith, or we cannot understand what the Bible says, we can pray and ask God to help us. We can share with other **mature** Deaf and hearing believers about our struggles.

2. Prepare for Difficult Times (9:24-27)

²⁴God has ordered four hundred ninety years for your people and your holy city for these reasons: to stop people from turning against God; to put an end to sin; to take away evil; to bring in goodness that continues forever; to bring about the vision and prophecy; and to appoint a most holy place.

²⁵Learn and understand these things. A command will come to rebuild Jerusalem. The time from this command until the appointed leader comes will be forty-nine years and four hundred thirty-four years. Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and a trench filled with water around it, but it will be built in times of trouble.

²⁶After the four hundred thirty-four years the appointed leader will be killed; he will have nothing. The people of the leader who is to come will destroy the city and the holy place. The end of the city will come like a flood, and war will continue until the end. God has ordered that place to be completely destroyed.

²⁷That leader will make firm an agreement with many people for seven years. He will stop the offerings and sacrifices after three and one-half years. A destroyer will do blasphemous things until the ordered end comes to the destroyed city.

Chapter 9 looks at the suffering of the people and the holy city (Jerusalem). Time is expressed in Hebrew language for these verses. Using the 360 days in a year of Jeremiah's time, scholars have determined it was 490 years from the time the command was given to **restore** Jerusalem after the captivity until Jesus died on the cross.

Verse 24. God gave six reasons for the 70 years of weeks: 1. To stop people from turning against God. 2. To take away evil. 3. To **atone** for sin. 4. To bring in goodness forever. 5. To make the **vision** and **prophecy** come true. 6. To set up a new holy place. At the end, the Jews would have atoned for their sins and the **tribulation** of Jerusalem would end.

Verse 25. God said he would restore the city of Jerusalem and the temple. Babylon fell seven weeks of years (forty-nine years) after Jerusalem fell around 539-537 B.C.

The appointed leader or anointed prince may have been Darius (Cyrus) who took control of Jerusalem around 539 B.C. In Isaiah 44:28, God called Cyrus "my shepherd" with the responsibility to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. Cyrus made a decree permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem (Ezra 6:3-12; 7:7-28). Most Bible scholars agree that the decree of Cyrus (537 B.C.) is the starting point of the 70 weeks.

Verses 26-27. These verses are difficult to understand. God's people could become discouraged to read about the destruction of God's temple. However, we also can have hope because He promises to destroy the enemy.

God revealed through prophecy how Christ's followers could expect increased tribulation as the end of time nears. But God also said He will destroy the enemy. We can be better prepared to trust and obey God when we face difficult times because we know God is in control.

3. Persist in Living for God (12:9-13)

⁹He answered, "Go your way, Daniel. The message is closed up and sealed until the time of the end.

¹⁰Many people will be made clean, pure, and spotless, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. Those wicked people will not understand these things, but the wise will understand them.

¹¹The daily sacrifice will be stopped. Then, after 1,290 days from that time, a blasphemous object that brings destruction will be set up.

¹²Those who wait for the end of the 1,335 days will be happy.

¹³As for you, Daniel, go your way until the end. You will get your rest, and at the end you will rise to receive your reward.”

Verse 9. These verses are part of a new vision beginning in Daniel 10:1. Chapters 10-12 relate to Daniel’s **vision** of an attempt to destroy Judaism. Daniel saw a man dressed in fine linen standing near a river and asked him what would happen. He refused to give Daniel more information. He told Daniel to go on with his life because the message is closed up and sealed until the time of the end.

Verse 10. God will guide history as usual. People will be made clean and live for God, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. The wicked will not understand these things, but the wise will understand. The word understand is used often in these verses.

Verse 11. Temple sacrifices would be stopped for 1,290 days (three and one-half years). After the 1,290 days, worship will be reestablished, the temple rededicated to Yahweh, and His people will be happy.

Daniel saw a vision of what would happen in the second century (164 B.C.). Antiochus would do **devastating** acts against Jewish worship. The first three and one-half years referred to deliverance from **persecution**. The second three and one-half years referred to the time the **reign** of righteousness would be set up.

Verse 12. Those who go through the second three and one-half years will be happy at the end.

Verse 13. Again, Daniel is told to go on with his life. He would not receive any more visions or understanding. He is to rest, go to his grave, and wait for his heavenly reward.

Daniel learned God’s people will not know the timing of God’s final victory. God’s people must learn to live in faith and the **assurance** of victory without requiring specific details. Like Daniel, God’s people must go on living their lives faithfully and confidently for God. We cannot know the exact time when the end comes. We can trust His promises about our resurrection and eternal life in heaven through Jesus Christ. Everyone must be saved and be prepared to meet God.

Today, more and more Christian believers are being persecuted for their faith in Christ. A few years ago, a popular restaurant company was persecuted for standing up for Christian values and beliefs. This company refused to stay open for business on Sundays. The company stood for biblical marriage—marriage between a man and woman. The company was attacked by the news media. The owner is a very godly Christian man who loves the Lord. He continues to live for God and obey His Word.

What About You?

Have you ever been criticized because of your faith? What did you do?

What is your view of the end times? Do you believe we are now living in the end times? What can you do to prepare for the end times?

What will you say to someone who asks you about the end times?

Applying the Lesson

Look back through these lessons from Ezekiel and Daniel. Find some verses to encourage you to be a faithful servant of the Lord. Find these verses in your Bible and mark them with a red pencil so you will see them when you open your Bible. Look at the verses at the end of each lesson, "A verse to remember." Let God speak to you again and again through these great verses. List any verses that encourage you to continue faithfully serving God.

A verse to remember: "Many people will be made clean, pure, and spotless, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. Those wicked people will not understand these things, but the wise will understand them" (Daniel 12:10).

Answers to Study Questions

Unit 1

Session 1

1. Near the Kebar River in Babylonia.
2. He saw the **glory** of God that looked like a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day.
3. He heard God's voice.
4. God told Ezekiel to go warn His people of the coming judgment on them.
5. Because they worshiped false idols and did not obey Him.

Session 2

1. The temple in Jerusalem.
2. God's **glory** and religious leaders offering sacrifices to idols.
3. They were religious leaders from Israel.
4. He would punish them for worshiping and serving idols.
5. They must change their lives and stop worshiping idols.

Session 3

1. Their parents and grandparents.
2. The people themselves, not their parents.
3. Turn away from their sins and obey God.
4. Give them new life, a new heart, and a new spirit.
5. Each one of us is responsible for our own sins.

Session 4

1. To show the temple would be destroyed and the people would grieve.
2. He must not show grief in front of the people. He must grieve privately.
3. It would make the people think about God again.
4. Ezekiel would be able to speak again.
5. Yes, Ezekiel obeyed the Lord.

Session 5

1. He was very proud.
2. Yes.
3. God gave him riches.
4. Because he was a proud and evil king.
5. Adam.

Unit 2

Session 1

1. The leaders of Israel.
2. They thought only about themselves.
3. They did not lead and take care of God's people.
4. He would search for and take care of them.
5. A Shepherd, from the family line of David. Jesus is that Shepherd.

Session 2

1. A valley full of dry bones.
2. If the bones could live again.
3. Preach to the bones.
4. His spirit.
5. New life, return to their land, and God's temple.

Session 3

1. He saw the **glory** of the Lord return to the temple.
2. He lay face down on the ground in awe.
3. He would live with them forever.
4. New plans for the temple.
5. Holiness, holy living.

Unit 3

Session 1

1. They were sent to be trained to serve the king of Babylon.
2. They did not want to make themselves spiritually unclean.
3. Only vegetables and water.
5. Wisdom and ability to learn.
6. He immediately sent them to serve in his court.

Session 2

1. Nebuchadnezzar.
2. He had a giant statue of himself.
3. They refused to bow down and worship the statue.
4. They were put in a fiery furnace.
5. He praised God and honored Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego for their faithfulness.

Session 3

1. He was the great-grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar and second in command.
2. They drank wine from sacred temple cups and praised false gods.
3. The fingers of a man's hand wrote on the palace wall.
4. Daniel.
5. God was going to destroy the Babylonian Empire.

Session 4

1. A document saying all people must pray only to him for thirty days.
2. In the upstairs room of his house, three times a day.
3. Because Daniel continued to pray to God.
4. God sent an angel to close the lions' mouths (6:22).
5. God (6:27).

Session 5

1. A cruel, terrible animal, that had iron teeth and ten horns.
2. God.
3. The Eternal One, or the Ancient of Days. His clothes and hair were white.
4. One like the Son of Man.
5. God's people.

Session 6

1. Praying and confessing his and Israel's sins.
2. Gabriel.
3. Wisdom and understanding.
4. About the rebuilding of Jerusalem.
5. Rest and reward.

Word List

- Appoint** – To name someone to an office or position.
- Assure, assured, assurance** – A promise, true knowledge.
- Atone** – To pay back for a wrong you did.
- Authority** – The power to give commands.
- Awesome** – Great and wonderful.
- Bold** – Brave.
- Chaldean** – Another name for Babylonian.
- Challenge** – A call to a contest, to compete with someone.
- Clash** – Bump into each other, crash; disagreement.
- Collapse** – To fall down.
- Compromise** – An agreement, with both people giving up some of their strong feelings in order to agree.
- Concubine** – A slave woman, a woman with little importance.
- Confess** – To agree with God and say we have sinned, to admit our sin.
- Confident, confidence** – Faith, trust.
- Confront** – To accuse someone face-to-face.
- Conqueror** – Someone who defeats another person, army, or nation, the winner.
- Consistent** – To be faithful or dependable, to keep doing something the same way without changing.
- Corrupt** – Not honest, sinful, evil, to become evil.
- Courageous** – To be brave, not afraid.
- Crumble** – To fall apart, to decay.
- Declare, declaration** – To make a statement or an announcement.
- Dedicate** – To be committed to something.
- Deserve** – To earn, to have the right to something.
- Design** – Plan.
- Devastating** – Something shocking, upsetting, or painful.
- Devotion** – Deep commitment to something.
- Disaster** – An event causing great harm or damage.
- Discrimination** – To be unfair to someone, to show preference.
- Empower** – To give power or ability to someone.
- Evaluate** – To measure, to study.
- Folly** – Foolishness.
- Glory** – The strong presence of the Lord.
- Idol** – Something that is worshiped, a false god.
- Idolatry** – To worship false idols, gods, or images.
- Improbable** – Maybe will not happen.

Indestructible – Something that can't be destroyed.

Interrupt – To stop a conversation, situation, or action.

Loom – Seem to be very near.

Martyr – Someone who is tortured or killed for his beliefs.

