

MAJOR PROPHETS

TMBC Course #6



Student Workbook

Profiles of Prophets

Chapter 1

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #61



Objective: To introduce the role of Old Testament prophets and understand how they fit with the rest of Scripture.



Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

—Amos 3:7

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

—2 Peter 1:20, 21

Israel and Judah had many prophets, but only 16 of them wrote books. From a New Testament perspective, these books of the prophets are considered the essence of the Old Testament. They express the heart of God toward His people.

Who were these prophets? They were men from many different backgrounds who were called to speak for God—usually to give words of correction to a nation of priests and people who had gone astray. All the prophets who wrote books lived in a period of approximately 400 years, from 800 to 400 BC. They were often ridiculed, mocked, and persecuted because they preached a message few people wanted to hear. When their message was rejected, they warned of the judgment God would bring on the nation. In the message of most of the prophets, that judgment came in the form of captivity for God's people; Assyria would capture the northern kingdom of Israel, and Babylon would capture the southern kingdom of Judah. In all of their warnings, however, there is a message of hope. God let His people know ahead of time that they would be restored after they had repented. The prophets preached during the darkest days in the history of God's people, yet their greatest message of hope came from their prophecies of the coming Messiah.

1. True or false? There are two essential sections of the Old Testament: the Law and the Prophets.
2. True or false? All great prophets in the Old Testament wrote books.
3. True or false? Most prophets were also priests.



Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. Who could become a prophet?
 - a. Anyone born into a family of prophets
 - b. Those who trained for years in the prophetic arts
 - c. Only priests
 - d. Whoever God selected
5. Why were prophets needed?
 - a. God wanted everyone to know their future, so he chose prophets to be fortune-tellers.
 - b. The people—including the priests—had become corrupt and disobeyed God.
 - c. God did not want His people to relate to Him directly, so He assigned these holy men to represent Him.
 - d. The people had learned the Law and practiced it perfectly, but God still had more things to tell them.
6. How long did the era of prophets last?
 - a. About 400 years
 - b. Less than 50 years
 - c. At least 1,000 years
 - d. Four weeks in 787 B.C.
7. What were God's prophets primarily called to do? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. Predict the future
 - b. Be a spokesman for God
 - c. Exhort the people of God to obey and apply God's Word to their lives
 - d. Get people's priorities in line with God's priorities
 - e. Preach against a problem that was blocking God's work
 - f. Give everyone hope and make them feel good

8. The ministry of the prophets was primarily related to what historical events?
 - a. The end times
 - b. God's judgments through conquest and captivity
 - c. The Exodus and Promised Land
 - d. Earthquakes and famines
9. What usually happened when the prophets preached messages of repentance and revival?
 - a. Everyone who heard them repented and was restored.
 - b. The nation changed its course for the better.
 - c. The prophets were honored for their faithfulness.
 - d. Their message was ignored and rejected, and they were often persecuted.
10. What problem did the prophets most often address?
 - a. Social injustice
 - b. Anger
 - c. Idolatry
 - d. Jealousy
11. What solutions did the prophets promise? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. God would bring them back to the land.
 - b. God would ultimately deliver them through a Savior.
 - c. Their punishment would be so effective that they would never sin again.
 - d. God would eventually punish their enemies.
12. What were the roles of the prophets? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. To tell the will of God for the present
 - b. To explain the details of the Law
 - c. To foretell God's plan for the future
 - d. To protect Israel from its enemies
 - e. To cry out against the obstacles to the will of God
 - f. To help people cope with adversity
13. What type of writing is given the most space in the Bible?
 - a. Law
 - b. Letters
 - c. Prophets
 - d. History
14. How do the prophetic books fit historically with the rest of the Old Testament?
 - a. They explain the foundations and beginnings of Israel.
 - b. They were written during Israel's "golden age."
 - c. They tell of the fall of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
 - d. Their primary purpose has little to do with Old Testament history but instead points toward New Testament times.



Are there any obstacles to what God wants to do in your life? If so, what are they? If you do not know, pray and ask God to reveal them to you and help you deal with them.



Thank God that He speaks to His people—and that He corrects us when we need it. Pray that you would be sensitive to His voice. Ask Him to remove any obstacles or problems that are blocking God's work in your life. Ask God to give you opportunities and courage to speak of His will for His people.



Going Deeper

1. Since God the Holy Spirit, Who wrote the Bible, shows the importance of a subject or topic in the Bible by the amount of space given to that subject, what is God telling us by the fact that the largest sections of Scripture are the writings of the prophets? _____

2. Why are the prophets the least read and least understood books by the people of God today? _____

3. What is the definition of a prophet? _____

4. What was the role and function of a prophet? _____

5. What was the essential message of the prophets? _____

6. What kinds of people were called to be prophets? _____

7. How were the prophets treated when they preached the messages that God gave them to preach? _____

The Coming and Going of Isaiah

Chapter 2

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #62



Objective: To introduce the life and ministry of the prophet Isaiah.



*I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*

—Isaiah 6:8

The book of Isaiah is the longest prophetic book in the Bible and is quoted more in the New Testament and gives more prophecies of the coming Messiah than any other prophet. Isaiah ministered to several kings and may have been distantly related to some of the kings. He lived during the time when Assyria, which had already taken Israel's northern ten tribes, was the ruling world power. He prophesied of the capture and return of the southern kingdom by Babylon.

Isaiah was a great preacher who ministered for nearly 60 years. He gives us one of the greatest examples in the Bible of the foretelling ministry of a prophet. He predicted that God's people would be led into captivity and that while they were in Babylon, Persia would conquer Babylon and a Persian king named Cyrus would free the captives to return to their land and rebuild the temple. His prophecy was fulfilled exactly as he had said.

The 66 chapters of Isaiah are divided into two main sections: the first 39 warn of judgment, and the last 27 bring a message of healing and comfort—just as the Bible itself is divided into 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament. Like the Bible as a whole, the two sections of Isaiah make us aware of our need for a Savior and then introduce us to the Savior who would come. Chapters 49-57 tell of the coming Messiah as Savior and 58-66 foretell the second coming when Christ comes as King. Some of the favorite chapters are 5, 6, 11, 40, 53, 55, and 61.

1. True or false? Isaiah is one of the least important prophets of the Old Testament.
2. True or false? Isaiah frequently prophesied about the coming of Jesus.
3. True or false? Assyria was the worst enemy Israel had, as well as an enemy of the southern kingdom.
4. True or false? All of Isaiah's prophecies have already happened and are not relevant to us anymore.



Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. What message did God tell Isaiah to give King Hezekiah when the king was worried about an Assyrian attack?
- a. Surrender.
 - b. Make a treaty with the Assyrians.
 - c. Ask the Egyptians to help fight the Assyrians.
 - d. "God will take care of you and defeat the Assyrians Himself."
6. How long did Isaiah prophesy?
- a. About 60 years
 - b. Ten years
 - c. Ten months
 - d. Only during the Assyrian invasion
7. Which Persian king's name was prophesied by Isaiah long before that king came to power?
- a. Ezra
 - b. Cyrus
 - c. Nebuchadnezzar
 - d. Daniel
8. Why is the book of Isaiah sometimes called "a little Bible"? (*choose all that apply*)
- a. It has 66 chapters, and the Bible has 66 books.
 - b. The first part points out our need for a Savior, and the second part foretells the good news of salvation through Christ.
 - c. It is smaller and inferior to the other books of the Bible.
 - d. Isaiah wrote on smaller scrolls than the other prophets did.
 - e. It foretells the second coming of Jesus at the end of the age.

