

# INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF EZEKIEL

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

A study of the sacred Old Testament scriptures is an invaluable asset to any and all students of the Bible, New Testament Christians or not. To engage in such is to tap into the forethought, foreknowledge, foreshadows, and foresight of the eternal God whom we serve. However, to reject such is ultimately to reject the abundant blessings waiting in store for any who would desire them. And as neglected as the Old Testament as a whole is, it is believed by most that Ezekiel is one of the most neglected books in the entire Bible. Why is it, though, that such a book as that of the twenty-sixth book of the Bible would be passed by even among those who earnestly desire a knowledge of the scriptures?

Ezekiel, like most of the prophetic books of the Old Testament, is seasoned throughout with symbolism and highly figurative language. In order to understand the whole of Ezekiel's narrative it, then, is absolutely essential to understand the non-literal elements of his writings. However, the twenty-first century mindset is conditioned to interpret things literally; and quite frankly for most people, studying Ezekiel to the degree required to properly understand it is simply too much work. But, the problems, with which Ezekiel had to deal are too similar to those faced today, especially in the United States, and thus the divine knowledge contained in Ezekiel is simply too valuable to not glean. Blackwood's studied conclusion was that, "...he who studies this grim prophecy begins to discern a haunting parallel with the events and attitude of today."<sup>1</sup>

The Old Testament entirely, and especially the books of prophecy, give such an abundance of wisdom and hope in view of the future that it is no wonder Paul wrote of such, "*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*" (Romans 15:4).<sup>2</sup> In this brief introduction and overview, particular attention, then, will be given to the days in which Ezekiel lived and worked so the stark comparisons to today can be readily seen.

## **HISTORICAL SETTING:**

The writer, himself, identifies the timeframe in which he is living and working. Ezekiel, being the writer, as discussed later, states that this is now, "...in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month..." (Ezekiel 1:1) and in the, "...fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity" (Ezekiel 1:2). Scripture dictates that of the three carryings away, Jehoiachin was part of the second in 597 B.C. The fifth year of that captivity would then place these events around 592 B.C. The northern nation of Israel, at this time, would have been exiled to Assyria 130 years earlier; and their brethren to the south have now been in Babylon for fifteen years. However, it was still to be six years before Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Babylonian raze at which time the temple and the wall would be lain to waste.

The thirtieth year of which Ezekiel writes would be his own, therefore he would have been born in 622 B.C. At this time Josiah, Judah's third and final righteous king, was midway through his reign. After Josiah's death, having been slain in Megiddo while fighting against the Egyptian forces of Pharaoh-Neco, his successors either did not have the gumption or the desire to set the feet of the nation toward righteousness, and therefore their ungodliness caused God to bring judgment upon them.

As for the prophetic work of Ezekiel, he worked among his brethren for twenty-two years, until 570 B.C. when he died at the age of fifty-two. His life and work would coincide with the likes of Jeremiah and Daniel, thus it is obvious that God had a plan in reaching his people during this time regardless of where they were. Primarily these men were sent with the message that the seventy-year period was real and they would remain for every second of it. But, likewise, the similar message of each of these prophets was that of hope. This hope was physical in that after seventy

years they would be released and sent home, but this hope also was spiritual in looking forward to the time in which the prophesied Messiah would come and establish His eternal kingdom in which would be found life. Jeremiah back in the homeland, Daniel in the Babylonian court, and Ezekiel in the exilic land each delivered the divine message so as to provide the hope so desperately needed in these troubled days.

However, a final word regarding the historical setting and its impact upon the people and the majority of Ezekiel's message would be helpful. Wherein Judah was sent to Babylon because of idolatry, the Babylonians were an idolatrous people. Therefore anybody that dwelt in Babylon was going to have to deal with their sordid sacrilege. Their principle god was named Baal, but they likewise worshipped the likes of Nego Marduk, and Sheshak. The task then placed upon Ezekiel, as well as the other prophets, was to remedy the people's idolatry while they were in the midst of concentrated idolatry. Ezekiel then set about to fulfill his mission which, "...was to show the exiles of the southern kingdom of Judah that their rebellion toward God had caused their captivity and that the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple was evidence of God's wrath (cf. Ezekiel 1:1-24:27). The account of Ezekiel's prophecies in Ezekiel 25:1-32:32 served to warn the surrounding nations that they were to honor the God of Israel."<sup>3</sup> The nation then was going to have to look beyond their local influence and be an example to the surrounding nations by rejecting the ill-fated idol and serve their Savior and God, therefore giving them the right to return home with the blessing of God. This is the type of hostile environment in which Ezekiel was to work and thus the setting would obviously determine the means through which he would approach his responsibility.

### **AUTHOR:**

The writer identifies himself with a quick change from writing in first person to third person during the first four verses of the text. First, he states that, "*I was among the captives by the river Chebar*" (Ezekiel 1:1), then he transitions to say, "*The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest...*" (Ezekiel 1:3). Some would question the reality of Ezekiel's authorship, but their "questions" are nothing more than a pathetic ploy to deny authenticity and verbal inspiration and exalt the atheistic viewpoint of sacred history.

Ezekiel was the son of Buzi. His name, meaning "God strengthens," dictates who he was as that would be his divine directive during his years of service. The fact that he was a priest would determine that his father, too, was a priest. He was sixteen years of age when Nebuchadnezzar first came up against Judah and carried away the temple vessels and the seed royal, among whom was Daniel. Then when he was twenty-five Nebuchadnezzar again took many captives from Judah, and this time Ezekiel was among them, alongside king Jehoiachin. Now it is five years later, he is thirty, and God is calling him to prophesy among his exiled brethren.

The prophet states that his home among the captives is by the river Chebar. This was "a place called Tel-Abib near Nippur on the grand canal southeast of Babylon (Ezekiel 1:1,15)."<sup>4</sup> He also lived in his own house. This is interesting based on the fact that most view the captivities as times of slavery comparable to the cruelty of the taskmasters in Egypt. However, in Babylon the people were treated more as colonists instead of slaves, which would explain why Ezekiel lived independently in his own house, but even more this explains why Daniel and others would have been able to rise to offices of such high esteem.<sup>5</sup>

Other than his father and his home, little is known about Ezekiel's personal life other than the fact that he was married (Ezekiel 24:18). It is known that he rose to some influence among his brethren seeing that the elders of Judah would often assemble at his house (Ezekiel 8:1; 14:1; 20:1).<sup>6</sup> Ezekiel's personality, though, shines forth from his writing. He has been noted to be one of the most colorful of the prophets because of the symbolic actions seen throughout this book.<sup>7</sup> He used vivid imagery and colorful illustrations to effectively and plainly get his point across to the people.<sup>8</sup> The greatest compliment that can be given to Ezekiel, though, is his passion for preaching and love for his brethren. These two qualities are necessary for anyone to be an effective leader, and God saw in Ezekiel these traits when he called unto Ezekiel and said, "*Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed*

*against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus said the Lord God” (Ezekiel 2:3-4).*

A final observation about Ezekiel as author of this book would have to be the stress he placed on individual responsibility. He first set the precedent by owning up to his own personal responsibility. It would have been easy for Ezekiel to respond to the Lord’s call similar to the way Moses or Jonah did. However, Ezekiel recognized that his God had singled him out for a reason, and his response was never one of question or doubt, but rather of acceptance. Then, though, after practicing it he preached it. To the children of Israel Ezekiel taught individual responsibility in passages such as Ezekiel 18:20 and 33:12. Many today would learn well from Ezekiel’s acceptance of responsibility.

It is believed that Ezekiel concluded his prophetic work around 570 B.C. and died about ten years later at the age of fifty-two. It would only be another twenty-one years before Cyrus and his Persian army would come up against and overtake Babylon under the rule of Nabonidus, and shortly thereafter send the captives home (536 B.C.) just as Ezekiel had promised.

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of Ezekiel’s inspired text is easily deduced from its theme. As mentioned before, Ezekiel’s two-fold theme in writing was essentially judgment and hope. He first of all dealt with God’s judgment upon them and the purpose of it.

*“Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do anymore the like, because of all thine abominations. Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds. Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord God; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity” (Ezekiel 5:8-11).*

In other words God’s judgment now is sent upon Judah because of their abundant ungodliness. It was then through His providence that Babylon came against Judah from which many died and more went to the seventy year captivity. God always has and always will punish wrongdoing. If only today’s world would read the likes of Ezekiel and see what the result of ungodliness can be, surely God fearing folks would rise up and take a stand.

The second of the two-fold theme of Ezekiel is hope. Just as he reminded Judah of why they were in Babylon in the first place, he points to the future to help them recall the fact that God is merciful in addition to just. God tells Ezekiel that in the midst of His fury and wrath...

*“...I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land” (Ezekiel 36:21-24).*

Therefore, just as God had sent them into captivity, He likewise would bring them out in mercy. They had been reminded of God’s objective justice, but now they remember His wonderful mercy. Similarly, God continues to be a God of objective justice, but he also will have mercy upon all who will seek it and meet the conditions for it. And so Ezekiel’s two-fold theme was judgment and hope.

However, now the task is to determine how the theme defines the purpose. Knowing the theme it can only be concluded that Ezekiel’s purpose was by using the combined theme that the people would come to know that He is the Lord.<sup>9</sup> This, however, has likewise been the general

theme of most of the historic and prophetic books of the Old Testament. The Jewish people had rejected God for the “illustrious” idol so long ago that they seemingly had forgotten all about the God that took their forefathers by the hand and led them forth out of Egypt. Therefore Ezekiel’s work and writing served as a reminder to the people of the true God whom they had forgotten. A phrase repeated sixty-three times in Ezekiel sums up God’s theme and purpose of the book: “...and ye shall know that I am the Lord” (Ezekiel 6:7, etc.).

In a world that is seemingly doomed to repeat Judah’s mistakes, God providentially continues to raise up voices for righteousness similar to that of Ezekiel. It can only be prayed that mankind will start to listen lest they suffer the eternal exile of torment.

## **OVERVIEW:**

Ezekiel’s prophetic book has been outlined and overviewed in numerous ways of considerable value; however, in order to provide a basic understanding of this book a brief outline and then summary of each chapter would be of great value.

From an exegetical standpoint, Wilkinson and Boa outlined Ezekiel in the following way: (1) The Commission of Ezekiel (chapters 1-3); (2) The Judgment on Judah (chapters 4-24); (3) The Judgment on the Gentiles (chapters 25-32); and (4) The Restoration of Israel (chapters 33-48).<sup>10</sup>

However, from the standpoint of principle and application, Frank Chesser brilliantly outlined Ezekiel in two ways:

“Ezekiel opens with captivity and closes with liberty. Chapters 1-33 focus on sin and judgment due sin ensuing from God’s holiness, righteousness, justice, and wrath.

Chapters 34-48 center on the material and spiritual blessings of love, grace, and mercy conjoined with the obedience of faith. Chapters 1-33 mirror Genesis 3:6 and man’s helplessness in the face of sin. Chapters 34-48 reflect Genesis 3:15 and 12:3.

The first chapter of the final and climactic section of Ezekiel has sacrifice and priesthood (40:39-46) anticipating the termination of the seed of woman and Abraham in Christ and Calvary.”<sup>11</sup>

The balance Ezekiel provides now is evident as he deals with sin and then looks forward to the fruits of penitence (such should define the preaching and teaching done today). Now, though, a closer examination to the text shall be given.

### **Ezekiel 1**

The events of Ezekiel 1 have been called “the vision of the likeness of God’s majesty.”<sup>12</sup> He begins his prophetic book by relaying the events that called him to prophesy. The word of the Lord came forth to Ezekiel in a vision that made known to him God’s glory. “*No man hath seen the Father at any time*” (John 1:18), but God has revealed Himself to His faithful servants from time to time, this being an occasion. Ezekiel looks and sees a whirlwind, representing the presence of God, burning with the fire of God’s brilliance and might. The four creatures that came forth from the whirlwind of representations of God’s majesty, because as powerfully as they are described they still were under his throne (Ezekiel 1:26). When Ezekiel saw the likeness of the glory of the Lord, he fell prostrate and listened to His voice.

### **Ezekiel 2**

Here is recorded the entirety of Ezekiel’s actual call to the prophetic ministry. The voice he heard came forth from the throne at the end of the previous chapter was the voice of God. Now as the Lord reveals unto Ezekiel his work He emphasizes three points. First, this is Ezekiel’s task and he is expected to abide thereby. There would be no excuses to which Ezekiel could turn in order to vacate his responsibility, not even the evil influence of his brethren. Second, Jehovah points out that this rebellious nation will be more likely to reject Ezekiel and the message than they will be to accept him and it, and that the captivity itself was the result of their ungodliness. Then, third, Jehovah stresses that the message Ezekiel was to deliver was not his own but that of God. God’s message was to indicate His power and control, thus any other message would not suffice. The chapter closes with the scroll of God lain before Ezekiel, filled with lamentations, mourning, and woes.

### **Ezekiel 3**

With the scroll of God before him, Ezekiel is commanded to eat it. His consumption of the scroll, still all as part of the vision, indicated his acceptance of the divine message. The very depth of his being was to be embodied by this message, and as it tasted as honey for sweetness, Ezekiel refers to the goodness of it. Now fully equipped with what he was to take to the captive countrymen, Ezekiel is sent with the encouragement to be strong in the face of adversity, and tell his brethren the message whether they would hear it or not. Then suddenly the vision comes to an end as the Spirit lifts him up and takes him back to Tel-abib, at the river Chebar where he began. Ezekiel's individual responsibility is again stressed as he is given the dutiful task of being the watchmen of his brethren and told that regardless of the people's penitence, Ezekiel would be held accountable as to whether he warned them. The closing words find Ezekiel struck dumb, only being able to talk when God opens his mouth and gives him the message he would share.

### **Ezekiel 4**

Now is given the first warning of the coming siege of Jerusalem. As stated, Ezekiel's call (chapters 1-3) occurred in 592 B.C., the siege and destruction of Jerusalem took place just six years later (586 B.C.). Now the people, through these three symbolic illustrations, are to know the fate of their brethren still at home. The first illustration given is the sign of the tile. The clay tile would represent Jerusalem, the fort built against it was Nebuchadnezzar's army, and the pan was the wall around the city. The point was Jerusalem's doomed fate and the wall's destruction. The second illustrative sign was Ezekiel's having to lay on his side. A day for a year, Ezekiel was on his left side three hundred ninety days facing the iniquity of Israel and on his right side forty days facing the iniquity of Judah. Israel was guilty of the greater sin thus represented by the longer burden; but, also the combined time of four hundred thirty years is representative of the years in Egypt their forefathers bore (Galatians 3:17). The bread he would consume depicted the third sign of illustration. These verses point to the famine Jerusalem would suffer and the extent to which the people would go so as to not starve. Ezekiel was given strict rationing restrictions and then was told the bread eaten would have to be baked over burning cow dung, indicating the impurity of the foods required for survival. They had enjoyed a liberal lifestyle, now they would be limited to the bare necessities.

### **Ezekiel 5**

God, through Ezekiel, next sets out to pinpoint the means of His judgment upon them. To illustrate Ezekiel shaves all of his hair off and divides it into three equal portions to which he does the following: (1) he burns one third of it to illustrate how a third of the Jews would die by the pestilence; (2) he chops one third of it up with the knife to illustrate how a third of them would die by the sword of the Babylonians; and (3) he throws one third of it into the wind to illustrate how a third of them would be scattered into the captivity. The most disturbing of the foretold events is when it is stated that the famine will effect them to such a degree that fathers would eat their sons and sons would eat their fathers just to stay alive. Surely the burden of sin is greater than should be borne.

### **Ezekiel 6**

The symbol of Judah's damnable departure was the high places of idolatry. Ezekiel now sets his face before the Judaeen mountains and declares the desolation of these atrocious altars. They would be broken down along with the idols and the idolaters. Many would die, but hope is given for the future by way of a remnant. This remnant would be persons saved from the sword and ushered into captivity where they would be given opportunity to repent. They would remember God in their captivity and be given opportunity to return home. Likewise it would be through this remnant that the lion of the tribe of Judah would spring forth, the Messiah promised, prophesied, and pointed to in the Old Testament. Without this remnant's preservation the seed line would extinguish and with it man's hope for redemption.

### **Ezekiel 7**

Warnings are finished, now God will take action upon His people. The seeds of iniquity and idolatry the people had sown for generations would now cause them to reap God's heavy hand of

justice. Once Babylon was sent upon them there would be nothing left to do. They could fight but their efforts would be in vain. Outside the city was the fierceness of the battle, and inside the city was the fire of death. The only alternative was to surrender and hope for mercy. They would blow the trumpet to indicate battle, but there would be none to answer the call. They could surrender their riches in hopes of mercy, but it would not save them. They could turn to their idols for help, but would only find them deaf and dumb. Destruction was inevitable and all the king would be able to do was mourn. By these events they would know that Jehovah is God.

