

OLD TESTAMENT EXPERT
The Major Prophets, Isaiah – Daniel
Lesson # 9

I. REVIEW: WRITE DOWN THE THEMES AND OUTLINES OF JOB - SONG OF SOLOMON

A. Theme of Job is:

1. Outline of Job
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

B. Theme of Psalms is:

1. Outline of Psalms
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

C. Theme of Proverbs is:

1. Outline of Proverbs
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

D. Theme of Ecclesiastes is:

1. Outline of Ecclesiastes
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

E. Theme of Song of Solomon is:

1. Outline of Song of Solomon
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

II. SEE IF YOU CAN MATCH THE NAMES WITH THE NUMBERED DESCRIPTIONS

#	Person	#	Description of Person
	Job	1	A person who practices sin
	Satan	2	A person who knows God's Word but doesn't apply it to his life
	Eliphaz	3	Rich, godly man who worshiped God before his trials, during his trials and after his trials
	Bildad	4	An unsubmitive, nagging, complaining wife
	Zophar	5	A person who knows God's Word, doesn't apply it to his life, and ridicules those who do
	Elihu	6	A person enslaved to wine or alcoholic beverages
	Wise man	7	Was sought out by the Lord to test a godly man
	Fool	8	A person who does not control his emotions, tongue, or actions
	Naive	9	Job's friend who gave him bad counsel based on his <i>experiences</i> , assumed Job was in sin
	Scoffer	10	A naive, boisterous, ungodly woman who practices immorality and/or is unfaithful to her husband
	Sluggard	11	Job's younger friend who gave wiser counsel than those older than he, rebuked Job for being self-righteous
	Vexing Woman	12	A person who knows God's Word and who applies it to his life
	Angry Man	13	Job's friend who gave him bad counsel based on <i>traditions</i> , assumed Job was in sin
	Evil man	14	A faithful, godly, diligent and wise wife
	Foolish Woman	18	A person who is ignorant of God's Word and has little life experience
	Drunkard	19	Job's friend who gave him bad counsel based on his <i>personal religious convictions</i> , assumed Job was in sin
	Excellent Wife	20	A person who is lazy, undisciplined and makes excuses for not working diligently and planning ahead

III. THEMES AND STRUCTURES OF ISAIAH – DANIEL

A. Theme of Isaiah: Salvation

1. Outline of Isaiah
 - a. Chastening of God, Chapters 1-39
 - b. Comfort of God, Chapters 40-66
2. Key people of Isaiah
 - a. Isaiah – Prophet who served among the nobles in Judah and was a contemporary of Micah.
 - b. Uzziah (Azariah) – Most prosperous king in Judah since the division of the Kingdom after Solomon. He was struck with leprosy for offering incense to the Lord in the temple.
 - c. Jotham – King of Judah, son of Uzziah, father of Ahaz, feared the Lord, built the high gate of the temple, subdued the Ammonites
 - d. Ahaz – King of Judah, son of Jotham, did evil in the sight of the Lord, refused to trust the Lord, received the virgin birth prophecy from Isaiah.
 - e. Hezekiah – King of Judah, followed the Lord, destroyed pagan high places, destroyed bronze serpent which Moses made in the wilderness because it had become an idol.
3. Summary of Isaiah – Isaiah, the “Shakespeare of the prophets,” has often been called the “evangelical prophet” because of his incredibly clear and detailed messianic prophecies. The “gospel according to Isaiah” has three major sections: prophecies of condemnation (1–35); historical parenthesis (36–39); and prophecies of comfort (40–66).

Prophecies of Condemnation (1–35): Isaiah’s first message of condemnation is aimed at his own countrymen in Judah (1–12). Chapter 1 is a capsulized message of the entire book. Judah is riddled with moral and spiritual disease; the people are neglecting God as they bow to ritualism and selfishness. But Yahweh graciously invites them to repent and return to Him because this is their only hope of avoiding judgment. Isaiah’s call to proclaim God’s message is found in chapter 6, and this is followed by the book of Immanuel (7–12). These chapters repeatedly refer to the Messiah (see 7:14; 8:14; 9:2, 6–7; 11:1–2) and anticipate the blessing of His future reign.

The prophet moves from local to regional judgment as he proclaims a series of oracles against the surrounding nations (13–23). The eleven nations are Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus (Syria), Ethiopia, Egypt, Babylon (again), Edom, Arabia, Jerusalem (Judah), and Tyre. Isaiah’s little apocalypse (24–27) depicts universal tribulation followed by the blessings of the kingdom. Chapters 28–33 pronounce six woes on Israel and Judah for specific sins. Isaiah’s prophetic condemnation closes with a general picture of international devastation that will precede universal blessing (34–35).