9. What experience was a turning point in Isaiah's life?
- a. He witnessed the death of King Uzziah.
 - b. He was taken captive by Babylon.
 - c. He saw God sitting in His temple.
 - d. He got a job in the king's palace.
10. What was Isaiah's response when he saw God?
- a. He saw his sinfulness and answered God's call.
 - b. He ran because he was afraid.
 - c. He refused to go on God's mission.
 - d. He agreed to prophesy only if God made Judah believe his prophecies.
11. What did God want most from Isaiah?
- a. Fruitfulness
 - b. Faithfulness
 - c. A military victory
 - d. A martyr's death
12. What does Isaiah's life demonstrate for us? (*choose all that apply*)
- a. Humble confession
 - b. Obedience to God
 - c. Commitment to the calling of God
 - d. A successful lifestyle



Has God called you? Have you confessed your sins? Think of a time when your work has seemed fruitless. In what ways does Isaiah's character and ministry encourage you? What would God say to you about your responsibility of obedience and faithfulness?



Thank God that He has revealed to us the truth about our sin and the Savior He sent us. Ask Him to help you be faithful to His will. If you are willing, tell Him you will be obedient and faithfully serve Him wherever He sends you.



Going Deeper

1. Do the first eight verses of the sixth chapter of Isaiah describe his conversion or his call to be a prophet? _____

2. Why do so very many spiritual leaders like Isaiah have deep, supernatural spiritual experiences? _____

3. How does the way the book of Isaiah is organized parallel the way the books of the Bible are organized? _____

4. Why is Isaiah considered by many to be the “Prince of the Prophets”? _____

5. Give at least four ways Isaiah exceeds all of the other prophets who wrote books of prophecy. _____

6. What is the difference between a major and a minor prophet? _____

7. Describe the impact that Isaiah had on both Hebrew and ancient history. _____

The Manifesto of the Messiah

Chapter 3

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #63



Objective: To understand the messianic prophecies of Isaiah.



*All we like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way:
And the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

—Isaiah 53:6

*Seek the Lord while he may be found;
Call on him while he is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts.
Let him turn to the LORD and he will have mercy on him,
And to our God, for he will freely pardon.
“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither my ways your ways,” declares the Lord.
“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways
And my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

—Isaiah 55:6-9

There is more messianic prophecy in the book of Isaiah than in any other book of prophetic literature. Isaiah made it clear that the Messiah would be God in human flesh, and he also tells us the essence of the Spirit that would be expressed through Messiah. Jesus would be the perfect expression of the Spirit of God. His life would become the model by which all of us should live our lives.

Isaiah prophesied that God needed a “highway” on which to travel into this world (40:3-5). That highway would be the life of His Son. Just as building a physical highway requires leveling mountains, filling valleys, straightening crooked places, and smoothing rough places, the Son would level mountains of pride, fill our empty places, straighten out our sinful ways, and smooth out the rough spots of our lives. When God has that kind of highway to travel on in our lives, others will see salvation and the glory of God.

When Jesus described His ministry, He quoted from the book of Isaiah. He brought good news to the afflicted, healed the brokenhearted, proclaimed liberty to captives, and declared that the time of the Lord’s favor had come.

1. True or false? Isaiah spoke about food because he was concerned for the diet of his fellow Jews.
2. True or false? The Word of God always accomplishes what God wants it to accomplish.



3. True or false? Isaiah mainly preached his own opinions, regardless of whether God had spoken to him.

4. True or false? There are many similarities between the way Isaiah preached and Jesus taught.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. Which of the following are major themes of Isaiah's preaching? (*choose all that apply*)

- a. Jesus the Christ
- b. Business
- c. Farming
- d. Sin
- e. Repentance
- f. Proper rituals
- g. Forgiveness and restoration
- h. Worship
- i. Self-denial

6. What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?

- a. Knowledge is practical; wisdom is theoretical.
- b. Knowledge makes us godly; wisdom makes us intelligent.
- c. Knowledge is learning the truth; wisdom is knowing what to do with truth.
- d. There is no difference; they mean the same thing.

7. What analogy does Isaiah use to describe God coming into this world?

- a. Digging a well
- b. Preparing a main public road
- c. Building a bridge
- d. Climbing a mountain

8. In what ways does God want to use our lives as a “good road”? (*choose all that apply*)

- a. God wants to take His message to the world through our lives.
- b. He wants to level the mountains of pride in our lives.
- c. Filling the valleys and empty place with His sufficiency.
- d. He wants to straighten our crooked and sinful ways.
- e. He wants to smooth the rough areas in our lives and make them smooth.

9. Read Isaiah 61:1-2. Which of the following did Isaiah say the Messiah would do? (*choose all that apply*)

- a. Overthrow the Roman government
- b. Proclaim liberty to captives
- c. Start a new religion
- d. Provide better housing
- e. Declare the Lord’s favor
- f. Heal the brokenhearted
- g. Preach good news

*“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
Because the Lord has anointed me
To bring good news to the afflicted;
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to
proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to
prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the
Lord.”*

—Isaiah 61:1-2

10. How does the Messiah’s “manifesto” apply to Christians?

- a. It only proves to us that Jesus is the Savior.
- b. It shows us what Jesus wanted to do if He had lived longer.
- c. It shows what we are to demand from our political leaders.
- d. It is a description of what we are to do, since we are to be like Jesus.

11. How can we do the works that Jesus called us to do?

- a. Only by the power of His Spirit
- b. By being perfect and sinless as He was
- c. By knowing the right words to pray
- d. We cannot do His works because we are not divine like He is.

12. If we have experienced salvation, what ministry does Jesus want to have through us?

(*choose all that apply*)

- a. Bring spiritual sight to those who are spiritually blind.
- b. Set those free who are spiritually bound.
- c. Make the poor prosperous.
- d. Bring God’s healing to the broken and bruised.



If God wanted to clear a highway for Himself in your life, what mountains would He need to level? What valleys would He fill out? What crooked places would He straighten, and what rough spots would He smooth out?



If you are hurting, brokenhearted, spiritually blind, or captive, thank God that the Messiah's ministry is meant for you, and ask God to set you free, heal and comfort you. Also pray that He would help you be a highway on which He travels in this world so people will see Him through you.



Going Deeper

1. In addition to literally healing some blind people, how was the Messiah going to give sight to the blind? _____

2. How was He going to set the captives free? _____

3. How would the Messiah heal the brokenhearted? _____

4. Since the most dynamic truth in the New Testament is that Christ the Messiah lives in and through us today and we are literally His body, in what ways does He want to do those same things in and through us? _____

5. The greatest prophet and the greatest man ever born of woman, according to Jesus, came preaching the great sermon of Isaiah about the life of the Messiah being a highway on which God would travel into this world. What are the applications of that highway sermon to your life today? _____

6. What would it be like if you asked God to make your life a highway on which He, through the Christ Who lives in you, would travel into this world? _____

7. If you had the faith and the courage to pray that prayer, what would it be like if God's spiritual bulldozers showed up in your life? _____

Our Suffering Substitute

Chapter 4

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #64



Objective: To understand the message of salvation found in the book of Isaiah.



Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

—Isaiah 53:4-6

In addition to prophesying of the coming and the nature of Christ, Isaiah also prophesied of His death. One of the most beautiful chapters in the Bible is Isaiah 53, which describes Jesus as the Suffering Servant who would pay for the sins of God's people—"sheep" who have gone astray. For the sake of all human beings, who, like lost sheep, have turned to our own way, God laid our iniquity upon Jesus. He bore the punishment for our sins. Isaiah describes the crucifixion of Jesus hundreds of years before it happened when he wrote that the Suffering Servant would be despised, rejected, afflicted, and pierced for our transgressions. But by his wounds, we would be healed.

