

## References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

### SEPTEMBER 4-10

#### TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EZEKIEL 42-45

##### "Pure Worship Restored!"

**(Ezekiel 43:10-12)** "As for you, son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, so that they will feel ashamed because of their errors, and they should study its plan. <sup>11</sup> If they feel ashamed of all they have done, you should make known to them the ground plan of the temple, its arrangement, its exits, and its entrances. Show them all its ground plans and its statutes, its ground plans and its laws, and write them down before their eyes, so that they may observe all its ground plan and carry out its statutes. <sup>12</sup> This is the law of the temple. The entire territory all around the top of the mountain is most holy. Look! This is the law of the temple.

w99 3/1 8 ¶3

##### "Set Your Heart Upon" God's Temple!

<sup>3</sup> This extensive vision, filling nine chapters of Ezekiel's book, provided exiled Judeans with a faith-strengthening promise. Pure worship would be restored! In the centuries since then, even down to our day, this vision has been a source of encouragement to lovers of Jehovah. How so? Let us examine what Ezekiel's prophetic vision meant to the exiled Israelites. It has four main components: the temple, the priesthood, the chieftain, and the land.

it-2 1082 ¶2

##### Temple

**Ezekiel's temple vision.** In 593 B.C.E., in the 14th year after the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple therein, the priest-prophet Ezekiel, transported in vision to a high mountaintop, beheld a great temple of Jehovah. (Eze 40:1, 2) To humiliate and bring about repentance of the exiled Jews, also doubtless to comfort faithful ones, Ezekiel was instructed to relate everything he saw to "the house of Israel." (Eze 40:4; 43:10, 11) The vision gave careful attention to the details of measurement. The units of measure used were the "reed" (the long reed, 3.11 m; 10.2 ft) and the "cubit" (the long cubit, 51.8 cm; 20.4 in.). (Eze 40:5, ftn) This attention to measurement has led some to believe that this visionary temple was to serve as a model for the temple later constructed by Zerubbabel in the

postexilic period. There is, however, no conclusive substantiation of this assumption.

**(Ezekiel 44:23)** "'They should instruct my people about the difference between what is holy and what is common; and they will teach them the difference between what is unclean and what is clean.

**(Ezekiel 45:16)** "'All the people of the land will make this contribution to the chieftain in Israel.

w99 3/1 10 ¶10

##### "Set Your Heart Upon" God's Temple!

<sup>10</sup> How all of this must have lifted the hearts of those exiles! Each family was assured of having an inheritance in the land. (Compare Micah 4:4.) Pure worship would occupy an exalted, central place there. And notice in Ezekiel's vision that the chieftain, like the priests, would live on land contributed by the people. (Ezekiel 45:16) So in the restored land, the people were to contribute to the work of those whom Jehovah appointed to take the lead, supporting them by cooperating with their direction. In all, this land was a picture of organization, co-operation, and security.

##### Digging for Spiritual Gems

**(Ezekiel 43:8, 9)** By putting their threshold next to my threshold and their doorpost beside my doorpost, with only a wall between me and them, they defiled my holy name by the detestable things they did, so I exterminated them in my anger. <sup>9</sup> Now let them put their spiritual prostitution and the carcasses of their kings far away from me, and I will dwell among them forever.

it-2 467 ¶4

##### Name

Israel's failure as God's name people to live up to his righteous commands constituted a profanation or defilement of God's name. (Eze 43:8; Am 2:7) Since the Israelites' unfaithfulness resulted in God's punishing them, this also gave opportunity for his name to be spoken of disrespectfully by other nations. (Compare Ps 74:10, 18; Isa 52:5.) Failing to recognize that the chastisement came from Jehovah, these nations wrongly attributed the calamities that befell Israel to the inability of Jehovah to protect his people. To clear his name of such reproach, Jehovah acted for the sake of his name and restored a remnant of Israel to their land.—Eze 36:22-24.

**(Ezekiel 45:9, 10)** “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘You have gone far enough, chieftains of Israel!’ “‘Put an end to your violence and oppression, and do what is just and righteous. Stop seizing the property of my people,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. <sup>10</sup> ‘You should use accurate scales, an accurate e’phah measure and an accurate bath measure.