Mature, maturity – To be fully grown, developed, ready.

Messenger – A person who speaks for another person.

Neglect – To ignore, abandon, or not take care of, to leave undone.

Pagan – Idol worshiper, someone who has no religion, someone who is not a Jew or a Christian.

Persecution – To punish someone for his religious beliefs.

Persist – To continue, not give up, not quit.

Portrait – A photo, picture, or description of something.

Presence (God's presence) – When we feel God very near to us.

Principle – A rule relating to right behavior.

Process – To do things in an orderly way.

Prophecy – To predict the future by divine guidance.

Prophet – A person who speaks for God and tells about future events.

Radical – Very strong feelings about something.

Realize, realization – To understand fully.

Rededicate – To make a promise or commitment again.

Reestablish – To set up again, to start again

Reign, reigned – To rule with power, control, and authority

Repent, repentance – To turn away, to feel sorry and change our behavior or attitude.

Resist – To reject something.

Restore, restoration – To bring back as it was before.

Risk – Danger.

Scholar – An educated person, a teacher, an expert on some writing such as the Bible.

Secure – Safe.

Sovereign – To rule, to have full power to control.

Supreme – The highest, top, best, or most important.

Testimony, testify – To tell about something we know.

Tragedy – A very sad or bad event that happened.

Tribulation – A time of great trouble.

Tug – To pull.

Unaware – Not know.

Vision – Something seen in a dream.

Daily Bible Readings

Month 1

- 1 1 Samuel 8–10
- 2 1 Samuel 11–13
- 3 1 Samuel 14–15
- 4 1 Samuel 16–17
- 5 1 Samuel 18–20
- 6 1 Samuel 21–24
- 7 1 Samuel 25–27
- 8 1 Samuel 28–31
- 9 2 Samuel 1–3
- 10 2 Samuel 4–7
- 11 2 Samuel 8–11
- 12 2 Samuel 12–13
- 13 2 Samuel 14–15
- 14 2 Samuel 16–18
- 15 2 Samuel 19–20
- 16 2 Samuel 21–22
- 17 2 Samuel 23–24
- 18 1 Kings 1–2
- 19 1 Kings 3–5
- 20 1 Kings 6–7
- 21 1 Kings 8
- 22 1 Kings 9–10
- 23 1 Kings 11–12
- 24 1 Kings 13–14
- 25 1 Kings 15–17
- 26 1 Kings 18–19
- 27 1 Kings 20–21
- 28 1 Kings 22
- 29 2 Kings 1–3
- 30 2 Kings 4–5

Month 2

- 1 2 Kings 6–8
- 2 2 Kings 9–10
- 3 2 Kings 11–13
- 4 2 Kings 14–16
- 5 2 Kings 17–18
- 6 2 Kings 19–21
- 7 2 Kings 22–23
- 8 2 Kings 24–25
- 9 1 Chronicles 1–2
- 10 1 Chronicles 3–5
- 11 1 Chronicles 6–7
- 12 1 Chronicles 8–10
- 13 1 Chronicles 11–13
- 14 1 Chronicles 14–16
- 15 1 Chronicles 17–20
- 16 1 Chronicles 21–23
- 17 1 Chronicles 24–26
- 18 1 Chronicles 27–29
- 19 2 Chronicles 1–4
- 20 2 Chronicles 5–7
- 21 2 Chronicles 8–11
- 22 2 Chronicles 12–15
- 23 2 Chronicles 16–19
- 24 2 Chronicles 20–22
- 25 2 Chronicles 23–25
- 26 2 Chronicles 26–28
- 27 2 Chronicles 29–30
- 28 2 Chronicles 31–33
- 29 2 Chronicles 34–36
- 30 Ezra 1–2
- 31 Ezra 3–4

Month 3

- 1 Ezra 5–6
- 2 Ezra 7–8
- 3 Ezra 9–10
- 4 Nehemiah 1–2
- 5 Nehemiah 3–4
- 6 Nehemiah 5–6
- 7 Nehemiah 7
- 8 Nehemiah 8
- 9 Nehemiah 9
- 10 Nehemiah 10–11
- 11 Nehemiah 12–13
- 12 Esther 1–2
- 13 Esther 3–4
- 14 Esther 5–7
- 15 Esther 8–10
- 16 Job 1–3
- 17 Job 4–6
- 18 Job 7–9
- 19 Job 10–12
- 20 Job 13–15
- 21 Job 16–19
- 22 Job 20–22
- 23 Job 23–27
- 24 Job 28–30
- 25 Job 31–33
- 26 Job 34–36
- 27 Job 37–39
- 28 Job 40–42
- 29 Psalms 1–10
- 30 Psalms 11–19
- 31 Psalms 20–27

EXPLORE
THE BIBLE

BIBLE STUDIES FOR THE DEAF
LEADER

Ezekiel, Daniel



BIBLE STUDIES FOR THE DEAF

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* Evangelistic Lesson

Helps for the Teacher

Resources for Use this Quarter

- **Church library.** Check with your church library for commentaries on Daniel and Ezekiel. If you do not have a church library, ask at a larger church. Librarians are always pleased to have someone use their materials.
- **Book Stores.** Another source for small commentaries is a used bookstore that sells religious books. Be sure you know the author or publisher.
- **Online.** You can find many commentaries online. Be sure you know the author. If you are not familiar with such authors, make a list of the commentaries you find and ask your pastor which ones are dependable. If you use Bible Gateway software you can find commentaries also. These should be dependable.
- **Bible Gateway.** This is a free download. Go to www.biblegateway.com. You can use this to look up a verse or a whole chapter. It also has keyword search, topical index, devotionals, and more. You can select any translation for Scripture texts, including the New Century Version (NCV) we use in this quarterly. The **keyword search** is like a concordance. You can find verses in the version you select related to your current topic. The **topical index** lets you type in a word and find Scriptures related to that topic. The **devotionals** are by general topic.
- You can find some help in commentaries on line. The **EasyEnglish Bible Commentaries** can be downloaded. Go to <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/index.htm>. The author of the Ezekiel commentary is Ian Mackervoy. A second approach on chapters 40-48 is presented by Keith Simons. The commentary on Daniel was written by Robert Bryce. These authors are not well known. The commentaries are usually dependable, but it is important to compare their insights with known Bible commentary authors.
- **The ASL Bible** developed by Deaf Missions includes Daniel but not Ezekiel (as of December 31, 2012). The DVDs are easy to use. You can easily select the verses you want to see. Your class will enjoy seeing how these verses are signed in this DVD. The people who translated this did much research and their translation is very accurate. Your study of their interpretation may help you choose the signs you use for some of the concepts in these prophetic books. You can secure a copy of **The ASL Bible** from www.letssignllc.com or www.deafmissions.org.

Use a Variety of Teaching Methods

- Here are some teaching methods for you to try:
- **Assignments.** As you prepare your lessons, look for ways to involve your class members. You may want someone to sign one or more of the Bible verses, sign a hymn related to the lesson, or review some of the information in this Leader Guide. Encourage them to study it so they can tell it (in ASL). *Try this for every lesson.*
- **Drama.** Useful when there is conversation between two or more characters in the Scripture text. You may want to ask two of your class members to study the two prophets, Ezekiel and Daniel. For the first lesson in each of these studies, ask them to wear an appropriate costume and sign a five to ten minute presentation, "I am Ezekiel," or "I am Daniel." Use the church library or material on line to find information for these performers.
- **Field Trip** to the library, nursery, or pastor's office. If you are in a large church, use this to help your class know what is available for them each week.
- **Group Study.** This is effective when your class members can understand the Scripture text and comments in the quarterly. Ask each group to study the verses and commentary, and then share with the whole class what they learned, and what was important to them in the Scripture.
- **Guest Teacher.** This is effective when you have a lesson on an issue that can be discussed by someone like the pastor, a deacon, or finance committee chairman.
- **Lecture.** This is effective when you have a lot of new material to present, such as the first lesson in Ezekiel or Daniel. Plan ways to encourage discussion.
- **Object Lesson.** Use an object that relates to the lesson.
- **Pupil teachers.** This will give your pupils an opportunity to grow and possibly become a teacher in the future.
- **Scripture Searching.** Prepare questions and ask class members to find the answer in the Bible verses for each section.

Introduction

Ezekiel, Daniel

Faith Under Fire

Many of your class members may look at the books of prophecy with the idea it is either boring or too difficult to understand. Encourage them to look for the characteristics of the prophets, their faith, their willingness to speak for God in the face of danger, and their confidence in God's final victory.

Ezekiel

Ezekiel began his prophesy during the fifth year of the exile and his captivity, or about 593 B.C. He was about thirty years old. He identified the place as the Kebar River (Ezekiel 1:1). This was south of the city of Babylon. No doubt a number of Israelite exiles were living in that area.

Ezekiel's message was the most spiritual of the prophets, as he dealt more with the person of God. Someone has said, "Ezekiel is the prophet of the Spirit, as Isaiah is the prophet of the Son, and Jeremiah the prophet of the Father." During the first years of the captivity, the false prophets said the people would be returned to Jerusalem and the city would not be destroyed. It was not until the final deportation, during Zedekiah's reign, that the city was destroyed, eleven years after Ezekiel was taken captive. Jeremiah sent a message to Babylon (Jeremiah 29:1-23) saying Jerusalem would be destroyed. Ezekiel confirmed this message and warned the people they must turn to God before they could return to Jerusalem.

In many ways Ezekiel spoke in the darkest days of the nation. He stood at the bottom of the valley in the darkest corner. He had to meet the false hope given by the false prophets and the indifference and the lack of hope that grew in the days of sin and disaster. When the people would not listen to Ezekiel or his message, he changed to a new method. Instead of speaking in parables, he acted them out (Ezekiel 24:20-24). We have seen "flagpole sitters" and "walkathons" on television. These attracted the attention of the public. This sort of thing was the method Ezekiel used and shows a picture of those days of spiritual decay.

Ezekiel referred to the character of Daniel and to his office as a prophet (Ezekiel 14:14, 20; 28:3). They apparently knew each other well.

Daniel

Daniel was carried into captivity when Jerusalem was destroyed, about 587 B.C. (Daniel 1:1-3).

Jesus called the Pharisees “hypocrites,” but He called Daniel “the prophet” (Matthew 24:15). There also is a possible reference to Daniel in Hebrews 11:33.

There are three words that characterize Daniel’s life: purpose, prayer, and prophecy. Daniel was a man of purpose (Daniel 1:8; 6:10). He determined that he would not be defiled by the immorality of paganism or be involved in idolatry. Daniel was a man of prayer (Daniel 2:17-23; 6:10; 9:3-19). His total life and his every decision in a pagan court showed his dependence on prayer. Daniel was a man of prophecy. The bulk of his book relates to prophetic themes.