### **Ezekiel 8**

Ezekiel dates the current events now to be in the sixth year and sixth month, or one and one half years since his call (Ezekiel 1:2). God comes to him in the appearance of fire and in a vision takes him to Jerusalem to point out four specific abominations of which the people were guilty. (1) The image of jealousy in the inner courts (vs. 3); (2) the worship of the beasts and creeping things (vs. 10-11); (3) the women's worship of Tammuz; and (4) the worship of the sun by twenty-five priests (vs. 16). These abominable actions on the part of Jerusalem kindles an intense anger within Jehovah and His reaction is, *"Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ear with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them"* (Ezekiel 8:18).

### **Ezekiel 9**

The executors of God's judgment, numbering six, come as commissioned by Jehovah with weapon in hand and ready to act. These came from the north, representative of Babylon being north of Judah. A man with an inkhorn appears who serves a two-fold purpose: (1) God's destruction of Jerusalem would be recorded to prove unmistakably His power; and (2) a mark would be placed upon the heads of those to not be slain and then comprise the remnant. Then men and women, young and old without the mark of salvation were slain before Ezekiel's eyes. He cries out for mercy on behalf of his brethren not because they deserved mercy, but because of the heathen's ridicule of God who delivered them and now is killing them. However, His response essentially was, they had made their bed and now they would lie in it.

### **Ezekiel 10**

Now is pictured the glory of the Lord, the burning of Jerusalem, and the withdrawing of God from the sanctuary.<sup>13</sup> After Jerusalem's fall the cherubim from chapter one reappear along with the scribe of chapter nine. The scribe is to take coals of fire and scatter them throughout the city signifying the fact that it would then be burned to the ground. The cherubim had come in to destroy from the north, but now from the south they move northward again and with them went the glory of the Lord, now departing from Jerusalem. After a symbolic discussion of God's omniscience and omnipresence (the "all-seeing" One) the cherubim with the glory of the Lord depart Jerusalem completely and spread forth to the four corners of the earth (in all directions). How sad it is indeed to know that God chose these people and this place with and in to dwell, a marvelous honor indeed; but because of their utter rejection now He must depart. It would be better to love in perpetuity than to love and lose, the fate of which all Judah is now the recipient.

### **Ezekiel 11**

Ezekiel is now brought to the east gate of the Jerusalem temple and, seeing a group of twenty-five men, is told by God that these were the men who provided wicked counsel to the people. These men told the people that destruction was not near and that Jerusalem itself would protect them from the Babylonians. Ezekiel is commissioned to prophesy against them and warn them of their error, the result of which would be their death and destruction. In the midst of Ezekiel's prophecy one of the men, Pelatiah, falls dead stirring the spirit of Ezekiel, striking in him fear that God would not preserve the remnant. Jehovah, though, assures that though He will scatter the nation abroad He would still protect them and be their sanctuary. The chapter closes with the glory of the Lord being removed from the temple and residing on a mountain to the east, probably the Mount of Olives, and Ezekiel being returned to Babylon to speak to the captivity the visions he had received from God.

## **Ezekiel 12**

At this time the actions of Ezekiel are to become a commentary about the exilic events that would shortly transpire. He is to carry provisions in the midst of the people symbolizing the needs of the captivity and he was to dig through the wall in their sight to foreshadow the wall's destruction. Then Ezekiel prophesied that even the king himself would not be able to escape the captivity but he would be led to Babylon and die there though he would never see it (because Zedekiah's eyes were put out after seeing the death of his sons – II Kings 25:7). The people, though, were being influenced by the false prophets that because it had been such a long time since they had gone into captivity and Jerusalem itself still stood that it would not be destroyed (some had been there over fourteen years and some over five years). Ezekiel's guarantee to them, however, was that God had meant what He had said and Jerusalem would fall. His words would no longer be prolonged, *"but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord God"* (Ezekiel 12:28b).

## **Ezekiel 13**

God, now, sends Ezekiel on the offensive against the false prophets who lied to the people about the captivity. They were cunning in their unenviable efforts, but God accuses them of not standing in the gap or building a protective hedge around the people. They, in fact, lied so long and to such an extent that they began to be convinced of their own lies just as the people. Jehovah compares their false teachings to a wall built with untempered mortar. It might have had structure but it had no strength and so when put to truth's test it would fall to the ground in shambles. They cried out, "Peace, peace" when there was no peace and now they would be exposed for their sins. Then at the close of the chapter God sets His sights of vengeance upon the false prophetesses who were deviously leading the people astray through their sorceress practices. God states His displeasure in their actions and promises deliverance of the people from their sly treachery. Based on His actions, they would know that He was Lord.

## **Ezekiel 14**

The elders now assemble in the house of Ezekiel and the Lord speaks to Ezekiel for the intent of informing and forewarning these men about their lifestyles and the coming judgment upon the nation. It is easy, now, to see the source of Judah's sin because it was rooted in their leadership. Sin often starts at the top and filters down as was the case with Judah. Ezekiel's message was that anybody at all who was steeped in idolatry needed to repent lest they bear the punishment of their iniquity. However, salvation of the entire nation was no longer an option. Ezekiel draws upon three righteous men of history to prove this point. He states, *"Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord"* (Ezekiel 14:14). Unlike Sodom that could have been saved by ten righteous souls found therein, one righteous soul could not have saved Judah but only that soul. Through these events God's justness was going to be known by all the people, a lesson many would do well to realize today.

## **Ezekiel 15**

An allegory is now provided to illustrate the purpose behind God's actions. He points to the vine tree in the midst of a forest and points out that the sole purpose of that tree is to bring forth fruit. However, if it does not bring forth fruit then it is just as profitable cast into the fire as it is left whole. Such was the case with Judah. Their purpose was to bring forth the fruit of glory to God, but since they were not accomplishing their purpose then they were just as profitable cast into the fire as they were being left whole. God then would prove His power through their destruction and the land would be left desolate.

## **Ezekiel 16**

In lengthy detail, Ezekiel outlines the gradual apostasy of Judah. Throughout her history, the Israelite people relied heavily upon their physical lineage traced back to the similar sinful deeds of the Amorites and the Hittites. Starting in Egypt God took these people and cleansed them as His own children. He nurtured them, protected them, and provided for them. He made a covenant with them of redemption, but their redemption would depend on their faithfulness. However, Judah forsook Jehovah and played the spiritual harlot. So steeped in sin was she that the Lord points out that the daughters of the Philistines were even ashamed of their lewd behavior. They forsook God

and joined themselves with other nations and gods, breaking the covenant. Regardless of their sin, though, God's covenant had a far more reaching effect than simply unto the Jews, therefore God continued to work according to His everlasting covenant. But the promise was made that upon fulfillment, through the coming of Christ and the gospel, the people would be ashamed of their past because of God's great blessing upon them.

### **Ezekiel 17**

Turning now to the form of a riddle, Ezekiel speaks a parable of eagles illustrating the events that had and would transpire. Nebuchadnezzar would come to Jerusalem and take Jeconiah and the seed royal back to Babylon, and though Zedekiah would try to preserve the nation's independence by aligning with Egypt, there was nothing they would do to stop God's wrath coming through Babylon. Zedekiah would be taken to Babylon himself where he would eventually die like many of his people had. However, through the preserved seed would the Messiah come forth and establish in the city of Jerusalem a new Jerusalem, the church of Christ. By this all of mankind would see the power of God displayed.

### **Ezekiel 18**

This chapter argues in great detail the individual responsibilities that the people were now facing. Yes, the children were suffering the natural consequences of their parents' sins, but their souls were in their own hands. Their eternal destiny would not be determined by the sins or righteousness of another no more than another's eternal destiny would be determined by their sin or righteousness. Maybe they had grown up in a sinful environment, but as accountable adults it is now their responsibility to make things right. The entire chapter is well summed by the timely words of vs. 20: *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."* Ultimately, though, God's mercy allowed the penitent soul to escape their iniquity and the consequences thereof. God was, is, and always shall be interested in man's salvation and not in their demise, therefore His mercy continued to similarly stand.

### **Ezekiel 19**

A lamentation is now extended toward Judah's princes. The illustration of the lioness with her young lions symbolizes Jerusalem with her final two kings that sealed the doom of Judah by leading the people into multiplied evil. The result of them both was being put in chains and led to Babylon. They had been planted in a fruitful land where they prospered and grew to be a great nation. Now, though, Judah was planted in the wilderness of the captivity, away from their homeland, and the only thing in the immediate future that they could look forward to was the captivity. Their kings had led them to glory, but now they had led them to ruin.

### **Ezekiel 20**

As the elders of Judah again assemble in the house of Ezekiel, they come seeking to enquire of the Lord regarding their release from captivity. It is with self-centeredness they do so and God refuses to listen to them. Rather through Ezekiel He provides a history lesson of the Jewish nation and their continued rejection of God despite His generous blessings upon them. God had chosen them, through His promise to Abraham years earlier, to make Himself known unto and deliver from bondage to freedom. God had provided them with many things, the two foremost being law and rest. Through cruel irony, in the midst of assuming they were pleasing God, they actually rejected all He had done, including the law and rest. By turning to idolatry and profaning the Sabbaths they stirred up the wrath of God who spared them only for the sake of preserving credibility among the heathen. He then set out to punish them for continuing in their wicked ways, the result of which was the captivity of which they now enquired. Jerusalem would be destroyed from top to bottom and even the righteous would have to suffer temporarily while God smote the wicked with His wrath.

### **Ezekiel 21**

God is now pictured as unsheathing His sword of wrath against Judah. This sword is said to be sharpened and furbished, completely capable of slaughtering whomever its point is dropped. Regarding this prophecy, Ezekiel is told to set his face at Jerusalem and specifically toward the holy



places. It was the impurity enacted at these locations that caused God's wrath to begin with, thus it is only fitting that His vengeance begin here. The sword is said to be Nebuchadnezzar and that regardless of where it started (whether Jerusalem or Rabbath) to be assured that it would come. The divination methods of Nebuchadnezzar (linked to idolatry) set him towards Jerusalem, but because the people would think it to be inaccurate they would remain and be taken to Babylon. Christ is pictured in this chapter as the only rightful heir to David's throne, thus Zedekiah, the wicked prince, was to remove the diadem from his head looking forward to he one whose it was. The final verses picture the destruction of the Ammonites who perished at the hand of Babylon along with others in the southern land.

### **Ezekiel 22**

Jerusalem is pictured as the bloody city, now, describing the character of the people as they dealt unevenly with so many people. Two especially disheartening reasons Jerusalem was described as the bloody city was because of their idolatrous practice of offering their young children to the god Molech and the fact that they would at times kill God's prophets whom He sent to warn them of such evil. Their guilt is seen through their blood stained streets. A host of sins are named of which the people were guilty and Jehovah points out that He is blowing the bellows upon His wrathful fire to increase their burden and indignation. The leaders have failed to lead and the people have yet still followed blindly. The result then was the fire of God's wrath upon them.

### **Ezekiel 23**

Often in scripture one's unfaithfulness to God is illustrated as marital unfaithfulness. This is the premise of the whole book of Hosea, and such is the premise of this whole chapter. Aholah and Aholibah are described as two sisters given to whoredom. They represent Samaria and Jerusalem respectively. Aholah (Samaria), the older sister, had gone off and played the harlot with Assyria and Egypt, making unlawful alliances in hopes of being protected from other nations. However, each discovered her unfaithfulness and slew her with the sword. Common sense would have indicated to Aholibah (Jerusalem), the younger sister, to not tread the same treacherous path as her sibling, but none was to be found. She joined herself to Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt and eventually suffered the same fate. Their infatuation with the foreign nations' lifestyles pulled them further into their spiritual prostitution and resulted in their continued sin, idolatry, killing of children, and other unthinkable actions resulting in their demise. God would purge the faithless to preserve the faithful and continue the unfolding of His redemptive scheme.

### **Ezekiel 24**

By way of another parable Ezekiel foretells of Jerusalem's coming ruin. The boiling pot of Jerusalem would be inflicted by the fire beneath, representative of Babylon. All of the inhabitants, though, would be removed and exiled to Babylon and just as the pot remained on the fire to be purged but would not, God intended Jerusalem to be purged of impurities but they refused. God's wrath then is increased upon them because they refuse to be purged and promises a time of judgment to come. To illustrate, then, what would become of Jerusalem God tells Ezekiel that his wife would die. However, Ezekiel was not allowed to mourn as a sign of what the people's response to Jerusalem's ruin would be. The destruction would be so swift and unexpected that they would not weep but simply go off to Babylon without choice. When Ezekiel's wife died and he did not mourn this troubled the people and Ezekiel then told them that this represented what was to come.

### **Ezekiel 25**

Now begins a series of prophecies continuing through chapter thirty-two regarding foreign nations that surrounded Judah. In all seven nations are foretold of things to come. In this chapter four are forewarned including Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia. These smaller nations in addition to Tyre and Zidon faced ruin as the mighty Babylonians marched right over them en route to Egypt, their ultimate goal.<sup>14</sup> Dobbs noted,

“The smaller nations along the route were butchered one by one. The military machine of Babylon had time; they were waiting for the conquest of Tyre by starvation. It was slow, but it was deadly. In the meantime, other kingdoms had to go. Nebuchadnezzar could leave no potential enemy at his back as he advanced

toward his target. Egypt was his goal, but Tyre, Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, and Zidon were in the way. They had to be cleared out. When Tyre fell, Babylon wanted a straight shot at Egypt – and Babylon would not be denied.”<sup>15</sup>

Each of these nations was a fierce enemy of the children of God and now Jehovah would use Babylon to punish them just as He had Judah. Ezekiel is told to set his face against these heathen nations and when the man of God sets his face against the heathen, God has set His face against them. Ezekiel is but the representative of God. With each, vengeance was carried out and all of man truly knew that Jehovah is God.

### **Ezekiel 26**

Ezekiel twenty-six through the beginning of chapter twenty-eight exclusively deal with the ungodly nation of Tyrus, otherwise known as Tyre, and each chapter deals with a specific aspect of Tyre’s situation. Chapter twenty-six describes and explains the coming judgment and destruction of Tyre at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar and mighty Babylon. Tyre had much joy in Jerusalem’s fall. As their only competitors on the trade-market nearby, Tyre would gain extensively from Jerusalem’s fall. So rather than weeping for the loss of their former allies, they rejoiced in their coming abundance. However, their joy would soon fade. Babylon spent thirteen years doing so, but finally overcame Tyre and destroyed her power. Old Tyre was destroyed to such an extent it would have had to be completely rebuilt from scratch anyway so they moved the city off the coast to an island where it remained until eight hundred years later when Alexander and the Greeks destroyed it. The words of God truly came to pass: *“I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord”* (Ezekiel 26:21).

### **Ezekiel 27**

Just as chapter twenty-six describes the destruction of Tyre itself, chapter twenty-seven considers the reasons for the coming destruction. Ezekiel speaks a lamentation upon Tyre that describes the pride they had demonstrated among themselves by saying, *“I am of perfect beauty”* (Ezekiel 27:3b). Their lavish lifestyle, manifold merchandising, and yet treacherous treatment then caused God to blow in the east wind (Babylon) and break them. With Tyre’s destruction was the destruction of their riches and wealth; thus, their self-exaltation brought about a type of self destruction.

### **Ezekiel 28**

Now that Ezekiel has foretold their destruction and given the reasons for it he turns his eyes toward the top and prophecies regarding the king of Tyre. This man had exalted himself to be a god, sitting in the seat of God. Because, then, he had climbed to the top of Mount Self-Exaltation and is claiming to be “king of the mountain,” God is going to knock him down. Jehovah sends the terrible of the nations (Babylon) to draw their swords against him and His promise is *“Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers...”* (Ezekiel 28:10). Just as the fate of the nation is sealed in death, so then is the fate of the king. Then in the final verses of the chapter Ezekiel pronounces woe upon Zidon for aiding and abetting the enemies of Judah. They too would be overcome by Babylon for their great evil.

### **Ezekiel 29**

In the tenth year of Ezekiel’s exilic stay in Babylon (587 B.C.) he was given a word by the Lord to prophesy against Egypt. Egypt, like the other six nations of doom, had given themselves to pride and arrogance in addition to a mistreatment of the Israelite nation throughout history. Jehovah, through Ezekiel, announced, *“I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt”* (Ezekiel 29:3); and when God be against us, who can be for us? God’s displeasure with Egypt bore full fruit when Babylon of old traipsed across the Nile to claim their prize. A period of forty years is promised in which Egypt would be left desolate and barren; but then after those years it would be restored. Through Egypt’s fall Nebuchadnezzar would complete unfinished business. In the thirteen year campaign against Tyre, Nebuchadnezzar had not provided wages for his army, but through Egypt’s spoil those wages would be provided. The following three chapters continue to detail Egypt’s doom.