#### **it-2 140**

#### **Justice**

Therefore, Jehovah has always rightly required that those desiring to gain his approval acquaint themselves with his standard of justice and follow it. (Isa 1:17, 18; 10:1, 2; Jer 7:5-7; 21:12; 22:3, 4; Eze 45:9, 10; Am 5:15; Mic 3:9-12; 6:8; Zec 7:9-12)

#### **Bible Reading**

**(Ezekiel 44:1-9)** He brought me back by way of the outer gate of the sanctuary facing east, and it was shut. <sup>2</sup> Then Jehovah said to me: “This gate will remain shut. It is not to be opened, and no human will enter by it; for Jehovah, the God of Israel, has entered through it, so it must remain shut. <sup>3</sup> However, the chieftain will sit in it to eat bread before Jehovah, for he is a chieftain. He will come in through the porch of the gate, and he will go out through it.” <sup>4</sup> Then he brought me through the north gate to the front of the temple. When I looked, I saw that the glory of Jehovah had filled the temple of Jehovah. So I fell with my face to the ground. <sup>5</sup> Then Jehovah said to me: “Son of man, pay attention, watch, and listen carefully to everything I tell you about the statutes and the laws of the temple of Jehovah. Pay close attention to the entryway of the temple and all the exits of the sanctuary. <sup>6</sup> You must say to the rebellious house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “That is enough of your detestable practices, O house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> When you bring foreigners who are uncircumcised in heart and flesh into my sanctuary, they profane my temple. You present my bread, fat and blood, while my covenant is being broken because of all your detestable practices. <sup>8</sup> You have not taken care of my holy things. Instead, you assign others to take care of the duties in my sanctuary.”’ <sup>9</sup> “‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “No foreigner living in Israel who is uncircumcised in heart and in flesh may enter my sanctuary.”’

## **SEPTEMBER 11-17**

### **TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | EZEKIEL 46-48**

#### **“Blessings That Restored Israel Would Enjoy”**

**(Ezekiel 47:1)** Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and there I saw water flowing eastward from under the threshold of the temple, for the front of the temple was facing east. The water was flowing down from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar.

**(Ezekiel 47:7-12)** When I returned, I saw that on the bank of the stream were very many trees on both sides. <sup>8</sup> Then he said to me: “This water flows toward the eastern region and continues down through the Ar’a-bah and enters the sea. When it enters the sea, the water there will be healed. <sup>9</sup> Swarms of living creatures will be able to live wherever the waters flow. There will be an abundance of fish, because this water will flow there. The seawater will be healed, and everything will live wherever the stream goes. <sup>10</sup> “Fishermen will stand beside it from En-ged’i clear to En-eg’la-im, where there will be a drying yard for dragnets. There will be an abundance of many kinds of fish, like the fish of the Great Sea. <sup>11</sup> “It will have swampy places and marshy places, and these will not be healed. They will be abandoned to salt. <sup>12</sup> “All sorts of trees for food will grow on both banks of the stream. Their leaves will not wither; nor will their fruitage fail. Each month they will bear new fruit, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruitage will serve as food and their leaves for healing.”

#### **w99 3/1 10 ¶11-12**

#### **“Set Your Heart Upon” God’s Temple!**

<sup>11</sup> Would Jehovah bless their land? The prophecy answers this question with a heartwarming picture. A stream flows from the temple, widening as it goes, becoming a torrent by the time it enters the Dead Sea. There it revives lifeless waters, and a fishing industry flourishes on a stretch of the shoreline. Along the riverbanks are many trees that bear fruit year-round, giving nourishment and healing. —Ezekiel 47:1-12.

<sup>12</sup> To the exiles, this promise echoed and confirmed earlier restoration prophecies that they held very dear. More than once, Jehovah’s inspired prophets had described a restored, repopulated Israel in paradisaic terms. Dead regions coming to life had

been a recurring prophetic theme. (Isaiah 35:1, 6, 7; 51:3; Ezekiel 36:35; 37:1-14) So the people could expect that Jehovah's life-giving blessings would flow forth like a river from the restored temple. Consequently, a spiritually dead nation would revive. The restored people would be blessed with outstanding spiritual men—men as righteous and firm as the trees along those visionary riverbanks, men who would take the lead in rebuilding a ruined land. Isaiah too had written of "big trees of righteousness" who would "rebuild the long-standing devastated places."—Isaiah 61:3, 4.