His prophecy can be seen as a series of conflicts. In each case, Daniel’s faithfulness to God won over what others wanted him to do. The first was about eating proper foods (1:8-15). Next was about the power of pagan magic and God’s wisdom in interpreting dreams (chapter 2). The next conflict was between idolatry and obedience to God (chapter 3). The king’s pride challenged God’s sovereignty (chapter 4). Next was the king’s abuse of sacred things (5:1-30). Finally, the men plotted against Daniel (chapter 6).

Unit 1

Crisis of Faith

Ezekiel 1:1–32:32

As you start this new unit, help the class get an overview of the quarter. Use the material in the introduction to the quarter, above, and from the pupil's material. Write on the board the theme for the quarter: "Ezekiel, Daniel: Faith Under Fire."

Point out the three units for this quarter. Note that the first two units are from Ezekiel and the third unit from Daniel. Then focus on the title for this first unit, "Crisis of Faith." List the lesson titles as types of crises: (1) when your world crumbles, (2) when idols tug at your heart, (3) when you want to blame others, (4) when tragedy hits home, and (5) when pride turns to greed.

Note that the lesson for June 15 is the evangelistic lesson for this quarter. Ask some class members to be ready to give a testimony of their salvation experience and to present clearly the plan of salvation if you have lost people in your class.

Use an Old Testament Bible map to show the Chebar Canal (or Kebar River), land of the Chaldeans (Babylonia) for June 1 and Jerusalem for June 8.

As you prepare to teach, read the text several times from different translations. Look for special verses that can be applied to your Bible class. Read other commentaries for additional information you can use. Look for opportunities to make assignments for class members to prepare and present to the class. Consider a variety of teaching methods for the lessons.

Consider using the ASL Bible to present a signed version of the text for each section. (See a discussion of this resource in the Teacher Helps, above.)

At the beginning of each lesson, give a brief summary of the lesson to be studied that week.

Meet the Writer

George Joslin became involved in ministry with Deaf people in California in 1957. He served as a missionary to the Deaf with the Baptist Home Mission Board (now the North American Mission Board) for seventeen years in California, Texas, and Virginia. George is now retired and lives in Springfield, Missouri. After retirement, he and his wife, Lorene, served eighteen months with the International Mission Board in Ecuador, South America. George is currently active in the Missouri Baptist Conference of the Deaf. He has been writing for LifeWay since 2001.

When Your World Crumbles

Background Study Outline

1. **“See My Glory”
(Ezekiel 1:1-28)**
2. **“Warn Hardheaded
People” (2:1–3:27)**
3. **“Show Them What I’ll
Do” (4:1–5:17)**
4. **“Announce the End
Has Come” (6:1–7:27)**

Lesson Material

1. **Dealing with Life
Interrupted
(Ezekiel 1:1-3)**
2. **Seeing God’s Awe-
some Glory (1:28)**
3. **Empowered for
Mission Improbable
(2:1-5)**
4. **Making Sense of
Disaster (6:7-10)**

Bible Truth

**God can use difficult
times to help us grow
in our faith.**

DIG DEEPER!

Ezekiel, the Prophet (Ezekiel 1:1)

The name *Ezekiel* means “consolation or comfort.” In the face of exile and destruction, God offered His people comfort and hope.

We do not know much about Ezekiel, the man. We have only what he wrote in his prophecies. He was the son of Buzi, a priest of the family of Zadok. He was both a priest and a prophet, much like Jer-emiah (Jeremiah 1:1). He grew up in Jerusalem and may have been a priest before God called him to prophesy. He was taken into exile in 597 B.C. by King Nebuchadnezzar, at about age 25. He prophesied from about 592 B.C. to 570 B.C. This was about the same time as Daniel and Jeremiah.

Ezekiel lived in a community of captives in the area identified as the River Chebar. He was married (Ezekiel 24:16-18). He lived in his own house (Ezekiel 3:24; 8:1).

When God called Ezekiel in a vision, He gave him a scroll and told him to eat it (Ezekiel 3:1-3). The message God gave him was directed toward individuals, not the whole nation as the other prophets had done. He also offered comfort to the people if they would repent.

Like some of the other prophets, Ezekiel used a number of dramatic demonstrations as symbols of what God said. One was the death of Ezekiel’s wife in the ninth year of his exile, by some sudden, but not explained, event (Ezekiel 24:18). The Bible does not tell us when or where Ezekiel died.

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

The title and theme of today’s lesson is “When Your World Crumbles.” Ask your class members if any of them have felt that way at some time (lost their job, a child or spouse died, a house fire). Most everyone has had some kind of experience like that. This lesson is about the time when the nation of Israel went into captivity in Babylon.

Make the lesson come alive! Ask someone ahead of time to discuss Ezekiel from “Dig Deeper” above, or have someone act out his life.

STEP TWO – DEALING WITH LIFE INTERRUPTED (EZEKIEL 1:1-3)

Ask how many understood from the lesson how Ezekiel’s life was interrupted. (He and many others were taken captive from Jerusalem to Babylon.) Note that the first captivity was in 605 B.C. Ezekiel was in the second group in 597 B.C. The Book of Ezekiel begins five years later, about 593 B.C. Use a Bible map to show Jerusalem and the Kebar River. On a modern map, this would be Iraq.

STEP THREE – SEEING GOD’S AWESOME GLORY (1:28)

Summarize Ezekiel’s vision from verses 4-27.

Emphasize how Ezekiel saw God’s glory in the strange vision he had. It reminds us we can see God’s glory any time, even when our life is interrupted.

STEP FOUR – EMPOWERED FOR MISSION IMPROBABLE (2:1-5)

Ask, “What did God tell Ezekiel to do?” (Go speak to the people of Israel. Verses 2-3.)

Ask, “What was the message Ezekiel must tell?” (“This is what the Lord says.”) That must always be our message to lost people today. Show them what God’s Word says.

Ask, “What would happen if the people refused to listen?” (They will still know God has spoken.) We are commanded to go and tell. We are not responsible for the results.

STEP FIVE - MAKING SENSE OF DISASTER (6:7-10)

Review chapters 3–5 and mention some of the things Ezekiel said and did.

Note that verse 8 tells us God planned to save some people—the ones who repented and turned back to Him. God always has a “remnant,” a group who remains faithful.

STEP SIX - CONCLUSION

Review the lesson using “What About You?” Then encourage the class members to do the activity in “Applying the Lesson.”

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Does this lesson have meaning for them today? Is it difficult for them to apply something like this from the Old Testament to their life today—2500 years later?

When Idols Tug at Your Heart

Background Study Outline

1. **When Idols Multiply (Ezekiel 8:1–9:11)**
2. **When God Leaves (10:1–11:25)**
3. **What Exile Is Like (12:1–28)**
4. **Why False Faith Imperils (13:1–23)**
5. **Where Idolatry Leads (14:1–23)**

Lesson Material

1. **What's in Your Temple? (Ezekiel 8:3b–4, 10)**
2. **Do We Think God Is Unaware? (8:11–12)**
3. **What's So Wrong with Idols? (14:1–5)**
4. **What's the Way Out? (14:6)**

Bible Truth

God's people must love only Him. They must not have idols in their hearts.

DIG DEEPER!

Idols (Ezekiel 8:3)

God hates idolatry! Idolatry was forbidden in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:4). When they went into the Promised Land, Canaan, all the nations around them had idols. The Canaanites were descendants of Noah's son, Ham. Because of Ham's sin, Noah placed a curse on his family (Genesis 9:24–25).

Almost from the beginning, the Israelites adopted the gods and idols of their neighbors instead of staying faithful to God. The people made idols from wood, stone, silver, or gold. They believed their god came and lived in those idols.

David wrote, "Their idols are made of silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak. They have eyes, but they cannot see. They have ears, but they cannot hear. They have noses, but they cannot smell. They have hands, but they cannot feel. They have feet, but they cannot walk" (Psalm 115:4–7).

The prophets often told of the foolishness of worshipping idols and the joy of worshipping God, but the people refused to listen. Even in Babylon, where they were carried because of their idolatry in Jerusalem, they continued to worship idols.

Bel (Baal) and Marduk were the more important idols worshipped in Babylon. *Bel* means "lord." It often preceded the name of a god. Marduk was seen as the chief of the Babylonian gods. He was also called the sun god or the storm god. Babylonians had more than fifty different names for this god.

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

The title and theme of today's lesson is "When Idols Tug at Your Heart." Ask, "Do you have an idol tugging at your heart?" We will answer this in today's lesson.

Ask someone ahead of time to discuss idols from "Dig Deeper," above, and other resources from the church library. Look for pictures of Babylonian idols in books in your church library or online. Ask if class members feel Satan tugs at our hearts more today than in Bible times, though in a different way.

STEP TWO – WHAT'S IN YOUR TEMPLE? (EZEKIEL 8:3B-4,10)

Note the events in Ezekiel 6:11–7:27. Ezekiel predicted the destruction of Jerusalem. In 8:3-10, Ezekiel pictured more of the idolatry in Jerusalem.

Make the lesson come alive! Find several small boxes of different sizes so each one fits inside another. Begin by explaining the biggest box is "your heart." Open it and explain the next is "your family." Then "your house," "your neighbors and friends," "your church." Finally, in the smallest box, explain this is something no one can see. What is it? It is "your sin." Put all the boxes back together. Ask, "Can anyone see your sin? No, it is hidden inside all the good things in your life." Then ask, "What's wrong with that example?" (No one can see the sin, but God can. That is today's lesson.)

STEP THREE – DO WE THINK GOD IS UNAWARE? (8:11-12)

Refer back to your object lesson with the boxes. Ask, "Do you think many people feel that way? Because they cannot see God, they think He cannot see them."

Say, "Think for a moment about this past week. Think of all the things you did, where you went, who you were with, and what you said. Close your eyes and let God show you the sin in your life." Pause briefly with everyone's eyes closed.

STEP FOUR – WHAT'S SO WRONG WITH IDOLS? (14:1-5)

Review: In chapters 9-10, Ezekiel saw more visions. Chapter 11 has prophecies against evil leaders and a promise to the faithful. In chapter 12, Ezekiel acted out the idea of captivity. In chapter 13, he spoke against false prophets.

Emphasize the leaders were not honest. They were only pretending to ask for help from God. God reminded them of His hatred for idols and punishment for idol worship.