Isaiah himself experienced the suffering that God's servants often go through. According to tradition, King Manasseh had him brutally killed, and many believe his martyrdom is described in the book of Hebrews as an example of great faith.



1. True or false? When the New Testament mentions “the prophets,” it is referring to the Old Testament prophets who wrote books.
2. True or false? The origin of the prophets’ writings was supernatural.
3. True or false? The function of a prophet is to cry out about an obstacle that is interfering with the will of God until that obstacle is removed.
4. True or false? God rarely warns His people before He brings judgment on them.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. How do we know when prophets like Isaiah preached?
 - a. They were very careful historians and wrote down the dates of their ministry.
 - b. They usually identified which king was ruling when they prophesied.
 - c. We do not know because they never wrote anything about the times they lived in.
 - d. We cannot know because they are legendary characters who probably did not really exist.
6. According to tradition, how did Isaiah die?
 - a. King Manasseh had him put into a hollow log and then had the log sawn in half.
 - b. The Assyrians killed him for prophesying against them.
 - c. He died from leprosy.
 - d. He died of natural causes when he was 97 years old.
7. Put the following three sections of Isaiah in order:

a. Historical interlude	Chapters 1-35
b. Comfort, salvation, and restoration	Chapters 36-39
c. Sermons on the judgment of God	Chapters 40-66
8. Which section is really the heart of Isaiah’s message?
 - a. Chapters 1-35
 - b. Chapters 36-39
 - c. Chapters 40-66
 - d. Chapters 67-80
9. Which of the following is true of the book of Isaiah? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. It is the only book of prophecy not quoted at all in the New Testament.
 - b. It has more messianic prophecies than all of the other prophets.
 - c. It is quoted in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament book.
 - d. It is the shortest book among the major prophets.
 - e. It is the first book of prophecy in the Bible’s order of books, but it was written after all of the others.

10. How does the ministry of Jesus apply to us?
- a. It is for us to receive.
 - b. It is for us to give to others.
 - c. We both receive it and give it.
 - d. We neither receive it nor give it. We only learn about it.

11. What is Isaiah 53 about?
- a. How Babylon would capture Israel
 - b. Why God allows suffering in the world
 - c. When Jesus would be born to a virgin
 - d. How Jesus died for our sins

12. What animal does Isaiah 53 compare us to?
- a. Wolves who endanger other people
 - b. Sheep who have gone astray
 - c. Eagles who fly higher than everyone else
 - d. Worms who do not deserve respect



What do you need to receive from Jesus today? What do you have from His ministry that you can give to someone else today?



Thank the Lord for His compassion that provides true healing. Whatever difficulties you face today, ask Him to help you with them. Tell Him you also want to feel His compassion for others.



Going Deeper

1. In what ways does the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah present the meaning of the death of the Messiah on the cross? _____

2. What does it mean when Isaiah writes that the chastisement of our peace was upon Him? _____

3. The sixth verse (in the New King James Version) begins and ends with the word “all.” What would it mean if you agreed that the first “all” of this verse includes you? _____

4. What would it mean if you agreed that the last “all” of that verse includes you? _____

5. Some say that the Romans killed the Messiah, while others say that it was the Jews. According to the 10th verse of this chapter, who crucified Jesus Christ? How does that relate to John 3:16? _____

6. Based on the 11th verse of Isaiah 53, was it the physical details of death by crucifixion that satisfied the divine justice of God, or was it the suffering, the agony, or the labor of His soul? Should we therefore emphasize the physical dimensions of His suffering or the spiritual dimensions? What caused this spiritual suffering? _____

7. How many prophecies of Isaiah in this profound chapter have been fulfilled? _____

A Series of Sobs

Chapter 5

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #65



Objective: To understand the times and the message of Jeremiah.



"I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity."

—Jeremiah 29:11-14

Jeremiah was called "the weeping prophet" because of how much his prophecies are filled with tears and lamentation. In fact, the poem he wrote after the book of Jeremiah is called "Lamentations." It describes the devastation of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

The fall of Jerusalem was a catastrophe that stretched over a period of nearly 20 years. Jeremiah ministered for a total of 41 years, during which he warned of the impending catastrophe and then witnessed all three of Babylon's invasions. He was hated by kings and false prophets because his message was so harsh, but he spoke the truth. He also prophesied that God's people would return from captivity after 70 years.

Like Isaiah, Jeremiah wrote several prophecies of the coming Messiah. This message of hope would be not only for Judah, but also for the whole world. He preached that meaning and fulfillment could only be found in knowing God.



1. True or false? The book of Jeremiah is very well organized.
2. True or false? Jeremiah wrote impersonally, as someone who was objective and detached from the events he wrote about.
3. True or false? Jeremiah only ministered during the reign of one king—about seven years.
4. True or false? God's people were very sympathetic toward Jeremiah for his weeping.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. During the reign of Josiah, when Jeremiah ministered, what was rediscovered when the temple was being remodeled?
 - a. The lost ark of the covenant
 - b. The remains of another temple underneath the new one
 - c. Much of the wealth Solomon had hidden
 - d. Scrolls of God's Word, which had been forgotten
6. Why did the fall of Jerusalem take such a long time?
 - a. God's armies were very strong and kept repelling the attacks.
 - b. Because of rebellious kings, God's judgment increased in severity over time.
 - c. Jerusalem and Babylon kept trying to negotiate a peace, but could never come to terms.
 - d. God could not decide whether to judge or forgive His people.
7. Which of the following sums up Jeremiah's message?
 - a. "God has rejected Israel and has now chosen Babylonians to be His people."
 - b. "If you build up your army, you will be able to defeat Babylon."
 - c. "Defeat and captivity are certain, but God will bring you back in 70 years."
 - d. "God has not yet made up His mind what to do, so He may not judge you if you repent."
8. What did Jeremiah advise Jerusalem's leaders to do when Babylon attacked?
 - a. Surrender
 - b. Compromise
 - c. Flee to Egypt
 - d. Trust God and be courageous and fight
9. What visible illustration did Jeremiah use to represent the Jews' captivity and return?
 - a. A flower in springtime
 - b. A camel returning from the desert
 - c. A piece of pottery that has been broken and repaired
 - d. His own illness and recovery

10. What effect did the captivity have on Judah's idolatry?
- a. They decided to worship idols because God had forsaken them.
 - b. They found better idols to worship in Babylon.
 - c. They saw how important it is for every culture to have its own gods.
 - d. They never worshiped idols again.
11. How did Jeremiah feel about the message God had given him?
- a. He grew weary of preaching it.
 - b. He was grateful that God had trusted him with such an important message.
 - c. He never complained about the hardship it brought him.
 - d. He enjoyed being useful to God.
12. What did Jeremiah promise when God's people were being chained and taken into captivity?
- a. God would never forgive them for what they had done.
 - b. God had good plans to give them hope and restore them.
 - c. God would hide from them until the time of the Messiah.
 - d. They would be happy and successful in Babylon.
13. What is the difference between a true prophet and a false prophet?
- a. A true prophet preaches good news, and a false prophet preaches bad news.
 - b. A true prophet is always popular, and a false prophet is always hated.
 - c. A true prophet must die as a martyr.
 - d. The words of a true prophet always come true. The words of a false prophet often do not.



Have you ever knowingly been disciplined by God? How difficult was it to submit to His will? What promise does God give to those who experience His loving discipline?