**(Ezekiel 47:13, 14)** This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: "This is the territory that you will assign as the land inheritance of the 12 tribes of Israel, and Joseph will have two portions. <sup>14</sup> You will inherit it and receive equal shares. I swore to give this land to your forefathers, and now it is assigned to you as an inheritance.

**w99 3/1 10 ¶10**

**"Set Your Heart Upon" God's Temple!**

<sup>10</sup> How all of this must have lifted the hearts of those exiles! Each family was assured of having an inheritance in the land. (Compare Micah 4:4.) Pure worship would occupy an exalted, central place there. And notice in Ezekiel's vision that the chieftain, like the priests, would live on land contributed by the people. (Ezekiel 45:16) So in the restored land, the people were to contribute to the work of those whom Jehovah appointed to take the lead, supporting them by cooperating with their direction. In all, this land was a picture of organization, cooperation, and security.

**(Ezekiel 48:9, 10)** "The contribution that you are to set apart to Jehovah will be 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 wide. <sup>10</sup> This will be the holy contribution for the priests. It will be 25,000 cubits on the north side, 10,000 on the west, 10,000 on the east, and 25,000 on the south. The sanctuary of Jehovah will be in the middle of it.

**Digging for Spiritual Gems**

**(Ezekiel 47:1)** Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and there I saw water flowing eastward from under the threshold of the temple, for the front of the temple was facing east. The water was flowing down from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar.

**(Ezekiel 47:8)** Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region and continues down through the Ar'a-bah and enters the sea. When it enters the sea, the water there will be healed.

**(Ezekiel 48:30)** "These will be the exits of the city: The northern side will measure 4,500 cubits.

**(Ezekiel 48:32-34)** "The eastern side will be 4,500 cubits long, and there are three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan. <sup>33</sup> "The southern side will measure 4,500 cubits, with three gates: one gate for Sim'e-on, one gate for Is'sa-char, and one gate for Zeb'u-lun. <sup>34</sup> "The western side will be 4,500 cubits long, with three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Ash'er, and one gate for Naph'ta-li.

**w99 3/1 11 ¶14**

**"Set Your Heart Upon" God's Temple!**

<sup>14</sup> Were these events the only fulfillment of Ezekiel's vision? No; something far greater is indicated. Consider: The temple that Ezekiel saw could not really be built as described. True, the Jews took that vision seriously and even applied some details literally. However, the visionary temple as a whole was too large even to fit on Mount Moriah, the site of the former temple. In addition, Ezekiel's temple was not in the city but some distance away on a separate tract of land, whereas the second temple was built where its predecessor had stood, in the city of Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:1, 2) Further, no literal river ever emerged from Jerusalem's temple. So ancient Israel saw only a token fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy. This implies that there must be a greater, spiritual fulfillment of this vision.

**(Ezekiel 47:6)** He asked me: "Have you seen this, son of man?" Then he had me walk and return to the bank of the stream.

**it-2 1001**

**Son of Man**

In the Hebrew Scriptures the most frequent occurrence of the expression is in the book of Ezekiel, where over 90 times God addresses the prophet as "son of man." (Eze 2:1, 3, 6, 8) The designation as so used apparently serves to emphasize that the prophet is simply an earthling, thus heightening the contrast between the human spokesman and the Source of his message, the Most High God. The same designation is applied to the prophet Daniel at Daniel 8:17.

## Bible Reading

**(Ezekiel 48:13-22)** “Right next to the territory of the priests, the Levites will have a portion 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 wide. (The whole length will be 25,000 long and 10,000 wide.)<sup>14</sup> They should not sell, exchange, or transfer any of this choicest portion of the land, for it is something holy to Jehovah.<sup>15</sup> “The remaining area that is 5,000 cubits wide alongside the 25,000 cubit border will be for common use of the city, for housing and pasture ground. The city will be in the middle of it.<sup>16</sup> These are the city’s measurements: The northern border is 4,500 cubits, the southern border is 4,500, the eastern border is 4,500, and the western border is 4,500.<sup>17</sup> The pasture ground of the city will be 250 cubits to the north, 250 to the south, 250 to the east, and 250 to the west.<sup>18</sup> “The length of the remaining portion will correspond to the holy contribution, 10,000 cubits to the east and 10,000 to the west. It will correspond to the holy contribution, and its produce will provide food for those serving the city.<sup>19</sup> Those who are serving the city from all the tribes of Israel will cultivate it.<sup>20</sup> “The whole contribution is 25,000 cubits square. You should set it aside as the holy contribution along with the possession of the city.<sup>21</sup> “What remains on both sides of the holy contribution and of the possession of the city will belong to the chieftain. It will be alongside the 25,000 cubit borders that are east and west of the contribution. It will correspond to those adjoining portions, and it will be for the chieftain. The holy contribution and the sanctuary of the temple will be in the middle of it.<sup>22</sup> “The possession of the Levites and the possession of the city will be between what belongs to the chieftain. The chieftain’s territory will be between the boundary of Judah and the boundary of Benjamin.