### **Ezekiel 30**

Jehovah's wrath upon Egypt was imminent. The day was near and coming, thus they should readily expect it. Not only, though, would Egypt pay the wages of their sin, but those close to them who supported and uplifted Egypt would suffer as well, nations such as Ethiopia, Libya, and Lydia would all fall by Babylon's sword. Egypt would be burned with the fire of God's wrath and the source identified is none other than Nebuchadnezzar. The land would be laid to waste and then God would set His sights on Egypt's idols. His promise was, "...*I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph...*" (Ezekiel 30:13). With God against him the powerless Pharaoh was without defense and in falling to Babylon its inhabitants would scatter among the countries, thus further proving that Jehovah is God.

### **Ezekiel 31**

Pinpointed now is Egypt's underlying problem: greatness. No, it was not inherently wrong for them to have grown to the prominence they enjoyed. The first nine verses indicate the extent of Egypt's greatness. However, along with greatness came pride. As Egypt began to recognize their power they, then, grew in pride, exalting themselves above all others. Jehovah points out that trees do not exalt themselves for their height because they all die eventually and are then no greater than other trees (vs. 14). Therefore Egypt had no room to boast for she would one day find ruin as well. Egypt's fall greatly disturbed other nations around the world. Their knowledge of the events brought the sobering thought "If it can happen to mighty Egypt it can happen to anybody." Egypt's past prominence was no guarantee for an immovable future, a lesson every American would do well to learn. With the nations of old every government around the world should recognize that without God there are no guarantees.

### **Ezekiel 32**

Egypt's destruction is now described in further detail. God will break them with His staff of power and Babylon will rise up in triumph over them. With vivid imagery Ezekiel describes the complete lack of hope with which Egypt is forced to look toward the future. They would be obliterated to such an extent that many would look in horror at the mighty things done to Egypt. Egypt's lack of power is illustrated by God's statement that for Babylon, "*Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil...*" (Ezekiel 32:14). Babylon would have smooth sailing against Egypt who would not even be able to cause a ripple in Babylon's swift destruction. The once mighty Egypt would become nothing more than the same rubble that characterized the lowly nations fallen before them. Truly God is great in His power.

### **Ezekiel 33**

Jehovah turns His attention again toward Ezekiel and speaks once more about responsibility. He, as God's watchman, had the responsibility to warn. Regardless of the people's response or lack thereof Ezekiel was to warn. As long as he warned then he did the will of God, but if he did not warn even if the people repented Ezekiel would be lost because he did not do his job. Then Jehovah relates the people's responsibility. As individuals their penitence or lack thereof would determine their individual salvation. No longer could the misaligned majority depend upon the faithful few. Now each person was individually responsible for him/her self. In the second half of the chapter, in the twelfth year of captivity, a messenger comes to Ezekiel with news of Jerusalem's fall. He had prophesied of it for years and knew it would come; now the hand of the Lord had come down upon them. Ezekiel was made dumb and only the Lord's word could proceed from his lips. For the rest of the chapter Ezekiel explains to the captives what had caused these things to come to pass. Their rejection of God and His statutes had sucked the life (spiritually) out of them and no longer were they fit for His service. The sun still burns, the moon still shines, and those principles continue to apply if only more would listen.

### **Ezekiel 34**

Ezekiel now speaks by God unto the evil leaders of Judah. They had fattened themselves with lush lifestyles at the expense of the people and God is not pleased. These men had misused their positions of authority for personal benefit and now they would pay. God pronounces woe upon them for their deeds and makes this promise – at the judgment He would judge between the fat and

the lean. The Lord's promise to His flock is that He would provide. They would eventually be brought back from Babylonian exile where Jehovah would provide safety and supplies much needed for survival. They would be cared for physically in looking forward to the time in which they would be cared for spiritually. The final nine verses of this chapter are Messianic. One shepherd, identified as David, would be raised up to feed and lead the people. David having been long dead, this obviously is a reference to the seed of David, Jesus the Christ. Through His covenant of peace, the flock of God would then always know their souls' needs would be met, never more to be in bondage again.

### **Ezekiel 35**

Mount Seir represents the Edomite nation, whom was the polar opposite of Jehovah's righteous remnant. Edom's continued presence would have presented problems with Judah's return so God deals with them. Verse nine reveals God's promise as, "*I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*" Edom's continued desolation today proves the fulfillment of God's promise. In stark irony, the world would then rejoice in Edom's desolation in the same way Edom had always rejoiced in theirs'. The restoration, in prophecy, of God's people thus is begun; the very people through whom the blessed Messiah came forth to save the people from their sins.

### **Ezekiel 36**

To the mountains (leaders) of Israel, God now turns His attention in relating to them the two-fold reason He is allowing Israel to return home. First, God is enacting judgment on the surrounding heathen nations, and He will do so by raising up His once faithful nation back to a state of prominence. They had scoffed at the captivity and bondage of Israel and Jehovah would then punish them for such. However, more important than judgment on the nations was God magnifying His holy name. The world mocked a God who would deliver His people only to send them back into bondage. But now God would show His power by unveiling His plan. He had had a purpose for exiling them and now He would fulfill His plan. He would deliver them back into their homeland so lush and fertile that to them it would appear as the Garden of Eden. They would thus be sanctified and allowed to enter into rest; a striking parallel to God's sanctification of men's souls today for the purpose of entering rest. Again these things would be done that the people would know He is Lord.

### **Ezekiel 37**

Perhaps one of the best-known accounts in the Scriptures, Ezekiel 37 now provides the reader with two illustrative symbols to the hope of the nation. First, Ezekiel is transported in a vision to a valley in which dried bones were abundant. These bones had no connection between each other, nor was there any life found therein. These bones were representative of the nation of Judah, who had in captivity had the life sucked out from them. However, through the power of God there was hope of a resurrection of life. So Ezekiel prophesied and the bones came together, connected, and produced flesh; but, as of yet had no life. Then, though, Ezekiel prophesied to the four winds and breathed into this army the spirit of life and they became living creatures. This was symbolic of Judah, though being in captivity, being resurrected unto the freedom of life enjoyed at home. Second, Ezekiel sets his eyes not only toward the revitalization of an old kingdom, but the coming of a new. Jehovah instructed Ezekiel to take two sticks, one representing Israel and one representing Judah, tie them together and make them one again. This, though, would not be made manifest in a united kingdom as to old Israel, but born anew under a new standard. They would be one nation without defilement, under the united leadership of king David, walking according to the judgments of God. This is a prophecy of the coming church in which all of mankind could be united and led by David's descendant Jesus Christ, in which the will of God could abound eternally. Peace would be made possible and all of man would recognize Jehovah as Lord.

### **Ezekiel 38**

The children of God from past to present have always had more enemies than friends, and Judah was no different. Pictured in chapter thirty-eight are all the nations of the world coming up against Israel in opposition, but God stands with His people. There may have been questions in the people's minds regarding God's presence because of how much they had already suffered (having

done so for their own sins), but God reminds the people that He works on His own schedule. “*After many days he visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them*” (Ezekiel 38:8). Gog, the nation most mentioned in this chapter, is warned that when they rise up against Judah, they would in the process experience the wrath of God. Jehovah may at times have felt the need to punish His children, but other nations were not free to do with them as they would, illustrated by God’s warning to Gog.

### **Ezekiel 39**

Those things foretold in chapter thirty-eight now come to pass in chapter thirty-nine. Gog is destroyed by the Lord for their aggression against His people. In fact their destruction was so great that Israel would burn their weapons for seven years (complete time) and Gog would bury their dead for seven months (complete time). They would be as a great sacrifice that God would make on behalf of His people. Thus it would be through that great sacrifice that Judah would be redeemed from bondage and given back their liberty. God in providing for His people likewise proves to the people His power and that He was the one whom they were to serve.

### **Ezekiel 40-48**

These chapters, combined because of content, are often referred to as “Israel’s Glorious Hope to Come.” In them Ezekiel is looking forward to the coming church and does so from two standpoints: (1) Vision of the Future Temple Described [chapters 40-43:12] and (2) Vision of Future Worship and Future Land [chapters 43:13-48]. The primary focus of these chapters is to discuss these two points from these two perspectives: (1) pattern and (2) glory. First, the coming church, in which the saved are now, is one established according to a pattern. Its prophesied pattern was to be fulfilled or else it was not the church. Its presented principles were to be met or else it was not the true church. These chapters, in referencing the exact measurements and expectations of the temple, illustrate how that God’s church can be identified by the pattern set forth in scripture (time established, location, indestructibility, et.) and any “church” not fitting the pattern is not *the* church of the New Testament. Likewise is the worship of this church to be according to the pattern. Rather than a feel-good saga of sporadic insanity, the worship of the church is to be organized, reverent, and meaningful to all, especially the Recipient of it. Therefore, first these chapters prove that God is a God of pattern and truly He is not the author of confusion but of peace (I Corinthians 14:33). Second, though, the chapters present the glory of God as pictured through His church and worship. The temple built for God was beautiful beyond comprehension because of the precious material with which it was built, but the church of Christ is more beautiful and precious because it is stained with the blood of Jesus Christ. The worship under Mosaic mandate was precise and sacrificial, but the Christian’s worship is according to spirit and truth (John 4:24). Just as the writer of Hebrews set out to prove, truly Christ and Christianity are superior to anything the Old Testament had to offer. To a people destitute in derision, Ezekiel spoke these things to give hope of future times, a better day ahead. Today, men can enjoy that better day of which many anticipated, if only they would do things exactly as God said (as illustrated by these chapters) and accept His free and marvelous gift through obedience.

From God’s glory presented in chapter one to God’s glory pictured in chapters forty through forty-eight, Ezekiel paints a beautiful portrait of God from His justice to His mercy. And if only man, in the bondage of sin today would see God’s willingness to Judah, if only they would repent, this world would be a much more great and godly place in which to live. For centuries men have doomed themselves to the same mistakes, as did Judah of old. Let this world begin its trek back to God starting with you and me.

### **LESSONS**

Frank J. Dunn, in his marvelous work called Know Your Bible, presented three lessons that will be mentioned and upon which we will elaborate.

First, “the terrible nature of sin. It destroys both men and nations.”<sup>16</sup> If ever a nation knew the repercussions of sin it was Israel. For centuries she as a united and divided nation had toyed with sin, never completely learning their lesson. Many things could be attributed to this perpetual problem, but perhaps two would be helpful especially given present circumstances in America and around the world. First, a lack of godly men to govern the people escalated an already growing problem of sin. Men in leadership often are guilty of conforming their practices to the majority rule, the problem of which is that sin is always in the majority. Israel and Judah never figured out that a godly nation starts with a godly government. America must soon figure that out. For decades now there has not been a political leader of high enough rank to speak out against the evils found in this nation and make a lasting influence. Shall America have to suffer the fate of Israel and Judah to figure it out? Secondly, though, was the fact that with each generation arose the need of godliness. Israel and Judah often apostatized within one generation, illustrating the need to teach our children the righteous ways of New Testament Christianity. An ignorance in today’s children will transform into an ignorance in tomorrow’s adults and leaders. Mankind is always just one generation from total apostasy. May we do all we can to make sure that trend ceases to be.

Second, “individual responsibility – *‘The soul that sinneth it shall die’* (Ezekiel 18:20). Men suffer not for the sins of others, but for their own sins.”<sup>17</sup> This lesson aids today’s religious mindset in two ways. First, it adamantly refutes the Calvinistic heresy of total hereditary depravity. Babies are not born guilty of ancestral sins all the way back to Adam. But rather they are born pure and unblemish, guilty of sin only after committing such after reaching accountability. Secondly, though it teaches man to look inward. It is easy to point out the shortcomings of others, and even the world, and sometimes its needed; but it is much harder and much more needful to look at one’s self to find fault. I am ultimately responsible for me, seeing that I will account for my sins and mine alone – no one else will be accountable for me. This sobers the mind to know as I will stand in judgment alone I have need to emphasize my individual responsibility more personally to protect my soul and have the most impact upon others.

Third, and finally, “the necessity of repentance in obtaining forgiveness of sins (14:1-20; 18:20-32; 33:1-22). God ‘now commendeth’ all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30).”<sup>18</sup> The Lord had a standing promise of release to the people, but until they repented they could not be redeemed. Today’s world has two extreme mindsets: (1) no hope or (2) universal hope. But just as Judah of old, if man desires to be redeemed from the bondage of sin, he must repent. God’s promise is ready and willing, but man must take the step of faith, trusting in the Lord and His redemptive scheme, then forgiveness can be theirs.

There are many additional lessons that could be considered, but given the spiritual standing of society, those three best illustrate how improvement can be made especially in America. Recognize the terribleness of sin, accept personal responsibility for it, and repent before its everlasting too late.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The book of Ezekiel, though oft neglected, truly is a nugget of wisdom from which so much could be gleaned. As Chesser stated it, “Ezekiel is a perfect portrait of the background of redemption in Genesis 3-12 and is, therefore, a revelation of the nature of God, sin, and redemption.”<sup>19</sup> To this we do heartily concur. May today’s generation and those to come learn the lesson Judah realized the hard way. The pleasure of sin may last a lifetime, but the glory of hope lasts an eternity. Let us turn to God and forever enjoy the hope of eternal redemption safe in the hallow of His hand.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Andrew W. Blackwood, Jr. Ezekiel – Prophecy of Hope. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1965), p. 11).

<sup>2</sup> All scriptures quoted from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Meador. “An Introduction to the Book of Ezekiel.” In Introducing the Prophets and Their Message, Volume 1. Edited by Donald W. Walker. (Shenandoah, TX: Shenandoah Church of Christ, 2001), p. 290.

<sup>4</sup> Keith A. Mosher, Sr. “Introduction to Ezekiel.” In Ezekiel and Lamentations: Lessons for God’s People. Edited by Curtis A Cates. (Memphis, TN: Memphis School of Preaching, 1997), p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Frank J. Dunn. Know Your Bible. (Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 1997), p. 285.

<sup>6</sup> Mosher, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Bobby Liddell. Class notes from Ezekiel and Lamentations. Memphis School of Preaching, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa. The Wilkinson and Boa Bible Handbook. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), p. 214.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 215.

<sup>11</sup> Frank Chesser. Portrait of God. (Huntsville, AL: Publishing Designs, Inc., 2004), p. 187.

<sup>12</sup> Curtis A. Cates. “Ezekiel’s Vision of God’s Glory (Ezekiel 1:1-28).” In Ezekiel and Lamentations: Lessons for God’s People. Edited by Curtis A. Cates. (Memphis, TN: Memphis School of Preaching, 1997), p. 59.

<sup>13</sup> Liddell.

<sup>14</sup> H.A. “Buster” Dobbs. “Prophecies Against the Nations (Ezekiel 25:1-28:26).” In Ezekiel and Lamentations: Lessons for God’s People. Edited by Curtis A. Cates. (Memphis, TN: Memphis School of Preaching, 1997), p. 238.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Dunn, p. 288.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pp. 288-289.

<sup>19</sup> Chesser, p. 187.

# Suffering Savior the Prophets saw

Anthony Oesch

## INTRODUCTION

1. The death of our savior is one of the turning points in the history of the world.
2. His birth is given special occasion each year, and that was an important event, for without His birth He would not have a body in order to offer that complete sacrifice for sins.
3. His death and His suffering is given a few chapters in the New Testament.
4. Regarding His suffering the New Testament offers little on actual suffering of our Lord.
  - a. Mat 27:26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.
  - b. Mar 15:15 And *so* Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged *him*, to be crucified.
  - c. Joh 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged *him*.
5. The death of our Savior and His suffering was prophesied in the Old Testament and we are given a picture of the brutality of his sacrifice and the completeness of his sacrifice.
6. It is interesting to this writer that throughout all the times of history God chose the time in history to be the fullness of time – Gal 4:4
  - a. One of the most cruel ways to punish someone was in practice – the scourge
  - b. One of the cruelest ways to execute someone was in practice – crucifixion.
  - c. God could have chosen any other time in history to execute His plan and to have the complete sacrifice for sin given – yet he chose a time of utmost cruelty.
    - i. This should demonstrate the seriousness of sin
    - ii. And it should remind us just how much God and Christ loved us.
7. The prophet Isaiah gives a shadow of the suffering of our savior, and gives a shadow of the completeness of His offering as a well as the victory gained by His suffering.
8. His suffering was:
  - a. Vicious
  - b. Valiant & with valour
  - c. Vicarious
  - d. Victorious



## Discussion

### I. HIS SUFFERING WAS VICIOUS

A. Isa 53:3-5 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

B. The vicious mental suffering before the cross

1. Let us never forget the suffering of our Lord before the Cross.

2. How often was he rejected for teaching the word of God and making the application to men?

3. Luke 4:19-29 He quotes from Isaiah and proclaims the fulfillment and the people were angry and wanted to thrust him out.

