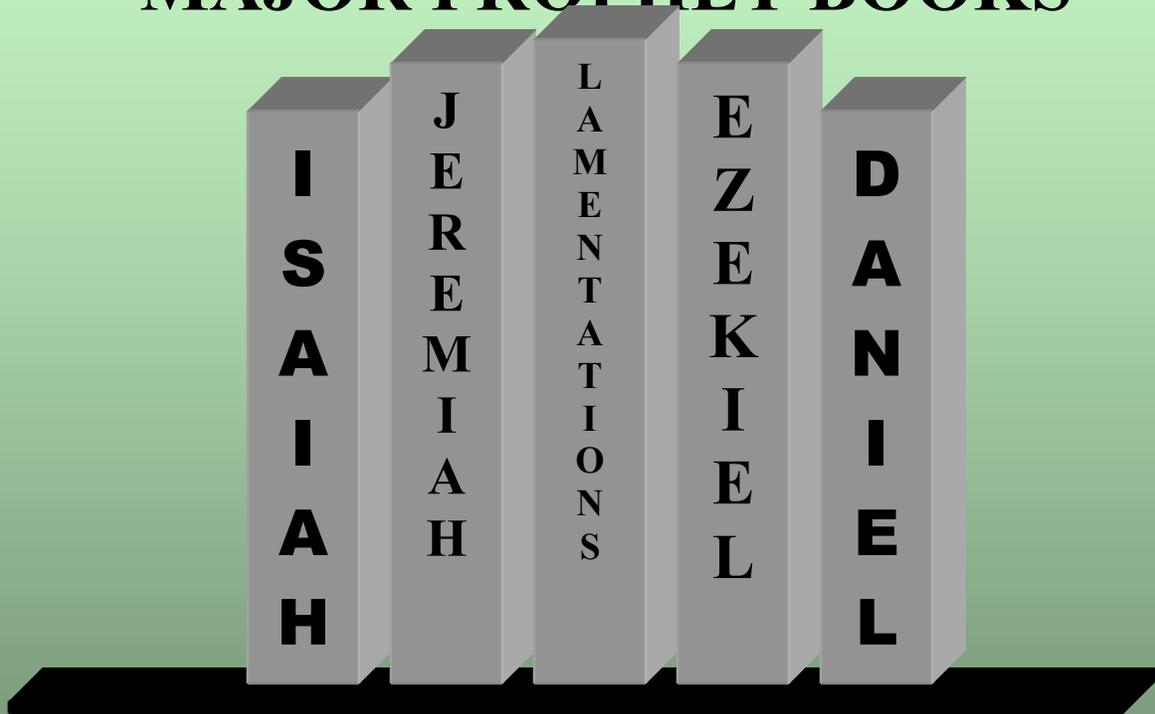


*A Year's Spiritual Journey through a Study of  
Old Testament Books*

*Part #3*

Important Lessons to be learned from

**OLD TESTAMENT  
MAJOR PROPHET BOOKS**



*13 Lessons*

*Prepared by:*

**PAUL E. CANTRELL**

**2005**



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**PAUL E. CANTRELL  
84 Northview Drive  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050**

[pecantrell@juno.com](mailto:pecantrell@juno.com)

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## Lesson One

***“Introducing the Books of Prophecy”***

One of the richest sources of study and inspiration in the Old Testament is the Books of Prophecy. They provide a rich source of learning about mankind: their tendencies, their aspirations; their needs, and their problems. We learn much about God as well: His great attributes and His ways and means of working among men. As well, we can learn about faithful, godly leaders among God’s people that affected their lives. These Prophets were some of the most spiritual and courageous men of the Old Testament. God used them greatly. Truly the Books of Prophecy live up to the Apostle Paul’s statement in Romans 15:4: ***“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”*** As Christians, we miss much of our birthright when we fail to read and study these Books of Prophecy!

The Prophets had a message for the people of their day and their hearts yearned to deliver it. Some of the greatest recorded sermons can be found in these books. Their messages were filled with:

1. **Denunciation of sin;**
2. **Glories of being a Child of God;**
3. **Great Promises of God to watch over His Children;**
4. **The great Plan of God for the future!**
5. **Calling God’s People back to the Law...back to faithfulness as a People of God!**

**WHO WERE THE PROPHETS?**

The word “Prophet” is used for translating three different Hebrew words. Some translation may not use the word prophet, but possibly a synonym that has a close connection with the same concept.

1. **Ro’eh** (Occurs 11 times—can be translated “Seer”)—One who sees—a man of vision.
2. **Chozeb** (Occurs 22 times—similar idea)—He has knowledge others do not. .
3. **Nabhi** (Occurs over 300 times)—One who announces—spokesman for another.

The general idea is of one who has received a vital message from God that must be spoken. God has called, endowed, and commissioned him to go speak. It must be understood that:

1. **The Message he speaks is not his, but God’s.**
2. **The words are not his, but God’s Words.**
3. **He is as one who speaks in the place of God!**
4. **He is like an Ambassador to God’s people (Amos 3:7-8; Jeremiah 23:16; Ezekiel 13:1-7).**

Quite often the phrase will appear: ***“Thus sayeth the Lord.”*** They were given a message to be spoken (Jeremiah 20:9; Isaiah 6:8).

Other terms are also used to identify these men, such as: **Man of God** (1 Samuel 9:6; 1 Kings 17:18), **Servant of God** (1 Chronicles 6:49; 1 Kings 18:36), **Messenger of Jehovah** (Isaiah 42:19), and **Watchman** (Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7). Also, there were many more prophets that

are mentioned, but have not left writings of their work. Two of the better known ones are Elijah and Elisha. Nathan and Gad were also prominent in the lives of God's People. It is possible that these and/or other Prophets may have been used by God to record much of the information in the Books of History (2 Samuel 12:1; 24:11; 1 Kings 1:11).

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE MEN

1. In each case they were called by God personally (Isaiah 6:8).
2. They were conscious of God's authority being behind their message. *"Thus sayeth the Lord"* is used often. They were speaking the words of God. (2 Peter 1:21)
3. They spoke courageously and uncompromisingly. They were not bound by public opinion (Jeremiah 38:1-6; Amos 7:10). They would not be stopped by Kings, False Prophets, nor persecution.
4. They were men of clean and consecrated lives and character. Their moral lives went unchallenged. Their lives were beyond reproach—which caused no hindrance to their message.
5. They were men of spiritual depth and communion with God.
6. They faithfully and fiercely denounced all evil practices. They were *"Preachers of Righteousness."* They were moral reformers and ethical teachers. They were disturbers of men's minds, as well as their indifferences. They had no respect of persons in their messages.
7. They were also revealers of future events in history. They revealed the Divine purposes of God. They gave great insight to the coming Messiah and the Messianic Age. They also told of future Reward and Punishments.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Godly and courageous men and women are needed today in the church to help keep God's people on the right track just as they were needed back under the Old Covenant. Men are needed to publicly speak the message of God, even if it means pointing out sins and man's drifting from God. People are still the same today. We may have new gadgets and the outward trappings may be different, but people still trust in physical strength, delight in wealth and luxury and forget God. There is nothing new about lying, killing, stealing, fornication, adultery. We still have oppression and injustice. Men would still rather hear a message of reassurance rather than one that pricks their conscious. And men still prefer to worship and sacrifice outward things, rather than to live right and do justice.

If we take the study of the Prophets seriously and take their message to heart, our lives can be greatly enriched as a people of God. This study will not satisfy the curiosity seeker who is trying to find references to automobiles, atomic bombs, airplanes, tire rationing, or rise of world dictators for our day, in the words of these Prophets. Our study will be divided between the **Major Prophets** and **Minor Prophets**.

**REVIEW QUESTIONS****True or False**

- 1. The use of the term “Major Prophets” mean that they are more important than the “Minor Prophets.”**
- 2. Most of the Prophets were self-appointed.**
- 3. Old Testament Prophets spoke as the Holy Spirit moved them to speak.**
- 4. Prophets were also called Watchmen.**
- 5. The Prophet’s message was mostly negative—against sin.**
- 6. The Prophets could be looked upon as reformers who disturbed men’s minds.**
- 7. The Prophets were continually added things to the Law of Moses.**
- 8. All Prophets wrote their message down for future study.**
- 9. The message of the Prophets was mostly futuristic in nature.**
- 10. The Prophets enable us to see how God looks upon His People and their attitudes and actions.**

## Lesson Two

***“Rebellion, Punishment, but Hope”***  
**(Isaiah 1-12)**

The Prophet Isaiah is probably one of the better known Prophets of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. Two other Prophets were at work during the time of Isaiah, but they (Amos and Hosea) were primarily sent to preach to the Northern Kingdom. Micah and Isaiah were primarily sent to Judah. The Book of Isaiah is one of the longest of Old Testament books. It is quoted in the New Testament more than any other Prophet (21 times). The 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter is referred to as “The Gospel of Isaiah.” It contains no language loftier, no truth more touching, and no news more needed than this message. Isaiah was related to one of the kings of Judah, was married to a prophetess, and had two children who were named by God. His work lasted for at least 40 years or more and it was during a very critical time for Judah. Isaiah lived and work during the reign of the following kings of Judah: **Uzzah** (790-739 BC), **Jotham** (751-736 BC), **Ahaz** (743-728 BC), and **Hezekiah** (728-695 BC). In this series of lessons we will only be surveying these five Major Prophet Books. There will be three lessons a peace on Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; there will be two lessons on Daniel, and one on Lamentations. While Isaiah contains a lot of judgments upon the Nations, as well as Israel and Judah, it also is a Book of constant reassurance and hope for those who will turn to God.