STEP FIVE - WHAT'S THE WAY OUT? (14:6)

This is the key to this lesson. "Change your hearts and lives. Stop worshiping idols."

STEP SIX - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Does this lesson have meaning for them today?

When You Want to Blame Others

Background Study Outline

- 1. Judgment Against Unfaithfulness (Ezekiel 15:1-8)**
- 2. Judgment Against Detestable Practices (16:1-63)**
- 3. Judgment Through Real-Time Disasters (17:1-24)**
- 4. Personal Accountability in Judgment (18:1-32)**
- 5. Judgment: A Time for Grief (19:1-14)**

Lesson Material

- 1. Who's to Blame? (Ezekiel 18:1-4)**
- 2. What to Do? (18:21-23)**
- 3. What's Right? (18:25-27)**
- 4. What Could Be? (18:30-32)**

Bible Truth

All people are responsible for their own sins. God will give new life to people who turn away from their sins.

DIG DEEPER! **An Evil Proverb (Ezekiel 18:2)**

The proverb quoted in this verse was also quoted by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:29-30). Jeremiah was in Jerusalem at this time and Ezekiel was in Babylon, but they both probably heard the people saying this. It is actually an incorrect quotation of God's statement. God often said He would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, especially the sin of idolatry (Numbers 14:18). The Jews in Babylon said this proverb as an insult to God. They said they were being punished for the sins of their ancestors, not their own sin of idolatry. God meant, if the parents turned to idolatry, their sons and grandsons might also be led into idolatry and would suffer for it.

This attitude showed the Jews were not humble and did not repent of their sin. They tried to say their sin was God's fault. When Jeremiah quoted this proverb, God answered with a promise of mercy. This time, God answered with judgment. He showed their wickedness so clearly, they couldn't blame anyone else.

God does not punish the children for the fathers' sins unless they follow in their fathers' path. Then the children are still responsible for their own sin. Many children of sinful parents live righteous lives. It is possible for innocent children to suffer for their father's sins. A father gets drunk and beats his children. Or the parents do drugs and their children are born with physical and mental defects. This is not God's direct hand of judgment, but the natural result of sin in the actions of the parents.

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

Review 14:7–17:24. Ezekiel reviewed God's actions toward Jerusalem.

The title and theme of today's lesson is "When You Want to Blame Others." Ask, "How many of you are guilty of blaming someone else for something you did?" Of course everyone has done that. All children quickly learn to do that.

STEP TWO – WHO'S TO BLAME? (EZEKIEL 18:1-4)

Ask someone ahead of time to discuss An Evil Proverb from "Dig Deeper," above. Note that just because "everyone says it," does not mean it is true.

Make the lesson come alive! Some modern proverbs sound good but are not true, such as "What you don't know can't hurt you." "Hard work never hurt anyone." "Crime doesn't pay." "Beauty is only skin deep." "All people are born equal." These are not true, but they are not harmful. The one the Jews quoted was an insult to God. That is why it was evil. Review verses 5-20, God's argument against that evil proverb.

STEP THREE – WHAT TO DO? (18:21-23)

Emphasize this is the opposite of the first section. In the first section, God said He will punish sin. Here, God said He will forgive anyone who repents. We have a choice.

STEP FOUR – WHAT'S RIGHT? (18:25-27)

Emphasize these verses are in the Old Testament. Jesus had not yet died on the cross. So, what about today? Can a person be saved, then fall into sin and become lost again? Ask someone to read 1 John 2:19-24 and Romans 8:37-39. These verses, and many others, give us assurance of our salvation. Ask if our Baptist statement, "Once saved always saved" is a spiritual truth or a false proverb. Encourage discussion.

STEP FIVE - WHAT COULD BE? (18:30-32)

These verses present God's plan for salvation of the Jews. Ask if class members can quote some Scripture verses to show the plan of salvation through Jesus. Romans 3:23; 6:23; 10:9-10 are often called the Roman Road to Salvation. John 3:16 is the most well-known verse to explain God's plan for salvation.

This is the evangelistic lesson for this quarter. Use this discussion to lead into presenting the plan of salvation if you have any lost persons in your class. Ask mature Christians to give their testimony.

STEP SIX - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Do they feel they are ready to take the blame for their own sin?

When Tragedy Hits Home

Background Study Outline

1. Repeating Past Failures (Ezekiel 20:1-49)
2. Reaping Sin's Consequences (21:1-32)
3. Exposing a Broken Society (22:1-31)
4. Judging Disgraceful Actions (23:1-49)
5. Dealing with Grievous Loss (24:1-27)

Lesson Material

1. Listen for God's Guidance (Ezekiel 24:15-18)
2. Seek to Know God Better (24:19-24)
3. Trust That God Is in Control (24:25-27)

Bible Truth

God is in control. We can trust Him to prepare us and help us when we experience difficult times.

DIG DEEPER!

Destruction of Solomon's Temple (Ezekiel 24:21)

Ezekiel prophesied the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. Babylon had attacked Jerusalem in the past and took many things from the temple, along with many people as captives, to Babylon.

The temple Ezekiel prophesied about was the beautiful temple built by Solomon in about 968 B.C. Thousands of Israelites and Canaanites worked for seven years to build the temple. The Ark of the Covenant was moved there and worship in the temple became the center of the Jewish religion. All Jewish men went to Jerusalem to make sacrifices on special days such as the Passover.

The Jewish people believed they could not be defeated by any other nation because God lived in their temple. They believed Egypt was their friend and would help protect their city and temple against any attack from Babylon. But Egypt refused to help them. Three prophets, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Jeremiah, warned the people to turn back to God, but they refused.

The story of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple is told in 2 Kings 25; 2 Chronicles 36; and Jeremiah 39.

Several months after Ezekiel made his prediction about the destruction of the temple, a survivor came from Jerusalem and reported it had happened, just as Ezekiel prophesied (Ezekiel 33:21). From that time, the Jewish people began to turn back to the Lord and later they began to return to their homes in Israel.

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

Today's lesson shows us how to handle a tragedy in our life. The title and theme of today's lesson is "When Tragedy Hits Home." Discuss the meaning of this phrase and appropriate signs for it. (When terrible things happen to us.)

Ask if anyone in the class wants to tell about "the worst thing that ever happened to me." Use the questions in "What About You?" to prompt their responses. After a brief discussion, ask the class if they felt God was present with them during this crisis. Online, locate a summary of the book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, by Harold Kushner. Briefly share some insights from this book.

STEP TWO – LISTEN FOR GOD'S GUIDANCE (EZEKIEL 24:15-18)

Review briefly the story in Hosea 1:1–3:5 about how he lost his wife through adultery. God often used an experience in the life of the prophets to express His message to His people.

God used Ezekiel's tragedy to tell His people what they would face soon. They were encouraged to look to God for leadership.

STEP THREE – SEEK TO KNOW GOD BETTER (24:19-24)

Ask someone ahead of time to discuss the destruction of Solomon's temple from "Dig Deeper" above, and other resources from the church library.

Make the lesson come alive! Ask two persons ahead of time to work together and be prepared to talk about Solomon's temple. In the church library or online, they can find pictures of Solomon's temple, and a description of how large and beautiful it was. To the Jews, it had become the most important place in their nation and in their hearts. These people can read 1 Kings 5–8 for the story about building the temple. Ask them to share with the class what they learned.

STEP FOUR – TRUST THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL (24:25-27)

Ask, "Do you sometimes think your life is out of control? Is it because you try to control your life and do not let God control it for you?"

We often have major decisions to make and find it hard to see God's way. Ask, "How can we know God's will for us?" (through prayer, Bible study, and through talking with mature Christians).

STEP FIVE - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Does this lesson have meaning for them today? Use the checklist in "Applying the Lesson" to prompt discussion of proper ways to deal with a crisis in their life.

When Pride Turns to Greed

Background Study Outline

1. **Condemnation of Bitter Revenge (Ezekiel 25:1-17)**
2. **Condemnation of Selfish Pride (26:1-28:19)**
3. **Condemnation of Contempt for God's People (28:20-26)**
4. **Condemnation of Empty Boasting (29:1-32:32)**

Lesson Material

1. **Portrait of Selfish Pride (Ezekiel 28:1-5)**
2. **Folly of Selfish Pride (28:11-13a, 14-15)**
3. **Result of Selfish Pride (28:16-19)**

Bible Truth

God wants His people to be humble. Pride makes people selfish. They do evil things and bring God's judgment.

DIG DEEPER!

Tyre (Ezekiel 28:2)

The word *Tyre* means "a rock." This Phoenician city is located northwest from the Sea of Galilee, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It was the center for trading with nations across the Mediterranean Sea.

The history of Tyre goes back to at least 1500 B.C. with shipping and commerce for almost one thousand years. The name Tyre was used for two areas. One was on the mainland and the other on a small rocky island a half mile from the shore. Nebuchadnezzar attacked Tyre for thirteen years (586-573 B.C.), but he was not able to defeat it. That was finally accomplished by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C.

The town was known for its purple dye and cloth. This was the main source of income for the people, other than the trading and shipping. Sidon was north of Tyre, and the two cities were often mentioned together. Both towns were full of shops selling dye and cloth along with precious stones. Solomon requested craftsmen from Hiram, king of Tyre, to help build the temple.

In the Old Testament, other prophets joined Ezekiel in preaching against these two cities because of their idolatry and sin (Isaiah 23:1-14; Jeremiah 25:19-26; Amos 1:9-10; Zechariah 9:2-4). Jesus also spoke against Tyre (Matthew 11:20-24). Jesus visited this area at least twice and did many miracles (Mark 3:7-12; 7:24-30; Matthew 12:15-21; 15:21-28). Paul visited Tyre on his third missionary journey (Acts 21:3-7).

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

The title and theme of today’s lesson is “When Pride Turns to Greed.” Encourage discussion of how many other sins seem to begin with pride. List their suggestions on the board (coveting, anger, speaking badly of another person, selfishness, lack of concern for other people, not sharing, turning away from God).

STEP TWO – PORTRAIT OF SELFISH PRIDE (EZEKIEL 28:1-5)

Ask someone ahead of time to discuss Tyre from “Dig Deeper,” above, and other resources from the church library. Sign some of the verses listed in this discussion. Locate this area on an Old Testament map. It is northwest from the Sea of Galilee.

Call attention in verse 3 to the reference to Daniel. Daniel became known because he was able to interpret the king’s dream. This suggests how Ezekiel and Daniel may have known each other well, though they lived in different parts of Babylon. Jeremiah prophesied during this same time, but he lived in Israel.