## SEPTEMBER 18-24

### TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | DANIEL 1-3

#### “Loyalty to Jehovah Brings Rewards”

**(Daniel 3:16-20)** Sha’drach, Me’shach, and A-bed’ne-go answered the king: “O Neb·u·chad·nez’zar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.<sup>17</sup> If it must be, our God whom we serve is able to rescue us from the burning fiery fur-

nace, O king, and to rescue us from your hand.<sup>18</sup> But even if he does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold that you have set up.”<sup>19</sup> Then Neb·u·chad·nez’zar became so furious with Sha’drach, Me’shach, and A-bed’ne-go that the expression of his face changed toward them, and he gave orders to heat the furnace seven times hotter than usual.<sup>20</sup> He ordered some of the mighty men from his army to bind Sha’drach, Me’shach, and A-bed’ne-go and to throw them into the burning fiery furnace.

#### w15 7/15 25 ¶15-16

#### Maintain Your Loyalty to God’s Kingdom

<sup>15</sup> Sooner or later, all of Jehovah’s servants will find themselves in situations in which their conscience obliges them to stand out as different from those around them—whether colleagues, classmates, neighbors, relatives, or others. (1 Pet. 2:19) Yet, stand out we must! We should not be surprised if the world hates us for our stand; Jesus warned us that it would. Most opposers do not appreciate the importance of the issues involved in Christian neutrality. For us, though, these are matters of utmost importance.

<sup>16</sup> Loyalty to Jehovah requires that we be steadfast in the face of threats. (Dan. 3:16-18) Fear of man can affect people of all ages, but young people may find it especially difficult to go against the flow, so to speak. If your children are facing such issues as the flag salute or nationalistic celebrations, do not hesitate to assist them. Use Family Worship sessions to help your children understand the issues involved so that they can meet those challenges courageously. Help them to express their personal convictions clearly and respectfully. (Rom. 1:16) To back up your children, take the initiative to speak with their teachers about these matters if necessary.

**(Daniel 3:26-29)** Neb·u·chad·nez’zar approached the door of the burning fiery furnace and said: “Sha’drach, Me’shach, and A-bed’ne-go, you servants of the Most High God, step out and come here!” Sha’drach, Me’shach, and A-bed’ne-go stepped out from the midst of the fire.<sup>27</sup> And the satraps, prefects, governors, and the high officials of the king who were assembled there saw that the fire had had no effect on the bodies of these men; not a hair of their heads had been singed, their cloaks looked no different, and there was not even the smell of fire

on them. <sup>28</sup> Neb-u-chad-nez'zar then declared: "Praised be the God of Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, who sent his angel and rescued his servants. They trusted in him and went against the command of the king and were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. <sup>29</sup> I am therefore issuing an order that any people, nation, or language group that says anything against the God of Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go should be dismembered, and their houses should be turned into public latrines; for there is no other god who is able to rescue like this one."

**w13 1/15 10 ¶13**

### **Be Courageous—Jehovah Is With You!**

<sup>13</sup> In the seventh century B.C.E., three Hebrew servants of Jehovah were given clear evidence that God rewards faith and courage. King Nebuchadnezzar assembled Babylon's dignitaries and demanded that they worship a towering image of gold. Any who would not do so were to die in a fiery furnace. The three Hebrews respectfully told Nebuchadnezzar: "Our God whom we are serving is able to rescue us. Out of the burning fiery furnace and out of your hand, O king, he will rescue us. But if not, let it become known to you, O king, that your gods are not the ones we are serving, and the image of gold that you have set up we will not worship." (Dan. 3:16-18) The thrilling rescue of the three Hebrews is vividly described at Daniel 3:19-30. Although we are not likely to be threatened with death in a fiery furnace, we do face tests of integrity and can be sure that God will bless us for our faith and courage.

