



AUGUST REFLECTION GUIDE

DAY 214-244

In this month's reading, we see the Southern Kingdom ultimately fall to Babylon and the exile of God's people. We also see the prophets Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk & Ezekiel speaking of this impending exile, issuing a call to repent and looking toward a coming hope of a new king, returning to the land & a rebuilt temple.

Days 214, 215, 217, 231 - II Kings 20-25, II Chronicles 32-36

In this section of II Kings, we see God is patient, but He does not allow persistent sin to go unpunished. King Hezekiah is a man who had years added to his life and was faithful to the Lord. But on Day 214, we see him become prideful as he boasts in all the treasure the Lord has given him.

Tara-Leigh says this of what we can learn from the downfall of Hezekiah:

"God hears the prayers of this selfish, arrogant man, and He answers them with a "yes". One of the things I find most interesting about humanity is that we spend so much time trying to avoid pain -- but pain is often where we draw near to God. Pain is what prompted Hezekiah to pray and to listen to the prophet Isaiah. But when life is good and easy and we aren't desperately seeking God anymore. We begin to grow complacent. And before we know it, we remember what intimacy with God is like, but we can't quite access it. So we start to do our own thing. That's what Hezekiah did when he had all kinds of treasures and blessings and suddenly felt like he didn't need to listen to God or His prophet anymore. I want to learn from King Hezekiah's rise and fall that nothing is worth putting my hope in besides God."

- **Can you think of a time when pain drew you closer to God?**
- **Do you find in good times you grow complacent and distant from God?**
- **What are you putting your hope in?**

On **Day 215**, we also get an insight into what possibly led to the pride we see before King Hezekiah's downfall.

I Chronicles 32:30-31 says *"This same Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works. And so in the matter of the envoys of the princes of Babylon, who had been sent to him to inquire about the sign that had been done in the land, God left him to himself, in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart."*

- **How do you feel when you hear that "God left him to himself, in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart"?**

We also see on Day 215 that Hezekiah's son Manasseh repents and turns back toward the Lord which is the opposite of his dad's story.

Here's what Tara-Leigh says:

"Hezekiah started out strong but lost his way, and Manasseh started out evil and repented. And the turning point in both of their stories was the direction of their eyes -- Hezekiah turned his eyes inward -- we call this navel-gazing. He grew prideful and wandered from God. Manasseh turned his eyes upward and humbled himself, and God redeemed his story. God is in the business of changing hearts and moving eyes."

➤ **What do we learn about God when we study Hezekiah and Manasseh?**

On **Day 217**, we see King Josiah begin his reign at 8 years old. God had plans for Josiah to remove the idols and repair the temple. We also see God use the evil Pharaoh Neco to warn Josiah, but he didn't listen so he was killed.

Tara-Leigh reminds us that God can use anyone:

"But according to 2 Chronicles 35:22, Pharaoh Neco was actually speaking the truth. It all serves as a reminder that God can even work and speak truth through the mouths of those who oppose Him. He's not limited to working through those who are His kids. He can use anyone and everyone to point to Himself and His truth somehow, which should make us both more humble and more discerning. I'm not saying we should go around receiving everything anyone says as truth from God. Rather, I'm noticing what this text reveals: we can't dismiss something as a lie just because we don't like the person who said it. Because of that, I pray He gives us wisdom as we try to discern what things line up with the truth of His Word."

➤ **Have you ever had someone that you don't like say something to you that you know was true? How did you receive it?**

On **Day 231**, Josiah was Judah's last good king. On this day, we see the final 4 kings and Judah's ultimate demise as Babylon takes over and leads them into exile. But the book still ends on a hopeful note.

In 2 Kings 25:27-30, we see Jehoiachin, the king who surrendered to Babylon as soon as things got tough. He's been imprisoned in Babylon. Under the new King Evil-Merodach we see a beautiful picture of who God is to his children.

"Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, as long as he lived."

Jehoiachin was considered an enemy to Babylon, and he was even a bad king by God's standards. And even still he gets to experience freedom, provision and protection while in exile.

