

# MAJOR PROPHETS

By

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## Foreword

For over fifty years, Mrs. Jet Witherspoon Toole blessed the constituency of the United Pentecostal Church with her anointed pulpit and writing ministry. Over twenty years were spent as an instructor at Pentecostal Bible Institute, Tupelo, Mississippi, and Conquerors Bible College, Portland, Oregon. Even when she retired and her active ministry was curtailed, she continued to draw from her vast knowledge of God's Word and penned Minor Prophets, The Tabernacle, Romans, and Christian Living for the Overseas Ministries Training Course. These four books are now joined by this volume, Major Prophets, which are based on the thorough lecture notes that Sister Toole prepared for her class.

Sister Toole's natural vision is now dim, her ministry continues. It is now multiplied many times over as the foreign missionaries – many of whom are her former students – use her textbooks and what she taught in word and example in her classroom to teach their own Bible school students.

Sister Toole has obeyed Paul's instruction to Timothy: "The things that thus hast heard of me ... the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Tim. 2:2). May we who have been influenced by Sister Toole's love and knowledge of God's Word follow her example and continue to commit eternal truths to other faithful people.

Dorsey L. Burk  
Editor

## Introduction

There are four major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. They are not called major prophets because their prophecies are more important, but because their books are longer than those of the minor prophets:

We will study the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah – including Lamentations – and Ezekiel. Daniel's prophecies should be studied in conjunction with the New Testament's book of prophecy, Revelation.

To understand the utterances of the prophets, a person needs to be familiar with the whole history of Israel. It is necessary to be acquainted with the political and religious conditions that prevailed at the time of each prophet's ministry to understand his prophecy fully.

The mission of the prophets was twofold. The first function of each was to testify against the sins of his own time. His second and even more important objective was to foretell the future. The prophets predicted the future in light of the present and often predicted the distant future (end time) in light of the near future. This is called the "Law of Double Reference."

Utterances of the prophets centered around four historical points:

1. their present time
2. the empires of Assyria and Babylon
3. the coming of Messiah
4. the Millennium

A careful study of the context and the historical background of the prophecies help to determine to which of these four events each passage refers.

Each of the prophets presented the twofold character of Christ. They pictured a suffering Messiah, as in Isaiah 53, and also a reigning, triumphant Messiah, as in Isaiah 11. The two strands of Messianic prophecy were interwoven in such manner, however, that even the prophets did not understand exactly how they would be fulfilled (I Peter 1:8-12).

In the prophecies, Christ's suffering and reigning often seemed to be contemporaneous, but the New Testament has revealed the interval between His first and second advents. It has also revealed the two phases of His reign. He reigns in the hearts and lives of His people now, but during the Millennium, He shall reign in all His kingdom glory.

# Lesson One

## Isaiah

### I. Introduction

Many Bible students consider Isaiah to be the greatest of the prophets and his prophecies the most beautiful and sublime. Of all the prophets, he gave the most glorious and complete view of Messiah and His kingdom. Because of its detailed prophecies of Messiah and His work of redemption, the Book of Isaiah has been called the fifth Gospel and its author the evangelist of the Old Testament. The name Isaiah means "salvation of Jehovah." Isaiah 6 records his divine calling to the prophetic ministry. He prophesied for approximately sixty-two years – 760 to 698 B.C. – under the reigns of Uzziah (Azariah – II Kings 14:21-22), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He ministered in Judah and principally to Judah, although he also had a message for Israel (the ten northern tribes). The northern kingdom of Israel was taken captive by Assyria under the reign of Hoshea, about 721 B.C., during the reign of Ahaz over Judah.

Tradition states that the wicked king Manasseh caused Isaiah's death by putting him into a hollow log, which was then sawed asunder. See Hebrews 11:37.

The historical background for Isaiah's prophecy is found in II Chron. 26-32. (The student should note the distinction between the historical backgrounds of Isaiah's prophecy and the historical section of the Book of Isaiah.)

### II. Overview of Book

#### A. Condemnatory Section (Isaiah 1-35)

This section is concerned primarily with rebukes for Judah's sins.

- Isaiah 1-12 Prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem

- Isaiah 13:23 Prophecies of judgment on the nations

- Isaiah 24-27 Prophecies of world judgment, ending in Israel's redemption

- Isaiah 28-35 Prophecies of judgment and mercy

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

This section contains a part of Judah's history under the reign of Hezekiah. Isaiah 39:5-8 is a prophecy of the Babylonian captivity.

- Isaiah 36-39 Invasion of Judah by Assyria and Judah's deliverance

### C. Consolatory Section (Isaiah 40-66)

This section contains words of comfort to chastised Israel and promises restoration and blessings.

Isaiah 40-48 Deliverance from captivity through the agency of Cyrus

Isaiah 49-57 Redemption through the suffering and sacrifice of Christ

Isaiah 58-66 The future glory of God's redeemed people

### III. A Brief Resume of the Chapters

*Isaiah 1* portrays the sinful condition of Judah at the time of Isaiah's prophecy. If it had not been for a small remnant of the faithful, the nation would have been totally destroyed, even as Sodom and Gomorrah were (verse 9). But in spite of their sinful condition, God promised redemption for His people.

*Isaiah 2* promises salvation for the faithful in the end time (verses 1-5), but God promised to humble and punish the proud and idolatrous (verses 6-22).

*Isaiah 3* looks ahead of the fall of Judah and Jerusalem for their sins (verses 1-9). It promises righteous judgment and justice to the wicked as well as the righteous (verses 10-15). Verses 16-26 picture the sinful pride of the women and predict their judgment.

