



# Major Prophets

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Barbara Westberg

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by Barbara Westberg

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To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I am eternally grateful for the passion for writing that He has planted in my soul. -Barbara Westberg

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## Notes to the Instructor

# How to Use This Manual

Welcome to the world of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, which in multiple ways parallels our world.

These lessons are interactive, encouraging the students to get into the Word.

*Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember. Involve me, I learn.*

Proverbs 15:2 in the Living Bible says, “A wise teacher makes learning a joy.” This applies to teachers of all ages. Teaching methods differ according to the age level, but every age should enjoy studying God’s Word. One common saying among good teachers is “it is a sin to make the gospel boring.” This applies to all the Word of God. Teach with passion. Teach with energy. Teach with anointing and teach with wisdom.

Each lesson will require one and a half to two hours. If you do not have that much time, divide the lessons, or choose the activities best suited to your students and environment. Some of the in-class exercises could be given as homework assignments. Be flexible. The lessons are.

At the end of each lesson is a list of discussion/review questions. These may be used in several ways: (1) class discussion starters, (2) class review, (3) individual checkup, and/or (4) a review quiz. Answers may be given orally or written.

“Variety is the spice of life.” Spice up (enliven) your lessons by using a variety of teaching methods.

## Lesson 1—The Keepers of the Light

**Overview.** To define role of the prophets

Lessons 1–3 set the stage for the ministries of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. To understand the prophecies of the major prophets, the students need to be acquainted with the political and religious conditions of Israel, as well as the geographical location.

**Word search.** Students use concordances to find references for the verses given on the table. They determine the prophet called and how he was called. If time is limited, assign specific verses to each team. When time is called, students share answers and complete the table.

Answers: (1) I Kings 19:16. Elisha anointed by Elijah; (2) Isaiah 49:5. Isaiah called by God from the womb; (3) Jeremiah 1:4–5. Jeremiah called by God from the womb; (4) Amos 7:15. Amos called by God from keeping the sheep; (5) Ezekiel 2:1–3. Ezekiel called by audible voice of God; (6) Jonah 1:1–2. Jonah called by audible voice of God.

**Think about it.** Brainstorm with the class on ways the responsibilities of the keeper of the light parallel a prophet’s duties.

**Dig deeper.** Students are to list Old Testament prophets. Divide the class into teams of two or three. Allow four minutes for the teams to list as many prophets as they can. Ask the team with the longest list to read theirs. Other teams check off their list the duplicate names called. Other teams contribute names not mentioned. In Part II of this exercise, students designate which prophets were speaking, writing, or both. Allow a short time for comparison and discussion.

**Checkup.** After students have studied the Tanakh table for a few minutes, ask them to close their books. On a dry erase board make columns with headings: (1) Law, (2) Early Prophets, (3) Latter Prophets, and (4) Writings. Ask for two volunteers: a reader and a scribe. The reader uses the table of contents in his or her



Bible to read the names of the books. As each book is read, the class identifies the Tanakh category the book belongs in, and the scribe lists it on the board.

**Conclusion.** Lead the class in singing “Send the Light,” or read it together as a class.

**Commitment.** Allow a few minutes for students to write their commitment on the memo pad. Conclude with a prayer.

## Lesson 2—The Kings of Israel

**Overview.** To study a chronological listing of the kings of Israel and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses

**Review of Lesson 1.** Collect from the students their one-page testimonies. Grade these and return them to the students at the beginning of lesson 3. Ask two or three students to quote II Peter 1:19.

**Review the history of Israel.** This is basic history that your students should know before they can comprehend the times and messages of the major prophets. Answers: twelve; Abraham; Egypt; Moses; Canaan; idols; Samuel; king; Rehoboam; ten; Samaria; Judah; Jerusalem; altars; Temple

**Note it.** Students are asked to list two or three ways in which the geographical location of their nation affects the lifestyle of the people. This is for the students’ observation. You need not ask for comments unless you feel it would be beneficial to their understanding of their environment.

**Study of the kings.** This study of the kings could easily take an hour: (1) 5 minutes – self-check on Israel’s history; (2) 15–20 minutes – assigning and grading the kings; (3) 10 minutes – sharing grades; and (4) 15–20 minutes class discussion, which probably will include varied opinions.

**Dig deeper.** This exercise is designed to make students think. To conserve time, divide the list of kings between individuals or teams to study and grade. Students look up the scriptural passages and determine a grade to assign each king, using the GATS grading scale. Then they share their grade recommendations, and the class completes the table. Conclude by engaging the class in a discussion, using the questions given and any that arise from this exercise.

**Discussion and review questions.** At the end of each lesson is a list of discussion/review questions. These may be used in several ways: (1) class discussion starters, (2) class review, (3) individual checkup, and/or (4) a review quiz. Answers may be given orally or written. Use a variety of methods to engage the class.

### **Lesson 3—The Enemies of Israel**

**Overview.** To define Israel's enemies and how they infiltrated and conquered God's people

**Review of lesson 2.** Return to the students their graded testimonies from lesson 1. Ask two or three students to share the summary of lesson 2 that they wrote.

**List them.** Answers: Judah, verse 19; Benjamin, verse 21; Manasseh, verses 27-28; Ephraim, verse 29; Zebulun, verse 30; Asher, verses 31-32; Naphtali, verse 33; Dan, verse 34.

**Talk about it.** Use the discussion questions given to engage the class in analyzing how the Canaanites' sins contaminated God's people.

**Do it.** Bring a transparent jar or glass of clean water and some dirt. Add a small amount of dirt to the water and stir. Did the clean water purify the dirt, or did the dirt pollute the clean water? What does this say about sin?

**Look closer.** If you have an overhead projector and copier, make transparencies of the maps. Project the ancient map on the wall. Overlay it with

the contemporary map to give students an overview of the magnitude of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires.

**Dig deeper.** Students are asked to list what God foretold that Israel's enemies would do to them.

**Look closer.** Lead the class in a discussion of their findings.

**Talk about it.** Divide the students into three teams and assign each team one point to discuss. If time allows, call for one member from each team to share their team's conclusions.

**Plan ahead.** In appendix 4 is a skit "Answering the Call." Choose two dramatic students to present this at the beginning of lesson 4. Give each actor a copy of the script to study (not memorize). Gather the needed props and run through the skit at least once before class.

## Lesson 4—Isaiah Commissioned

**Overview.** To evaluate Isaiah's call and how it influenced his ministry

**Review of lesson 3.** Call for the students to turn in the warning to the church against compromise that they wrote. If there is time, share a few of these with the class.

**Introduction.** Introduce the lesson with the skit, "Answering the Call." (See appendix 4, page 192.) Ask students to summarize in one sentence what the skit said to them.

**Note it.** If time allows, ask two or three of your students to share who they were (professionally, e.g., student, pastor, or baker) when God called them and where they were geographically.

**Note it.** Ask for a volunteer or two to share a time when the presence of God pressed them to their knees in repentance or awe.

**Write it.** Students write a prayer for their nation. Lead the class in a corporate prayer of repentance for their nation.

**Do it.** To illustrate the purpose of prophecies, ask students to get out their phones. Instruct them to use the camera feature and focus in on something or someone. Talk about how with the zoom feature they can bring distant objects closer and enlarge them, making the details clearer. How is this like prophecy? Stress that prophecies should be studied in the light of (1) current events by examining them closely, and (2) future events by carefully comparing them with other prophecies in God's Word.

## **Lesson 5—The Book of Isaiah**

**Overview.** To present an overview of the Book of Isaiah and analyze how God's goodness and severity is demonstrated in His dealings with His people.

**Review of lesson 4.** Allow a brief time for volunteers to share the mission statements they wrote for Isaiah and for themselves.

**Talk about it.** In several places, discussion questions are given. Use these to lead your students into introspection.

**Dig deeper.** Students may work individually, in teams, or as a class to list the eight woes pronounced by God upon Judah.

**Read aloud.** Ask for volunteers to read aloud these passages as they are necessary for understanding the flow of the lesson. Never call on a student to read aloud unless you know that student is qualified to do so.

**Plan ahead.** "The Case of Jehovah vs. Judah," (appendix 6) is a synopsis of this lesson. Present it at the beginning of lesson 6 for review. A practice session

would be helpful, but not necessary. Simply give copies of the script to the actors and let them present it as a reader's theater. (Actors read and act out their parts spontaneously.) No props required.

**Optional:** Announce to the class that you will give extra credit to those who write a modern version of the Parable of the Vineyard.

## Lesson 6—Prophecies of Judgment

**Overview.** To demonstrate that the law of the harvest is universal and timeless

**Review of lesson 5.** Ask students to submit the revision of the Parable of the Vineyard that they wrote. (Optional: give extra credit for completing this project.) Present the skit "The Case of Jehovah vs. Judah."

**Talk about it.** After the skit, lead the class in a discussion of the significant points.

**Read it.** Students find and read together Hosea 8:7. Allow a few minutes for them to write a paraphrase of this verse, either individually or as a class.

**Dig deeper.** Assign each team one nation to research. Each team chooses a scribe to record findings. Allow 15–20 minutes for research. Teams should use concordances and/or other resources. If numerous biblical references are given, students read the first verse/passage, the last, and any significant events. Teams organize their notes chronologically. Call for scribes to report their team's findings. Set a time limit for reports.

**Plan ahead.** On a sheet of paper print Sennacherib's message to Hezekiah (in italics in the script). Roll it and tie with a ribbon. Give a copy of the script to five good readers to study. Assign each a part. This will be presented as a readers' theater in lesson 7.

## Lesson 7—Isaiah’s Prophecies Fulfilled

**Overview.** To examine Isaiah’s fulfilled prophecies in the light of history and be aware of coming events

**Review of lesson 6.** Collect the written testimonies demonstrating the law of the harvest. Return to the students the graded parables of a contemporary vineyard.

**Readers’ Theater.** *If “theater” is offensive to some, “radio program” could be used here.* Students assigned parts sit or stand facing the class as they dramatically read the script. Afterward, lead the class in a discussion of the significant points.

**Talk about it.** Divide the class into two groups and assign each a chapter to discuss Hezekiah’s miracle and his mistake. (The assignment at the end of lesson 6 was for students to read chapters 38–39, so they should be prepared to engage in a discussion.) Appoint one student in each group as the leader and another student to be the scribe and take notes. Set a time limit. Call for each group’s findings.

**Dig deeper.** To save time, assign references on the table to individuals or teams. Students share their answers and their teammates complete the tables.

**Answers to Fill in the Blanks (Table 1):** (1) Rezin/Syria, Pekah/Israel; (2) Damascus; (3) Palestina; (4) Assyria; (5) Moab; (6) Egypt and Ethiopia; (7) Kedar; (8) Tyre; (9) David; (10) Fifteen.

**Answers to Fill in the Blanks (Table 2):** (1) Hezekiah, Babylon; (2) east; (3) Medes; (4) Babylon, Sodom, Gomorrah; (5) Cyrus, Jerusalem, Temple; (6) children, Israel, Jerusalem; (7) altar, Egypt; (8) world; (9) seventy; (10) Edom (Idumea), generation, generation.

## Lesson 8—The Messianic Prophet

**Overview.** To interpret Isaiah’s messianic prophecies in light of Christ’s first and second advents

**Review of lesson 7.** Ask the class to quote in unison Isaiah 53:3–5.

**Talk about it.** These discussion questions can lead into a lengthy analysis. To prevent this, allow a brief time for each question. When the timer sounds, stop the discussion immediately, even in the middle of a student’s argument.

**Dig deeper.** Divide the class into three teams and assign each team a chapter: Isaiah 43, 44, or 45. Each student takes a segment to study. Students highlight verses that refer to the oneness of God. When time is called, have a reading marathon. In scriptural sequences the students read aloud the verses they highlighted. Keep the reading moving. No discussion. Just the Word of God speaking for itself. As verses are quickly read one after another, the almighty God will be exalted. Students who are not reading follow along, highlighting in their Bibles the verses read. This makes a convenient reference for future study of (or teaching on) the oneness of God.

**Talk about it.** (optional) This discussion is designed to reinforce the students’ understanding that Jesus Christ is the one true God revealed in flesh. If your students are well grounded in this truth and time is limited, you might skip these questions.

**Word search.** Assign each student (or team) a prophecy and challenge them to find a New Testament verse that proves Jesus Christ fulfilled that prophecy. (Concordances are needed.) When time is called, students share their answers and complete the table.

**Think about it.** Allow time for students to write a few sermon notes focusing on a promise given in Isaiah’s prophecies.

**Make a note.** Students describe how one verse from the list has ministered to them in the past.

## **Lesson 9—Jeremiah, the Weeping Prophet (Part 1)**

**Overview.** To survey Jeremiah's mission and ministry

**Review of lesson 8.** Ask students to quickly share the words or phrases from Jeremiah 1 that spoke to them. They should turn in their synopses of Isaiah for grading.

**Note it.** On the memo pad students are asked to briefly note a turning point in the history of their nation, church, or family that was told to them by the older generation—something they did not witness or experience, but it determined the direction of their life.

**Fill in the blanks.** Students work individually or as a class to fill in the blanks.

**Think about it.** Use these questions for a class discussion or for a moment of quiet reflection.

**Talk about it.** Use these questions for a class discussion, as time allows.

**Commitment.** Students complete the prayer list.

**Dig deeper. Homework assignment.** Write each of Jeremiah's prophecies on a slip of paper, one per student. (You need one per student, so duplicate them as needed.) Fold and distribute to students at the end of class. Before the next class, students study the prophecy assigned, identify a key word, and summarize the prophecy into two or three sentences. At the beginning of lesson 10, students share their conclusions, as time allows.

## **Lesson 10—Jeremiah, the Weeping Prophet (Part 2)**

**Overview.** To parallel Jeremiah's ministry to Judah to the church's mission to the world



**Review of lesson 9.** Ask the students to turn in for grading their synopsis of the prophecy assigned them.

**Dig deeper.** Students read the verses and fill in the blanks, individually or as a class. Answers: (1) neighbors, (2) family, (3) “familiar” or friends, (4) priests, prophets and all the people, and (5) the king.

**List it.** Brainstorm with the class to compile a list of Jeremiah’s character traits. Ask for opinions on which was his strongest and which was his weakest.

**Act it out.** Assign each illustrated sermon to an individual student or a team. If time in class allows, they start planning a creative way to dramatize the sermon, e.g., skit, monologue, pantomime, song, or whatever. They probably will need to work outside of class to polish and practice their presentation, which they will give at the beginning of lesson 11. Limit each presentation to 3–5 minutes. Base grades on biblical accuracy, creativity, and spiritual impact.

## **Lesson 11—Lamentations, a Sad Song**

**Overview.** To discover God’s merciful, refining word even in affliction

**Review of lesson 10.** Call for the teams dramatizing Jeremiah’s illustrated sermon. Allow 3–5 minutes per team. Because of the time the dramatization requires and because the Book of Lamentations is brief, less study material is provided for it than other books.

**Read it aloud.** Encourage students to put themselves in Jeremiah’s skin as he watched his people led into captivity. Lead the class in a loud, wailing corporate reading of Jeremiah’s “how” statements.

**Talk about it.** Use the questions to lead a brief discussion reviewing the setting of the Book of Jeremiah.

**Note it.** If there is time, ask students to make notes regarding how the process of tearing down can lead to the building of something better, as related to their lives or the lives of someone they know. If there is not enough time in class, this could be part of the homework assignment.

**Memorize it.** Set a timer for three minutes and challenge the students to memorize Lamentations 3:21–23. They work individually, in pairs, or as a class. Ask for volunteers to quote these verses.

**Sing it.** Lead the class in singing “Great Is Thy Faithfulness,” or play a recording. Students make a note of the line that impacts them the most.

**Assignment.** Assign each student a chapter from Lamentations from which to write a sermon or lesson outline. They are to list (1) the Scripture text, (2) sermon/lesson title, and (3) three main points.

## **Lesson 12: Ezekiel, the Watchman in Babylon**

**Overview.** To emphasize that even in an ungodly environment God’s people are accountable to His Word

**Review of lesson 11.** Students turn in their explanations of a simile from Lamentations, as well as their sermon titles and outlines.

**Note it.** Lead the class in a corporate reading of Ezekiel 2:3–7. Allow a few minutes for them to list on their notepads the similarities between Isaiah’s, Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s job descriptions. If time allows, call for a few volunteers to share their notes.

**Talk about it.** Three discussion segments are given in sequence. Lead the students in discussions of the questions.

**Study it.** Assign each student one of Ezekiel’s visions or sign-acts. (See Assignments for details.)

## Lesson 13—Ezekiel, the Restoration Prophet

**Overview.** To compare the restoration of Israel to the restoration of mankind.

**Review of lesson 12.** If there is time, ask for a couple of volunteers to share their paper expounding on one of Ezekiel's sign-acts or visions. Ask the class to collectively quote Ezekiel 11:19-20.

**Dig Deeper.** Assign each student one of the metaphors or parables. Students read the reference and fill in the blanks in the chart. When time is called, students share their answers with the class, and the class completes the chart. Answers: (1) vine tree, Jerusalem, fire; (2) Jerusalem, nations; (3) eagle, Babylon, Jerusalem, Babylon(ia); (4) furnace, fury (wrath, indignation, judgment); (5) Samaria, Jerusalem; (6) pot, Jerusalem, wife, purge; (7) Lamentation, Tyrus; (8) shepherds, Israel; (9) sticks, Judah, Joseph

**Note it.** Students are given a list of apocalyptic prophecies. Allow time for them to highlight these or note them in the margin of their Bibles.

**Talk about it.** Lead the class in a discussion of how the sin-cycle is perpetuated in their generation, whether in their family, nation, and/or globally.

**Visual it.** The timeline of Ezekiel's ministry is designed to be a class project. Stretch a line across the front of the room. Provide paper clips or clothespins to attach the students' artwork in the sequence given in the lesson. Ask the students to explain the significance of their symbols as they add them to the line. After the timeline is assembled, remove the symbols and challenge volunteers to replace them in the correct sequence.

**Assignment.** As a review of this course, students are to dramatize one scene (of their choosing) from the life of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel. They may work individually or in pairs. Methods of performances could be an object lesson, pantomime (sign-act), skit, song, drawing, or monologue. Set a time limit for each. The main portion of lesson 14 is devoted to these illustrated sermons. Announce

that the presentations will be graded on (1) biblical accuracy, (2) creativity, (3) emotional impact, and (4) adherence to the time limit.

## **Lesson 14—A Review of the Major Prophets**

**Overview.** To emphasize that the prophecies of the Major Prophets continue to be fulfilled

**Review of lesson 13.** Spend a few minutes reviewing the timeline of Ezekiel's ministry. Remove the symbols, shuffle them, and ask volunteers to replace them in the correct sequence.

If you need to give the students a written review test, pick and choose questions from those given at the end of each lesson.

**Dramatize it.** Most of this class time is devoted to the students' illustrated sermons taken from Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel. Set a time limit for each presentation. Base grades on (1) biblical accuracy, (2) creativity, (3) emotional impact, and (4) adherence to the time limit.

**Conclusion. Talk about it.** Lead the class in a discussion of the course review.

**Commitment. Do it.** Conclude this course by challenging the students to be keepers of the light, speaking the Word of God no matter how they are received. Sing "Send the Light" or another dedication chorus. End with a time of consecration.

"Well done, thou good and faithful [instructor]."

## Lesson 1

# The Keepers of the Light

## Key Scripture

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. (II Peter 1:19)

## History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Old Testament prophets were called by God to guide and warn a dark world. They brought insight and foresight that we would do well to heed.

## Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Categorize the books of the Old Testament according to English and Hebrew classification
- Compare a prophet's role to that of a keeper of the light
- Examine their role in the plan of God

## Lesson Outline

- I. A Light in the Darkness
  - A. The lighthouse
  - B. The keepers of the light
- II. The Prophets
  - A. The call of the prophets
  - B. The role of the prophets
- III. The Classification of the Prophets
  - A. Speaking and/or writing
  - B. Major and minor
- IV. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment

## Lesson

### A Light in the Darkness

#### The Lighthouse

Like traffic signs at sea, lighthouses were scattered along the shores of oceans, seas, and huge lakes. Their lights beamed across the vast waters toward the horizon. Some lighthouses situated on the shoals withstood the ebb and flow of the tide. Some standing on the highest point on isolated islands endured the brunt of hurricanes. Other lonely sentinels on deserted coastlines grew weathered from the day-to-day elements. In times of sea battles, lighthouses were often military targets. Many were damaged and some even destroyed. No matter the locations, lighthouses did not go running around looking for vessels to save. They were anchored to the rock. They stood. They shone.

Lighthouses are different heights considering the curvature of the earth. The higher the light above the MHW, “mean high water,” the farther away it is



#### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

The following is an urban legend worth repeating and considering.

The night was foggy and eerie. The lookout on a battleship peering through the darkness spotted a light on the starboard side. He alerted the captain.

The captain asked, “Is it steady or moving?”

“It is steady.”

The captain ordered the lookout to send a reply. “We are on a direct collision course. Change course 20 degrees.”

The reply came, “Advise you to change course.”

The captain huffed and puffed out his chest. “I am the captain. Change course 20 degrees.”


The firm response: “I am a seaman second class. Change course.”

The furious captain ordered: “I am a battleship. Change course!”

The final reply: “I am the lighthouse!”

visible. But if it is too high, it cannot be seen by local sailors. Shorter lighthouses are built on top of a cliff, and taller ones nearer the water to guide mariners near and far.

Before radar and satellites, lighthouses were used by sailors as navigational aids. Each lighthouse had its own distinctive flash patterns for easy identification. Lighthouses warned sea vessels away from dangerous shoals, reefs, and cliffs. Their purpose was to guide, protect, and warn.



**AN  
ENLIGHTENING  
MOMENT**

“I can think of no other edifice built by man as altruistic as a lighthouse. They were made only to serve” –George Bernard Shaw

Due to the development of technological navigational aids, many lighthouses have been deserted or converted into other uses such as guest houses or museums. Looking over our shoulders in time, we view lighthouses as fascinating magnificent maritime castles. But let us not forget their significance to past generations. They were beacons of hope and points of refuge.

### The Keepers of the Light

The safety of countless unnamed people rested on the keepers of the lighthouses. If they grew slack on their job, ships wrecked, lives were lost, and cargo disappeared. So seven days a week from before dusk until after dawn, the



**AN  
ENLIGHTENING  
MOMENT**

A hero of the last half of the nineteenth century was Ida Lewis, a lighthouse keeper. She is credited with saving eighteen people from certain death.

keepers of the lights toiled—polishing the lens, replenishing the oil, monitoring the weather, and sounding the foghorns.

Keeping the light was a lonely, monotonous job. Day after day, the same tedious tasks had to be performed. No social media to keep them connected to the outside world. Pay was minimal. Applicants did not line up at the employment office seeking the position.

Then came the storms. The boredom was shattered. The lighthouse keepers' lives were on the line. As winds and waves raged and ships were shoved by fierce winds into rocky bluffs and hidden shoals, keepers threw on their rain gear, launched the lifeboats, and defied the turbulent waves to rescue mariners in peril.

Lighthouse keepers were heroes, ordinary folks, standing guard at their isolated posts. Through dark nights they toiled, doing what had to be done to assure that the light continued to burn. Then in a moment of danger, they donned the cloak of a hero and risked their lives for others.

In these days of GPS and radar, lighthouses are historic relics. But for the student of Old Testament prophecy, lighthouses and their keepers have a strong parallel to the role of the prophets and the light radiated across the ocean of time by their prophecies.

## **The Prophets**

### **The Call of the Prophets**

The prophets, keepers of God's truth, were ordinary people. God called these men (and in a few cases, women) from their day-to-day tasks to proclaim the light of His truth.

Priests inherited their positions because of their family lineage. Their job was to teach God's law (Deuteronomy 24:8) and serve as mediators between God and man. They were responsible for performing the ceremonial rituals – offering sacrifices. Over the years they frequently developed an “above-the-law” mentality. Often the priesthood ignored the rising tide of sin and corruption around them.

The prophets were the voice of God's covenant with His people, reminding them that the future was contingent upon their response.



I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me. (Jeremiah 35:15)

God called prophets whose voices would ring out in palaces and streets. No royal bloodline required. No diplomas hanging on their walls. No strings attached. They were God's agents. They answered only to God.

**Word search.** Use your concordance to find the references for these verses. Complete the table by naming the prophet called and how he was called.

	<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Name of Prophet Called</b>	<b>How Called</b>
1.	"And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and _____ the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room" (_____:____).		
2.	"And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength" (_____:____).		
3.	"Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (_____:____).		
4.	"And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel" (_____:____).		

5.	<p>“And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.  “And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.  “And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day” (_____ :_____).</p>		
6.	<p>“Now the word of the LORD came unto _____ the son of Amittai, saying,  “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me” (_____ :_____).</p>		

### The Role of the Prophets

The role of the prophets was an unpopular, lonely one. They were called to open the eyes of the people to their day and give them insight into the future. They were responsible for delivering the untarnished messages that God gave them, even though they knew it would anger the hearers. They walked into the midst of people’s lives crying out, turning their worlds upside down. Whether they ministered in the palace, beside the river in exile, or in the desert, they were laughed at, ignored, threatened, belittled, or unappreciated. They possessed a passion for God, a love for people, and a tenacity to get the job done. They sought neither power, possessions, nor popularity. They did not seek to impress or entertain. They sought to bring the people to repentance, to change their lives to save them from spiritual shipwreck.

The prophets reminded kings, priests, and people of their covenant with God. They were, in essence, the spiritual conscience of the people that could not be hushed. Some were martyred, but their messages continued to cry out. Jeremiah once determined that he would seal his lips, but he soon learned that he could not not cry out. (See Jeremiah 20:9.)






**Dig deeper**

On the worksheet circle the speaking prophets. Add a checkmark to the writing prophets. Some names will be both circled and checked. Compare your list with your classmates. Be prepared to defend your answers.

**Major and/or Minor**

**Dig deeper**

Turn to the table of contents in your Bible. The English translations classify the books of prophecy in the Old Testament as the Major and Minor Prophets, not because the major ones are more important than others, but because they are lengthier.

List here five Major Prophet books. While there are five books, there are only four prophets. Put a star beside the names of the prophets.

The Tanakh (TBK), the Hebrew translation, categorizes the Old Testament books differently. It lists Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel as “Prophets.” Daniel and Lamentations are classified as “Writings.” (See the table on page 30.) Lamentations is an appendix to the Book of Jeremiah, which we shall study in a later lesson.) In the GATS curriculum, Daniel is studied alongside the Book of Revelation.

Five Major Prophet Books

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Jesus called the books of the Old Testament “Scriptures.”

He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the **Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.**” Then he opened their minds so they could understand the **Scriptures.** (Luke 24:44–45, NIV)

Philip testified that Jesus was the object of the prophecies from the Law and the Prophets. (See John 1:45.) Several other New Testament passages refer to the ancient books of Scripture as “the law and the prophets.” Some references say “the law of Moses” when referring to the Torah. (See Matthew 5:17; 11:13.)

### Tanakh (TBK)

Hebrew Category	Books	Notes
<b>Torah (Law)</b>	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	
<b>Prophets—Former</b>	Joshua, Judges, I/II Samuel, I/II Kings	Speaking prophets
<b>Prophets—Latter</b>	<b>Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel,*</b> Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi	Speaking/Writing prophets
<b>The Writings</b>	Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Songs of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, <b>Lamentations,</b> Esther, <b>Daniel,</b> Ezra, Nehemiah, I/II Chronicles	

\* The five Major Prophet books as classified by English translations are given in **bold** type

### Check up

Your instructor will give you a few minutes to study the Tanakh table before leading the class in reviewing it.