4. Events such as these occurred throughout His ministry.

5. We know how it feels when someone rejects us or does not believe our report

- a. Asking someone on a date, getting in trouble at home, etc
- b. Christ was dealing with the truths of God and people time and time again rejected him.

C. Surely he hath borne our griefs... he was wounded for our transgressions.

1. Isa 59:1,2 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.

2. He bore our griefs as he prayed in the garden Mat 26:37-39 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

3. As Christ prayed in the garden he sweat drops of blood. – Luke 22:44

- a. When one considers the seriousness of sin and what it does, no wonder he sweat drops of blood.
- b. A medical doctor notes: One of the rarest medical conditions called hematidrosis. This condition is the result of blood vessels rupturing into sweat glands. This may occur in highly emotional or stressful

states. The blood loss thus occurring would be minimal but the high stress is certain worth noting.

- c. Because of our sins – it could be that he felt personally at that moment all the sins of mankind from Adam to the last man who will walk this earth.
- d. The weight of our sin on his mind and to know the only way for God to be satisfied was to undergo to death that was before Him.

4. Consider the emotional strain on His mind as He was illegally arrested, sent through an illegal and mock trial, then to have the very people who hours before passionately wanted to see and hear him, now passionately wanted him dead.

- a. Matt 26:69-75 Peter denied Christ
- b. Matt 27:15-17 The people chose a murderer over their savior
- c. Matt 27:22 the people cried out to have Christ
- d. Matt 27:24 a weak man named Pilate

D. That was only the beginning of his vicious suffering.

1. Consider the scourge – John 19:1

2. The New Testament only mentions the scourging and really the crucifixion.

- a. A whip with bones and other sharp objects woven and tied into it.
- b. With each blow the bones would grab flesh and tear skin, muscle, & bones.
- c. One scholar noted: The naked back, buttocks and legs were repeatedly struck with the iron balls causing deep contusions with the thongs and sheep bones actually cutting into the skin subcutaneous tissue and even muscles. Pain and blood loss generally led to circulatory shock and severity of this condition would usually determine how long the victim would survive the cross. When Jesus was led away to be crucified his condition was serious if not critical.

3. Our Lord underwent this vicious attack (Matt 26:28) for the remission of our sins.

4. A Crown of thorns placed upon His head, then after the scourging to be spit upon, to mocked, to have the garments ripped off His bloody body. – all this to be the sacrifice for sins!!

## E. The Crucifixion

1. The cruelest way to execute an individual – why God chose this time and this way to have the complete sacrifice for sins, I don't know? --The reason to demonstrate the seriousness of sins.
2. Christ literally had nails driven through his hands, and feet and put into a position that in order to exhale he had to literally push up on the nail through His feet.
  - a. He was subject to and underwent infection.
  - b. The physiological aspects of crucifixion: the major effect beyond exquisite pain would include interference with normal respiration particularly with exhalation. A maximum inhalation would be obtained by resting the body weight on the nailed wrist with outstretched arms. Yet exhalation would be impossible. In order to breath the victim had to transfer his weight to the nails through his feet. Thus a breathing cycle would require Christ to lift himself on the cross, exhale, then gently let himself down as he inhaled. Muscle spasms in the legs, shoulders and arms, and pain directly from the nails in the wrists and feet were experienced with each breathing cycle. As a result each cycle would be more painful, agonizing and tiring and would lead to eventual asphyxiation.
  - c. For nine hours Christ suffered physically the in most vicious way for our sins to bear our grief's to be the offering for the sacrifice for sins.

## II. HIS SUFFERING WAS VALIANT –STRENGTH OF MIND

A. Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

B. Consider the strength Christ had as He did not open His mouth against the accusers.

1. Sheep when going to the sheers don't open their mouths, even if they know what is about to happen, in fact very few open their mouths while they are getting sheared.
2. One may often why Christ did not open His mouth?
3. Yet, as sad as this is it was a good thing, that He did not. – there was not a time in His life when he could not out debate anyone
  - a. Many time when the Pharisees and Sadducees tried to get Christ into the horns of a dilemma Christ not only defeated the accusation, but won the people
  - b. Who is to say He would not be able to do it again this time – then no sacrifice, and no remission of sins.

4. The New Testament records that Christ did not open his mouth against His accusers

a. Matt 26:63

b. Matt 27:12-14

c. John 19:9

d. 1Pe 2:21-23 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

5. How many of us would not stand up and make an effort to defend our selves in some way, or would not hire the best lawyers we could afford – especially if we knew that we were innocent?

6. Yet Christ opened not His mouth for our sins – He stood with strength as they accused Him, with strength as they scourged Him, with strength as they pierces him.

7. This was more than any physical strength, but sheer will to be that sacrifice for our sins – Thanks be to God that He did.

C. He suffered with valor – honor

1. Strength of mind in regard to danger; that quality which enables a man to encounter danger with firmness; personal bravery; courage; intrepidity; prowess.

2. We honor those who die for us – soldiers other – so much the more Christ

3. Isa 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

4. It is truly an honorable idea and fact for someone to lay down his own life for others

5. Joh 10:15-18 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

6. Joh 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

7. He laid down His life for his friends – He did not argue, nor fuss, he obeyed and completed His task and offered that complete sacrifice for us – He did not deserve it but He endured it. --Isa 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

### III. HIS SUFFERING WAS VICARIOUS

A. Acting for another; filling the place of another; as a vicarious agent or officer. Substituted in the place of another

B. Christ's offering was for another – everyone who has lived and will ever live.

C. Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

1. Matt 8:16-17 – When even was come they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils and he cast out the spirits with his word and healed all that were sick. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet saying Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses

2. Notice YET we did esteem him stricken – how many then and today still do not care nor take advantage of the fact.

D. Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. Isa 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. Isa 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

1. Notice how many times it said that the suffering savior would be wounded, bruised, or stricken for our iniquity.

2. Rom 5:6-8 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

E. Isa 59:1,2 notes that sin separates one from God, but that God's hand is not short that it cannot save – God sent His Son and He came to save us – he died for us.

1. Gal 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

2. 1Pe 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

3. 1Pe 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

4. 1Jn 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world.

#### IV. **HIS SUFFERING WAS VICTORIOUS**

A. Isa 53:5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Isa 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

B. No other sacrifice could ever obtain victory over sin and death.

1. Heb 10:1-7

2. As a result of His sacrifice we can be sanctified through His blood and reconciled to God.

3. Rom 5:8 -10 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

C. There was victory over sin - 1Jn 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

D. There was and will be victory over death

1. 1Co 15:56-57 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23) but we can have victory over that physical death thanks to the suffering and sacrifice of Christ.

E. By his stripes we are healed –

1. Healed from the long term effects of sin – eternal separation from the Father

2. Healed from the misery – knowing that our redeemer lives and this life is not all there is – we have something to which to look forward.

## Conclusions

1. Why did God choose such the time in history to send His son?
  - a. Yes, there was a common language, good travel, and relative peace.
  - b. But there was also the most cruel way to kill people – crucifixion
2. Isa 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.
3. His suffering was vicious – the previous verse is at time almost overwhelming
  - a. All that Christ underwent the physical and emotional beating and the horrible death satisfied God. – ALLOW THAT TO SINK IN
  - b. That should be us undergoing that, but Christ did it for us
4. His suffering was valiant and with valour – strength and honor
  - a. He could have easily called legions of angels to stop this event – but did not
  - b. He died with honor – it is truly honorable to die for someone else
5. It was vicarious – it was not for anything that He had done – he suffered for us.
6. It was victorious – BY HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED
7. Has one taken advantage of this tremendous sacrifice? - we are only healed when we obey God.



# The Church As Seen By The Major Prophets

## Billy Hayes

### **INTRODUCTION: GALATIANS 4:4:**

1. To study the church is to study time and detail. The church was established at the right time and by the right plan.
2. Ephesians 3:8-11.
3. God never has had a “plan B.” His plans will always come to fruition. The church is another example of this fact.
4. The salvation of man has been in God’s plan because of the nature of the freedom of choice.
5. Man needed redemption as soon as their teeth pierced the skin of the fruit in Eden.
6. God’s plan for man is not seen any clearer than in the church: in prophecy, in present, and in perfection.
- 7.

### **The church as Seen by the Prophets in:**

#### **I. PROPHECY**

- A. If the church was not an “after thought” of God, then He must have said something about it.
  1. This could have been in warning.
  2. This could have been in anticipation.
  3. It was spoken of in some of the following ways:
    - a. The place of origin.
    - b. The “Kingdom of God.”
    - c. How man and God dwell together.
    - d. The future temple.
    - e. The future worship.
- B. The majority of our time will be spent in the exploration of these few ideas fulfilled in the church.
- C. These are not all the facets of the church, but only a few due to time restraints.
- D. Let us look closely at these few ideas.
  1. The Place of Origin.
    - a. Isaiah 2:2-3.
    - b. Jeremiah 31:6-7.
    - c. The church as seen by the Prophets was to be founded in JERUSALEM.
    - d. It is also to be available to ALL NATIONS.
    - e. “Jew, Gentile, bound, free, male, female....”
  2. The church is known as the “Kingdom of God.”
    - a. Daniel 2:44.
    - b. This kingdom is established for ever.
    - c. Isaiah 60:12.

- d. All nations are subject to the superior kingdom.
- e. Isaiah 9:6-7.
- f. Notice the ruler of this “government.”
- 3. How can imperfect (sinful) man dwell with a perfect (sinless) God?
  - a. Man must make a mends.
  - b. But how...
  - c. Ezekiel 43:9.
  - d. Complete submission unto God is required. It has always been required.
- 4. This church is shown to have a “future temple.”
  - a. Ezekiel 40:1 – 43:12 (Ezekiel 43:7 especially)
  - b. The future temple is in the midst of His children.
  - c. There is no need any longer for a physical temple.
  - d. But, there is still a need for a temple.
  - e. If a temple is needed, where will it be?
- 5. God has mandated His worship in His church.
  - a. Ezekiel 43:13 – 48:35.
  - b. This worship MUST be done in a way that shows to the world that God is in control and that God controls me.
  - c.

## **II. PRESENT**

- A. Did these prophecies come to pass?
  - 1. If they did not, then we must be bound by Old Testament Law and still be waiting for the coming Messiah.
  - 2. If these signs come to pass, the God’s church has been established and we must seek God’s church in order to please Him.
- B. Denominational world as a whole—not pleasing to God.
  - 1. I Corinthians 1:10.
  - 2. Is there a church that follows God’s Law or has that church died out?
- C. The church, for which the Christ died, falls into line with these predictions.
  - 1. Origin - Acts 2
  - 2. Kingdom - Matthew 16:18-19
  - 3. Man dwelling with God - II Corinthians 6:16
  - 4. Future temple - I Corinthians 3:17
  - 5. Future worship - John 4:24 (I Corinthians 16:2; Ephesians 5:19; I Thessalonians 5:17; I Corinthians 11:23-28; Acts 8:35)
- D. If the Laws of God are not observed, then it does not matter what name is on the door---IT IS NOT THE CHURCH!
- E. We must perform the proper actions with proper attitude (John 4:24).

### **III. PERFECTION**

- A. The fact of the matter is: Jesus is going to return. At that point the judgment will commence.
- B. The books will open and I will give an account of my life. (And so will you!)
- C. Matthew 25- Great separation of Sheep and Goats.
- D. Those sheep will be called unto the Great Shepard (John 10).
  - 1. What a day of rejoicing that will be.
  - 2. Are you a sheep?
- F. Those goats will be separated unto the Great Punishment (John 10).
  - 1. What a tragic day that will be.
  - 2. Are you a goat?

# “Here Am I Send Me” (Isaiah 6)

## Bryan Wilson

### **INTRODUCTION:**

We often sing a song “Here Am I, Send Me” and this statement has to be considered very powerful given that we as Christians are charged to preach the gospel throughout the world to every human being. (Mark 16:15). “Here Am I, Send Me” is a very courageous, bold statement with a “can do, and I will do” attitude. How many would be converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ today if every Christian embraced and lived this statement as to spreading the gospel?

The phrase “Here Am I, Send Me” is found in the book of Isaiah 6:8 –  
“Also, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me”.

### MAIN BODY

#### **I. ISAIAH CHAPTER 6**

- A. The 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah can be divided into 3 segments.
  1. Verses 1-5 deal with Isaiah’s vision of the Lord. The vision occurred during the year of King Uzziah’s death. History places this date around 740-739 B.C. and his death brought an end to an era of prosperity and affluence for Judah as King Uzziah’s death was really a beginning point of decline for Judah. This decline ultimately ended in captivity and Isaiah’s message prophesies this captivity, the eventual return of a remnant, and the coming of Christ who would redeem the people from a greater bondage, sin, through a more perfect sacrifice.
  2. Some people have mistaken Isaiah’s vision of the Lord to have been God. However, in further study of the scripture, it is clear that the Lord, the King, the Lord of hosts mentioned here in Isaiah 6 is Jesus. In the gospel of John 12:37-41, we have the writings of Isaiah 6 referenced, and that the people or Jews will not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart and they will not subsequently be converted. Verse 41 specifically states, “These things said Isaiah when he saw his glory, and spake of him.” This clearly is referring to Jesus our Lord here in John 12. We are also told in John 1:18 “that no man hath seen God at any time” and in I Timothy 6:16 “whom no man hath seen, nor can see”. Therefore, it should be clear that the Lord visioned here in Isaiah 6 is Jesus.
  3. We also see that Isaiah is overcome by the vision of the Lord because he says in verse 5 “I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips” or in effect I am not worthy. Having seen the Lord, Isaiah realizes that the purest

person is unclean when measured by the divine. I think that Isaiah's statement also points out that one becomes tainted with uncleanness when surrounded by the unclean. The environment in which you choose to live and the people with whom you associate can affect your spirituality.

4. Verses 6-7 deal with the cleansing or consecration of Isaiah. We are told in these verses that one of the seraphims took a hot coal and touched it to Isaiah's lips and his iniquity and sin were purged and taken away. This appears to symbolize that since Isaiah has seen Jesus that through him and his future sacrifice that sin will be taken away and that sin and guilt must be removed or blotted out if one is to be an acceptable servant. After the purging, the prophet was now ready to respond or be sent as the messenger who would reveal the plan for Christ to be sent to this earth and sacrificed so that through Him all forgiveness and redemption would be accomplished. Thus laying out future hope and understanding to which the remnant could thus strive toward.
5. The remainder of the chapter, verses 8-13, deals with Isaiah's commission or charge from the Lord. The purpose of the vision was to prepare someone to be sent to the people. The prophet having been cleansed from his sin and having had his iniquity taken away is now ready and when the Lord asks "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah responds readily, "Here am I, send me" in verse 8. In verse 9 we see that the prophet is commissioned to go and to preach a message though it is foretold that "this people" will not understand nor perceive the application or the truth of this message. The Lord knows that the majority of the people will refuse to hear and refuse to see the path to repentance and salvation. He knows that this vast majority will have their hearts hardened and that His Word will be rejected. We also know that the message must still be delivered and that a small remnant will hear and listen (Isaiah 1:9). Therefore we know that the Lord never loses sight of the individuals who will hear His voice and who will do His will. Isaiah asks the Lord how long should he deliver this message and the Lord tells him until the cities be wasted and until the men are removed far away, meaning into the coming captivity. However in verse 13, we are again reminded that there will be a remnant that shall return and from this number endure. The apostle Paul discusses this remnant in the book of Romans 9:27-31 and further in Romans 11:1-5. There will always be those who will hear, consequently the need for those to say, "Here am I, send me".