*Isaiah 4* is a vision of the future glory of the kingdom of God. His people will be redeemed from their wickedness.

*Isaiah 5* gives a parable of the Lord's vineyard that shows the unfaithfulness of both Israel and Judah (verses 1-7). (Compare with John 15:1-7.) Verses 8-30 announce six woes of God's judgment on the people for their sins.

*Isaiah 6* describes Isaiah's vision and call to the prophetic ministry and predicts the people's rejection of his message and their judgment (verses 1-13).

*Isaiah 7* records the evil confederacy of the king of Israel (ten tribes) with the king of Syria. God sent Isaiah with a message to Ahaz, king of Judah. The main prophecy of this chapter is verse 14, which announces that Messiah would be born of a virgin and His name would be called Immanuel. (See Matthew 1:21-23)

*Isaiah 8* predicts the Assyria invasion of Judah and gives warning to the people of Israel and Judah.

*Isaiah 9* is a beautiful prophecy of Messiah and His accomplishment. Note especially verses 6 and 7.

*Isaiah 10* predicts God's judgment on Assyria and Samaria, while promising that Judah would also be punished for her sins of idolatry. But He promised salvation for the righteous remnant.

*Isaiah 11* portrays briefly the peace and righteousness of the millennial reign.

*Isaiah 12* is the beautiful prophecy that Jehovah would become our salvation in Messiah and mentions that His name would be exalted. (See Philippians 2:9-10)

*Isaiah 12-27* consists mostly of judgments pronounced against the various nations. By God's judgment the inhabitants would learn righteousness (26:9). In His final judgment on the nations, God promised to hide His people away in a place of safety (26:20-21), which is apparently the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9; I Cor. 15:51-57; I Thess. 4:13-18). Israel's own efforts to save itself were compared to a bed too short for a man to stretch himself on and a covering too narrow to wrap himself in (28:20). The only covering that hid Israel's sins was the covering of God's Spirit that would be provided in Christ (30:1). The people of Israel were bringing God's judgment upon themselves by going to Egypt and turning to the arm of flesh for help (31:1-3). The only hiding place from the tempests of judgment and storms of life was the promised King who would come to reign in righteousness.

*Isaiah 34:1-8* pictures God's wrath upon the nations in the Battle of Armageddon. (See Rev. 19:11-12)

*Isaiah 35:8* describes the way (road) to heaven that God would provide in Christ as a highway of holiness (see John 14:1-6).

*Isaiah 36-39* (the historical section) tells of the Assyrian's invasion of Judah, God's deliverance in answer to Hezekiah's prayers, Hezekiah's sickness and recovery, and the king's folly of pride in showing his treasures to foreign visitors.

*Isaiah 40* promises the forerunner of Christ (John the Baptist – compare verses 3-8 with Luke 3:4-6). Then it portrays the greatness of the Lord who would come (verses 9-28) and the greatness of the salvation he would bring to humanity (verses 29-31).

*Isaiah 41-48* emphasizes that there is just one God and that he is the Savior of His people (42:8; 43:10-17; 44:6; 45:5; 46:9-10; 48:5, 12-13). *Isaiah 41:2, 44:24-28, and 45:1*

speak of the Persian king Cyrus by whom God would deliver His people from Babylonian captivity. (See Ezra 1:1, 11.) The remarkable thing about this prophecy is that the prophet called his name about 150 years before his birth.

*Isaiah 49-57* is primarily concerned with the coming of Messiah and the salvation He would provide through suffering. His name would be announced before His birth. (Compare 49:1 with Matt. 1:21.) His word would be as a sharp sword. (Compare 49:2 and 50:4 with He. 4:12 and John 7:46.) Isaiah 50:6-9, 52:14, and 53:1-12 describe His suffering. Isaiah 51:9-11, 52:1-12, 55:1-3, and 57:15-19 describe the joy and blessings of the salvation He would provide for men through His suffering.

*Isaiah 58* shows that religious ceremony is not sufficient to save and that God only hears the prayers of those who turn away from sin.

*Isaiah 59* shows that the sins of men had separated them from God (verses 1-9) and that no one but the Lord could save them from their sins (verses 16-21).

*Isaiah 61:1-2* is the text that Jesus read in the synagogue in Nazareth.

*Isaiah 56:6-7, 63:16, and 65:1* foretell that God would receive the Gentiles.

*Isaiah 66:20-42* closes Isaiah's prophecies with the promise of new heavens and a new earth in the consummation of God's salvation of His people. (See II Peter 3:10-14.)



## Study Questions on Isaiah

1. What was Israel's sinful condition as picture Isaiah 1?

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What spiritual restoration was predicted?

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2. What was said of Israel's idolatry in Isaiah 2?

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What judgment did God pronounce on Israel for her idolatry?

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3. What picture of the women's vanity was given in Isaiah 3?

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4. What picture of restoration was given in Isaiah 4?

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5. What interpretation was given of the parable of the vineyard in Isaiah 5?

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What comparison may be drawn between this parable and Jesus' teaching in John 15:1-7?

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6. For what six sins was woe pronounced on Isaiah in Isaiah 5?

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7. Describe Isaiah's vision and call to the prophetic ministry as given in Isaiah 6.

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8. What important prophecy of Christ was given in Isaiah 7?

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What was its New Testament fulfillment? Give the Scripture reference.

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9. What invasion was predicted in Isaiah 8? What was the Lord's provision for Israel's deliverance?