Thank God that He has a wonderful plan for your life to give you hope and a future. Thank God that He cares enough about His children to correct and discipline us. Ask Him to teach you His will and train you in His ways.



Going Deeper

1. What was the essence of the message of Jeremiah before the Babylonian armies arrived on the scene? _____

2. How did the essence of that message change when the Babylonian armies showed up? _____

3. Have you ever experienced a personal application of the essential message of Jeremiah regarding a “captivity” and restoration that purged sin out of your life? Explain. _____

4. The word “rehabilitation” in its Latin root form means “to invest again with dignity.” That was an integral part of the message of Jeremiah. Do you have a need to apply that part of his message to your life today? In other words, do you have a personal need for any kind of rehabilitation? (Consider Jeremiah 29: 11-14 NIV) Explain. _____

5. Why was Jeremiah hated so intensely by those to whom he preached? _____

6. One of Jeremiah’s greatest sermons is recorded in chapter 9: 23 - 24. Why does he preach that we should not try to find our fulfillment in wisdom, riches, or physical strength, but in knowing God? What attributes of God does Jeremiah tell us can lead us to a personal knowledge of God? _____

7. If you have been finding the meaning of life in anything other than knowing God, how could you apply this magnificent sermon of Jeremiah to your personal pursuit of God? _____

The Captivity Cantor

Chapter 6

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #66



Objective: To understand the key messages of Jeremiah's preaching.



"This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it—the LORD is his name: 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'"

—Jeremiah 33:2-3

As the people of Jerusalem were about to be taken to Babylon in chains, Jeremiah gave them some words of hope to cope with their captivity. Though they had been stripped of all human strength and wealth, and though they were stunned with grief and horror, Jeremiah told them that God would still be with them. They could know Him in His love, His righteousness, and His justice. In fact, in Babylon they would have only Him to depend on, and they would come to know Him better there.

Jeremiah preached many messages, sometimes by acting them out as visual illustrations. Through his sermons, He taught God's people and his messages teach us how to trust in Him, how to still have hope in the midst of tragedy, and how their hearts and ours can be changed if we seek God and asked Him to change us.



1. True or false? Many of the messages of the prophets are in the form of a sermon.

2. True or false? Jeremiah did not preach only gloom and doom; he also delivered messages of hope.

3. True or false? After Jerusalem had been defeated and God's people had lost their wealth, their homes, their jobs, and their strength, they had no hope of fulfillment.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. According to Jeremiah, how can God be known on earth? (*choose all that apply*)

- a. Through His love
- b. Through His righteousness
- c. Through our education
- d. Through His justice
- e. Through our wealth

5. Which of the following was a common method of preaching for Jeremiah?

- a. Standing at a podium to deliver a message
- b. Writing letters to send all over the kingdom
- c. Acting out visual illustrations
- d. Singing his messages in the temple

6. Why did Jeremiah buy the farm of a relative?

- a. He wanted to demonstrate that the captives would return to the land.
- b. He wanted one last harvest before the captivity.
- c. He thought he could sell it for a profit.
- d. He wanted to be able to feed the Babylonians when they invaded.

7. In Jeremiah 33, what does God promise to do when we call on Him?

- a. Give us exactly what we ask for.
- b. Solve all of our problems.
- c. Consider whether He will answer us or not.
- d. Show us great and mighty things we have never seen before.

8. What does Jeremiah tell us about how to change our ways?

- a. We need to forget the past and make a new start on our own.
- b. If we really resolve to do better, we can.
- c. Only God can change us.
- d. With the right psychological help, we can improve ourselves.

9. What were the two sins that Jeremiah preached against in chapter 2? (*choose both that apply*)

- a. They were disobedient sheep wandering without a shepherd.
- b. They stopped drinking from the Spring of Living Water, forsaking God.
- c. They were proud and did not think God would allow His people to suffer.
- d. They dug their own wells that did not hold water, listening and believing their own human wisdom.

10. What did Jeremiah say about the human heart?
- a. In our own fallen nature, our heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.
 - b. Deep within us, everyone has a good heart.
 - c. There is no way for the heart to be changed.
 - d. The heart is much less significant than the mind of reason.

11. Who can really know what is in the human heart?
- a. Our self
 - b. Psychologists
 - c. Those with psychic gifts
 - d. God



In what ways have you tried to change in the past? How successful were your attempts? Have you ever experienced the power of God to change your heart? What is one thing that you want God to change in your heart?



Thank God for His promise to restore you when you fail and to change your heart as you submit to Him. Ask Him to show you great and mighty things you have never known, as He promised to do.



Going Deeper

1. What are two things Jeremiah tells us about the human heart and, above all things, what is true of the human heart according to Jeremiah? (Consider Jeremiah 17:9, 10) _____

2. In the verses above, what question does Jeremiah ask about the human heart, and how does he answer that question? _____

3. How does that relate to the great prayer of David in the last two verses of Psalm 139, and to the way you seek to understand yourself or other people? _____

4. "... Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." (Jeremiah 33:3 NIV) How can this verse relate to you when you are discouraged and burned out, with more of the same happening year after year in your life and ministry? _____

5. What this translation calls "unsearchable things," the Living Bible calls "spiritual secrets." What might those spiritual secrets be? _____

6. When he wrote in his second chapter that the people had forsaken the Spring of Living Water and built for themselves cisterns that could not hold water, give some examples of what Jeremiah meant by cisterns that could not hold water. _____

7. (Compare Jeremiah 2:36 with 13:23 NKJV. "Why do you gad about so much to change your way? Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? (*"Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil."*)) Was Jeremiah teaching that our situation is hopeless and that there is nothing we can do about the condition of our heart? Explain. _____

God's Sad News

Chapter 7

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #67



Objective: To understand more about God's messages through Jeremiah and how He used this prophet.



"This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

—Jeremiah 31:33

There were two kinds of people in Jerusalem as the city was falling to the Babylonian empire: those who realized the captivity was chastisement from God and accepted His discipline; and those who refused to recognize it as God's will and rebelled. To those who were willing to go to Babylon in judgment and repent of their sinfulness, God promised His help. He would see that they were treated well, give them new hearts that could respond to Him, and bring the next generation back to Jerusalem. But to those who rejected Jeremiah's message and would not repent, God warned that they would experience defeat, famine, and disease until they were destroyed.

Jeremiah preached many sermons about these two kinds of people, and he was often mocked for always delivering sad news. But his preaching was the only hope of the Jews who heard his sermons, and his prophecies of future restoration and the Messiah continue to give us hope today.



1. True or false? Even though God is always willing to forgive us, sometimes the scars and consequences of our sins are irreversible.
2. True or false? Jeremiah preached that we are the captains of our own fate.
3. True or false? Jeremiah spoke harshly about those who trust in their own ability to guide and rescue themselves.
4. True or false? The book of Jeremiah ends with the prophet rejoicing and celebrating God's favor.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. What illustration did Jeremiah use as a description of people who did not accept his message that their captivity was God's chastisement?
 - a. Filthy clothes
 - b. Rotten figs
 - c. Straying goats
 - d. Spilled wine
6. Jeremiah was not the only person in Scripture to use a farming illustration of plowed ground. Who else did?
 - a. Moses
 - b. David
 - c. Elijah
 - d. Jesus
7. What did the four kinds of soil in Jesus' parable represent?
 - a. Four responses to the good news of salvation
 - b. The four kingdoms of God
 - c. The four ways of salvation
 - d. Four kinds of fruit that were available in Israel
8. When Jeremiah urged the people to break up their fallow ground, what did he want them to do?
 - a. Practice better farming techniques to grow a better crop
 - b. Dig up the earth around Jerusalem so the Babylonians could sow their seeds
 - c. Be prepared to receive the seed of God's Word
 - d. Bury all of their copies of Scripture so the enemy could not take them
9. How did Jeremiah respond when the people mocked his "sad news"?
 - a. He told them that they themselves were the sad news and rebuked them for mocking God's Word.
 - b. He tried to find something happier to talk about.
 - c. He told God he was not going to preach anymore.
 - d. He picked up stones to throw at them.