**BACKGROUND TO ISAIAH 1-12**

About the time that Isaiah would be coming on the scene as God’s Prophet to the people of Judah, both **Uzziah** (Judah) and **Jeroboam II** (Israel—Northern Kingdom) were closing out prosperous reigns. They had peace, plenty, and even extravagance to the leading citizens. Both borders were extended back to their original territories. Both had had time to enlarge their armies, while the surrounding nations were weak and posed little problem. However, when Tiglath Pileser (745 BC) came to the Assyrian throne, his dynamic leadership began to be felt all the way to Palestine. Menahem, King of Samaria (Northern Kingdom of Israel), paid a heavy tribute to buy him off. Later, Samaria and Syria (Damascus) teamed up to overthrow Jerusalem. By this time, Ahaz was King of Judah. Through weakness of faith, he called for Assyria for help. Tiglath Pileser ruthlessly overthrew Damascus in 732 BC. Shortly afterwards, most of Northern Israel fell, leaving primarily the capital city of Samaria. As a results, Ahaz became the vassal of Assyria with little independence left.

When Shalmanezzer succeeded Tiglath Pileser to the throne of Assyria (727 BC), he began a siege of Samaria and Sargon II completed the job in 722 BC. People in the Northern Kingdom were taken away as captives and scattered among other nations. Assyrian influence upon Judah came through King Ahaz and brought on terrible consequences religiously. The cult of Ashur was set up to be worshipped in Jerusalem. This brought about a corruption of the people to such an extent that two later great reformation efforts did not undo it. This finally led to the purging in the furnace of Babylonian captivity. Ahaz had mortgaged the hope of Judah! Isaiah had his work cut out for him!

## SURVEY OF ISAIAH 1-12

**Chapter One.** God's people had rebelled and are in a pitiful condition. God wants to reason with them and cleanse them and bring them back to Himself. Jerusalem had become a harlot and no longer was faithful. Lack of repentance will bring utter ruin for the unbelieving.

**Chapters Two-Four.** There is hope offered in the form of the coming Kingdom of Heaven (the Lord's House). But the rebellious will be reckoned with. Unjust leaders will be removed and God will stand in judgment upon them. The women of Judah will be punished also. But a remnant will be prepared for the future.

**Chapter Five.** God's people are compared to a vineyard that has gone bad. Woes are pronounced upon the ungodly. They will go into exile because of their lack of knowledge. Their destruction will come like the roaring of the sea.

**Chapter Six.** Isaiah records his vision of God and his call and commission. His task will not be easy, and very little hope is held out that Judah will repent.

**Chapter Seven.** Isaiah gives an historical account of Resin (Syria) and Pekah (Israel—Samaria) planning to conquer Judah and place a puppet king over her. Isaiah is sent to warn Ahaz to trust in God for his deliverance, but he turned to Assyria and became their vassal. Ahaz is told to ask for a sign, but he would not. So, a sign was given to him—a young maiden (virgin) will bear a son and his name will be called "Immanuel." Isaiah also told of the terrible trials that lay ahead for Judah if they will not trust in God.

**Chapter Eight.** Israel predicts the overthrow of Damascus and Samaria by the King of Assyria. This came about because of the alliance of Ahaz with Assyria. Neither were threats to Judah again after this. Isaiah's challenge to the people to turn to the Law and the testimony.

**Chapter Nine.** Hope again is given as Isaiah looks into the future when a child would be born who would be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace. God speaks against the arrogance of the people of Ephraim, and their punishment.

**Chapter Ten.** God will use the kings of Assyria to punish ungodly nations, but because of her haughtiness, she will be brought low. God's anger with Judah will come to an end, and it will then be directed towards Assyria.

**Chapter Eleven and Twelve.** The coming righteous reign of the Branch will bring all the scattered Jewish people back to Jerusalem where there will be peace. This probably has reference to the coming of the Messiah and the new Kingdom of Heaven (the church). Thanksgiving is offered to God for such a hope in the future. *"Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."*

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It seems that when things looked the darkest for Israel and Judah, that God gives the prophetic Messianic hopes to the people. He knew that the rebellious people would have to be punished, but that a remnant would need some kind of hope for the future to give them reason for returning and being faithful to God.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

#### True or False

- 1. Judah's poor leadership brought on much of their calamities as a nation, even though there were still some who strove to be faithful to God.
- 2. The way that the women of Judah were conducting themselves brought God's judgment upon them.
- 3. Judah was compared to a worthless grape vineyard.
- 4. Isaiah talked about people who called evil good, and good evil.
- 5. Isaiah actually saw the King, the Lord of hosts.
- 6. Isaiah was told to Prophesy until the cities of Judah were devastated.
- 7. Isaiah said that Judah displayed their sin like Sodom.
- 8. The Lord's house was to be established in the last days.
- 9. Isaiah had three children—all named by God.
- 10. Isaiah was married to a prophetess.

## Lesson Three

***“God’s Judgment upon the Nations, but  
Judah’s Deliverance”*****(Isaiah 13-39)**

Isaiah was used by God to try to help save Judah during some very crucial times. His work is broken down into three sections:

- 1) Chapters 1-6—during the last years of the reign of Uzziah and Jotham.
- 2) Chapters 7-14—During the weak reign of Ahaz.
- 3) Chapters 15-66—During the reign of Hezekiah.

We have seen that God raised up the Assyrian power to use as his punishing rod. But when God is finished with Assyria, he too will be punished for his haughtiness. Assyria humbles all the nations around Judah, and sends Egypt home after a bloody defeat. The only power that is able to stand at all before Assyria was Babylon—but that would be short-lived. However, Isaiah foretells of the coming rising power of Babylon to great heights about 100 years before it became a reality. Then, also foretold of her downfall by Cyrus, the Mede. He foretold of the exile of the Jews and told of the future glory of Judah and her return from exile.

**BACKGROUND TO ISAIAH 13-39**

With the overthrow of Damascus and finally Samaria in 721-722 BC, Babylon was able to revolt and successfully defeated Sargon in battle. The Palestinian countries (Judah, Edom, and Moab) quietly continued to pay tribute. In 711 BC, Ashdod revolted and tried to get Egypt, Judah, Edom, and Moab to join with him. Hezekiah was ruling in Judah and was tempted to go along with Ashdod. Isaiah warns the king against depending upon Egypt for deliverance. He stripped down naked and walked through the city in chains to illustrate the outcome if they joined in with the others. Nothing was done to Judah at this time, but later Sennacherib came to power in Assyria (705 BC). He had to put down revolts for the first several years of his reign. During this time Hezekiah was being pushed hard by his advisors to revolt with the rest. He evidently must have done so. The Pro-Egyptian party was too influential for him to deal with. Isaiah’s warning went unheeded.

During this time, Hezekiah was trying to purify the worship at Jerusalem of the Assyrian cultic idol. It was a thorough-going cleaning of house. He was successful outwardly in centering the worship of God in Jerusalem only again. Babylon fell under the onslaught of the Assyrians in 703 BC. The Egyptian army was later defeated in battle in an effort to help Ekron. It was now Judah’s time to be dealt with. Some 46 cities were taken. 200,000 inhabitants were driven from their homes as refugees. Jerusalem itself was besieged. Hezekiah realized too late his mistake of not listening to Isaiah. He sued for mercy by offering to become tributary to Assyria again. At first Sennacherib seems to have been satisfied, but later changed his mind. It looked very gloomy for Jerusalem. Through Isaiah’s influence, the King and leaders defied Sennacherib. God took a hand and killed 185,000 soldiers of Assyria. Sennacherib went home without any further efforts.

### SURVEY OF ISAIAH 13-39

**Chapters 13-14.** Babylon's future rise to glory and fame is foretold by Isaiah. But at the same time her shameful fall because of her pride. She will fall to the Medes (under Cyrus' leadership). This was foretold almost 200 years beforehand. It is believed that Babylon's fall is depicting in such a way to describe the fall of Satan originally. It also foretells of Babylon's ultimate destruction in which she will never be inhabited again. Philistia's fall is also described at the end of chapter 14.