## II. THE APPLICATION OF ISAIAH 6:8 TODAY

A. How can Isaiah's statement, "Here am I, send me" be applied to us today?

1. First let's review the general purpose and message of Isaiah. He urged and encouraged the people of Israel and Judah to wait and expect the Lord, a coming Messiah. The Lord also let him know that the majority of the people would not hear because of hardened hearts. Consequently, Isaiah also delivered the message and emphasized that the Messiah would bring in the Gentiles together with the Jews. The coming of the Messiah would be a light bringing salvation to all nations who would be part of **ONE** spiritual kingdom. In essence, Isaiah's prophecy foretells the coming of Christ, his sacrifice, the church and the intended opportunity of salvation and true forgiveness of sin through a more complete sacrifice, that being Christ, for all mankind.
2. Second, we know that Isaiah's prophecy concerning Christ came true. Right after Mary's conception it becomes evident that Isaiah's prophecy was coming true. In Luke 1: 41-43 we read that when Elisabeth, also an expectant mother carrying the child who was John the Baptist, heard the salutation of Mary that her babe leapt in her womb and Elisabeth asked "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" John 4:25 shows that some of the people understood and believed in the coming Messiah. Romans 8:3 reiterates as many verses in the Bible that God sent his Son in the flesh. As foretold by Isaiah, the coming of Christ the Messiah came to pass as well as opportunity for true forgiveness of sins, salvation and eternal life bought by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.
3. Third, from early on Jesus went about his Heavenly Father's business teaching at a very young age. He informed the people as in John 4:25-26 that he was the Messiah, the Christ. John 9 relates a very interesting story and also shows the foretold truth of Isaiah 6. It is the story of the blind man that was healed by Jesus on the Sabbath. The man had been blind from birth and the disciples asked Jesus who had sinned, the man or his parents. Jesus told them neither but that he was such so that the works of God should be made manifest to him. Jesus took clay and put on his eyes and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. The man did so and received his sight. His neighbors couldn't believe it and they took him to the Pharisees and they didn't believe that Jesus had done it and if so accused him of being a sinner for working on the Sabbath. The Pharisees refused to believe that Christ was sent by God (verse 29) and continued to press the blind man. It is very interesting then that the blind man delivered his own sermon (verses 30-33). This offended the Pharisees and they cast him out. Jesus heard of this and sought him out and the man believed on the Lord and worshipped him (verses 35-38). The last three verses of

John 9, verses 39-41, then point back to the prophecy foretold in Isaiah 6. Those that can see will not but are made blind and those that are blind are made to see, very familiar to Isaiah 6:9-10.

4. Fourth, we are instructed that the disciples and followers of Christ are to teach the gospel plan of salvation to the world around us. Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16, and Luke 24:47 all lay the foundation for teaching the gospel to every creature. The great commission didn't just apply to those disciples there that day. In Acts 9:19-20 we see that Saul, later known as Paul, began straightway to preach that Christ is the Son of God right after his conversion. In II Timothy 2:1-2, Paul instructs Timothy to teach faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Women are also to teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-4). We are to "study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth", (II Timothy 2:15). In other words, study so that we can be knowledgeable in the truth and can understand it and to be able to teach it boldly, clearly, truthfully, and with exactness unlike those found in Hebrews 5:12. There we see those that should have progressed to be teachers of the word still needed someone to teach them again. How many members of the church fail to progress year after year and are unable to teach others?

- B. Isaiah said, "Here am I, send me". He was ready to go and to teach as the Lord instructed. I commend all those here who preach the word of God. I commend all the young men at the Memphis School of Preaching and other such scripturally sound schools preparing themselves to go and better teach the word of God. It is no easy road that you travel, nor will it ever be. It is a crazy world we live in when a person can be paid millions for winning a few rounds of golf in a weekend, a professional football player earning millions playing in 16 games a year and so on. Then we drop down to those who teach in our schools preparing all the children of this and other nations to better survive in this physical world who are barely paid a living wage. Then to those of the ministry who are charged with teaching and leading others to Eternal Life, often not really paid a living wage. It might have been a living wage in 1978 but not in 2008. Yes I know ministers don't do it for the money but they need to be able to rear and provide for a family. No matter from what home congregation of the church you may be, think about the value you place on helping those that teach others so that their soul might be saved versus the value you place on watching a football game. Are you faithfully and justly helping support those who say "Here am I, send me"? More importantly, have you ever said, "Here am I, send me"? You never know where this world may lead you. Are you prepared to do the spiritual work of teaching the gospel as instructed by God's word? If not, will you stand up and start to prepare yourself and thus say "Here am I, send me"?

- C. What about others that God sent but unlike Isaiah did not want to go? Jonah comes to mind and we all know the story of Jonah and how he was swallowed by a great fish and spent three days and nights in the belly of the fish. What about the rich young man who had kept the commandments from his youth up? (Matthew 19:20-21). Jesus told him to go and sell what he had and give to the poor and **come and follow me**, not a whole lot different than “Here am I, send me” except this young man did not “say so”. He did **not** what Jesus told him and went away sorrowful and no doubt was forever lost. In Matthew 25:41-46 we are told of the fate of those who fed not the hungry, who clothed not the poor, who ministered not to those in need. They will be sent into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into eternal life. Are you numbered with those who say “Here am I, send me”? There are so many ways to do the work of the Lord and thus teach by example.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Why did the Lord choose Isaiah to be his messenger and foretell of his coming? I do not know. No doubt, Isaiah was a man of strong character, possessing deep faith in God, and full of courage and conviction. He was clearly effective in court circles, among false teachers, and among the common people and probably for all these reasons the man of the hour whom the Lord selected. Whatever the reason, the most important thing is that Isaiah was prepared and stood at the ready – **“Then said I, Here am I, send me”**.



# Lessons from the Four Hebrew Youths of Daniel: Living Godly in an Ungodly World

## Chance Hicks

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Imagine growing up in a nation that...
  - a. Had been greatly blessed by God in the past.
    - i. The nation of Israel had been delivered by God from Egyptian bondage.
    - ii. God had led them through the wilderness, across the Red Sea, provided manna, and given them the Law through Moses.
    - iii. God promised them the land of Canaan and gave them their promised land (Josh 21:43-45).
  - b. Had forgotten God and had forsaken Him in spite of all He had done for them.
    - i. The nation of Israel forgot God and forsook Him (Jer. 2:13; Jer. 2:32).
    - ii. They left the Living, True God to worship the idols that man had created (Jer. 2:27-28).
    - iii. Even the priests had turned on God worshipping idols, even bringing them into God's temple in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 8:15-16).
    - iv. They had forsaken God's message and followed after the message of false prophets (Jer. 5:30-31).
  - c. Had become morally corrupt.
    - i. Sexual perversion was rampant because of the idol worship in which the nation of Israel was involved (Jer. 5:7-9).
    - ii. The people had become greedy and deceitful, even forgetting the orphans and overlooking the needy (Jer. 5:25-29).
    - iii. They shed innocent blood, even offering their own children in sacrifice to idols such as Baal (Jer. 19:4-5).
  - d. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah grew up in a nation that been blessed but had forgotten God and forsaken Him.
  - e. We live a nation that has forgotten God, has forsaken Him, and has become morally corrupt.
2. Who were these four Hebrew youths who lived Godly in an ungodly world?
  - a. These four young men were likely 15-20 years old when they were carried into captivity.
  - b. They were the descendants of King Hezekiah (Isa. 39:5-7; Dan. 1:1-3, 6).
  - c. Even though they lived in the land of Babylon, a land given to idolatry and paganism, they were able to live Godly lives.
  - d. Daniel is described as "greatly beloved" by God (Dan. 9:23; 10:11) and a righteous man (Eze. 14:12-20).
  - e. What did they do in their lives that can help us live Godly lives in an ungodly world?
3. These four Hebrew youths can help us live Godly in an ungodly world, when we see:
  - a. Their Foundation
  - b. Their Faithfulness
  - c. Their Fearlessness
  - d. Their Friendship

e. Their Fervor

**Discussion:**

**I. THEIR FOUNDATION (Daniel 1:8)**

- A. Having a good foundation is very important.
  - 1. The foundation of a building is that upon which it is built and which transfers the load of the building into the ground.
  - 2. The foundation is designed to keep the building stable and sturdy even after the structure has settled over the years.
  - 3. If a building were built without a foundation to provide support, then the building would collapse as winds and storms beat upon it.
- B. The same is true when it comes to living Godly lives: a good foundation is very important!
  - 1. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah had a good foundation spiritually – “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself” (Dan. 1:8).
  - 2. They knew who God was, and they knew what God’s laws were.
  - 3. At some point in their lives, whether by their parents or by some other God-fearing individual, these young men had been taught about God, about His nature, and about His law!
  - 4. Because of their knowledge of God and faith in Him, they were not going to defile themselves nor disobey God.
- C. How do we develop a good foundation so that we may live Godly lives in an ungodly world?
  - 1. To live Godly lives we need to be grounded in the faith (Col. 2:6-7).
  - 2. As parents, we must instruct our children, teaching them the Word of God (Psa. 119:11; Deut. 6:7; Eph. 6:4).
  - 3. As individuals, we must develop our faith in God by hearing His word and studying it (Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 2:15).
- D. Their solid foundation allowed them to stand strong when their faith was tested.
  - 1. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were trained for three years in the schools of the Babylonians (Dan. 1:4-5).
  - 2. This schooling was to instruct these “children” (Dan. 1:4) who were brought out of Judah in the language of the Babylonians and in the customs of the Babylonians.
  - 3. Their names were changed from Hebrew God-fearing names to names of the Babylonian gods.
    - a. Daniel – “God is my judge” to Belteshazzar – “Bel’s prince or protector”
    - b. Hananiah – “God is gracious” to Shadrach – “Command of Aku”
    - c. Mishael – “Who is what God is” to Meshach – “Who is like Aku”
    - d. Azariah – “God has helped” to Abed-nego – “Servant of Nebo”
  - 4. Even through these three years of instruction, these four young men emerged dedicated to the God of Heaven, not willing to defile themselves!
- E. The faith and foundation of our children is often tested in today’s educational system just as these four faced when they were trained in Babylon.

1. Children’s textbooks are filled teachings against the Bible, such as evolution and humanism.
2. Evolutionists and humanists view the classroom as their place to indoctrinate our children with their religion – J. Dunphy wrote:

“I am convinced that the battle for humankind’s future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the educational level – preschool day care or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new – the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism...

It will undoubtedly be a long, arduous, painful struggle replete with much sorrow and many tears, but humanism will emerge triumphant. It must if the family of humankind is to survive.”<sup>1</sup>

3. The only way for our children to stand these tests of their faith is for them to be properly grounded in the truth with a strong foundation.
  4. We must teach our children or we will lose our children!
- F. If we are going to live Godly lives in an ungodly world, then we must purpose in our hearts to do so!

## **II. THEIR FAITHFULNESS**

- A. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were faithful even though they were removed from their homeland and were living in a foreign land.
  1. They did not let the conditions which surrounded them prevent them from serving God.
  2. They were removed from the city of Jerusalem, where the temple had been located, where they were to offer their sacrifices.
  3. They were likely removed from the ones who had taught them growing up.
  4. They were far from home and could have given up on God, but they did not!
  5. Even away from home, they remembered God through prayer (Dan. 2:17-19; 6:10-11; 9:3-19).
  6. There will come a point in life where we, as young people, will leave home and enter a place which will be unfamiliar to us.
  7. We need to make sure we have the proper foundation so that when we are on our own away from home, we too can be faithful!
  8. We must always be sure that we remember God in prayer just as these four Hebrew youths did (1 Thess. 5:17).

- B. Their faithfulness to God and to His instructions led to them living upstanding lives (Dan. 6:1-6).
1. Daniel, a man of foreign descent to the Medes and Persians, is made one of three presidents over them.
  2. But he was not just one of three presidents, he was the first president over them causing them to be jealous of him and his position.
  3. Those under Daniel were seeking to find fought with Daniel concerning the laws of the kingdom, but they were unable to find anything amiss in the life of Daniel.
  4. Daniel understood that being faithful to God means being in subjection to the government which is ruling over, so long as it does not violate the law of God (Acts 5:29).
  5. If we are going to be faithful to God and live Godly in an ungodly world, then we too must be in subjection to the government that rules over us so long as it does not violate the law of God to do so (Rom. 13:1-5).
- C. The faith of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah led them to give God the glory in all that they accomplished.
1. Daniel and his three friends were able to accomplish some great things with God's help.
  2. They were able to reveal the dream of Nebuchadnezzar concerning the great statue and interpret it (Dan. 2), to interpret the dream of Nebuchadnezzar concerning the tree which was cut down (Dan. 4), and to read and interpret the handwriting on the wall for Belshazzar (Dan. 5).
  3. In all of these situations, they did not once take the credit for themselves, but they always gave the credit and glory to God (Dan. 2:19-23, 26-28)!
  4. We must give the glory to God, for all of our blessings come from Him (Jam. 1:17; Phil. 4:6).
- D. If we are going to live Godly lives in an ungodly world, then we must be faithful to Him no matter where we are and always give Him the glory!

### **III. THEIR FEARLESSNESS**

- A. Daniel was fearless before King Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler of the empire ruling the world!
1. Daniel knew his life was endangered because no one had been able to tell the dream to Nebuchadnezzar or to interpret it.
  2. The king was going to have all of his wise men cut to pieces and their houses turned into dunghills (Dan. 2:5, 12-13).
  3. Daniel requested time from the king to be able to show the interpretation to the king.
  4. Daniel was not afraid to tell King Nebuchadnezzar about the God of Heaven who reveals secrets (Dan. 2:28).
  5. Daniel was not afraid to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream concerning the tree even though "the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies" (Dan. 4:19).
  6. Daniel was not afraid to tell Nebuchadnezzar how he might avoid eating grass as the oxen (Dan. 4:27).

- B. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were fearless before a great golden image and a great multitude of idol worshippers (Dan. 3)!
1. Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden statue in the plain of Dura that was 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide.
  2. The command was for the people, nations, and languages to fall down and worship the golden image when they heard the sounds of the instruments playing.
  3. The punishment for not bowing to the image was given: “and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace” (Dan. 3:6).
  4. These three Hebrew youths were not afraid to stand out in a crowd!
  5. These three Hebrew youths cared more about serving God than about preserving their lives – they were willing to die in service to God!
  6. They were not afraid when Nebuchadnezzar addressed them directly and gave them a second chance.
  7. They were not afraid because they trusted in God (Dan. 3:16-18).
- C. Daniel was fearless despite those who were attempting to throw him into a den of lions (Dan. 6)!
1. Daniel was not afraid to obey God’s law above man’s law no matter the punishment.
  2. Darius was tricked into signing a decree (an unchangeable law of the Medes and Persians) which would cause Daniel to be punished.
  3. The punishment for breaking the decree signed by Darius was being cast into a den of lions.
  4. Daniel prayed as his custom was, just as he had always done, because he was not afraid of the lions.
  5. Daniel was willing to give his life serving the God of Heaven!
- D. The first century Christians were willing to give their lives for Christ!
1. Jesus instructed them, and us, through the pen of the apostle John to be faithful to the point of death (Rev. 2:10).
  2. Many first century Christians lost their lives for their faith in God.
  3. Some were burned at the stake, while others were forced to fight beasts in the arena.
  4. However, some Christians were not fearless in the face of the persecution giving up on God and submitting to the Roman government worshipping the Roman idols.
  5. There are Christians today, however, who would not be willing to give their lives for Christ and for His cause because are not willing to give their time or their money for Him either.
- E. If we are going to live Godly lives in an ungodly world, then we must be fearless followers of Christ (Rev. 21:8)!

#### **IV. THEIR FRIENDSHIP**

- A. Daniel remembered his dear friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, when he was blessed.

1. After Daniel revealed the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and interpreted the dream for him, Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel many gifts and made him ruler over Babylon (Dan. 2:48).
2. Daniel did not take this great position and use it for himself, but he requested that his friends be placed in positions of authority also (Dan. 2:49).
- B. The friendship among Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah was one of the reasons they were able to stand before the golden image when all the others present bowed before it (Dan. 3).
  1. Many times it is easier to give in and to give up when you are alone in your decision.
  2. Having friends at their side which were willing to do what was right, they were able to stand firm.
- C. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah chose Godly friends who had determined to do what was right (Dan. 1:8).
  1. What if they had developed greater friendships with those of Babylon than with each other? Would the record given in Daniel have read differently?
  2. Our friends and their decisions can play a major part in the way we live and in the decisions which we make (1 Cor. 15:33).
- D. If we are going to live Godly lives in an ungodly world, then we must choose our friends carefully!

## **V. THEIR FERVOR**

- A. Daniel was often confused after seeing the visions which were revealed to him.
  1. After seeing the four beasts (the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the diverse beast) come out of the sea, Daniel was grieved, and his thoughts troubled him (Dan. 7:15, 28).
  2. After seeing the vision concerning the ram and the he-goat, Daniel fainted and was sick being astonished at the vision (Dan. 8:27).
- B. However, Daniel did not give up because his thoughts troubled him; he always sought to understand the vision!
  1. He asked one that stood by to tell him the truth concerning the four beasts out of the sea (Dan. 7:16-17).
  2. He sought to know the truth concerning the fourth beast (Dan. 7:19-22).
  3. Daniel always kept the matter in his heart (Dan. 7:28).
  4. Daniel sought the meaning of the vision concerning the ram and the he-goat (Dan. 8:15).
- C. As Christians, we need to have fervor, a great desire, to understand the Word of God!
  1. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children” (Hos. 4:6)!
  2. We are instructed to study and to grow as His children (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 5:12-14)!
  3. Daniel did not give up when he did not understand immediately, and neither should we give up when we do not understand a passage of Scripture we are studying!