### **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

**(Daniel 1:5)** Furthermore, the king assigned to them a daily ration from the king's delicacies and from the wine he drank. They were to be trained for three years, and at the end of that time they were to enter the king's service.

**(Daniel 1:8)** But Daniel resolved in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's delicacies or with the wine he drank. So he asked the principal court official for permission not to defile himself in this way.

**it-2 382**

### **Meshach**

There are three probable reasons why they considered the king's delicacies 'polluting': (1) The Babylonians ate animals declared unclean by the Mosaic Law; (2) they would not be careful to see

that the animals were properly bled, some perhaps being strangled; (3) the pagans often first sacrificed the animals to their gods, considering the eating of such meat as a part of worship of these gods.—Da 1:8; compare 1Co 10:18-20, 28.

**(Daniel 2:44)** "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. And this kingdom will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it alone will stand forever,

**w12 6/15 17, box**

### **WHO MAKE UP "ALL THESE KINGDOMS"?**

The prophecy at Daniel 2:44 states that God's Kingdom "will crush and put an end to all *these* kingdoms." That prophecy refers only to the kingdoms pictured by the various parts of the image.

What about all other human governments? The parallel prophecy in Revelation reveals the larger picture. It shows that "the kings of the entire inhabited earth" will be gathered against Jehovah on "the great day of God the Almighty." (Rev. 16:14; 19:19-21) Hence, not only the kingdoms of the image but also all other human governments will be destroyed at Armageddon.

**w01 10/15 6 ¶4**

### **The Key to a Happy World**

The answer is found at Daniel 2:44: "In the days of those kings [ruling at the end of the present system] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. *It will crush and put an end to all these [man-made] kingdoms*, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." Why will God's Kingdom have to "crush" earthly rulerships? Because these insist on perpetuating the God-defying spirit of self-determination promoted by Satan back in the garden of Eden. In addition to working against mankind's best interests, those who strive to perpetuate that spirit put themselves on a collision course with the Creator. (Psalm 2:6-12; Revelation 16:14, 16) Hence, we must ask ourselves, 'Are we for or against rule by God?'

### **Bible Reading**

**(Daniel 2:31-43)** "You, O king, were watching, and you saw an immense image. That image, which was huge and extremely bright, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was terrifying. <sup>32</sup> The head of that image was of fine

gold, its chest and its arms were of silver, its abdomen and its thighs were of copper, <sup>33</sup> its legs were of iron, and its feet were partly of iron and partly of clay. <sup>34</sup> You looked on until a stone was cut out, not by hands, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and of clay and crushed them. <sup>35</sup> At that time the iron, the clay, the copper, the silver, and the gold were, all together, crushed and became like the chaff from the summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a large mountain, and it filled the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> “This is the dream, and we will now tell the king its interpretation. <sup>37</sup> You, O king—the king of kings to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the might, the strength, and the glory, <sup>38</sup> and into whose hand he has given men wherever they may dwell, as well as the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens, and whom he has made ruler over all of them—you yourself are the head of gold. <sup>39</sup> “But after you another kingdom will rise, inferior to you; then another kingdom, a third one, of copper, that will rule over the whole earth. <sup>40</sup> “As for the fourth kingdom, it will be strong like iron. For just as iron crushes and pulverizes everything else, yes, like iron that shatters, it will crush and shatter all of these. <sup>41</sup> “And just as you saw the feet and the toes to be partly of clay of a potter and partly of iron, the kingdom will be divided, but some of the hardness of iron will be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with soft clay. <sup>42</sup> And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom will be partly strong and partly fragile. <sup>43</sup> Just as you saw iron mixed with soft clay, they will be mixed with the people; but they will not stick together, one to the other, just as iron does not mix with clay.