**Chapters 15-20.** Two chapters (15-16) are used to describe the judgment upon Moab (Judah's neighbor). One chapter (17) is used to describe the fall of Damascus (along with Samaria or Ephraim). Three chapters (18-20) are used to send messages to Ethiopia and Egypt and a brief historical note that tells of their defeat by Assyria and carrying a lot of their people away captive.

**Chapters 21-24.** One chapter (21) is used to tell of the fall of Babylon, Edom, and Arabia to the Assyrians. One chapter (22) is used to envision the fall of the cities of Judah. One chapter (23) is used to describe the destruction of Tyre, but after 70 years to come back as a city as before. One chapter (24) is used to talk about the general destruction to occur during all of these wars.

**Chapters 25-27.** One chapter (25) gives praise to God for all His great and wonderful things that He has and will do. One chapter (26) records the song to be sung in Judah after the terrible things that will be done during this period of time. One chapter (27) tells of God punishment upon the evil of the nations and upon Judah's sins as well, but hope is held out for Judah.

**Chapters 28-35.** Two chapters (28-29) tells of the Fall of Samaria, as well as Judah's sinfulness and punishment. Two chapters (30-31) shows the futility of relying on Egypt. They need to turn to the Lord. Assyria will be punished. Two chapters (32-33) states that Salvation will be given to those who trust in God—Messianic. Two chapters (34-35) contrasts the punishment of the nations to the restoration of Israel.

**Chapters 36-39.** These chapters are an historical section in between two prophetic sections. See 2 Kings 18:13ff. This is an historical account that took place showing the fulfilling of what Isaiah had foretold concerning God's saving of Judah.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

God was trying to save as many of the Jewish people as possible. They were needed in order to fulfill God's promises of a "seed" of Abraham to come and bless all nations. Chapters 36-39 gives information on how God miraculously saved Judah from destruction by slaying 185,000 of the Assyrians. God stated through Isaiah: *"For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake."* (37:35). God was able to forgive or overlook some things that Hezekiah did—not so much for his benefit, but for God's benefit of upholding his promises that He had made to Abraham and David. The great lesson that should have been learned by the people of God was—great faith can struggle against many obvious factual situations and win the battle!

**REVIEW QUESTIONS****True or False**

- 1. God foretold of the fall of Babylon before Babylon became a ruling empire!**
- 2. Lucifer is the devil that is described in Isaiah 14.**
- 3. Moab had a reputation that they upheld in spite of God's pronounced doom.**
- 4. God said that he would cause the Egyptians to fight against one another.**
- 5. God said that both Egypt and the Ethiopians will be conquered by Assyria.**
- 6. Isaiah walked naked and barefooted as he prophesied among the people.**
- 7. Tyre was the merchandizer of the nations.**
- 8. God gave Judah a song to sing to help them get through the trials ahead for them.**
- 9. The spoiling of the nations would come from war, famine, and diseases.**
- 10. God foretold the destruction of Assyria by the Babylonians.**

### Lesson Four

## ***“The Coming of the Messianic King and Kingdom”*** **(Isaiah 40-66)**

The Assyrian struggle is over, but not in the absolute. But she will pose no threat of extinction for God’s people. Samaria had fallen and been carried away among the nations. Many of the cities of Judah had fallen and the people carried away captive by the Assyrians. But Jerusalem was miraculously spared by God. So, what does the future hold for Judah? Isaiah now turns to deal with the new threat in the future. God’s people will not truly turn to Him as they should. God will have to punish them and cleanse them of their idolatry—for this is the big battle now, Idolatry versus the True and Living God! Since they will not wholly turn from Idolatry, God will purge them by seventy years of captivity in Babylon. After that, the Jews will be allowed to return back to Jerusalem. Some of the greatest insights to the Nature of God are found in these chapters. But these chapters also contained many passages dealing with the Messianic King and Kingdom that was to come.

### SURVEY OF ISAIAH 40-48

If God allowed Israel and Judah to be overthrown, then how is He any greater than the Idol gods of the nations about them who were overthrown also? These chapters deal with this question and time and again the contrast is outstanding. Yes, Israel and Judah will be punished, but Judah will also be blessed. God will reveal Himself in a special way so that the nations about Judah will know that He is the only God that can be trusted. These chapters show the weakness of men and the folly of idolatry. God’s superiority is so obvious. Also, throughout these chapters he keeps talking about a man from the East that will come and bless His people. Finally, in chapter 45, he calls the man by name (Cyrus). Two hundred years before the event, God names the person who will deliver Judah and allow her to return to Jerusalem. It was God who allowed His people to be overthrown, not idols. And, He will be with them in their captivity and help them. Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel were special Prophets sent to them during this time to be an encouragement to them. There is a strong emphasis upon the gathering of the Jewish people from all nations so that they might be a nation again. Messianic passages are scattered throughout these chapters trying to give hope for the Jews at that time and when they are taken captive. God has not cast them off for ever. Israel will be restored again and the temple rebuilt. Gentiles will be impressed with the God of Israel and many turn to Him. Even though Judah will go into captivity by the Babylonians, He will judge Babylon and release His people through the work of Cyrus. Isaiah again reminds the Jews of the reasons why all these things will happen—their sinfulness and rebellion in not listening and trusting in God.

### SURVEY OF ISAIAH 49-55

In the previous chapters, God foretells of His servant, Cyrus, who will reign over the nations, but will help to restore Israel back to their homeland. This will be a sign to show the greatest of the true and living God! But God also has another servant that will come about 700

years later. He, too, will reign over the nations of the world, but in a spiritual sense. Both Jew and Gentile will be among that number who turn to and serve the living God. The Prophet now shows some facts about the Messiah to come. He reminds Israel of how He had delivered them from Egypt and that He can deliver them again just as well. So, put your trust in God like father Abraham. Trust in Him and be obedient to Him. Sing praises to your God who will be your deliverer. Visions of the Messiah now come to its greatest height in revelation (Isaiah 53). It is looked upon as the “Holy of Holies” of Old Testament Prophecy. He is presented as the humble suffering servant for the redemption of mankind. God is desirous of making a new covenant with Israel through His new Servant. God has spoken; the purpose of His Word will be accomplished.

### SURVEY OF ISAIAH 56-59

God wants to bless His people, but He is unable to do so because of their sins. They will go into captivity, but they must be faithful to God while in Babylon, so that they can return. The question is raised, “*Why do the righteous perish with the wicked?*” And the answer could be that they are delivered from a worse evil that was coming upon this unrepentant nation. Idolatry is strongly rebuked again. Hezekiah’s son, Manasseh, turned the people’s heart back to idolatry again. God warns that He will not be patient with them forever. Sins of the people are pointed out again and again in these chapters. Israel’s hypocrisy is strongly rebuked. Isaiah pointed out that their hearts were far from God, even though they observed His ordinances outwardly. He told them that their worship was vain and their fasting was worthless. After pointing out their long list of sins, he appeals to them to repent and turn back to God with their whole heart.

### SURVEY OF ISAIAH 60-66

This last section of Isaiah is showing the glories of the restored Jerusalem. The city will be rebuilt as well as the temple. Messianic insights are so intermingled with the restoration of Jerusalem that it is hard to make clear-cut distinctions. These chapters are to give hope and strength to the righteous to be faithful in the midst of all of these calamities. God shows his tenderness to the humble and penitent person, and the great blessings to come upon the new Zion. This section begins with a song of triumph upon glorified Zion, her exaltation, and that all nations will come to Zion. The Messiah is pictured as bringing great blessings to the people of God. A new name will be given to God’s new people and salvation will be proclaimed to the ends of the world. Edom is picked out to represent the enemies of God’s people and how God will deal with these enemies. Isaiah pictures the people offering thanksgiving to God, confessing their sins, and asking for God to show favor upon His people. As God had shown His great power in the past, they call upon Him to do it again. God explains the reason for their punishment and that He will not destroy them. The section ends with an emphasis upon rebuilding the Temple. But in reality God really dwells in the heart of the humble of heart.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Outward obedience to God was the thing of the day, but their hearts were still won to the idols of the nations around them. What a shame to have such ungodly leaders to lead the people away from God “in the name of religion.” Wrong thoughts about God keep men from coming to

repentance. False teachers are a curse to God's people and mankind in general. They have only "chaff" to offer, not the real "wheat" for the soul!

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

#### True or False

- \_\_\_ 1. Isaiah was telling Judah that they would go into Babylonian captivity about 100 years before the actual event.
- \_\_\_ 2. At the time that Isaiah was foretelling of the Babylonian captivity, the Babylonians were not a super nation.
- \_\_\_ 3. Jerusalem is used as a means of identifying the faithful people of God.
- \_\_\_ 4. God actually told the name of the Median King that would conquer Babylon 200 years later.
- \_\_\_ 5. False teachers do teach some things correct, and therefore do some good.
- \_\_\_ 6. God says that Jerusalem and the Temple will be rebuilt that the Babylonians destroyed.
- \_\_\_ 7. Isaiah indicates that idolatry is foolishness.
- \_\_\_ 8. Naming Cyrus ahead of time was to serve as a sign to the people that God was the only true God.
- \_\_\_ 9. Jesus actually quotes Isaiah 61:1-3 and states that it was being fulfilled in their midst.
- \_\_\_ 10. Isaiah 53 is referred to as the "Holy of Holies" of Old Testament Prophecy.