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

**Send the Light** by Charles H. Gabriel  
Published 1888, now in public domain

There's a call comes ringing o'er the restless wave,  
"Send the light! Send the light!"  
There are souls to rescue, there are souls to save,  
Send the light! Send the light!

Refrain:

Send the light, the blessed Gospel light,  
Let it shine from shore to shore,  
Send the light, and let its radiant beams  
Light the world forevermore!

We have heard the Macedonian call today,  
"Send the light! Send the light!"  
And a golden offering at the cross we lay,  
Send the light! Send the light!

Let us pray that grace may everywhere abound,  
"Send the light! Send the light!"  
And a Christlike spirit everywhere be found,  
Send the light! Send the light!

Let us not grow weary in the work of love,  
"Send the light! Send the light!"  
Let us gather jewels for a crown above,  
Send the light! Send the light!

## Wrap Up

### Conclusion

As prophetic messages exploded from the mouths of the prophets, they sent flashes of insight toward the horizon and offered glimpses into the future. For a society inundated by the raging winds of idolatry, immorality, and indifference, these rays of light shouted, "Warning! Turn around." Their messages continue to beam across the ages into our homes and our hearts. We would do well to take heed.

### Commitment

On this memo write one way in which you commit to sending the light of God's Word into your dark world in the coming week.

My Commitment

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## Assignment

Check off each assignment as you complete it.

- Write your testimony in a one-page essay following this outline:
  1. Your call
  2. Your passion
  3. Your commitmentTurn it in at the beginning of the next class.
- Write a thank you note to the keeper of the light who guided you into truth. Mail or deliver it in person.
- Memorize II Peter 1:19. Be prepared to quote in class.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. What are the three major divisions of Scripture in the Hebrew Bible?
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Prophets fall into two categories according to their method of delivery. What are the categories? Name at least two prophets who fit into each category.
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Who was speaking in Luke 24:44-45?  
\_\_\_\_\_



4. What did Jesus call the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings?

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5. What are three other names for a prophet?

A. 

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B. 

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C. 

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6. Name some ways God called Old Testament prophets.

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7. What was the difference in the role of a priest and a prophet?

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**Personal Study Notes**

## Lesson 2

# The Kings of Israel

## Key Scriptures

Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. (Daniel 2:20-22)

## History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

An overview of the kings who ruled Israel gives us insight into the lifestyles and mindset of the people to which the prophets ministered. The history of the Israelites paints a clear picture of the value of godly leaders.

## Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Locate the biblical nations of Israel and Judah and their capitals on a map
- Evaluate the influence of the kings in Israel's history
- Explain the importance of godly leaders in a nation and one's life

## Lesson Outline

- I. A Synopsis of Israel's History
  - A. Review: the history of Israel
  - B. The location of Israel
- II. An Overview of the Kings
  - A. The kings of Israel
  - B. The kings of Judah
- III. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment

Note to student: Turn in to your teacher your one-page testimony. Be prepared to quote II Peter 1:19 if called upon in class.

## Lesson

### A Synopsis of Israel's History

#### Review: The History of Israel

If you walked up to two total strangers engaged in a casual conversation, you probably would not relate to their discussion. However, if you knew the people, their language, their culture, and their background, simply by listening a bit and asking a few questions, you could intelligently join the conversation. So to understand the messages of the prophets, we must understand their history and their times.

How much do you know about the history of Israel? Fill in the blanks in this synopsis of Israel's beginning.

**WORKSHEET:****Review: The History of Israel**

The nation of Israel sprang from the \_\_\_\_ sons (families or tribes) of Jacob, the grandson of \_\_\_\_\_. Through a mighty hand God miraculously delivered them from slavery in \_\_\_\_\_ under the leadership of \_\_\_\_\_. In the promised land of \_\_\_\_\_, the Israelites (also called Hebrews) continually turned from the worship of the one true God to worship \_\_\_\_\_. When \_\_\_\_\_ was the judge, the people demanded a \_\_\_\_\_, so they might be like other nations. After the reign of King Solomon, during the reign of his son \_\_\_\_\_, the twelve tribes divided. The Northern Kingdom was made up of \_\_\_ tribes and called Israel (sometimes referred to as Ephraim). Their headquarters was \_\_\_\_\_. Two tribes formed the Southern Kingdom called \_\_\_\_\_. Their headquarters was in \_\_\_\_\_. Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom, set the pattern for their downfall when he built two \_\_\_\_\_ for the people to sacrifice at so they would not return to the \_\_\_\_\_ in Jerusalem to worship the one true God.



**AN  
ENLIGHTENING  
MOMENT**

Locate Simeon's allotment of the land. Simeon was included in the northern kingdom of Israel, yet his tribe's territory was located on the southern end of Judah. What happened to the tribe of Simeon when the nation divided?

"Though sources do not clearly indicate where the tribe of Simeon settled, it seems to have been in the south of Palestine beyond the powerful tribe of Judah. In time, part of the tribe of Simeon was apparently absorbed by Judah, while other members possibly relocated in the north. If the tribe of Simeon is counted among the tribes that formed the northern kingdom, then it too was assimilated by other peoples after the Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians. One way or another, the tribe of Simeon disappeared from history." (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Simeon-Hebrew-tribe>. accessed on 12/20/2019)





Look closely at the maps. The geographical location of a nation greatly influences the lifestyle of the people.

Through Moses and Aaron, God promised the Israelites “a land flowing with milk and honey.” Honey symbolizes delight or joy, good health, and prosperity. Milk symbolizes life and abundance. God blessed Abraham’s

descendants with a land of abundance. When the spies returned from spying out the land, it took two men to carry a bunch of grapes. That's a big cluster of grapes!

How sad it is that they turned their blessing into a curse, as they failed to complete the conquest of the land and rid it of idolatry and immorality. (See Judges 1-2.)

**Note it.** List two or three ways in which the geographical location of your nation affects the lifestyle of the people.

A rectangular piece of white paper with horizontal lines, resembling a notepad or a sheet of lined paper. The paper is slightly crumpled at the top and bottom edges. It is positioned in the center of the page, below the text. The lines are evenly spaced and run horizontally across the width of the paper.

## **An Overview of the Kings of Israel**

### **The Kings of Israel**

**Dig deeper.** To conserve time, your instructor will assign you a few kings to study. Look up the references given and grade the monarchs, using the GATS grading scale. A few kings were good throughout their reign. Others were evil through and through. Some succeeded in one area and failed in another. This exercise gives you room to express your opinion. Did the good outweigh the bad or the bad outweigh the good? As your classmates share their findings, add their grades to the table.



**Kingdom of Israel (the twelve tribes)**

King	Length of Reign	Scripture	Prophet(s)	Grade
Saul	40 years	I Samuel 10:21–24; 15:26; 16:14	Samuel	
David*	40 years	I Samuel 16:13, 18:14–16; II Samuel 12:7–13; I Kings 15:5	Samuel, Nathan	
Solomon	40 years	I Kings 3:5–10; 11:4	Nathan	

**The Kingdom of Judah (the two southern tribes)**

King	Length of Reign	Scripture	Prophet(s)	Grade
Rehoboam	17 years	I Kings 12:12–15; II Chronicles 12:14	Shemaiah	
Abijah	3 years	I Kings 15:1–3	Shemaiah	
Asa	41 years	I Kings 15:11; II Chronicles 14:11–12; 16:7	Hanani	
Jehoshaphat	25 years	I Kings 22:41–44; II Chronicles 17:1–5	Micaiah, Elijah	
Jehoram (Joram)	8 years	II Kings 8:16–18; II Chronicles 21:1–6	Elijah	
Ahaziah	1 year	II Kings 8:25–27		
Athaliah (Queen)	6 years	II Kings 8:26, 11:1, 20; II Chronicles 22:10–12		
Joash (Jehoash)	40 years	II Kings 11:21; 12:1–3; II Chronicles 24:20–22	Joel	
Amaziah	29 years	II Kings 14:1–4; II Chronicles 25:1–2, 14–16		
Uzziah (Azariah)	52 years	II Kings 15:1–4; II Chronicles 26:1–5, 16–21	Zechariah, Isaiah, Micah, Amos	
Jotham	18 years	II Kings 15:32–36	Micah, Hosea	
Ahaz	19 years	II Kings 16: 1–4; II Chronicles 28:22–27	Isaiah, Micah, Obed	
Hezekiah	29 years	II Kings 18:1–7; II Chronicles 30:26–27	Isaiah, Micah, Hosea	
Manasseh	55 years	II Kings 21:1–9, 16; II Chronicles 33:9, 12–17	Isaiah	
Amon	2 years	II Kings 21:19–22		

Josiah	31 years	II Kings 22:1–2; 23:25	Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah	
Jehoahaz (Joahaz)	3 months	II Kings 23:31–32	Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel	
Jehoiakim (Eliakim)	11 years	II Kings 23:34–37	Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Ezekiel	
Jehoiachin	3 months	II Kings 24:8–9	Jeremiah, Ezekiel	
Zedekiah* (Mattaniah)	11 years	II Kings 24:18–19	Jeremiah, Ezekiel	

\* After the death of Saul, Abner (Saul's cousin and commander-in-chief) appointed Saul's son Isbosheth as king. For a short time (probably two years) Isbosheth (puppet king controlled by Abner) reigned over eleven tribes. Judah followed David, who reigned in Hebron for seven years before he was called by the other tribes to be their king. David's total reign was forty years.

\* In the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took the Israelites from the southern kingdom of Judah captive and deported them to Babylon.



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

God's messages of judgment as declared by Isaiah are recorded in Isaiah 1–39.

- Under Kings Uzziah and Jotham (Isaiah 1–6)
- Under King Ahaz (Isaiah 7–14)
- Under King Hezekiah (Isaiah 15–39)

### The Kingdom of Israel (the ten northern tribes)

Also known as Ephraim and/or Samaria

King	Length of Reign	Scripture	Prophet(s)	Grade
Jeroboam I	22 years	I Kings 12:26–33	Abijah	
Nadab	2 years	I Kings 15:25–26		
Baasha	24 years	I Kings 15:27–30, 33–34; 16:7	Jehu	

Elah	2 years	I Kings 16:8–9, 12–14	Jehu	
Zimri	7 days	I Kings 16:15–20	Micaiah	
Omri	12 years	I Kings 16:21–28	Elijah	
Ahab	21 years	I Kings 16:29–33	Elijah, Micaiah	
Ahaziah	2 years	I Kings 22:40, 51–53	Elijah	
Jehoram (Joram)	11 years	II Kings 3:1–3	Elijah	
Jehu	28 years	II Kings 10:28–31	Elisha	
Jehoahaz (Joahaz)	16 years	II Kings 13:1–9	Elisha	
Jehoash (Joash)	16 years	II Kings 13:10–11	Elisha	
Jeroboam II	41 years	II Kings 14:23–28	Hosea, Amos, Jonah	
Zachariah	6 months	II Kings 15:8–9	Hosea	
Shallum	1 month	II Kings 15:13–15	Hosea	
Menahem	10 years	II Kings 15:14–21	Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah	
Pekahiah	2 years	II Kings 15:22–24	Amos, Hosea, Isaiah	
Pekah	20 years	II Kings 15:27–28	Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Obed	
Hoshea*	9 years	II Kings 17:1–6	Isaiah	

\* In the ninth year of Hoshea's reign, the Assyrians took the Israelites from the northern kingdom of Israel captive and deported them to Assyria. This was the end of the biblical history of the ten tribes.

## Wrap Up

### Conclusion

The story is told of a captain astride his horse leading his troops into battle. A foot soldier mocked his leader for riding while others walked. The captain dismounted and handed the reins to the soldier. The young man arrogantly mounted the horse. They had advanced only a short distance when the enemy's bullet hit its mark – the leader riding high in the saddle of authority. The greater the responsibility, the greater the danger.

How sad to start gloriously and end in disgrace.



**AN  
ENLIGHTENING  
MOMENT**

**Chronological Listing of Prophets**

**Pre-Exilic** (before the Babylonian captivity): Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah.

**Exilic** (during the Babylonian captivity): Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah (Jeremiah's prophecies overlapped both the pre-exilic and the exilic periods).

**Post Exilic** (after the Jews returned to Jerusalem from Babylon): Obadiah, Joel, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Nahum and Jonah prophesied to Nineveh, and Obadiah to Edom.

**Commitment**

My Commitment

How often do you pray for the leaders of your nation?

In obedience to God's Word, I commit to pray for the leaders of my nation (daily, weekly, when I think of it).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (I Timothy 2:1-4)

**Assignment**

As each assignment is completed, check it off.

- Make and keep your commitment to pray for the leaders of your nation.
- Take time to examine your present relationship with God. Do you need to correct your course?
- Write a summary (one or two sentences) explaining how this lesson impacted your life. Place this in your Bible and be prepared to share with the class.
- To prepare for lesson 3, read Judges 1, Deuteronomy 28:47-58, and II Kings 17:7-23. Underline any words or phrases that impact you.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. Is it possible for a king to be both good and bad? Godly and wicked?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Some kings started out right and ended up wrong. Give an example. Why do you think this happened? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. True or false: As the king goes, so goes the nation. \_\_\_\_\_ Defend your answer. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Is it possible for a nation to progress if the leadership is corrupt? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Israel (the ten northern tribes) were conquered by the Assyrian Empire in 722 BC. Over one hundred years later, in 586 BC., Judah was taken into captivity by the Babylonian army. Based on this study of the kings, why do you think God delayed His judgment of Judah?

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6. What did this study reveal to you about the influence of a leader?

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7. How many tribes were in the Northern Kingdom? What was the name of that kingdom? What was the capital?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

8. How many tribes were in the Southern Kingdom? What was the name of that kingdom? What was the capital?

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9. Which kingdom continued to be led by the descendants of King David?

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10. Two kings were severely judged by God when they presumed to fill the office of the priesthood. Who were they? What was their punishment?

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11. Why did the Northern Kingdom go into captivity before the Southern Kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Which king reigned the longest time? Which reigned the shortest time?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Personal Study Notes**



## Lesson 3

# The Enemies of Israel

### Key Scripture

And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. (Judges 2:14)

### History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Compromise with the enemy is a downhill slide that leads to bondage. God sometimes uses ungodly people and nations to execute judgment.

### Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Relate how Israel's compromise with the enemy started with small concessions that escalated into bondage.
- Identify times when God used ungodly people and/or nations to execute judgment.
- Parallel Israel's history of compromise to the challenges confronting the church.

## Lesson Outline

- I. The Canaanites\*
  - A. Israel compromised
  - B. Israel contaminated
- II. The Assyrians
  - A. Geographic location
  - B. Military strategy
- III. The Babylonians
  - A. Geographic location
  - B. Political strategy
- IV. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment


\* In this lesson “Canaanites” is used generically to include the heathen nations that God commanded the Israelites to destroy, such as the Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, and Philistines.

**Note to Student:** Are you prepared to share with the class your summary of lesson 2? You may be the one *called* and *chosen*. Have you been *faithful* to complete your assignment?

## The Canaanites

The Moabites descended from Lot’s incestuous relations with his older daughter. They worshiped Chemosh, a bloodthirsty god who demanded child sacrifices.

The Ammonites descended from Lot’s incestuous relationship with his younger daughter. They worshiped Molech (identical to Chemosh), a large statue



**AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT**

According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, Baal was “any of numerous Canaanite and Phoenician local deities.” Baal was the family name of many idols. *Baalim* is the plural form of Baal.

“The Canaanites, and eventually many Israelites and Judeans, worshiped the storm god Baal—the one [they believed] who brought fertility to the land. In addition, they worshiped the sex goddess Asherah. Numerous fertility figurines have been found in archaeological excavations in Israel. From some of the texts found in Ugarit (a city in Syria) we know that Canaanite worship could include ritual dancing and cutting and slashing of one’s body.” (Archaeological note from *Halley’s Bible Handbook*, E-book. Brackets the author’s.)

with a gaping mouth and a furnace belly. Children sacrificed to Molech were placed in his arms and slid into his blazing belly, where they were burned alive.

### Israel Compromised

Before the Israelites marched into Canaan, God commanded them not to make leagues with the people of the land, but to annihilate them and their idols. (Read Deuteronomy 7:1–6.)

#### List them

Quickly scan Judges 1. List on the memo pad the tribes that did not totally drive out the Canaanites, including the verse reference.

Canaanite Tribes

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Partial obedience is disobedience.

#### Talk about it

Why do you think God judged the Canaanites so severely?


“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (I Corinthians 5:6). Compare this to the Israelites’ compromise with the Canaanites.

God used the Israelites as His instrument to bring judgment to the Canaanites. In turn, He used pagan nations to discipline the Israelites. “Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you” (Judges 2:3).

## Israel Contaminated

### Talk about it

- Two children played together. One child was clean, and one was dirty. Did the dirty child become clean or the clean child become dirty? Why?
- Compare this to what happened to the Israelites when they compromised with the Canaanites.
- Based on II Kings 17:7-23, list the Israelites’ sins that led them into bondage. Compare them with the Canaanites’ sins. How many of Israel’s sin were rooted in Canaanite culture?
- What does this say to us as individuals and to the church as a whole?



**AN  
ENLIGHTENING  
MOMENT**

When the twelve tribes divided into two kingdoms, Benjamin allied with Judah. The Southern Kingdom assumed the name of the larger tribe, Judah. In the time of the judges, the tribe of Benjamin was almost annihilated. (See Judges 20–21.) Benjamin struggled for generations to regain recognition.

## The Assyrians

### Geographic Location

Assyria means “the country of the god Asshur.” Over time Assyria had four capitals; Asshur was the first, and Nineveh was the last. Two important rivers ran through Assyria, the Tigris and the Euphrates.

The Assyrian (Neo-Assyrian) Empire is considered the first real world power in human history. Initially colonized by people from Babylon, it rose to prominence on the world stage around 884 BC. The empire, during Ashurbanipal's reign (c. 640 BC), controlled 540,543 square

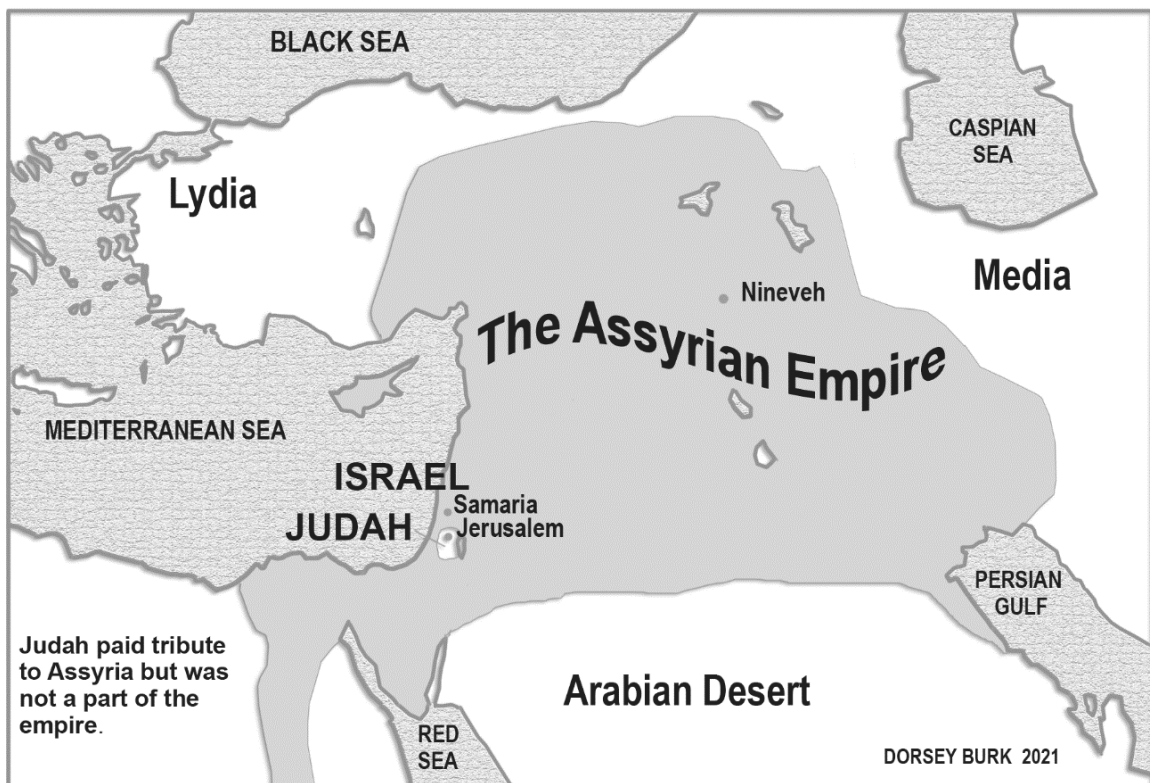
miles (1.4 million square kilometers) of land. Assyrian domination, which lasted for 272 years, ended when the Babylonians conquered and sacked their capital city of Nineveh in 612.<sup>i</sup>

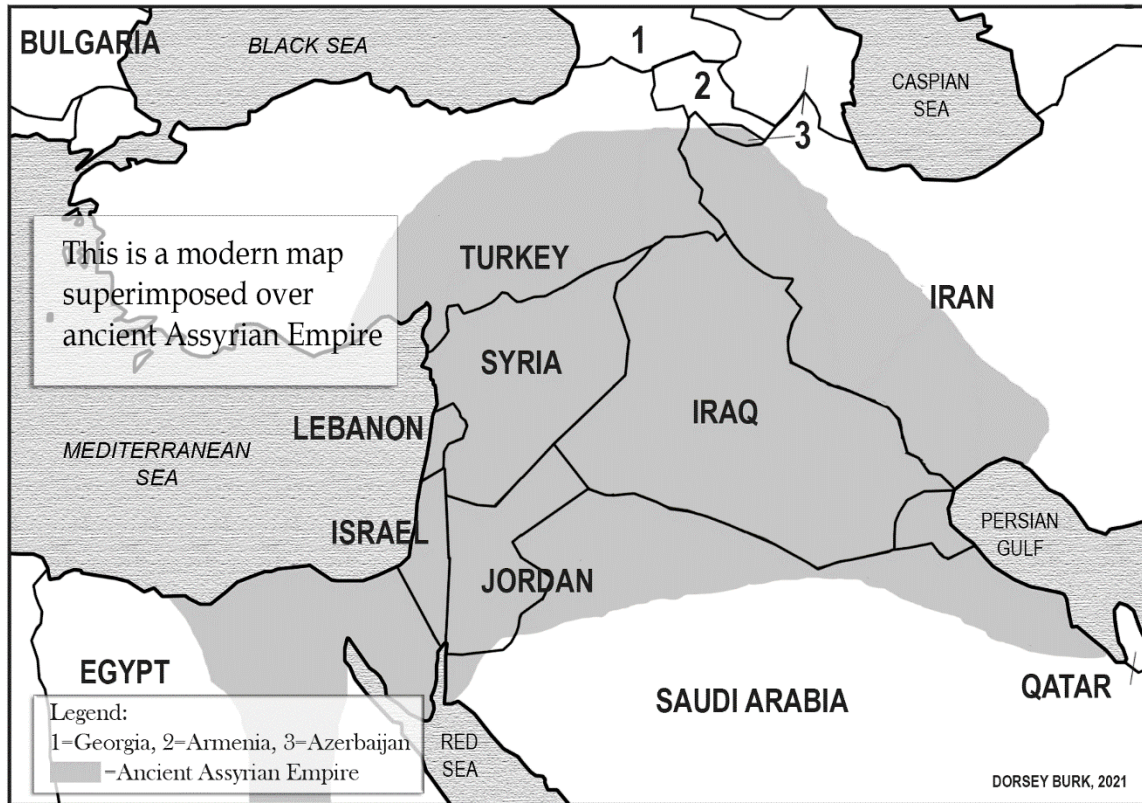
### Look closer

- On the map locate the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Note: the Assyrians defeated the nations around Judah and even many Judaeen cities, but they did not conquer Jerusalem.
- Compare the maps to get an idea of the magnitude of the Assyrian Empire.

**Note to Instructor/student:** If you have access to the internet, download other maps related to this lesson at

- <https://www.biblestudy.org/maps/assyrian-empire.html>
- <https://www.bible-history.com/biblemaps/assyrian-empire-at-the-time-of-nahum/>
- <http://www.yourchildlearns.com/online-atlas/middle-east-map.htm>





## Military Strategy

### Dig deeper

Based on Deuteronomy 28:47-58, write a short description of what Israel's enemies would do to them.

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The Assyrians were some of the most sadistic people in history, known for their brutal, inhumane violence. Years before they attacked Israel, they oppressed the surrounding nations with a heavy hand. The atrocities of the Assyrian army included such horrors as tearing the tongues out of their victims, skinning them alive, or impaling them on sharpened poles.

One Assyrian king, Ashurnasirpal II, boasted of his treatment of those who opposed him as follows:

I built a pillar over against the city gate and I flayed all the chiefs who had revolted and I covered the pillar with their skins. Some I impaled upon the pillar on stakes and others I bound to stakes round the pillar. I cut the limbs off the officers who had rebelled. Many captives I burned with fire and many I took as living captives. From some I cut off their noses, their ears, and their fingers, of many I put out their eyes. I made one pillar of the living and another of heads and I bound their heads to tree trunks round about the city. Their young men and maidens I consumed with fire. The rest of their warriors I consumed with thirst in the desert of the Euphrates.<sup>ii</sup>

When archaeologists excavated Assyrian royal palaces, they found walls decorated with depictions of horrendous treatment being meted out to captives. (These are on display at the British Museum.)

The Assyrians excelled in mind warfare, skillfully wielding the weapons of propaganda and intimidation. Their cruel tactics so terrorized their enemies that many raised the white flag of surrender without so much as lifting their swords.

The Assyrians' greedy grab for power and wealth impoverished both Israel and Judah and overshadowed them with threatening war clouds. In futile attempts to meet the Assyrian kings' outrageous demands, Kings Ahaz and Hezekiah depleted the Temple treasury, even stripping gold from the doors. Their efforts to evade an Assyrian invasion proved futile. The more the enemy got, the more he demanded.

When Hoshea, king of Israel, ceased paying tribute to the Assyrians and attempted to make an alliance with Egypt, Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, besieged Samaria. After three years, Samaria fell, and the Assyrians deported their prisoners.

Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath,

and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. (II Kings 17:23–24).

The Assyrian policy was to rid captives of all traces of nationalism, strip them of their identity, and force them to worship their Assyrian gods. When Samaria was demolished, the Assyrians sent the captives to other vassal nations to rebuild cities that had been destroyed by war. They brought captives from Babylonian cities to Samaria to rebuild it.

Eight years after the fall of Samaria, Assyria invaded Judah. Under King Hezekiah, Judah paid tribute to Assyria, attempting to stave off war, but that failed to appease the enemy. The greedy Assyrians demanded more and more. King Sennacherib’s army besieged numerous Judaeen cities and conquered them. Due to the divine intervention of one angel, the Assyrian army surrounding Jerusalem suffered an immense loss. (Read II Kings 19:35–37.) (More about Assyria’s battles with Judah in lesson 7.)

After reigning for three hundred years as the most powerful empire in the world, the Assyrian Empire came to an inglorious end around 612 BC. Nineveh, weakened by an internal struggle for the throne and invasions by foreign hordes from the north and east, fell to the combined forces of the Babylonians and Medes. This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah some hundred years before when he wrote, “That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders” (Isaiah 14:25).