Note the title for each section in this lesson uses the expression “selfish pride.” Ask, “Is there any other kind of pride?” (Yes, there is pride in what others do, pride in God’s power and work, pride in what our children do—but not becoming proud of “me” because of what “my children” do.)

STEP THREE – FOLLY OF SELFISH PRIDE (28:11-13A,14-15)

Discuss the nature of prophecy. Ezekiel spoke about the city of Tyre, but it can also be seen as an example of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden or Satan (Lucifer) before he was put out of heaven.

Refer to the Introduction in the pupil material, and emphasize how we can see similar examples of this in the world today and in the lives of individuals around us. These are prophetic truths.

STEP FOUR – RESULT OF SELFISH PRIDE (28:16-19)

Ask someone to sign verse 17. The emphasis is on the fact God gave them many good things and they sinned because of their pride, as if they did all of it themselves.

Make the lesson come alive! Have a Scripture search for verses about pride. (1 Samuel 15:22-24—speaking to King Saul; 2 Chronicles 26:16; Job 20:5-7; Psalm 19:13; Proverbs 8:13; Proverbs 11:2; Proverbs 16:18; Philippians 2:3; 1 Timothy 6:4).

STEP FIVE - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Do they have a problem with the temptation to be selfishly proud of what they have or what they have done? How do they control that temptation?

Unit 2

Hopeful Faith

Ezekiel 33:1–48:35

The three lessons in this unit complete the study of the prophecies of Ezekiel. The previous lessons may seem to be more negative, dealing with the sins of the people of Israel and their neighbors. Next, Ezekiel offers words of hope in the face of difficulty. The people are still in captivity, but they can have hope of returning to Israel—if they repent. They can have hope of new freedom, new life, and new worship. They have been in captivity for many years. Many of them were born since the captivity or were too young to remember Israel as it was before Babylon attacked. They need instruction on how to return to Israel and return to the proper worship of God. When they return, the city of Jerusalem and the temple will be in ruins. Their homes will be destroyed, or other people will be living in them. They will need this hope.

The theme for this unit is Hopeful Faith. As you introduce these three lessons, ask, “Is there any other kind of faith, other than faith with hope?” These lessons will help answer that question.

Use a Bible map to show again the Chebar River on July 20.

Help them see how these lessons have meaning for them, today, just as they did for the Israelites in the time of Ezekiel. Look for opportunities to make assignments for class members to prepare and present to the class. They will learn more if more is asked of them.

Encourage your class to read all the verses in the Background Study Outline. These three lessons cover twenty-five chapters, so they will have a lot to read each week. This will help them get the full story from this final section of the Book of Ezekiel.

Hope of New Freedom

Background Study Outline

1. **God Warns About Wickedness (Ezekiel 33:1-20)**
2. **Some Misread God's Warnings (33:21-33)**
3. **God Acts to Rescue His People (34:1-31)**
4. **God Acts to Protect His People (35:1-15)**

Lesson Material

1. **Why Is Rescue Required? (Ezekiel 34:2b-6)**
2. **What Does Rescue Involve? (34:11-16)**
3. **Who Provides Rescue? (34:22-24)**

Bible Truth

Even when people fail spiritually, God will continue to save lost people and give them spiritual freedom in Christ.

DIG DEEPER!

God Is Our Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:11)

Through Ezekiel, God tells the Israelites He is their shepherd. With this picture we can also see Jesus reminding us He is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). Sheep were common in Old Testament Israel. The people often saw a shepherd and his flock moving across the hillside or down the roadway. The Old Testament pictures God as the perfect shepherd.

Jacob blessed his son, Joseph, and said, "My ancestors Abraham and Isaac served our God, and like a shepherd God has led me all my life" (Genesis 48:14-16). In the Book of Hebrews, Jesus is pictured as "The Great Shepherd of the sheep" (Hebrews 13:20-21). John said Jesus, as shepherd, will "lead them to springs of water that give life" (Revelation 7:17).

Shepherds took care of their sheep during the day and night. They fed their sheep, cared for them, and protected them. The first shepherd named in the Bible is Abel, the son of Adam (Genesis 4:2). The king of Israel was called the shepherd for the people (2 Samuel 5:2). God promised through Jeremiah to provide leaders who would lead with knowledge and understanding (Jeremiah 3:15).

Paul and Peter taught church leaders to feed the flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

We are all familiar with Psalm 23 that begins with, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Secure a copy of the little book, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, by Phillip Keller. Ask one of the class members to read it and select several illustrations from the book to share with the class.

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

The title and theme of today's lesson is "Hope of New Freedom." After many years in captivity, the Israelites are now given some reason to hope for freedom again. Encourage discussion of the concept of freedom—spiritual freedom as well as the freedom we have in our nation. Ask, "If we are free in Christ, are we free to do anything we want?" "In our nation, are we free to do as we please?" "What is the difference between controlled freedom and captivity?"

Consider using "pupil teachers" for this lesson. Two or three weeks ahead, ask one class member to teach one section and others for the other two sections. After their presentation, guide the discussion and answer any questions.

STEP TWO – WHY IS RESCUE REQUIRED? (EZEKIEL 34:2B-6)

Make the lesson come alive! Ask someone to sign the hymn, "The Ninety and Nine" or "Jesus, Like a Shepherd Lead Us." Encourage them to use ASL!

Encourage discussion of the article from Living Proof, in the pupil material. Ask, "Is this true of Deaf adults in America today?" "Do you think Deaf people in America have rejected Jesus?" "How can we help Deaf people in our community to turn from sin and trust Jesus as Savior?"

STEP THREE – WHAT DOES RESCUE INVOLVE? (34:11-16)

Ask someone ahead of time to discuss God Is Our Shepherd from "Dig Deeper" above, and other resources from the church library. Ask someone to sign Psalm 23.

Ask someone to sign verse 16. Note the last sentence, "I will tend the sheep with fairness." Encourage discussion of God as a fair judge. God is fair to those who obey Him. He is also fair to those who refuse to obey Him.

STEP FOUR – WHO PROVIDES RESCUE? (34:22-24)

Help your "pupil teacher" to see this as prophecy about Jesus coming as the Messiah (Savior) for all people. God led the rulers to let His people return to Israel. They were rescued from captivity. In the same way, Jesus provides "rescue" for all who trust Him as Savior.

STEP FIVE - CONCLUSION

Review the lesson using the Study Questions. (Help pupils answer these each week.)

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Does this lesson have meaning for them today?

Close with prayer for believers in the nations where Christians are persecuted. Pray for more Deaf believers to be called to go and tell them about Christ.

Hope of New Life

Background Study Outline

- 1. Renewal of God's Land (Ezekiel 36:1-15)**
- 2. Renewal of God's People (36:16–37:28)**
- 3. Defeat of God's Enemies (38:1–39:20)**
- 4. Demonstration of God's Holiness (39:1-29)**

Lesson Material

- 1. Possibility of New Life (Ezekiel 37:1-3,11)**
- 2. Process of New Life (37:12-14)**
- 3. Portrait of New Life (37:23-28)**

Bible Truth

God gives new life to all who come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ.

DIG DEEPER!

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 37:1)

The term *Holy Spirit* is not as common in the Old Testament as the terms the *Spirit of God* or *God's Spirit*. The first reference is in Genesis 1:2 where the Spirit is present in the creation. Pharaoh, in Egypt, recognized God's Spirit in Joseph (Genesis 41:38). The Spirit of God gave skills to the workers when they built the tabernacle (Exodus 31:3-5; 35:31).

The judges were led by the Spirit of the Lord (Judges 3:10, Othneal; 6:34, Gideon; and 13:25, Samson). The Spirit of the Lord led King Saul (1 Samuel 10:6, 10) and King David (1 Samuel 16:13). The Spirit led David's soldiers (1 Chronicles 12:18). The prophets were often led by God's Spirit: Elijah (1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:16); Zechariah (2 Chronicles 24:20); Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-3); Micah, (Micah 3:8). God assured the prophet, Haggai, His Spirit was with him, "so don't be afraid" (Haggai 2:5). God spoke through the prophet Zechariah to tell Zerubbabel he would succeed by the Lord's Spirit in rebuilding Jerusalem (Zechariah 4:6). God became angry when the people would not listen to the prophets who were sent by His Spirit (Zechariah 7:12). God spoke through the prophet Joel and said, "I will pour out my Spirit on all kinds of people" (Joel 2:28-29). Job said the Spirit of God created him (Job 33:4), and he spoke of the Spirit as the "breath of the Almighty that gives understanding" (Job 32:8).

David recognized the Spirit of God is everywhere (Psalm 139:7).

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

The title and theme of today's lesson is "Hope of New Life." This is the first of three lessons emphasizing the hope God gave His people after many years in captivity. Be alert to some of your class members who may be facing difficult times and may not have a sense of hope about their future. Let this lesson be an encouragement to them. If they let God's Spirit lead them, they, too, can have hope of a new life.

Note the three terms used in the three sections—possibility, process, and portrait (picture). God's Word assures us of the possibility of hope for a new life, then tells us the process (how to have that hope), and then gives us many examples of what that hope in Christ can be.

STEP TWO – POSSIBILITY OF NEW LIFE (EZEKIEL 37:1-3,11)

Ask someone ahead of time to sign verse 1 and then discuss (in ASL!) the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament from "Dig Deeper," above. Encourage each one to find and read all the verses in this column. It is an interesting study.

Make the lesson come alive! Ask two class members to do a skit with verses 1-3 and 11. One can be Ezekiel, the other God. Ask Ezekiel to sign very small, as if he is talking to himself. Ask God to sign very large, strong, and dramatic. Verse 11 should be like they are whining (O, woe is me!).

STEP THREE – PROCESS OF NEW LIFE (37:12-14)

Emphasize these verses are not talking about an actual resurrection but the rebuilding of the nation of Israel.

Note the reference to God's Spirit again in verse 14.

These verses do not lend themselves to continuing the drama, but have someone do this as a monologue, speaking forcefully as above, representing God's message to His people. Encourage the class to consider how to sign these statements from God. "If God did this in ASL, what would it look like?"

STEP FOUR – PORTRAIT OF NEW LIFE (37:23-28)

Emphasize this is also prophecy about the nation of Israel. Verse 24 is a Messianic prophecy. Jesus was a descendent of King David.

Continue the monologue. Encourage discussion of how to sign these verses.

STEP FIVE - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Does this lesson have meaning for them today? With all the symbolic language of prophecy, did they feel God speaking to them with words of hope?