➤ **What does the story of Jehoiachin show us about who God is?**

Day 231 concludes the narrative story of Israel up to the Babylonian exile and hints at the coming hope in the future.

II Chronicles 36:15 sums it up like this:

"The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, until there was no remedy."

The book ends with a promise that the King of Persia's heart will be stirred by the Lord to send His people back to the land one day to rebuild the temple.

➤ **What does this section of scripture show us about who God is?**

Major & Minor Prophets

When God had a message for the people, He spoke to them through prophets: men moved by the Holy Spirit to speak on God's behalf. The prophets emerged in a time of great crisis to bring God's message to His people. These messages came in visions, oracles, dreams, parables, and the like.

These major and minor prophets were often prophesying during the time described earlier in I & II Kings and I & II Chronicles or in the exile that followed.

Day 216 - Nahum

It might help to think of Nahum as a follow-up to the book of Jonah. Both prophets speak God's word regarding the city of Nineveh. Nineveh's first repentance didn't take. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, and the Assyrian empire had only grown more mighty and more wicked since the time of Jonah. Assyria is the country that took over the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

God sends the prophet Nahum to reveal Nineveh's future: utter desolation. With Jonah, there was a chance to repent. Now the time for repentance is over. God is good and compassionate, but He will not leave the guilty unpunished. Nahum is a brutal prophecy against the enemies of God and His people, but Nahum's name means "comforter." This oracle comforts God's people by showing them that He is still in control. He still watches over His own. Even when justice seems completely out of balance, He has a plan to right the scales.

Tara-Leigh says this about Nahum:

"It offers reminders that God has His eyes not only on the wicked people He's going to punish, but also on the remnant of His people He plans to restore and bless. He encourages Israel with reminders that they'll be set free and will be able to celebrate their feasts again, which is something they couldn't do while Assyria was oppressing them. Nahum is a heavy book, for sure, but ultimately it should encourage us because it points to the fact that our God is a defender of His people. And our God addresses injustice. It does not escape Him. It may seem to take longer than you want, it may be resolved in your lifetime, but our God is not blind to it. When leaders mislead, God can still be trusted. It's just another reminder of why we can't put our hope in nations or powers, because only God can rule in complete righteousness."

Nahum gives us powerful reminders like:

1:3 - *"The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty. His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet."*

1:7 - *"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him."*

The prophet Nahum reminds us of God's active hand, working even in the darkest of times to bring justice and hope throughout the world.

- **Have you ever found it hard to do what is right when you are discouraged with what you see in the world around you?**
- **Do you find yourself troubled at injustices you see and feel like God is silent?**
- **What does Nahum teach us about the character of God?**

Day 218 - Zephaniah

Zephaniah was the great great grandson of King Hezekiah and he preached his message during the rule of King Josiah. At this time, the nation as a whole was obeying God's laws and turning from idols. Since the land was obeying God, one might ask, "Who was Zephaniah warning?" His warnings seem to be for the next generation of Judah, Josiah's sons. They disobey the Lord, and are the ones who lead as they are conquered and taken into exile. Zephaniah tells the people that God will bring about a time when all the nations will call on the name of the Lord. The day is coming when Judah, Israel, the nations, and the Lord will dwell together in peace, justice, and joy.

The book starts off harsh:

1:2 gets right to the point of what is coming for Judah: *"I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth," declares the Lord.*

2:3 offers a solution to this impending destruction: *"Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord."*

3:2 gets to the heart of the problem: *"She listens to no voice; she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the Lord; she does not draw near to her God."*

But by the end we see glimpses of hope...

3:17 - *The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.*

3:20 - *At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the Lord.*

- **What do we learn from the book about what God asks of us?**
- **What do we learn from this book about what God offers us?**

Days 219-222- Jeremiah 1-13

Jeremiah was a prophet that served from the reign of Judah's last good king through the time that Jerusalem was destroyed by Babylon. Like many other prophets, Jeremiah's messages focus on the coming punishment of Judah, but is also sprinkled with messages of hope. You'll see just how many chances God gives His people to follow His voice and

keep His covenant. Jeremiah promises restoration and looks forward to a righteous king from the line of David to arise in the future foreshadowing God's plan to make a new covenant with His people through Jesus.