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10. What important prophecy about Christ was given in Isaiah 9? How was Christ identified in this prophecy?

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11. What punishment for Israel's sin did the Lord promise in Isaiah 11?

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12. What was prophesied of Assyria in Isaiah 10? What hope was held out to Israel?

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13. What picture of the Lord's future kingdom is given in Isaiah 11?

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14. What was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 12?

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15. What was prophesied of Babylon in Isaiah 13? To what does this Babylon refer (verse 11)? To what does the "day of the LORD" refer (verse 9)?

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16. What consolation is held out to Israel in Isaiah 14?

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17. What is shown to be the origin of Babylon's pride and evil in Isaiah 14?

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18. To what does the destruction of Babylon refer in Isaiah 14?

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19. What is prophesied of Moab in Isaiah 15-16? Who were the Moabites?

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20. What was prophesied of Damascus in Isaiah 17? What nation did Damascus represent?

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21. On what nation was woe pronounced in Isaiah 18?

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22. On what nation was woe pronounced in Isaiah 19?

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23. What was indicated by Isaiah's pronouncement of judgment on the many different nations? (See Daniel 2:31-45.)

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24. What nation did the Lord ordain to destroy Egypt and Ethiopia in Isaiah 20?

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25. In Isaiah 21, what nation did the Lord ordain it destroy Babylon?

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26. What is the interpretation of the prophecy of Isaiah 22? (See II Chron. 32:1-5, 30.)

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27. Against what country was judgment predicted in Isaiah 23?

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28. To what does the prophecy of Isaiah 24 refer? (See Rev. 19:11-17.)

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29. Give Scripture references that help to interpret the prophecy of Isaiah 25.

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30. What was God's purpose in judgment, as revealed in Isaiah 26?  
Of what were verses 20&21 prophetic?

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31. What restoration of Israel was predicted in Isaiah 27?

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32. What captivity and restoration was pictured in Isaiah 28? What is the interpretation of verse 20?

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33. Give New Testament interpretations of the prophecy of Isaiah 29.

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34. What were the people of Israel warned against in Isaiah 30-31? What deliverance was promised to them?

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35. What restoration was promised in Isaiah 32?

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36. What was pictured in Isaiah 33?

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37. What was pictured in Isaiah 34?

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38. What was pictured in Isaiah 35?

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39. What of Judah's history was recorded in the historical section of Isaiah 36-39? What was God's answer, through Isaiah, to the Assyrian threat? How did God fulfill His promise (Isaiah 37)?

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40. What was Hezekiah's folly as recorded in Isaiah 39?

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41. Of whom did Isaiah prophecy in Isaiah 40:1-5?

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42. How did Isaiah picture the Lord in Isaiah 40:9-31?

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43. What was shown of the weakness of men in Isaiah 41? What was shown to be the hope of weak men?

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44. What New Testament passage interprets the prophecy of Isaiah 42:1-12?

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45. What two aspects of Israel's restoration are shown in Isaiah 43? To what does verse 27 refer?

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46. What is emphasized in Isaiah 44-46?

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47. What was prophesied about Cyrus in Isaiah 44:24- 28 and 45:1-4? When and how was this prophecy fulfilled?

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48. In Isaiah 47 to what does the judgment of Babylon refer? (See Rev. 17:1-18.)

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49. In Isaiah 49, what judgment was pronounced on Israel and what promise was given?

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50. What New Testament passage interprets the prophecy about Christ in Isaiah 49?

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51. What was the fulfillment of the prophecy about Christ in Isaiah 50?

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52. In Isaiah 51, what does the prophecy about Israel refer?

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53. Give New Testament interpretations of the prophecies of Isaiah 52.

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54. How was the prophecy of Isaiah 53 minutely fulfilled?

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55. What restoration of Israel was prophesied in Isaiah 54? (See Rev. 7:1-8.)

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56. What picture of salvation in Christ was given in Isaiah 55?

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57. Name some of the admonitions given in Isaiah 56.

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58. What rebukes and what promises were given in Isaiah 57?

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59. How was Israel's hypocrisy pictured in Isaiah 58?

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60. What picture of the lost was given in Isaiah 59? What was shown to be man's only hope?

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61. In Isaiah 60, how was the salvation of Christ shown to be universal?

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62. What was the New Testament fulfillment of Isaiah 61?

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63. What was prophesied of Israel in Isaiah 62?

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64. In Isaiah 63, to what do verses 1-6 refer? To what do verses 7-19 refer? To what does verse 16 refer?

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65. In Isaiah 64, what did Isaiah predict of the future attitude of the people of Israel toward their need? What situation was to bring them to this attitude?

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66. In Isaiah 66, what was shown to be God's requirement for salvation? What was shown to be His provision of salvation?

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## Lesson Two

### Jeremiah

#### I. Introduction

Jeremiah was the son of a priest from Anathoth. (Anathoth was located about three miles northeast of Jerusalem.) He began prophesying during the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign and continued until the captivity of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians about forty years later (Jeremiah 1:2-3). He is called the weeping prophet because of the great burden he carried for his own people.

#### II. Historical Background

We shall briefly study the years of Jeremiah's prophecy under the reign of each of the kings of Judah from Josiah to Zedekiah. This historical information is found in II Kings 22-25 and II Chron. 34-36.