Historical Parenthesis (36–39): This historical parenthesis looks back to the Assyrian invasion of Judah in 701 b.c. and anticipates the coming Babylonian invasion of Judah. Judah escapes captivity by Assyria (36–37; 2 Kin. 18–19), but they will not escape from the hands of Babylon (38–39; 2 Kin. 20). God answers King Hezekiah’s prayers and delivers Judah from Assyrian destruction by Sennacherib. Hezekiah also turns to the Lord in his illness and is granted a fifteen-year extension of his life. But he foolishly shows all his treasures to the Babylonian messengers, and Isaiah tells him that the Babylonians will one day carry his treasure and descendants to their land.

Prophecies of Comfort (40–66): Having pronounced Judah’s divine condemnation, Isaiah comforts them with God’s promises of hope and restoration. The basis for this hope is the sovereignty and majesty of God (40–48). Of the 216 verses in these nine chapters, 115 speak of God’s greatness and power. The Creator is contrasted with idols, the creations of men. His sovereign character is Judah’s assurance of future restoration. Babylon will indeed carry them off; but Babylon will finally be judged and destroyed, and God’s people will be released from captivity.

Chapters 49–57 concentrate on the coming Messiah who will be their Savior and Suffering Servant. This rejected but exalted One will pay for their iniquities and usher in a kingdom of peace and righteousness throughout the earth. All who acknowledge their sins and trust in Him will be delivered (58–66). In that day Jerusalem will be rebuilt, Israel’s borders will be enlarged, and the Messiah will reign in Zion. God’s people will confess their sins and His enemies will be judged. Peace, prosperity, and justice will prevail, and God will make all things new.¹

B. Theme of Jeremiah: Last Hour Warning

1. Outline of Jeremiah
 - a. Jeremiah’s Call, Chapter 1
 - b. Judah’s Gall, Chapters 2-51
 - c. Jerusalem’s Fall, Chapter 52
2. Key People in Jeremiah
 - a. Jeremiah – Prophet of God who prophesied to Judah before they were taken captive to Babylon
 - b. Baruch – Jeremiah’s personal scribe and assistant
3. Summary of Jeremiah – Jeremiah is a record of the ministry of one of Judah’s greatest prophets during its darkest days. He is called as a prophet during the reign of Josiah, the last of Judah’s good kings. But even Josiah’s well-intentioned reforms cannot stem the tide of apostasy. The downhill slide of the nation continues virtually unabated through a succession of four godless kings during Jeremiah’s ministry. The people wallow in apostasy and idolatry and grow even more treacherous than Israel was before its

¹Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. Talk Thru the Bible. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.

captivity (3:11). They pervert the worship of the true God and give themselves over to spiritual and moral decay. Because they refuse to repent or even listen to God's prophet, the divine cure requires radical surgery. Jeremiah proclaims an approaching avalanche of judgment. Babylon will be God's instrument of judgment, and this book refers to that nation 164 times, more than the rest of the Bible together.

Jeremiah faithfully proclaims the divine condemnation of rebellious Judah for forty years and is rewarded with opposition, beatings, isolations, and imprisonment. His sympathy and sensitivity cause him to grieve over the rebelliousness and imminent doom of his nation. He often desires to resign from his prophetic office because of the harshness of his message and his reception, but he perseveres to Judah's bitter end. He is the weeping prophet (9:1; 13:17)—lonely, rejected, and persecuted.

Although Jeremiah is not easy to arrange chronologically or thematically, its basic message is clear: surrender to God's will is the only way to escape calamity. Judgment cannot be halted, but promises of restoration are sprinkled through the book. Its divisions are: the call of Jeremiah (1), the prophecies to Judah (2–45), the prophecies to the Gentiles (46–51), the fall of Jerusalem (52).

The Call of Jeremiah (1):—Jeremiah is called and sanctified before birth to be God's prophet. This introductory chapter surveys the identification, inauguration, and instructions of the prophet.