## Lesson Five

***“Preaching to Closed-Minded People”***  
**(Jeremiah 1, 36-45, 52)**

About 700 B.C., Isaiah warned the Jewish people that Babylon would come and take them captive; and in 625 B.C., Jeremiah came preaching the same message. But, he lived to see it come to pass. Jeremiah’s call was unusual and his work was not going to be pleasant at all. He was to condemn the corrupt lives and practices of the Jewish people and to warn them of the impending doom upon their nation. His message was unpopular and hated. It was a most discouraging job—to preach to a closed-minded people! And what made his work harder was the false prophets that contradicted his message. Obviously, the people had rather believe the prophets of blessings and greatness rather than the prophet of doom.

Jeremiah’s book contains his biography, some history, and prophecies. It can be easily broken down into the following:

- 1) Chapter 1—Jeremiah’s call and work.
- 2) Chapters 2-35—Prophecies to Jerusalem and Judah.
- 3) Chapters 36-45—Biographical accounts.
- 4) Chapters 46-51—Prophecies concerning foreign nations.
- 5) Chapter 52—History of the reign and fall of Zedekiah.

His book contains a record of the fall of Jerusalem, the Temple, and the death agony of the nation of Judah.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO JEREMIAH**

Manasseh, King of Judah, reigned for about 55 years (696-641 B.C.). He brought all kinds of idolatry back into the land—setting some altars in the house of the Lord. He made his son pass through the fire to Molech. He practiced soothsaying, divination, and sorcery. He shed much innocent blood and was indulged worse in evil than the nations they had driven out of the land. He was captured by the Assyrians and put in prison for a time. He was later released, repented of the evil he had done and wanted to change the people back to God.

One of the world powers during this time was Egypt. Assyria sacked and destroyed Thebes, a chief city of Upper Egypt (663 B.C.). The Prophet Nahum had given description of such and warned Assyria with the same. Twelve years later, the Egyptians revolted and gain their independence. Assyria was having problems with the tribes north of her. This may have been the reason why Manasseh was allowed to go back home—to serve as a buffer between her and Egypt. Babylon and Elam had revolted and were put down again (648-645 B.C.). Many of the people were deported to Samaria. But one nation after another began again to gain their independence: Egypt, Lydia, Media, and Babylon (626 B.C.).

Amon succeeded his father (Manasseh) as king and reigned for two years (641-639 B.C.) and returned to the previous evil of his father. He was assassinated. Josiah was crowned king at

the age of 8 (639 B.C.). At age 16, he earnestly sought the Lord (631 B.C.). At about the age of 25-26 (2 Kings 22:1-23:30; 2 Chronicles 34:1-35:27), he started a great restoration movement in Jerusalem. His reforms were great, but not lasting. Josiah was sincere in his efforts, but the people were not. Josiah died in battle against Pharaoh Neccho of Egypt.

### SURVEY OF JEREMIAH CHAPTER ONE

Jeremiah's call came when Josiah was reigning, and he prophesied for about 40 years. He lived and worked under the following kings of Judah: Jehoahaz (609 B.C.); Jehoiakim (609-598 B.C.); Jehoiachin (598-597 B.C.); and Zedekiah (597-587 B.C.). Jeremiah was told that the people would reject his teachings and be violently against him, but that God would be with him.

### SURVEY OF JEREMIAH CHAPTERS 36-45

Jerusalem fell during the reign of Jehoiakim (606 B.C.), and many were carried away captive to Babylon. Jehoiachin was placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, but later rebelled and was overthrown in 597 B.C.) Zedekiah was then placed on the throne. Before the fall, God gave Jeremiah a message to be read to the King and princes...but it was cut up and burned. Later, Jeremiah was imprisoned where he stayed until Jerusalem fell a third time (586 B.C.). The Babylonians treated Jeremiah kindly and allowed him to live where he desired. Some time later, a group of people rebelled and had to flee to Egypt—taking Jeremiah with them. He foretells of the Babylonians conquering of Egypt and assured the safety of only a remnant of the Jews that went into Egypt. The rest would be slain because of their sins.

### SURVEY OF JEREMIAH CHAPTER 52

This chapter primarily deals with the reign of Zedekiah, the fall of Jerusalem, and much of the details of the city's destruction. Zedekiah's sons were slain in front of him and he was blinded, put in prison where he died. The chapter ends with the release of Jehoiachin from prison in Babylon, but remained in the city where he was provided for by the king of Babylon.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Jeremiah lived at a very crucial time for the Jewish people. The Northern Kingdom had fallen (Samaria). Many of the cities of Judah had been ravished. Now Jerusalem itself is taken and destroyed, along with the temple. Thousands were taken to Babylon as captives. They were warned time and again, but would not listen. God's patience had come to an end with such a rebellious people.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

#### True or False

1. Jerusalem was overthrown three different times by the Babylonians before its final destruction.
2. Jeremiah was forced to go into Egypt against his will.
3. All the Jews that went down into Egypt would die.

- \_\_\_ **4. Jeremiah came from a line of priests.**
- \_\_\_ **5. King Josiah, who lived at the same time of Jeremiah, tried to bring about great reforms among the people.**
- \_\_\_ **6. His efforts were successful for a long time.**
- \_\_\_ **7. Babylonians and Elamites were deported to Samaria.**
- \_\_\_ **8. Jeremiah was imprisoned during the reign of Jehoiakim.**
- \_\_\_ **9. Jehoiachin was released from prison in Babylon and show respect as a king under the king of Babylon.**
- \_\_\_ **10. King Zedekiah's sons were slain in front of him and then blinded.**

## Lesson Six

***“Prophecies to Jerusalem and Judah”***  
**(Jeremiah 2-35)**

This section has many prophecies to both Jerusalem and Judah or Israel in general. But it also has some historical events in the life of Jeremiah that can be identified with the historical events in the Kings and Chronicles. These prophecies are not necessarily in historical sequence, but sufficient information has been given to tie the prophecies in with historical events. We will be looking at this section of Jeremiah in groups of chapters.

**SURVEY OF JEREMIAH 2-6**

Jeremiah begins by quoting God as He asked the leaders of Judah a serious question.... *“What sin has been found in Me that you go away from Me?”* So much of this section of the book deals with the sins of Judah that has led to their captivity. God pleads with them and their children and grandchildren...why? What evil have I done to you? No nation have changed their gods, but Judah has! Why? Judah have committed two evils: (1) They have forsaken the fountain of living waters; and (2) Have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Your own wicked and evil will correct and reprove you. You have called a stock your father and a stone has brought you forth. When trouble comes, go to them for help and see if you get any. You have been disciplined, but to no value. You will be ashamed of Egypt just like you were of Assyria when the time comes. You have not turned to me with your whole heart, but only feignly. He calls on His backsliding children to repent and come back before it is too late. Wickedness is found in your midst, Prophets prophesy falsely, and priests bear rule by their means—and the people love to have it that way. They no longer are able to hear or see the truth, and God’s Word is a reproach to you. Seek the Old Paths, the good way, and walk in that way.

**SURVEY OF JEREMIAH 7-10**

Jeremiah is sent by God to call the people to repentance. He calls upon them to turn from their lying words, stealing, murder, adultery, swearing falsely, burning incense unto Baal, walking after other gods. If you will not repent, I will cast you out like I did Ephraim (Samaria). Obey my voice and I will be your God, but you will not listen nor obey. You have slidden back with a continual backsliding. The wise men, the prophets, and the priests—all deal falsely. God pleads with them: ***“Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep over you night and day.”*** The Lord is the true God, to whom men must turn and not to idols. It is so obvious that man needs God’s directions for his life.

**SURVEY OF JEREMIAH 11-15**

God reminds them of the Covenant that He made with them...they swore to obey it, but they have turned from it in disobedience. The men in Jeremiah’s hometown plotted to kill him, but God delivered him out of their hands, and promised to punish them soon. Jeremiah brings up

the age-old question of *“Why do the wicked prosper?”* He is told to look at the day of slaughter or judgment. They shall reap what they have sown. God used an illustration of a girdle with Jeremiah that help him to see the worthlessness of sinful Judah. Judah shall be carried away captive because of the greatness of their sins and because they have forgotten their God and trusted in falsehoods. When they attempt worship, I will not hear nor accept it. Their Prophets prophesy lies in God’s name and they shall be consumed by sword and famine. Jeremiah expresses for the people an acknowledgement of their wickedness. God said that though Moses or Samuel stood before Him, he would not change his mind about the punishment of this wicked people. He said that the people would be scattered among all the nations because of idolatry. Jeremiah reminds the Lord of his faithfulness and not to forget him. The Lord promises that He will take care of him.