##### A. Josiah (II Kings 22:1; II Chron. 34:1)

Josiah reigned eighteen years. He was a good and faithful king. At the age of sixteen he began to seek the Lord, and when he was twenty years old, in the twelfth year of his reign, he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of idolatry (II Chron. 34:1-7). He then ordered the renovation and repair of the Temple, in the process of which the book of the law of Moses was found (II Kings 22:3-10; II Chron. 34:8-10). Evidently the law had not been read to the people of Judah for many years, and Josiah rent his clothes out of great concern when he became conscious, through the hearing of the law, of the sinfulness of the people. He sent priests to inquire of the Lord. The Lord answered through the prophetess Huldah that He would judge the people for their sins, but due to Josiah's faithfulness, the judgment would not fall during his lifetime (II Kings 22:11-20; II Chron. 34:18-28).

Josiah then read the law to all the people and zealously tried to stamp out idolatry in Judah. He held the greatest Passover feast that the people had known in many years (II Kings 23:1-25; II Chron. 34:29-33; 35:1-19).

Nevertheless, he seems to have made one mistake. The Egyptians pharaoh marched through the land on his way to wage war against Assyria. Josiah, evidently against the will of God, encountered him in battle in Megiddo. Josiah was killed in this battle, and his son Jehoahaz was crowned king of Judah (II Kings 23:31-33; II Chron. 35:20-27; 36:1-2).

B. Jehoahaz, son of Josiah (II Kings 23:31-33; II Chron. 36:1-3).

Jehoahaz had reigned only three months when Judah was subjugated by the pharaoh of Egypt. He was carried to Egypt where he died.

C. Jehoiakim, son of Josiah and the same as Eliakim (II Kings 23:34-36; II Chron. 36:4-8)

Pharaoh-nechoh bound Judah under tribute and made Jehoahaz's brother, Eliakim, of Judah, changing his name to Jehoiakim (II Kings 23:32-32; II Chron. 36:1-5). Jehoiakim became a very wicked king and persecuted Jeremiah.

After three or four years, Nebuchadnezzar gained power over most of the territory held by Assyria and Egypt. He subjugated Judah and brought Jehoiakim under his jurisdiction. Three years later, Jehoiakim rebelled against the rule of Nebuchadnezzar. He was arrested, and plans were made to carry him to Babylon. However, it appears that he was not taken to Babylon but reigned in Jerusalem about another five years, the overall period of his reign being eleven years (II Kings 24:1-7; II Chron. 36:5-8; Jer. 25:1-3; Dan. 1:1-2). The vessels and treasures that Nebuchadnezzar carried to Babylon at this time were probably given to him as tax by Jehoiakim. And some of the best of the young men of Judah, including Daniel and his friends, were taken to Babylon at this time (Dan. 1:1-7).

D. Jehoiakim (II Kings 24:6-10; II Chron. 36:8-10)

When Jehoiakim died, his son Jehoiachin became king of Judah. He had reigned only three months when Nebuchadnezzar's armies again besieged Jerusalem. Jehoiachin gave himself up to them, and his family, and his officials were taken to Babylon (II Kings 24:8-16; II Chron. 36:9-10). Evidently Ezekiel was also taken to Babylon with this group, approximately five years after Daniel had been taken to Babylon.

E. Zedekiah (II Kings 24:17-19; II Chron. 36:10-12; Jer. 37:1-2)

Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah king of Judah in place of Jehoiachin and changed his name to Zedekiah (II Kings 24:17-19; II Chron. 36:10). He was a son of Josiah and brother to Jehoiakim (Jer. 37:1). Zedekiah reigned eleven years, till the fall of Jerusalem. He came to Jeremiah secretly on various occasions to inquire of the will of the lord. He was too weak, however, to take a stand against the princes of his court. He finally yielded to their pressure to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar in spite of Jeremiah's warning against such action (Jer. 37:11-21; 38:2-28). When Zedekiah rebelled in the ninth year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar sent his armies to

besiege Jerusalem. In less than two years, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, Jerusalem was taken and destroyed (II Kings 25:1-21; II Chron. 36:11-21; Jer. 39:1-12; 40:2-6).

### **III. A Brief Resume of the Chapters**

*Jeremiah 1:4-10* records Jeremiah's call to the prophetic ministry. It appears he was called when quite young, since he called himself a child (verse 6).

*Jeremiah 2:1-3:5* is Jeremiah's first message to the Jews. He rebuked the unfaithfulness of the priests and kings, the false prophets, and the idolatry of the people. He charged them with two evils: forsaking the Lord and substituting idols in His place (2:13). He said the noble vine God had planted had degenerated into a strange or wild vine (2:1). (See Isaiah 5:2.)

*Jeremiah 3:6-6:30* is Jeremiah's second message. He rebuked Judah for disregarding the warning of the captivity of her sister Israel (the ten tribes). Judah had blindly followed in the footsteps of Israel in her idolatry (3:6-11).

Jeremiah called the people to repent (3:12-25; 4:1-4). Yet, since he knew there would be no permanent repentance, he pronounced their doom (4:7-13). They pretended to worship the Lord Jehovah while continuing in their wicked ways (5:1-15). He called them to remember and return to their former state of faith and blessing, but they refused to heed his pleading (6:16-17).

*Jeremiah 7-10* gives Jeremiah's message in the gate of the Lord's house. He rebuked the people for believing the lying prophets who promised a false security (7:4-10). He warned that God would permit them to be destroyed even as He had permitted the Philistines to carry the ark away from the Tabernacle in Shiloh (7:12-14). He said when their enemies destroyed Jerusalem they would dishonor Judah by taking the bones of their kings and princes from the tombs and scattering them in the open (8:1-3).