The Prophecies to Judah (2–45):—Jeremiah's message is communicated through a variety of parables, sermons, and object lessons. The prophet's life becomes a daily illustration to Judah, and most of the book's object lessons are found in this section (13:1–14; 14:1–9; 16:1–9; 18:1–8; 19:1–13; 24:1–10; 27:1–11; 32:6–15; 43:8–13). In a series of twelve graphic messages, Jeremiah lists the causes of Judah's coming judgment. The gentile nations are more faithful to their false gods than Judah is to God. They become a false vine by following idols and are without excuse. The people are condemned for their empty profession, disobedience to God's covenant, and spiritual harlotry. God has bound Judah to Himself; but like a rotten waistband, they have become corrupt and useless. Jeremiah offers a confession for the people, but their sin is too great; the prophet can only lament for them. As a sign of imminent judgment he is forbidden to marry and participate in the feasts. Because the nation does not trust God or keep the Sabbath, the land will receive a sabbath rest when they are in captivity. Jerusalem will be invaded and the rulers and people will be deported to Babylon. Restoration will only come under the new Shepherd, the Messiah, the nation's future King. Jeremiah announces the duration of the Captivity as seventy years, in contrast to the messages of the false prophets who insist it will not happen.

Because of his message (2:25), Jeremiah suffers misery and opposition (26–45). He is rejected by the prophets and priests who call for his death, but he is spared by the elders and officials. In his sign of the yoke he proclaims the unpopular message that Judah must submit to divine discipline. But he assures the nation of restoration and hope under a new covenant (30–33). A Remnant will be delivered and there will be a coming time of blessing. Jeremiah's personal experiences and sufferings are the focal point of 34–45 as opposition against the prophet mounts. Since he is no longer allowed in the temple, he sends his assistant Baruch to read his prophetic warnings. His scroll is burned by Jehoiakim, and Jeremiah is imprisoned. After the destruction of the city, Jeremiah is taken to Egypt by fleeing Jews, but he prophesies that Nebuchadnezzar will invade Egypt as well.

The Prophecies to the Gentiles (46–51): These chapters are a series of prophetic oracles against nine nations: Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Damascus (Syria), Arabia, Elam, and Babylon. Only Egypt, Moab, Ammon, and Elam are given a promise of restoration.

The Fall of Jerusalem (52): Jeremiah's forty-year declaration of doom was finally vindicated in an event so significant that it is recorded in detail four times in the Scriptures (see 2 Kin. 25; 2 Chr. 36; Jer. 39; 52). In this historical supplement, Jerusalem is captured,¹ destroyed, and plundered. The leaders are killed and the captives taken to Babylon.²

C. Theme of Lamentations: Funeral of Jerusalem

1. Outline of

- a. The Ruin of Jerusalem, Chapter 1
- b. The Wrath of God, Chapter 2
- c. The Request for Mercy, Chapter 3
- d. The Review of the Siege, Chapter 4
- e. The Request for Restoration, Chapter 5

2. Summary of Lamentations – For forty years Jeremiah suffers rejection and abuse for his warnings of coming judgment. When Nebuchadnezzar finally comes and destroys Jerusalem in 586 b.c., a lesser man might say, "I told you so!" But Jeremiah compassionately identifies with the tragic overthrow of Jerusalem and composes five beautiful and emotional lament poems as a funeral for the once proud city. These dirges reflect the tender heart of the man who was divinely commissioned to communicate a harsh message to a sinful and stiff-necked people. The city, the temple, the palace, and the walls have been reduced to rubble and its inhabitants have been deported to distant Babylon. Jeremiah's five mournful poems can be entitled: The Destruction of Jerusalem (1); The Anger of Jehovah (2); The Prayer for Mercy (3); The Siege of Jerusalem (4); and The Prayer for Restoration (5).

The Destruction of Jerusalem (1): This poem consists of a lamentation by Jeremiah (1:1–11) and a lamentation by the personified Jerusalem (1:12–22). The city has been left desolate because of its grievous sins, and her enemies "mocked at her downfall" (1:7). Jerusalem pleads with God to regard her misery and repay her adversaries.

The Anger of Jehovah (2): In his second elegy, Jeremiah moves from Jerusalem's desolation to a description of her destruction. Babylon has destroyed the city, but only as the Lord's instrument of judgment. Jeremiah presents an eyewitness account of the thoroughness and severity of Jerusalem's devastation. Through the Babylonians, God has terminated all religious observances, removed the priests, prophets, and kings, and razed the temple and palaces. Jeremiah grieves over the suffering the people brought on themselves through rebellion against God, and Jerusalem's supplications complete the lament.

The Prayer for Mercy (3): In the first eighteen verses, Jeremiah enters into the miseries and despair of his people and makes them his own. However, we observe an abrupt turn

² Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. Talk Thru the Bible. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.

in verses 19–39 as the prophet reflects on the faithfulness and loyal love of the compassionate God of Israel. These truths enable him to find comfort and hope in spite of his dismal circumstances. Jeremiah expresses his deep sorrow and petitions God for deliverance and for God to avenge Jerusalem’s misery.