Hope of New Worship

Background Study Outline

- 1. Restored Place of Worship (Ezekiel 40:1–42:20)**
- 2. Revered Person of Worship (43:1-12)**
- 3. Purified Practice of Worship (43:13–46:24)**
- 4. Renewing Effect of Worship (47:1-12)**
- 5. Extended Reach of Worship (47:13–48:35)**

Lesson Material

- 1. The Lord: Deserving of Worship (Ezekiel 43:1-5)**
- 2. Repentance: Doorway of Worship (43:6-9)**
- 3. Holy Living: Design of Worship (43:10-12)**

Bible Truth

Real worship leads us to live holy lives.

DIG DEEPER!

The Glory of God (Ezekiel 43:1)

The Hebrew word translated *glory* means “God’s divine power and majesty.” Moses asked God to show him His glory (Exodus 33:18-23). David said we can see God’s glory in His creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the skies announce what His hands have made” (Psalm 19:1).

When the temple was built, God’s glory came into the Holy of Holies (1 Kings 8:10). Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and he only went in once a year.

Sometimes God’s glory shines from someone in a special way, like when the angels told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:8-12). When one of the first deacons, Stephen, was killed, he looked up and saw the glory of the Lord in heaven (Acts 7:54-60).

The Bible tells us to “give God the glory.” This means to honor His glory. Jesus brought glory to God by finishing the work He came to do (John 17:1-5). In the book of Revelation, the living creatures around the throne gave glory to God (Revelation 4:9-11). We can also give glory to God. How? By living the way Christ wants us to live. Paul said, “If you eat or drink, or if you do anything, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Sin keeps us from God’s glory (Romans 3:23), but we can honor God’s glory by faith in Jesus Christ. When we work together for Christ, we glorify God (Romans 15:5-9). “That glory comes from the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:12).

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

The title and theme of today's lesson is "Hope of New Worship." Ask class members what this title means. Help them review the background for this chapter. Ezekiel was with the Jews who were taken captive to Babylon. Their temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. Now, Ezekiel told them about a new temple. Help them see this is prophecy about Jesus. When Jesus died, the temple curtain was torn in half, and now all people can go into God's holy place.

Make the lesson come alive! The three sections make this a good lesson to use pupil teachers. Ask three of your pupils to be ready to discuss one of the sections. The first section emphasizes how we need to worship God. The second section emphasizes the need to turn from sin (repent) and turn to God before we can worship Him. The third section emphasizes our need to continue to live a holy life as we worship God.

Ask someone ahead of time to discuss the glory of God from "Dig Deeper," above. Look in the church library for commentaries on Ezekiel 43:2 for more about this subject.

STEP TWO – THE LORD: DESERVING OF WORSHIP (EZEKIEL 43:1-5)

Prepare questions to use after your pupil teacher makes the presentation. Ask if Ezekiel really saw this new temple. (No, it was a vision.)

Encourage discussion of what worship means. Ask, "How do Deaf people like to worship different from hearing people (such as at state conferences or in a Deaf church)?"

Ask, "How important is our method of worship?" Emphasize how worship must be from a true attitude toward God.

STEP THREE – REPENTANCE: DOORWAY OF WORSHIP (43:6-9)

Discuss the meaning of repent. Use the illustration of making a U turn.

Emphasize the need to start worship by remembering how great God is, and then how much we need to turn away from any sin so we can worship Him.

STEP FOUR – HOLY LIVING: DESIGN OF WORSHIP (43:10-12)

Ask your pupil teacher to bring a flower, a leaf, or a picture showing the sun, moon, and stars. Use this to demonstrate how God has a plan for everything – even in how we worship Him.

Emphasize the word *design* in this section means "plan." We must plan our lives so we live as God wants us to live. Then we can worship Him better.

STEP FIVE - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Do they understand better what it means to worship God?

Unit 3

Radical Faith

Daniel 1:1–12:13

Throughout these lessons, keep the term, “Radical Faith,” on the board and refer to it with each lesson. The lesson titles are like a check list of how to live a radical faith: July 27, Draw the Line; August 3, Risk Everything for God; August 10, Tell It Like It Is; August 17, Never Give Up on Prayer; August 24, Live to Win in the End; and August 31, Be Ready for Tribulation.

As you start this new unit, review the book of Daniel using the introduction at the beginning of this Leader Guide, the one at the beginning of the pupil material, and other materials you can find in your church library. Ask one pupil to find all the information he/she can about the man, Daniel. Use the Bible Gateway program and books in the church library. Have that pupil report on this on July 27.

Use a Bible map to show Babylon and Jerusalem for July 27; Babylon and the Plain of Dura for August 3; Jerusalem, Media, and Persia for August 10; and Jerusalem for August 31.

As you prepare to teach, read through the Scripture text several times and from different translations. Use the Bible Gateway program (<http://www.biblegateway.com>) to look up verses, find commentary information, and to read a passage in several other translations.

Look for special verses that can be applied to your Bible class. Look for opportunities to make assignments for class members to prepare and present to the class. Review the suggestions for varying your teaching methods, in “Teacher Helps,” above.

About July 13, encourage your class to begin reading the Book of Daniel. It only has twelve chapters. They may want to go online and use the Bible Gateway program to read from different translations or to find commentaries about Daniel.

Draw the Line

Background Study Outline

- 1. Disasters Happen
(Daniel 1:1-2)**
- 2. Temptations Come
(1:3-7)**
- 3. Discipline Works
(1:8-16)**
- 4. God-Given Wisdom
Matters (1:17-21)**

Lesson Material

- 1. Evaluate What
Others Demand
(Daniel 1:3-5)**
- 2. Act Boldly on
Principle (1:8-10)**
- 3. Be Prepared for
Tests (1:12-15)**
- 4. Trust God for Wis-
dom (1:17-19)**

Bible Truth

God is pleased when His people decide to live strong Christian lives.

DIG DEEPER!

King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1:3)

Nebuchadnezzar (also spelled Nebuchadrezzar) was king of the Babylonian Empire from 605 to 562 B.C. He is mentioned often in the writings of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. He captured Jerusalem in 597 B.C. and carried King Jehoiachin and many men to Babylon (2 Kings 24:10-17). He raided Jerusalem again in 587 B.C. and carried others to Babylon (Jeremiah 39:1-3). The prophets Ezekiel and Daniel were in the groups taken to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was born about 635-630 B.C. He began as a very successful military leader under his father, King Nabopolassar who freed Babylon from dependence on Assyria. He became king in 605 B.C., when his father died. By 570 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt. He led Babylon to its greatest power. He constructed many great buildings in the capital city and built a wall around it to prevent others from capturing the city. He built a seaport on the Persian Gulf and several canals to help with transportation. Nebuchadnezzar was cruel to the people of the nations he conquered. Some documents tell how the exiles were forced to walk without resting and often without clothing. He murdered many of the captives. Daniel served under King Nebuchadnezzar and at times faced punishment or death for his refusal to disobey God. After God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar through the writing on the wall, he was more lenient to the Jewish captives. He reigned forty-three years and died at the age of about eighty-four.

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

Since you are starting the study of a new book, you may want to use the lecture method for this study.

Ask your pupils to explain the meaning of “Radical Faith,” the theme of this unit from the Book of Daniel. How will they sign radical? Call attention to the definition in the Word List on pages 109-110 (to have very strong feelings about something).

The title and theme of today’s lesson is “Draw the Line.” Encourage discussion of what this means in terms of what a Christian should do and should not do.

Make the lesson come alive! Ask someone ahead of time to discuss King Nebuchadnezzar from “Dig Deeper,” above. Tell more about the captivity. Use a Bible map to show the relation between Babylon and Jerusalem. It was about five hundred miles distance, but the route they traveled was about nine hundred miles. All of this took place before the time Daniel was in Babylon.

You may want to use the ASL Bible to present the Scriptures in these lessons from Daniel. See a description of this in “Teacher Helps.”

STEP TWO – EVALUATE WHAT OTHERS DEMAND (DANIEL 1:3-5)

Ask if class members remember the joke about, “The devil made me do it.” It was a way of saying, “I’m not responsible for my actions.” Ask, “Is this true?” Encourage discussion of pressures today leading Christians to do things against God’s will.

STEP THREE – ACT BOLDLY ON PRINCIPLE (1:8-10)

Discuss the meaning of principle as used in this section. (See the definition in the “Word List:” A rule relating to right behavior.)

Emphasize the Bible is the basis for the principles we choose to follow as Christians.

STEP FOUR – BE PREPARED FOR TESTS (1:12-15)

Ask someone to sign these verses.

Encourage discussion of ways a Christian can show he passes the “test” (reputation, reward at work for good attitude, appreciation for people he helps).

STEP FIVE - TRUST GOD FOR WISDOM (1:17-19)

Ask, “Do you ever ask God for wisdom when you pray?” Most of us have a lot of knowledge, but we need God’s wisdom to know how to use our knowledge.

STEP SIX - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Did it help them to know how and when to “draw the line” and show they have “radical faith”?

Risk Everything for God

Background Study Outline

- 1. Confronting Impossible Demands (Daniel 2:1-16)**
- 2. Turning to God for Help (2:17-49)**
- 3. Refusing to Compromise Devotion (3:1-23)**
- 4. Demonstrating Extreme Faith (3:24-30)**

Lesson Material

- 1. Decide to Serve Only God (Daniel 3:1,8-12)**
- 2. Resist All Pressure to Falter (3:15b-18)**
- 3. Trust in God's Presence and Power (3:24-25,28)**

Bible Truth

God is with His people in difficult times and uses their faithfulness to glorify His name.

DIG DEEPER!

Babylonian Gods (Daniel 3:12)

Like the Egyptians and the Canaanites, the Babylonians had many gods. Many of them were brought in when the Babylonian army defeated other nations.

Also, like the other nations' gods, these were related to the desires and fears of the different groups represented in Babylon. They had gods of the city and gods of the harvest. They had gods for worshiping water, sand, thunder, and lightning. When a new god was added, its name was changed or it was connected with another god.

With so many gods, only a few were truly important. People who study history have identified many of these gods. Some of the more important ones were:

Marduk (also known as Bel) was the national god of the Babylonians. He was the most powerful god and probably the most important and most widely worshiped. He was called the god of magic and creation.

Anshar was the god of heaven and Kishar the god of earth. But Anu was the god of the highest heaven. Ashur was the god of the Assyrians, brought into Babylon.

Enki was the god of wisdom, while Ishtar was the goddess of love and sex, and Enurta was the god of war.

Enli was the god of weather and storms and Shamash was the god of the sun and of justice.

Sometimes the gods were merged and given a different name. Names and duties also changed from one period of time to another.

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

This is a good lesson to use the “group study” method. Assign one group to study each of the three topics.

Use a Bible map to show Babylon and the Plain of Dura, to show where the giant statue was placed.