### **Geographic Location**

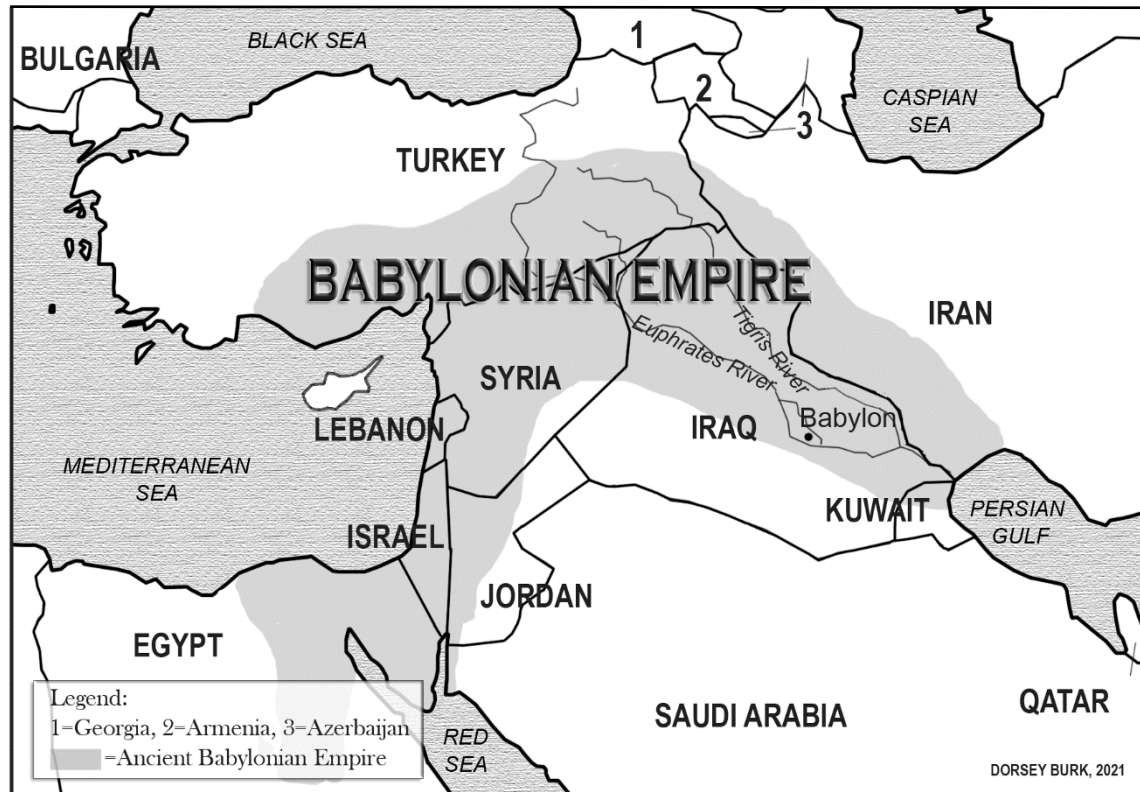
Tracing Assyrian and Babylonian roots leads back to Nimrod, meaning “rebel.” (Read Genesis 10:8–12.)

### **Look closer**

- Compare the map of the Babylonian Empire with the Assyrian Empire on pages 53 and 57. Notice how these empires overlapped.



## The Babylonians



The map above shows modern nations superimposed over the ancient Babylonian empire.

- Compare the map of the Babylonian Empire with the Assyrian Empire on pages 53 and 57. Notice how these empires overlapped.
- How could the location of these empires have incited war?
- Compare the map of ancient Babylonia to the contemporary nations on the map on page 54.



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

Like the Canaanites and the Assyrians, the Babylonians worshiped many gods. Each city had a patron god. A temple or *ziggurat* was built in the middle of the city where sacrifices were made. The Babylonians' primary god was Marduk, whose city was Babylon. He had as many as fifty different titles and was often portrayed with a pet dragon.

URLs for maps of Babylonian Empire:

[https://visualunit.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/babylonia\\_empire.png](https://visualunit.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/babylonia_empire.png)

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=maps+of+babylonian+empire&id=9F780>

What present nations are in what was once the Babylonian Empire?

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What conflicts are these modern nations engaged in that could have roots in their ancient history?

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### **Political Strategy**

The conflict between Assyria and Babylonia continued for centuries with first one empire and then the other gaining dominance. After Assyria decimated Israel, their power waned, and Babylonia gained supremacy on the world scene. Over a hundred years after Israel's exile, God used Babylonia to execute judgment on the southern kingdom of Judah. (More about the Babylonian captivity in later lessons.) Although Assyria threatened Judah for decades, Babylonia dealt the final blow in the destruction of Jerusalem, taking its citizens into captivity.

The Babylonian army besieged and conquered cities. They looted, burned, and destroyed. They killed and captured, but their brutality did not reach the level of the barbarous Assyrians.

The Assyrians exemplified brutality, but the Babylonians encouraged civilization. The Assyrians focused on military power. The Babylonians concentrated on education and economics. Their goal was not to annihilate their enemies, but to assimilate them into the Babylonian culture. They offered their captives opportunities to build houses, start businesses, and provide for their families. They even gave some of the elite, such as Daniel and his friends, positions in the government. Instead of wiping out their enemies' brain power, they were smart enough to use it.

The overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar's army came in three stages:

- (1) 606–605 BC Overcame King Jehoiakim and carried off hostages including Daniel and the three Hebrews.
- (2) 597 BC The rebellion of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin brought further action. Nebuchadnezzar took ten thousand hostages, including Jehoiachin and Ezekiel.
- (3) 586 BC Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city after a long siege and took more captives.

### **Talk about it**

- How did the Assyrian way of scattering their enemies threaten the identity of God's people?
- How did the Babylonian way of assimilating their captives threaten the Jews' identity?
- Read II Corinthians 2:11. Parallel the devices Satan uses in his attempt to overthrow the church with the tactics used by the Babylonians and Assyrians.
- What insight did you gain regarding the necessity of the church retaining its identity?

## **Wrap Up**

### **Conclusion**

Over and over God sent prophets to shine light upon the dangers of compromise. They warned God's people to turn from idols and return to Him, the one true God. Because the Israelites continued to disobey God, His justice forced Him to send judgment. To do this He used nations more wicked than Israel. Eventually, the heathen conquerors were also judged.

### **Commitment**

### MY COMMITMENT

I realize the tendency in myself to compromise in the area(s) of (*circle the ones that apply*) relationships, holiness, doctrine. With God's help, I commit to retaining my Apostolic identity by taking a stronger stand for truth in these areas.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Assignment

As each assignment is completed, check it off.

- Consider one area in which the world is putting pressure on the church to compromise. How would compromise in this area affect future generations? Write a warning to the church. Keep it brief and powerful. Prophets did not waste words. Be prepared to give it to your instructor at the beginning of lesson 4.
- Read Isaiah 6.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. What was the Israelites' biggest mistake when possessing the land of Canaan? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. How did the Canaanites' lifestyle contaminate the Israelites?

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3. Which empire engaged in mind warfare?

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4. What is mind warfare? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. How does the enemy of our soul use mind warfare? Give a Scripture reference. \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What was the Babylonian strategy for treatment of prisoners of war?

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7. What Israelite kings took gold from the Temple treasury to pay tribute to a foreign oppressor? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What city was under siege for three years by the Assyrians?

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9. Why do you think the Assyrian army never entered Jerusalem, although they did overthrow several Judean cities and laid siege to Jerusalem?

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10. Give an example of a time God used ungodly people to judge His people.

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## Lesson 4

# Isaiah Commissioned

## Key Scripture

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. (Isaiah 6:8)

## History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

The call of God leads to confession and cleansing. Every born-again believer is commissioned to “go and tell,” whether the message is received or rejected.

## Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Share Isaiah’s vision in detail
- Evaluate their personal commission
- Communicate God’s message to the world

## Lesson Outline

- I. Isaiah Called (Isaiah 6:1-7)
  - A. His vision
  - B. His response
- II. Isaiah Commissioned (Isaiah 6:8-13)
  - A. His mission
  - B. His message
- III. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment

**Note to Students:** At the beginning of class, turn in to your instructor the warning you wrote to the church.

## Lesson

### Isaiah's Call

#### Introduction

Skit: "Answering the Call" (Appendix 4)

#### His Vision

God calls men and women from sheepfolds, palaces, and all places in between. He calls the unknown and the well-known. According to Jewish rabbinic tradition in the Babylonian Talmud, Isaiah's father, Amoz, was a brother of Judah's King Amaziah. This would make Isaiah King Uzziah's cousin. He was a family man with a wife and two children, Shear-jashub, meaning "a remnant shall return" (Isaiah 7:3), and Mahershalalhashbaz, meaning "spoil quickly, plunder speedily" (8:3). We do not know if he lived in the palace compound or elsewhere in Jerusalem, but he had access to the palace, the throne room, and the Temple. God puts the right men in the right place at the right moment. God has *Isaiahs* in areas



of government around the globe, men and women who are not afraid to stand up and speak up for righteousness.

**Note it**

Do you feel God’s call on your life? On the notepad write who you were (professionally) when God first called you, where you were (geographically), and your response.



**Read aloud Isaiah 6:1-8.**

Isaiah, whose name means “Salvation of Yahweh” or “Jehovah is salvation,” received his call approximately two hundred years after Israel divided into two kingdoms. He was living when the Northern Kingdom fell to the Assyrians, but his primary ministry was to the Southern Kingdom. He ministered during the reign of one of Judah’s most wicked kings (Ahaz), as well as during the reign of one of Judah’s most godly kings (Hezekiah). Isaiah experienced the highs and lows of ministry, revival and apostasy – a returning to God and a falling away from God.

He was called “in the year King Uzziah died,” which was 740 BC. Whether this was before or after his prophecies recorded in Isaiah chapters 1-5 is debatable. Uzziah was one of Judah’s godly kings. Because of Uzziah’s religious reform, Judah experienced a political, military, and economic revival. His reign ended tragically when he allowed pride to overrule his respect for God’s laws. (See II Chronicles 26:16-23.)

Transition in government affects everyone, both individually and collectively. Uzziah had led Judah into a golden era. A few decades later his grandson Ahaz reduced Judah’s gains to rubble, as he led the nation back into idolatry.

In chapter 6, Isaiah, possibly grieved over the death of a family member, had a vision. He saw the “Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.” Kings rise and fall. Governments change, but the eternal King reigns forever. (See Isaiah 9:7.) Isaiah’s vision parallels John’s vision on the Isle of Patmos when he saw one seated on the throne. (See Revelation 4:2.)

“His train filled the temple” refers to the majesty and splendor of the king. The Temple was filled with God’s glory. This reaffirmed that although King Uzziah had violated the sanctity of God’s house by attempting to fill the priest’s role, God’s presence had not departed from the Temple.

**His Response**

Seeing the glory of God brought Isaiah face to face with his sin and the sins of his people. Coming into God’s holy presence forces us to face self, and we always come up lacking. At that point, we have two choices: repent or flee. Adam and Eve hid (Genesis 3:8). Jonah fled (Jonah 1:3). John the Revelator fell on his face (Revelation 1:17).

**Note it**

In two or three sentences write about a time when the presence of the Lord pressed you to your knees in repentance or awe.



**AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT**

According to *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*, *seraphim* (plural) means “burning or glowing.” (Seraph is singular.) Seraphim are celestial beings. According to Isaiah 6:2, they have three pairs of wings: one covering their face (a token of humility); one covering their feet (a token of respect); while the third is used for flying. From head to toe they recognize the eternal King’s sovereignty. Their purpose is twofold: (1) to praise God’s holiness and power, and (2) to serve as a mediator between Heaven and earth.

The seraphim sang, “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.” Isaiah saw only a small fraction of God’s glory in his vision. At the dedication of the Temple, Solomon prayed, “Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” (1 Kings 8:27).

A rectangular box containing ten horizontal lines for writing, with a faint background illustration of a star or angelic figure.

Centuries before Jesus spoke the words recorded in Matthew 12:34-35, Isaiah realized their truth. How could he speak the holy words of God when his heart was defiled? His confession was both personal and national. He repented for himself and for his nation.

Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. (Isaiah 6:5)

**Write it**

How long has it been since you repented for your nation? Read II Chronicles 7:14. On the notepad write a prayer of repentance for your nation.

“Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it on my mouth” (Isaiah 6:6-7).

Ouch! Cleansing hurts.

The fire on the altar in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple was never to go out. (See Leviticus 6:12-13.) Check the fire on your altar.

The altar in the Temple was a place of sacrifice. At the altar Isaiah submitted to the sanctification of his lips and the sacrifice of his will.



**AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT**

May the fire on my altar never burn out,  
The fire on my altar never burn out,  
The fire on my altar never burn out.  
May the fire on my altar never burn out.  
Make me a house of prayer  
Day and night, night and day.

When planning a lesson or sermon, remember to touch the senses.

Isaiah *saw* the Lord. He *heard* the seraphim. He *smelled* the smoke. He felt the burning coal *touch* his lips. And how could something touch his lips and not involve his sense of *taste*? Through the five senses (see, hear, touch, smell, and taste), God taught Isaiah a powerful lesson.

“Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged” (6:7). What beautiful words. With the load of guilt removed, Isaiah was ready to answer the call. “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (6:8).

## Isaiah’s Commission

### Isaiah’s Mission

After Isaiah was called and cleansed, God commissioned him. His mission was to speak to Judah and Jerusalem the word that God revealed to him.

### Read aloud Isaiah 6:9–13.

God never wastes manpower or words. Isaiah’s ministry was desperately needed. Through Isaiah God warned His people that judgment was coming. Justice demanded judgment. Yet all was not lost; interwoven in Isaiah’s prophecies were threads of hope. Isaiah was not responsible for the people’s response, but he was accountable for delivering the message.

### Think about it

How do you think Isaiah felt when God told him the people were not going to receive his message, but he must continue delivering it until 90 percent of the people were removed far away? (See Isaiah 6:11–13.) Only a remnant, 10 percent, would be saved. How would you feel if you received a commission from the Lord and knew in advance you would have only a 10 percent success rate?



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

The most basic meaning of *commission* is “the act of passing a responsibility to someone else.” Someone who has been commissioned is authorized to do a job on behalf of the one commissioning them. Isaiah was commissioned by God to speak for Him.

## Isaiah's Message

The mission of the prophets was twofold: (1) to tell forth—to testify against the sins of their time, and (2) to foretell the future.

The prophecies of Isaiah, as well as Jeremiah and Ezekiel, centered around four historical eras:

1. the Assyrian Empire,
2. the Babylonian Empire,
3. the coming of the Messiah, and
4. the Millennium.

The **law of double reference** applies to prophecies that relate to two or more of these historical times. Double reference prophecies refer to (1) the near future in the light of the present, and (2) the distant future in the light of the near future. These prophecies have both an ancient and a modern fulfillment. An example is Isaiah 7:14–17, which refers to King Ahaz's time and the coming of the Messiah.

The **gap theory** treats events as if they were continuous and successive when thousands of years may be in between. An example is Isaiah 28:11 and I Corinthians 14:21, which refer to the invasion of Judah by the Assyrians, whose language the Jews did not understand, and the gift of tongues, which ministers to the church.

Two key principles for interpreting prophecy are progressive revelation and multiple or analogous fulfillment. In brief, the principle of **progressive revelation** indicates that divine revelation unfolds across the story of Scripture



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

Jewish tradition says that Isaiah suffered a cruel death of martyrdom by being sawn in two during the reign of wicked Manasseh, Hezekiah's son. This incident may be referred to in Hebrews 11:37.



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) is one of the original seven Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in Qumran in 1947. It is the largest (734 cm) and best preserved of all the biblical scrolls, and the only one that is almost complete. The 54 columns contain all 66 chapters of the Hebrew version of the biblical Book of Isaiah. Dating from ca. 125 BCE, it is also one of the oldest of the Dead Sea Scrolls, some one thousand years older than the oldest manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible known to us before the scrolls' discovery.

with ever-increasing detail and dimension; later revelation always and only adds to prior revelation and never detracts from or overturns it.

The principle of **analogous fulfillment** argues that many biblical prophecies are given in such a way that may describe multiple events. In some sense, this is the logic that drives the very existence of prophetic books: if the prophet's message was only seen as applying to one specific set of historical circumstances or events, what would be the need of writing the message down for future generations to read? Rather, prophecies are recorded because they continue to speak divine truth.<sup>iii</sup>

### **Do it**

The instructor will lead the class in a demonstration showing the purpose of prophecy using the zoom capability on a camera.

### **Talk about it**

- How does this compare to the law of double references?

The Book of Isaiah is divided into three major divisions:

- Chapters 1–35: Prophecies of judgment concerning Judah, Israel, and the surrounding foreign nations, mainly Assyria. (Covered in lessons 5 and 6.)
- Chapters 36–39: Historical interlude (narrative). Reminds the people of Judah that there was hope if they would repent. (Covered in lesson 7.)
- Chapters 40–66: Promises of the grace of Jehovah. Foretells the restoration of Israel and the coming of the Messiah. (Covered in lesson 8.)

Isaiah ministered to the people of Judah, his here-and-now. While his message was focused locally, his prophecies spoke of the future. Thousands of years after Isaiah wrote and spoke, his words impact us. Likewise, the future impact of your ministry is in God's hands. You can miss your mission if you get so farsighted that you neglect to minister to those around you. Stand up and speak out here and now. Trust God to decide how long and how far your words will resonate.

## Wrap Up

### Conclusion

When Isaiah saw the Lord, he saw himself unclean and unworthy. After he was cleansed, he witnessed God's vision. God commissioned Isaiah, "Go and tell" (Isaiah 6:9). Jesus told His disciples in the Great Commission, "Go . . . and preach" (Matthew 28:18–20). "Go and tell" is the bottom line of God's commission to His followers. The "uttermost part of the earth" may be your neighbor's yard. "All nations" includes the country you currently reside in. (See Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:19.) Whether people want to hear God's Word or not, whether the message is popular or not, whether you feel like delivering it or not is irrelevant. Just go and tell. Open your mouth and speak what God tells you.

### Commitment

Your call may not be as dramatic as Isaiah's, but you have been called and commissioned to "go and tell." Write on the commitment card your response to God's call.

MY COMMITMENT	
	_____
	_____
	_____
Name:	_____
Date:	_____

## Assignment

As each assignment is completed, check it off.

- Most businesses and many churches have a mission statement. The mission statement of Global Missions (United Pentecostal Church International) is as follows: "Our mission is that every tribe and nation will know the name of Jesus." Write a mission statement (1) for Isaiah, and (2) for yourself. Be prepared to share these with the class at the beginning of lesson 5.

- Share your testimony with at least one unsaved person.
- Read Isaiah 1-5.
- Lessons 4-7 focus on the prophet Isaiah. He is quoted and referenced in sermons, lessons, and even conversation more often than we realize. On a piece of paper in your Bible or under notes on your phone, list every reference from Isaiah that you hear outside of this classroom until lesson 8.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. What excuses given in the skit, "Answering the Call," have you used (or perhaps are still using) to avoid getting involved in the work of the Kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Were you surprised that when the call came it was for (*B's name*)? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What is the significance of the seraph touching Isaiah's lips with the coal of fire and not his hands or feet?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What did Isaiah's vision of the Lord compel him to do?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



5. What are the two purposes of a prophet's mission?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the law of double reference? Give a biblical example.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the gap theory? Give a biblical example.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Define the principles of progressive revelation and analogous fulfillment.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Name the four historical eras covered in Isaiah's prophecies.

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

D. \_\_\_\_\_

10. What is the difference in "mission" and "commission"?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Personal Study Notes**

## Lesson 5

# The Book of Isaiah

## Key Scripture

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. (Romans 11:22)

## History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

God in His goodness chastises us to save us from judgment. God always grants men and nations a space to repent before He sends judgment. The outcome is determined by man's will.

## Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Summarize the Book of Isaiah
- Outline the conflict between Judah and Jehovah
- Explain how the severity of God can spring from His goodness

## Lesson Outline

- I. Judah's Real-life Drama (Chapters 1-12)
  - A. A look at the program
  - B. Setting the stage
- II. The Plot Revealed
  - A. The conflict between God and Judah
  - B. Let the action begin
- III. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment

**Note to Students:** Are you prepared to turn into your instructor the mission statements you wrote? Or share them with the class?

## Lesson

### Judah's Real-life Drama

#### A Look at the Program

Had the events of the Book of Isaiah been written as a drama, the program might have looked something like this:

**Setting:** The Ancient Middle East

**Time:** From political events of Isaiah's day (the 700s BC) to the end of time

**Plot:** The struggle between the goodness and severity of God

**Characters:**

Prophet Isaiah

Kings of Judah – Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah

Kings of Assyria – Sennacherib, Tiglath-Pileser

Kings of Babylon – Merodachbaladan

Minor characters:

Uriah

Zechariah

Rabshakeh

Eliakim

Shebna

Joah

Isaiah's wife, the prophetess

Shearjarsheb, Isaiah's first-born son

Mahershalalhashbaz, Isaiah's second-born son

### **Act I – Messages of Judgment** (Isaiah 1–35)

Scene 1: Judgment on Jerusalem (Isaiah 1–5, 7–8; lessons 5–6)

Scene 2: Judgment on Jerusalem and the Nations of the Entire Earth (Isaiah 13–23; lesson 6)

### **Narrative Interlude** (Isaiah 36–39; lesson 7)

### **Act II – Messages of Restoration** (chapters 40–66; lesson 8)

Scene 1: The Return to Jerusalem and the Coming of the Servant

Scene 2: The Exaltation of Jerusalem and the Call to the Nations

### **Setting the Stage** (chapters 1–5)

“For Isaiah, words are watercolors and melodies and chisels to make truth and beauty and goodness. Or, as the case may be, hammers and swords and scalpels to *unmake* sin and guilt and rebellion. Isaiah does not merely convey information. He creates visions, delivers revelation, arouses belief. He is a poet in the most fundamental sense – a *maker*, making God present and that presence urgent. Isaiah is the supreme poet-prophet to come out of the Hebrew people.”<sup>iv</sup>

Viewing Isaiah as a poet-prophet, it is easy to recognize the drama in his writing. His words, as inspired by God, created the action and setting for future



#### **AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT**

**A reminder:** The lessons in this course are arranged chronologically and by theme as much as possible. Some chapters are skipped, then referenced later. Therefore, the chapters are not always studied in numerical order. Isaiah's prophecies were given over a period of some forty years. Some were focused on the near future, the events of Isaiah's time or shortly thereafter. Some foretold the far future, promising the coming of a Redeemer and reaching beyond the horizon of time into eternity. Some sounded warnings. Some offered hope. Many did both.

events—encompassing disaster, desolation, and deliverance. The dark backdrop had been determined by the generations before him. Prophets like Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, and others (some unnamed) had repeatedly warned Israel to turn from their wicked ways. God had chastised them by sending drought, internal strife, and war with neighboring nations. Had Israel repented, judgment would have been averted. But they stubbornly refused to humble themselves. Not one king of the Northern Kingdom turned his nation to God. Rather, they led the people deeper and deeper into the abyss of idolatry.

Finally, God’s verdict to the ten tribes rang out, “Enough!” The Assyrian army marched into the land and decimated it, leaving the capital of Samaria a heap of rubble. They led away the inhabitants by hooks in their noses, naked and humiliated. They were scattered to the four winds. Israel had wasted their space of grace.

The prophet Isaiah mainly focused the spotlight on the Southern Kingdom. Judah fared a bit better than her sister nation to the north. Because a few righteous kings had led the southern two tribes into short-term revivals, Judah’s judgment was delayed.

One ray of light shone through the curtain of darkness—God’s covenant with David. (See II Samuel 23:5; Psalm 89:3–4.) As Jehovah dealt with His rebellious people, in the forefront of His mind was the Davidic covenant. Although David’s descendants repeatedly broke their part of this covenant, they clung to the belief that God was obligated to keep His part.

In Isaiah’s day, the ruling elite espoused what has been termed a “royal Zion” theology focused on the everlasting covenant established between God and David and symbolized by the presence of the Temple in the capital city of Jerusalem. Given the nature of God’s promise and the reality of His presence within the city, the ruling class assumed there was an unbreakable relationship between God, the Davidic king, and the city of Jerusalem that housed the Temple. The city was, by definition then, unconquerable, being protected directly by God Himself and ultimately destined to be the capital of the nations of the world.

This understanding of the place of Jerusalem and the Judean king within the cosmic order quickly fell into a dangerous sense of privilege that licensed greed, oppression, violence, and even worship of false gods.<sup>v</sup>

The nations of Israel and Judah marched across the pages of history believing they were center stage, God's chosen. They arrogantly assumed that God was obligated to hand them the victor's trophy.

### Talk about it

- How can this privileged mindset become an obstacle to the mission of the church?

## The Plot Revealed

### The Conflict Between God and Judah

The stage was set for conflict. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth" (Isaiah 1:2). Heaven and earth sat on the edge of time as Isaiah shouted Judah's sins before the judgment seat of God.

God interrupted: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:18-19).



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

#### Overview of the Book of Isaiah

##### A. Condemnatory [Judgment] Section (Isaiah 1–35)

1–12: Prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem

13–23: Prophecies of judgment on the nations

24–35: Prophecies of judgment and mercy

##### B. Historical Section (Isaiah 36–39)

36–39: Invasion of Judah by Assyria and Judah's deliverance

##### C. Consolatory [Restoration] Section (Isaiah 40–66)

40–48: Deliverance from captivity through the agency of Cyrus

49–57: Redemption through the suffering and sacrifice of Christ

58–66: The future glory of God's redeemed people

The goodness of God pleaded with Judah. It was not too late to avert judgment if only they would bend their will and obey God. The Jews plugged their ears and refused to heed Isaiah's warnings.

The severity of God responded, “But, if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (1:20).

The sharp sword of God’s judgment hung over Judah as the glaring light of truth revealed their sins. (See chapter 2.)

1. They made alliances with strange nations, like the Philistine soothsayers. (2:6)
2. They intermarried with the heathen. (2:6)
3. They multiplied riches. (2:7)
4. They multiplied horses and chariots for war. (2:7. Also see Deuteronomy 17:16–17.)
5. They filled the land with idols. (2:8)
6. They worshiped the work of their hands. (2:8)

### **Talk about it**

- What do you think was Judah’s root sin?
- What in the contemporary world could be compared to “horses and chariots”?
- Name some inventions (the work of men’s hands) that can become idols.
- Identify any sins in the above list that raise a warning flag to you.

### **Dig deeper**

As the plot unfolded, God pronounced eight woes upon the wicked inhabitants of Judah. (See Isaiah 3:9–11; 5:8–22.) List them on the notepad on page 81.



The scene changes from a dark tension-laded setting to a peaceful vineyard. Isaiah stepped to the stage and related a parable.

**Read aloud Isaiah 5:1-7.**

**Talk about it**

- Who was the keeper of the vineyard?
- What did the keeper do for the vineyard?
- Why do you think the vineyard brought forth wild grapes?
- What more could the keeper have done than he did?
- What is the significance of the keeper letting the vineyard lie waste?
- Parallel this parable with the nation of Israel.
- In one sentence apply this parable to the church.
- If you were preaching a sermon about this parable, what would you title it?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

**Let the Action Begin**

Before the beginning of time when Lucifer rebelled against God, the stage was set for war. (See Isaiah 14:12-15.) He said, "I will ascend . . . I will exalt . . . I will sit . . . I will be like the most High." The most exalted angel in Heaven was not content to be in second place. Pride and rebellion exploded in him. He instigated war. One-third of the angels followed him. Ultimately, they were defeated and cast out of Heaven. Thus, the earth became a battleground. War between good and evil raged in Isaiah's day. It continues and will continue until the King of kings reigns on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

When King Uzziah of Judah was placed in isolation because of leprosy, his son Jotham ascended to the throne. "So Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God" (II Chronicles 27:6). But during his reign God stirred up Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel. The sins of

Judah's forefathers were catching up with them. The land rumbled as Syria and Israel prepared for battle (II Kings 15:32-38; 16:1-6).

