

It was 600 years before the promised Messiah would come. Good King Josiah had died about four years previously. Daniel remembered him although he was just a child when he died. Now King Jehoiakim was reigning in Jerusalem, but he was nothing like his father, King Josiah. Jehoiakim turned his back on the God of Israel and wouldn't listen to the warnings of Jeremiah the Prophet.

Daniel, as a child and teenager, growing up in the royal house of Judah in Jerusalem, would have known Jeremiah the Prophet's warnings about the impending invasion of the Babylonians. Daniel would have heard the judgment of God as spoken by Jeremiah concerning the wickedness and idolatry of the Jewish people. As Daniel witnessed the besieging of Jerusalem, the articles of the Temple being taken, and himself taken captive by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, he would remember the words of Jeremiah. He would know that the words that Jeremiah spoke were the true words of the God of Israel.

As Daniel traveled from Jerusalem to Babylon as a captive, what would his thoughts be? What fears would he have? Did he know what had happened to his own family?

The entire history of the man, Daniel, is an incredible story of faith, courage, and obedience to his God. He was just a youth when he was taken captive along with several other "Israelites from the royal family and nobil-

ity, young men without any physical defect—well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace." From 605 B.C. until at least 535 B.C., a period of 70 years, Daniel would remain and finally die in captivity.

The Bible gives us no indication that Daniel ever returned to Jerusalem. Instead he remained as one of the "wise men" in the service of King Nebuchadnezzar and his successor, King Belshazzar. As the writing on the wall predicted, the Babylonian king was slain and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom. So the Babylonians were conquered by the Medes and Persians, but Daniel remained and served Darius and then Cyrus the Persian.

Example after example is given in the book of Daniel of Daniel's faith and courage. He was just a young man when he was taken captive. Upon being taken to the Babylonian palace to learn the ways of his captors, Daniel immediately resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine and requested only vegetables. The guard agreed to put Daniel and his three companions to a ten-day test. At the end of the test, it was found that "they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food."

Everyone remembers the story of Daniel and the Lions' Den. Daniel continued to pray to the God of Israel although King Darius had signed a law that made this illegal. Since this oc-

curred around 537 B. C., Daniel would have been an old man, at least 80 years old, when he was thrown into the Lions' Den. But Daniel would have seen again, as had happened several times in his life, that his faith in God not only resulted in his own salvation, but also in God's glory being seen by those in power. As King Darius wrote after Daniel was saved from the lions: "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel."

During the years between becoming a captive at the hands of the Babylonians and the night spent in the Lion's Den, Daniel was given many prophecies concerning the distant future and the latter days. This included the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great image that signified the sequence of several world empires. In the end, the image that represented the world empires was destroyed by a small stone that became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

Many of these prophecies were terrifying to Daniel. The visions that he saw included strange, powerful beasts; horrendous, deadly wars between the worldly powers; and the final destruction of those powers. However, through all these visions and troublesome prophecies, Daniel was comforted and assured by the angel of God: "Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. 'Do not be afraid, O man highly esteemed,' he said. 'Peace! Be strong now; be strong.' When he

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## *Portrait of a Saint* Daniel - A Profile in Faith and Courage (*Continued*)

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spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, 'Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength.'" (Daniel 10:18-19)

Although the prophecies were terrifying, God gave Daniel some amazing prophetic promises. These promises are assurances to us also that God is in control and is working out his plan and purpose with his people and the earth that he created. Consider these promises:

"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring

them to an end, but it will itself endure forever." (Daniel 2:44)

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12:1-4

"He replied, 'Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand....As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.'" Daniel 12:9-13

(Additional readings to consider include II Chronicles chapters 35 and 36, Jeremiah chapters 25 and 29, and Daniel chapters 10 and 12.)

## *Bible Principles*

### **He Comes!** (*Continued*)

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Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

Revelation 11:15: The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Psalms 2:4-8: The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

"I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."

I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son;

today I have become your Father. Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

When we read these verses it becomes clear that the hope of a disciple of Jesus is not going to heaven, but waiting for his return and the resurrection from the dead. What is

promised is a heavenly kingdom—that is a kingdom on the earth wherein dwells righteousness. This is a kingdom from or of heaven, not in heaven. Remember the Lord's prayer that is found in Matthew 6:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done  
*on earth* as it is in heaven.

Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he was with his disciples near the vicinity of Bethany on the Mount of Olives when he was taken up into heaven. In fact, Luke writes in the book of Acts: "he was taken up before their very eyes and a cloud hid him from their sight."