### SURVEY OF JEREMIAH 16-20

Jeremiah gives signs of the coming captivity. And states the reason for it...they have walked after other gods and forsaken God and have not kept His law. You have done worse than your fathers. Their iniquities will be recompensed. A man is cursed if he puts his trust in men, but blessed if he puts his trust in God. Their sin of not hallowing the Sabbath will bring its due punishment. God reminds them that if they will repent he will save them. Plots are devised against the life of Jeremiah again, but it fails because of God’s care. God’s pronouncement upon the city: *“Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.”* Pashur tries to get Jeremiah to quit speaking about these terrible things. God pronounces a curse upon him...and for the first time mentions that Babylon is the one who will take them captive. Jeremiah struggled with trying not to speak God’s message, but it burned in his heart to be spoken.

### SURVEY OF JEREMIAH 21-35

Jeremiah is asked by King Zedekiah if the Babylonians will be successful in overthrowing the city. God’s message to him was—if Nebuchadnezzar doesn’t do it, I personally will do it! You will go into captivity. Oh, if only you had been obedient, how different it would have been! Even though Israel has and will be scattered among the Nations, a remnant will be called back after a while. False prophets that say the opposite of this God hates and will punish. These are prophets of deceit, they speak of visions of their own heart, God has not sent them, so don’t believe their lies. God will bless the righteous, but punish the wicked. There will be seventy years of captivity before the return. Babylon will then be punished. Jeremiah is accused of speaking against the city and Temple, and should die. He escapes death barely, but Urijah doesn’t. Jeremiah told the people to surrender to the Babylonians and live, but if they fight, they will die. Those that come under the yoke of the Babylonians will live and later return to Jerusalem. Hananiah opposes Jeremiah and is condemned by God—you will die this year! Jeremiah sends a letter of encouragement to those already in captivity. Take a wife, build your house, and seek the peace of your location. You will be there for 70 years and then you will be allowed to return. The rejoicing described upon their return. God promises a New Covenant to be

made with the people. Jeremiah buys a field to show all that there will be a return. Jerusalem will be destroyed, but restored. A glorious return promised to the captives. The promise of the “Branch of righteousness” to reign on David’s throne. Jeremiah’s warning to Zedekiah to expect to be captured and go into captivity.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Most of these prophecies are dealing with messages to the rulers and leaders so that they will change their ways and submit to captivity rather than fight and be destroyed. The city and Temple could have been saved if they had listened to the Prophets from God. But they preferred to listen to the false prophets and be lost.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

#### True or False

1. The people were assured that there would still be a king to sit on David’s throne in the future.
2. Hananiah, a false prophet, was told he would die that year because of his false teaching.
3. Jeremiah bought a field in Judah because he believed that Judah would be revived again.
4. Jeremiah’s job was made much harder because of the false prophets and their false messages.
5. God states through Jeremiah that Babylon will be the one to take them captive.
6. Jeremiah deals with the age-old question of why do the righteous suffer.
7. God intended that the Jews be scattered throughout the nations.
8. God told the people that His Word had become a reproach to them.
9. The efforts of King Josiah to reform and clean out idolatry was mostly outward, the people’s heart was not really in it.
10. Zedekiah, king of Judah, died a natural death in Babylon.

## Lesson Seven

***“Prophecies to the Nations”***  
**(Jeremiah 46-51)**

While Jeremiah’s primary work was to speak to Judah and their rulers about the coming fall of the city of Jerusalem; yet, other nations were also involved during this time in trying to deal with the armies of the Babylonians. Jeremiah made it clear in his messages to these other nations around Judah that their punishment for sin was also coming and that God was using the Babylonians as a means of that judgment. This section of Jeremiah’s book describes the fall of nation after nation to the Babylonians.

**EGYPT.** She will be greatly humbled by Nebuchadnezzar. Noph shall be left desolate and waste. The leading men in Judah were wanting to depend upon Egypt to help ward off the army of Nebuchadnezzar from Jerusalem. Jeremiah, as well as other prophets, said that Egypt is like a broken reed—undependable when the need is there. God will punish the multitude of No, the Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods. Jeremiah offers comfort to the Jews about their eventual return to Jerusalem.

**PHILISTINES.** The major cities will be taken—Gaza and Ashkelon will both be cut off. They will be overthrown by Egypt.

**MOAB.** Nebo will be spoiled and Misgab will be confounded and dismayed. They trusted in their works and in their treasures, but they will be taken in captivity. Their cities will be laid waste. Moab’s calamity is near to come. Moab will be punished for her pride, loftiness, arrogance, and haughtiness of heart.

**AMMONITES.** Ammon will be a desolate heap; their kings go into captivity, and their priests and princes as well. But God will allow them to return again to their land.

**EDOM.** Esau will be made bare, his seed will be spoiled, their cities to become desolate and a waste. Their overthrow will be like Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities of the plains.

**DAMASCUS.** This was a city that God seems to have taken a special joy in. But it will fall into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. The palaces of Benhadad will be destroyed.

**KEDAR and HAZOR.** Nebuchadnezzar will smite both of them. You had better flee while you have time. Your possessions will be confiscated by the King of Babylon.

**BABYLON.** Now, Jeremiah turns to expressed God’s plans for Babylon. Her idols will be confounded and broken into pieces. A great host from the North will come upon the city and overtake it. Jeremiah enlarges on the concept of the armies that would come against Babylon—“an assembly of great nations from the north country.” The Chaldeans shall be spoiled. Babylon

will be punished just like Assyria was punished. God also compares the ultimate destruction of Babylon liken unto Sodom and Gomorrah. Babylon had been a golden cup in the Lord's hand that made all the earth drunken. But her fall will come and it will be at the hands of the kings of the Medes. Jeremiah states that every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon in order to make the land of Babylon a desolation with habitants. Jeremiah continually emphasizes that God will do judgment upon Babylon's graven images. Jeremiah gave this message about Babylon to Seraiah who went into captivity with Zedekiah. He told Seraiah, when you come into Babylon, then read this pronouncement against Babylon. Then, bind a stone to this scroll and cast it into the Euphrates, and say: "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary."

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

While God had sent prophets a long time before some of these events took place, it was God's purpose through Jeremiah to drive home and reaffirm what God had foretold many years ago. These prophecies were close to happening, within a few years at most. Another purpose for Jeremiah's work was to try to overcome the false prophets' lies that were misleading the people. Unfortunately, the people had rather heard good things, not the bad things. Because the people would not listen, needless bloodshed and destruction came upon the cities of Judah, its walled cities, and Jerusalem itself.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or false

1. God's justice was carried out upon many nations, not just Judah.
2. Jerusalem was left in desolation like other major cities in the area around Judah.
3. Babylon's destruction was to eventually be like Sodom and Gomorrah.
4. The term "Chaldeans" is used with reference to Babylon.
5. Damascus, as a city, was a special joy to God.
6. Egypt was to be punished by Nebuchadnezzar just like other countries.
7. The Philistines were to be punished by the Egyptians.

## Lesson Eight

***“Lamenting the Fall of Zion”***  
**(Lamentations)**

The name “Lamentations” comes from the Latin version of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century. The writer is nowhere stated, but it is strongly believed to have been Jeremiah. The book was probably written after the final overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in about 586 B.C. Many captives were again taken to Babylon and the city was laid waste. Jeremiah had foretold of Jerusalem’s fall, but when it happened, it must have had an impact upon his heart and life.

For God to have allowed the city and the Temple to be destroyed must have been a hard thing for the people to believe. Jerusalem and the Temple had stood for a long time. They were widely known throughout the world. For these to be destroyed, there must have been great justification. Great weeping was called for on the part of the people.

**SURVEY OF LAMENTATIONS**

The writer begins with a contrast of how full of people the city use to be and now it sit in solitude like a widow. Judah has gone into captivity because of her great sins. She is dwelling among the heathen and finds no rest. Because she had grievously sinned, she was removed. All that previously honored her, now despise her because they have seen her nakedness. The Lord of Heaven has trodden the virgin (Jerusalem) as in a winepress. There is great weeping and none to comfort.

God has not remembered his “footstool” in the day of His anger—He has shown no pity. He has violently taken away his tabernacle as if it were a garden. He has caused the solemn feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion. The Altar of sacrifice has been cut off. Her king and princes are among the Gentiles and the Law is no more. The virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground. All that pass by and see clap their hands, hiss, and way their head at the daughter of Jerusalem. They say, “Is this the city that men call ‘The perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?’” Let tears run down like a river day and night over her fall and desolation.