Jeremiah endures mockery, imprisonment, kidnapping, and death threats from the people he desperately tries to help. The people don't listen and they rebel, but God's determination to restore His people is constant and unwavering as He is working toward the new covenant that is coming.

On **Day 219**, we see from the beginning that God chose Jeremiah and intended for him to deliver this message.

1:5 says, *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."*

1:9-10 goes on to say, *"Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."*

This is quite a calling that God has placed on Jeremiah's life.

- **Do you think you would have been obedient if the Lord gave you this calling?**
- **Do you feel like God has called you to something that maybe you are avoiding because it feels too hard?**

On **Day 221**, we see what is often referred to as Jeremiah's Temple Sermon in chapter 7. They are worshipping God inside the temple, but then ignoring God as soon as they leave those temple walls. In chapter 8, we see Jeremiah mourn for these people.

Jeremiah warns them in 7:4-7 - *"Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord. For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.'"*

But God says in 7: 24-25 - *"But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day."*

- **How do you see God's people today perhaps worshipping God in some places and not in others?**

In 9:24, God says, *"but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord."*

- **What does the Lord delight in?**

Hint: He does not delight in the suffering of His children... but in justice and righteousness. He love His children with His steadfast love that sometimes includes hard discipline for rebellion.

Tara-Leigh explains it like this:

"The consequences of their sins are so harsh that some will prefer to die instead of live. And while God's methods may seem harsh, they're always righteous. I've heard that when it comes to sin, we should be angry at our own and heartbroken over others'. That's not to say we shouldn't also be heartbroken over our own sin; it's more to say we should stay humble. How easy is it to look at the sins others commit and feel disgusted as through we aren't

sinners too. It's arrogant So Jeremiah's response is fitting. He stays humble. He aches over Judah's actions. And God makes it clear that He's heartbroken too -- because He continues to point out that He wants their hearts, not their begrudging obedience. Besides, the only kind of obedience that is complete and true is obedience that flows from a heart of love. He wants transformation at a heart level."

Day 222 addresses the people's worship of idols and the covenant that has been broken.

Tara-Leigh talks about idols this way:

"When you think about those statues, and then you consider YHWH, there is no comparison. The people are worshipping these idols because they think it'll give them safety and power and happiness. Most of us probably don't have a false god set up in our homes, but we certainly do look to other things besides YHWH for those same purposes: safety and power and happiness. There is nothing wrong with those things but when they take precedence in our hearts and thoughts, they take our eyes off YHWH. When our good desires become ultimate, when they become expectations and requirements, we're on the same path as Judah who sought out other gods to access desires."

- **Where do you see idols in your own life that bring you safety, power or happiness?**

- **What do chapters 1-13 of Jeremiah reveal to you about God's heart?**

Tara-Leigh shares this:

"What does it reveal about God's heart that He keeps sending this message, decade after decade, begging them to repent? I see His patience in this. I see His persistence in this. And not to get too alliterative here, but I also see His planning in this -- He knew they wouldn't repent. He knew the day was coming when He'd exile them, and He also knew the day was coming when Jesus would claim victory over all the sins of His people: past, present, and future. God the Father and God the Son both endured a LOT in order to bring us into a peaceful relationship with God Himself. He's where the joy is!"

Days 223-230- Jeremiah 14-40

On Day 223 , we see Judah continue to suffer consequences for their disregard of the Lord and his commands. We also see that the people are being led astray by false prophets, but God points out that they are still responsible for their own actions.

Chapter 17 is clear about their sinful hearts and about their disregard for the Sabbath.