Luke goes on to write that as the disciples were "looking intently" into the sky as he was going, they were given a promise by two men dressed in white: "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)

This verse is just one place in the New Testament that promises that Jesus will return to the earth in the same way that he was taken up into heaven. His return will be visible, real and with great power. Jesus himself made the promise to his disciples when he spoke to them concerning the latter days: "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory." (Matthew 24:30) He made the promise again in the very last verses of the book of Revelation: "Yes, I am coming soon."

There is no doubt that the New Testament teaches and the First Century disciples expected Jesus

to return to the earth. The question is this: if the good have gone to heaven and the wicked to their punishment when they died, what is the purpose of Jesus returning to the earth? Here are three things that the Bible teaches concerning the purpose of Jesus in returning to the earth:

**He will raise the dead who belong to him:**

1 Thessalonians 4:15-16: According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Corinthians 15:20-24: But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

John 6:40: For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

**He will judge the world in righteousness:**

Acts 17:31: For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

Matthew 25:31-33: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

John 5:28-30: "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

**He will be king over the earth and rule in righteousness:**

Luke 1:31-33: You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The

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## *What is Courage?*

The word “courage” comes from the Latin word “cor” which means “heart”. Courage according to the dictionary means “the ability to face danger or pain without fear” or “the confidence to act according to one's beliefs”. However, “courage” is one of those words best understood through example rather than definition:

- Courage is Daniel and his three companions refusing the food that their captors insisted they eat and requesting vegetables instead. (Daniel 1)
- Courage is Daniel going to the King that had taken him

captive and announcing that he could interpret the King's dream. (Daniel 2)

- Courage is Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refusing to bow down to the idol made by King Nebuchadnezzar. (Daniel 3)
- Courage is Daniel telling King Belshazzar the true meaning of the handwriting on the wall. (Daniel 5)
- Courage is Daniel ignoring King Darius' command by continuing to pray openly to the God of Israel three times a day. (Daniel 6)

- Courage is Daniel praying to the LORD, the great and awesome God, for mercy and forgiveness for his people. (Daniel 8)
- Courage is Daniel, although overwhelmed by the terrifying visions given to him by God, continuing in faith and obedience to his God. (Daniel 10 and 11)
- Courage is Daniel believing the promise of God that “You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance”. Daniel 12

*Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.*

Ambrose Redmoon

*Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point.*

C.S. Lewis

## *Thoughts on the Daily Readings (Continued)*

*(Continued from page 5)*

things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”

**1 John 3:21-24** “Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to be-

lieve in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.”

**Revelation 21:22-27** “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God

gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

The scheduled Daily Bible Readings in the Old Testament for the months of October through December include many prophetic and historical books during the period of time when the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive by the Babylonians until the captivity ends and the temple and the city in Jerusalem are rebuilt.

The prophetic books contain many prophecies not only of the time when the prophets were living but also of the "latter days".

The New Testament readings include letters written by several of the Apostles to the young Christian churches and also the final prophetic book of the Bible: the Book of Revelations.

While reading the Bible, it is many times helpful to mediate or focus on certain verses, but always in their context. Here are some suggested "focus" verses from this quarter's readings (all quotes from the New International Version of the Bible):

**2 Chronicles 6:17-21** And now, O LORD, God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David come true. "But will God really dwell on earth with men? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, O LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence. May your eyes be open toward this temple day and night,

this place of which you said you would put your Name there. May you hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. Hear the supplications of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place; and when you hear, forgive."

**Jeremiah 2:11-13** "Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their Glory for worthless idols. Be appalled at this, O heavens, and shudder with great horror," declares the LORD. "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

**Psalms 135:13-18** "Your name, O LORD, endures forever, your renown, O LORD, through all generations. For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants. The idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them."

**Ezekiel 11:17-21** "Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.' "They will return to it

and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God."

**Zechariah 14:9** "The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.

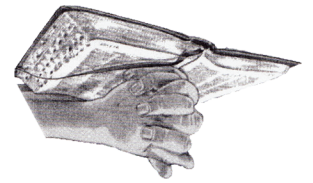
Habakkuk 2:14 "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

**Daniel 2:44** "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."

**Psalms 145:10-13** "All you have made will praise you, O LORD; your saints will extol you. They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made."