## SEPTEMBER 25–OCTOBER 1

### TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | DANIEL 4-6

#### “Are You Serving Jehovah Continually?”

**(Daniel 6:7-10)** All the royal officials, prefects, satraps, high royal officers, and governors have consulted together to establish a royal decree and to enforce a ban, that for 30 days whoever makes a petition to any god or man except to you, O king, should be thrown into the lions’ pit. <sup>8</sup> Now, O king, may you establish the decree and

sign it, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be annulled.” <sup>9</sup> So King Da-ri’us signed the decree and the ban. <sup>10</sup> But as soon as Daniel knew that the decree had been signed, he went to his house, which had the windows of his roof chamber open toward Jerusalem. And three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed and offered praise before his God, as he had regularly done prior to this.

w10 11/15 6 ¶16

#### Young Ones—Be Guided by God’s Word

<sup>16</sup> Why should you want to obey Jehovah even when you are alone? Remember this: You are able either to hurt Jehovah’s feelings or to make his heart rejoice. (Gen. 6:5, 6; Prov. 27:11) Jehovah is affected by your actions because “he cares for you.” (1 Pet. 5:7) He wants you to listen to him so that you can benefit yourself. (Isa. 48:17, 18) When some of Jehovah’s servants in ancient Israel ignored his counsel, they caused him to feel pain. (Ps. 78:40, 41) On the other hand, Jehovah felt deep affection for the prophet Daniel, for an angel called him a “very desirable man.” (Dan. 10:11) Why? Daniel remained loyal to God not only when in public but also in private.—*Read Daniel 6:10.*

w06 11/1 24 ¶12

#### Do You Share Jehovah’s View of Sacred Things?

<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, many things related to the lives of anointed members of the Christian congregation and their companions are held sacred. *Our relationship with Jehovah* is something sacred. (1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 36:7) It is so precious to us that we allow nothing and no one to come between us and our God, Jehovah. (2 Chronicles 15:2; James 4:7, 8) *Prayer* plays an important part in our maintaining a close relationship with Jehovah. Prayer was so sacred to the prophet Daniel that even at the risk of his life, he continued faithful in his custom of praying to Jehovah. (Daniel 6:7-11) “The prayers of the holy ones,” or anointed Christians, are likened to incense used in temple worship. (Revelation 5:8; 8:3, 4; Leviticus 16:12, 13) This symbolism underscores the sacredness of prayer. What a privilege it is to be able to communicate with the Sovereign of the universe! No wonder prayer is held sacred in our lives!

**(Daniel 6:16)** So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the pit of lions. The king said to Daniel: “Your God whom you are continually serving will rescue you.”

**(Daniel 6:20)** As he got near the pit, he called out to Daniel with a sad voice. The king asked Daniel: “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you are continually serving been able to rescue you from the lions?”

**w03 9/15 15 ¶2**

### **Why Should We Pray Incessantly?**

<sup>2</sup> How did Jehovah view Daniel? When the angel Gabriel came to answer one of Daniel’s prayers, he described the prophet as “someone very desirable” or “a man greatly beloved.” (Daniel 9:20-23; *The New English Bible*) In the prophecy of Ezekiel, Jehovah referred to Daniel as a righteous man. (Ezekiel 14:14, 20) Over the years, Daniel’s prayers evidently resulted in a close relationship with his God, a fact recognized even by Darius.—Daniel 6:16.

**(Daniel 6:22, 23)** My God sent his angel and shut the mouth of the lions, and they have not harmed me, for I was found innocent before him; nor have I done any wrong to you, O king.”

<sup>23</sup> The king was overjoyed, and he commanded that Daniel be lifted up out of the pit. When Daniel was lifted up out of the pit, he was completely unharmed, because he had trusted in his God.

**w10 2/15 18 ¶15**

**“The Spirit and the Bride Keep On Saying: ‘Come!’”**

<sup>15</sup> After Daniel had spent a night in the lions’ pit, the king himself went there and cried out: “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you are serving with constancy been able to rescue you from the lions?” Daniel immediately replied: “O king, live on even to times indefinite. My own God sent his angel and shut the mouth of the lions, and they have not brought me to ruin, forasmuch as before him innocence itself was found in me; and also before you, O king, no hurtful act have I done.” Jehovah blessed Daniel for serving “with constancy.” —Dan. 6:19-22.

### **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

**(Daniel 4:10, 11)** “‘In the visions of my head while on my bed, I saw a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was enormous. <sup>11</sup> The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached the heavens, and it was visible to the ends of the whole earth.

**(Daniel 4:20-22)** “‘The tree that you saw that grew great and became strong, whose top reached the heavens and was visible to all the

earth, <sup>21</sup> which had beautiful foliage, abundant fruit, and food for all, beneath which the beasts of the field would dwell and on whose branches the birds of the heavens would reside, <sup>22</sup> it is you, O king, because you have grown great and become strong, and your grandeur has grown and reached to the heavens, and your rulership to the ends of the earth.