10. How do we know Jeremiah was a true prophet?
- a. He looked like a prophet.
 - b. His father was a prophet and trained Jeremiah to be a prophet too.
 - c. His prophecies of calamity and of restoration all came true.
 - d. He worked many miracles.
11. Why did Jeremiah advise people not to get married?
- a. Celibacy is more spiritual than marriage.
 - b. As part of His judgment, God forbade marriage for 70 years.
 - c. The temple had been destroyed, so there was no holy place for weddings.
 - d. In a time of captivity and persecution, marrying and having children would only result in families being torn apart.
12. What did Jeremiah prophesy about the hearts of God's people?
- a. God would give His people a new heart and write His laws on their heart.
 - b. They would never accept God in their heart again.
 - c. People would return to God and then fall away again.
 - d. Their hearts were so wicked that God would not be able to redeem them.



Have you experienced God's gift of a new heart? If so, what has changed in your life since you received that gift? If not, do you believe that you need a new heart? Why or why not?



Thank God for the gift of a new heart. Ask Him to continue to work in your heart and in the hearts of people you know. Pray that your heart and life would always overflow with gratitude and praise for Him.



Going Deeper

1. When you look in a mirror, do you see “God’s sad news,” or do you see God’s Good News of the Gospel – a new creation by the grace of God? Why? _____

2. What was the upbeat hope that Jeremiah shared with these people of God regarding their experience of captivity? (Consider Jeremiah 29: 11-14) _____

3. Relate that hope to some of the setbacks you’ve experienced in your journey of faith. _____

4. According to the passage referenced above, how can you apply to your life the things you can do in your “captivity,” and the things God promises to do at that time? _____

5. How do you implement the essential application of the sermon God gave Jeremiah in chapter 18, regarding the vessel that was flawed on the wheel of the potter and recycled? (Consider chapter 18.) _____

6. Jeremiah showed his faith in God’s promise about the return from captivity by purchasing land near Jerusalem, just prior to his captivity. How have you ever demonstrated your faith through an action against all odds, the way Jeremiah showed that he believed his own prophecy about the return from captivity when he purchased the farm of a relative just outside of Jerusalem shortly before the captivity began? _____

7. How can you show people that your faith is authentic, the way the king showed that he believed Jeremiah's preaching when he visited Jeremiah in the dungeon while the siege of Jerusalem was at its peak? _____

God Loves You Anyway

Chapter 8

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #68



Objective: To understand the message of the book of Lamentations.



This I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

—Lamentations 3:21-26

The book of Lamentations is a sequel to the book of Jeremiah. It is a lament over the land that has been conquered and the people who have been massacred or taken captive. It also expresses grief over the fact that God's people were separated from their holy city and could no longer be near His temple.

Not only is Lamentations an expression of God's heart for His people, it is also a masterpiece of poetry. It contains five poems, four of which, in the original language, are acrostic—each line begins with a successive letter of the alphabet. Though it is a beautiful piece of literature, its inspired message is what earns it a place in God's Word. Even in the midst of despair, Jeremiah delivers a message of hope. In the middle of this sad book, he reminds us of the Lord's great love and that His compassions never fail. His chastisement is a sign that we are His children, and His mercies are new every morning.



1. True or false? Because God loved Jeremiah for his faithfulness, He spared the prophet from having to witness the horror of Jerusalem's downfall.
2. True or false? When Lamentations was written, Jerusalem was essentially a pile of rubble with very few people left in it.
3. True or false? Many people believe that Jeremiah wrote Lamentations on the same hill where Jesus was crucified centuries later.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. What is an acrostic poem?
 - a. A poem in which every line rhymes with the previous line
 - b. A poem about death and destruction
 - c. A poem in which each successive line begins with its corresponding letter of the alphabet
 - d. A prophetic poem that foretells the future
5. What is the most important feature of Lamentations?
 - a. Its literary quality
 - b. Its inspired message
 - c. Its graphic descriptions
 - d. Its hopelessness
6. In what way is Lamentations like the book of Job?
 - a. In the middle of all its sadness, there is a message of hope.
 - b. They are the same length.
 - c. Job is also an acrostic poem.
 - d. Neither book acknowledges the faithfulness of God.
7. What does it mean that God's compassions never fail?
 - a. God never lets His people suffer.
 - b. Whenever God has to judge His people, He will find someone else to have compassion on.
 - c. He makes sure His people always have some kind of hardship so He can express His sympathy for them.
 - d. God always loves us, even when we have failed.
8. What does the Bible mean when it says "God is love"?
 - a. Wherever we see any kind of love, God is the source of it.
 - b. God is the perfect expression of love that is patient, kind, selfless, forgiving, unconditional, and indestructible.
 - c. "God" is just another word for love.
 - d. God would never chastise His people.

9. How was Jeremiah vindicated by the destruction of Jerusalem?
- a. His prophecies came to pass.
 - b. It fulfilled his desire for Babylon's king to reign.
 - c. It satisfied his anger.
 - d. The enemy gave him great wealth and promoted him to a very high position.
10. What aspect of God's character did He demonstrate by chastising His people and allowing them to suffer?
- a. His bad temper
 - b. His always-changing mind
 - c. His unreasonable standards
 - d. His great love for His children
11. What message from Jeremiah does Hebrews 12 confirm?
- a. God punishes everyone the same.
 - b. God loves everyone and never would chastise those He loves.
 - c. God's love can not be understood.
 - d. God chastises those He loves.



What does it mean that God's love is unconditional? How does that love inspire you?
Do you have that kind of love for anyone else?



Thank God that even in your greatest difficulties, you can depend on His love and that His love will never fail. Ask Him to help you experience that love and also demonstrate it to others.



Going Deeper

1. The greatest passage in Lamentations is chapter 3: 21 - 26. How do you apply that passage to your life and personal journey of faith? _____

2. The Living Bible Paraphrase captures the essence of this passage when it has God saying to Israel through Jeremiah, "I have never stopped loving you!" How does this essential truth about God's love apply to you personally? _____

3. Since the hope expressed in this passage applies primarily to the promised return of Israel to their land, how does the message of hope and waiting on the Lord apply to you personally especially in times of difficulty, when God may be chastising you? _____

4. Why did Jeremiah follow his prophecy, which has been called "A Series of Sobs," with more crying? As you answer this question, show how Lamentations describes the substance of the message of Jeremiah. In other words, show how this book of Lamentations graphically profiles the horror that Jeremiah saw coming. _____

5. Show how the fact that Jeremiah was writing these Lamentations on the hill of Calvary means that God was telling Israel through Jeremiah that He was not only pouring out His unconditional love for Israel there, but that one day He would pour out His love for the whole world on that spot. _____

6. Relate the 12th chapter of Hebrews to this basic message of the book of Lamentations that God loves us when He is chastising us. _____

7. How did the conquest of Jerusalem and Israel validate Jeremiah as an authentic prophet? ____

All Things Weird and Wonderful

Chapter 9

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #69



Objective: To introduce and understand the person and the writings of the prophet Ezekiel.



