



## DEVOTIONAL FOR DANIEL 10-12; EZRA 1-6; PSALM 137

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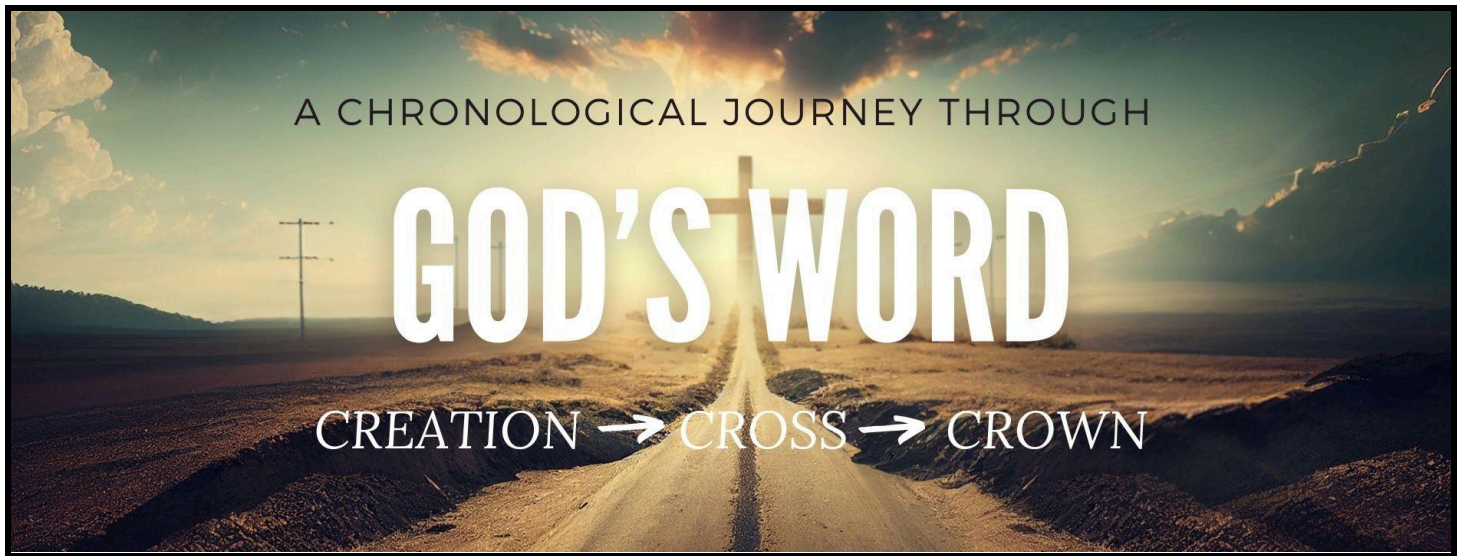
The Book of Ezra opens with a gentile, Persian king being used by God Almighty to fulfill His word to Jeremiah. In His sovereignty, God directs the thoughts and intentions of Cyrus' heart to issue an edict authorizing the Babylonian exiles (God's chosen people) to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of the Lord. This is nothing short of miraculous, as God's Word is being fulfilled through a pagan king!

Ezra then goes on to list those Jews (God's chosen people) and their families who are to return to Jerusalem to rebuild what was lost to them. For seventy years they were enslaved.

It's here I thought of my own exile to a godless life of sin before I was born again. God used many miraculous circumstances, people, and great trials to bring me to a place where I was counted among those on the list (the Lamb's book of eternal life) of returning "exiles". But that was only the beginning for me, the beginning of a Christian journey, where I would and will face opposition to the building (my sanctification process) of my new life. I have great confidence in this process, however. Romans 8:38-39 are two of the most comforting and sustaining verses to me in the Bible. "And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (NLT)

Occasionally, and more often than I would like, I face trials and tests to this new life in Christ. I often find myself waiting for answers and solutions to the troubles that come my way (and every Christians life). In the prescribed reading for this devotional, Daniel 10:13 tells of an instance where God's message to Daniel came later due to opposition from the enemy. I don't doubt similar delays could be at play in my walk with God. Let me say this as a personal testimony: I fare much better through my waiting and struggles if I do not ask, "why?" The following scripture helps me with the why questions. "...for I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return" (2 Timothy 1:12b NLT).

Ezra tells of the completion and dedication of the temple! Hallelujah. Sacrifices were made! "Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you" (1 Corinthians 3:16 NLT)?



**Questions:**

1. Is your name on the list? (Revelation 21:27 - the Lamb's book of life?)
2. Are you fully committed to the building of the temple? (1 Corinthians 3:16 - your relationship with God and His body?)
3. In what areas do you need others to come alongside you in this building process?