Jeremiah expressed his own grief over Judah's sinful condition (8:18-22; 9:1-2). He pronounced God's judgment on Judah as well as on all the other nations (9:23-26). He rebuked the people for trusting in lifeless idols that could do neither good nor evil while they forsook the living God who created all things (10:1-13). He acknowledged that due to carnality they could not make themselves righteousness (10:23-24).

*Jeremiah 11-12* contains Jeremiah's message of the broken covenant. This was prompted by the finding of the book of the law in the renovation of the Temple by

Josiah. The law revealed that Judah was under great condemnation for having broken the law of God (1:1-13). The people would be punished for persecuting God's prophet (11:18-23). They were to be carried into captivity, but when they repented God would bring them back again (12:15). However, during their captivity they should spread the doctrine of one true God among the heathen (12:16).

*Jeremiah 13* is Jeremiah's message that he illustrated by the sign of the linen girdle. As his girdle was spoiled by being buried in the hole of a rock by the Euphrates River, so Judah would be buried among the heathens of the country of the Euphrates because they had failed to cling to the Lord as a girdle should bind the garment (13:1-11). But Judah could no more make herself righteous than an Ethiopian could change his skin or a leopard his spots (13:23).

*Jeremiah 14-15* warns Judah of a coming drought and other judgments. (See Deu. 28:15; 23:24.) Jeremiah had to battle against the influence of false prophets who denied that these things would come to pass (14:13-16). When he interceded for the people, the Lord told him they had gone so far in sin that even if Moses and Samuel were there to intercede, He would not spare them (15:1, 6). However, He promised to save the small righteous remnant (15:11-21).

*Jeremiah 16:1-17:18* gives Jeremiah's message in which he used his own unmarried state to emphasize the nearness of Judah's destruction (16:1-9). Again, he warned the people against trusting in the arm of flesh, but he promised that God would try their hearts and bless all who trusted in Him (17:5, 7, 9-10).

*Jeremiah 17:19-27* warns against breaking the Sabbath, which was a sign of God's covenant with Israel and a type of their eternal rest.

*Jeremiah 18:1-19:13* records Jeremiah's learning in the potter's house how God would take the marred people of Judah and either save or destroy them according to their attitude. He could do with them as He willed, even as the potter with the clay.

*Jeremiah 19:14-20:18* portrays Jeremiah's reaction to his first persecution. He first thought he would cease giving out the message of judgment that had brought on his persecution, but the Word of God became like a fire shut up in his bones. He could not be silent (20:7-9).

*Jeremiah 21-22* relates Jeremiah's answer to Zedekiah's inquiry concerning Nebuchadnezzar's invasion. He answered that if Judah repented of her sins she

could be spared, but if she did not the kingdom would surely be given to the Babylonians.

*Jeremiah 23:4-6* promises the coming of Israel's righteous King and Messiah, through whom they would be redeemed and made righteous. The remainder of the chapter warns against relying on false security promised by lying prophets.

*Jeremiah 24* describes good and bad figs. By these signs, God showed that the repentant Jews would be restored but the wicked ones would be destroyed.

*Jeremiah 25:10-11* predicts Israel's repentance in Babylon and their restoration after seventy years of captivity (Psalms 126 and 137).

*Jeremiah 26* relates the priests' decision to kill Jeremiah. Nevertheless, he was saved by the pleading of the princes and the people, who used the example of Micah's prophecy in the days of Hezekiah (26:11-19).

*Jeremiah 27-28* recounts how Jeremiah predicted Judah's subjugation by Babylon using the sign of a yoke, but it promises deliverance in the day (or reign) of Nebuchadnezzar's grandson (27:7).

*Jeremiah 29* tells of Jeremiah's letter of warning and comfort to the captive already in Babylon.

*Jeremiah 30* records God's command to Jeremiah to write all the words of God in a book. When the people returned from captivity, this book would confirm the truth and fulfillment of all the Word of God.

*Jeremiah 31* gives the Lord's promise that the captives would return from Babylon and rebuild and worship in their land. The long-range view promised spiritual restoration through the new covenant of Messiah (31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-12).

*Jeremiah 32* demonstrates Jeremiah's faith in God's promise of restoration by his redeeming the inheritance of his uncle's son (verses 6-18).

*Jeremiah 33* records the Lord's promise that He would cause His people to return from captivity. He again promised final deliverance through the Branch of the house of David (verses 15-18). This promise was as sure as His covenant of day and night (verses 19-26).

*Jeremiah 34* describes how that, in the face of a Babylonian siege and an earlier deportation, Zedekiah made a covenant to release Hebrew slaves. But when

Babylon lifted the siege for a time, he retracted his covenant and God again pronounced destruction on Judah.

*Jeremiah 35* contrasts the disobedience of Judah with the obedience of the Rechabites (Kenites) to the command of their elders. (See I Cor. 2:55.)

*Jeremiah 36* recounts that when Jeremiah was shut up in prison during the reign of Jehoiakim, he called for Baruch to write his prophetic words and read them in the house of the Lord. Jehoiakim burned the roll (book) of God's Word, but Jeremiah dictated all the words to Baruch again and added a judgment against Jehoiakim.

*Jeremiah 37-38* records that when the Babylonian siege was lifted briefly, Jeremiah was again imprisoned and put in a dungeon. Through secret counsel with Zedekiah, he was taken out of the dungeon, placed in the court of the prison, and given a daily ration of bread. When he continued to prophesy the fall of Jerusalem, he was again put in a dungeon. Nevertheless, Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian, interceded with the king and saved Jeremiah from death in the dungeon.

