



PRAYING WITH PURPOSE MINISTRIES

BIBLICAL NOTES & HIGHLIGHTS

Books Of Lamentations • Ezekiel • Joel • Daniel

September 2021

REVIEW OF SEVEN SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES

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| 1. Organization | — | God's plan to simplify our lives |
| 2. Sow & Reap | — | God's plan to provide for our lives |
| 3. Stewardship | — | God's plan to fulfill our lives |
| 4. Authority | — | God's plan to protect our lives |
| 5. Unconditional Love | — | God's plan to keep us from failing |
| 6. Obedience | — | God's plan to reward our lives |
| 7. Agreement | — | God's plan to crown our lives with peace |

Book of Lamentations

Lamentations is the book the prophet Jeremiah penned as he lamented and mourned over the death of Jerusalem ... Jerusalem had fallen! The prophet pours out his heart ... his emotions over the desolation of the once proud and prosper city which now lies in ruins. Judah has received the punishment Yahweh had warned her about. But in the midst of this tragedy, the “weeping prophet” triumphantly speaks his faith in the God of His salvation, Lamentations 3:22–23:

²² *Because of the LORD's faithful love we do not perish, for his mercies never end.*

²³ *They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!*

The Book of Lamentations can be divided into five lamenting poems:

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| 1. Jerusalem's Destruction | — | Chapter 1 |
| 2. Jehovah's Wrath | — | Chapter 2 |
| 3. Jeremiah's Prayer for Mercy | — | Chapter 3 |
| 4. Jerusalem's Siege Rehearse | — | Chapter 4 |
| 5. Jeremiah's Prayer for Restoration | — | Chapter 5 |

PRAYER OF MOURNING — BEREAVEMENT

Book of Ezekiel

Ezekiel's very name means "God Strengthens". Ezekiel's call in Ezekiel Chapters 1 and 2 is closely related to Isaiah's call in Isaiah Chapter 6—great imagery. Ezekiel had a glorious theophany (a visible manifestation to humankind of God or a god) in Babylon.

Ezekiel, like Isaiah, sees God as the Holy One of Israel. Ezekiel is called to speak to the Israelites in exile. The words he speaks proclaim judgment as well as restoration for the people of God—peace. In the twenty-first century, one could call Ezekiel a "pastor of restoration," who announced hope for his people who were in exile. Ezekiel assures the exile community that Yahweh's presence (glory, **kabod**) is among them.

He too, like Jeremiah and Isaiah, was trying to get the people to repent and turn their hearts back to God. His message encouraged the people that even though they had endured much misery in the past, Israel would return to her God and to her promised land. They would be God's people and he would be their God.

The Book of Ezekiel encourages us as Christians to prophecy to dead situations if we want them to be resurrected, Ezekiel 37:1–14:

The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by his Spirit and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me all around them. There were a great many of them on the surface of the valley, and they were very dry. ³ Then he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I replied, "Lord GOD, only you know."

⁴ He said to me, "Prophecy concerning these bones and say to them: Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! ⁵ This is what the Lord GOD says to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live. ⁶ I will put tendons on you, make flesh grow on you, and cover you with skin. I will put breath in you so that you come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD."

⁷ So I prophesied as I had been commanded. While I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸ As I looked, tendons appeared on them, flesh grew, and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹ He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, ^[a] prophesy, son of man. Say to it: This is what the Lord GOD says: Breath, come from the four winds and breathe into these slain so that they may live!" ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me; the breath entered them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, a vast army.

¹¹ Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Look how they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished; we are cut off.'

¹² Therefore, prophesy and say to them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: I am going

to open your graves and bring you up from them, my people, and lead you into the land of Israel. ¹³ You will know that I am the LORD, my people, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I am the LORD. I have spoken, and I will do it. This is the declaration of the LORD.’”

The Book of Ezekiel can be divided into four parts:

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| 1. Call of Ezekiel | — | Chapters 1–3 |
| 2. Judgment of Judah | — | Chapters 4–24 |
| 3. Judgment of Gentile Nations | — | Chapters 25–32 |
| 4. Israel’s Restoration | — | Chapters 33–48 |

PROPHECY OVER DEAD SITUATIONS!!!