“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the Word I speak and give them a warning from me . . . If you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself.”

—Ezekiel 3:16-17, 19

Ezekiel was taken into captivity when he was a young man and preached in slave labor camps in Babylon. God did not want His people to be without a prophet, even when they were being disciplined for their sin. Ezekiel’s prophecies are called apocalyptic literature, which means they take us “behind the veil” so we can see what is normally unseen. The book of Ezekiel is filled with prophecies of the future, especially what will happen when God brings an end to human history.

The book of Ezekiel begins with a great vision of God. God gave this vision in order to keep His people from perishing. They no longer had the temple and their holy city, and they had lost their vision of God. Ezekiel actually saw the glory of the Lord and was called to minister to God’s people in a very difficult time and place. Throughout his book, Ezekiel emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit—the presence of God wherever His people happen to be.



1. True or false? Ezekiel was the only prophet who ministered directly to the captives in Babylon.
2. True or false? Ezekiel was born long after Jeremiah died.
3. True or false? Ezekiel's ministry was to stand in the gap between God and His captive people.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. Which of these biblical writers were exiles when they wrote? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. Ezekiel
 - b. Joshua
 - c. Daniel
 - d. Luke
 - e. John
5. Match each prophet with the member of the Trinity he emphasizes.

a. Isaiah	i. the Father
b. Jeremiah	ii. the Son
c. Ezekiel	iii. the Spirit
6. What is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to us if we are His children?
 - a. He is in us.
 - b. He is on us.
 - c. He is with us.
 - d. All of the above
7. In what way was Ezekiel like Jeremiah?
 - a. They both used many visual illustrations.
 - b. Ezekiel also wrote a book of lamentations.
 - c. They both lived in Babylon with the captives.
 - d. They were the same age.
8. How did many of Ezekiel's sermons come to him?
 - a. On golden tablets
 - b. From the writings of Jeremiah
 - c. In visions
 - d. Through his own personal research
9. Which New Testament writer used many of the same symbols and pictures that Ezekiel used?
 - a. Paul
 - b. John
 - c. Luke
 - d. Peter

10. To what did Ezekiel compare his role and responsibility?
- a. A watchman
 - b. An eagle
 - c. Broken pottery
 - d. A wheel
11. Why did Ezekiel believe he could do what God had called him to do?
- a. He was a very gifted speaker.
 - b. He knew the Bible very well and could teach it to others.
 - c. He was smarter than the other captives.
 - d. He depended on the Holy Spirit.



In what ways have you experienced the strength of the Holy Spirit? What responsibilities do you currently have for which you need the Spirit's help?



Thank God that His Spirit will never leave you or forsake you and for His promises to strengthen and equip you to serve Him. Ask Him to lead you and to fill you with His wisdom, strength, and love.



Going Deeper

1. Give several examples of the way Ezekiel used the symbolic act to communicate his messages. _____

2. Show how Jesus used this same method when He began His longest recorded discourse, known as “The Upper Room Discourse.” (John 13-16) _____

3. What would our culture think of a man like Ezekiel if he were to preach his symbolic act sermons today? _____

4. What was the consistent and repeated theme of Ezekiel’s preaching, and why did he continuously emphasize that message? _____

5. Why do you think Daniel, the Apostle John, and Ezekiel preached sermons that emphasized apocalyptic (meaning behind the veil) truths about the future, since they all wrote their books while in exile? _____

6. State how you realize your need to emphasize the Holy Spirit’s work as you accept His call and live to minister in this world for God. _____

7. How should you ask the same Holy Spirit that Ezekiel preached about to help you interpret the weird and wonderful prophecies of Ezekiel? (Consider 1 Corinthians 2: 9-16) _____

Dry Bones

Chapter 10

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #70



Objective: To learn from one of Ezekiel's greatest sermons that only God's Spirit can give new life.



"Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

—Ezekiel 37:4-6

Ezekiel preached a sermon that came from his vision of a valley of dry bones. When Ezekiel prophesied to the bones, as the Lord told him to do, the bones came together. As he continued preaching, sinew and flesh were added to the skeletons. Then the Lord told Ezekiel to prophesy to the Breath—the Spirit of God—so that the bodies would come to life. God's message to the Jews was that even though they felt like they had no life, just dry bones, He would restore them from captivity and lead them back to Israel.

There is an important lesson for us in this sermon: apart from the Holy Spirit, people who share the gospel with the lost are attempting the impossible. In fact, anything we try to do apart from the Spirit is as impossible as giving dead bones new life. The church must be energized by the Holy Spirit to implement the Great Commission and take the gospel of life to the spiritually dead world. Only God's power can raise spiritually dead people to new life.



1. True or false? The bones Ezekiel saw were fresh. The people had not been dead very long.
2. True or false? Ezekiel preached long after God's people had returned from captivity.
3. True or false? The dry bones represented how spiritually dead the exiles were.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. How did Ezekiel get the idea to preach to dry bones?
 - a. He did not believe death was real, but was only an illusion.
 - b. He thought the spirits of those who had died could still accept Christ.
 - c. He wanted the spirits of the dead to speak back to him.
 - d. God told him to.
5. What was Ezekiel's primary ministry?
 - a. Preach and minister to the captives in Babylon.
 - b. Gather the bones of dead exiles and bury them.
 - c. Count the number of deaths Babylon had caused so Judah could get revenge later.
 - d. Teach the people that death and destruction would satisfy God's anger.
6. What did God mean when He told Ezekiel to preach to the Dead?
 - a. Ezekiel was to walk around and breathe on each corpse.
 - b. The wind would come and raise the dead.
 - c. The dead can be raised only by the Spirit of God through prayer.
 - d. Ezekiel's preaching would be as useless as talking to air, since everyone in the valley was dead.
7. What message did Ezekiel's vision of the bones give to the exiles?
 - a. They would all end up dead in Babylon.
 - b. God would destroy the Babylonians and scatter them across a valley.
 - c. God would one day restore the captives to their homeland.
 - d. They should avoid prophets who preach about strange visions.
8. How does Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones apply to us today?
 - a. It tells us that many people are hopelessly lost and dead and that nothing can save them.
 - b. It teaches us to preach the message of life to the spiritually dead and to do so energized in the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. It shows us that no one would die if we just had enough faith.
 - d. It has no application for us today.
9. What does it mean that the prophets had both "coming" and "going" experiences?
 - a. They never stayed in one place for very long.
 - b. They kept changing their minds.
 - c. They were hard to capture because they kept coming and going.
 - d. They had experiences of coming to God and then going to the people.

10. What was Ezekiel's "coming" experience?
- a. His journey to Babylon to be with the exiles.
 - b. His vision of God.
 - c. His adventure into the valley of dry bones.
 - d. His return to Jerusalem after 70 years.
11. How is Ezekiel a good example to us?
- a. We should preach weird and wonderful messages.
 - b. We should be committed to obeying and fulfilling God's Word.
 - c. We should have visions.
 - d. We should always go for God, even if we have not come to God.
12. What did Ezekiel's vision of God reveal to him about God?
- a. That God is all-knowing
 - b. That God is everywhere
 - c. That God is all-powerful
 - d. All of the above



Have you ever tried to share the gospel without asking God's Spirit to breathe life into the person you have shared with? What were the results? Why is it impossible to bear spiritual fruit without the Spirit of God's help?



If you are a believer in Jesus, thank God that He has breathed His Spirit into you. (If you are not a believer in Jesus, if you feel spiritually like dry bones, place your trust in Him now and ask Him to save you and breathe His eternal life into you.) Ask God to empower you to do His will.