The title and theme of today’s lesson is “Risk Everything for God.” We have many believers today who risk death because they worship God.

Make the lesson come alive! Ask someone to sign two or three verses of the hymn “Trust and Obey.” This is the theme of today’s lesson.

STEP TWO – DECIDE TO SERVE ONLY GOD (DANIEL 3:1,8-12)

Before the group reports, use the ASL Bible to present verses 1-12. Comment on verses 2-7. This will help your class get the whole story.

Discuss the setting, and then have someone prepared to discuss Babylonian gods from “Dig Deeper,” above, and other resources from the church library. The verses are not clear if this was a statue of the king or a tower. If it was a tower it would be shaped much like our Washington Monument.

Encourage discussion of why some of the Babylonians wanted to see the Jews punished. Was it jealousy?

Find and share stories of present-day believers in other countries who are killed because of their faith. You may find some information at <http://www.IMB.org> and other mission sites.

STEP THREE – RESIST ALL PRESSURE TO FALTER (3:15B-18)

Before the group report, use the ASL Bible to present verses 13-23. Emphasize how the king did not expect them to refuse.

Encourage discussion of this story with Acts 5:12-42. Then look at 1 Peter 2:13-14. Ask, “How can we know when to obey a law and when to stand for Christ?”

STEP FOUR – TRUST IN GOD’S PRESENCE AND POWER (3:24-25,28)

Before the group report, use the ASL Bible to present verses 19-30.

Ask someone ahead of time to study what commentaries say about the “fourth man” in verse 25. You will find several interpretations of this.

Emphasize the faith of these men and how God rewarded their faith in a way that brought honor to Him.

STEP FIVE - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Look at the three section headings again. Do your pupils feel God leading them to risk anything for Him?

Tell It Like It Is

Background Study Outline

- 1. Troublesome Thoughts (Daniel 4:1-27)**
- 2. Humbling Afflictions (4:28-37)**
- 3. Disturbing Interruptions (5:1-12)**
- 4. Fortright Warnings (5:13-31)**

Lesson Material

- 1. Be Certain: Sin Corrupts (Daniel 5:1-4)**
- 2. Be Warned: God Confronts (5:5-6)**
- 3. Be Humble: All Need to Know (5:16-17)**
- 4. Be Honest: Judgment Comes (5:23c-28)**

Bible Truth

All people are responsible for their sins. God warns us about His judgment.

DIG DEEPER!

The Temple Cups (Daniel 5:2)

When Nebuchadnezzar captured the Jewish people and carried them to Babylon, he also took many things from the temple. The destruction of the temple is reported in both 1 Chronicles and 1 Kings.

“Nebuchadnezzar carried away to Babylon all the things from the Temple of God, both large and small, and all the treasures from the Temple of the Lord and from the king and his officers. Nebuchadnezzar and his army set fire to God’s Temple and broke down Jerusalem’s wall and burned all the palaces. They took or destroyed every valuable thing in Jerusalem” (2 Chronicles 36:18-19).

“The Babylonians broke up the bronze pillars, the bronze stands, and the large bronze bowl, which was called the Sea, in the Temple of the Lord. Then they carried the bronze to Babylon. They also took the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, dishes, and all the bronze objects used to serve in the Temple. The commander of the king’s special guards took away the pans for carrying hot coals, the bowls, and everything made of pure gold or silver” (2 Kings 25:13-15).

Nebuchadnezzar probably put all the valuable things on display to show his power over Jerusalem. In today’s lesson, King Belshazzar asked for the golden cups from the temple. These were dedicated to the worship of God. He used them to show his lack of respect for God, and God punished him. When the Jews returned to Jerusalem, they took with them over 5,000 of these vessels (Ezra 1:5-11).

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

The title and theme of today's lesson is "Tell It Like It Is." Discuss the meaning of this expression and ask the class to think of the best way to sign it. (Tell the truth.)

Use the ASL Bible to present all of chapter 5.

STEP TWO – BE CERTAIN: SIN CORRUPTS (DANIEL 5:1-4)

Ask someone ahead of time to discuss the temple cups from "Dig Deeper," above, and other resources from the church library.

Ask, "What was the sin Belshazzar did in these verses?" (He used the cups from God's temple to show honor to his gods. This was an insult to God.)

Encourage discussion of how we can abuse things dedicated to God, such as neglecting His church by not doing good maintenance or by not attending the worship services in His house.

STEP THREE – BE WARNED: GOD CONFRONTS (5:5-6)

Ask if class members have seen the expression, "I have seen the handwriting on the wall." Discuss how this means they have been warned or they know what to expect. Some people might say they have seen the handwriting on the wall when their employer begins to lay off workers because of the economy.

Make the lesson come alive! Give each pupil a blank sheet of paper. Ask them to write what they think God might write on the wall about the future of America. For the Babylonian king, the message was based on his rejection of God. What words might God use to warn our nation? Encourage discussion of how we have the Bible to warn us. We do not need a message written on the wall. God's Word is our guide.

STEP FOUR – BE HUMBLE: ALL NEED TO KNOW (5:16-17)

Emphasize how Daniel showed humility when he refused to be paid for serving God. He knew the king could kill him if he wanted to, but Daniel was willing to tell the king about his sin.

STEP FIVE - BE HONEST: JUDGMENT COMES (5:23C-28)

Ask someone to sign verses 23 and 24. This is the sin of Belshazzar.

With verse 28, use a Bible map to show Jerusalem, Babylon, Media, and Persia.

STEP SIX - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Ask them to look at the questions in "What About You?"

Close by looking at "Applying the Lesson."

Never Give Up on Prayer

Background Study Outline

- 1. Character Built on Spiritual Discipline (Daniel 6:1-10)**
- 2. Courage in Dangerous Situations (6:11-18)**
- 3. Confidence in God's Help (6:19-24)**
- 4. Confession of God's Awesomeness (6:25-28)**

Lesson Material

- 1. When Big Challenges Arise (Daniel 6:3-5)**
- 2. When Faith and Culture Clash (6:6-7, 10)**
- 3. When Personal Danger Looms (6:16-18)**
- 4. When God's Help Is All That Will Do (6:19-23)**

Bible Truth

God's people grow in faith when they have a strong prayer life.

DIG DEEPER!

King Darius of Persia (Daniel 6:6)

After Belshazzar died, Darius became king of Persia. Daniel 5:31 identifies Darius as a Mede. The Medes were conquered by an earlier Persian king, Cyrus. Darius made Daniel his assistant. By this time, the Persian Empire was very large, so Darius set up 120 princes to help govern (6:1). Daniel was one of these princes, but the king planned to put him in charge over all the others.

We do not know much about this king. He reigned from 521-486 B.C., but only one year of his reign is discussed in Daniel (9:1; 11:1). In other documents Darius is identified as Astyages. He is known in history as one who governed well and had many large building projects and roads. He had a postal delivery system similar to our pony express, with riders posted on the "royal road" so no one had to ride more than a day. He built a canal from the Nile River to the Red Sea. He died in 486 B.C. at the age of 64. His son, Darius II, followed him.

Darius gave orders for the work in Jerusalem to be continued (Ezra 4:4-5, 24). He ordered his princes to help them. The Jews in Babylon and in Jerusalem had peace and more freedom than they had under the Babylonian kings.

Daniel 6:8 refers to the law of the Medes and the Persians which cannot be changed. (See also Esther 1:19; 8:8.) This probably does not mean the laws can never be changed, but rather when the king made a law one day, he couldn't change his mind and do something else the next day.

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

The title and theme of today's lesson is "Never Give Up on Prayer." Call attention to Daniel's daily prayer time. He didn't wait until he was in the lion's den to start praying.

Make the lesson come alive! Look for articles in missions magazines and online about today's believers being persecuted and killed. Use the headlines from these stories to show how this lesson has meaning today.

Use the ASL Bible to present all of Daniel 6. Take a few minutes to see if anyone had a question about any sign used in this DVD. Let them use their Bibles to look up verses listed in the discussions below.

STEP TWO – WHEN BIG CHALLENGES ARISE (DANIEL 6:3-5)

Ask someone ahead of time to discuss King Darius of Persia from "Dig Deeper," above. Note that while he was kind to the Jews and respected Daniel's faith, his pride caused Daniel to be put into the den of lions.

Ask the class to look in these verses and identify the sin. (Jealousy was the reason the others wanted to get Daniel removed from his position.)

STEP THREE – WHEN FAITH AND CULTURE CLASH (6:6-7,10)

Review verses 8-9 to help set the background for verse 10.

Ask the class to identify the sin reported in these verses. (The sin of jealousy by the other princes is joined by the sin of pride by the king.)

From verse 10, we understand Daniel knew what the new law said, but he did not stop his worship of God and did not try to do it in secret. (The window was open.)

STEP FOUR – WHEN PERSONAL DANGER LOOMS (6:16-18)

Ask class members to find the result of the king's sin. (In verse 16, Daniel was put into the lion's den.)

Ask class members to identify the effect of the sin of King Darius. (In verse 18, he did not eat or have entertainment, and he could not sleep.)

STEP FIVE - WHEN GOD'S HELP IS ALL THAT WILL DO (6:19-23)

Ask class members to identify the result of Daniel's prayers (verse 22).

Ask class members if they think Darius was glad his pride did not cost Daniel his life? (Ask someone to sign verses 24-28.)

STEP SIX - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Use "What About You?" and "Applying the Lesson" for some practical applications of this lesson.

Live to Win in the End

Background Study Outline

1. **Human Kingdoms Rise and Fall (Daniel 7:1-8)**
2. **God's Kingdom Endures Forever (7:9-28)**
3. **God's People Face a Time of Trouble (8:1-14)**
4. **God Shatters Evil in the End (8:15-27)**

Lesson Material

1. **Realize Evil Will Persist (Daniel 7:7-8)**
2. **Remember God Is the Supreme Judge (7:9-12)**
3. **Serve Confidently Under Christ's Lordship (7:13-14)**
4. **Live Securely in the Guarantee of Victory (7:15-18)**

Bible Truth

God has shown He is the everlasting ruler, and through His Son (the Messiah), He will give everlasting victory to His people.

DIG DEEPER!

Daniel's Visions (Daniel 7:7)

The Book of Daniel includes five visions (Chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, and 10-12). They took place during about seventy years. Bible scholars believe these visions point to important future events in the life of the Jews.

In chapter 2, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, and Daniel interpreted it. Chapter 7 is Daniel's dream. The other three are Daniel's visions.

It is not possible to find exact dates, but Bible scholars have agreed on possible dates for the events prophesied in these visions.