Book of Joel

The Book of Joel is hard to date. Some biblical scholars place the book with the early prophets like Amos, Micah and Elisha. There are other scholars who argue that the book was written much later ... post-exilic period; therefore, the book is placed after Ezekiel chronologically. Nevertheless, whether it was written earlier or later, the theme remains the same, which emphasizes the “Day of the Lord” ... God’s sovereignty. Joel’s very name means “Yahweh is God” ... a very appropriate name that resonates with the theme.

Joel is a prophet of Judah and he is addressing the people of Judah during the “locust plague.” He uses this terrible locust plague to tell the people to repent by asking the priest to call a fast (Joel 1:13–14). He assures them, if they repent, the Lord will respond and restore the land, Joel 2:25–29:

I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust ate, the young locust, the destroying locust, and the devouring locust—my great army that I sent against you. ²⁶ You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied. You will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. My people will never again be put to shame. ²⁷ You will know that I am present in Israel and that I am the LORD your God, and there is no other. My people will never again be put to shame.

²⁸ After this I will pour out my Spirit on all humanity; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will have dreams, and your young men will see visions. ²⁹ I will even pour out my Spirit on the male and female slaves in those days.

The Book of Joel can be divided into two parts:

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| 1. “Day of the Lord”—locust invasion | — | Chapters 1–2:17 |
| 2. “Day of the Lord”—promised restoration | — | Chapters 2:18–3:21 |

PRAYERS OF RESTORATION — HEALING & HEALTH, FINANCES, RELATIONSHIPS, ETC!!!

Book of Daniel

As most of us know the Book of Daniel is about a young teenager who has been exiled to Babylon; however, this young man doesn't defile himself and stays true to his God. Because of his devotion to the Most High God, he is highly favored and serves in the royal court of the Babylonian Empire and the Medo-Persian Empire. The Book of Daniel tells us about several sensational stories and vivid visions. The book describes the importance of being faithful to God and obeying Him in dire situations ... life and death situations; and that God is sovereign over all; for He is the "Lord of History."

Daniel gives us a prophetic history overview of the "times of the Gentiles," (four world powers: Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome). He also gives us an exact timeline of the Messiah's appearance. And he describes the times which we as believers are living in. Even though the Book of Daniel can be complex in understanding the prophetic visions, it can be divided into two simple parts to help one understand it.

1. Daniel's Stories — Chapters 1–6
2. Daniel's Visions — Chapters 7–12

Daniel's stories inspire us to walk in the Principle of Obedience—a righteousness-building principle. We know from scripture that it was recorded that Daniel was a righteous person, along with Job and Noah. We see in the stories how Daniel and the Hebrew boys were rewarded for their obedience to the Most High God. We see impeccable integrity and perseverance; hopefully this will encourage us to continue to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain.

Now, let's spend time talking about the visions that Daniel received from the Most High God starting with chapter seven. This vision that Daniel received parallels the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had in chapter two which Daniel interpreted for him.

The Vision of the Four Beasts

The powers that emerged are represented as beasts. These are the four empires that were shown to Daniel in his vision:

1. Lion with wings of an eagle — Babylonian Empire
2. Bear — Medo-Persian Empire
3. Leopard — Grecian Empire
4. Beast with ten horns — Roman Empire

The nature of the beasts revealed the true character of these empires ... they were ruthless "times of the Gentiles." Daniel witnessed the fall of the Babylonian Empire because he served under Darius and Cyrus, Medo-Persian Empire. And as we know from the Book of Isaiah, it was prophesied that Cyrus would free the Jews who were carried into exile. Cyrus was a benevolent dictator; he is known to have established the earliest human bill of rights ... Cyrus Cylinder.

From a standpoint of history, we know that Daniel's prophecies of history of the "times of the Gentiles" were accurate because Alexander the Great overthrew the Persian Empire and then the ruthless beast with the ten horns, Rome, overthrew the Greek Empire, which had been divided into four parts after Alexander's death.

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus in his *Jewish antiquities* 11.317–345, tells about Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire. The story is told that as Alexander was on his way to attack the nation of Syria, Jerusalem lay directly in his path. Jerusalem was not his primary target. It was just a small powerless region that was between him and Syria. However, his plan was that as he passed by, he would lay siege to the city and take it, like he had done in many cities before. Whenever Alexander conquered a city or nation, he left a path of devastation, death and destruction behind him.