**1 Peter 4:7-8** "The end of all  
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## Daily Bible Readings for October, November, December

### *Read the Entire Bible in One Year*

| Day | October        |                 | November     |                | December      |                |
|-----|----------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
|     | Old Test       | New Test/Psa    | Old Test     | New Test/Psa   | Old Test      | New Test/Psa   |
| 1   | Hosea 11,12    | Titus 1         | Jerm 19-21   | James 3        | Eze 12-14     | Psalm 139      |
| 2   | Hosea 13,14    | Titus 2         | Jerm 22,23   | James 4        | Eze 15, 16    | Rev 1          |
| 3   | II Chron 1,2   | Titus 3         | Jerm 24-26   | James 5        | Eze 17, 18    | Rev 2          |
| 4   | II Chron 3,4   | Philemon        | Jerm 27-29   | I Peter 1      | Eze 19,20     | Rev 3          |
| 5   | II Chron 5,6   | Psalm 110, 111  | Jerm 30, 31  | I Peter 2      | Eze 21, 22    | Rev 4          |
| 6   | II Chron 7, 8  | Psalm 112, 113  | Jerm 32, 33  | I Peter 3      | Eze 23, 24    | Rev 5          |
| 7   | II Chron 9,10  | Hebrews 1       | Jerm 34-36   | I Peter 4      | Eze 25, 26    | Psalm 140      |
| 8   | II Chron 11,12 | Hebrews 2       | Jerm 37,38   | I Peter 5      | Eze 27, 28    | Psalm 141      |
| 9   | II Chron 13,14 | Hebrews 3       | Jerm 39-41   | Psalm 120, 121 | Eze 29-31     | Rev 6          |
| 10  | II Chron 15,16 | Psalm 114, 115  | Jerm 42,43   | Psalm 122, 123 | Eze 32, 33    | Psalm 142- 143 |
| 11  | II Chron 17,18 | Hebrews 4       | Jerm 44-46   | Psalm 124, 125 | Eze 34, 35    | Rev 7          |
| 12  | II Chron 19,20 | Hebrews 5       | Jerm 47,48   | II Peter I     | Eze 36, 37    | Rev 8          |
| 13  | II Chron 21,22 | Psalm 116, 117  | Jerm 49,50   | II Peter 2     | Eze 38, 39    | Rev 9          |
| 14  | II Chron 23,24 | Hebrews 6       | Jerm 51,52   | II Peter 3     | Eze 40, 41    | Psalm 144      |
| 15  | II Chron 25,26 | Hebrews 7       | Ezr 1, 2, 3  | Psalm 126, 127 | Eze 42-44     | Rev 10         |
| 16  | II Chron 27,28 | Hebrews 8       | Ezr 4, 5, 6  | Psalm 128, 129 | Eze 45, 46    | Rev 11         |
| 17  | II Chron 29,30 | Psalm 118       | Ezr 7, 8, 9  | I John 1       | Eze 47, 48    | Psalm 145      |
| 18  | II Chron 31,32 | Hebrews 9       | Ezr 10 Neh 1 | I John 2       | Dan 1,2       | Rev 12         |
| 19  | II Chron 33,34 | Hebrews 10      | Neh 2,3,4    | I John 3       | Dan 3,4,5     | Rev 13         |
| 20  | II Chron 35,36 | Psa 119: 1-24   | Neh 5,6, 7   | I John 4       | Dan 6,7,8     | Rev 14         |
| 21  | Lam 1,2        | Hebrews 11      | Neh 8,9      | I John 5       | Dan 9,10      | Psalm 146      |
| 22  | Lam 3,4,5      | Hebrews 12      | Neh 10,11    | Psalm 130, 131 | Dan 11,12     | Rev 15         |
| 23  | Jerm 1,2       | Hebrews 13      | Neh 12,13    | Psalm 132, 133 | Habakkuk 1-3  | Rev 16         |
| 24  | Jerm 3,4       | Psa 119: 25-48  | Esth 1,2,3   | Psalm 134, 135 | Zephaniah 1-3 | Psalm 147      |
| 25  | Jerm 5,6       | Psa 119: 49-74  | Esth 4, 5, 6 | II John        | Haggai 1, 2   | Rev 17         |
| 26  | Jerm 7,8       | Psa 119: 75-96  | Esth 7-10    | III John       | Zechariah 1-3 | Rev 18         |
| 27  | Jerm 9,10      | Ps 119: 97- 120 | Eze 1, 2, 3  | Psalm 136      | Zechariah 4-6 | Rev 19         |
| 28  | Jerm 11, 12    | Ps 119: 121-144 | Eze 4, 5, 6  | Psalm 137      | Zechariah 7-9 | Psalm 148      |
| 29  | Jerm 13, 14    | Ps 119: 145-176 | Eze 7,8,9    | Psalm 138      | Zechar 10-12  | Psalm 149, 150 |
| 30  | Jerm 15, 16    | James 1         | Eze 10,11    | Jude           | Zechar 13,14  | Rev 20, 21     |
| 31  | Jerm 17, 18    | James 2         |              |                | Malachi 1-4   | Rev 22         |

See page 5 for some thoughts on the daily readings.

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