Jotham died. His twenty-year-old son, Ahaz, ascended to the throne of his forefather David. He "did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD" (II Kings 16:2). He followed the lead of wicked kings of Israel, even going so far as to sacrifice his son to Molech. War was imminent. Terror blanketed the nation like a fog.

Syria and Israel had attacked Judah separately (II Chronicles 28:5-21) and defeated them. When the Israelite army came home, marching into Samaria with their Judean brothers, the prophet Obed stopped them in their tracks with a message from God. God ordered them to free their captives, which surprisingly the Israelites did. Later, however, Israel (Ephraim) and Syria made a league and went together against Judah (II Kings 16:5).

God's Word moves the reader from the palace to the upper pool outside the city (Isaiah 7:3). King Ahaz, apparently worried about the coming invasion, was checking the city's water supply. A man and a little boy, Isaiah and his son Shearjashub ("a remnant shall return"), stepped onto the stage and confronted the king. Isaiah had a message from Jehovah for Ahaz extending the goodness of God to Judah. The prophet assured Ahaz that God had everything under control.

### **Read aloud Isaiah 7:3-9.**

The figure of speech picturing Syria and Israel as "smoking firebrands" assured Ahaz that these enemy nations would soon die out. The man of God prophesied that in sixty-five years Samaria would fall. These were the years from the first deportation (734 BC) to the settlement of foreigners in the land by Esarhaddon around 670 BC (II Kings 17:24; Ezra 4:2).

Isaiah challenged Ahaz to ask a sign from the Lord. Ahaz refused and this angered Isaiah. He proceeded to give the skeptical king a sign anyway. He said that in the immediate future, a child would be born into David's family. While biblical scholars agree this prophecy was a blending of the near future and of the

Messiah's birth in the far future, they are perplexed as to the identity of the child born during Ahaz's reign.

Isaiah's confrontation of Ahaz at the pool was the king's chance to turn Judah toward God and avoid the severity of God's wrath. But the seeds of rebellion and idolatry were so deeply rooted in the soil of the king's heart that he ignored the word from God and pushed Judah toward judgment by making an alliance with Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria.

During these events, God instructed Isaiah to write another prophecy. He was to father another son and name him Mahershalalhashbaz ("quick to the plunder; swift to the spoil"). Both of his sons were given names relative to his prophecies as signs to the Jews (Isaiah 7:3; 8:3). Thus, the boys were constant reminders of both the goodness and severity of God. These prophecies were sealed and given to Isaiah's disciples (Isaiah 8:16).

**Read aloud II Kings 16:7-9.**

Assyria accepted Judah's payment and became their mercenaries. After the Assyrians defeated Syria and Israel, they turned against Judah and demanded ever-increasing tribute. Eventually, Assyria's army marched into Judaea and put Jerusalem under siege. (More about this in lesson 7.)

Isaiah's prophecies sounded like piercing sirens on the streets of Jerusalem and in the throne room of King Ahaz. Judgment was coming. Judah's history continued to move from one battlefield to another.

God stretched out His scepter of mercy to David's descendants, generation after generation. But the day came when God said, "Enough!" He withdrew His mercy, and judgment fell. Honoring His covenant with David, He did not annihilate Judah as He did Israel. God did use nations more wicked than Israel as His instrument to chastise His people, then He turned His wrath on those nations.

## Wrap Up

### Conclusion

At times, parents are forced to chastise their children to save them from the judgment of society, the courts, and/or God. This discipline springs from the goodness of the parents' hearts. It is called "tough love." At times, such disciplining may be deemed severe. So it is with God's dealing with His children. Men often question, "If God is so good, how can He allow (or cause) this to happen?" In Isaiah's prophecies and biblical history, we see both the goodness and severity of God. If we look closely, we appreciate that the goodness of God always shines through, even when He severely corrects His people. His purpose is to save them from eternal judgment. "Behold the goodness and severity of God."

### Commitment

#### My Commitment

I remember a time when I felt God's heavy hand disciplining me.  
At the time I felt only the severity. Looking over my shoulder,  
I now understand how it was the goodness of God  
that saved me from the judgment my actions were bringing upon me.

Write here a prayer of thanksgiving  
for both the goodness and severity of God.

### Assignment

As each assignment is completed,  
check it off.

- Write a contemporary version of the Parable of the Vineyard, setting it in a family, church, or world scene.



- Memorize Isaiah 1:18–20.
- Read Isaiah 13–23.
- Remember to make a note on paper or your phone every time you hear a verse from Isaiah referenced outside this classroom. Continue doing this until lesson 8.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. Parallel Judah's relationship with Assyria to that of a child of God who turns to the world for support.

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2. Something about King Ahaz's refusal to ask for a sign from God angered Isaiah (Isaiah 7:10–14). Demonstrate with body language how you think Ahaz responded to Isaiah's prophecy that he had nothing to fear from Israel and Syria.

3. What did King Ahaz's response to Isaiah's prophecy reveal about his heart?

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4. Relate specific times God revealed both His goodness and severity in His relationship with Judah.

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5. Explain how Isaiah's sons' names reminded Judah of both God's goodness and severity.

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6. Share a time when you witnessed both the severity and goodness of God in your life. \_\_\_\_\_

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7. How can the severity of God be the fruit of His goodness?

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## Lesson 6

# Isaiah's Prophecies of Judgment

## Key Scripture

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (Galatians 6:7)

## History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

The law of the harvest is universal and timeless. We, as individuals and as a nation, will reap what we sow. We are called to repent for ourselves and for our land.

## Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Identify the nations surrounding ancient Israel and locate them on a map
- Identify the four major wars during Isaiah's ministry
- Evaluate the relationship of Judah with at least three other nations
- Relate ways current events demonstrate the law of the harvest

## Lesson Outline

- I. Prophecies of Judgment against Judah (Isaiah 1–12)
  - A. The Case of Jehovah vs. Judah (Appendix 6)
  - B. Timeline of Judah’s wars
- II. Prophecies of Judgment against Nations Surrounding Judah (Isaiah 14–23)
  - A. World powers surrounding Judah
  - B. Lesser nations surrounding Judah
- III. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment

**Note to Students:** Hand your instructor the contemporary version of the Parable of the Vineyard that you wrote.

## Lesson

### Prophecies of Judgment against Judah (Isaiah 1–12)

#### The Case of Jehovah vs. Judah

To review lesson 5, ask four students to present the skit: “The Case of Jehovah vs. Judah.” (See appendix 6.) After the skit, engage the class in a discussion.

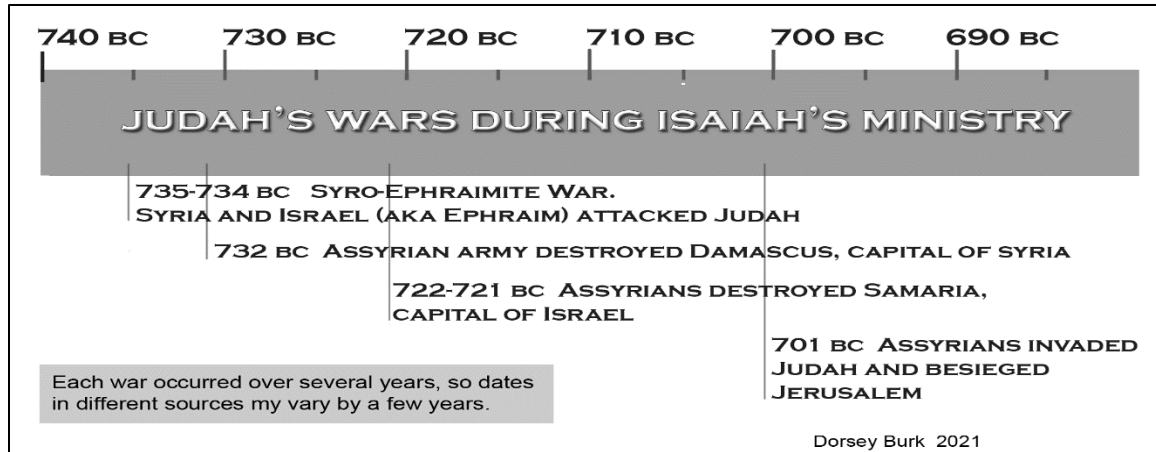
#### Talk about it

- What were the charges against Judah?
- Was the prosecuting attorney justified in demanding justice? Defend your answer.
- What did the defense attorney ask the judge to grant Judah? Why?
- How does the judge’s ruling demonstrate both severity and goodness?

#### The Timeline of Judah’s Wars

Isaiah’s ministry spanned four major wars.





The Assyrian Empire had been expanding for 150 years before the days of Isaiah. As early as 840 BC, Israel, under King Jehu, had begun to pay tribute to Assyria. While Isaiah was still a young man (734 BC), Assyria took away the population of the northern part of Israel. Thirteen years later (721 BC), Samaria fell, and the rest of Israel was forced into exile. Then, a few years later, Sennacherib of Assyria came into Judah, destroyed forty-six walled cities, and took two hundred thousand captives with him. Finally, in 701 BC, when Isaiah was an old man, the Assyrians were stopped before the walls of Jerusalem by an angel of God (II Chronicles 32:21). Thus, Isaiah's whole life was spent under the shadow of the threat of Assyria, and he himself witnessed the ruin of his entire nation at their hands, except Jerusalem.<sup>vi</sup>

- 735–34 BC Syria and Israel (Ephraim) allied and went to war against Judah and King Ahaz (II Kings 16:5). Both nations had previously attacked Judah separately. In desperation and trusting man not God, King Ahaz turned to Assyria for help (II Kings 16:7–8).
- 732 BC Assyria attacked Syria and took Damascus, the capital (II Kings 16:9).



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

“It was Israel and Judah’s misfortune to be in what scholars call the ‘Levant,’ the coastal strip that borders the Mediterranean Sea roughly from Syria in the north to the fringes of Egypt. The coastal strip was a natural artery of trade and conquest, the crossroads of continents.”<sup>vii</sup>

- 722 BC The Assyrian army invaded the Northern Kingdom, taking their population into exile and destroying Samaria, the capital (II Kings 17:6).
- 701 BC The Assyrians invaded Judah and besieged Jerusalem. This war ended when the angel of God intervened and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (II Kings 19:35). Although Assyria conquered forty-six Judean cities, they never set foot in Jerusalem.



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

This lesson is an overview of Isaiah's prophecies in chapter 14–23. The history of many of these nations predates Abraham and reaches into the Millennium. Other nations came and went on the stage of history. The insight God gave Isaiah into the future destiny of world powers astonishes historians. A study of how these prophecies were fulfilled in world history gives the scholar strong arguments for defending the validity of God's Word.

## Prophecies of Judgment against Nations Surrounding Judah (Chapters 14–23)

### World Powers Surrounding Judah

As Isaiah prophesied to the Southern Kingdom, Hosea was prophesying to the Northern Kingdom. The same debaucheries Isaiah witnessed in Judah, Hosea saw in Israel on an even greater scale. Both prophets were cognizant of the evil in the nations around them.

#### Read Hosea 8:7.

God pulled aside the curtain of time separating the past from the present. He revealed to Isaiah the scene in Heaven that set the stage for war and strife on earth when Lucifer, son of the morning, rebelled against the Most High (Isaiah 14:12–14).

Write a paraphrase of Hosea 8:7 on this notepad.

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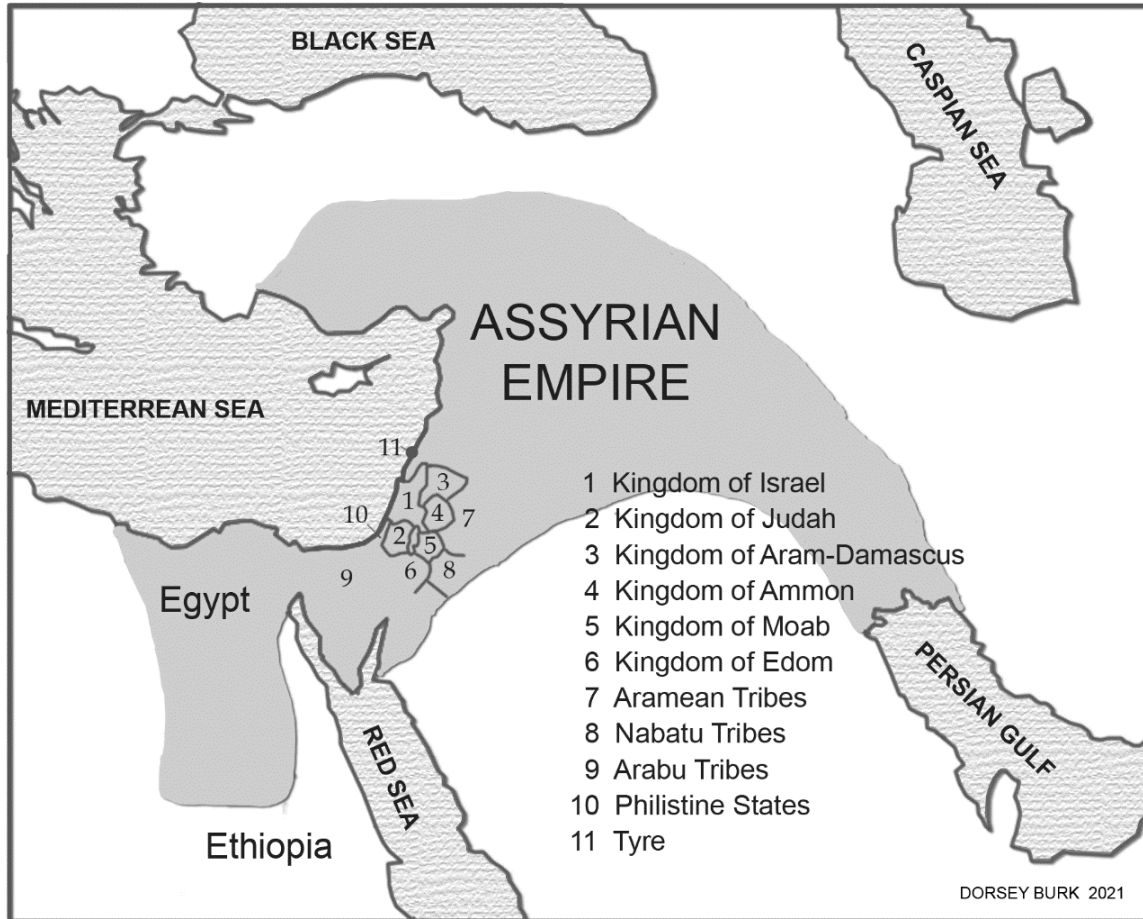
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Then God pulled aside the curtain separating the present from the future and revealed to Isaiah the judgment coming not only upon Israel, but also the nations surrounding God’s chosen people.

### Dig deeper

The instructor will assign one nation to each team to research in God’s Word. Assign a member of each team to be the scribe. Read the references and information given. With a concordance conduct a deeper search. Make notes on the notepad and be prepared to share briefly what you have learned.

**Assyria** (Isaiah 10:5-19; 14:24-27).

A graphic of a notepad with ten horizontal lines for writing, positioned to the right of the 'Dig deeper' section.

God used the Assyrian army to chastise His people, but when the Assyrians flexed their muscles, ferociously tortured their enemies, and taunted, “Look what we have done! No god can stand against us,” God declared, “Enough!” The nation that had terrorized and tortured was terrorized and tortured as the wrath of God fell on them. (Read Isaiah 33:1.) When attacked by the Babylonians around 612 BC, the vicious Assyrian Empire fell. (See the map of the Assyrian Empire, lesson 3, page 53.)

**Babylon** (Isaiah 13:17, 19–22; 14:4–27).

In Isaiah’s day Babylon was inferior to Assyria, but when Babylon increased in power, they conquered Assyria. In 586 BC, after two previous campaigns, Nebuchadnezzar decimated Jerusalem and carried away the final band of captives into Babylon. Then in 539 BC, during the reign of King Belshazzar, the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon. (See Daniel 5:30–31.) One hundred years before, Isaiah had prophesied that Babylon would become as desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah. (See Isaiah 13:19.) (See the map of the Babylonian Empire, lesson 3, page 57.)

As Isaiah prophesied, Babylon superseded Assyria; Media superseded Babylon; Babylon passed from the scene as a world power.

**Syria** (Isaiah 17).

Syria (Aram) was populated by the descendants of Shem, Noah’s eldest son (Genesis 10:22). In the Old Testament this nation is first called Syria when the Israelites served the “gods of Syria” (Judges 10:6). Although the Aramaic people and the Israelites were from the same lineage, war was constant between them and continues to this present time. Syria’s downfall in Isaiah’s day was their alliance with the Northern Kingdom against Judah in the Syro-Ephraimite War. Isaiah foresaw the capital of Syria desolate and a pile of rubble, overrun by the Assyrian army. This prophecy was fulfilled in 732 BC when Assyrians invaded the land. Damascus is believed to be among the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world. Time and time again Damascus has arisen from the ashes and rebuilt.

**Egypt** (Isaiah 18–20)



Egypt, the oppressor and enemy of God’s people, played a major role in biblical history from Genesis to Revelation. “Going down to Egypt” often is symbolic of backsliding. Isaiah’s prophecy in chapter 19 was fulfilled about the time of Isaiah’s death. Panic. Civil war. Chaos. Drought. Unemployment. Idolatry. Occult. In chapter 20 Isaiah warned that the Assyrian army would invade the land and lead away naked the Egyptians and Ethiopians. After the Babylonian exile, many Jews sought refuge in Egypt. Isaiah 19:18-25 foretold the day when Egyptians would turn to the one true God.

### **Lesser nations surrounding Judah**

**Philistia** (Isaiah 14:28-32).

The Philistines were related to the Phoenician “sea people.” They inhabited the land on the southeast coast of the Mediterranean Sea. They and the children of Israel had a rocky relationship, dating back to the patriarchs. At the death of their enemies, King Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria and King Ahaz of Judah, the Philistines

rejoiced. Isaiah warned them not to celebrate too soon because a far more venomous snake was coming from the north. True to Isaiah's prophecy, the Assyrians obliterated Philistia.

### **Moab** (Isaiah 15–16).

The Moabites were descendants of Lot's incestuous relationship with his elder daughter. The Ammonites were their cousins, descendants of Lot's relationship with his younger daughter. Both nations became bitter enemies of Israel, Abraham's descendants. The Moabites worshiped Chemosh, identical to the Ammonites' god Molech, by offering human sacrifices. Ruth, King David's grandmother and an ancestor of Jesus, was a Moabitess. Moabites were forbidden to enter the Temple to the tenth generation. (Compare Deuteronomy 23:3 and Nehemiah 13:1.) God advised the Moabites that it would be to their advantage to renew their allegiance to the house of David. Isaiah's prophecy gave Moab a time limit of three years. "The cities named were pillaged by Tiglath-pileser III in 732 BC, by Sargon II in 713 BC, and by Sennacherib in 701 BC. It is not indicated to which of these three Isaiah refers."<sup>vii</sup> According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Moab became a tributary of Assyria and was conquered by the Babylonians in 582 BC, after which it disappeared from history.

### **Ethiopia** (Isaiah 18)

Ethiopia controlled the trade route in southwestern Arabia. Their wealth came from precious metals, gems, and expensive spices, as demonstrated by the Queen of Sheba's gifts to King Solomon. "Shadowing with wings" (v. 1) is believed to refer to swarms of flies and mosquitos. *The Message* paraphrase of Isaiah 18 describes the people as tall and handsome, respected everywhere, mighty, and merciless. Isaiah's prophecy declared that just before the harvest, God would intervene and wipe it out. "Historically, Ethiopia can count on at least seven major droughts each century."<sup>viii</sup>

### **Arabia** (Isaiah 21:13–17).

The Arabians were descendants of Ishmael who dwelt in the desert between Edom and Babylon. As the angel told Hagar, Ishmael was the progenitor of a nation of strong, wild men of war (Genesis 16:11–12; 17:20). On the flip side, the

desert Bedouins were known for their hospitality. Isaiah's prophecy gave a timeframe of one year. This gave his listeners a scale for grading his prophecies. True or false? Within one year, in 715 BC, the Assyrian army invaded Arabia. True.

**Tyre** (Isaiah 23).

Tyre was the maritime center of the world in Isaiah's day with colonies around the Mediterranean. Tyre was an idolatrous, prosperous city. Hiram, king of Tyre, was a friend and business associate of Kings David and Solomon. After Tyre was overthrown by King Nebuchadnezzar, it was forgotten for seventy years, as Isaiah had prophesied. The city was rebuilt, and business continued as usual. Nehemiah condemned the officials of Jerusalem for allowing the people of Tyre to do business in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. (See Nehemiah 13:16.) Tyre and its sister city of Sidon were referenced by Jesus. (See Matthew 11:21-22.)

The Book of Isaiah consistently portrays God as King over all nations, from the call of the prophet (Isaiah 6:1) to God's own declaration in the final chapter: "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool" (Isaiah 66:1).<sup>ix</sup>

Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah. (Psalm 9:20)

## **Wrap Up**

### **Conclusion**

Sowing is not a choice. Everyone sows seeds. The choice is the kind of seed sown. God determines when the harvest will be. The preacher wrote, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). Nations, as well as

individuals, can develop the mindset, “Judgment delayed is judgment forgotten.” But not so. The harvest is as sure as the sunrise.

### Commitment

**MY COMMITMENT**

In the coming week I commit to intentionally sow good seeds by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Assignment

As each assignment is completed, check it off.

- Memorize Galatians 6:7–8. Be prepared to quote this in class.
- Write your testimony or the one of someone you know that demonstrates the law of the harvest. Hand this to your instructor at the beginning of the next class.
- Study Isaiah 38–39. Be prepared to engage in an in-depth discussion of these chapters.
- Remember to make a note on paper or your phone every time you hear a verse from Isaiah referenced. Continue doing this until lesson 8.



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

Babylon was one of the most famous cities of the ancient world. It was the center of a flourishing culture and an important trade hub of the Mesopotamian civilization. The ruins of Babylon can be found in modern-day Iraq, about 52 miles (approximately 85 kilometers) to the southwest of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. All that remains of the great city that was at the heart of one of the most ancient civilizations on earth, is a tell (archeological site) of debris and mounds spread across an area of less than one square mile near Hillah. Ancient texts say that Babylon was located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Archeologists now believe that the course of the Euphrates River has changed, and many parts of the ancient city are now submerged. (Information from [www.mapsof-world.com/answers/history/where-is-ancient-babylon-located-today/](http://www.mapsof-world.com/answers/history/where-is-ancient-babylon-located-today/) Accessed 2/23/2020)



**No. 62      The Great Reaping Day.**

**R. E. W.** **R. E. WINSETT.**



1. There is coming a day when to judgment we'll go, There to reap as in life we've sown,  
 2. Ev - 'ry day passing by you are sowing the seed Fruits of life or of death will bear,  
 3. If you'd win life eternal there's no time to lose, Look around you, the fields are white,  
 4. Ev - 'ry act you per-form is as seed to some one, For the in-flu-ence will ne'er die,



**FINE.**

Death e-ternal we'll reap if we sow to the flesh, Heaven's joys then will never be known.  
 When you reap what you sow to that land may you go, To that bright, happy home over there.  
 Go ye forth to the field, sow and reap golden grain, Soon will fall the dark shadows of night.  
 Then be careful each day what you do, what you say, For you'll meet it again by and by.

*D. S.—O the joy on that day when we hear Jesus say,  
 Come, ye blessed, a crown you have won.*

**REFRAIN.** **D. S.**



May we sow righteous seed for the reap-ing Which is com - ing to ev - 'ry one,

Owned by R. E. Winsett.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. The Moabites and Ammonites were the Israelites' extended family. Why do you think so much animosity existed between them?

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2. Which of Noah's sons was the forefather of both the Aramaic/Syrians and Israelites? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is another name for Syria?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What in Israel and Syria's history affects their relationship in current times? Note their location on the map.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is believed to be the oldest continually inhabited city in the world? Find it on the map. \_\_\_\_\_

6. What nation was home to the desert Bedouins? Locate this nation on the map. \_\_\_\_\_

7. What nation is related to the "sea people?" Find this nation on the map. What is the connection between this nation and the sea?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What city did Isaiah foretell would become as desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah? Local it on the map.

\_\_\_\_\_

9. If you were asked to defend how a loving God could annihilate these nations, what would your argument be?

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**Personal Study Notes**

## Lesson 7

# Isaiah's Prophecies Fulfilled

## Key Scripture

Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. (Joshua 23:14)

## History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Because many of Isaiah's prophecies have been fulfilled, we know that they all will come to pass. Fulfilled prophecy is historical proof of the truth of God's Word.

## Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Outline the story of Assyria's attack on Judah
- Recall at least two of Isaiah's near future prophecies that were fulfilled in his lifetime and two that were fulfilled after his death
- Present a convincing argument that all the prophecies in God's Word will come to pass

## Lesson Outline

- I. Review of the Overview
  - A. Two halves of the Book of Isaiah
  - B. Transitional chapters (Isaiah 34-39)
- II. Divine Intervention (Isaiah 36-39; II Kings 18-19; II Chronicles 32)
  - A. Jerusalem under siege
  - B. Hezekiah's miracle and mistake
- III. Isaiah's Prophecies Fulfilled
  - A. During his lifetime
  - B. After his lifetime
- IV. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment

**Notice to students:** Give your instructor the testimony you wrote demonstrating the law of the harvest.

## Lesson

### Review of the Overview

#### Two Halves of the Book of Isaiah

Though the Book of Isaiah is massive, it falls neatly into two natural halves. Isaiah 1–33 “projects a scenario of judgment,” and focuses on the arrival of such judgment, first on Judah and Jerusalem, and then on the entire world. The second half of the book, however, “no longer projects judgment, but instead presupposes that the judgment . . . against Babylon, Assyria, and the other nations has now taken place and that the time of Jerusalem’s restoration is at hand.” These halves of the book parallel each other in important ways. For example, Isaiah 1 opens with a call to the heavens and earth to witness God’s judgment (Isaiah 1:2); Isaiah

34 calls the nations to witness His deliverance of Judah (Isaiah 34:1, 35:1ff). Also, Isaiah 7 dramatically showcases Ahaz's lack of faith and trust in God's care and deliverance, while the story of Hezekiah's response to the Assyrian invasion in Isaiah 36–39 makes a pointed contrast between Hezekiah's astounding faith and Ahaz's craven disbelief.<sup>x</sup>

## Transitional Chapters

Chapters 34–39 carry the readers over a bridge from the first half, focusing on judgment, to the second half, focusing on restoration. We step onto the bridge in chapter 34 when Isaiah gives us a vision of “the day of the Lord's vengeance and the year of recompences” (verse 8). It is a gruesome, shocking sight as God settles the accounts for the cause of Judah.

In chapter 34, Idumea (Edom) is a prototype, an illustration of what happens when God pours out His indignation. The world is warned to take heed.

Keep moving across the bridge. About halfway across, the scene changes dramatically. The God who poured vengeance on the wicked is coming to save His people. In chapter 35 songs of joy and gladness ring out as an anthem of victory echoes around us. Streams flow in the desert. The barren places bloom like a rose garden. The disabled are healed. The weak are strong. The redeemed come marching down the highway of holiness, radiating God's glory.