Now, the people of Judah learned that Alexander was on his way to take their city. In response to this news, the High Priests and his priestly court dressed themselves in white, gathered up the sacred scrolls that were kept in the temple and went out to meet Alexander on the road outside the city.

The story goes on that when Alexander saw this company of Priests dressed in white, he left his troops and rushed ahead to meet them. When he reached the place where they were, he knelt before the High Priest. Alexander is said to have told the High Priest that the night before, God had shown him in a vision that an old man dressed in white would show him something of significance about himself. At that point the High Priest, a man named Juddua, opened the book of Daniel and read the eighth chapter to Alexander the Great. He pointed out to Alexander that he was the shaggy goat prophesied by Daniel that defeated the two-headed ram (Daniel 8:5–6). The shaggy goat corresponds to the third beast (leopard in Chapter 7:6). This had to be a 'selah' moment in time, when a living human being has himself pointed out and identified in biblical prophecy such that the person can look at the prophecy and say 'yeah that is me'.

Alexander was so moved that he did not invade Jerusalem, the city was spared destruction, and he showed the people of Judah kindness during the remainder of his rule. In return for Alexander's kindness, the Jews developed a strong pro-Greek tendency.

I believe that when Juddua took the sacred scrolls and went out to meet Alexander, it was not by accident, it was not a desperate and frantic act. Juddua was doing what his Old Testament forefathers had taught him. For example, when Joshua led the nation of Israel to cross the Jordan River preparing to take the land of Canaan, it was the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant that led the way and the nation followed. Also, when the army marched around the city of Jericho, it was the Priests carrying the Ark and blowing the trumpet that led the way and the army followed. Even during some of the Philistine wars, it was the priests that carried the Ark into battle.

In the Old Testament, the Ark represented the presence of God. And the Priests carrying the Ark were always the vanguard out front leading the Israeli army and people into difficult situations. So, when Juddua went to meet Alexander, he was simply carrying out that tradition ... being obedient as a "High Priest." He was behaving as the vanguard, carrying the presence of God into a difficult situation. And Jehovah Saboath, the Lord of Host, did the rest. Juddua didn't have the Ark, but he had the scrolls that he read to Alexander. Those words acted like an army and turned

the mighty Alexander away from the city. Also, according to Josephus, the Lord had given Juddua a dream about the situation which encouraged him.

When he was 32 or 33 years old, Alexander the Great died in a drunken stupor ... grieved and bored because he had no more worlds to conquer. His death created a significant leadership void for his vast kingdom which was eventually filled by dividing his world empire among his four top generals: Ptolemy, Lysimachus, Cassander, and Selenus. These are the four notable ones which are described in the eight chapters of Daniel.

Let's talk about chapter nine which is a key chapter in the Book of Daniel because in this chapter Daniel offers a heartfelt, sincere prayer for his people as well as himself. During the prayer the angel Gabriel comes to Daniel ... answering the prayer and giving him a prophecy about the future of his people and the exact time, appearance of the Messiah.

Daniel 9:1–23: (1599 Geneva Bible)

¹ *In the first year of Darius the son of ^[a]Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the ^[b]realm of the Chaldeans,*

² *Even in the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by ^[c]books the number of the years, whereof the Lord had spoken unto Jeremiah the Prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem.*

³ *And I turned my face unto the Lord God, and ^[d]sought by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.*

⁴ *And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, saying, Oh Lord God which art ^[e]great and fearful, and keepest covenant and mercy toward them which love ^[f]thee, and toward them that keep thy commandments,*

⁵ *We have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, yea, we have rebelled, and have departed from thy precepts, and from thy judgments.*

⁶ *For we would not obey thy servants the Prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, and to all the people of the land.*

⁷ *O Lord, ^[g]righteousness belongeth unto thee, and unto us ^[h]open shame, as appeareth this day unto every man of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, yea, unto all Israel, both near and far off, through all the country, whither thou hast driven them, because of their offences, that they have committed against thee.*

⁸ *O Lord, unto us appertaineth open shame, to our ^[i]Kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.*

⁹ *Yet compassion and forgiveness is in the Lord our God, albeit we have rebelled against him.*

¹⁰ For we have not obeyed the ^[i]voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he hath laid before us by the ministry of his servants the Prophets.