*Jeremiah 39-40* depicts Jerusalem's fall, Zedekiah's death, Jeremiah's deliverance, Ebed-melech's reward, and Gedaliah's is being made governor by Nebuchadnezzar.

*Jeremiah 41* reports that Ishmael, a traitor, assassinated Gedaliah and that the remnant of Jews, fearing they would be punished by Nebuchadnezzar, made plans to flee to Egypt.

*Jeremiah 42-44* shows that the fearful Jews asked Jeremiah to inquire of the Lord if they should go to Egypt. As they had already determined to go, they disregarded his advice not to go. They took Jeremiah and Baruch with them into Egypt. In Tahpanhes, Egypt, Jeremiah continued to prophesy to the rebellious Jews. He told them that Nebuchadnezzar would conquer Egypt and all who had fled there for safety would meet the same judgment and destruction that had fallen on Jerusalem. They boldly defied him and deliberately went after idols until they were destroyed according to Jeremiah's prophecy.

*Jeremiah 45* is a message of comfort to Baruch in the days of Jehoiakim.

*Jeremiah 46-51* is Jeremiah's messages of judgment against the Gentile nations. These messages look ahead to the destruction of all worldly powers by the Lord at Armageddon (Dan. 2:40-45). As both Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied, Babylon was destroyed by the Medes and Persians (Dan. 5:1-31). And by the law of double



reference, this prophecy foreshadows the end-time destruction of the kingdom of Antichrist, which is also called Babylon (Rev. 17-19).

*Jeremiah 52* records the destruction of Jerusalem and the kindness shown to Jehoiachin in his latter days by Evil-merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar.

## Study Questions on Jeremiah

1. Describe Jeremiah's call to the prophetic ministry.

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2. What was Jeremiah's first message to the Jews?

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With what two evils did he charge them? What did he say about the noble vine of God?

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3. What was Jeremiah's second message of the Jews?

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Why did he rebuke Judah? What promise did he give?

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4. What was Jeremiah's message in the gate of the Lord's house? For what two reasons did he rebuke the people?

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How did he express his own grief over Judah's sinful condition? What judgment did he pronounce on Judah?

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5. What prompted the message of the broken covenant?

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What punishment was pronounced on the nation? Why? What promise was given?

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6. What is the significance of the sign of the linen girdle?

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7. Why did Jeremiah have to battle the false prophets?

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What did the Lord tell him concerning the condition of the people? What promise did the Lord give (15:11-21)?

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8. What was the significance of Jeremiah's unmarried state as it related to Judah? What did he warn the people against?

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9. The Sabbath was a sign of what?

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10. What lesson did Jeremiah learn in the potter's house?

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11. What was Jeremiah's reaction to his first persecution?

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12. What was Jeremiah's answer to Zedekiah's inquiry concerning Nebuchadnezzar's invasion?

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13. What promise was given concerning the coming of Israel's righteous King and Messiah?

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14. What was shown by the sign of the good and bad figs?

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15. What did Jeremiah predict in Jeremiah 25:10-11?

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16. How was Jeremiah saved from the priests who determined to kill him?

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17. What was shown by the sign of the yoke? What promise was given?

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18. What was Jeremiah commanded to write in a book?

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What was the future purpose of the book?

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19. What promise was given concerning the captives in Jeremiah 31?

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What was the long-range spiritual promise?

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20. How did Jeremiah demonstrate his faith in God's promise of restoration?

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21. What promises were given in Jeremiah 33?

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22. Who were the Rechabites (Kenites)? Contrast there with Judah's.

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23. Who was Baruch? What happened to his book?

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24. How was Jeremiah delivered from the dungeon?

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25. Describe the fall of Jerusalem.

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26. Who was Ishmael of Jeremiah 41?

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Why did the remnant of the Jews decided to flee to Egypt?

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27. What did the Jews ask Jeremiah in Jeremiah 42?

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What did Jeremiah continue to do in Egypt? What was the reaction of the Jews?

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28. What message was given to Baruch in Jeremiah 45?

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29. What messages are recorded in Jeremiah 46-51?

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According to the law of double reference, what do these messages foreshadow?

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30. Describe Jehoiachin's treatment by Evil-merodach.

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## Lesson Three

### Lamentations

#### I. Introduction

The book of Lamentations is an appendix to Jeremiah's prophecy. In it he expressed his heartbreak and sorrow over the destruction of Jerusalem and the miseries and desolations of God's people. The main object of the book was to cause the Jews to realize that their calamities were God's chastening for the purpose of turning them back to Himself in true repentance.

This book is still used by the Jews to express their sorrow over the sufferings and dispersion of Israel. They read Lamentations yearly to commemorate the burning of the Temple. And in the ninth month of Ab, which corresponds to our July, they read Lamentations aloud in all the Jewish synagogues. They have also used Lamentations as they wailed before the Wailing in Jerusalem.

#### II. A Brief Resume of the Chapters

*Lamentations 1* pictures the city of Jerusalem and the people of Judah as a weeping widow. The chapter depicts Judah's grief. (See Psalm 137:1-6.)

*Lamentations 2* pictures the city and the people as a veiled woman mourning over the ruins. It depicts Judah's humiliation.

*Lamentations 3* pictures Jeremiah's great sorrow as he put himself in the place of the people as their intercessor. It points to Judah's cause for hope by recognizing the justice of God's chastisement.