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

The nation of Edom descended from Israel's twin brother, Esau. Seeds of bitterness planted in Esau against his brother took root and flourished in his descendants. The Edomites denied the Israelites passage through their land on the journey to Canaan. Israel and Edom often engaged in war. The Edomites were proud and profane. They gloried in their stronghold, Petra, and their wisdom. Isaiah in his prophecies used Edom as a symbol of what will happen to all the enemies of God's people. He warned the whole world to take heed and learn from Edom.

“Once populous and fertile, it [Edom] is now one of the most desolate regions on earth, inhabited mainly by wild beasts, birds, and reptiles (Isaiah 34:10-15).”

As we near the end of the transitional bridge, we walk into the middle of a battleground and an amazing story of God's supernatural delivering power (chapters 36–39).

## **Divine Intervention**

### **Jerusalem Under Siege**

After exploring Isaiah's prophecies in chapters 1–33, stop, take a deep breath, and enjoy the story of an astounding right-on-time miracle.

Angered by King Hezekiah's refusal to pay more tribute money to Assyria, King Sennacherib and his army came swooping upon Judah with a vengeance. According to Sennacherib's records, he plundered forty-six Judaeen cities and took 200,150 captives. His next target—Jerusalem.

#### **Read it.**

Students chosen by the instructor will read appendix 7 as a radio program.

#### **Talk about it**

- What misinformation was in Rabshakeh's message to Hezekiah? How could this have discouraged the people of Jerusalem had they not known the truth?
- The Assyrian king claimed that Hezekiah's God had told him to war against Judah. Is this true or false? Explain.
- Isaiah assured Hezekiah that God would save Jerusalem for "His own sake and His servant David's." Why is David mentioned here?

### **Hezekiah's Miracle and Mistake**

#### **Talk about it**

The instructor will divide your class into two discussion groups and assign each group a chapter to delve into and discuss.

### **Chapter 38**

Points to consider: At the time of Hezekiah's illness . . .



- the threat of Assyrian invasion and domination had hung over his head all his reign.
- His son Manasseh had not yet been born.

Questions to discuss:

- How old was Hezekiah when Isaiah told him he was going to die? (Compare II Chronicles 29:1-2 and Isaiah 38:5.)
- Is it possible to change the mind and will of God?
- How would Judah's history have been changed had Hezekiah died of this illness?
- How did the reversing of the sundial affect the world?
- When Isaiah returned to speak to Hezekiah, what two points did his prophecy cover?

## Chapter 39

Point to consider:

- At this time Babylon was not Judah's enemy; Assyria was.

Questions to discuss:

- What was Hezekiah's motivation in showing his wealth and military might to the Babylonian emissary?
- Why did Hezekiah's actions anger Isaiah?
- What was the cost of Hezekiah revealing his strength to the Babylonians?
- What does Hezekiah's response to Isaiah's prophecy (verse 8) reveal about the king's mindset?
- How much are you willing to sacrifice that there "be peace and truth in your day"?

## Isaiah's Fulfilled Prophecies

### During His Lifetime

**Do it.** Fill in the blanks. To review prophecies fulfilled in Isaiah's lifetime, look up the reference and fill in the blank in the second column. (To expedite this activity, the instructor will assign references to individuals or teams.)

**Table 1**

References	Prophecies fulfilled during Isaiah's lifetime
1. Isaiah 7:1	_____ and _____ could not prevail against Judah.
2. Isaiah 17:1–3	The city of _____ was left a ruinous heap.
3. Isaiah 14:31	The nation of _____ was dissolved.
4. Isaiah 8:7–8	The army of the king of _____ overflowed Judah.
5. Isaiah 15:1	The nation of _____ was laid waste.
6. Isaiah 20:3–5	Isaiah walked naked and barefoot for three years as a prophecy of the time when God stripped _____ and _____ bare.
7. Isaiah 21:17	The mighty men of _____ (Arabia) were diminished.
8. Isaiah 23:1	_____ was laid waste.
9. Isaiah 37:33–37	God defended Jerusalem for his servant _____'s sake.
10. Isaiah 38:5	God added _____ years to King Hezekiah's life.

### After His Lifetime

**Do it.** Fill in the blanks. To find the prophecies fulfilled after Isaiah's death, look up the reference and fill in the missing words. (Your instructor will assign references to individuals or teams.)<sup>xi</sup>

**Table 2**

References	Prophecies fulfilled after Isaiah's lifetime
1. Isaiah 39:5–7	_____ 's sons and possession were carried into _____.
2. Isaiah 46:11	God's judgment was executed on Babylon by a man from the _____.
3. Isaiah 13:17	God stirred up the _____ against Babylon.

4. Isaiah 13:19	_____ was left as desolate as _____ and _____.
5. Isaiah 44:28	The Jewish captives in Babylon were released by _____ to return and rebuild _____ and the _____.
6. Isaiah 27:12–13	The _____ of _____ returned to worship in the holy mount at _____.
7. Isaiah 19:19	An _____ was built in _____ to worship the God of Israel.
8. Isaiah 27:6	Israel's religion spread over the face of the whole _____.
9. Isaiah 23:13–18	Tyre was destroyed and rebuilt after _____ years.
10. Isaiah 34:5–17	A great slaughter in the land of _____ and desolation that lasts from _____ to _____.

When time is called, the students share their answers and the class finishes the exercises.

## Wrap Up

### Conclusion

Understanding the timing in prophecies is essential. Some of Isaiah's prophecies were for his near future and came to pass in his lifetime, and some within a hundred years or so after his death. Others were for the far future and have yet to be fulfilled. We can be assured that "not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof" (Joshua 23:14).

### Commitment

**Think about it.**

As you participated in this class, what did the Spirit of God say to you? Has your faith in God's promise(s) to you been wavering? Have you questioned His timing? Have you been pushing against God's will demanding your own? Has this lesson changed your mindset?

Write one paragraph on the notepad how this lesson has affected your life.



## Assignment

As each assignment is completed, check it off.

- Make a list of promises that God has given you that have not yet been fulfilled. Date it and keep it in your Bible. As each promise is fulfilled, note the date.
- Read Isaiah 53 aloud several times. Memorize verses 3-5.
- Continue making a note of every reference from Isaiah that you hear outside this classroom. At the beginning of lesson 8, you will compare your list with other students.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. What is the focus of the first half of the Book of Isaiah?

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2. What is the focus of the second half?

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3. Name two parallels between the first half of Isaiah and the second half.

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Isaiah 34-39 transition the readers from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

5. What chapter is an anthem of victory? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Why did God turn the sundial backward ten degrees rather than forward?

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7. What was the cure for Hezekiah's illness?

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8. Relate two of Isaiah's prophecies that were fulfilled in his lifetime.

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9. Relate two of Isaiah's prophecies that were fulfilled after his death.

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10. How did God defeat the Assyrian army?

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## Lesson 8

# The Messianic Prophet

### Key Scriptures

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

### History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Isaiah is often called the “Messianic Prophet,” since his prophecies of judgment and deliverance point toward the advent of the Messiah. His beautiful words continue to warn, promise, and comfort us as we look for Christ’s second coming.

### Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Parallel key verses in Isaiah 43–45 to New Testament verses proving that Jesus Christ is the one true God
- Recall at least four New Testament references to the life of Christ that fulfilled Isaiah’s messianic prophecies
- Recap the ministry of the prophet Isaiah

## Lesson Outline

- I. Messianic Prophecies
  - A. The Messiah’s first advent
  - B. The Messiah’s second advent
- II. The Poetic Prophet
  - A. The salvation symphony
  - B. Poetic promises
- III. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment

**Note to Students:** Are you prepared to quote Isaiah 53:3–5 in class? Compare your list of references from Isaiah that you have heard outside the classroom since lesson 4. Isn’t it amazing how often the poetic writings of Isaiah are quoted by preachers, teachers, and biblical scholars?

## Lesson

### Messianic Prophecies

#### The Messiah’s First Advent



Throughout the Book of Isaiah runs the promise that the Messiah would come from Israel and would bring healing and peace to the whole world. John wrote that Isaiah saw the glory of Christ and spoke of him. (See John 12:38–41.)

For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us. (Isaiah 33:22)

Over the course of the first half of the book, the identity of the promised King who would come to deliver Judah, reunite the nation of Israel, destroy its enemies, and establish true justice in the earth remained cloaked in mystery. However, here [in Isaiah 33:22] the King's identity is revealed: it is Jehovah Himself who is coming to rule and reign in Zion.<sup>xii</sup>

Some seven hundred years before Jesus' birth, Isaiah dropped clues for identifying the Messiah. Despite that, almost two thousand years after the Messiah's first advent, the Jews are still waiting for His coming. Their ears were heavy, and their eyes shut. (See Isaiah 6:10.) Their preconceived beliefs about the Messiah locked their hearts to His identity. They were looking for a king to deliver them from the oppression of their enemies and bring in an age of peace and prosperity. Their mindset was, "Who could deliver us other than a king with a powerful army?" Their life experiences and their rigid opinions limited their vision.

### **Talk about it**

- How do our life experiences limit our interpretation of Scripture?
- How can we see and think beyond our experiences, culture, and education when we study God's Word? (See I Corinthians 2:16.)
- Can we have so many preconceived opinions about the end time that we could miss the signs of Christ's return? Defend your answer.

Let's dig into Isaiah chapters 43–45, which expand upon the truth of the one true God. (Also see Isaiah 1:4, 24; 29:23; and 41:4.)

### **Dig deeper**

The instructor will divide the class into three groups and assign each group one chapter: Isaiah 43, 44, or 45. Highlight verses in your assigned chapter that prove there is only one God.

When time is called, have a reading marathon. As quickly as possible in numerical order, the groups read aloud their highlighted verses emphasizing the power and deity of God.

Who is the Messiah? He is YHWH, Jehovah God. (See I Timothy 3:16.)



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

When the word “lord” is written in all upper case letters (LORD/ LORD), the Hebrew behind this word is the name of God, יהוה (YHWH). <https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/god-yhwh/difference-between-lord-Lord-and-LORD.htm>. Accessed May 4, 2020.

#### Talk about it (optional)

- Read Isaiah 43:11; 45:22; and Luke 2:11. Explain how these verses agree.
- Read Isaiah 44:6 and Revelation 2:8. Explain how these verses agree.
- Read Isaiah 44:24 and John 1:1–3, 10. Explain how these verses agree.

**Word search.** Your instructor will assign each student (or team) one of the references in the table and challenge them to find a New Testament verse showing how Jesus Christ fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy. (Use a concordance, if needed.) The class will share answers to complete the table.

Clues to Messiah’s Identity	Isaiah’s Prophecy	New Testament Fulfillment
His Forerunner	Isaiah 40:3–5	
His Conception	Isaiah 7:14	
His Birth	Isaiah 9:6	
His Lineage	Isaiah 11:1	
Location of His Ministry	Isaiah 9:1	
His Ministry to the Gentiles	Isaiah 49:6	
His Miracles	Isaiah 61:1	
His Spirit	Isaiah 11:2	
His Rejection	Isaiah 53:3	
His Suffering	Isaiah 53:5	

His Death	Isaiah 53:12	
His Burial	Isaiah 53:9	
His Resurrection	Isaiah 25:8	

### The Messiah's Second Advent

The scope of Isaiah's vision is breathtaking, extending from the political events surrounding the Northern Kingdom's demise all the way to the end of time, when God Himself comes to rule and reign upon the earth.<sup>xiii</sup>

Isaiah prophesied of both the first and second advent of Christ, the suffering and reigning of Christ. Often the way his prophecies are recorded in Scripture makes them seem simultaneous, but the New Testament reveals the "gap" between the first and second coming. In this church age, Christ rules in the hearts of His people, but during the Millennium, He will sit on the throne of David and rule His earthly kingdom. The Jews did not understand the "gap theory" and rejected their Messiah. The fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies will not be completed until the son of David rules over His kingdom of peace. (See Isaiah 11:1-9; 42:1-4; 61:1-11; 65:17-25.)



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

In chapter 44, Isaiah prophesied that a heathen foreigner would be the Jews' deliverer. God even revealed to His prophet the name of "his anointed"—Cyrus. This was before Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, and took thousands of Jews captive. Surely the prophecy of a heathen king delivering Judah shocked "God's chosen people." Why would they need to be rescued by a heathen? The fact that God chose Cyrus, king of Persia, is evidence of God's sovereign rule over all nations, even idol worshipers. Right in the middle of chapters exalting the one true God, Isaiah 44:9-20 gives a detailed description of and warning against idolatry.

Reference	Prophecies
Isaiah 2:4; 65:25	Global peace
Isaiah 24; 26:21; 34:1-4	The earth destroyed
Isaiah 32-35	The Great Tribulation, the judgment of the nations, the Millennium
Isaiah 25:8; 26:19	No more death, the resurrection
Isaiah 52:6	The Jews will recognize their God and know His name

Isaiah 54:13	Great peace for Israel
Isaiah 60	God's favor makes Israel the power center of the world
Isaiah 55:5	Israel glorified before all nations
Isaiah 62:2; 65:15	God's people given a new name
Isaiah 63:1–6	The Battle of Armageddon
Isaiah 65:17; 66:22	A new Heaven and a new Earth
Isaiah 66:15–18, 22–24	Final judgment and glory of the Lord

In Revelation 21–22 the Bible closes with a glorious picture of the new Heaven and Earth, which parallels with the closing of the Book of Isaiah (chapter 66). Many of Isaiah's prophecies have been fulfilled, but the end is not yet. The second coming of Christ is imminent.

## The Poetic Prophet

### The Salvation Symphony

“Symphony” is the term many find useful to capture the fusion of simplicity and complexity presented in the Book of Isaiah. The major thrust is clearly God's work of salvation: “The Salvation Symphony” (the name Isaiah means “God Saves”). The prominent themes repeated and developed throughout this vast symphonic work are judgment, comfort, and hope. All three elements are present on nearly every page, but each also gives distinction to three “movements” of the book that so powerfully enact salvation.<sup>xiv</sup>

- |                                     |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Wells of salvation               | Isaiah 12:3  |
| 2. Joy of salvation                 | Isaiah 25:9  |
| 3. Walls of salvation               | Isaiah 26:1  |
| 4. Everlasting salvation            | Isaiah 45:17 |
| 5. Day of salvation                 | Isaiah 49:8  |
| 6. Feet of the heralds of salvation | Isaiah 52:7  |
| 7. Spread of salvation              | Isaiah 52:10 |
| 8. Arm of salvation                 | Isaiah 59:16 |
| 9. Helmet of salvation              | Isaiah 59:17 |

10. Garments of salvation

Isaiah 61:10

11. Light of salvation

Isaiah 62:1<sup>xv</sup>

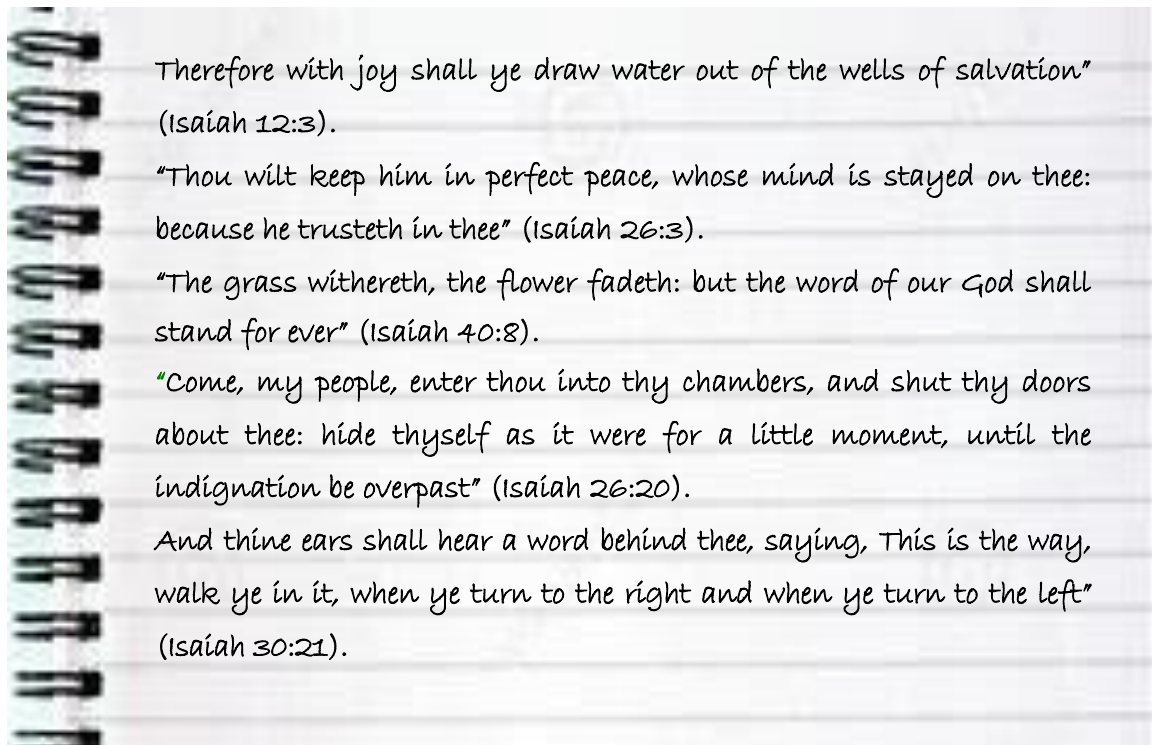
### Think about it

- If you were going to preach a sermon (or write a lesson) about salvation using one of the above verses as your text, which would you choose?
- Briefly note how you would connect that verse to the plan of salvation.



### Poetic Promises

The Book of Isaiah is full of “apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Proverbs 25:11), poetic words and passages that add color and harmony to Isaiah’s writing.



"Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isaiah 51:11).

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 54:17).

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1).

"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Isaiah 55:6).

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:7-9).

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

"Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear" (Isaiah 59:1).

"So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19).

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the



prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified" (Isaiah 61:1-3).

Note it

On the notepad, briefly relate how one of the above verses has ministered to you.

## Wrap Up

### Conclusion

Isaiah prophesied of both the first and second advents of the Messiah. The Old Testament reveals that Christ first came as the "suffering Servant" (Isaiah 53) to set up His kingdom in the hearts of men. To those who look for Christ's second coming, Isaiah spoke as forcefully as he did to his society. The laser beam of his prophecies focused upon the sordid sins of Judah (and our day). He exposed his contemporaries' social injustices, quest for carnal indulgences, trust in the arm of flesh, and hypocritical pretense of orthodox religion. Do we cringe as we read his writings and his words pull the cover from the facade of our society and our lives?

As we conclude this study of the Book of Isaiah, may we cry out with this Old Testament prophet, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips: and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5).

### Commitment

This week commit to give a Bible study on the oneness of God to an individual, either in person, via email, letter, or phone call.

<b>MY COMMITMENT</b>
Bible study given to _____
on (date) _____ via _____.
Results: _____
_____
By: _____

## Assignment

As each assignment is completed, check it off.

- Memorize two or three of the verses on the list above.
- Give a Bible study on the oneness of God.
- Read Jeremiah 1 and underline any words or phrases that speak to you.
- Write a synopsis of what you have learned from Isaiah using the following prompts. Complete each prompt with 1-2 sentences. This exercise is due at the beginning of the next lesson.

**Isaiah was**

**The Book of Isaiah is**

**Through Isaiah, God warned Judah**

**God also promised**

**The most important thing I learned from studying Isaiah (lessons 4-8) is**

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. Why was Isaiah called the “Messianic Prophet”?

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2. Why is Isaiah sometimes referred to as a poetic prophet?

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3. Approximately how many years before Christ's birth did Isaiah prophecy about Him? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Give three Scripture references from Isaiah proving there is one God.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Recall one of Isaiah's prophecies foretelling the coming of the Messiah and a New Testament reference where that prophecy was fulfilled.

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6. What was the name of the king that Isaiah prophesied would allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple?

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7. Why did the Jews reject Jesus as their Messiah?

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8. Explain the “gap theory.”

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9. What is a key word found in Isaiah? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Quote a key verse from Isaiah that has ministered to you.

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11. What about Isaiah’s ministry spoke to you the loudest?

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## Lesson 9

# Jeremiah, the Weeping Prophet (Part 1)

### Key Scripture

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! (Jeremiah 9:1).

### History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Jeremiah lived in turbulent times under extreme pressure. Before he opened his mouth, he knew the message God commissioned him to deliver to the nations would not be accepted, yet he persevered. He had a strong backbone, a broken heart, and overflowing eyes. What a role model for everyone who ministers.

### Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Review the struggle between the three world powers during the time of the major prophets
- Explain why Jeremiah is called “the weeping prophet”

- Recall the five main points of Jeremiah's prophecies
- Compare Jeremiah's world to theirs

## Lesson Outline

- I. The Prophet Jeremiah
  - A. The Times of Jeremiah
  - B. The Book of Jeremiah
- II. Jeremiah's Mission
  - A. His Commission
  - B. His Prophecies
- III. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment

**Note to Students:** Turn in the synopsis of Isaiah that you wrote, using the prompts given in the lesson 8 assignment. When instructed, call out the words from Jeremiah 1 that spoke to you.

## Lesson

### The Prophet Jeremiah

#### The Times of Jeremiah

Jeremiah was born in a time when society was deteriorating economically, politically, and spiritually. The idolatrous ways of the heathen had permeated Judah. False prophets were lauded, and the true men of God were persecuted. Nations were rising against nations. Immorality, war, and slavery were the norm.

Isaiah and his generation had witnessed the Northern Kingdom's annihilation and the Southern Kingdom's deliverance when in one night one angel destroyed the Assyrian army. Several decades after Isaiah's generation had passed from the scene a young Jeremiah stepped onto Judah's stage. Had the chronicles of major events of Isaiah's era been relegated to dusty scrolls in Judah's palace? Was Jeremiah's generation even interested in learning from history? Were they so engrossed in the sound of their voices that they stopped listening to the voices from the past?

**Note it**

Are you listening to history? On the memo pad briefly note a turning point in the history of your nation, church, or family that was told to you by the older generation. You did not witness it, but it determined the direction of your life.

Jeremiah lived during the reign of five Judean kings, starting with Josiah. King Josiah's reforms brought revival to Judah, much like the reign of his great-grandfather Hezekiah. But because of the atrocities of Hezekiah's son (Josiah's grandfather) Manasseh, a stormy cloud of judgment hovered on the horizon.

**A Turning Point**

**Have you shared this turning point with your family? If not, do so this week.**

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." –George Santayana, 1905

Jeremiah's prophetic ministry began in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reforms. While Jeremiah experienced the highs of revival and celebrated the Passover with the Jews, he realized the revival was only skin deep. The heart of the people had not changed. One man, even though he is the king, can only do so much to turn a nation. Josiah's reforms stayed the judgment of God for a few years, but trouble was on the horizon.

Much of Jeremiah's preaching echoed Isaiah's. Different generation. Same sins. Same message. "Repent! If you will turn from your wicked ways, God will be merciful. If you do not repent, judgment is coming." King Josiah repented, but the people did not.

Jeremiah ministered in turbulent times. In the south, Egypt, which had been a world power some one thousand years before Jeremiah, was flexing its muscles. To the north, Assyria had dominated the world for three hundred years. Assyria had dominated the world and conquered nation after nation using brutal, inhumane violence, and mind warfare. In Jeremiah's day, Babylon in the east had begun subjugating its enemies and gaining control. These three bullying powers – Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon – marched onto the battlefield struggling for world dominance. Insignificant Judah would not have been worth their notice, except the trade route from Assyria to Egypt ran down Judah's coastline. That made this small nation worth the battle. Israel was caught in the middle of a power struggle, as it remains today.

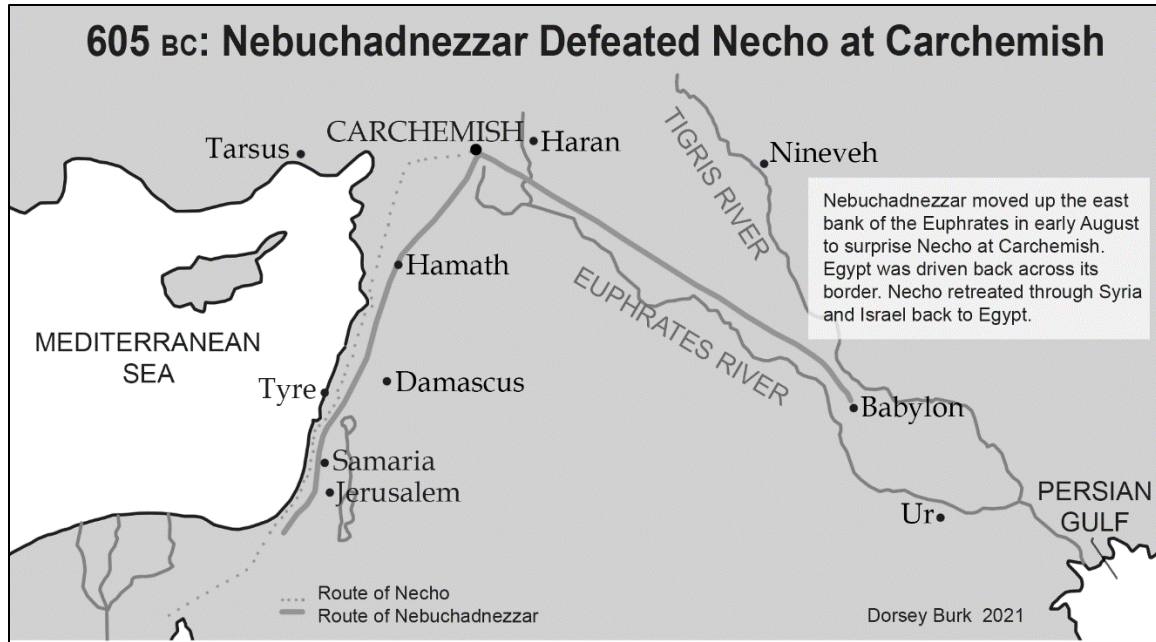
### **The Battle at Carchemish**

(See II Chronicles 35:20–27.) A world war was brewing in 609 BC when Pharaoh Necho of Egypt set out for the city of Carchemish to join the Assyrians in an attempt to defeat the Babylonians, who were rising to great power. Necho marched his armies through Judah, where King Josiah tried to stop him at Megiddo, but was killed. The battle began at Carchemish in 605 BC. The Egyptians and Assyrians were soundly defeated, chased to Hamath, and defeated again. Babylon was now the new world power.<sup>xvi</sup>

For seventy years Babylonia ruled the world – the same seventy years as those of the exile (or Babylonian captivity) of the Jewish people.<sup>xvii</sup>

### **The Book of Jeremiah**

Why do we need to study the Book of Jeremiah?



- (1) God told Jeremiah, "Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book" (Jeremiah 30:2). God spoke. Jeremiah dictated. Baruch wrote. If it was important enough for God to record it, it is important enough for us to study.
- (2) "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3). Every word of God is vital to our lives, not simply the ones that are easily comprehended.
- (3) "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Corinthians 10:11). We need to examine these examples and learn from them. As Jeremiah's generation faced judgment, so our generation "upon whom the ends of the world are come" faces the judgment of God if we do not repent. (See II Chronicles 7:14.)

The Book of Jeremiah is as much an autobiography as it is a chronicle of prophecies. Jeremiah's words are raw and emotional, quite a contrast to Isaiah's flowing poetic writing. The weeping prophet did not stand on the sidelines and write. He lived what he wrote. He wrote what he lived. He wept as he wrote.