Tara-Leigh share this:

In chapter 17, God tells us about two kinds of people: the man who trusts in man and doesn't rely on God. His soul will be parched. Then there's the man who trusts in God -- his soul flourishes even in a drought. Verse 9 goes on to say that the man who trusts in himself is a fool, because his heart can't be trusted. We close with a lengthy reminder about the importance of keeping the Sabbath as a set-apart day of the week. The people may not realize it, but failure to keep the Sabbath signals greed and mistrust in God's provision. What kind of God sets up resting as an act of worship? That's incredible! People tend to view God as an angry taskmaster, making demands on His people non-stop. And while God does call His people to work hard, for sure, He also knows our souls desperately need to reconnect with Him, and that doesn't happen as easily in the chaos. Sabbath gives us space for intimacy with God. He wants us to slow down and fix our eyes on Him. Yes, He wants constant communication, but He also wants FOCUSED time. "

- Do you slow down and prioritize Sabbath Rest into your rhythms?
- How could you start to implement that into your life as an act of worship?

In this section of scripture, Jeremiah writes a letter to those who are exiled, here we get this famous verse that is a favorite: **Jeremiah 29:11** - *“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”*

- Did you realize that this verse was given to the people while they were in exile?
- Does this change how you read this verse?

A quick run-through of the themes run through these middle chapters of Jeremiah:

- **Day 223-224** - God did not break the covenant with His people, they broke the covenant with Him (14:21, 18:15) Jeremiah feels deceived by the Lord, but the Lord was with him and clear from the beginning. (20:7)
- **Day 225-226** - Their rebellion will not go unpunished. (25:29) They will suffer Babylonian captivity, but after 70 years, the Babylonians will also suffer captivity. (25:12). Jeremiah trusts the Lord and this trust allows him to so he can humbly submit to the authority of evil leaders. (26:14-15)
- **Day 227-228** - God promises restoration for His people and His land. (30:17-18) He will use this exile to draw them closer to Him. (30:21-23) This promise of a new covenant extends beyond the people of Judah into all the earth. (31:7-8) The new covenant will be written on their hearts. (31:33) Nothing is too hard for the Lord. (32:26)
- **Day 229-230** - Jeremiah's obedience to God brings him suffering and persecution (37:15, 38:6), yet God still sends a way of deliverance (38:11-14) Jeremiah gets to live free and not exiled with his people and his enemies treat him better than his own people. (40:2-6)

Tara-Leigh says this about all that Israel and Judah has endured in these days:

“That’s a LOT for Israel and Judah to go through, and on the surface, some of it may sound cruel. But this process is necessary in getting the scales to fall from their eyes and in softening their hearts. Yes, God is wounding them, but all His wounds are ways to heal. He can be trusted. He’s taking us through the process. And if you’ve lived through anything challenging, you know that the processes we go through have a formative effect on us. They build character. They teach us what’s important. They shape us into people who are hopefully more humble, less entitled, more compassionate, less impatient, and ultimately more like God, who had repeatedly described Himself as merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, a God of forgiveness and justice.”

- What do we learn about God in this section of Jeremiah?

Day 230 - Psalm 74,79

Tara-Leigh says this about these two Psalms:

“Psalm 74 is perfectly suited to what’s happening in Judah. It’s hard to know if this was a prophetic psalm about the destruction of the temple or if it was written in the aftermath of the destruction. It has a lot in common with Psalm 79, but one thing distinct about Psalm 79 is that the psalmist holds the people of Jacob responsible for

breaking the covenant. The people have sinned and this is the consequence they'd been promised. But the psalmist begs for mercy and relief, appealing to God on the basis of His name and His power."

God answers with a yes when He sends Jesus to fulfill a NEW covenant. It's so moving that even in the midst of all of this hard, the people cry out with Psalm 79:13 *"But we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise."*

- **When you suffer hard consequences of sin, is your first inclination to give thanks and praise?**

Day 232 - Habakkuk

Habakkuk is known for wrestling and pleading with God, asking Him to save Judah from her own wickedness. God answers, but not in the way Habakkuk expected. To judge Judah's wickedness, God says He will hand them over to the Chaldeans (Babylonians): a nation even more wicked, violent, and corrupt. Habakkuk questions God, much like Job, "Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they? Will they continually slay nations without sparing?" But God is way ahead of Habakkuk. The Lord shows him that something else is in store for the Babylonians. He reveals His justice that is to come... They will be looted by the other nations and become disgraced. God makes it clear that both nations will be judged and appropriately punished, but that "the righteous will live by his faith". When Habakkuk sees God's master plan, he can only worship. God will be known in all the earth in His perfect timing.