- D. If we are going to live Godly lives in an ungodly world, then we must have a great fervor for the Word of God!

**CONCLUSION:**

1. We live in an ungodly world just as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah did.
  - a. They were able to live Godly lives because of their foundation, their faithfulness, their fearlessness, their friendship, and their fervor.
  - b. If we are going to be successful in living Godly lives it will require the proper foundation, faithfulness, fearlessness, friendships, and fervor to obey God.
2. May we learn these great lessons from these four young men (Rom 15:4)!
3. Have we purposed in our hearts not to defile ourselves or to disobey God?

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> As quoted by Jonathan Sarfati, Refuting Evolution, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1999), pp. 20-21.

# Introduction and Overview of Daniel

Chris Butler

## INTRODUCTION:

1. In Daniel 9 we read, @ I Daniel understood by the books the number of years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. @ (Dan 9:1)
2. Daniel was a man who was educated in the law of his God. He knew the law of Moses, as well as the prophets.
3. In this chapter Daniel read from Jeremiah of the 70 years of captivity.
4. In response to his reading Daniel offered unto the Lord prayers and supplications.
5. In verses 9-11 of we read of Daniel=s understanding that the captivity was a result of the righteousness of God, who rightly punished His people because of their continual rebellion, and refusal to repent and confess their sins to God.
6. Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are two chapters in the Law of Moses which reveal the curse that God brought on his people.
  - a. Note that in Daniel=s prayer are mentioned these words: sinned, iniquity, done wickedly, rebelled, by departing, neither have we hearkened unto the prophets, trespass, neither have we obeyed.
  - b. Note from (Lev. 26:14-15, 23) the following: will not hearken, will not do, despise, abhor, break, walk contrary.
  - c. Note from (Deut. 28:15-ff) the following: will not hearken, will not observe.
  - d. These two chapters were warnings from God about that which Daniel and many others were now living.
  - e. Throughout the prophets one can read of the deterioration of God=s people.
    - i. Isaiah, Micah, and Hosea , among others, paint vivid pictures of the conditions of God=s people.
    - ii. Truly they walked contrary to the God of heaven, and thus he walked contrary to them. (Lev. 26:23-24).
    - iii. See (Amos 3:3).
7. Assyria had conquered the north and taken them captive. Judah was left for about 150 years or so. The book of Daniel begins with captives being taken from Jerusalem and carried into Babylon under the direction of King Nebuchadnezzar.
  - a. Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city and carried the first captives away in 606 B.C.
8. Daniel=s name means A God is my judge @.
9. He is the author of the book which bears his name.
  - a. There are a number of passages in the book wherein Daniel speaks of himself. (Dan. 7:2, 15, 28; 8:15, 27; 9:2, 22; 10:2, 7)
  - b. All the evidence one needs is found in one verse in the New Testament. Mat. 24:15. Christ both affirms the authorship of the book and the fact that Daniel was a prophet.



10. Not only that, but the authenticity of the book is confirmed as well. Jesus often quoted from the Old Testament. His quotation from the book is all one needs concerning the authenticity of the book.
11. The key chapter of the book is chapter two. In this chapter God revealed the dream to Daniel, which was a figure of four kingdoms, the last of which was Rome. During the days of these kings, God would set up his kingdom which shall never be destroyed.
12. The fifth kingdom that Daniel saw is one unlike the other four mentioned.
  - a. It truly is not of this world.
  - b. It is not based on any physical nation or people
  - c. This kingdom is the heart and soul of the book before us.

Discussion:

### ***THE VISIONS OF KINGS AND DANIEL=S INTERPRETATIONS***

#### **I. THE DEDICATION OF HEART, AND THE EXALTATION OF THE FAITHFUL. CHAPTER 1.**

- A. Chapter one describes taking of Captives by the heathen King.
  1. The purpose of which is stated in (Daniel 1:-3-4).
    - a. The King wanted the best of Judah to serve in his court. He wanted those who had ability to learn the learning and language of Babylon.
    - b. Among those captives were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. (Dan. 1:6).
  2. From the onset King Nebuchadnezzar sought to make Babylonians out of them.
  3. He took them from their home to a foreign land. Judah to Babylon
    - a. He taught them new ways. The ways of the heathen. Learning of the Chaldeans.
    - b. He changed their language.
    - c. He changed their names.
      - (1) Daniel was named Belteshazzar
      - (2) Hananiah, was named Shadrach
      - (3) Mishael was named Meshach
      - (4) Azariah was named Abednego.
    - d. He tried to change their food.
  4. He changed many things about the lives of these youths of Judah, but one thing could not be changed, that being their dedication to God, and their conviction of heart to serve God no matter the circumstances.
- B. Daniel=s Dedication of heart. (Dan. 1:8).
  1. Daniel purposed in his heart. This first chapter of the book introduces a characteristic which makes Daniel an extraordinary example to follow.
  2. In the midst of a foreign land, under the pagan influences of Babylon Daniel remained faithful to his God.
  3. The word purpose means: to put, place, set. (BDB)
  4. According to Strong=s it means: purpose, determine among a host of other

definitions.

5. Other translations use the following words:
  - a. ESV Aresolved.@
  - b. NASB Amade up his mind.@
6. From these we understand that Daniel made a firm decision based upon faith, trust, conviction, and dedication to God.
7. Daniel gave God his whole heart. (Deut. 6:1-6; Mat. 22:37-ff)

C. Exaltation of Daniel.

1. Daniel was bought into favor with the prince of the eunuchs. (Daniel. 1:9)
2. That Daniel was a favorite and held in high regard is noted in verse 10.
3. The prince of the eunuchs feared for his life.
4. Daniel was granted his request and as he believed they appeared better than all others.
5. God gave these young men knowledge and wisdom, and to Daniel understanding in visions and dreams.
6. Daniel was of just the right character for God to reveal himself among the pagan Kings. He would faithfully proclaim any word from God.
7. Before Godless pagan Kings God=s people stood firm.
8. There is a wonderful lesson for the church today. We can shine faithful in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. (Phil. 2:15-ff)
9. We can faithfully carry out God=s purpose despite how bad things may seem.

II. THE LIMITATIONS OF MAN AND THE REVELATION OF GOD. CHAPTER 2.

A. The Vision and the troubled spirit.

1. Both the King and his chosen wise men were found to be helpless in the matter.
  - a. Note the kind of man Nebuchadnezzar was. He said the dream is gone from me, but you will tell me the dream and the interpretation or I will cut you into pieces and make your houses a dunghill.
  - b. They knew their limitations. Note, they said, Athere is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king=s matter.
  - c. They realized this ability was beyond their reach. Note verse 11. They realized only the Agods@ could know what the King wanted from them.
  - d. Brethren, without God man is lost.

B. They did not know Daniel, rather they did not know the God of Daniel. He is the ARevealer of secrets@

1. Daniel was called to reveal the dream, but first asked the King for a space of time. (Dan. 2:12-16)
2. Now watch it, Daniel went to all the wise men and said, ALet us have a meeting and concoct a plan@ NO!!
3. Daniel went to his brethren. They bowed in prayer before their and made their request before the Revealer of Secrets. (Dan. 2:17-23).
4. The last time you had a problem, what did you do? How many times have you called some of your Christian friends and said come pray with

me?

- 5.
- C. Daniel knew that God could reveal the secret. This was evident in his prayer to God, but Daniel made sure that Nebuchadnezzar knew the secret was revealed by God.
  1. Daniel said all your wise men CANNOT make known the dream, **ABUT** there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets.@
  2. In humility and faithful service to God, Daniel said this is not of my doing.
  3. This is not because of my wisdom and power, God revealed it.
- D. The interpretation of the Dream described four kingdoms, starting with Babylon followed by, the Medes and Persians, Greece, and finally Rome.
- E. The Explanation of the dream is described as follows:
  1. Head of Gold. Babylon
  2. His breasts and arms of silver. Medes and Persians.
  3. His belly and thighs of brass. Grecian.
  4. His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and clay. Rome.
  5. The image was smote in the feet by the small stone cut out without hands.
  6. The image brake in pieces and the stone became a great mountain.
- F. The Institution. In the days of the last kingdom, God would set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. (Dan. 2:44).

### III. THE CONVICTIONS OF MEN AND THE PROTECTION OF THE FAITHFUL. CHAPTER 3.

In this chapter of Daniel we are introduced to the three youths mentioned in chapter one.

- A. The Formation of the image and Nebuchadnezzar's Command.
  1. The king made an image and commanded the people at the sound of the trumpet to bow down and worship. (Dan. 3:1-4)
  2. This was contrary to the law of God. (Ex. 20:4-5)
  3. Whatever the image may have been, an image of Nebuchadnezzar, Marduk or another, the point is clear. God's faithful servants could not bow in worship of the image.
- B. The Accusation. Certain Chaldeans saw this and accused the Jews before the king. (Dan. 3:8)
  1. AHave not regarded thee@
    - a. With their lives in the hands of a pagan king, they said like Peter and the Apostles Awe ought to obey God rather than men.@
    - b. The time is coming and now is, when we will face some of the same decisions.
    - c. To preach the simple Gospel of Christ, or face the punishment of the authorities.
  2. AThey serve not they Gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up@
    - a. Their hearts were dedicated to God and him alone.
    - b. They could not divide their allegiance between the God of heaven and pagan gods@
    - c. Neither can we divide our hearts between the creator of all and the world in which we live. (Col. 3:1-2)

- C. Their Conviction of heart caused their firm stand.
1. When Nebuchadnezzar heard the word of their refusal to bow down he was enraged.
  2. He brought Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego before him to question them about the matter.
  3. He reminded them of the consequence of refusing to worship the image, a burning fiery furnace.
  4. The king then asked a question, AWho is that god that shall deliver thee out of my hands?@ The answer to this question would come in a way he never dreamed.
  5. Note their answer, Awe are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that **we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.**
  6. That is conviction. A firm belief or persuasion.
    - a. Conviction is based of faith, trust in God.
    - b. They did not know if God would deliver them or not.
    - c. Their lives are a commentary on (Rev. 2:10), which means be faithful even if being faithful causes you to die.
  7. Note that their trust was in God. (Dan. 3:28).
- D. The Visitation. Note that because of their trust in God, they did not go into the furnace alone.
1. (Dan. 3:25) ALo I see four men@
  2. The fourth is Alike the Son of God.@
  3. God has promised the faithful, AI will never leave thee nor forsake thee.@ Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (Heb 13:5-6)
  4. What will you trade for your Christianity?

#### IV. THE EXALTATION OF KINGS AND THE HUMILIATION OF THE PROUD.

##### CHAPTER 4.

- A. The Exaltation of the King. In chapter four we read of the second vision of King Nebuchadnezzar.
1. The Power and Pride of the King is seen in a number of ways.
    - a. First, the destruction of Jerusalem and taking of captives.
    - b. Second, in the first vision Daniel said to him, AThou ..art a king of kings....hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.
    - c. Third, the king had the power of life or death. (Dan. 2:5, 12-13; 3)
    - d. Fourth, while walking through his palace one day he said, AThe king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that **I have built** for the house of the kingdom by the might of **my power**, and for the honour of **my majesty**?@ (Dan 4:30).
    - e. See also (Dan. 5:20-21). A.....his heart was lifted up,...mind

hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne.

- B. The Information greatly needed. The purpose of the vision was to continue teaching the King about the God of heaven. Three times in the chapter the purpose is stated.
1. Note (Dan. 4:17). At the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.
  2. Note (Dan. 4:25) A.....till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.@
  3. Note also, (Dan. 4:32) A.....thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.@
- C. The Humiliation of the King.
1. Solomon wrote, A Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.@ (Prov 16:18-19).
    - a. The king of the most powerful kingdom of the time was removed from his palace for a pasture. His kingly garb was removed for that of a beast.
    - b. His dainties were taken from him and he was given grass to eat.
  2. The King himself learned a valuable lesson about pride and the God of heaven.
    - a. Listen to his words from (Dan. 4:37), A Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: **and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.**
    - b. (Luk 14:11) A For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.@
    - c. God resists the proud.... A Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.@ (1 Pet 5:5).
  3. Remember King Nebuchadnezzar said, A who is the God....@
    - a. Now he knows. (Dan. 4:34) A I blessed, I praised, I honored.@
    - b. A None can stay his hand@ here the most powerful man on earth was taken out of his palace, put in a pasture and ate grass like an ox.

## V. ABOMINATION OF THE KING AND THE TERMINATION OF THE KINGDOM. CHAPTER 5.

Belshazzar is now king.

- A. The Abomination of King Belshazzar. (Dan. 5:1-4).
1. King Belshazzar made a great feast to a thousand of his lords.
  2. During this feast the king called for the vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple at Jerusalem.
  3. When Nebuchadnezzar took those vessels from Jerusalem he placed them in the house of his god in Babylon.
  4. Here are vessels that God directed His people to use in worship and

service to Him, now being used in a drunken pagan feast.

- a. Note lesson here. Consider all that God has given us, all of which is to be used in His honor and glory.
- b. How do we use what God has given. To glorify Him? Or to satisfy self.
- c. Brother Camp said, Awhen we allow sacred things to become familiar and they lose that sense of sacredness and respect its an indication of inward decay.
- d. What about the Bible? Is that a sacred book to your?
- e. Did you know this book cost God His Son. Brother Camp told of Brother Nichols, how that he said, when he read his Bible he read it as though the blood of Christ flowed over the verse he was reading. He based that on (Mat. 26:28).
- f. What of our mind, affections or the church of our Lord...?
- g. (Heb. 10:29) AOf how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?@

5. Verse four of the chapter tells us of their worship of the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood and of stone.

- a. Thus, the occasion was a pagan feast, wherein idol gods were worshiped.
- b. Imagine the gall of the king.
- c. Now the text states in verse 22 that Belshazzar knew of the events with King Nebuchadnezzar.
- d. But he did not humble himself, but rather lifted up himself against the Lord of heaven.
- e. Again we see the grave danger of pride.

B. The Suggestion of calling for Daniel for the Interpretation

1. Again let us learn the limitations of man apart from God.
2. The astrologers, Chaldeans, soothsayers could not help. They had no solution to the troubled heart of the king.
  - a. Twice in this chapter we read, Abut they could not@ (Dan. 5:8; 15)
  - b. They could not because God was not with them.
3. But God was with Daniel. The Queen new of Daniel=s ability.
  - a. (Daniel 5:12) note Aexcellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting of dreams, shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts.
  - b. Note as well she called him by his Hebrew name. (Dan. 5:12)
  - c. She said, Ahe will shew the interpretation.@
  - d. She perhaps remembered what transpired under Nebuchadnezzar=s reign. Perhaps she remembered the change of heart, from proud to poor in spirit.
4. Belshazzar did not remember this. Perhaps he ignored what he saw and learned.

- a. Here is what we do know. He was far from what his father became.
  - b. He was lifted up in pride against the God of his very breath.
  - c. Daniel said, And they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, **which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is**, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:
- C. The Termination of Belshazzar as King, and Cessation of the Babylonian Kingdom.
- 1. The Revelation, MENE, MENE TEKEL, U-PHARSIN.
  - 2. The Interpretation by Daniel.
    - a. MENE. A God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it@.
    - b. TEKEL. A Thou are weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.@
    - c. PERES. A Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.
  - 3. That night the king was slain, and the second kingdom that Nebuchadnezzar saw ruled in their place.

## VI. FORMULATION OF AN OCCASION AND THE SUPPLICATION OF DANIEL. CHAPTER 6.

- A. Daniel=s Position in the second kingdom. (Dan. 6:1-3).
  - 1. Of three presidents over the whole kingdom Daniel was first.
  - 2. Daniel=s promotion in the kingdom caused envy among the others.
    - a. A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones. (Proverbs 14:30).
    - b. For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. (Mat 27:18)
  - 3. The examination of Daniel by the jealous.
    - a. In seeking to find fault in Daniel, we simply read, A but they could not.
    - b. Note the wonderful character of Daniel. Keep in mind he is not at home, but in the midst of a pagan land.
    - c. Truly he was light in a dark world. (Mat. 5:13-16).
- B. The Formulation of an Occasion. (Dan. 6:6-9).
  - 1. Because they could find no fault with Daniel in regards to his work in the kingdom, they turned to plan b.
  - 2. Note what they said, A We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.@ (Dan. 6:5)
  - 3. Listen to what they are saying. We could not find any fault with Daniel relating to his work in the kingdom.
  - 4. So they turn to an area where they know they can catch him.
    - a. We know this because of their choice. Ever thought about why they chose prayer?
    - b. They knew Daniel was a man of prayer, and as such was faithful in prayer.

