

Week of September 26 – October 2

Ezekiel 48 The Holy City Named “The LORD Is There’

After the division of the land among the twelve tribes comes the grand ending, the last message from Ezekiel, his last words: “And the name of that city from that day shall be ‘Jehovah Shammah,’ the LORD is there.” It is a perfect ending to this great book. In its beginning, we see the glory of the Lord departing. We read of Israel’s rebellion, Jerusalem’s judgments, the nation’s disobedience, and rejection. Then came the messages of hope—Israel’s conversion, the regathering of the twelve tribes, the final conflict with Gog, and the glory of the Lord returning. From that day, the name of the city will be called Jehovah Shammah. God displayed His gracious presence among His people and established His throne, blessed His people with all the spiritual and national blessings promised by His prophets, destroyed all their enemies, and covered them with His glory once more. Therefore, the city will have the name “The LORD is there.” The city through which Jesus once walked, the city through which He was dragged and carried a cross on His shoulders, the city which rejected Him and where He was crucified—that same city will become the glorious city on the new earth. God Himself will be there.

Twenty-two years and 48 chapters earlier, Ezekiel began his book with a vision of a storm picturing the destruction of Old Jerusalem and, later, God's departure from it. He ended it with another vision of the establishment of the New Jerusalem and God's permanent residence in it. The glory of the Lord ties the book together and runs through it from beginning to end.

Jehovah Shammah is one of seven compound names of Jehovah found in the Old Testament: Jehovah Jireh "the Lord will provide," Jehovah Rapha — "the Lord who heals," Jehovah Shalom "the Lord our peace," Jehovah Tsidkenu "the Lord our righteousness," Jehovah Nissi — "the Lord our banner," and Jehovah Ra'ah — "the Lord our shepherd."

Daniel

Daniel, the main character from whom this book gets its name, was probably only a teenager when he arrived in Babylon in 605 B.C. as a captive. He continued in office as a public servant at least until 538 B.C. and as a prophet at least until 536 B.C. The record of his ministry spans 70 years, the entire duration of the Babylonian Captivity and probably lived to be at least 85 years old.

Daniel 1 Nebuchadnezzar's Training Program for Promising Jewish Teenagers

During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel came into favor and power. The king seems to have been impressed by the Israelites he had conquered and wanted some of the choicest of their young men to be included among his servants.

Among those selected were four Jewish youths, one of whom was Daniel. They were set apart for training and preparation for their official duties. This training lasted three years. They had special physical attention, and their choice food and drink were supplied from the king's table.

Daniel at once displayed his strength of character in abstaining from eating the king's food and drinking his wine. He asked for a ten-day test. The test was successful as the four became healthier and better nourished, eating only vegetables and drinking water. As a result, he and his friends continued with their training and at the end of that training, were presented to Nebuchadnezzar, were approved by him, and appointed to positions in his kingdom.

Daniel 2 Daniel Interprets the King's Dream and Is Appointed Ruler over Babylon

In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by dreams and unable to sleep. He called on his enchanters and sorcerers to explain his dreams, one of which troubled him particularly. Their difficulty was that the king could not recall the dream. Of course, his demand was unreasonable and yet the claims these men made as magicians ought to have enabled them to know the dream and interpret it. Nebuchadnezzar declared that if they were unable to do what he asked, he would know that they were lying and corrupt. They failed and Nebuchadnezzar was furious, demanding they all be executed, including the four Hebrew youths.

Daniel sought an interview with the king and promised to tell the king his dream and interpret it. Daniel gathered his friends together and they prayed. In answer, the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision at night, and in his gratitude, he praised the name of Jehovah. He asked the king's executioner not to destroy the wise men since he was able to interpret the king's dream.

Daniel was brought to the king and gave God the glory for the interpretation. He declared the truth concerning the God of heaven, Who was able to reveal secrets, and Who, by this dream, intended to let the king know the events of the history of his people. He described the image in the king's dream and interpreted its meaning, tracing the events through the kingdoms of Babylon, Media, and Persia, Greece, Rome, the ten kingdoms, and the final setting up of the Kingdom of Heaven. This interpretation convinced Nebuchadnezzar, who recognized the supremacy of God and rewarded Daniel by appointing him to be ruler over the whole province of Babylon and the wise men.

Daniel 3 The Worship of Nebuchadnezzar's Statue

The pride of Nebuchadnezzar is shown as he sets up a 90-foot golden statue in the plain of Dura. He commanded all the people to bow down in worship when the band played. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the statue since it would be an act of idolatry. Consequently, they were thrown into a flaming furnace but were supernaturally delivered from the fierce fire. The king saw four men inside the furnace, One so glorious, that even he described Him as being "like a son of the gods." Their deliverance from the furnace deeply impressed Nebuchadnezzar, and he decreed that no word should be spoken against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and promoted them in the province of Babylon.

Daniel 4 Nebuchadnezzar Is Humbled by The Lord

The story of a dream which troubled Nebuchadnezzar follows. It came to when he was living in prosperity and ease in his palace. His magicians were unable to interpret the dream, and Daniel was brought before him to interpret his vision.

Daniel was "astonished" with the dream because he saw the application of the dream to the king's fall from power. Nevertheless, in loyalty to truth, he interpreted its meaning.

He then appealed to Nebuchadnezzar to turn from sin and show mercy to the poor so his peace and prosperity might be lengthened.

A year later, the dream was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar did not obey the appeal of Daniel, and while he was boasting that he had built the great city of Babylon by his power and for his glory, a voice came from heaven to tell him that the kingdom was being taken from him and that all that Daniel had interpreted would be fulfilled. He was chased from his palace and eat grass like

the cows, and his body was wet with dew. His hair grew as long as eagles' feathers and his nails were like birds' claws.

Finally, Nebuchadnezzar recognized the God of heaven and was restored to his kingdom, praising the King of Heaven whose works are true and whose ways are just.