The Siege of Jerusalem (4): The prophet rehearses the siege of Jerusalem and remembers the suffering and starvation of rich and poor. He also reviews the causes of the siege, especially the sins of the prophets and priests, and their foolish trust in human aid. This poem closes with a warning to Edom of future punishment and a glimmer of hope for Jerusalem.

The Prayer for Restoration (5): Jeremiah’s last elegy is a melancholy description of his people’s lamentable state. Their punishment is complete, and Jeremiah prayerfully desires the restoration of his nation.³

D. Theme of Ezekiel: Condemnation and Restoration

1. Outline of Ezekiel

- a. Requisition of Ezekiel, Chapters 1-3
- b. Wrath on Judah, Chapters 4-24
- c. Wrath on Gentiles, Chapters 25-32
- d. Restoration of Israel, Chapters 33-48

2. Key people in Ezekiel

- a. Ezekiel – Priest, prophet, son of Buzi, ministered to exiled Jews in Babylon

3. Summary of Ezekiel – Ezekiel prophesies among the Jewish exiles in Babylon during the last days of Judah’s decline and downfall. His message of judgment is similar to that of his older contemporary Jeremiah who has remained in Jerusalem. Judah will be judged because of her unfaithfulness, but God promises her future restoration and blessing. Like Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel proclaims a message of horror and hope, of condemnation and consolation. But Ezekiel places special emphasis on the glory of Israel’s sovereign God who says, “They shall know that I am the Lord.” The book breaks in four sections: (1) The commission of Ezekiel (1–3); (2) the judgment on Judah (4–24); (3) the judgment on the Gentiles (25–32); and (4) the restoration of Israel (33–48).

The Commission of Ezekiel (1–3): God gives Ezekiel an overwhelming vision of His divine glory and commissions him to be His prophet (cf. the experiences of Moses in Ex. 3:1–10, Isaiah in 6:1–10, Daniel in 10:5–14, and John in Rev. 1:12–19). Ezekiel is given instruction, enablement, and responsibility.

³ Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. *Talk Thru the Bible*. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.

The Judgment on Judah (4–24): Ezekiel directs his prophecies against the nation God chose for Himself. The prophet's signs and sermons (4–7) point to the certainty of Judah's judgment. In chapters 8–11, Judah's past sins and coming doom are seen in a series of visions of the abominations in the temple, the slaying of the wicked, and the departing glory of God. The priests and princes are condemned as the Glory leaves the temple, moves to the Mount of Olives, and disappears in the east. Chapters 12–24 speak of the causes and extent of Judah's coming judgment through dramatic signs, powerful sermons, and parables. Judah's prophets are counterfeits and her elders are idolatrous. They have become a fruitless vine and an adulterous wife. Babylon will swoop down like an eagle and pluck them up, and they will not be aided by Egypt. The people are responsible for their own sins, and they are not being unjustly judged for the sins of their ancestors. Judah has been unfaithful, but God promises that her judgment ultimately will be followed by restoration.

The Judgment on the Gentiles (25–32): Judah's nearest neighbors may gloat over her destruction, but they will be next in line. They too will suffer the fate of siege and destruction by Babylon. Ezekiel shows the full circle of judgment on the nations that surround Judah by following them in a clockwise circuit: Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, and Sidon (25–28). He spends a disproportionate amount of time on Tyre, and many scholars believe that the "king of Tyre" (28:11–19) may be Satan, the real power behind the nation. Chapters 29–32 contain a series of oracles against Egypt. Unlike the nations in chapters 25–28 that were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, Egypt will continue to exist, but as "the lowliest of the kingdoms." Since that time it has never recovered its former glory or influence.

The Restoration of Israel (33–48): The prophecies in these chapters were given after the overthrow of Jerusalem. Now that the promised judgment has come, Ezekiel's message no longer centers on coming judgment but on the positive theme of comfort and consolation. Just as surely as judgment has come, blessing will also come; God's people will be regathered and restored. The mouth of Ezekiel, God's watchman, is opened when he is told that Jerusalem has been taken. Judah has had false shepherds (rulers), but the true Shepherd will lead them in the future. The vision of the valley of dry bones pictures the reanimation of the nation by the Spirit of God. Israel and Judah will be purified and reunited. There will be an invasion by the northern armies of God, but Israel will be saved because the Lord will destroy the invading forces.

In 572 b.c., fourteen years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel returns in a vision to the fallen city and is given detailed specifications of the reconstruction of the temple, the city, and the land (40–48). After an intricate description of the new outer court, inner court, and temple (40–42), Ezekiel views the return of the glory of the Lord to the temple from the east. Regulations concerning worship in the coming temple (43–46) are followed by revelations concerning the new land and city (47–48).⁴

E. Theme of Daniel: God's Plan for Israel

1. Outline of Daniel
 - a. History, Chapters 1-6
 - b. Prophecy, Chapters 7-12

⁴ Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. *Talk Thru the Bible*. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.