- C. The Suggestion to the king.
1. They approach the king with an idea that sounds wonderful to his ears.
  2. AWhosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, o King, he shall be cast into the den of lions.@
  3. He swallowed the plan hook, line, and sinker.
  4. Herein we learn the danger of flattery.
  5. Relate the story of the young preacher. APerfume is well to put on, but don=t drink it. A
- D. The Supplication of Daniel. (Dan. 6:10-ff)
1. AWhen Daniel KNEW!!!!!!! He went, he kneeled, he prayed.@
    - a. He prayed according to the word of God. 1 Kings 8:
    - b. House of prayer. Represented communion and fellowship with God.
    - c. Solomon told of the time of captivity when they were to pray toward that land.
    - d. We learn in this that Faith is the secret of prayer. (Jam. 1; Heb. 11:1; 2 Cor. 5:7).
      - (1) Faith gives substance to those things which are not seen.
      - (2) Faith makes God real.
    - e. We learn as well that Prayer is the secret of a devoted life. Note Daniel as an example.
      - (1) Toward Jerusalem, the place where God dwelt, presence.
      - (2) His life was God centered.
      - (3) He could give up everything, even his physical life, but he would not give up prayer.
      - (4) He knew about the decree, and also the penalty. He also knew that the King could do nothing about the law.
      - (5) This is the foundation and root of what Christianity is all about.
      - (6) What would it take for us to lay aside our Christianity?
      - (7) This is what (Rev. 2:10) is all about!! (Mat. 10:39)
      - (8) Does God mean that much to you?
  2. Daniel did not change his actions based on the actions of others.
    - a. Too many times our action are based on consequences.
    - b. Not Daniel. You do what is right, and leave the consequences to God.
  3. The text says this was a characteristic of Daniel=s life. AAs he did aforetime.@ (Dan. 6:10).
  4. Notice the words of the king both before and after his the den of lions, AThy God whom thou servest continually@. (Dan. 6:16, 20).
  5. Note, Daniel lived this day like he did all the days before. He did not wait until he faced the trial, tribulation, and then turn to God in prayer.
  6. His deliverance was based on faith. (Dan. 6:23) Abecause he believed in his God.
  7. What keeps your from Bible study, prayer, or meditation?
  8. When Daniel went into the den of lions he did not go alone. Why? He



lived and walked with God everyday. Imagine knowing that you face a den of lions, but God is not there!!!

9. God was the most important thing in his life. He was in a position of power, but that did not matter!!! He was not concerned with physical things. He refused, you will remember the gifts Belshazzar offered.
10. As a result God was honored through the faithfulness of one man in the midst of a pagan world.
- 11.

*The Visions of Daniel and The Interpretations.*

VII. THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST AND THE DOMINION OF HIS KINGDOM.

CHAPTER 7

- A. The vision of chapter two lays the framework for the rest of the book.
  1. Remember that Nebuchadnezzar saw a vision of an image which represented four kingdoms. Babylon through Rome.
  2. He saw a small stone cut out of the mountain without hands and it smote the image destroying it.
  3. There was the mention of a fifth kingdom. The Kingdom which God would establish in the days of the Roman kings. It would be an everlasting kingdom, and would not ever be destroyed.
- B. In this chapter we read of another vision which represents the four kingdoms. It is described as four beasts.
  1. A lion. Babylon
  2. A bear. Media, Persia.
  3. A leopard. Greece
  4. A fourth with teeth of iron. Rome.
- C. The second part of this vision is of the Ancient of Days.
  1. Nebuchadnezzar learned that the most high ruleth in the kingdoms of men@.
  2. In this chapter we read of judgement. In the rise and fall of these nations we learn that God was and is still behind the scenes working in the affairs of men.
  3. Each of the kingdoms we read about in the book made contributions to the Kingdom of Kingdoms, the church of our Lord.
- D. The third part of this vision Daniel saw the Ascension of Christ to the Ancient of Days. (Dan. 7:13-14).
  1. In such there were many things that were given to the one who ascended.
  2. Dominion, glory, a kingdom.
  3. The nature of the kingdom would be everlasting.
  4. This, of course is just what the writers of the new covenant affirm.
    - a. Luke records, Acts 1:9-11 A And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. [10] And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; [11] Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into

heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.@

b. Upon the ascension there was given him dominion, glory, and a kingdom. Paul said of Christ that He is AKing of Kings and Lord of Lords@ (1 Tim. 6:13-16).

5. Upon his ascension he was crowned as King over his spiritual kingdom, and as such he reigns. (1 Cor. 15:22, 27).

6. He truly is at the right hand of God exalted. (Acts 2:33).

#### VIII. THE VISION OF THE MEDES, PERSIANS AND GREECE. CHAPTER 8

A. Daniel saw in this vision a ram with two horns.

1. Unlike chapter 11 we are told the interpretation of this dream and the ram represents the Medes and Persians.

B. He also saw a rough he goat from the west.

1. The same is true of the he goat. This was a king of Greece.

2. Alexander the great.

#### IX. DANIEL=S EDUCATION, SUPPLICATION, AND THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST. CHAPTER 9

A. Daniel=s Education in the law. Note that Daniel understood by the books, the particular book being mentioned was Jeremiah. (Dan. 9:2)

1. Jeremiah 29:10 AFor thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.@

2. From this text Daniel read about the seventy years of captivity.

3. This no doubt encouraged him in the hopes of the promised return.

4. His first action, go to God in prayer.

a. This is the way it works. As faith increases so does prayer.

b. Prayer is an evidence of faith.

c. As one grows in faith and knowledge prayer should increase.

B. Daniel=s Supplication and Intercession to God on behalf of the people. (Dan. 9:3-19)

1. Confession of sin. 3-15

a. Daniel confessed their sin, iniquity, wickedness, rebellion and departure from God. 9:5

b. We have not listened to the prophets. 9:6

2. Petition unto God 16-19

a. His petition is for God to hear, and to turn away his anger and fury.

b. The people of Israel are a reproach.

c. Do this Daniel said, for the Lord=s sake.

C. Seventy weeks are prophesied until the Crucifixion of Christ. (Dan. 9:24-27)

1. The division of the Seventy weeks.

a. Seven weeks. 49 years

b. Sixty-two weeks . 434 years

c. One week. 7 years

2. The time given would be from the going forth of the commandment to build Jerusalem. ,

a. Isa. 44: prophecy of Cyrus. Ezra 1:1-ff But this commission was

to restore the law. Then the temple, then the walls and city.

- b. Some consider the starting point to be under Artaxerxes, when Nehemiah returned to build the walls, as this concerned the actual building of the city.
- c. Regardless of when the starting point might have been, there is no question but that the last week mentioned by Daniel concerns the life and death of Christ.
  - (1) note the following. to finish the transgression,
  - (2) and to make an end of sins.
  - (3) and to make reconciliation for iniquity.
  - (4) and to bring in everlasting righteousness.
  - (5) and to seal up the vision and prophecy.
  - (6) and to anoint the most Holy.

#### X. The Consolation of Daniel.

- A. Daniel condition is described in verses 1-2
  - 1. Daniel mourned.
  - 2. He fasted, ate no pleasant bread, no flesh, nor wine.
    - a. Perhaps because of the condition of his brethren in Jerusalem, and the status of the work?
    - b. Perhaps it was over sin, either his or of his people.
- B. Daniel=s Vision.
  - 1. The man of the vision. (Dan. 10:5-6)
  - 2. The effect of the vision. (Dan. 10:8-9)
- C. Daniel=s Consolation
  - 1. Daniel was lifted up to his knees.
  - 2. Twice Daniel was called a Aman greatly beloved@
  - 3. The vision it seems overwhelmed Daniel and his strength left him.
  - 4. The messenger was sent to help Daniel understand.
  - 5. Dan. 10:19 AI was strengthened@

#### XI. Further Visions of Kingdoms and Kings

- A. The Persian Period. V. 2 Fourth King Artaxerxes.
- B. The Grecian Period. V. 3-4 The Mighty King Alexander the Great.
- C. Egypt and Syria. V. 5-20
- D. Antiochus Epiphanes 21-35. Abomination of Desolation. (Mat. 24)
- E. For a complete explanation of the eleventh chapter see Rex Turner=s ADaniel A Prophet of God., and also West Visalia coc lectureship. Daniel God=s Prophet of Hope in Captivity.
- F. ADaniel 11 A admits not half-measures.@ In this chapter, Daniel predicted events pertaining to the Persian period down to the Hellenistic era, taking the reader to the brink of New Testament times. Daniel surveyed future events so accurately that not even the critics disagree with the basic outline. The unbelievers= consensus is that Daniel 11 is so precise that it had to be written after the fact.@

#### XII. PERSECUTION, RESURRECTION AND DANIEL=S QUESTION. CHAPTER 12

- A. Persecution of God=s people.
  - 1. The reality is that God=s people when faithful, always suffer persecution.

- a. (Mat. 5:10-12)
  - b. (2 Tim. 3:12.)
- 2. Antiochus Epiphanes was responsible for some of the worst persecution the Jews ever faced.
- 3. It is said that he went into Jerusalem in 168 B. C. and killed 40,000 Jews.
- 4. He desecrated the temple by offering a sow.
- B. The Resurrection mentioned here could be the end time, but also in keeping with the context, could be a figurative resurrection.
  - 1. Antiochus died in 164 B. C. after which the Jews returned and regained the city.
  - 2. They reestablished the worship in the temple
- C. Daniel=s question.
  - 1. What shall be the end of these things? (Dan.12:9)
  - 2. The answer came but Daniel did not understand.
  - 3. We today can feel what Daniel did. There is certainly some difficulty in this book.
  - 4. There is a reference to the sacrifice fo Christ, as most commentators believe. (Dan. 12:11)
  - 5. The other possibility is again a reference to Antiochus. In his war against Jerusalem, he desolated the temple, set up an altar to his God, and killed 40,000 Jews. The daily sacrifice certainly was stopped, and the desolation taken place.
  - 6. Daniel was told, Ago thy way@. The time would come when God=s faithful will find rest.
- D. Ultimately that which Daniel saw in visions pointed to the one sin sacrifice, through which God=s Kingdom was established.
  - 1. It would be in this kingdom that God=s people would find rest. (Mat. 11:28-30)
  - 2. The time for rest, ultimately comes in the reward for the faithful in eternity.
  - 3. (Heb. 4; Rev. 14:13)

**CONCLUSION:**

- 1. Truly the book of Daniel is one of the more remarkable books of the Bible.
- 2. It requires much dedication in study and prayer.
- 3. It characters are marvelous examples for God=s faithful to emulate.
- 4. Overall, this book teaches us a number of lessons about God. He is still in control.
- 5. In regards to Daniel and his companions their lives are summed up by a statement in Heb. 11:33-34. The mouths of lions were stopped, and fires quenched, all because of faithfulness to God.

# THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS

Curtis A. Cates

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. Good and faithful schools have had significant positive impact through the ages in the proclamation and spread of the truth of God.

1. They have been helpful in the work of restoring New Testament Christianity.

2. The apostle Paul reasoned “daily in the school of Tyrannus: And this continued for the space of two years; so that all that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:9-10).

3. Countless times through the ages have preachers/teachers gathered students around them and educated them in God’s Word and His work in a kind of less formal type school situation.

4. Christ taught His apostles during His three and one-half years of earthly ministry, and before they died the gospel had been “preached in all creation under heaven” (Col. 1:23).

B. There were also schools in the Old Testament [somewhat formal, at times], called the schools of the prophets.

1. They existed especially during the days of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha.

2. Designed to impart knowledge, promote spirituality, and stress unswerving loyalty to God and strict adherence to His Word, these schools had a most vital role at a very low point in the history of Israel.

C. It was decreed by God that the priests [who offered sacrifices for themselves and also for the people] were to be teachers; they of course were to maintain purity of heart, life, and teaching.

1. The priests were not to drink strong drink. They were to distinguish between the holly and clean, and the unholy and unclean—“and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah hath spoken unto them by Moses” (Lev. 10:8-11).

2. “Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so shall ye observe to do” (Deu. 24:8).

3. That was a responsibility of all the Levites, not just the sons of Aaron.

4. God expected for His Word to be taught and thus made provisions for it.

5. However, the priests failed in responsibility and became corrupt in precept and example.

6. When those in leadership and teaching responsibilities became corrupt, the corruption of the nation would follow—and it did!

7. Thus, there would be the urgent need for the schools of the prophets and the critically important need for assuring that the teaching required by God would be accomplished.

8. Samuel was “raised up for such a time as this.”

D. The approach of this study will be to examine the background of the schools of the prophets in Samuel’s time, to notice various references to the schools in the Scriptures, and to come with some observations and draw some conclusions from the study.

## **II. BACKGROUND CIRCUMSTANCES**

A. The birth of Samuel is recorded in 1 Samuel 1.

1. Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah; Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

2. Elkanah was a Levite, a descendent of Kohath (1 Chr. 6:22-28), thus not a descendent of Aaron and not a priest serving at the altar.

3. He went regularly, year after year, to sacrifice and worship at the tabernacle at Shiloh.

4. Eli was high priest, and his sons Hophni and Phinehas served at the tabernacle.

5. Being grieved at not having a child and being provoked by Peninnah, Hannah prayed and wept, pouring out her soul at the tabernacle; Eli told her that God would answer her prayer.

6. Hannah conceived and bore Samuel.

7. In fulfillment of her earlier vow that if God would give her a son, she would “give him to the Lord all the days of his life,” as soon as she had weaned Samuel she brought him to the tabernacle, the house of Jehovah, and dedicated him to God.

8. “And the child did minister unto Jehovah before Eli the priest” (2:11).

B. Corruption came about in the priesthood.

1. “Now the sons of Eli were base men; they knew not Jehovah” (2:12).

2. Their greedy, selfish attitude was seen in their demand to take meat [for their portion] with the three-pronged flesh hook before the meat was boiled, instead of after it was boiled, even threatening to take the raw meat by force, if not given to them. “And the sin of the young men was very great before Jehovah, for the men despised the offering of Jehovah” (2:13-17).

3. Further, when Eli was old, “he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, and how that they lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting” (2:22). Eli warned his sons, but not strong enough; “they harkened not unto the voice of their father.” God was very angry over this evil and compromise (2:25).

4. In the meanwhile, Samuel was growing before God in serving Him; reminiscent of Christ (Luke 2:52), “And the child Samuel grew on, and increased in favor both with Jehovah, and also with men” (1 Sam. 2:26).

5. A prophet came unto Eli, and God spoke through him thus: Eli “honorest thy sons above” God (2:27-29); there would “not be an old man in [Eli’s] house for ever,” and “Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die both of them” (2:30-34); God would “raise up a faithful priest” (2:35).

6. “And the word of Jehovah was precious [scarce] in those days; there was no frequent vision” (3:1).

7. God began revealing His Word to Samuel, telling him that He would judge Eli’s house, “because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not” (3:2-14).

8. Samuel revealed everything to Eli, whose response was, “It is Jehovah: let him do what seemeth him good” (3:15-18).

9. Samuel prophecies were fulfilled, and he “was established to be a prophet of Jehovah” in the knowledge of all Israel (3:19-21).

C. God’s anger was further revealed because of the corruption of the priesthood, the low morals, and the idolatry.

1. Smitten by the Philistines [4,000 killed], the elders of Israel took the ark of the covenant from Shiloh, reasoning that the Lord would not let them loose with the ark from the tabernacle in the midst of the Israelite army; God would not allow it to be taken, they reasoned—as if the ark would produce some kind of magic.

2. The Philistines were afraid—“Woe unto us!” they responded.

3. However, Israel lost the battle [30,000 slaughtered], the ark captured by the Philistines, and Hophni and Phinehas slain (4:1-11).

4. When Eli [now old and heavy] heard of the great slaughter and the message that “thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken,” fell backward off his seat and “his neck brake, and he died” (4:12-18).

5. Phinehas’ wife, upon hearing about her husband’s death, that the ark was captured, and that Eli was dead, entered into childbirth and “named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel; because the ark of God is taken” (4:19-22).

6. The long and short of it is that the ark was stolen, and there was no high priest.

7. The ark was in the hands of the Philistines seven months, during which time God was “heavy” upon them and “destroyed them” in the Ashdod area. Thus, they started trying to get rid of it (1 Sam. 5, 6).

8. The ark was in the house of Abinadah for some eighty-six years (7:1), during the time of David (2 Sam. 6:3-4; 1 Chr. 13:7). Ultimately, the ark was placed into the temple, which was erected by Solomon, at the time of its dedication (1 Kings 8:6-9).