*Lamentations 4* likens the destruction of the glorious Jerusalem and the degraded state of the once holy people to gold that is dimmed and degraded. It shows that Judah's punishment corresponded to the extent of her backsliding.

*Lamentations 5* pictures the people as repentant and pleading with the Lord for forgiveness. It depicts Judah's repentance in Babylon.



## Study Questions on Lamentations

1. What is the relationship of Lamentations to Jeremiah's prophecy?  

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2. What is the main objective of the book?  

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3. How do the Jews still use the book?  

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4. What does the weeping widow symbolize and depict?  

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5. What does the veiled woman mourning over the ruins symbolize and depict?  

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6. What does Jeremiah's role as intercessor point to in Lamentations 3?  

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7. What does the dimmed and degraded gold symbolize in Lamentations 4?  

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8. What depicts Judah's repentance in Babylon?

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## Lesson Four

### Ezekiel

#### I. Introduction

The historical background for the first part of Ezekiel's prophecy is found in II Kings 24-25. He was a priest (Ezekiel 1:3) who was carried into Babylon at the same time that King Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, was taken captive to Babylon (II Kings 24:11-17). Five years later (Ezekiel 1:2), God called him to prophesy to the captives in Babylon. He prophesied from about six years before the fall of Jerusalem until about fifteen years after its destruction and the final deportation of the Jews to Babylon.

Before the fall of Jerusalem, he prophesied that God would give the city and its people into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. After Jerusalem fell, he sought to console the captive Jews with promises of their future restoration.

Tradition says he was finally put to death by a Jewish captive whom he had rebuked for his idolatry.

#### II. A Brief Resume of the Chapters

*Ezekiel 1:* In preparing for his ministry, Ezekiel was given a symbolic vision of the future glory of God's redeemed people. (See Revelation 4-5.)

*Ezekiel 2-3:* God commissioned Ezekiel to prophesy to the captives of Israel in Babylon and impressed upon him his responsibility to obey this call.

*Ezekiel 4:* By the sign of a tile and an iron pan (verses 13), Ezekiel portrayed the siege of Jerusalem. By lying on his left on side for 390 days (a day for a year), he signified Israel's period of idolatry, and by lying on his right side for forty days, he signified the period of Judah's idolatry, for which idolatry God let both nations be taken into captivity (verse 48). By weighing his bread and measuring his water, he signified that famine would prevail during the siege of Jerusalem (verses 9-17).

*Ezekiel 5:* By cutting his hair, dividing it, and weighing it, Ezekiel signified the destruction of the people of Jerusalem by famine, pestilence, and the sword.

*Ezekiel 6-7:* Ezekiel predicted the imminent destruction of Judah but promised that a faithful remnant of the people would remember the Lord in Babylon.

*Ezekiel 8:* Ezekiel was carried over the city of Jerusalem in a vision and permitted to look down on the wickedness of the people.

*Ezekiel 9:* Ezekiel had a vision of the glory of the Lord departing from the most holy place of the Temple (verse 3). But the Lord put His mark on the foreheads of the faithful that they might be spared in the destruction of Jerusalem.

*Ezekiel 10:* Ezekiel was again given the vision of the four living creatures by which the Lord seems to have indicated the future state of His faithful and redeemed people in heaven. (See Rev. 4-5.) The glory of the Lord that had already departed from the most holy place now departed from the threshold of the Temple (verse 18).

*Ezekiel 11:* In light of Ezekiel's vision of Judah's wickedness, he again prophesied its destruction. However, God again promised that He would not forsake the faithful but would finally bring them into new life in Christ (verses 16-21). Ezekiel was then shown a vision of God's glory departing from the city of Jerusalem (verses 22-25).

*Ezekiel 12:* Ezekiel signified Judah's imminent destruction by removing his stuff as a fugitive, eating his bread with quaking, and drinking his water with trembling.

*Ezekiel 13:* Ezekiel prophesied against the lying prophets.

*Ezekiel 14:* Ezekiel refused to answer the captive elders of Judah who came to him insincerely, with idolatry in their hearts, God said that the Jews gone so far into idolatry that He would not spare them even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were within the city. Even these righteous men could only save themselves.

*Ezekiel 15:* The Lord showed by the vision of the burning vine that the sinful people of Judah deserved His judgment of fire.

*Ezekiel 16:* Ezekiel pictured the hideousness of Judah's sin by the symbol of a wife who was clothed, beautiful, and blessed of Jehovah, but who had gone away from Him to idols. God said they were more guilty than Sodom and Samaria because they had sinned against light and privilege. (See Matt. 10:15; 11:20-24.) But He promised a spiritual restoration by His everlasting covenant, which was the promised new covenant in Christ (verses 60-63).

*Ezekiel 17:* Ezekiel showed by the parable of the great eagle that Zedekiah would be punished for rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar and looking to the pharaoh of Egypt for help. (See Ezekiel 31.)

*Ezekiel 18:* God vindicated His punishment of Judah by showing that He would not punish them for the sins of their fathers but for their own sins, for they had continued to walk in their fathers' footsteps.

*Ezekiel 19:* Ezekiel lamented to the captives concerning the destruction of their mother (the Jews who were still in Judah), who would also be brought to Babylon soon.

*Ezekiel 20:* Ezekiel again refused to answer the inquiry of the elders who came to him insincerely, without an attitude of repentance. But he promised that they would finally be regathered after their punishment had brought them to repentance.

*Ezekiel 21:* By the signs of sighing and a sword, Ezekiel signified the imminent destruction of Jerusalem and said the people would not be able to escape the king of Babylon. He said that Israel would not again have a king to reign until Christ came (verses 26-27). He also pronounced judgment on the Ammonites.