Going Deeper

1. Ezekiel was ministering to the Jews in captivity. What was the allegorical meaning of the *dry bones* and what was Ezekiel's assignment? _____

2. Show how the dry bones sermon of Ezekiel demonstrates the impossibility of just about any kind of ministry, whether it is one-on-one evangelism or preaching the Gospel to large groups of people, without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. _____

3. If you are a pastor, a Sunday school teacher, a small-group leader or any other kind of spiritual leader, how can this sermon inspire you to look at those who are the target of your ministry, as you realize the impossibility of *your* objectives for them being accomplished? _____

4. How should we apply the difference it made when Ezekiel prophesied to the Breath? _____

5. What are the differences between the experiences we need to have in our coming to God and the experiences we need to have in our going for God? _____

6. What are some of the dimensions of the ministry of the Spirit for which you should pray when you minister? (For example, His Presence and ministry within us, with us, upon us and through us.) _____

7. As you seriously consider Ezekiel's vision of the restored temple in the place where the original temple once stood, what has to happen for that to be fulfilled, considering that the third-most sacred temple of Islam (The Dome of the Rock) now stands on that very spot? _____

Believers versus Babylonians

Chapter 11

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #71



Objective: To understand the book of Daniel and how his faith delivered him and honored God.



“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

—Daniel 2:20-23

The book of Daniel is the fourth book of the major prophets. Daniel and his three friends were taken to Babylon because they were intelligent young men that the king wanted to educate in Babylonian universities. God used the king’s decree to strategically place this prophet in Babylon to prepare him to minister to the other captives when they arrived. Daniel was faithful to God in very difficult situations in this foreign land, even when his obedience could have gotten him killed. God did miracles through Daniel and his friends that witnessed to the Babylonians that God is real and powerful.

The book of Daniel divides into two sections: chapters 1-6, are historical narrative, and chapters 7-12 are prophetic revelation. Ezekiel, John, and Daniel all prophesied about the end times and they were also exiled prophets. Daniel’s life is a superb example of living a strong, pure, godly life in the midst of a hostile environment even when he was only 14 years old.



1. True or false? Daniel was taken to Babylon during the first fall of Jerusalem, when only a few people were taken captive.
2. True or false? Daniel was already an adult man when he went to Babylon.
3. True or false? The fall of Jerusalem demonstrated that even God could not defeat the Babylonians.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. What was included in the book of Daniel?
 - a. Only historical accounts
 - b. Only predictions of the end times
 - c. Only legends about an ancient hero named Daniel
 - d. Historical events during the captivity and prophecies about current and future events.
5. Why did Daniel refuse to eat the food of the Babylonians?
 - a. He thought it was probably poisoned.
 - b. He wanted to be obedient to God's dietary laws.
 - c. He went on a hunger strike in protest against the captivity.
 - d. He was so discouraged that he had no appetite.
6. Match Daniel and his 3 friend's names with their Biblical meanings.

a. Daniel	i. Jehovah was favored
b. Hananiah	ii. Helped by Jehovah
c. Mishael	iii. God is my judge
d. Azariah	iv. Who is like God
7. How did King Nebuchadnezzar try to give Daniel and his friends a new identity?
 - a. He gave them new names that related to Babylonian gods.
 - b. He killed their entire families so they would have no connections to the past.
 - c. He adopted them into the royal family.
 - d. He persuaded them that Babylon's culture was superior to that of the Jews.
8. Why is the fourth chapter of Daniel so remarkable?
 - a. It is the only chapter Daniel actually wrote himself.
 - b. It was added centuries later by scribes.
 - c. It predicts the exact date of Jesus' return.
 - d. It is the confession of faith of King Nebuchadnezzar, who actually wrote part of it.
9. Why was Nebuchadnezzar's request for dream interpretation so unreasonable?
 - a. No king had ever asked to have his dreams interpreted before.
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar demanded that his wise men tell him the dream before they interpreted it.
 - c. The wise men had never taken a course in dream interpretation.
 - d. He knew that dreams do not really mean anything.

10. How did Daniel react to huge, difficult, inescapable, and impossible challenges? (*choose all that apply*)

- a. He went to God in prayer and asked friends to pray too.
- b. He demonstrated faith by trusting God absolutely.
- c. He recognized God as his only source of hope and gave Him all the glory.
- d. He understood that God had a purpose for placing him in that crisis.

11. How did the king react to Daniel's interpretation?

- a. He ordered him to be executed.
- b. He decided the dream must not have been very significant.
- c. He called Daniel "the one in whom God dwells."
- d. He rewarded Daniel by sending him back to Jerusalem.

12. What Babylonian law did Daniel refuse to keep?

- a. A law that prohibited prayers to God instead of the king
- b. A law requiring taxes to be paid to the king
- c. A requirement that everyone must have a Babylonian name
- d. A requirement to honor the divinity of lions

13. What does Daniel teach us about impossible situations?

- a. We can never really understand what God's will is.
- b. God uses impossible situations to close doors of opportunity for us.
- c. The power of God is limited in some situations.
- d. Nothing is impossible for those in whom the Spirit of God dwells.



Do you believe in the absolute power of God in impossible situations? Why or why not? When you go through a crisis or challenge, how should that belief guide your prayers?



Thank God that He is the God of the impossible. If you are facing an "impossible" situation, ask Him to demonstrate His power and love to you and through you in that situation. Pray that like Daniel you will be faithful and that your faith in Him will grow stronger each day.



Going Deeper

1. Explain why God may have strategically placed Daniel and his companions in Babylon before the general captivity. _____

2. How does Daniel show us the way to live the life of a believer in a culture like Babylon? ____

3. What are the obvious applications of this to you, as a believer living in a Babylon-like secular culture? _____

4. How do the spiritual absolutes of Daniel that made it possible for him to live as a believer in the arena of the politics of Babylon apply to you today? (He believed in the power of God, in the Providence of God and in prayer, absolutely!) _____

5. How can you apply the position Daniel took when he refused to eat the unclean foods of Babylon? _____

6. What is the obvious application to the faith of Daniel when he told the officials to make an appointment for him with the king and he would reveal and interpret the dream of the king, when he actually had no idea what the king had dreamed? _____

7. When the wise men of Babylon agreed that the gods do not live in men and Daniel told the king that the God who lived in him had revealed and interpreted the dream, the king thereafter always referred to Daniel as the one in whom the Spirit of God lived. How do you relate to the faith of Daniel, that God living in us should make such a difference? _____

Babylon Believes

Chapter 12

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #72



Objective: To understand the historical context of Daniel's ministry and the impact it had on Babylon.



"It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation."

—Daniel 4:2-3

At the time of Daniel, Babylon was not only the premier city of the world, but it ruled the most powerful empire that had existed up to that time. Its king, Nebuchadnezzar, was a powerful and prideful ruler. But through Daniel's witness of godliness and his ministry of interpreting dreams, Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon were given examples of the power of God. One of the most remarkable miracles in Scripture is the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar, one of the world's least likely rulers to turn to the living God. Rather than the Jews being transformed into Babylonians, as the king originally intended, the king and other Babylonians were turned into believers in the God of Daniel—the One True God. After his pride was stripped from him, Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that God is the rightful ruler of all the kingdoms of this world.