The Book of Jeremiah is weighty and dark, written by a lonely, depressed man with a staggering load on his shoulders, a fiery message in his mouth, and a breaking heart. As Jeremiah wrote, his shoulders shuddered and his tears streamed. Jeremiah's prophecies warned of God's fierce judgment, offering only a slight ray of hope for mercy if perchance the Jews would repent. The Book of Jeremiah focuses on the Jews' hard hearts, rebellious spirits, and idolatrous ways. Many shy away from reading this book because a negative theme runs through it. Jeremiah's blunt words bare their soul and spotlight their actions. How can one study this book without praying, "O God, have mercy on us"?



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

"Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jeremiah 8:22).

The balm of Gilead, a medicinal salve, was produced from the resinous juices of the balsam poplar trees found east of the Jordan River. This balm was used to reduce inflammation, soothe the skin, protect the immune system, eliminate pain, speed healing, soothe the stomach, and detoxify the body.

Was there balm in Gilead? Yes. But no matter how powerful a medicine, it is impotent if not applied. The cure for Judah's sin sickness was available, but powerless because it was rejected.

## An Overview of the Book of Jeremiah

Introduction: The Call of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1)

I. Jeremiah's Words to Judah (Jeremiah 2–20)

A. Words to the People (Jeremiah 2–11:17)

B. Words to God (Jeremiah 11:18–20:18)

C. Word to the Leaders (Jeremiah 21–25)

II. Jeremiah's Words in Judah (Jeremiah 26–45)

A. Jeremiah's Validation as a prophet (Jeremiah 26–29)

B. Jeremiah's Words of Comfort (Jeremiah 30–33)

C. Jeremiah's Persecution as a Prophet (Jeremiah 34–45)

III. Jeremiah's Words to the Nations (Jeremiah 46–51)

Conclusion: The Fall of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 52)<sup>xviii</sup>



## Jeremiah's Mission

### His Commission

Jeremiah was from the priestly lineage of Ithamar. was one of the few prophets who was also by birth a priest/Levite. His father, Hilkiah, belonged to the order of porters. Jeremiah was from Anathoth, a town in the territory of Benjamin assigned to the Levites by Joshua. It was northeast of Jerusalem and within walking distance for the Levites serving their tenure in the Temple.

Unlike Isaiah, whose calling is not recorded until chapter 6 of his book, Jeremiah's commissioning is recorded in chapter 1. Before God formed Jeremiah in the womb, He knew him (approved), sanctified (set apart), and ordained (commissioned) him "a prophet unto the nations." Isaiah was a prophet to the Jews in Judah. Ezekiel was a prophet to the Jewish captives in Babylon. Jeremiah was a prophet to the nations (Jeremiah 1:5), although he delivered only one prophecy outside of Judah (chapter 44).

Primarily, describing Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations serves as an indictment of the nation of Judah. In other words, Judah's idolatrous and oppressive behavior has made it, in God's eyes, simply another heathen nation deserving of judgment.<sup>xix</sup>

Jeremiah's message was to all nations, reaching even to this age.

**Read Jeremiah 1:6.** Although Jeremiah's calling was determined before his conception, he was probably around seventeen years old when he had this conversation with God. Note that he did not accept his call without arguing.



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

The Chaldeans are associated with the city of Ur and the biblical patriarch Abraham (Genesis 11:31). They pop up in the Bible again and again; for example, they were part of the Babylonian army that surrounded Jerusalem (II Kings 25). Scholars believe Nebuchadnezzar was of Chaldean descent. The Chaldean rule created the Neo-Babylonian [or new-Babylonian] Empire. (<https://www.learnreligions.com/the-chaldeans-of-ancient-mesopotamia-117396>. Accessed May 22, 2020.)

**Read 1:7-8.** God’s answer was firm, but also frightening. It was Jeremiah’s first clue of what he would be facing – hard faces. He was given the most difficult tasks assigned to a man – a ministry doomed by human standards to fail. No applause. No repentance. No converts. The prospect of his future ministry was daunting. He was not going to be welcomed with smiles and cheers. (See Jeremiah 5:3.)

**Read 1:9.** In response when God commissioned Jeremiah, He did for him what the seraphim had done for Isaiah.

**Talk about it**

- What did the seraphim do to Isaiah’s lips and why?
- What was the significance of God touching Jeremiah’s mouth when he was commissioned? Compare Jeremiah 1:9 with 20:9.
- How is this a type of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

**Fill in the blanks**

**Read 1:10.** Following the sanctification of Jeremiah’s mouth, God gave him his job description. Based on your knowledge of Judah’s spiritual condition, write on each blank below one thing that Jeremiah was to

- root out, \_\_\_\_\_
- pull down, \_\_\_\_\_
- destroy, \_\_\_\_\_
- throw down, \_\_\_\_\_
- build, and \_\_\_\_\_
- plant. \_\_\_\_\_

**Think about it**

- What does the sequence of the tasks assigned Jeremiah say to you?
- How is this job description relevant to the ministry today?

**Talk about it**

- Do you think Jeremiah's conversation with God was his first hint that he was called to be a prophet? Explain your answer.
- Did Jeremiah have a choice in whether he would be a prophet? Discuss.
- If Jeremiah had refused to accept his calling, how would that have affected his life and the nation of Judah?
- Which is stronger—God's will for a person or that person's will? Discuss.
- What does God calling Jeremiah before his conception say to medical science? To you?

In chapter 16:1-8, Jeremiah revealed more about the requirements of his calling. As an indication of the destruction to come, he was not to marry "nor have sons and daughters in this place." Neither was he to take part in funerals nor joyous occasions such as weddings. He truly was a man set apart, "called to deliver a message from another world."<sup>xx</sup> He was a lonely, rejected, and persecuted man—not a position one would desire.

### **His Prophecies**

Jeremiah's ministry began at the height of King Josiah's revival and spiraled downward to Jerusalem's destruction and several years into the Babylonian captivity. What a tense, traumatic time. No wonder he wept.

(Reference the table of the Kings of Judah, pages 41-42.)

**Read Jeremiah 7:9-11.** In his Temple Sermon, Jeremiah revealed the lack of connection between the Jews' hearts and lifestyle. Their worship and their lives were not aligned. They did not walk what they talked. The Jews foolishly consoled themselves by thinking, "We are God's chosen so we are free to live as we want."

Jeremiah's messages consistently emphasized five points:

1. Judah is going to be destroyed by victorious Babylonia.

2. If Judah will turn from her wickedness, somehow God will save her from destruction at the hands of Babylon.
3. Later, when there no longer seemed to be any hope of Judah's repentance, came a message of renewed hope: if Judah, as a matter of political expediency, will submit to Babylon, she will be spared.
4. Judah will be destroyed, but she shall recover and yet dominate the world.
5. Babylon, the destroyer of Judah, shall herself be destroyed, never to rise again.<sup>xxi</sup>

The mixing of the early and late prophecies in the Book of Jeremiah challenges biblical scholars. It also confuses the reader who starts at chapter 1 and reads through the book consecutively. Commentators believe that as Jeremiah recounted one prophecy to his scribe Baruch, he remembered another, perhaps delivered at a different time. As he remembered, Baruch wrote. Thus, the prophecies are not sequential. This table based on the research of the authors of *Halley's Bible Handbook* lists Jeremiah's prophecies chronologically.

### Jeremiah's Prophecies

King	Lineage	Events	Jeremiah's Prophecies
Josiah	Great-grandson of godly king Hezekiah; grandson of wicked king Manasseh and son of wicked king Amon	Led Judah into revival; because of his faithfulness, judgment was delayed; reigned 31 years. (II Kings 22:11; II Chronicles 34:1)	Jeremiah 3:6–25
Jehoahaz (Shallum)	Son of Josiah	Made king by popular demand when Josiah died; was "evil"; reigned 3 months; dethroned by the pharaoh of Egypt and carried to Egypt where he died; Judah forced to pay tribute to Egypt. (II	Jeremiah 22:11–17

		Kings 23:31–33; II Chronicles 36:1–3)	
Eliakim (Jehoiakim)	Son of Josiah	Made king by Pharaoh who renamed him Jehoiakim; taxed the people to pay tribute to Egypt; was wicked and persecuted Jeremiah; burned the Word of the Lord; subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar and bound in chains; died or was killed before he was carried into Babylon; given the burial of a donkey; reigned 11 years. (II Kings 23:34–36; II Chronicles 36:1–8; Jeremiah 22:19; 36:30)	Jeremiah 22:18–23; 25:1–38; 26:1–24; 27:1–11; 35:1–19; 36:1–32
Jehoiachin (Coniah)	Son of Jehoiakim; grandson of Josiah	Reigned 3 months and 10 days; was wicked; surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar and taken to Babylon; released from prison and given daily allowance by the king. (II Kings 24:6–17; 25:27–30; II Chronicles 36:8–10)	Jeremiah 13:18–27; 22:24–30
Mattaniah (Zedekiah)	Son of Josiah; brother of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim; uncle of Jehoiachin	Made king by Nebuchadnezzar; renamed Zedekiah; was wicked and weak; yielded to the princes and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar despite Jeremiah's warning not to; reigned 11 years; was king when Jerusalem was destroyed by	Jeremiah 21:1–4; 24:8–10; 27:12–22; 32:1–5; 34:1–22; 37:1–21; 38:1–28; 51:59–64

		Nebuchadnezzar; was blinded and carried into Babylonian captivity. (II Kings 24:17–19; II Chronicles 36:10–12; Jeremiah 37:1–2)	
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### Dig deeper

Your instructor will assign you one of the prophecies listed above. Because time in class will be limited, this is your homework assignment. Study the passage, choose a key word, and summarize the prophecy into two or three sentences.

Just as a painful surgery is often required to remove cancer from a body, so judgment was essential to purge Judah of idolatry. Over and over God had sent prophets offering the people the prescription to remedy their terminal condition—repentance. But they refused to take their medicine. (See Jeremiah 25:3–4.) Only after Judah experienced exile in Babylon were the Jews as a nation cured from worshiping heathen gods.

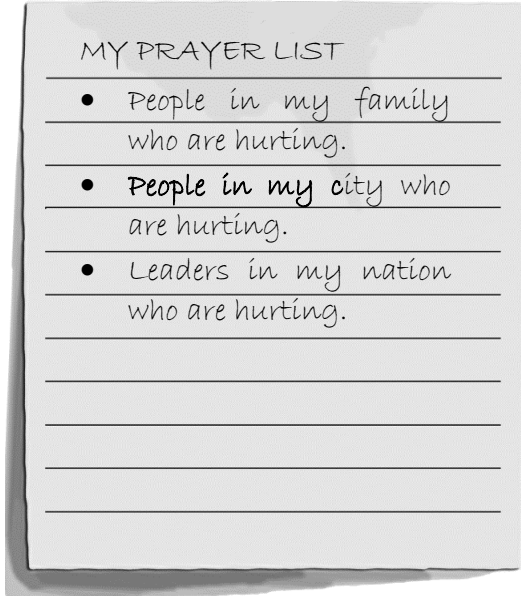
### Wrap Up

#### Conclusion

Jeremiah wept not so much because of the personal insults and rejection hurled at him, but because the people refused to repent, and he foresaw the judgment they were about to suffer. In a world where sin is rampant and truth is rejected, it is easy to become callous. Carrying a burden for the lost is hard. It is depressing. It hurts. Our natural tendency is to pull away from pain and pressure, to shrug our shoulders, and build a shield around our hearts. At times, we are tempted to wipe our tears and say like Jeremiah, “I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name.” But for those who have received a commission from God, this is not an option because His Word is in us as a burning fire shut up in our bones. We must go forth with weeping, speaking His Word.

### Commitment

How long has it been since you wept for your hurting family, city, or nation? Ask God to increase your burden and make your eyes a fountain of tears. Pray for people with specific hurts that you see around you.



### Assignment

As each assignment is completed, check it off.

- Study the prophecy assigned you. Write a short synopsis choosing a key word and condensing the prophecy to two or three sentences. These will be graded for clarity, comprehension, and content.
- Be especially sensitive to the hurting people around you. Put hands and feet to your prayers. Check the box when you have helped someone in a caring practical way.

### Review and Discussion Questions

1. What three nations were battling to become the leading world power in the time of the major prophets?  
A. \_\_\_\_\_  
B. \_\_\_\_\_  
C. \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Describe the spiritual condition of Judah in Jeremiah's day.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Name the five kings to whom Jeremiah prophesied.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. \_\_\_\_\_
- E. \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many years was Babylon the leading world power?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the balm of Gilead?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why is it important that we study the Book of Jeremiah?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What was Jeremiah's argument why he could not speak to the nation of Judah? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Which king led Judah into revival?

\_\_\_\_\_



9. Who was king of Judah when Jerusalem was destroyed?

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10. Why did Jeremiah weep?

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11. Fill in the blanks. Isaiah was prophet to the \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.  
Jeremiah was prophet to the \_\_\_\_\_. Ezekiel was prophet  
to the \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.

**Personal Study Notes**

## Lesson 10

# Jeremiah, the Weeping Prophet (Part 2)

### Key Scripture

But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive. (Jeremiah 13:17)

### History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Jeremiah's tears softened his hard message—repent and find mercy; continue in your sins and be judged. This is the message of the church. May we never become so callous that we can preach or teach on the judgment of God with dry eyes.

### Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Create a timeline of the main events of Jeremiah's life
- List at least three reasons justifying God's judgment of Judah

- Describe the persecution Jeremiah suffered
- Parallel Jeremiah's ministry to Judah to the church's mission to the world

## Lesson Outline

- I. Jeremiah's Experiences
  - A. Before and during the Babylonian siege
  - B. After the destruction of Jerusalem
- II. Jeremiah's Illustrated Sermons
  - A. Before and during the Babylonian siege
  - B. After the destruction of Jerusalem
- III. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment

**Note to Students:** Be prepared to turn in to your instructor your synopsis of the prophecy you were assigned at the end of lesson 9.

## Lesson

### Jeremiah's Experiences

#### Before and During the Babylonian Siege

In the first part of Jeremiah's ministry, he suffered mental and verbal abuse. He was resisted, ridiculed, and rejected.

#### Dig deeper

As each verse is read, fill in the blank with the names of the people (or groups of people) that rejected Jeremiah.

1. Jeremiah 11:21 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Jeremiah 12:6 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Jeremiah 20:10 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Jeremiah 26:8 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Jeremiah 36:26 \_\_\_\_\_

- Of the above, which do you think was the most painful?
- 

Repeatedly Jeremiah warned Judah that judgment was coming if they did not repent. During that time, he suffered physical persecution as well as rejection.

- He was accused of deserting to the Babylonian camp, beaten, and placed in stocks (Jeremiah 20:1–13; 37:12–16).
- Imprisoned (Jeremiah 32:2; 33:1).
- His writings were burned (36:22–23).
- He and his scribe Baruch were forced to hide (36:26).
- He was cast into a cistern and left to sink in the mire (38:6).

As the Babylonian army surrounded Jerusalem, Jeremiah continued to prophecy. “Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live” (Jeremiah 38:2).



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

Much of Jeremiah's persecution came from false prophets. In *An Introduction to Old Testament Prophets*, Terry Baughman lists from *Hottel Notes* the following way to identify false prophets:

1. They pretend to come from God (Jeremiah 23).
2. They were used of Jehovah to prove Israel (Deuteronomy 13).
3. They were led by evil spirits (I Kings 22:23).
4. They prophesied falsely (Jeremiah 23:16).
5. They prophesied out of their own heart (Jeremiah 23:16).
6. They prophesied in the name of idols (Jeremiah 2:8).
7. They prophesied peace, when there was no peace (Jeremiah 6:14; 23:17; Ezekiel 13:10; Micah 3:5).
8. They were pointedly and earnestly denounced by Jehovah (Isaiah 9:15; Jeremiah 6:13; 14:14; 23:30–32; 29:31–32; Ezekiel 13:3; 14:9).
9. They were sorely punished by Jehovah (Jeremiah 28:15–17, 29:22–23; Micah 3:5, 7, 11–12).

According to *Halley's Bible Handbook*, the captivity of Judah was accomplished in four phases.

- (1) In 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar defeated Jehoiakim and took to Babylon the sons of prominent families including Daniel, along with temple treasures. (See II Chronicles 36:6-7; Daniel 1:1-3.)
- (2) Eight years later in 597 BC, Nebuchadnezzar's army returned and took the rest of the temple treasures as well as King Jehoiachin and ten thousand princes, officers, and prominent citizens, including Ezekiel. (See II Kings 24:14-16.)

In 588 BC, the Babylonians threw up a siege around Jerusalem. As the siege grew tighter and the people hungrier, cowardly Zedekiah called for Jeremiah in secret: "Is there any word from the LORD?" Apparently, he was hoping God had changed His mind. Jeremiah repeated the previous warning with an addendum regarding Zedekiah's wives and children. Zedekiah sealed the doom of Jerusalem when he refused to humble himself and obey the word of the Lord.

- (3) In 586 BC, the Babylonians broke through the walls and burned the city and the Temple. They killed King Zedekiah's sons before his eyes, then put out his eyes. They carried 832 captives along with the king to Babylon. They imprisoned Zedekiah and there he died. (See II Kings 25:8-12; Jeremiah 52:29.)

**After the destruction of Jerusalem**, Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah, a high-ranking official in the Judaeen court, as the governor of the land. (See II Kings 25:22; Jeremiah 40.) He set up his headquarters in Mizpah and encouraged the remnant of poor Jews to pledge their loyalty to Babylon and peacefully farm the land.

Meanwhile, the Jewish prisoners of war started for Babylon. When Nebuchadrezzar, captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guards, found Jeremiah in

chains among the captives at Ramah, he set him free. "You can come with me, and I'll take care of you," he told Jeremiah. "Or you can stay here in the land with Gedaliah. It is your choice."

Jeremiah (and apparently Baruch) chose to stay in Judah.

Jews who had scattered to Moab, Ammon, and Edom heard that a remnant was left in Judah and returned home. All was well for a time. Then discontent and jealousy stirred the heart of a rebel, Ishmael. He assassinated Gedaliah and his supporters and captured many of the people, planning to take them to Ammon. In response Johanan and his forces went after Ishmael. A battle ensued. Ishmael fled for his life.

Johanan, his forces, and the people Ishmael had taken determined to go to Egypt. Then on second thought, Johanan decided it would be a good idea to ask the man of God to pray for them and tell them what to do. He assured Jeremiah that whatever God told him they would do. (See Jeremiah 42.)

After ten days, Jeremiah returned with the word of the Lord. "Don't go to Egypt. Stay here. God will build you up, not pull you down. He will plant you and not pluck you up. Do not be afraid. God is with you. If you go to Egypt, you shall die."

As always, the false prophets argued, "Jeremiah is lying. He is letting Baruch influence him. Let's go to Egypt." (See Jeremiah 43:1-3).

Some people never learn. They obeyed not the voice of God. Johanan carried his foolish followers off to Egypt, along with Jeremiah and Baruch. Just as Jeremiah prophesied, in Egypt the Jews turned to the worship of Egyptian idols. Jeremiah continued to prophesy against Egypt and the surrounding nations, including Babylon. When Nebuchadnezzar's army attacked Egypt, the Jews died of starvation, disease, and massacre. (See Jeremiah 43-44.) How and when Jeremiah

died is not known. However, Jewish tradition asserts that he was stoned to death in Egypt by disgruntled Jews.

- (4) Five years after the burning of Jerusalem in 581 BC, the Babylonians returned and took 745 captives (Jeremiah 52:30), even after a portion of the remnant and Jeremiah had fled to Egypt (Jeremiah 43).



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

Several of Jeremiah's prophecies were fulfilled in the New Testament:

Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16–18
Jeremiah 7:11	Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46
Jeremiah 31:31–34	Hebrews 8:8–13
Jeremiah 31:33	Hebrews 10:16

Thus ended the ministry of the weeping prophet who before he spoke a word from the Lord knew that he would be rejected, despised, and afflicted. Yet he persevered with strong words softened by tears.

“Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow” (Jeremiah 14:17).

#### List it

Brainstorm with your classmates to compile a list of Jeremiah's character traits.

- Which was his strongest trait?
- Which was his weakest?

### Jeremiah's Illustrated Sermons

#### Before and During the Babylonian Siege

Occasionally Jeremiah not only spoke prophecies, he illustrated them with visuals, everyday objects familiar to the



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

Jeremiah had two loyal supporters: Baruch, his scribe, and Ebed-melech the Ethiopian who interceded with King Zedekiah and saved the prophet from the dungeon. God remembered these men and spared them during the destruction of Jerusalem. (Read Jeremiah 39:15–18 and 45.)



people. These were his “show-and-tell” sermons. The class instructor will assign one sermon to each student or team. (See instructions under Assignment.)

### Jeremiah’s Illustrated Sermons Before and During the Siege<sup>xiii</sup>

Reference	Object	Significance
1. Jeremiah 1:11–12	Branch of an almond tree [The almond tree is the first to awaken in spring; thus, called “watcher.” It denotes God’s hastening to fulfill Jeremiah’s prophecies.]	God would carry out His threats of judgment.
2. Jeremiah 1:13–19	Boiling pot, tipping southward. [Although Babylon is east of Israel, the route the army took that brought them to Judah was from the north.]	God would use an army from the north as His instrument to punish Judah.
3. Jeremiah 13:1–11	A useless linen girdle [belt]	Because the people refused to listen to God, they were useless, like a rotten linen belt.
4. Jeremiah 18:1–17	Potter’s clay	God could destroy his sinful people if He so desired. This was a warning for them to repent.
5. Jeremiah 19:1–15	Broken clay jars	God would smash Judah just as Jeremiah smashed the clay jars.
6. Jeremiah 24:1–10	Two baskets of figs	The good figs represented those exiled in Babylon. The bad figs were the remnant left in Judah and in Egypt.
7. Jeremiah 27:2–11	Yoke	Any nation that refused to submit to Babylon’s yoke would be punished.
8. Jeremiah 32	Purchase of land	The Jews would be carried into Babylon, but they would return to their land.

9. Jeremiah 43:8–13	Large rocks	The rocks marked the place where Nebuchadnezzar would set his throne in Egypt.
10. Jeremiah 51:59–64	Scroll sunk in the river	Babylon would sink to rise no more.

## Wrap Up

### Conclusion

Jeremiah spent over forty years ministering to a people who stubbornly continued in their sins. Like Jesus, he was despised, rejected, and afflicted, yet with tears he continued to declare the word of the Lord. By human standards, he was a failure as he did not assemble a large following. Yet he fulfilled his commission, and by God's ruling, he succeeded. Around the world the church is preaching the coming of judgment upon this sinful world. May hard faces, stubborn wills, and intense persecution never deter us from delivering God's Word with tears.

### Commitment

### Assignment

As each assignment is completed, check it off.

<b>MY COMMITMENT</b>	
God has put _____ on my heart.	
This week I will minister to this person by	
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Check each box as you fulfill your commitment.	

- Study the Illustrated Sermon you were assigned. Choose a creative method for dramatizing it, for example, skit, monologue, pantomime, song, or whatever. At the beginning of lesson 11, each student or team will be allowed 3–5 minutes for their presentation, which may be given by one student or the entire team. Grades will be based on biblical accuracy, creativity, and impact on the class.
- Read the Book of Lamentations.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. Name three high points in Jeremiah's life.

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name five ways to identify false prophets.

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

D. \_\_\_\_\_

E. \_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you think was the hardest part of Jeremiah's calling?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Of what was Jeremiah falsely accused?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who was Jeremiah's scribe? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Who delivered Jeremiah from the dungeon? How did he do it?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. How many times did Nebuchadnezzar's army invade Jerusalem?

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8. Who set Jeremiah free when he was being exiled to Babylon with the Jews?

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9. What did Johanan ask Jeremiah to ask God?

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10. What did God tell Johanan about going to Egypt?

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11. Name Jeremiah's loyal supporters that God remembered.

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12. If you could choose one of Jeremiah's characteristics to emulate, which would it be?

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## Lesson 11

# Lamentations, a Sad Song

### Key Verse

This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:21-23)

### History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Even though the Jews were unfaithful, God was faithful to them. He used judgment to turn them back to Him. His merciful, refining work is evident in affliction.

### Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Explain the structure of the Book of Lamentations
- Quote Lamentations 3:21-23
- Describe the setting in which Lamentations was written

### Lesson Outline

- I. Review of Lesson 10
  - A. Dramatization of Jeremiah's Illustrated Sermons
  - B. Review of Jeremiah's Times and Messages
- II. The Book of Lamentations
  - A. The Setting
  - B. Five Funeral Dirges
- III. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment

## Lesson

### Review of Lesson 10

#### Dramatization of Jeremiah's Illustrated Sermons

Students will be given 3–5 minutes to present their dramatizations of Jeremiah's Illustrated Sermons. Listen carefully to each presentation and make notes: (1) title and reference, (2) any insight gained, and (3) emotional impact felt. If there is time, the instructor may ask you to share your notes.

#### NOTES

Illustrated Sermon 1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Illustrated Sermon 2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Illustrated Sermon 3: \_\_\_\_\_

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Illustrated Sermon 4: \_\_\_\_\_

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Illustrated Sermon 5: \_\_\_\_\_

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Illustrated Sermon 6: \_\_\_\_\_

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Illustrated Sermon 7: \_\_\_\_\_

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Illustrated Sermon 8: \_\_\_\_\_

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Illustrated Sermon 9: \_\_\_\_\_

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Illustrated Sermon 10: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Review of Jeremiah's Times and Messages

### Talk about it

1. Describe the political scene in Judah during Jeremiah's ministry.
2. What was the spiritual condition of Judah?
3. What was the heart of Jeremiah's messages?
4. How were Jeremiah's messages received?
5. Is there any correlation between Judah and your nation? If so, what?

## The Book of Lamentations

### The Setting

Lamentations, an addendum to Jeremiah, is the saddest book in the Bible. Not many sermons are preached from this heavy book because we shy away from anything depressing. The Book of Job is filled with agony but has a happy ending. Lamentations is filled with anguish but has no happy ending. An intense search through the darkness of Jeremiah's words is required to find a glimmer of hope.

Although in Lamentations the author is not named, the Greek Septuagint (LXX), a translation of the Scriptures done by seventy Hebrew scholars about 200 BC, accredited the authorship to the weeping prophet, Jeremiah. They prefaced Lamentations with these words: "And it came to pass, that after Israel had been carried away captive, and Jerusalem made desolate, Jeremiah sat weeping and



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

The facial features of a skull on Golgotha are created by caves. One of these is named Jeremiah's Grotto. Tradition says that Jeremiah sat there weeping over Jerusalem as he wrote Lamentations.





lamented this lament over Jerusalem and said, 'How doth the city sit solitary.'" (Compare Jeremiah 9:1 and Lamentations 1:16).

In the Hebrew Bible the name of the book is *'ekah*, meaning "how," the first word of the book. It can also be translated as "alas." In Lamentations *how* is not a question; it is an exclamation of pain or grief like the howl of a wounded wild dog.

### **Read it aloud**

Join the class in a corporate loud, wailing reading of the following declarations.

- How does the city sit solitary! (Lamentations 1:1)
- How is she become as a widow! (1:1)
- How is she become a tributary! (1:1)
- How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger! (2:1)
- How is the gold become dim! (4:1)
- How is the most fine gold changed! (4:1)
- How are they [the sons of Zion] esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! (4:2)

Lamentations is an eyewitness account of the destruction of the footstool of God (2:1), which the Jews arrogantly assumed could never fall—no matter how much they sinned. They reasoned that surely God would never let Jerusalem be destroyed because surrounding nations would boast that their gods were more powerful than Israel's. Such claims, they figured, would be a reproach to God's name. Apparently based on this belief, the false prophets and priests fled to the Temple as the walls of Jerusalem crumbled. Little did they realize that the Creator of the universe is not dictated to by men's assumptions. When God's judgment falls, there is no safe place for the ungodly.