Be it know, however, it is the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed. It is because of His compassion that we still exist. They are new every morning—great is His faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, I will hope in Him. The writer then adds, “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.” He was sure that the Lord had not cast them off forever. God does not even afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.

The punishment of the iniquity of Jerusalem is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom that was overthrown in a moment. The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem—but he did! Judah’s sins are being justly punished. The writer ends with a

description of the suffering of the captives. “The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us, that we have sinned!” He then extols the greatness of God—“Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation.” He calls upon God not to forget them, and let them see the days of old again.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Sin brings a terrible harvest, even though it may be long in coming. The Jewish people tried God’s patience over and over until finally He could no longer justly tolerate their rebellious attitudes and actions. How greatly a righteous nation of people were needed to influence the world of their day. They had had an impact for good for a while, but had long lost it because of their ungodliness. No matter how much it must have grieved the heart of God to bring such a punishment, it had to be done.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

#### True or False

1. God intended for Israel to be a light to the nations around them.
2. Israel and Judah’s sins required punishment that was appropriate.
3. The writer points out that it was because of God’s compassion and mercy that Israel still existed.
4. The writer says that Jerusalem’s punishment was greater than that of Sodom’s.
5. God does not afflict people willingly.
6. Jerusalem (Judah) is referred to as the “footstool” of God.
7. Jerusalem is compared to a widow—lonely, with no one around.
8. Man should hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

## Lesson Nine

# ***“The Call of a Watchman for Israel”*** **(Ezekiel 1-3)**

There were two outstanding “writing” Prophets who were carried into Captivity to Babylon—Ezekiel and Daniel. The last five lessons in this series will be looking at these two Books of Prophecy. Daniel was primarily used by God to speak to the rulers of Babylon and the Medo-Persian empires, while Ezekiel worked with the captives themselves.

The Book of Ezekiel is a very unusual book. It is written more in the form of visions than outright prophecies. It deals more in detail of God’s hand of destruction upon Israel and other nations. The book very vividly portrays God in His wrath and love as he describes Israel’s sin, her punishment, and her restoration.

### BACKGROUND TO THE BOOK

The Book is arranged chronologically. He dates his visions from beginning to end by the year, month, and day. Visions in between dates are considered to be of the same date as the previous dating. He began his visions in 592 B.C. and ended them in 572 B.C. 2 Kings 24 serves as a historical starting point leading up to the work of Ezekiel. There were three different overthrows of Judah:

- 1) 606 B.C.—The first carrying away of some of the people by Nebuchadnezzar. It is believed that Daniel was in this first carrying away.
- 2) 597 B.C.—The second carrying away of the majority of people (10,000). Ezekiel was in this group that was taken to Babylon. Five years later, in Babylon, he was called by God to go speak to the captives among whom he lived.
- 3) 586 B.C.—Final overthrow of Jerusalem.

The first half of his Book leads up to the destruction of Jerusalem (586 B.C.), and the second half deals mostly with visions, encouragements, and prophesies of the restoration of Israel.

### CHALLENGES THAT EZEKIEL FACED

Even though many of the people had been carried into Babylon from the first two overthrows of Jerusalem, the people were still optimistic about Jerusalem remaining. Jeremiah had told them the city would fall and be destroyed, but they didn’t want to believe it. Those left in Jerusalem may have looked upon themselves as the “righteous ones” who were deserving to be spared (Ezekiel 11:15; 33:24). False prophets kept their hopes alive, in Jerusalem as well as in Babylon. There was still a king (Zedekiah), and the City and Temple were still standing—so there was hope!

It was Ezekiel’s job to destroy this hope among the captives in Babylon. He had to convince them that God’s wrath was still to come upon the City and the Temple and all in it. They had to realize that they were being punished for their abominations and that God has

forsaken His Holy Temple. And they must realize that their captivity will be for seventy years so they could be cleansed of their iniquities (idolatry). They had to see that when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed that all was lost (Ezekiel 33:10; 37:11). When despair hit them, then they were ready to hear a message of hope of restoration.

### THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

He was a son of Buzi, a priest. The reforms of Josiah and the preaching of Jeremiah had gone before him. He knew very well the religious activities of the priests. He had witnessed the first overthrow of Jerusalem and people being carried into captivity. He found himself among the great numbers made captive in the second overthrow. For five years he lived among the captives in Babylon. He had been married, but his wife had died suddenly the year of the siege of Jerusalem. His unusual call by God to be a Prophet to the Captives came after five years in captivity and about six years before the final destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (586 B.C.). His over-all purpose was to help Israel to know that Jehovah is God. This phrase occurs some 62 times in the book. His efforts to get the people to listen to his message were most unusual—he acted out much of his messages. He was called to be a “watchman” for Israel.

### SURVEY OF EZEKIEL 1-3

At the call of Ezekiel, he saw some very unusual things that got his attention (1:1-28). He fell on his face in awe of what he was witnessing, and then a voice spoke to him. God was calling him to speak to the captives who were a rebellious people. They are stubborn and obstinate children. He was told to speak to them whether they were willing to listen or not, so they can know that there is a prophet among them. Symbolically, Ezekiel was asked to eat the scroll that was given to him which indicated that his message was coming from God. He stated that the scroll was sweet as honey in his mouth. God defined unto him what the job of a watchman was. He was to warn the wicked and encourage the righteous so that they will know the will of the Lord. If they will listen or not, you can know that your job will be done correctly.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Ezekiel’s Book is a real challenge to grasp at times, but in the main it is obvious what he is trying to help the people to understand about their condition, the truth about the fall of the City and Temple, and their ultimate restoration as a people. The next two lessons will survey the remaining chapters of Ezekiel.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

#### True or False

1. Ezekiel was told by God at his call that the people to whom he was to speak would not listen to him, but he was still to speak his message.
2. Ezekiel had been married, but had lost his wife in the siege of Jerusalem.
3. The job of a watchman is to warn of impending dangers to the city.
4. Ezekiel was in the first group of captives to be taken to Babylon from Jerusalem.

- \_\_\_ **5. Ezekiel and Daniel were both Prophets living in Babylon.**
- \_\_\_ **6. Ezekiel's work was primarily with the rulers of Babylon.**
- \_\_\_ **7. Ezekiel's job was to convince the people that Jerusalem was not going to be destroyed.**
- \_\_\_ **8. Jerusalem was destroyed about 6 years after Ezekiel was called to be a Prophet to Israel.**
- \_\_\_ **9. Ezekiel's call came in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of King Jehoiachin.**
- \_\_\_ **10. Ezekiel was a priest, the son of Buzi.**

## Lesson Ten

***“Jerusalem’s Destruction Vividly Described”***  
**(Ezekiel 4-24)**

Teaching people with visual aids is certainly not new—Ezekiel was a master at doing such (with God’s instructions). He could at least get their attention briefly, even if they would not believe his message. Then, when what he enacted came to pass, they would easily remember what Ezekiel had portrayed before their eyes. The captives in Babylon had to come to the realization that the City and the Temple are going to be destroyed before they were ready to accept their captivity because of their sins. As long as they had hopes of being released and going back home, they would not prepare themselves as they should for the long stay in Babylon. Jeremiah wrote a letter to them telling them to get married, build houses, and be at peace with the people you are to live among because you are going to be there for a long time. So, the first thing that he begins with is the sure destruction of Jerusalem.

**SURVEY OF EZEKIEL 4-24**

**Chapters 4-5.** Ezekiel was to draw out and act out a siege of Jerusalem to let the people know that it was going to be destroyed. He was to lie on his left side to indicate the years of the iniquity of Israel (390 days) and then on his right side for Judah (40 days). Jerusalem was going to fall because of their iniquities. The people will be destroyed by plagues, famine, the sword, and the rest scatter to the wind because they had defiled God’s Sanctuary with their detestable idols and abominations.

**Chapters 6-10.** Their idolatrous worship is pointed out and denounced. The time had come for the punishment of the wicked. Ezekiel was carried in a vision to Jerusalem to see first-hand the abominations and profaning of the Temple of God. Then, he sees a vision of the slaughtering of the people. God told Ezekiel that the iniquity of Israel and Judah was very, very great. And then he saw the glory of God departing from the Temple.

**Chapters 11-15.** Ezekiel now is allowed to see the rulers of the people and how wicked and evil they had become. Their destruction was assured and Ezekiel cries “Alas, Lord God! Will You bring the remnant of Israel to a complete end?” God promises him that God will bring back a remnant to possess the land again. He next has Ezekiel to prepare himself to go into exile and let the people in Jerusalem see you do so. When they ask what you are doing, explain that they will soon go into exile—those who escape death! False prophets are warned: “Woe to the foolish prophets who are following their own spirit and have seen nothing.” He next turns to the idolatrous elders and condemns them for misleading the people as well. He warns them to repent and turn from their idols and abominations. Then Ezekiel is given a message against the City of Jerusalem. If a country is unfaithful to Me and I stretch out My hand against it, even if Noah, Daniel, or Job were in its midst, they could only deliver themselves. Jerusalem is compared to a useless vine—good for nothing.