*Ezekiel 22:* Ezekiel enumerated the sins of the people, the priests, the princes, and the prophets. By the parable of the dross in the furnace, he indicated the severity of their judgment.

*Ezekiel 23:* Ezekiel described the idolatry of Israel and Judah as spiritual adultery in the parable of Aholah and Aholibah.

*Ezekiel 24:* By the boiling pot Ezekiel indicated the seething wickedness of the people of Jerusalem. The Lord signified the desolation He was bringing upon them by taking away Ezekiel's wife.

*Ezekiel 25-32:* Ezekiel prophesied of the judgment to be sent on the various nations. God pronounced judgment on each of the nations for their hatred and persecution of His people Israel. These prophecies, which have already been fulfilled on the nations named, also look ahead to God's final judgment on all worldly rules, which will terminate in the kingdom of Antichrist in the end time.

*Ezekiel 33:* God again impressed on Ezekiel his responsibility to warn the people of His judgment for their sins. In the twelfth year of Ezekiel's captivity, he received word of the fall of Jerusalem (verses 21-22). He again told the captives that this had

befallen Judah because of her sins. God revealed to him the insincerity of those who professed to accept his messages (verses 29-33).

*Ezekiel 34:* Ezekiel pronounced judgment against the faithless and mercenary shepherds (verses 1-10) and prophesied of the Good Shepherd to come by whom the faithful would be restored (verses 11-31).

*Ezekiel 35:* Ezekiel pronounced judgment against Mount Seri, which represented the Edomites, because they had rejoiced over the fall of Jerusalem and hoped to possess their land.

*Ezekiel 36:* Now that Jerusalem had fallen, Ezekiel sought to comfort the captives of Judah in their desolations. He promised that their enemies would be punished and that they would be restored to their land after they had repented of their idolatries. He also gave a most definite prophecy of their future spiritual restoration in Christ (verses 25-27).

*Ezekiel 37:* Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones portrayed symbolically the complete restoration, both natural and spiritual, of the people of Israel. He also showed that when they were restored, they would no longer be two nations but one. (See Ephesians 2:11-22.)

*Ezekiel 38-39:* Ezekiel's prophecy against Gog and Magog (Gog is the prince and Magog is his land) refers to the Beast and his armies, who will march against Israel. At the height of his glory, he will be destroyed by the Lord in the Battle of Armageddon. Many Bible students identify this North Country as Russia, and Meshech and Tubal as Moscow and Tobolsk. Note 38:14-19. Compare Ezekiel 39 with Rev. 19:11-21. Note also 39:29.

*Ezekiel 40-48:* Fourteen years after the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel was given a vision of the restoration of the Temple, which he described in these chapters. He described the Lord with a measuring reed showing His own required dimensions of His house (Ezekiel 40-42).

This was doubtless a reference to the rebuilding of the Temple under Zerubbabel when the Jews returned to Jerusalem by the decree of Cyrus. But the house of the Lord that Ezekiel described went far beyond the Temple of Zerubbabel. At the laying of the foundation of Zerubbabel's Temple, the old men of Israel who had seen Solomon's Temple before its destruction wept because they knew this house could never equal the beautiful Temple of Solomon (Ezra 3:12-13; Haggai 2:1-9).

And yet God promised a temple that would far exceed the glory of Solomon's Temple by reason of His glory that would fill it (43:1-6). Ezekiel prophesied of this house, which was not to be built with hands. (See II Cor. 5:1; 6:19-20; Eph. 2:19-22.) This spiritual house, which was shown to be foursquare (40:47; 42:13-14; 42:20), evidently refers to the New Jerusalem of Rev. 21. This was to be the throne of the Lord from which He would rule His people forever (43:7). God impressed upon Israel that only the pure and holy would inhabit His spiritual house (Ezekiel 44).

Ezekiel 45-46 appears to be mostly instructions for the natural people after their return to Jerusalem. Ezekiel 47-48 evidently relates to the restoration of the kingdom of Israel in the Millennium (Rev. 21-22).

## Study Questions for Ezekiel

1. Where, to whom, and when did Ezekiel prophecy?

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2. Under what conditions did he prophecy?

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3. What vision was given to Ezekiel at the time he was called to the prophetic ministry?

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What other Bible character was given this same vision, and what is its interpretation?

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4. What was Ezekiel's commission, and how was his responsibility impressed upon him?

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5. Name the various symbolic signs by which he warned the people and tell what each one signified.

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6. Describe Ezekiel's vision of Jerusalem that is recorded in Ezekiel 8-11. Where was he at the time he was given this vision?

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7. What did he teach by the parable of the dross in the furnace (Ezekiel 22)?

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8. In Ezekiel 22, with what sins did he charge the people, the priests, the princes, and the prophets?

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9. What chapter records Ezekiel's prophecies against the nations?

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10. For what general offense was God's judgment pronounced against the various nations?

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11. In Ezekiel 34, for what sin did God condemn the unfaithful shepherds?

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12. What changed trend did Ezekiel's prophecies take after the destruction of Jerusalem?

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13. What prophecy of the future spiritual kingdom was given in Ezekiel 36:26-27?

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14. For what sin did Ezekiel condemn the Edomites in Ezekiel 35-36?

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15. Give the interpretation of the vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37.

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16. What do Gog and Magog apparently refer to in Ezekiel 38?

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17. The detailed description of Ezekiel 40-48 is a prediction of what?

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