Habakkuk asks the Lord in 1:2 - *"O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear?"*

God tells him in 1:5 that *"I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told."* and in 2:4 that *"the righteous shall live by His faith"*

Habakkuk ends the book with this prayer showing his faith that even if things don't happen in the way he thinks they should, he still places his trust and joy in the Lord.

3:17-19 says, *"Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation."*

Habakkuk asks questions that many of us want to ask of God.

- **What does Habakkuk's posture and approach to God teach us?**
- **What does God's response teach us?**

Days 233 -236 Jeremiah 41-52

On **Day 233**, through a crazy turn of events, Gedaliah the new Governor in Judah is killed and the people want out of Judah. They want to go to Egypt and Jeremiah warns them not to. They go anyway and force Jeremiah to go with them. They openly worship idols and Jeremiah tells them that God is serious about His command to NOT worship idols.

In 44:22-23, he tells them, *"The Lord could no longer bear your evil deeds and the abominations that you committed. Therefore your land has become a desolation and a waste and a curse, without inhabitant, as it is this day. It is because you made offerings and because you sinned against the Lord and did not obey the voice of the Lord or walk in his law and in his statutes and in his testimonies that this disaster has happened to you, as at this day."*

- **Why do you think God takes the worship of idols so seriously?**

On Day 234 & 235, we see God address all the other nations through Jeremiah's words, we see oracles that address Egypt, Philisia, Moab, Amnon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, Elam, and Babylon. In this section God is reminding us that He is sovereign over all nations and all people.

On Day 236, we see the fall of Jerusalem, temple burning and exile to Babylon recounted.

This day opens with these words in Jeremiah 51:5, *"For Israel and Judah have not been forsaken by their God, the Lord of hosts"* a reminder that God was with them.

And today's reading ends with another telling of the story of King Jehoiachin (Day 231) Just a reminder, here's how his story ends...(52:33-34) *"And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, until the day of his death, as long as he lived."*

Tara-Leigh says this:

"Jeremiah has been prophesying all along that Judah should surrender to Babylon if they want to survive, but all the kings resisted? King Chin (Jehoiachin) was the only one who obeyed. He surrendered just 3 months into his reign. It probably looked like a fearful move — and maybe it was. But God blessed his obedience richly. He was a wicked king by most accounts, but he did what God commanded and God took care of him nonetheless. God provides for and protects people we'd never expect to receive His blessing. That says a LOT about God's heart."

➤ **What does this tell us about the value that puts on our obedience?**

Days 237-238 - Lamentations

Lamentations was likely written to be used by the people in prayer or worship. At this point, the Babylonians have ransacked the holy city and the people are devastated. Lamentations is a book of poems that mourn the fall of Jerusalem. The book deals with the question, "How could this happen?" Lamentations is a formal expression of grief in a beautiful literary style and it is structured like an acrostic poem and uses the entire Hebrew alphabet to give full expression to suffering in effect to offer a lament "from A to Z" for the people. The book moves from horrible loss and personal shame to restored hope and prayer for renewal.

On **Day 237** in Lamentations 1:18, Judah finally owns their part in all this destruction, saying *"The Lord is in the right, for I have rebelled against His word."*

Tara-Leigh says this:

"Not only does this verse remind us that God is just, but it also makes the truths of verses 12-16 bearable. And in verse 20, it sounds like Jerusalem truly repents. It says, "My heart is wrung within me, because I have been very rebellious." They mourn and grieve their actions, not just the consequences. In chapter 2, we get a second poem about the fall and destruction of Jerusalem. It points out ways that their relationship with God has been affected by this disaster. Verse 5 says, "The Lord has become like an enemy." LIKE an enemy. He's not an enemy, but it certainly feels like it to them. But they know that His actions were justified — He was enacting a necessary discipline for their sins."