1. True or false? In many ways, the book of Daniel can be read as a dramatic play.
2. True or false? Babylon was just a small, remote city at the time of Daniel.
3. True or false? Babylonians were not very religious people; hardly any temples have been found in their cities.
4. True or false? Daniel's three friends were not afraid to be thrown into the furnace because they knew God was going to protect them.
5. True or false? The Babylonian Empire remained dominant throughout Daniel's lifetime.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

6. Which of the following best describes Daniel's visions?
 - a. They are very easy to understand.
 - b. They have very few symbols in them.
 - c. They contain many mysterious images and symbols.
 - d. They are impossible to interpret.
7. What happened to the three young men who refused to worship a giant golden statue of King Nebuchadnezzar?
 - a. They were publicly executed by hanging.
 - b. They were thrown into a furnace, but God protected them.
 - c. They eventually changed their minds and bowed down to it.
 - d. They were imprisoned for the rest of their lives.
8. Which of the following best describes King Nebuchadnezzar's rule?
 - a. He had very widespread, absolute power. He could do whatever he wanted to do.
 - b. He was a weak king who was always worried about being overthrown.
 - c. He was very kind and generous throughout his reign.
 - d. No one in his kingdom respected his authority.
9. What did the four parts of the statue in the king's dream represent?
 - a. The king's lasting rule over everything to the north, south, east, and west
 - b. Daniel and his three friends
 - c. Only four more years left in his reign
 - d. Four kingdoms in succession: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.
10. What did Nebuchadnezzar believe about God?
 - a. He did not believe in God at all.
 - b. He believed he was God.
 - c. He believed in the one true God.
 - d. He first believed in Babylonian gods (and in himself), then converted to faith in the true God.

11. How did God strip the king of his pride and teach him to acknowledge God's glory?

- a. He caused the king to be insane for seven years.
- b. He allowed the Jews to rise up and defeat him.
- c. He afflicted the king with leprosy.
- d. He exiled the king to Jerusalem.



In what ways has God worked in your life to help you believe in Him? In what ways do you see Him working in the lives of those who do not yet know Him? How can you pray for them and share your faith with them?



Thank God that He does whatever is necessary to give us an opportunity to believe in Him. Thank Him for His miracles of mercy and revelation, and pray that He would bring many more into His kingdom. Like Daniel, commit to Him your life, purpose in your heart to not defile yourself with the things of this world, and acknowledge His total authority to be the Lord of your life.



Going Deeper

1. How do you apply the great miracle recorded in chapter four, that Nebuchadnezzar believed in the God of Daniel because of what began when Daniel was 14 years old? _____

2. What is the level of your faith in the proposition that, when Babylon determines that you as a believer are going to become a Babylonian, you can respond that they as Babylonians are going to become believers? _____

3. What is your response and application to the faith of Daniel and his friends when they refused to bow down to the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had erected to glorify himself? _____

4. How can you personally apply the ways God broke the pride of Nebuchadnezzar? (Consider Matthew 5:3-4) _____

5. How do you apply the absolute of Daniel that motivated him to refuse to obey the law of the king that prohibited prayer? _____

6. How do you apply the statement that Daniel was making by refusing to obey that law? _____

7. What is the priority of prayer in your life today? _____

The Prayer Priorities of a Great Prophet

Chapter 13

Audio Lesson: Old Testament #73



Objective: To learn some principles of interpretation of the visions and prophetic revelations of Daniel.



“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

—Daniel 7:13-14

Daniel had many visions that are highly symbolic and sometimes difficult for us to understand. He had a dream about four kingdoms that was similar to the dream he had interpreted for King Nebuchadnezzar, and a vision of the 70 weeks that indicated it was time for the people of Judah to return to Jerusalem. That vision also predicted the coming of the Messiah with great accuracy. The important thing to remember with visions like Daniel’s is that we must depend on the Holy Spirit to understand them—and even then, we should not be dogmatic about our interpretation. We must humbly ask the Holy Spirit what the Scripture says, what it means, and what it should mean to us. When we allow the Spirit of God to be our teacher, we will begin to understand more and more of His will and His ways. Daniel ends like the other prophets on a positive note. In his prophesy of the 70 weeks, he gives a precise prediction of the coming of the Messiah and the beginning of His Kingdom which shall be without end.



1. True or false? Even the historical sections of Daniel are difficult to understand.
2. True or false? Apocalyptic visions in the Bible give us a glimpse of God that we could never get in our natural understanding.
3. True or false? Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the four kingdoms ended with the eternal kingdom of God overcoming all others.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. What did the four great beasts of Daniel's vision represent?
 - a. Four kingdoms, as in Nebuchadnezzar's dream
 - b. Forty years of captivity
 - c. The four living creatures that Ezekiel saw around God's throne
 - d. The four major prophets
5. According to Daniel's dreams and visions, how long will God's kingdom last?
 - a. Seventy years
 - b. One thousand years
 - c. Until the end of the world
 - d. Forever and ever and ever
6. What do animal horns usually represent in Bible prophecy?
 - a. God's provision
 - b. Anger and God's judgment
 - c. Power or kingdoms
 - d. The beastly nature of human beings
7. Which of the following were the three "absolutes" on which Daniel stood firm in his faith?
(choose all that apply)
 - a. Prayer
 - b. The immediate coming of the Messiah
 - c. The absolute power of God
 - d. The purposes of God in placing him in Babylon
 - e. The power of dreams
 - f. The superiority of Babylon over all other kingdoms
8. What first caused Daniel to realize that the time of captivity was fulfilled?
 - a. A loud voice from heaven announced it to him.
 - b. The Persian king told him it was time.
 - c. He read Jeremiah's prophecy.
 - d. The people had learned their lesson and had become completely righteous.
9. Why is Daniel's great prayer a model for us?
 - a. It uses the same words as the prayer Jesus taught His disciples.
 - b. He was able to tell God what to do.
 - c. It shows how to repent in order to get what we want.
 - d. He prayed for God's will and for God's glory.

10. Which of the following best describes Daniel's prophecy of the Messiah?
- a. It is the most precise prediction of the Messiah in the Old Testament.
 - b. It is so vague that it could have been fulfilled by almost anyone.
 - c. It portrays the Messiah as a harsh and angry king.
 - d. It predicted that the Messiah would come at the end of the captivity.
11. What did the big rock not cut by human hands that destroys the statue represent?
- a. The powerful kingdom of Babylon
 - b. The Roman Empire that would break all other kingdoms.
 - c. It is too complicated; we cannot say what it means.
 - d. The Messiah's eternal Kingdom that will conquer all.
12. What promise do the prophecies of the end times give us who trust in God?
- a. That we will never have to suffer in this life
 - b. That we will never fail in any of our battles on earth
 - c. That we will be wealthy and powerful until the end times
 - d. That in the end, we will be on the winning side



Are you involved in God's kingdom now in such a way that you will be satisfied with your contribution to the final victory? If not, what can you do this week to help the winning effort?



Thank God for the certain hope that His people will be on the winning side at the end of history. Ask Him to give you opportunities to serve Him as faithfully as Daniel did. Pray that His will would be done and that He would be glorified in your life. Ask Him to help you share the good news with others and to always give God the glory.



Going Deeper

1. With what perspective should you approach the second half of the book of Daniel, which contains his visions regarding the future? _____

2. What is special about the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel? _____

3. What motivated Daniel to preach this great Messianic prophecy? _____

4. How should the pinpoint accuracy of this Messianic vision give us great respect for Biblical prophecy? _____

5. What were the four great kingdoms profiled in Daniel's vision, and how should that history lesson help us to interpret and apply this vision? _____

6. Why are these visions difficult or impossible to interpret without the Holy Spirit being our Teacher? (Consider John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2: 9-16) _____

7. Why does God want us to understand the future things to come? _____

