



my grandma time

...doing simple things together!

Week 38, Day 1 --- Daniel 7-9

Week 38, Day 2 --- Daniel 10-12

Week 38, Day 3 --- Ezra 1-3

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Week 38, Day 1 --- Daniel 7-9

The prophecies in Daniel are unusual. First, they are mostly predictions of the future while most of the Old Testament prophecy is God's judgment on the people. Second, most of the predictions are full of imagery, but are also interpreted for us. At least they are partially interpreted. These predictions, even with their interpretation, have been argued about since the time they were written. Some people think that the predictions cover the period of time between Daniel and the first coming of Jesus. Another group of people think that the predictions cover the time between Daniel and the second coming of Jesus.

I think the big idea behind all these predictions is that God reigns supreme. All the kingdoms of the earth are temporary. It is God's kingdom and only God's kingdom that will last. I am in the group of people who believe that these prediction look toward the first coming of Jesus. The Roman Empire will be a great kingdom. Its greatness will lead to the crucifixion of Jesus, but also provided the means for the rapid spread of the gospel, the good news of Jesus resurrection.

I recently taught a Sunday School lesson on Daniel 9. Here are some principles that came out of that study. Powerful prayer requires serious preparation. Confession, agreeing with God about our sin, precedes intercession, making requests of God. We pray as part of a community, the body of Christ. Given these principles, here are some questions for you to think about. What has God promised that we should be requesting of Him? What does God desire? What do we need to confess to God? Spend some special time in prayer today. Here are some additional Bible readings to help you think about the concept of prayer:

John 17; Acts 4:24-31; Romans 8:26-30; Romans 15: 30-33; Ephesians 1:15-23; Ephesians 3:14-23

Week 38, Day 2 --- Daniel 10-12

There is more going on than we can see. We see the physical and experience the passing of times. We live in 4 dimensions, but there is at least one more and that is a spiritual dimension. The Bible speaks of both angels and demons. They are powerful creatures and they are constantly battling. The results of their battles do have an impact on us. It also seems clear from Daniel's experience that prayer guides them. So, we must pray. Our prayers may be answered and we may be unaware that they have been answered. Daniel's prayer was answered immediately, but he didn't see the answer for 3 weeks.

The rest of the book is a prediction of future events. I believe that all these events have already occurred and culminated in the first coming of Jesus. Many others believe that these events are still in the future and that they end with the second coming of Jesus. Only time will tell which view is correct, if either are correct. Again, the main point is that God is in control.

Week 38, Day 3 --- Ezra 1-3

Now we return to the story. The people of Israel have been in captivity for 70 years. Most of the people who went into captivity have died. About 40,000 people decide to take the opportunity to return. However, many decide to stay in Babylon and the other cities where they have been in captivity, so only a remnant, a small portion, decides to return. Their task is to rebuild the temple. The end of chapter 3 is interesting. We might think that everyone would rejoice when the foundation of the new temple is laid. Apparently it was different from the old temple and some weep instead of rejoicing. Why do you think they wept? Why are we so reluctant to see things change? How do you think the weeping group will affect the rebuilding of the temple?

Week 38, Day 4 --- Ezra 4-6 - Psalm 137

The Jews who had returned from Babylon had been given a job to do. They were to rebuild the temple. The people who had been living in the land did not want this to happen. Some were worshiping God, but they were worshiping in Samaria. The restoration of the temple would move the center of worship from Samaria to Jerusalem and they did not want that. The process of sending letters back and forth was very slow, but very effective.

This section is important because it established the beginning of the feud between the Samaritans and the Jews. The Samaritans were the people who lived in Israel during the time that the Jewish people were in captivity in Babylon. The Samaritans were a mixed race people. They had Jewish blood, but they had intermarried and also had the blood of other races. They worshipped God, but also worshipped other gods. The hatred between Jews and Samaritans was extreme by the time that Jesus came. It all began here with the battle over the rebuilding of the temple.

Week 38, Day 5 --- Haggai 1-2

This is a prophecy to encourage and it is also a prophecy about priorities. What are the people putting first in chapter 1? What is the result? God asks the people to change and then He makes them a promise. Does God keep His promises?

The Jews who have returned from captivity do not have a king, but they do have a local governor. His very specific task is to rebuild the temple. God encourages him and tells him that he will be blessed and the people will be blessed if they will put this work first.

Week 38, Day 6 --- Zechariah 1-7

Today's reading is full of images. Most of the images are interpreted in the text. This book is one of the keys for interpreting the book of Revelation at the end of your Bible because many of the images are repeated there. Mixed in with the visions of the future are very specific instructions for the people who have returned from exile. They need direction to complete the task of rebuilding the temple and God

provides it through Zechariah. Why do you think God mixes very practical and timely instruction with fantastic visions of the future?

Week 38, Day 7 --- Zechariah 8-14

Zechariah writes after the people have returned from captivity to Jerusalem. This means that the restoration of Jerusalem that he is writing about is sometime in the future. There are many references to the events in Jesus' life in this section of Zechariah. How many did you see as you read this? As I read this section I got a better understanding of why the Jews of Jesus' day were expecting another warrior king like David. It seems clear that when Messiah comes Judah and Jerusalem will reign supreme and conquer the nations. This hasn't happened yet and so we are still waiting for the fulfillment of these prophecies.