**w07 9/1 18 ¶5**

### **Highlights From the Book of Daniel**

**4:10, 11, 20-22—What was represented, or symbolized, by the immense tree in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream?** The tree initially represented Nebuchadnezzar as the ruler of a world power. Since the rulership extended “to the extremity of the earth,” however, the tree must signify something far grander. Daniel 4:17 connects the dream to the rulership of “the Most High” over mankind. The tree, then, also symbolized Jehovah’s universal sovereignty, especially with respect to the earth. Therefore, the dream has two fulfillments—in Nebuchadnezzar’s rulership and in Jehovah’s sovereignty.

**(Daniel 5:17)** Daniel then replied to the king: “You may keep your gifts and give your presents to others. However, I will read the writing to the king and make known its interpretation to him.

**(Daniel 5:29)** Then Bel-shaz’zar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and placed a gold necklace around his neck; and they heralded concerning him that he was to become the third ruler in the kingdom.

**w88 10/1 30 ¶3-5**

### **Questions From Readers**

When the Hebrew named Daniel was finally brought in, the king repeated his offer—to clothe Daniel with purple, to put a gold necklace on him, and to make him the third ruler in the kingdom. The prophet honorably replied: “Let your gifts prove to be to you yourself, and your presents do you give to others. However, I shall read the writing itself to the king, and the interpretation I shall make known to him.” —Daniel 5:17.

So Daniel did not need to be bribed or paid to provide the interpretation. The king could keep his gifts or bestow them on someone else. Daniel would provide the explanation, not for a reward, but because he was empowered to do so by Jehovah, the true God, whose judgment on Babylon was impending.

As we read at Daniel 5:29, after Daniel had read and interpreted the words as he said he would, the king

ordered that the rewards be given to Daniel anyway. Daniel himself did not put on the clothing and the necklace. They were put on him by order of the absolute ruler, King Belshazzar. But this does not conflict with Daniel 5:17, where the prophet made it clear that his motive was not a selfish one.

#### **dp 109 ¶22**

#### **Four Words That Changed the World**

<sup>22</sup> Thus the riddle was solved. Mighty Babylon was about to fall to the Medo-Persian forces. Though crestfallen in the face of this pronouncement of doom, Belshazzar kept his word. He had his servants clothe Daniel with purple, bedeck him with a golden necklace, and herald him as the third ruler in the kingdom. (Daniel 5:29) Daniel did not refuse these honors, recognizing that they reflected the honor due Jehovah. Of course, Belshazzar may have hoped to soften Jehovah's judgment by honoring His prophet. If so, it was a case of too little too late.

#### **Bible Reading**

**(Daniel 4:29-37)** Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. <sup>30</sup> The king was saying: "Is this not Babylon the Great that I myself have built for the royal house by my own strength and might and for the glory of my majesty?" <sup>31</sup> While the word was yet in the king's mouth, a voice came down from the heavens: "To you it is being said, O King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar, 'The kingdom has gone away from you, <sup>32</sup> and from mankind you are being driven away. With the beasts of the field your dwelling will be, and you will be given vegetation to eat just like bulls, and seven times will pass over you, until you know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that he grants it to whomever he wants.'" <sup>33</sup> At that moment the word was fulfilled on Neb-u-chad-nez'zar. He was driven away from mankind, and he began to eat vegetation just like bulls, and his body became wet with the dew of the heavens, until his hair grew long just like eagles' feathers and his nails were like birds' claws. <sup>34</sup> "At the end of that time I, Neb-u-chad-nez'zar, looked up to the heavens, and my understanding returned to me; and I praised the Most High, and to the One living forever I gave praise and glory, because his rulership is an everlasting rulership and his kingdom is for generation after generation. <sup>35</sup> All the inhabitants of the earth are regarded as nothing, and he does according to his own will among the

army of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth. And there is no one who can hinder him or say to him, 'What have you done?' <sup>36</sup> "At that time my understanding returned to me, and the glory of my kingdom, my majesty, and my splendor returned to me. My high officials and nobles eagerly sought me out, and I was restored to my kingdom, and even more greatness was added to me. <sup>37</sup> "Now I, Neb-u-chad-nez'zar, am praising and exalting and glorifying the King of the heavens, because all his works are truth and his ways are just, and because he is able to humiliate those who are walking in pride."