➤ **Have you ever felt like God was an "enemy"? Can you look back on that time and see what God was doing?**

Lamentations reminds us of the importance not only of mourning over our sin but of asking the Lord for His forgiveness when we fail Him.

Tara-Leigh says this about Lamentations:

“What does it reveal to us about God that He included this book for us? I believe it shows us that He is a God who not only can handle our feelings and emotions, but also values them and wants to engage with us on that level. Chapter 2 verse 19 says it like this: “Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord.” These poems contain a LOT of feelings and frustrations — and the author pours it out unguarded before the Lord. God receives and values our emotions — even when they’re the result of our sins. He wants us to talk with Him about what we’re feeling.”

In Lamentations 3:22-24, we get this popular verse: *“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in Him.’”*

- **What does Lamentations show us about God and how we can lament to Him?**

Days 239-244 - Ezekiel 1-20

Ezekiel is a prophet who lived among the Jewish exiles in Babylon, and he is best known for his visions which are filled with symbolic imagery. He foresees the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the judgment awaiting rebellious Judah. He also gives us a glimpse of the new relationship God plans to make with His people through Jesus. His visions include bad news: God’s heart is broken over their idolatry and self-serving ways & God is allowing the destruction of Jerusalem. But he also shares some good news: God will render justice on the other nations who have led them into idolatry and celebrated the destruction. God will form a new covenant with the people of Israel and defend them against future enemies.

On **Day 241**, we see this powerful vision of God’s presence leaving the temple.

Here’s what Tara-Leigh says about this vision:

“In chapter 10, Ezekiel has a vision that he compares to his earlier vision in chapter 1, where he sees the 4-faced, 4-winged creatures attached to gyroscope-like wheels. This time he clarifies that they’re definitely cherubim — which is a type of heavenly being that is often seen guarding holy places. And that’s exactly what they’re doing here — they’re carrying the throne that God’s presence will dwell on when He leaves the temple. His cherubim chariot is waiting outside the temple as He’s getting ready to go, but first, God has the linen man send holy fire in judgment on the city itself. After this, God’s presence departs from the temple, rests on the cherubim-chariot and heads east. God has left the building. But God HASN’T left His people....Because then the presence of God heads east — toward Babylon. God follows His people into the land of their exile, pursuing them still. Even in exile, He’s our sanctuary. ”

- **What did you learn about God’s character in these visions of Ezekiel?**
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On **Days 242-244**, we see that God reminds them of the covenant He made with them and because they have sinned, he must address it. But we see that in Ezekiel 18:32 that He is not joyous about bringing justice.

“For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.”

- **What does this section and specifically this verse tell us about God’s character?**

God didn't exile the Israelites primarily to punish them. God never has been interested in punishment for punishment's sake. Rather, He intended the punishment or judgment in Ezekiel's day as a means to an end—to bring His people to a state of repentance and humility before the one true God. They had lived for so long in sin and rebellion, confident in their own strength and that of the neighboring nations, that they needed God to remind them of His holy nature and their humble identity in a most dramatic way. After centuries of warnings, prophetic messages, and invasions, God decided that more significant action was required—He had to remove the people from their promised land.

The book of Ezekiel reminds us to seek out the Lord in hard times when we feel lost, to examine our own lives, and to align ourselves with the one true God.

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Books:

- *30 Days to Understanding Your Bible* by Max Anders

Videos:

- [I & II Chronicles Overview Video](#)
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- [Jeremiah Overview Video](#)
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- [Lamentations Overview Video](#)
- [Ezekiel Part 1 Overview Video](#)
- [Ezekiel Part 2 Overview Video](#)

Websites for further studies:

- <https://bibleproject.com/> - Great overview videos by theme, book of the Bible and topic
- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/> - Choose a version of the Bible and click TOOLS next to the verse