### **Talk about it**

Based on what you have learned while studying Isaiah and Jeremiah and in reading the Book of Lamentations (lesson 10 assignment), how would you

correlate the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews to the mercy of God?

### **Five Funeral Dirges**

Each chapter of Lamentations is a funeral dirge, a lament for the dead, which Jews still sing. The book is a painful lament for the destruction of Jerusalem. The tears of the weeping prophet splash onto every page as he witnesses his city devastated and his people being led into Babylonian captivity. Lamentations has been called “an elegy written in a graveyard.”

Chapters 1–4 are written in poetic form as an alphabetic acrostic. Each verse (stanza) begins with a consecutive letter of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet (*aleph, beths*). Chapters 1, 2, and 4 each have twenty-two verses. Chapter 3 is a triple acrostic with sixty-six verses. Chapter 5 has twenty-two verses but is not an acrostic. “This thoughtful, tireless approach seems to cry out that the Jews have suffered grief from A to Z.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

The use of the acrostic pattern seems to serve several purposes: First, and perhaps most obviously, such a pattern makes these poems memorable or, better, memorizable. Second, the acrostic form gives the poems a sense of completion; thus, each poem addresses everything related to its subject from A to Z. Third, and perhaps most subtly, the orderliness of the acrostic format imposes an artificial structure on these poems that gives voice to the most uncontrollable emotions. In a sense, the acrostic form helps to contain the poetry and provides the mourners a path through their grief to renewed hope of restoration.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Through the strong voices of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets, God pleaded with Judah to turn from their wicked ways. These prophets preached and warned and wept. Repent before it is too late. “Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not” (Jeremiah 5:21). Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, suffered rejection, abuse, and persecution, yet he continued to exhort.

Finally, God said, “Enough.” The heavy hand of God’s judgment struck as the Babylonian army besieged Jerusalem. The thunder of falling walls and marching feet muffled the prophet’s voice. Lamentations is raw emotion. The prophet sobbed as he watched his people stripped naked and chained. His heart was ripped into shreds as those he loved were marched into captivity. Why, oh why, did they not listen? The tears flowed, but it was too late.

**Chapter 1:** Jerusalem mourns, but no one comforts her. Bitterness replaces joy. *Dake’s Annotated Bible* based on verses 8–11 lists six reasons Jerusalem was judged.

- 1) her grievous sins,
- 2) her nakedness,
- 3) her shame,
- 4) her many backslidings,
- 5) her filthiness, and
- 6) her unconcern for her sins.

**Chapter 2:** God’s hand is drawn back to allow His agents to destroy the city. His all-consuming wrath is poured out on Jerusalem. Mourning and moaning shake Jerusalem.

**Chapter 3:** Through the darkness of desolation the prophet sees a glimmer of hope as he remembers God’s immutable compassion and faithfulness.

In this chapter are twelve things man should do:<sup>xxv</sup> [Underline or highlight the things that you need to do.]

- 1) remember the suffering of life (verse 19),
- 2) let suffering humble, not embitter him (verse 20),
- 3) hope in God (verses 21, 24, 26),
- 4) seek God (verse 25),
- 5) wait for God’s salvation (verses 25–26),
- 6) bear the yoke in his youth (verse 27),
- 7) silently submit to the yoke (verse 28),

- 8) lie prostrate before Jehovah (verse 29),
- 9) refuse to retaliate (verse 30),
- 10) search and try his ways (verse 40),
- 11) turn to the Lord (verse 40) and
- 12) lift heart and hands to God in worship (verse 41).

**Chapter 4:** Judah goes from glory to devastation as iniquity is punished. God assures Judah that His wrath is not limited to them, but their gloating enemy Edom (descendants of Esau) will also feel the sting of His heavy hand.

**Chapter 5:** A plea to God for mercy and restoration. Judgment often precedes restoration.

Lamentations contains thirteen questions, three commands, two predictions, but no direct message from God – and no promises.<sup>xxvi</sup> It is a sad song.

**Note it**

Sometimes something must be torn down before it can be rebuilt.

- 1) Make notes of how this relates to Judah. (Read Jeremiah 1:10 and 31:28.)
- 2) Note a real-life experience (yours or someone else's) where God's judgment tore down something (a reputation, a relationship, a nation) so He could rebuild something better.

A grey rectangular box with a faint world map background and horizontal lines for writing.

- 3) Explain how the tearing-down process demonstrated God's mercy.

### Memorize it

The only place the author of Lamentations found a glimmer of hope was in his memory bank. When things are the darkest, we need to remember the Lord's mercy.

"This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:21-23).

### Wrap Up

### Conclusion

Thomas Chisholm was born in a log cabin in Kentucky, United States of America. He was converted as a young adult under the ministry of evangelist H. C. Morrison. When Thomas's health allowed, he worked at a variety of jobs ranging from journalism to insurance to evangelistic work. Through all the ups and downs, Lamentations 3:21-23 became his anchor. He discovered new blessings from God every morning. He did not write "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" after a lightning bolt of inspiration hit him, but after thirty years of experiencing God's faithfulness day after day.

Highlight the words or lines in this song that impact you.

### Sing it



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

The Edomites were the descendants of Esau. Although Jacob (Israel) and Esau temporarily made peace (Genesis 33), the roots of bitterness were never pulled up. Long after the death of Jacob and Esau the family feud raged. Only God's warning to Moses kept Israel from attacking Edom. (See Numbers 20:14-21.) Bitterness was deeply embedded in Esau, and its roots sprang up and defiled generations for centuries, even until this day. (See Hebrews 12:15.) Edom actively aided Babylon in the destruction of Jerusalem. God's main charges against Edom were (1) pride and (2) their mistreatment of their brothers, Israel. (Read the Book of Obadiah.)

### Great Is Thy Faithfulness

By Thomas O. Chisholm (1923, public domain)

(1) Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not. Thy compassions,  
they fail not;  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Refrain:

Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see:  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided —  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

(2) Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

(3) Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,  
Strength for today and bright hope for  
tomorrow —  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand  
beside!

### Commitment

The reason the highlighted word or line impacted me the most is...

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**MY COMMITMENT**

As God is faithful, I will be faithful . . .

- In church attendance
- In daily prayer
- In reading God's Word
- In doing my homework assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Assignment

As each assignment is completed, check it off.

- Lamentations is filled with similes (saying one thing is “as” or “like” another. Example: “She [Jerusalem] has become *as* a widow.”). Choose one simile from Lamentations and write a short paragraph explaining what it says to you. Be prepared to turn it in at the beginning of lesson 12.
- The instructor will assign you a chapter from Lamentations. Choose a word, verse, or passage from that chapter and write a sermon or lesson outline. List (1) Scripture text, (2) sermon/lesson title, and (3) three main points. This will be due at the beginning of the next class.
- Every day in the coming week pray Lamentations 5:21 for your nation.
- Do you know someone who is questioning where God is in their suffering? Send that person a Bible verse, the words (or recording) of a song, and/or a note of encouragement.
- Read Ezekiel 1-3.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. Why is Lamentations called “the saddest book in the Bible”?

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2. Why is one of the caves in the face of Golgotha called “Jeremiah’s Grotto”?

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3. What does *'ekah*, the name of Lamentations in the Hebrew Bible, mean?

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4. Why did the Jews assume that Jerusalem could never fall?

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5. Why is Lamentations sometimes called “an elegy written in a graveyard”?

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6. Describe the poetic structure of Lamentations.

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7. Which chapter in Lamentation is a triple acrostic? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Where in Lamentations can the reader find a glimmer of hope?

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9. What are the two main reasons God judged Edom?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

10. What motivated Thomas Chisholm to write "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"?

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**Personal Study Notes**

## Lesson 12

# Ezekiel, the Watchman in Babylon

### Key Scripture

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. (Ezekiel 3:17)

### History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

As a watchman, Ezekiel's prophecies were to the Jews in exile and those remaining in Jerusalem. No matter what our surroundings, we are responsible to God for our actions. National sin does not excuse personal sin. Even in an ungodly environment, we can obey God and trust His plan.

### Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Relate a brief bio of Ezekiel's youth in a Jewish culture setting
- Describe and interpret two of Ezekiel's visions and two of his sign-acts
- Apply Ezekiel's duties as a watchman to the responsibilities of the ministry in the present culture
- Compare the Jews' position in Babylon to the church in the world

## Lesson Outline

- I. Ezekiel's Bio (Ezekiel 1-3)
  - A. His youth
  - B. His calling
- II. Ezekiel's Ministry (Ezekiel 4-24)
  - A. The big picture of the Book of Ezekiel
  - B. His messages
- III. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion
  - B. Commitment

**Note to Students:** Turn in your homework assignments from lesson 11.



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

“The [Jewish] exiles [to Babylonia] must have been impressed by the country’s lush fertility, the product of a system of navigable canals dug centuries before.

The exiles must have been even more impressed by the capital, Babylon, a city of some two hundred thousand inhabitants, made virtually impregnable by a double row of fortification walls. The city had broad avenues and sumptuous gardens; an elaborately decorated gate dedicated to Ishtar, goddess of love and war; the massive palace of the king with its famous ‘hanging gardens’; and the great temple of the chief god Marduk, with its seven-stories pyramidal tower.”

## Ezekiel's Bio

### His Youth

Ezekiel, son of the priest Buzi, was born in Judah about 623 BC. He was a child when King Josiah's religious reforms transformed the landscape of Judah. Ezekiel grew up in an orthodox family, surrounded by men engaged in religious rituals. No doubt, he heard Jeremiah's trumpeting voice and the false prophets' howling mockery. For years, his family lived under the threat of an imminent Babylonian invasion and eventually experienced sieges. (Read II Kings 24:11-16 for the historical background.)

In the first Babylonian conquest in 605 BC, Daniel and his three Hebrew friends were exiled. Perhaps Ezekiel was acquainted with these young men. As

descendants of the royal lineage, Daniel and his friends were chosen to serve Nebuchadnezzar in the palace. Eight years later when Ezekiel was twenty-five (597 BC), the Babylonian army marched him along with the second wave of captives approximately eight hundred miles (1,287 kilometers) to Babylon. This band of Jews settled in the refugee camp of Tel-abib, along the Chebar River (a canal offering easy access by water to Babylon and other cities). This was eleven years before Jerusalem was destroyed.

### **His Calling**

(If you did not read Ezekiel 1–3 before class, do so now.) Although Ezekiel was far from Jerusalem, he was watchman over both the Jews in Babylonia and those remaining in Judah.

Ezekiel was in Babylonia by the Chebar River when on his thirtieth birthday he had a strange vision. It was the exact day he would have been ordained as a priest in the Temple had he been in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel was unable to go to the Temple, but the [Ark of the Presence] came to him. He received his commission to act from Jehovah in the form of specific instructions to speak Jehovah's words to the people of Israel and a scroll that he was to eat in order to internalize the divine message.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Ezekiel beheld a vision of the glory of the Lord—a divine throne carried by an odd vehicle supported by four cherubim. (For a detailed explanation read Ezekiel 1.) It was his first vision of the likeness of the glory of God. *Kavod* כבוד is the Hebrew word used here for glory; it is translated honor and respect. It is a heavy word of great significance. The glory of God is weighty, not to be taken lightly. When Ezekiel beheld the glory of the Lord, he fell on his face.

### **Think about it**

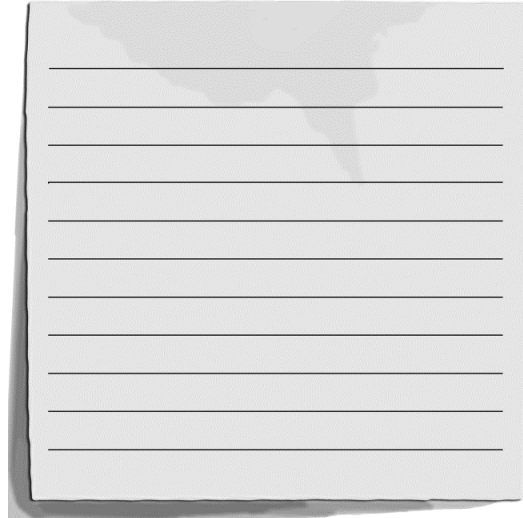
- Name other men in the Bible who fell on their faces in the presence of God.

- Have you ever witnessed the glory of God or felt His presence so strongly that you fell on your face?

After this astonishing vision, the Lord said to Ezekiel, “Stand up and listen.”

**Note it**

Read aloud Ezekiel 2:3–7. On the notepad list the similarities between Ezekiel’s job description and Isaiah’s and Jeremiah’s.



God detailed Ezekiel’s job description to prepare him for the reception he would receive, warning him that he would face hardship and persecution. Whether the people received God’s words or rejected them, Ezekiel was commanded to tell them, “Thus saith the LORD God.”

The Spirit then carried him away. He heard a great rushing voice saying, “Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place,” along with the sound of the moving wheels and the wings of the living creatures. After the Spirit returned Ezekiel to the Jewish colony by the Chebar River, he sat in shock for seven days.

Then the Lord commissioned him as a watchman to the house of Israel (3:16–21). He warned Ezekiel, as He did Jeremiah, not to let the people’s stubborn faces, hard heads, and defiant words hinder him (2:3–6).



**AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT**

From the beginning of Ezekiel’s ministry, mysteries abounded. Thus, the Book of Ezekiel is sometimes referred to as “a mystery book.” Two of these mysteries are found in Ezekiel 3:25–27. Some scholars conclude that Ezekiel being bound implies that he was to isolate himself in his house. Others imply that an unknown “they” put him under house arrest. Another mystery often debated is Ezekiel’s muteness. Scripture seems to indicate that from the time of his ordination, he could speak only when he delivered the word of the Lord. Some eight years later when a messenger came bearing news that Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians, his mouth was opened. (See Ezekiel 24:24–27; 33:21–22.)

Later Ezekiel met God on the plain for a one-on-one conference, where he again was admonished to eat the scroll that was filled with “lamentations, and mourning, and woe” (2:10). He also saw a rerun of his first vision of the glory of the Lord.

### Talk about it

Read Ezekiel 2:8–10; 3:1–3.

- What is the significance of the seraphim touching Isaiah’s lips, the Lord touching Jeremiah’s mouth, and Ezekiel being commanded to eat the scroll?
- Contrast the message on the scroll (2:10) to the taste it left in Ezekiel’s belly. How can the Word of God be both bitter and sweet?

## Ezekiel’s Ministry

### The Big Picture of the Book of Ezekiel

<b>Author</b>	Ezekiel—A priest called by God to be a prophet (593 BC—age 30)
<b>Theme</b>	God’s righteous judgment with predictions of Israel’s spiritual restoration
<b>Ezekiel’s prophecies</b>	About 22 years (593–570 BC)—first vision 593 BC (1:1–3); last vision 571 BC (29:17)
<b>Classification</b>	Ezekiel and Daniel were the Exilic prophets.
<b>Place</b>	Babylonia—first deportation of Jews 605 BC; second deportation 597 BC
<b>Key message</b>	As sovereign judge, God will rightly judge all nations and individuals.
<b>Future hope</b>	Those faithful to God will inherit His coming kingdom in all its glory.
<b>Key phrase</b>	“That you [they] may know that I am the LORD” appears sixty-three times in Ezekiel.

Chart compiled by Darline Royer, 2016 – slight modification by Barbara Westberg – Used by permission

<b>Divisions</b>	<b>Ezekiel’s Call (1–3)</b> 3 chapters	<b>Fall of Jerusalem (4–24)</b> 21 chapters	<b>Judgment of Nations (25–32)</b> 8 chapters	<b>Israel’s Future Hope (33–48)</b> 16 chapters
	Seeing God’s glory (1)	Judgment prediction (4–7)	Ammon (25:1–7)	The watchman and his message (33:1–20)

	Hearing God's word (2)	Departure of the Glory (8–11)	Moab (25:8–11)	The fall of Jerusalem (33:21–33)
	Becoming God's watchman (3)	Exposure of godless leaders (12–17)	Edom (25:12–14)	The shepherds and sheep (34)
		Defense of God's justice (18–21)	Philistia (25:15–17)	Renewal of Israel's land (35–36)
			Sidon (28:20–26)	Reestablishment of the priesthood and the Temple (40–48)
			Egypt (29–32)	

Chart adapted partially by Darline Royer from outline in *Be Reverent*, Warren B. Wiersbe

## His Messages

Ezekiel's messages to the exiles were not well received. He reminded them of their heritage and responsibility to Jehovah. He warned them of the consequences of continued disobedience. He assured them that God was present in Babylonia, not just Judah. Even in an ungodly environment, they were accountable to God's laws.

### Talk about it

How does this statement "National sin does not excuse personal sin" relate to your situation?

The first eleven years Ezekiel was in Babylon, Jerusalem and the Temple remained. Jehoiachin, exiled king of Judah, ate at King Nebuchadnezzar's table. These favorable signs, along with the false prophets' messages, encouraged the homesick exiles that they would soon return to Jerusalem. A letter from Jeremiah in Jerusalem warned against this false hope. He proclaimed that the Jews would be in Babylon for seventy years. He encouraged the exiles to build houses, plant gardens, marry, and have children. (See Jeremiah 29:1–14.) Ezekiel and his wife adjusted as much as possible without compromising their faith.

Life in Babylonia was surprisingly comfortable. The Jewish captives were permitted to form separate colonies, start businesses, work for and with the



Babylonians, and practice their Jewish faith. Although they had freedom of religion, they had no central place of worship.

Because God was their sanctuary, [Ezekiel] taught they did not require a temple in Babylon, but needed only keep their faith. Wherever true believers came together, the Lord would be with them. In the Jewish settlements small groups began to gather for prayer and study of the writings. Such assemblies were known as *synagogues* – they would later replace the Temple as the center of Jewish worship. The congregation needed mainly to obey the Mosaic laws and follow the rituals, which Ezekiel and other priests codified.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Another Jewish mindset that Ezekiel confronted was their “victim mentality,” blaming their captivity entirely on the sins of their forefathers. The members of the Chebar community often cited the popular proverb, “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge” (18:2). This mindset seared their consciences so that they felt liberated to continue in their sins. After all, they reasoned, “The previous generations have turned us in an irreversible direction.” Ezekiel confronted these false concepts. Individual responsibility was an important part of Ezekiel’s unpopular message.

While it is true that the previous generations had constructed the road to judgment, the Jews had numerous opportunities to make U-turns and return to God by repenting. But they repeatedly failed to do so despite the warnings of many prophets. “Shifting the responsibility for the calamity back to the people also opened up the opportunity for repentance: if the people’s bad behavior had resulted in their captivity, then their renewed good behavior could bring about divine blessing.”<sup>xxix</sup>

Like Jeremiah in Jerusalem, Ezekiel in Babylon did not win any popularity contests. Ezekiel endured mockery, sneers, jeers, and rejection, just as God had warned him (3:4-9).

**Talk about it**

As a class read Ezekiel 3:16–21 and 33:7–9. Discuss these questions:

- How do these verses relate to the New Testament church’s ministry? (See II Timothy 4:2–5.)
- Have you ever been charged by God to deliver a warning to a wicked person or an ungodly group? Did you obey? What were the repercussions?
- Does this charge to the ministry encourage or discourage you from pursuing the ministry? Why?

Ezekiel is best known for his mysterious visions and weird sign-acts. His eccentric behavior and bizarre sign-acts reduced him to something of a circus sideshow in the exilic community.<sup>xxx</sup> When the people wanted entertainment, they went to watch Ezekiel’s latest show (33:30–32).

**Study it**

For homework, your instructor will assign you one of Ezekiel’s visions or sign-acts to study. (See under Assignments.)

<b>Vision</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Notes</b>
God’s throne chariot	1:4–28; 3:12–14; 10:1–22	Ezekiel saw this same “vehicle” three times.
Eating the scroll	2:9–10; 3:1–3	Apparently, eating the scroll was a spiritual, rather than literal, experience. Both Jeremiah and John the Revelator had a similar experience. (See Jeremiah 15:16 and Revelation 10:9.)
Abominations in the Temple	8:1; 11:1–13	This vision illustrated the abominations that were taking place in the unregenerate imaginations of men, the basement of their minds. (Note: <i>Image</i> is the root word of <i>imagination</i> .)
Man with writer’s inkhorn	9:1–11	The righteous marked for deliverance; the wicked slain. A parallel to the marking of the 144,000 in Revelation 14:1.

The glory of the LORD	10:4, 18; 11:23; 43:2–5	The devastating departure of the glory of the Lord from the Temple (first from above the Ark, to the threshold of the Temple, to the hills outside the city) and its return were revealed to Ezekiel in a series of visions.
Wicked counsellors	11:1–13	Ezekiel was carried by the Spirit to Jerusalem where he saw twenty-five wicked counselors devising mischief. After he delivered the Word of the Lord to them, Pelatiah, one of the princes, died.
Valley of dry bones	37:1–14	Ezekiel saw a valley of dry bones resurrected, representing the restoration of the nation of Israel.
New city and new temple	40:1–48:35	A vision of the restoration of Israel in the end time.

“They [Ezekiel’s sign-acts] powerfully illustrated that the people of God no longer listened to His Word: therefore, God required a visible demonstration of the consequences of the continued disobedience of His people.”<sup>xxxi</sup> Ezekiel himself was a sign unto the people.

Thus Ezekiel is a sign to you; according to all that he has done you shall do; and when this comes, you shall know that I am the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 24:24, NKJV)

On that day your mouth will be opened to him who has escaped; you shall speak and no longer be mute. Thus you will be a sign to them, and they shall know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 24:27, NKJV)

Sign-Act	Reference	Notes
Building a tableau of Jerusalem using a clay tile and an iron pan	4:1–3	An object lesson that predicted the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar’s army and the soon arrival of other Jews to Babylonia.
Lying on left side 390 days and right side 40 days	4:4–8	Reminded the Jews of their years of iniquity

Eating defiled food	4:9–17	A warning that predicted the famine the Jews would suffer in captivity.
Shaving his head and beard	5:1–10	Indicated destruction by epidemics, the sword, and the scattering (Diaspora = dispersion).
Packing bags and digging through a wall	12:1–4, 11	Symbolized King Zedekiah's flight from Jerusalem and the final deportation of Jews into Babylon .
Refrained from mourning when his wife died on the day Jerusalem fell to Babylon	24:15–23	Ezekiel's apparent hard-heartedness symbolized God's reaction to Jerusalem's destruction.

Sermons/prophecies	Reference	Notes
Destruction of Judah	Chapters 6–7	A faithful remnant will remember God in Babylon
Hope for restoration	Chapter 11	God promised a new heart and spirit to His people; referenced new life in Christ
False prophets and idolatry condemned	Chapter 13	Numerous metaphors used
Condemned false elders	Chapter 14	Refused to answer insincere elders; mentioned Noah, Daniel, and Job. "It may be that for Daniel's sake Nebuchadnezzar had spared Jerusalem so far, but it is now to be spared no longer." <sup>xxxii</sup>
Listed Judah's sins	Chapter 18	Justified God's punishment by listing Judah's transgressions.
Lament to Jews in Babylon about Jews in Jerusalem	Chapter 19	Prophesied destruction of their "mother"; Jerusalem to be destroyed and more Jews to be deported to Babylon.
Promised regathering after punishment and repentance	Chapter 20	Again Ezekiel refused to answer the hypocritical elders.
The sword of the Lord	Chapter 21	Foretold judgment upon Jerusalem; no more king until Christ comes; judgment on Ammon.

## Wrap Up

### Conclusion

The Jews in Babylon are a striking parallel to the church in the world. Ezekiel, as the watchman on the wall, typifies the ministry. Even though the exile was punishment for the Jews' idolatry, God did not forsake His people. He continued to send prophets to speak His word, reminding the people that the foundation of their faith was not the Temple; it was Jehovah. Despite the idolatry that surrounded them in Babylon, they were expected to obey God's laws. God never wastes punishment. While in Babylon, the Jews learned their lesson. After seventy years of captivity, they, as a nation, never again worshiped false gods.

### Commitment

The gospel has been committed unto you, a child of God and student of His Word. Whether you are sure of your place in the ministry or you are still seeking, you are a watchman on the wall. You are responsible for warning the lost. Will you accept that responsibility? Sign the adjoining commitment card.

#### MY COMMITMENT

As a watchman on the wall, I accept my responsibility to deliver the Word of the Lord, even when I know the message will not be accepted and I will suffer rejection.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Assignment

As each assignment is completed, check it off.

- Write a one-page paper expounding on the vision or sign-act the instructor assigns you. Follow these guidelines: (1) Study the reference. (2) Describe the scene in your words. (3) Explain what it said to Ezekiel and the Jews. (4) Apply this to your life. Be prepared to turn in this paper at the beginning of lesson 13.

- Has God given you a message for a person or congregation that you are reluctant to deliver? Pray. Fast. Then go in the power of the Spirit and speak the word God has given you.
- Memorize Ezekiel 11:19-20.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. The adage says, "You never appreciate water until the well runs dry." Apply this proverb to the Jews in Babylon.

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2. Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord and heard God's word before he became God's man. How does what you see and hear affect what you become?

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3. How do you think Ezekiel's childhood affected his later years in Babylon?

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4. Which of Ezekiel's visions impacted you most forcefully? Why and how?

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5. Which of Ezekiel's sign-acts do you think was the hardest to fulfill? Defend your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Ezekiel's sermons seem to be a mix of reprimands, warnings, and encouragement. Compare this to a sermon or lesson you recently preached/taught or heard. Share your thoughts with the class.

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7. Name some positive results of the exile.

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8. For what is Ezekiel best known?

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9. Name three ways in which the Jews in Babylon parallel with the church in the world.

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

10. What has a watchman on the wall spoken into your life, via sermon or personal message? If you can do so comfortably, share the impact of that message with the class.

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11. What steps did the glory of the Lord take in departing the Temple? What is the significance of the glory departing little by little?

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## Lesson 13

# Ezekiel, the Restoration Prophet

### Key Scripture

Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves; and bring you into the land of Israel . . . And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken *it*, and performed it, saith the LORD. (Ezekiel 37:12, 14)

### History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Ezekiel warned of judgment, but also foretold restoration for Israel and the whole world—a new world filled with the glory of God’s Spirit. The Holy Spirit baptism restores our relationship with God, frees us from the judgment of sin, and gives us a foretaste of the world to come.

### Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Identify and interpret three of Ezekiel’s parables or metaphors
- Reference Ezekiel’s messianic prophecies

- Create a timeline of Ezekiel's ministry
- Parallel Israel's resurrection to the baptism of the Holy Ghost

## Lesson Outline

- I. Ezekiel's Ministry
  - A. Metaphors and Parables
  - B. Messianic and Apocalyptic Prophecies
- II. Prophecies of Hope (chapters 33–39)
  - A. Prophecy of Spiritual Restoration
  - B. Prophecy of Future Restoration
- III. Wrap Up
  - A. Class Project: A timeline of Ezekiel's Ministry
  - B. Commitment

**Message to students:** Turn in your one-page paper assignment on one of Ezekiel's sign-acts or visions.

## Lesson

### Ezekiel's Ministry

#### Metaphors and Parables

- A parable is a truth wrapped in a memorable story or word picture. Several of the Old Testament prophets and Jesus used parables to explain spiritual truths using a natural application.
- A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. For example, calling pastors shepherds.

## Dig Deeper

You will be assigned a reference containing a metaphor or parable from the list below to read and fill in the blanks. When time is called, the class will share answers to complete the chart.