**Chapters 16-19.** God recounts to Israel her poor beginnings and how God chose her to be His own, beautified her before the nations, and she became strong and desirous. You trusted in your beauty and played the harlot and committed all kinds of abominations. You preferred strangers than your own husband. So, God said He would gather all her lovers and cause them to go against her and help to destroy her. However, God will remember His covenant and bring them back from captivity. Ezekiel tells of the coming rebellion of Zedekiah, who had sworn a covenant to be in subjection, but sent to Egypt for help to rebel. He will be overthrown and brought as a captive to Babylon. Ezekiel points out that God's punishment is just. That each is punished for his own sins. He next takes up a lamentation for the Princes of Israel.

**Chapters 20-24.** Ezekiel rehearses before the elders of Israel in captivity how God had dealt with Israel in the past and had not destroyed them as a people because of their sins. And so it will be even now, a remnant will be brought back to resettle Jerusalem. Ezekiel is told to groan and grieve before the people, so that when they ask why, you can say: "because of the news that is coming..." The fall of Jerusalem is under consideration. God told Ezekiel to make know all the abominations of the City. God has Ezekiel to envision two daughters (Jerusalem & Samaria) who become harlots and deserve to be punished for their sins. He gives a listing of their sins. Ezekiel is now told to speak to the rebellious house that Jerusalem is now being besieged (that very day). God has spoken it, Jerusalem will be punished. The death of Ezekiel's wife was to be used as a means to impress Israel of what was happening. "Behold, I am about to profane My sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes and the delight of your soul; and your sons and your daughters whom you have left behind will fall by the sword."

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

What a prophet, what illustrations, what determination on God's part that the people will know for sure why all of these things were happening to them. The punishment was not only for the father's sins, but for their sins as well. **You are guilty**—not just your fathers! Strong repentance is called for. The cleansing process is underway to cleanse Judah of idolatry.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

#### True or False

- \_\_\_ 1. These people were having a hard time understanding that they were guilty of doing wrong.
- \_\_\_ 2. Ezekiel's wife died the day that Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem.
- \_\_\_ 3. God recounts how that He had been patient with the people in the past because of their sins and had not utterly destroyed them.
- \_\_\_ 4. Jerusalem and Samaria are pictured as two daughters of a common mother that had turned to harlotry.
- \_\_\_ 5. Ezekiel foretold that Zedekiah, king of Judah, would be taken captive and brought to Babylon.
- \_\_\_ 6. Ezekiel was taken in a vision to Jerusalem to see first-hand all the abominations being done in the Temple.
- \_\_\_ 7. The iniquities of Samaria were longer in terms of time than the iniquities of Judah.

- \_\_\_ **8. Jeremiah had written a letter to the captives in Babylon to help them realize they would not be released for a long time.**
- \_\_\_ **9. Ezekiel saw the glory of God departing from the Temple.**
- \_\_\_ **10. The Sabbaths were given to Israel as a sign between them and God.**

## Lesson Eleven

***“Judgment upon the Nations, but Restoration for Judah” (Ezekiel 25-48)***

With Judah and other countries around her rebelling again, Nebuchadnezzar had no choice but to come and stop their foolishness. The prophecies from Chapters 25-32 are dealing with those Nations around Judah that will be punished after Judah's fall. The siege was set against Jerusalem at this time, and it was just a matter of time before her fall. It was a terrible time for the Jewish people who were left in Jerusalem. The siege became so bad that mothers literally ate the flesh of their babies. When it was obvious that the city would fall, the King and others with him fled, but were overtaken by the Babylonians. The King's sons were slain in front of him and he was blinded and then led to Babylon a captive where he would die a natural death.

**SURVEY OF EZEKIEL 25-32**

**Judgment against Ammon.** They too will be punished severely because they gloated and rejoiced over the sinfulness of Judah and of their calamities. God said that He would give them to be the spoil of the nations.

**Judgment against Moab.** Moab, along with Ammon, would be given to the sons of the East. The sons of Ammon will not be remembered among the nations, and Moab will know that Jehovah is Lord.

**Judgment against Edom.** Edom had taking vengeance upon the Jews as they were fleeing and incurred grievous guilt before God. Edom will have both man and beast cut off them the land so that it will become waste.

**Judgment against Philistia.** They had also taking vengeance with scorn. God will execute great vengeance upon them.

**Judgment against Tyre.** The people of Tyre thought that they could now occupy the land of Israel. But God had other plans for her. He would send Nebuchadnezzar against her. He will make her like a bare rock. There will be great lamentation over her. Almost three chapters are used to describe in detail Tyre's sins and her fall. In Chapter 28, as with the Isaiah 13-14, the description of Tyre and Babylon seem to be a re-enactment of the fall of Satan.

**Judgment against Sidon.** Ezekiel was to let them know that God's face was against them. When He gets through with their punishment, they will know that He is Lord. When God re-gathers the people of Israel back in their land, then the nations will know that He is Lord.

**Judgment against Egypt.** Because of Egypt's arrogance, God will bring them low. Their land will become desolate and waste from Migdol to Syene and even to the border of Ethiopia. And God will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. But in forty years they will be allowed to return to their land. Egypt will become an inferior nation from then on and not be able to rule

over other nations again. After Nebuchadnezzar ends with the overthrow of Tyre, then the spoils of Egypt will become the wages for his army. All who joined in with Egypt to rebel against Babylon will be defeated (Ethiopia, Put, Lud, Arabia, and Libya). God calls for Ezekiel to lament over the fall of Egypt, for they will fall before the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. He then speaks to the Pharaoh of Egypt and compares him to Assyria. Assyria was blessed by God, became a beautiful tree among nations. Even the trees of Eden, which were in the garden of God, were jealous of it. But Assyria was given over to the nations around which cut her to the ground, and she is no more. So shall it also be with Egypt! Four chapters are used to describe the fall of Egypt to the Babylonians, thus assuring the captives in Babylon that there is no hope left for their quick return to Judah.

### SURVEY OF EZEKIEL 33-48

Ezekiel is again reminded of the work of the “watchman” and he has done his work well. Word comes to him that Jerusalem had fallen (12<sup>th</sup> year of their exile (586 B.C.). Ezekiel prophesies against the Shepherds of Israel, who were really not Shepherds but leaches. God says that he will call his sheep back to Judean pastureland where they will have a righteous shepherd that cares for them. Ezekiel is called upon to prophesy against Mount Seir that their cities were to be laid waste like the other nations around them. Israel will be blessed and restored for the sake of God’s Name among the nations. They will be cleansed from their iniquities and be made a righteous people again. Two visions are given to Ezekiel to emphasize the return of Israel: (1) The Valley of Dry Bones (37:1-3, 11-14) and (2) The Two Sticks Tied Together (37:20-23). Ezekiel gives further prophecy about Gog and future invasions of Israel. From Chapter 40-44, an effort is made to envision the rebuilding of the Temple and the glory of the Lord filling it. Also, there will be a re-establishing of the priesthood and the offerings. There will be (figuratively) a re-divisioning of the land among the 12 tribes. The city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt and renewed and given a new name: “The Lord is there.”

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

When the captives were able to see clearly the destruction of the Temple, and the nations around Judah were all conquered, their hope was completely squashed. This was God’s way of bringing them to repentance, so that they could live again as a people of God. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but sometimes the punishment must come. It came not only on the people of God, but also the Gentile nations around Judah. Ezekiel was now able to give them hope from God.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

#### True or False

1. The Valley of Dry Bones was a way of envisioning the return of the captives to Jerusalem in the future.
2. The final overthrow of Jerusalem came in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of their exile.
3. Ezekiel pictures the Altar for sacrifices and offerings to be begun again in Jerusalem.
4. The glory of God would no longer filled the New Temple when built.

- \_\_\_ **5. God brought Israel back again for His Name's sake.**
- \_\_\_ **6. Word of Jerusalem's capture by the Babylonians came to Ezekiel in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of their exile.**
- \_\_\_ **7. Babylon was able to finally subjugate and/or destroy all the nations around Judah that had rebelled against him.**
- \_\_\_ **8. Tyre was to be left like a bare rock.**
- \_\_\_ **9. The scattered Egyptians would be allowed to return after 40 years of captivity.**
- \_\_\_ **10. Judah had to stay for 70 years in captivity.**

## Lesson Twelve

***“Faithfulness in Adversity”***  
**(Daniel 1-6)**

Almost a hundred years (701-606 B.C.) before the events began to happen in the book of Daniel, Isaiah foretold of the coming captivity of Judah to the Babylonians, even pointing out that some of King Hezekiah’s descendants would become eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon (2 Kings 20:12-19). Later, after the captivity had begun (605 B.C.), Jeremiah told the people that the captivity would be for a period of 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11-12). This was to be a period of purging from the filthiness of the sinful Jewish Nation. Once cleansed, purified, they would be allowed to return to their homeland (Jeremiah 46:27-28). The captivity can be characterized in the following way:

- 1) **1<sup>st</sup> period (606-586 B.C.)**
  - a) False hopes.
  - b) Temple still standing.
  - c) “Things would change for the better.”
  - d) They would get to go back home soon.
  - e) Jeremiah sent a letter warning them not to expect it (Jeremiah 29:1-9). Ezekiel also tried to help the people see the truth (Ezekiel 17:11-24).
- 2) **2<sup>nd</sup> period (586-536 B.C.)**
  - a) Years of hopelessness.
  - b) Temple destroyed.
  - c) God has forsaken them.
  - d) Great Despair (Psalm 137).
  - e) Ezekiel is sent to give hope.
- 3) **3<sup>rd</sup> period (536 BC onward)**
  - a) Revived hopefulness.
  - b) Opportunity to return.
  - c) God is faithful—Greater things ahead.
  - d) Some returned, others stayed in Babylon.

