

# Week Thirty

Days 204–210



**Exile** Narrative: Isaiah 28–42 | Supplemental: Zephaniah 1–3; Baruch 1–6; Ezekiel 1–3; Proverbs 11:9–12:4

## DESPITE OUR SINS, THE LORD WILL BE OUR GOD



Ezekiel's "Chariot Vision"  
by Matthaeus Merian

Various contexts are featured in this week's readings.

Isaiah and Zephaniah write before the Babylonian Exile, in Judah.

Baruch and Ezekiel write while among the exiles in Babylon.

Judgment and hope continue to be central themes.

- Isaiah is well-known for containing not only important prophecies for the people of his own time, demanding that they return to faith in the Lord, but also for many prophecies directly related to Jesus Christ.
- For example, the Lord says, “Behold, I am laying in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation” (Isaiah 28:16). In the New Testament, 1 Peter 2:6 speaks about Jesus as this precious cornerstone and foundation.
- Much of Isaiah 40 is proclaimed during the season of Advent, such as “A voice cries: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD’” (Isaiah 40:3).
- Matthew quotes Isaiah 40:3 as being fulfilled by John the Baptist in preparation for Jesus’ ministry (see Matthew 3:1–3).
- The prophet Zephaniah prophesies after Isaiah and in the days of Josiah, the young king who restores worship in the kingdom of Judah (see 2 Kings 22–23).
- In chapter 1, Zephaniah accuses the people of Judah of many evils. They have fallen into idolatry, they have failed to pray, their leaders are bad, they are superstitious, and they believe that no judgment will come upon them for their actions. All of these indictments touch on the heart of their relationship with the Lord.
- Baruch highlights the importance of acknowledging willful sin.
- In this book, the people confess their sins and admit that, though they knew the Law, they disobeyed the Lord. They lacked hearts willing to be changed to be what God called them to be. They pray for deliverance.
- The final line of Baruch 2 offers hope: “I will make an everlasting covenant with them to be their God and they shall be my people; and I will never again remove my people Israel from the land which I have given them.”

## Dive Deeper

Zephaniah 1 cites the evils of the people of Judah. Knowing that God offers hope and mercy, do any of the prophet's accusations apply to you? If so, pray about them, ask for God's help in making changes, and seek his mercy as you step in the right direction.

## Bible Answers

### What is the meaning of the vision in Ezekiel 1?

In the vision that occurred during the Babylonian Exile, Ezekiel describes seeing a heavenly chariot where God is enthroned. He sees shining wheels with eyes around the edges. "From the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures" with different faces—man, lion, eagle, and ox (Ezekiel 1:5).

Some hold that the creatures are suggestive of the Babylonian zodiac. The message to those in exile is that the Babylonian deities have not overcome the Lord, but God is on high above the universe. Others believe the creatures are a foreshadowing of the writers of the Gospels. The vision reminds those in exile (and us) that during tumultuous times, God abides. He will restore them—and us—according to his promise.



### TEMPLE OF BEL

This first-century temple, located in Palmyra, Syria, was dedicated to Bel, or Baal.

Baruch 6 mentions Bel in its condemnation of idolatry.



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