¹¹ Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy Law, and are turned back, and have not heard thy voice: therefore the ^[k]curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the Law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

¹² And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that ^[l]judged us, by bringing upon us a great plague: for under the whole heaven hath not been the like, as hath been brought upon Jerusalem.

¹³ All this plague is come upon us, as it is written in the Law of Moses: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand thy truth.

¹⁴ Therefore hath the Lord ^[m]made ready the plague, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we would not hear his voice.

¹⁵ And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as appeareth this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

¹⁶ O Lord, according to all thy ^[n]righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy wrath be turned away from thy city Jerusalem thine holy Mountain: because of our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are a reproach to all that are about us.

¹⁷ Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to ^[o]shine upon thy Sanctuary, that lieth waste for the ^[p]Lord's sake.

¹⁸ O my God, incline thine ear and hear: open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city whereupon thy Name is called: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our own ^[q]righteousness, but for thy great tender mercies.

¹⁹ O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord ^[r]consider, and do it: defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy Name is called upon thy city, and thy people.

²⁰ ¶ And while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and did present my supplication before the Lord my God, for the holy Mountain of my God,

²¹ Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen before in the vision, came flying, and touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

²² And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee knowledge and understanding.

²³ At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee, for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter and consider the vision.

Daniel's prayer is a model prayer for us to pray.

1. Daniel starts by adoring and exalting God
2. He confesses his sins and the sins of his people Israel
3. He acknowledges God's righteousness
4. He appeals to God's mercy
5. He makes his supplications and petitions

Before Daniel finishes praying the Lord sends Gabriel to answer Daniel's prayer. Remember what Scripture says in Psalm 103:20:

Bless (affectionately, gratefully praise) the Lord, you His angels, you mighty ones who do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word.

Who gives voice to God's Word?

We give voice to His Word and the angels hearken to that Word. Gabriel answers Daniel by informing him about the seventy weeks prophecy (days represent years)—actually 490 years prophecy about the welfare of his people and Jerusalem, Daniel 9:24–27:

²⁴ Seventy ^[s]weeks are determined upon ^[t]thy people and upon thine holy city, to finish the wickedness, and to seal up ^[u]the sins, and to reconcile the iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

²⁵ Know therefore and understand that from ^[v]the going forth of the commandment to bring again the people, and to build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven ^[w]weeks and ^[x]threescore and two weeks, and the street shall be built again, and the wall even in a ^[y]troublous time.

²⁶ And after threescore and two ^[z]weeks, shall Messiah be slain, and shall ^[aa]have nothing, and the people of the ^[ab]prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the Sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood: and unto the end of the battle it shall be destroyed by desolations.

²⁷ And he ^[ac]shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to ^[ad]cease, ^[ae]and for the overspreading of the abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The prophecy addresses the following:

1. Bringing the Jews out of captivity
2. Rebuilding of the temple
3. Rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and its walls
4. Messiah's coming
5. Messiah's death—atonement for sin
6. Messiah confirming the everlasting covenant

The rebuilding of the temple which was decreed by Cyrus and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its wall all bear witness to the prophecy given to Daniel. Most scholars agree that it is clear that the first 69 weeks were filled at Christ's first coming and His ministry started the seventieth week and during that seventieth week, Jesus the Messiah was crucified and therefore, the everlasting covenant was confirmed by Him shedding His precious blood. Jesus offered Himself as the sacrificial Lamb. Jesus atoned for our sins. Also, the fourth beast is the dominant power, the Roman Empire ruling during the time of Jesus.

In chapter ten, Daniel has another encounter with the angel Gabriel. This chapter shows us how angelic beings minister to the heirs of salvation according to Hebrews 1:14:

Are not the angels all ministering spirits (servants) sent out in the service [of God for the assistance] of those who are to inherit salvation?

We can be encouraged and ensured by reading and studying the Book of Daniel that God's Word is true and the prophecies He gives to His prophets will be fulfilled; and that blessings lay at the end for the people of God.

PRAYER

Father, I pray, as children of the Most High God, we will be obedient like Daniel. A young man who had impeccable integrity and remained steadfast throughout his entire life ... never wavering, even when he was placed in the lion's den. May we be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in Your work, especially during these times—the "end times", knowing that our labor is not in vain; for we shall receive a crown, if we hold fast, in Jesus' Name. Amen