The book of Daniel covers a period from 605-533 B.C. It is believed that Daniel could have been 90 years old when he finished writing this book by inspiration of God. The book is written in the Hebrew language mostly, with a few sections in the Aramaic (Chaldean) language. If a primary purpose was to be suggested for this book, it would be to show the superiority of the God of heaven over idol gods, especially of Babylon.

**SURVEY OF DANIEL 1-6**

This first section of Daniel is historical in nature, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> section (7-12) is foretelling of future events more so than historical. We will briefly survey the first six chapters in this lesson.

**Chapter One.** These events took place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the reign of Jehoiakim, King of Judah (604 B.C.). Daniel and three other young men who were taken captive in the first overthrow of Jerusalem were put to a test. They refused to eat what the king provided for them, but desired to eat what they knew was correct for them. They were allowed and all went well. King Nebuchadnezzar found Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah in matters of wisdom and understanding far superior to the other people.

**Chapter Two.** These events took place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (603 B.C.). The king had a vision and wanted the wise men to tell him the dream and then the interpretation of it. None could do it. Daniel approached God for help. The dream was revealed to him and he was able to satisfy the king's request. The dream was of a giant image, with Nebuchadnezzar being the head. Four empires followed one upon another. In the last empire, the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. Daniel is rewarded and he requested that the king would set his three companions over the affairs of the province of Babylon.

**Chapter Three.** These events took place in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (600 B.C.). The king had a large image of gold erected and called on all of his rulers, wise men, etc., to come to its dedication. They were told to bow down and worship the image when they heard the music. If they did not, they would be cast into a fiery furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were accused of not worshipping the image. When called into account by the king, they still refused and were thrown into a fiery furnace. They were bound when thrown into the furnace, but the king said he saw four men and all loose. The king called for them to come out, and saw that the fire had no power over them at all. The king made a decree that nothing bad should be said of the God of these men or face terrible consequences. He also promoted them in the province of Babylon.

**Chapter four.** These events took place in the 36<sup>th</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (569 B.C.). The king had a dream about a huge tree that later was cut down. None of the wise men could tell the king the meaning of his dream. But Daniel was given the interpretation. The Tree was the king that had grown to great heights, but cut down and only a stump was left. The king would become like an animal of the field for seven years until he had learned that it is the God of heaven that rules over the nation. After seven years, the king was restored again.

**Chapter Five.** These events took place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Belshazzar's reign (538 B.C.). King Belshazzar had made a feast and invited all to come. During the feast, a large hand appeared and began to write on the wall. The wise men were not able to help the king know the meaning of what was written. Daniel was summoned and gave the meaning. He told the king that he had been weighed and was found wanting. His kingdom was ready to be taken from him. That night he was slain and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom.

**Chapter Six.** These events took place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of reign of Darius the Mede (536 B.C.). Daniel had been put into a very high position in this new kingdom and other men were jealous of him. They worked out a scheme where Daniel was thrown into a den of lions, but came out unhurt. The ones who had thought to have Daniel killed were themselves killed, as well as their families.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The faithfulness of Daniel unto his God, as well as the three young men with him, helped to open the door to teaching Gentile kings about the one true God of heaven and for His Name to be held in high esteem. God's part was to give the visions so that Daniel could interpret the dreams. Daniel and the three young men had an excellent spirit which went a long ways toward helping them to be influential over others.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

1. Evil plans can backfire and hurt the ones planning such.
2. Daniel was promoted to a very high position by Darius the Mede.
3. Belshazzar did not kill Daniel for telling him of his doom.
4. King Nebuchadnezzar ate grass like an animal for seven years.
5. The fourth person in the fiery furnace was like unto a son of the gods.
6. Nebuchadnezzar never did really come to believe in the one true God of heaven.
7. Daniel was in the first carrying away into Babylon (606-605 B.C.).
8. Daniel said that Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold of the great image he had seen in his dream.
9. God let the king know that He personally would set up His own kingdom during the last world empire.
10. Daniel was of royal lineage and was made a eunuch.

## Lesson Thirteen

***“All Kingdoms Come and Go Except One”***  
**(Daniel 7-12)**

Nebuchadnezzar had built a great empire and reigned from 605 to 561 B.C. His kingdom became the envy of the nations. But the city that was referred to in Scripture as the “glory of kingdoms,” “the golden city,” and “the lady of kingdoms” (Isaiah 13:19; 14:4; 47:5) was not to last much longer. Isaiah vividly described the judgment upon this great city in chapters 13-14 of his book. After Nebuchadnezzar’s death, the empire began to deteriorate. It is believed that Nabonidus married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, making his son, Belshazzar, an actual grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. Nabonidus held the empire together for another 17 years. He was away from Babylon and had left his son to reign in his stead. He was the 2<sup>nd</sup> ruler in the empire, with Daniel being the 3<sup>rd</sup>. This section (Daniel 7-12) begins at the first year of Belshazzar’s co-reigning with his father, Nabonidus.

## SURVEY OF DANIEL 7-12

**Chapter 7.** In the first year of Belshazzar’s reign (540 B.C.), Daniel had a dream of 4 beasts that represented four world empires liken unto the giant image that Nebuchadnezzar had dream about. And that the saints would be given a new kingdom which is an everlasting kingdom and all kingdoms will serve and obey the Most High God.

**Chapter 8.** In the third year of Belshazzar’s reign (538 B. C.), Daniel again had a vision of a Ram with two horns and a he goat. The Ram represented the Medo-Persian Empire and the he goat represented the Grecian Empire to come that would overthrow the Medo-Persian Empire.

**Chapter 9.** In the first year of Darius who was king over Babylon (536 B.C.), Daniel came to realize that the 70 years of captivity was at an end and God’s people were to be allowed to go back and rebuild the Temple and Jerusalem. He prayed earnestly to God confessing the sins of the people and praising God for his mercy and forgiveness. In the midst of the prayer, the Angel Gabriel came to Daniel and informed him of the 70 weeks that would be decreed upon the City of Jerusalem.

**Chapter 10.** In the third year of Cyrus’ reign (533 B.C.), Daniel had a vision about an Angel of God that came to give him an understanding of what shall befall the people of God in the latter days. He does not reveal the vision, but chapter eleven does give some historical indications of what will happen with God’s people in the later years under the Medo-Persian and Grecian Empires.

**Chapter 11.** In the first year of Darius, Daniel was allowed to see the struggle between two of the divisions of the Grecian Empire (the North (Syria) and the South (Egypt) and the effect it would have on the people of God.

**Chapter 12.** An angel brings a message to Daniel about the end of all these things and of the Jewish Nation. But Daniel is not allowed to write it down. He did tell Daniel that when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A close study of the book of Daniel with other historical information from the Jewish writings help to tell a great and pitiful tale of the Jewish people right up to the time of the coming of the Messiah and His being cut off for the sins of the people. Daniel is a fascinating Book that will be of great value to the one who reads and understands.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

#### True or False

1. There is historical information about the Jewish Nation that confirms what Daniel saw in his visions of the holy people.
2. The time was to come when the power of the holy people would be scattered.
3. Two great visions reveal not only the four succeeding empires to come, but when the kingdom of heaven would be set up among men.
4. The Grecian Empire followed the Medo-Persian Empire and was quickly divided into four divisions, two of which Daniel was allowed to see things about in a vision.
5. The vision of the 70 weeks decreed upon the holy city ended when Christ was crucified and the church was begun.
6. Belshazzar was a good king in the Medo-Persian Empire.
7. Daniel was a high official, not only in the Babylonian government, but the Medo Persian Empire as well.
8. Daniel's vision of the Ram and the He Goat was a foretelling of the overthrow of the Medo-Persian Empire by Alexander the Great.
9. Babylon was called the "golden city" by Isaiah.
10. Daniels vision of the four beasts is identical to the vision that Nebuchadnezzar had of the giant image.