2. Key People in Daniel

- a. Daniel – taken captive to Babylon as a teenager, official in the Babylonian government, prophet
- b. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego – spent time in the fiery furnace for not committing idolatry
- c. Nebuchadnezzar – Chaldean king, son of Nabopolassar, conquered Jerusalem and took Jews captive to Babylon
- d. Darius – Persian king who feared the Lord
- e. Cyrus – King of Persia who conquered Babylonians, allowed Jews to return to Jerusalem
- f. Belshazzar – King of Babylon, grandson of Nebuchadnezzar
- g. Michael – The archangel who ministered to Daniel

3. Summary of Daniel – Daniel, the “Apocalypse of the Old Testament,” presents a surprisingly detailed and comprehensive sweep of prophetic history. After an introductory chapter in Hebrew, Daniel switches to Aramaic in chapters 2–7 to describe the future course of the gentile world powers. Then in chapters 8–12, Daniel reverts back to his native language to survey the future of the Jewish nation under gentile dominion. The theme of God’s sovereign control in the affairs of world history clearly emerges and provides comfort to the future church, as well as to the Jews whose nation was destroyed by the Babylonians. The Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans will come and go, but God will establish His kingdom through His redeemed people forever. Daniel’s three divisions are: (1) The personal history of Daniel (1); (2) the prophetic plan for the Gentiles (2–7); and (3) the prophetic plan for Israel (8–12).

The Personal History of Daniel (1): This chapter introduces the book by giving the background and preparation of the prophet. Daniel is deported along with other promising youths and placed in an intensive training program in Nebuchadnezzar’s court. Their names and diets are changed so that they will lose their Jewish identification, but Daniel’s resolve to remain faithful to the Lord is rewarded. He and his friends are granted wisdom and knowledge.

The Prophetic Plan for the Gentiles (2–7): Only Daniel can relate and interpret Nebuchadnezzar’s disturbing dream of the great statue (2). God empowers Daniel to foretell the way in which He will sovereignly raise and depose four gentile empires. The Messiah’s kingdom will end the “Times of the Gentiles.” Because of his position revealed in the dream, Nebuchadnezzar erects a golden image and demands that all bow to it (3). The persecution and preservation of Daniel’s friends in the fiery furnace again illustrates the power of God. After Nebuchadnezzar refuses to respond to the warning of his vision of the tree (4), he is humbled until he acknowledges the supremacy of God and the foolishness of his pride. The feast of Belshazzar marks the end of the Babylonian kingdom (5). Belshazzar is judged because of his arrogant defiance of God. In the reign of Darius, a plot against Daniel backfires when he is divinely delivered in the den of lions (6). Daniel’s courageous faith is rewarded, and Darius learns a lesson about the might of the God of Israel. The vision of the four beasts (7) supplements the four-part statue vision of chapter 2 in its portrayal of the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires. But

once again, “the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever” (7:18).

The Prophetic Plan for Israel (8–12): The focus in chapter 8 narrows to a vision of the ram and goat that shows Israel under the Medo-Persian and Grecian empires. Alexander the Great is the big horn (8:21) and Antiochus Epiphanes is the little horn (8:23). After Daniel’s prayer of confession for his people, he is privileged to receive the revelation of the Seventy Weeks, including the Messiah’s atoning death (9). This gives the chronology of God’s perfect plan for the redemption and deliverance of His people. Following is a great vision that gives amazing details of Israel’s future history (10–11). Chapter 11 chronicles the coming kings of Persia and Greece, the wars between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria, and the persecution led by Antiochus. God’s people will be saved out of tribulation resurrected (12).⁵

IV. **HOMEWORK**

- A. Go through your flash cards for all of the books examined so far.
- B. Read through the summary information for Isaiah through Daniel and memorize the themes, outlines and key people.
- C. Read the assigned chapters below.
 - 1. Isaiah
 - a. Chapter 6
 - b. Chapter 40
 - c. Chapter 66
 - 2. Jeremiah
 - a. Chapter 23
 - b. Chapter 25
 - c. Chapter 31
 - 3. Lamentations
 - a. Chapter 3
 - 4. Ezekiel
 - a. Chapter 1
 - b. Chapters 36-37
 - 5. Daniel
 - a. The whole book

⁵ Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. Talk Thru the Bible. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.