Metaphor/parable <sup>xxxiii</sup>	Reference	Notes
1. Jerusalem, a useless _____ _____	15:1–8	Symbolized the way in which the inhabitants of _____ had become useless to the Lord and now served no other purpose than to be burned with _____.
2. The foundling	Chapter 16	Illustrated _____'s idolatrous affairs with the idols of wicked _____.
3. The _____ and the cedar	Chapter 17	Illustrated that the king of _____ would come to _____ and take King Zedekiah and the princes into captivity in _____.
4. Dross in the _____	22:17–22	Signified the severity of God's _____.
5. Two harlots	Chapter 23	Two sisters', Aholah's (_____ 's) and Aholibah's (_____ 's) idolatry compared to spiritual adultery.
6. Parable of the cooking _____	24:1–14	Gave the date of the siege of _____, the same day Ezekiel's _____ died; symbolized the way in which God was going to _____ Jerusalem from its filthiness.
7. The shipwreck	Chapter 27	A _____ for _____. Illustrated the judgment that was going to fall on Tyre.
8. The irresponsible _____	Ezekiel 34	Confronted the worthless leaders of _____ and revealed how God would deal with them.
9. Two _____	37:15–28	Prophecy of the uniting of _____ and _____.

## Messianic and Apocalyptic Prophecies

No direct quotations from the Book of Ezekiel are found in the New Testament; however, the New Testament alludes to Ezekiel's sayings over sixty times. Forty of these are in Revelation. Some of the imagery Jesus used to describe His ministry to His disciples comes from the Book of Ezekiel.

Isaiah is called the "messianic prophet" because the Book of Isaiah contains more references to the coming of the Messiah than that of any other prophet. However, the coming King is also referred to in the Book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 21:27	Messiah is the rightful heir to the throne of Israel.
Ezekiel 34:23–24	God will establish Messiah's kingdom.
Ezekiel 37:22	Messiah will reign over a united Israel.
Ezekiel 37:24–25	Messiah will reign over a restored, obedient Israel that has been returned to the land first promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. <sup>xxxiv</sup>

### Note it

Highlight the following apocalyptic passages or note them in the margin of your Bible.

6:1–14	7:5–12	20:33–44
28:25–26	34:25–31	36:8–15, 33–36
Chapters 38–39	47:1–12	

### Prophecies of Hope

(Chapters 33–48)

### Prophecy of Spiritual Restoration

(33–37)



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

Chapters for ministers: 13, 33, and 34  
 Revival chapter: 37  
 Search for man of integrity: 22:30

God abandoned Jerusalem and His Temple, but He did not abandon His people. Ezekiel witnessed the moving of the glory of the Lord from above the Ark,

to the threshold of the Temple, onto the hills surrounding Jerusalem, and then watched as it vanished from Israel. The shekinah glory then appeared to him in Babylonia as the chariot throne. Ezekiel foretold the future return of the shekinah to Israel (44:4).

Chapters 4–24 justify God’s casting the people out for they had defiled the land and profaned His name. God’s motive for restoring Israel was the same as His motive for judging them – “for mine holy name’s sake” (36:20–24).

Chapter 34 deals with the failure of the shepherds of Israel, then promises that God Himself would be the Shepherd of His restored people (34:23–24).

Chapters 36–37 focus on the restoration of the Jews. Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones is a poignant picture of their spiritual condition and in contrast a promise of the coming restoration – the rising up of a mighty army. The hopeless attitude of the exiles after the destruction of Jerusalem was revealed in their common saying: “Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off from our parts” (37:11). The resurrection of the dry bones extended to the people the promise of their nation’s restoration.

In the 1940s to avoid further persecution, Jews began a modern-day exodus to the land of their forefathers, leaving nations where they had scattered over the centuries. The bones in Ezekiel’s vision began rattling and coming together. On May 14, 1948, in Tel Aviv, Jewish Agency Chairman David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the State of Israel, establishing the first Jewish state in two thousand years.<sup>xxxv</sup>

The Hebrew term *ruach*, used in Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones for *wind*, parallels with the Greek words *pneuma*, meaning “spirit or breath,” and *naphach*, also meaning “breathe, blow hard, puff.” In creation the Spirit of God breathed (*ruach*) on the face of the waters. He breathed into Adam, and man became a living soul. On the Day of Pentecost, the wind (*pneuma*) of the Spirit blew and restored man to the relationship with God that Adam had lost in the Garden of Eden. In our day, the Spirit is blowing, bringing worldwide revival.

Just as God promised to put in the nation of Israel His “Spirit” and give them a new “heart” by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, God fills us Gentiles who have been reconciled to God by His Spirit and gives us new hearts.

The Exile was a dramatic measure God took to break the sin-cycle that Israel had perpetrated for generations – prosperity, idolatry, judgment, repentance. So Christ’s death at Calvary was the drastic measure God took to restore mankind’s relationship with Him. On the Day of Pentecost, the breath of God blew again on mankind and brought new life.

### **Talk about it**

- How do you see this sin-cycle being repeated in your generation, whether in your family, nation, or globally?
- What is the answer to breaking the sin-cycle in our world? (Compare Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:25-27 to John 3:3-8 and Acts 2:1-4.)

### **Prophecy of Future Restoration (40–48)**

Chapters 40–48 detail Ezekiel’s final vision that extends the promise of the restoration of all things. A heavenly tour guide with measuring rod in hand conducted Ezekiel through a new Temple and the restored land of Israel. Scholars differ on the interpretation of this vision of the new Temple. Some believe this vision is symbolic and others interpret it literally. One point of interest to ponder is that the city is never called Jerusalem. This is another of Ezekiel’s mysteries that will be made plain in God’s time.

The scene of the water flowing out from under the altar in the Temple has a beautiful correlation to the flow of the Spirit in these latter days. (Compare 47:1-12 with John 7:37-39.)

Perhaps most significant is the dating of this vision: 10 Tishri (the Day of Atonement) 573 BC. It was the twenty-fifth year of Ezekiel’s exile, and the twentieth year of his prophetic ministry. If Ezekiel received his prophetic calling in his thirtieth year (1:1), that would mean he received this culminating vision in his fiftieth year, the year in which a

Jerusalem priest would retire from Temple service. (See Numbers 8:25.) Thus, we find a kind of triple conclusion here: the conclusion of the book, the conclusion of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry, and the conclusion of God's ultimate plan for salvation and restoration when the restored people and the city of God will again host the divine glory that brings the wholeness of perfect peace.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

## Wrap Up

### Conclusion

#### Visualize it: Timeline of Ezekiel's Ministry<sup>xxxvii</sup>

For a memory aid, work with your class to create a visual timeline of Ezekiel's ministry. Your instructor will assign each student (or team) a date from the timeline and provide art supplies. Illustrate the main event of that year assigned you by creating a simple paper symbol such as a number, an image, an emoji, or an icon. Example: For 605 BC cut out the shape of a vessel to illustrate "Nebuchadnezzar takes the Temple treasures to Babylon," or a paper chain to depict "Daniel taken captive."

Symbols are to be cut from an 8½" x 11" piece of paper, black and white or colored.

Give a brief explanation of the significance of your symbol to the class. Attach the visuals to a line in front of the room in the correct sequence to provide an overview of Ezekiel's ministry.

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 605 BC | Nebuchadnezzar takes the Temple treasures to Babylon; Daniel taken captive |
| 597 BC | Ezekiel taken captive to Babylon at age twenty-five                        |
| 593 BC | Ezekiel called to prophesy at age thirty (chapters 1-3)                    |



### AN ENLIGHTENING MOMENT

The Bible does not tell us how Ezekiel died, but tradition says he died in Babylonia where the leader of the Israelite exiles killed him after being reproved for worshipping idols.

—*New World Encyclopedia*

- 592 BC Ezekiel's vision of the Temple in Jerusalem (8:1ff)
- 591 BC Ezekiel interprets Israel's history (20:1ff)
- 588 BC God reveals to Ezekiel that the siege of Jerusalem has started (24:1); his wife dies
- 587-585 BC Ezekiel's messages against Egypt (chapters 29-32) and Tyre (26:1ff)
- 586 BC Jerusalem destroyed by the Babylonian army
- 585 BC News comes to Ezekiel of Jerusalem's destruction; his mouth opened (33:21-22)
- 573 BC Visions of Israel's glorious future (40-48)
- 571 BC Ezekiel's message that Babylon will defeat Egypt (29:17-21)

## Commitment

How long has it been since you shared your testimony? Ask God to open a door in the next few days for you to witness to someone who needs their relationship with God restored.

## Assignment

As each assignment is complete, check it off.

- Write a one-page summary of Ezekiel's ministry and how his life impacted you.
- Choose one scene from the life of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel to illustrate with an object lesson, pantomime (sign-act), skit, song, drawing, or monologue. You may work with another member of your class if you wish. Your instructor will give you a time limit for your presentation. Lesson 14 is a review of the series and most of the class time will be devoted to these illustrated sermons.

## Review and Discussion Questions



1. How do you see Ezekiel 37:12, 14 being fulfilled in world current events and in your church?

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2. What is a parable? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What is a metaphor? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What king's fate is foretold in the parable of the eagle and the cedar?

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5. What is significant about the day that Ezekiel's wife died?

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6. What charges did God tell Ezekiel to bring against the shepherds of Israel? (See Ezekiel 34.)

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7. Give the reference for at least two of Ezekiel's messianic prophecies.
- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_

8. How many times are Ezekiel's saying alluded to in the New Testament?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What was God's motive for judging His people and then restoring them?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Relate the vision of the valley of dry bones to the Jews' saying, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off from our parts" (37:11).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. How do you see the vision of the valley of dry bones being fulfilled?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Give an instance where the Israelites were caught up in the sin-cycle—prosperity, idolatry, judgment, repentance.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Compare Ezekiel's vision of the water flowing out of the Temple to your relationship with God. Check yourself. Where in the river of the Spirit are you? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Personal Study Notes**

## Lesson 14

# A Review of the Major Prophets

## Key Scripture

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. (Isaiah 40:8)

## History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

God's Word is sure. Many prophecies uttered by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel have been fulfilled, and others are coming to pass before our eyes. We must take heed to their words written centuries ago to a world in much the same spiritual condition as our world "lest that day come upon us unawares."

## Lesson Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to

- Identify the similarities and the differences in the ministries of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel
- Develop a sermon or lesson based on a passage from each of the major prophets
- Relate the national and spiritual condition of the current world to the time of the Old Testament prophets

## Lesson Outline

- I. A Review of the Major Prophets
  - A. Timeline of Ezekiel's ministry
  - B. Illustrated sermons
- II. Wrap Up
  - A. Conclusion: Talk about It
  - B. Commitment: Do It

## Lesson

### A Review of the Major Prophets

#### Timeline of Ezekiel's Ministry

- Spend a few minutes reviewing the complete timeline from lesson 13.
- When the symbols are removed, can you replace them in the correct sequence?

#### Illustrated Sermons

When called upon, present your dramatization of a scene from the lives of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel.

Relax and enjoy this review session.

### Wrap Up

#### Conclusion

#### Talk about it

- Which major prophet would you choose to be: Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel? Why?
- In what way were the ministries of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel similar? In what way were they different?
- Which culture do you think most closely relates to the culture of your nation—the Canaanites, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, or the Israelites? Explain.
- Which Major Prophet book did you most enjoy? Why?
- Which Major Prophet book most powerfully impacted your walk with God?
- Do you feel this study has changed your life? How?
- How has your opinion of the major prophets changed?

### **Commitment**

This course began with a lesson on the keeper of the light. The major prophets lived in dark times, as we do. Often, they were martyred by evil powers attempting to hide their deeds in darkness. Yet the prophets persevered, no matter what the cost. Lighthouses save lives, but they cost the keepers their lives. Are you prepared to follow the footsteps of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel?

**Personal Study Notes**



# Appendices

## Lesson 4

### Answering the Call

**Characters:** A and B

**Props:** 2 copies of the script, cell phone, lounge chair, small table, snacks, book, folder

A is reclining in the lounge chair reading a book with script hidden in it. Snacks and phone are on a small table beside him.

B carries a folder with a copy of script in it.

Both should be acquainted with their parts, but do not need to memorize their lines.

ENTER B

B: **Hey there, (A's name). What's happening?**

A: *(grunts)*

B: **I missed you at prayer meeting. Have you been busy?**

A: *(peers over edge of book)* **I'm busy now. Can't you tell?** *(munches on snacks)*

B: **Well, not really. What are you doing?**

A: **I'm studying.**

B: **Studying? What?**

A: *(holds up book)* **How to Be a Missionary. I'm going to be a missionary like (name of local missionary). The problem is deciding where I am going to –**

SOUND: Phone rings

A: **That's it! Finally, He's calling.** *(grabs phone; looks at it)* **Awww, it's just (name of pastor).** *(puts the ringing phone back on the table)*

B: **Aren't you going to answer it?**

A: **No need! He probably just wants to know why I didn't show up for prayer. Besides, I can't tie up my phone with unimportant calls. I'm waiting for The Call!**

B: **The Call? What call?**

A: **The call from God telling me where He is sending me.**

B: *(points to one side)* **Look! That little boy is crying. Wonder what's wrong. Come on. We've got to help him.** *(grabs A's arm)*

A: *(shrugs him off)* **You go ahead, (B's name). I'm busy.**

B: *(runs to one side and pretends to help)*

A: *(flips through his book as he munches on snack)* **Hmmm . . . how about the United States or Canada? I hear they need –**

B: *(returns)* **That kid was lost. I helped him find his mother.**

A: *(grunts; picks up phone and shakes it)* **Sure wish He would hurry and call. I'm getting restless. I need to be going somewhere, doing something.**

B: **Then what are you waiting for?**

A: **I told you. I'm waiting for God to call and tell me where I can pick up my plane reservation.**

B: **Reservation? Where are you going?**

A: *(frustrated)* **I told you I'm not sure, but I feel like God may be sending me to the United States or Canada to preach. At least, I hope He is.**

B: **Wow! That's exciting. But who's going to reach your family and your village with the gospel?**

A: *(shrugs)* **Maybe God will bring someone from across the ocean to them. You never know what God will do.**

B: **That's true. But the question is what we should do right here, right now. Oh, wait a minute. I just remembered the family that lives next door to you. Let's go ask them if they want to take a Bible study.**

A: *(shakes his head)* **I don't think I can do that. I'm shy, you know. You go ahead. I'm still trying to decide where my ministering gifts fit best. Probably in a pulpit somewhere far away from here . . .**

B: **I'm going to go see your neighbor. I'll be back.** *(runs to another corner and pretends to talk)*

A: *(shakes his phone)* **Wonder if this phone needs to be charged. God should have called by now. He has my number. He knows I am waiting on Him.** *(munches on snack.)*

B: *(returns, excited)* **Your neighbors want a Bible study! We're starting tonight. Isn't that exciting?**

A: *(dully)* **Yeah.** *(checks his phone again)* **Sure would like to know exactly where God's going to send me.**

B: **It seems to me like there is a lot to be done for God right here, right now.**

A: *(shrugs)* **That's for those who don't have The Call on their lives. I have places to go and things to do. I—**

*SOUND: Phone rings*

A: *(looks at phone)* **Finally, it's Him! It's God! Wow! Finally, He's calling me. *(clears throat; answers phone)* Hello! Hello? Yes. Yes, this is *(name)*. . . . Who? . . . . You're calling who? . . . . *(B's name)*? . . . Yeah, he's right here. *(hands phone to B)* Here. It's God. He wants to talk to you.**

B: *(talking on the phone)* **Yes, Sir. . . . Yes, I can do that. . . . Yes, Sir, that sounds so exciting. No one has ever preached the gospel there. I'll be happy to. . . .**

EXIT. (A with shoulders slumped. B mimics lip synching, nodding, and smiling.)

## Lesson 6

### The Case of Jehovah vs. Judah

#### CAST:

Prosecuting Attorney (PA)  
Defense Attorney (DA), Instructor  
Judge  
Officer of the law

#### PROPS:

Black robe for the judge  
Rubber-headed hammer or gavel  
Clipboard  
4 copies of the script  
Copy of the court summons (copied from the script)

#### SET UP:

Judge's table is placed at an angle, right front. Two chairs for attorneys are at an angle facing the judge's table but allowing the audience to see their faces.

Loud pounding on classroom door. Instructor answers. Officer of the law enters, carrying the court summons.

OFFICER: **Is this the headquarters of the nation of Judah?**

INSTRUCTOR: **Yes, Sir.**

OFFICER: *(sweeps hand over class)* **And these are the people of Judah?**

INSTRUCTOR: **Yes, Sir. As of this minute, they are Jews.**

OFFICER: **I have here a court summons for the nation of Judah from the Court of Jehovah.**

INSTRUCTOR: *(shocked)* **A court summons? Whatever for?**

OFFICER: *(hands the summons to the Instructor)* **Read it for yourself. Have a good day. EXITS.**

INSTRUCTOR: **A good day! We are summoned to court, and he says, "Have a good day." Let's see what this is all about. *(reads)* To the Nation of Judah. The Court of Jehovah summons you to appear for trial immediately. You are charged with blatant disobedience of and disregard for the laws of God. Your crimes will be named in detail at the hearing. At which time you will be allowed to enter a plea.**

**What! *(points at the class)* You Jews are God's chosen people. Why would you be summoned before the Great Judge? You're the descendants of Abraham. You've done no wrong. You can do no wrong. Can you? Is there a problem here that I don't know about? *(Proudly)* Whatever it is, no problem. Don't worry. I am now your defense attorney. I'll take care of this.**

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY and JUDGE enter. The judge wears a black robe and carries a gavel and a clipboard containing the script. Take a seat at table in front of the class. Attorneys take their seats facing him.

JUDGE: *(hits the table with the gavel)* **The Court of Jehovah is now in session. *(to class)* Why aren't you standing? Everyone knows to stand when a judge enters the room. *(All stand.)* You may be seated. First case on the docket is the Case of Jehovah vs. the Nation of Judah. The charges are as follows: injustice, idolatry, murder, witchcraft, greed, and last, but not least, gross hypocrisy.**

DA: *(wipes brow and grimaces; says aside to students)* **That doesn't sound good. This may be a bigger problem than I thought.**

JUDGE: *(glares)* **Silence! Mr. Prosecuting Attorney, are you ready?**

PA: *(stands)* **Yes, Your Honor.**

JUDGE: **Is the attorney for the defendant present?**

DA: *(stands, gulps loudly and stutters)* **Yes, Your Honor.**

JUDGE: **Thank you. You may be seated. Mr. Prosecuting Attorney, please tell the court your name and explain why you believe these charges are valid.**

PA: *(gives name)* **I have been commissioned to represent Jehovah.**

JUDGE: *(nods)* **So what are the charges against the Nation of Judah?**

PA: The rich oppress the poor through theft, fraud, and intimidation. They have erected idols in every high place. They worship the false god Molech and offer their children as burnt sacrifices. The people have followed the lead of wicked King Ahaz. He nailed the Temple doors shut. He replaced the altar of Jehovah with a replica of the altar in Damascus. He paid tribute to the king of Assyria, stripping the people and the Temple to do so. Judah is a wicked and idolatrous nation.

JUDGE: *(nods)* I myself witnessed such abominations. But that was then. This is now. King Hezekiah is a good king. He has torn down the idols his father, King Ahaz, built. He has reopened and cleansed the Temple. He has strengthened the wall around Jerusalem and fortified the military.

PA: That is so, Your Honor. King Hezekiah's righteous acts have delayed God's judgment upon Judah. Jehovah has given Judah a space of grace to repent. Yet they have refused to turn from their sins. Hypocrisy is rampant. The people continue to make a pompous show of publicly observing sacred days and seasons. They offer sacrifices to God, all the while privately living immoral lives and worshiping idols. They mock God's prophets. Judges take bribes. (I hope you are not one of those judges!) Priests and false prophets serve for filthy lucre. Yet the Jews proclaim proudly, "The Lord is among us. Nothing can happen to us."

JUDGE: Thank you, Mr. Prosecuting Attorney. *(turns to DA)* Mr. Defense Attorney, you have heard the charges. How does your client wish to plead?

DA: *(aside to class)* You should have told me about these crimes. *(fearfully)* Uhhh, what can I say, Your Honor? My client cannot deny the charges. My client pleads "Guilty." But if it please the Court, I would like to beg for mercy. We humbly request that judgment be delayed once more.

PA: *(jumps up, waves his hand)* Your Honor? Your Honor?

JUDGE: *(sighs)* Yes, Mr. Prosecuting Attorney.

PA: **Your Honor, this is not the first time the nation of Judah has been in this courtroom and stood before You begging for mercy. They have repeatedly broken their probation by returning to their sinful ways. I demand justice – the severest punishment possible. They deserve justice.**

JUDGE: **That is true. They do deserve justice, and justice demands judgment. Yet my goodness prevails. Instead of annihilating them as I did Israel, I hereby sentence the nation of Judah to seventy years of captivity in Babylon.**

DA: *(tearfully)* **But, Your Honor, please grant mercy to my client. Is there no hope for another pardon?**

JUDGE: **Yes, there is always hope. One day a Savior will come who will pay the price for the sins of the world. He will extend pardon to all who repent. He will be the Messiah and sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem. He will grant mercy to your client. Meanwhile, my ruling stands. The promise of mercy does not overrule the necessity for judgment. The nation of Judah must be taught a lesson.**  
*(Pounds gavel on the table)* **Court dismissed.**

## Lesson 7

### Jerusalem under Siege

*The dialogue is a paraphrase of Isaiah 36-37 (King James Version).*

#### Scene 1 – Assyria Threatens

**NARRATOR:** In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria made war on all the fortress cities of Judah and conquered them. While wrapping up the conquest of Lachish, Sennacherib sent his general, the Rabshakeh, and a large army to Jerusalem. King Hezekiah sent Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah, three of his top advisors, to meet the Rabshakeh at the aqueduct.

**RABSHAKEH:** Take this message from the great king Sennacherib to your king. *(boasts)* You know you don't have a chance against me. Who do you think is going to help you? Egypt? That's a joke. Egypt is a rubber crutch. Do you think your God is going to help you? It's too late for that. Hezekiah just tore down all the altars and shrines, telling you to worship only at the altar in Jerusalem.

*(Clears throat)* Face the facts. My master, the great king of Assyria, will give you two thousand horses if you can put riders on them. You can't even do that. You might as well surrender here and now.

*(Rolls eyes)* Besides, my master has God's blessing. Your God told him to destroy your land.

**ELIAKIM:** *(finger over lips)* Shhh! Speak to us in Aramaic. We understand it. Don't talk in Hebrew where all the people listening can understand. You are scaring them.

**RABSHAKEH:** Ha! Do you think this message is only for the king? It's for all the people. After all, it is their future we are talking about.

*(Cups hand around mouth; shouts)* Listen to me! The great king of Assyria warns you. Don't listen to Hezekiah's lies. He can't save you. Do not pay attention to his propaganda. His God won't save you. Listen to what the king of Assyria offers you.



A good life. Plenty of land and water. Something far better than what you have here.

Think about it. Has any god ever defeated the king of Assyria? Look at all the cities we have conquered. Their gods could not save them. No god can stop us from taking Jerusalem.

NARRATOR: The team sent from King Hezekiah answered him not a word, because the king had commanded them, "Just listen. Don't answer him." They returned to the palace with their shoulders slumped, tearing at their clothes. When King Hezekiah heard their report, he put on sackcloth and went into the sanctuary.

HEZEKIAH: Eliakim, take Shebna and the senior priests and go to the prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz.

NARRATOR: Hezekiah's ambassadors came to Isaiah.

ELIKAIM: *(trembling voice)* King Hezekiah told us to tell you that this is a dark day. We are in a crisis. We are like pregnant women with not enough strength to give birth. We are weak. In pain. Master Isaiah, did your God hear what the Rabshakeh said? Did your God hear how he mocked the living God? Can your God do anything about the Assyrian army? Pray for us! Pray, Brother Isaiah, pray!

ISAIAH: Take this message from God to King Hezekiah. "Do not be upset by the Assyrian king's words. I heard how he mocked Me. I will take care of him. He will hear a rumor of bad news from home and will rush back to take care of it. There he will be assassinated."

## Scene 2—God Intervenes

NARRATOR: Surely enough, Sennacherib got an intelligence report. "King Tirhakah of Ethiopia is on his way to make war with you!" Pressure was mounting. He needed to wrap up this skirmish with Jerusalem quickly. He had a bigger enemy approaching. So what did he do? He put more pressure on Hezekiah to surrender. He sent a letter to the palace in Jerusalem. *(Hand the prewritten letter to Hezekiah.)*

HEZEKIAH: *(opens the letter and reads)* **"Don't let your God deceive you. He says that you won't fall into the hands of the king of Assyria. Use your head. Think about it. Look at all the countries we have conquered. Have any of their gods saved them? Do you see anything left of them? Why do you think your God can save you? Get smart. Surrender."**

*(Crushes the letter, wails)* **It is time to pray. I must get to the altar to pray.**

*(Flattens out the letter)* **Almighty God, You are the only God, the King of all the earth. You made the heavens and the earth. Look. See what the arrogant king of Assyria has written. Listen to the mocking words of Sennacherib. It is true that the Assyrians have crushed all the nations around us. They have destroyed their idols. No big deal. Their gods were no-gods, the work of men's hands. Show up, God. Show Yourself strong. Save us. Let all the earth know that You alone are God.**

NARRATOR: **In response to Hezekiah's prayer, God sent the prophet Isaiah to him.**

ISAIAH: **Because you prayed, here is God's answer. "Sennacherib, Judah has nothing for you but contempt. Who do you think you are to jeer at the Holy One of Israel? I am sick of your boasting. Don't you know that you are only puppets in My hand? I have been directing your every move, using you to mete out My judgment on My disobedient, rebellious people.**

**But enough is enough. I see you strutting and bragging. I hear your mocking, arrogant words against Me. And I have had it! I am going to put a hook in your nose and a bit in your mouth. I am going to show you who's the boss. I will turn you around and take you back to where you came from.**

**Hezekiah, take note. In three years, farming in Judah will return to normal. The people will put down roots and make a new start. Jerusalem will get moving again.**

**Don't worry! Sennacherib will not set foot in this city. He will not shoot one arrow or build one siege ramp. He will go home**

**the way he came. I have My hand on Jerusalem. I will save it for My sake and the sake of my servant David.**

**NARRATOR: That night the angel of the Lord struck the Assyrian camp. By sunrise, 185,000 Assyrian soldiers were corpses. Sennacherib and the few survivors got out of there fast, back to Nineveh. Sometime later, as Sennacherib was worshiping in the house of his god, Nisroch, he was assassinated by his sons.**

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# ENDNOTES

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- <sup>xi</sup> Information on the tables taken from *Halley’s Bible Handbook*, E-book
- <sup>xii</sup> Johnson and Runck. *Handbook on the Prophets*, 13. [Brackets the author’s]
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## Missionary Spotlight

# Gary and Sharon Abernathy

Gary Abernathy, an alumnus of Apostolic Bible Institute and son of veteran missionaries to South Africa, felt the call to foreign missions while assisting Pastor David Judson in Syracuse, Indiana. He and his wife Sharon received their appointment as UPCI missionaries to South Africa in May 1981. During their first term the Abernathys were heavily involved the Bible school and other aspects of the training ministry. In 1987 they transferred to Malawi. They continued to emphasize ministerial training in Malawi through their second and third terms. Gary stated that the only way to reach Africa's millions is through trained national ministers.

In 1998 Gary Abernathy assumed the leadership of the church in Zambia. He worked closely with the national leadership of the mature Zambian church. His wife was involved in women's ministry and child evangelism while they both taught at Word Aflame Bible College. The church in Zambia has doubled during the Abernathys' tenure.

After being appointed UPCI missionaries for thirty-nine years, Gary and Sharon Abernathy retired from global missionary service in 2020.