Chapter 2, during the second year of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar, was about 603 B.C. Daniel explained it referred to four kingdoms. Bible scholars believe these were the Chaldean Empire (605-539 B.C.), the Medean and Persian Empire (539-336 B.C.), Macedonia Greece (336-133 B.C.), and the Roman Empire (133 B.C. to A.D. 70).

Chapter 7 is Daniel's dream during the first year of King Belshazzar. He describes the four kingdoms in more detail.

Chapter 8 is a vision Daniel had during the third year of King Belshazzar. It refers to Alexander and Antiochus.

In chapter 9, the angel Gabriel appears to Daniel, and then the "Son of Man" appears. It is a messianic prophecy.

In chapters 10-12, the vision reveals more about history and the coming Messiah.

All of these were given to encourage God's people during difficult times.

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

The title and theme of today's lesson is "Live to Win in the End." Ask what this means to the pupils. (The faithful Christian will have his reward in heaven, if not before.) This is another lesson where you can use the "Scripture search" method.

STEP TWO – REALIZE EVIL WILL PERSIST (DANIEL 7:7-8)

Use the ASL Bible to present Daniel 7:1-8. Discuss any signs the class did not understand.

Make the lesson come alive! Ask someone who is interested in history to discuss Daniel's visions from "Dig Deeper," above, and other resources from the church library. If the pupil searches online, be sure the commentaries are accurate. Remember that these interpretations are from men who study the Bible, but they are not the Bible.

STEP THREE – REMEMBER GOD IS THE SUPREME JUDGE (7:9-12)

Use the ASL Bible to present Daniel 7:9-12. Discuss any signs the class did not understand. Especially note how the phrase "the Eternal One" (or "Ancient of Days") is signed, and discuss this concept.

Ask class members to find the "symbols" used in these verses. Write these on the board (verse 9—thrones, white clothes, white hair like wool, fire, wheels; verse 10—river of fire, angels, courtroom, books to be opened; verse 11—the little horn, the fourth animal, burning fire; verse 12—other animals). These are things Bible scholars study to understand what the prophecy means.

STEP FOUR – SERVE CONFIDENTLY UNDER CHRIST'S LORDSHIP (7:13-14)

Use the ASL Bible to present Daniel 7:13-14. Discuss any signs the class did not understand.

Ask, "Do you agree the person described in these verses is Jesus Christ?"

STEP FIVE - LIVE SECURELY IN THE GUARANTEE OF VICTORY (7:15-18)

Use the ASL Bible to present Daniel 7:15-28. (The lesson stops at verse 18, but the rest of the chapter helps understand the vision.) Discuss any signs the class did not understand.

Verses 15-28 give the interpretation of the vision. Bible scholars have decided what these verses refer to in our history.

STEP SIX - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. Use the questions in "What About You" to encourage discussion.

Be Ready for Tribulation

Background Study Outline

- 1. Praying About Desolation (Daniel 9:1-27)**
- 2. Seeing Cosmic Conflict (10:1–11:35)**
- 3. Foreseeing Final Distress (11:36–12:3)**
- 4. Going On with Life (12:4-13)**

Lesson Material

- 1. Pray for Further Understanding (Daniel 9:20-23)**
- 2. Prepare for Difficult Times (9:24-27)**
- 3. Persist in Living for God (12:9-13)**

Bible Truth

God will use times of great trouble to renew His people and prepare us for eternal life.

DIG DEEPER!

The Angel, Gabriel (Daniel 9:21)

Gabriel is one of only two angels named in the Bible. The other is Michael (Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7).

Daniel had a vision and Gabriel explained it (Daniel 8:16). This time, he is identified only as Gabriel, not the angel Gabriel. Gabriel came again to Daniel to explain the vision in our lesson for today.

Later, Daniel had another vision. In this vision, Daniel said a man talked with him and touched him, and Daniel fell on his knees. The man said, “Daniel, God loves you very much. Think carefully about the words I will speak to you, and stand up, because I have been sent to you” (Daniel 10:9-11). Again, this man is not identified as Gabriel, but it is possible he was the one because he is the one in the other chapters who told Daniel what God wanted him to know.

In other verses, Gabriel is not named, but is identified as the “angel of the Lord.” Since this title is used with his name in other places, many Bible scholars feel this is also Gabriel.

Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, received a message from “the angel of the Lord” (Luke 1:11-19). This may have been Gabriel because a few verses later, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her she would become the mother of the Messiah (Luke 1:26-38).

First Thessalonians 4:16 tells of the archangel who will blow the trumpet at the time of the resurrection. Some people think this is Gabriel, others believe it is Michael.

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

The title and theme of today's lesson is "Be Ready for Tribulation." Encourage discussion of the term *tribulation*. It can refer to very difficult times or to the period of time described in the Book of Revelation as The Great Tribulation. In this lesson, it refers to tribulation during Daniel's life time. With a lot of information to conclude Daniel and introduce the next quarter, you may want to use the "lecture" method.

Use the ASL Bible to present Daniel 9 and 12. This will give the background for the verses in today's lesson.

STEP TWO – PRAY FOR FURTHER UNDERSTANDING (DANIEL 9:20-23)

Note these verses tell about Daniel's experience under Darius, the first King of Persia, after Persia defeated Babylon. The Jews were still in captivity. Darius is the one who made plans for them to return to Jerusalem.

Ask the class to look at Daniel 9:3-19. This is Daniel's prayer. Ask them to find words to show how Daniel confessed the sins of God's people. (Verse 10, not obeyed; verse 11, turned away; verse 13, did not stop sinning; did not pay attention to God's truth.) Then look for what God did to try to turn the people back to Him. (Verse 10, teachings of the prophets; verse 11, curses and punishment; verse 12, a great disaster.)

Make the lesson come alive! While Daniel was praying, the angel Gabriel came to him again. Ask someone ahead of time to discuss the angel Gabriel from "Dig Deeper," above, and other resources from the church library. Use the ASL Bible, or ask someone to sign Daniel 10:4-6. This is a description of Gabriel.

STEP THREE – PREPARE FOR DIFFICULT TIMES (9:24-27)

Emphasize the importance of being prepared for difficult times, rather than trying to interpret all the numbers. Encourage discussion of how we need to be spiritually prepared today for possible persecution or other difficult times. How do we become prepared? (through study of God's Word, prayer, and fellowship with God's people).

STEP FOUR – PERSIST IN LIVING FOR GOD (12:9-13)

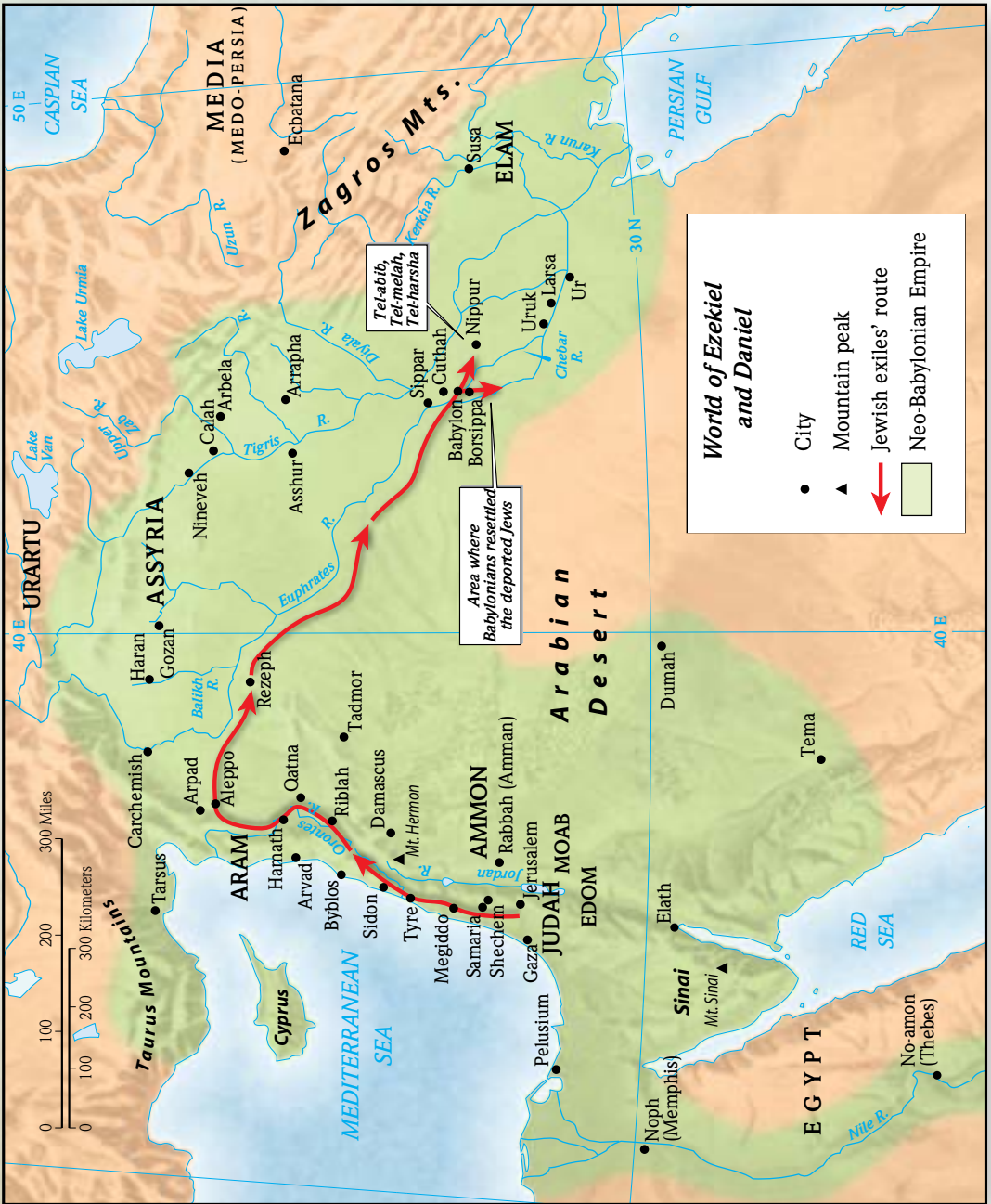
Ask someone to sign verse 13. After all the visions Daniel saw, the angel told him at the end to go on being faithful until the end. Then he would have rest and peace.

STEP FIVE - CONCLUSION

So What? Ask class members what they have learned. What have they learned from this study of Ezekiel and Daniel?

Encourage your class to start reading the book of Hebrews. That will be our study next quarter.

World of Ezekiel and Daniel



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