### **III. SAMUEL’S VITAL ROLE**

A. Samuel was a prophet of God, the last of fifteen judges, and a Levite; being a prophet, he seemed to occupy a position similar to the priests—especially under the present distress.

1. He began educating the people, for “prophet” means a teacher [a forthteller] as well as a foreteller.

2. For example, Aaron was Moses’ spokesman—“Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet” (Exo. 7:1); David was God’s prophet: “The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:2).

B. Samuel commanded Israel to return to God with all their heart and therefore to “put away the foreign gods,” to “direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he

will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” They did put away their idols and served God only (1 Sam. 7:3-4).

1. He gathered all Israel, they confessed their sins, and Samuel judged Israel (7:5-6).

2. Threatened further by the Philistines, Samuel offered a whole burnt-offering unto God and cried out for Israel. The philistines were pursued and smitten by Israel, by the help of the Lord. Samuel took a stone memorial and called it “Ebenezer”—“Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us.” Thus, the Philistines were subdued by God all the days of Samuel (7:7-14).

C. Samuel was also a “circuit riding” prophet/teacher; “And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah, for there was his house; and there he judged Israel: and he built there an altar unto Jehovah” (7:15-16).

1. The message was, if they would worship God, and Him alone, then He would be their guardian.

2. Samuel would gather young men around him and so train them that they could really help Israel.

3. Very sadly, when Samuel was old, “he made his sons judges over Israel” (8:1-2), but they were not righteous like their father.

4. “And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice” (8:3).

5. The elders of Israel seemed to use that as an excuse to ask for a king, but their real desire was to be like the nations around them.

6. Deeply hurt, Samuel prayed unto Jehovah; God assured him that Israel had not rejected Samuel but God Himself (8:4-8).

7. God called upon Samuel to protest seriously, warning the people of the consequences of having a king (8:9-18).

8. The sad situation was, “the people refused to harken unto the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us” (8:19-22).

9. It could well be said that Samuel was savior of the nation of Israel.

#### **IV. THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS**

A. Samuel anointed Saul to be king of Israel (10:1) and mentioned a “band of prophets.”

1. When Saul would come to Gibeah, the “hill of God,” he would “meet a band of prophets...and they would be prophesying.” Saul would prophesy with them.” These signs would show “God is with thee” (10:2-8).

2. The signs came to pass: “behold, a band of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them” (10:9-11).

3. This is the first intimation that there were schools or bands or companies of prophets—in Samuel’s time.



4. Someone asked, “And who is their father?” (10:12), the implication being that they had a teacher or master.

5. Peter makes reference to the special place of Samuel thus: “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they have also told of these days” (Acts 3:24).

6. Evidently Samuel originated the schools of the prophets and was their chief schoolmaster, or teaching leader.

B. When David was fleeing from Saul, he and Samuel are mentioned with the “company of the prophets” (1 Sam. 19:18-20).

1. David escaped and fled to Samuel in Ramah, where he stayed with the prophets in “Naioth,” or nevayoth, meaning student housing, or dormitory, which Samuel evidently had erected for his students. The plural of nevath indicates more than one dwelling.

2. The messengers of Saul were sent by the king to arrest David, Saul’s having in some way learned of David’s location.

3. Having entered a study area or hall, the messengers saw the “prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them.”

4. The Spirit of God came upon the messengers, and “they also prophesied.” Thus, they did not pursue their evil intent; rather, they joined in with the prophets and with Samuel, their master.

5. Saul sent messengers a second and a third time, and they prophesied, after which Saul went personally, stripped down to his under clothes, and “also prophesied before Samuel,” provoking again the question, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” (19:21-24; cf. 10:11).

6. David then fled to Jonathan (20:1).

C. The first time the term “sons of the prophets” is used is 1 Kings 20:35, meaning the pupils or students of the prophets.

1. The command for his fellow student to smite him was to teach unquestioned submission to God’s commands in such a wicked, rebellious age.

2. His fellow “refused to smite him,” evidently because he sought not to smite one of his companions.

3. However, because he did not submit unquestioningly to God’s command, he was slain by a lion (1 Kings 20:35-36).

4. He commanded by God’s word another to smite him, and that person smote him with a wound (20:37).

D. There were hundreds of the prophets of God.

1. Obadiah hid one hundred of them, by fifties, in a cave and fed them, during the time of Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 18:1-4).

2. This was during the time of Elijah, another master of the prophets.

3. Jezebel had “cut off the prophets of Jehovah; Obadiah saved them.

4. Then, Obadiah informed Ahab that Elijah was there, leading to the contest on Mt. Carmel with the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of the Asherah (18:7-40).

E. Elisha was anointed to be Elijah's successor (19:16), both of whom were masters over schools of the prophets.

1. God still had seven thousand who had "not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (19:18).

2. The sons of the prophets at Bethel met Elisha and said, "Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy head today? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold your peace" (2 Kings 2:3).

3. The sons of the prophets at Jericho asked Elisha the same question and received the same response (2:4-5).

4. Elijah, his master, was with Elisha and promised not to leave him.

5. Fifty of the sons of the prophets stood nearby as Elijah [with his mantle] smote the waters of the Jordan River and divided it, and Elijah and Elisha crossed on dry land.

6. Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit be upon him, and as they walked and talked, "behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!"

7. Elijah's mantle fell from him, and Elisha picked it up, used it to divide the Jordan, and went back over the Jordan—evidently a symbol of the double portion.

8. Many centuries later, Elijah would reappear on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mat. 17:3).

9. "And when the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho over against him saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him." In Jericho the waters were bad, so at the request of the sons of the prophets, Elisha healed them (2:6-22).

F. Many of the sons of the prophets must have been married.

1. One of the wives was widowed and told Elisha that their creditor was about to "take unto him my two children to be bondmen.

2. Elisha caused her oil to be increased, and she sold it and paid the debt (4:1-7).

G. Evidently in a dormitory type situation in Gilgal, Elisha told his "servant" [note the servant-master relationship], "Set on the great pot, and boil pottage for the sons of the prophets."

1. However, one of the sons of the prophets [observe the attitude of work] in gathering herbs that were poison—"O man of God, there is death in the post."

2. Elisha asked for meal and healed the pot (4:38-41).

H. At times, the schools outgrew their space, as in 2 Kings 6:1-7.

1. They went to the Jordan, cut the wood, and took “every man a beam.”
2. They asked Elisha to go with “thy servants,” and their master went with them.
3. The honesty and integrity of the sons of the prophets are seen when one lost an axe-head in the water; he said to Elisha, “Alas, my master, for it was borrowed.” Elisha made the axe-head, made of iron, to swim.

## **CONCLUSION**

- A. Never in the history of the world has the need for the pure, pristine message of the saving gospel of Christ been greater.
- B. Teeming millions of people are perishing; they must be rescued. The fields are white unto harvest.
- C. Faithful, dedicated laborers are critically needed to carry the truth throughout the world (Mat. 28:19-20).
- D. Faithful, loyal schools [like, or similar to, the schools of the prophets] can help meet this urgent need and deserve our encouragement and financial support.
- E. Although one does not have to be educated in such a school, it can be very helpful.

# CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES: PROPHETIC ACCURACY OF THE MAJOR PROPHETS

Curtis A. Cates

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:11-12).

1. The forty writers of the Sacred Scriptures were inspired of God, and they transmitted the absolute, infallible, plenary, verbally inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
2. The writers more than 3,000 times verified and/or specifically stated that fact.
3. A tremendous evidence of the Bible’s inspiration is predictive prophecy, hundreds of prophesies being meticulously, specifically fulfilled many years, often hundreds or thousands of years, after the death of the prophet.

B. The Bible is unique, different from all other books ever written—only therein is this amazing element.

1. This is proof of special revelation from God, proof of Christianity’s credibility.
2. What clearer proofs could exist than predictive prophecy and fulfillment, necessitating the miraculous, supernatural action and revelation of deity?
3. This proof is unanswerable, a phenomenon existing only among the people of Jehovah God.

C. Predictive prophecy, superhuman and miraculous knowledge of the future, is not within the realm of human achievement.

1. Human wisdom and foresight cannot accurately, precisely, and unerringly predict future events.
2. Science can predict such physical events as the eclipse of the sun or the return of Halley’s comet, but such predictions are the result of scientific law, causal order; predictive prophecy is unpredictable, not happening because of physical causality.
3. And, predictive prophecy is not mere intuition, guesswork, or some fallible human foresight, as in the case of a Nostradamus or a Jeanne Dixon.
4. Nowhere else is anything found, in the history of this world, that is even remotely comparable to Biblical prophecy.

## II. THE NATURE OF PROPHECY

A. The prophets of God were “forthtellers” and “foretellers.”

1. Forthtelling had to do with their message to the people of their own day and was authoritative; they spoke for God about their present needs and conditions, thus emphasizing our need to study the historical background and setting in which the prophets spoke and wrote.

2. Being spokesmen for God, the prophets had responsibility: ‘for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak’ (Jer. 1:7; cf. Eze. 2:1-7).

B. The prophets also foretold future events.

1. No mere forecast could perfectly predict future persons, nations, and events.

2. They were endued with miraculous foresight by the Infinite Deity.

3. How otherwise could one explain the phenomenon of detailing peoples, empires, and events hundreds and thousands of years before their very existence?

4. Human beings deal with future uncertainties and unknowns.

### **III. GOD’S TESTS OF FALSE PROPHETS**

A. “Produce your cause, said Jehovah; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and declare unto us what shall happen: declare ye the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or show us things to come. Declare the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work is of nought; an abomination is he that chooseth you” (Isa. 41:21-24).

1. God challenged the false prophets to prove their genuineness by predicting events in the remote future; they could not.

2. God’s prophets did predict remote future events.

3. Therefore, the Bible is God’s Word.

B. Man is finite.

1. What person can predict with certainty future world conditions, or the stock market, or even next year’s winner of the World Series?

2. What person or group of persons in our day are capable of producing a history of nations that shall exist in the Thirtieth Century [if the world stands], and the events actually take place as written?

3. “Boast not thyself of tomorrow; For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Pro. 27:1).

### **IV. THE OMNISCIENT GOD**

A. “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things

that are not yet done; saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isa. 47:9-10).

1. God continued, “I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed, I will also do it” (47:11).
  2. Who enabled the Biblical prophets to predict the future? Not the idols!
  3. “Declare ye, and bring it forth; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath showed this from ancient time? Who hath declared it of old? Have not I, Jehovah? And there is no God else besides me, a just God and a Saviour; there is none besides me” (Isa. 45:21).
- B. The existence of fulfilled predictive prophecy is objective evidence that the major prophets, as well as the other Biblical prophets, were informed and inspired by the omniscient God.
1. “God is not a man, that he should lie, Neither the son of man, that he should repent: Hath he said, and will he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and will he not make it good?” (Num. 23:19).
  2. God is all-knowing, and the prophets wrote His words, as affirmed 120 times in Isaiah, 430 times in Jeremiah, 329 times in Ezekiel, et al., according to Rene Pache, **The Inspiration and Authority of Scriptures**, p. 81.

## **V. GOD’S CHALLENGE TO TEST HIS PROPHETS**

- A. God unhesitatingly urges mankind to examine His Word and to use logical reasoning relative to it (Isa. 1:18; Rom. 12:1-2; 1 The. 5:21).
1. Notice the tests of a true prophet in Deuteronomy 18:21-22—if the things spoken come to pass.
  2. “The prophet that prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that Jehovah hath truly sent him” (Jer. 28:9).
  3. The prophet also had to prophesy in honor of the Lord, not in opposition to Him (Deu. 13:1-5).
  4. Christ affirmed the test of a prophet thus: “From henceforth I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he” (John 13:19); of course, He thereby confirmed His deity.
  5. The true prophet would be of upright, genuine character, awaiting God’s sacred revelation (Hab. 2:1-4).
  6. Whenever God chose a person to be His prophet, He made it very clear (6:1-10; Jer. 1:4; Eze. 2:1-5; Dan. 2:17-23); no person could in and of himself or by some type education or by some intellectual brilliance or intuition make himself a prophet of God (e.g. Amos 7:14-15).
- B. There were clear characteristics of true, fulfilled prophecies.
1. The prophecies involve events unpredictable in nature, such as the virgin birth (Isa. 7:14; Mat. 1:22-23), thus not possible without miraculous revelation.
  2. The prophecies involve specific details, not vague generalities and guesswork.

3. The prophecies often involved persons and kingdoms foretold hundreds of years before they even existed, for example the four world empires of Daniel 2.
4. The prophecies often involved events which were opposite to the expectations of mere human speculation, including the fall of certain major civilizations, countries, empires, and cities.
5. The prophecies' fulfillment cannot be questioned or gainsaid; it is one thing merely to predict, but it is clearly another thing for those prophecies to be fulfilled in objective, indisputable, unambiguous detail.

C. The point is this—"ye know not what shall be on the morrow" (Jam. 4:13-15).

1. God's command and challenge is "prove the spirits" (1 John 4:1).
2. It is to be "ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).
3. The Bible's inspiration is proven by the existence of fulfilled prophesy; "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

## **VI. THE MAJOR PROPHETS AND THEIR ACCURATE HISTORICAL FORETELLING**

A. The major prophets [Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel] lived and prophesied more than 530-730 years before the birth of Christ.

1. They prophesied of future events hundreds, even more than 1000 years before their meticulous, detailed fulfillment.
2. The modernistic, atheistic critics have struggled in vain to "late-date" the Old Testament prophets.

a. The liberals charge [falsely] that the events predicted are in such detail that the prophets had to write as historians after the fact [after the events took place] as if they were prophets [as if writing before the events took place].

b. This is a vain attempt to do away with predictive prophecy, thus the supernatural.

c. But, in reality, it is a tacit admission of the accuracy and detail of the prophets' foretelling the future.

3. The terms "major" and "minor" do not have reference to the prophets' degrees of importance; rather, they have reference [in general] to the length of the prophetic books, i.e., the term "major" indicating the longest and "minor" the shortest.

B. The following examples of foretelling the future are beyond any possible refutation.

1. Isaiah

- a. 2:2-3—Establishment of the church
- b. 7:14—Virgin birth of Christ
- c. 9:1-2—Christ's first miracle in Cana of Galilee
- d. 9:6-7—Christ, God's Son, on David's throne

- e. 11:1-5—Christ a shoot out of stock of Jesse
- f. 11:6-9—The church, the peaceable kingdom
- g. 13:1-22—Fall of Babylon
- h. 39:1-8—Sons of Hezekiah to be made eunuchs in Babylon
- i. 44:24 – 45:7—Cyrus, God’s anointed to deliver God’s people from Babylon
- j. 52:13-53:12—God’s suffering Servant, Christ
- k. 55:1-13—Mercies of God in new covenant
- l. 56:3-8—Foreigner, eunuch fully welcomed in the church
- m. 62:1-5—New name, married to Christ in the church, Who is the “way” (35:8)
- n. 65:1—Gentiles welcomed in the church
- o. 65:17-25—The church/kingdom the new heavens and new earth
- p. 66:12—Peace like a river
- q. 66:18-21—Gentiles to be brethren of the Jews, if enter kingdom and bring oblation in a clean vessel and become spiritual priests and Levites

## 2. Jeremiah

- a. 22:24-30—Coniah and his seed cast out; no one of his descendents would prosper on David’s throne, ruling in Judah; Christ a descendent of Coniah could not/can not rule on earth (Mat. 1; Luke 3; cf. Zec. 6:12-13; Heb. 8:4)
- b. 23:5-6—Christ the Branch, seed of David, reign as king
- c. 29:10—Judah to be in Babylon seventy years
- d. 30:11—God to make full end of nations where Judah is scattered, but save Judah
- e. 31:15—Voice of mourning to be heard in Ramah, when Herod kill all male children two and under
- f. 31:22-- New thing to happen, the virgin birth of Christ
- g. 31:31-34—New covenant and sin forgiven, remembered no more

## 3. Ezekiel

- a. 26:1-28:19—Destruction of Tyre
- b. 29:1-32:32—Desolation of Egypt
- c. 22:15—Judah to be scattered, exiled among foreign lands; would bring about remorse and purging
- d. 36:24-28—God’s people would repent, new heart; be restored to Canaan land
- e. 37:1-10—Vision of dry bones assurance the captivity would end
- f. 17:22-24—Tender twig planted upon highest mountain of Judah’s royalty, Christ the Messiah
- g. 34:23-24—Servant David, Christ the Messiah, to be Prince [King] and Shepherd
- h. 37:24-28—Servant David the one Shepherd, Prince for ever, everlasting covenant of peace, tabernacle for all peoples, Christ and His church

## 4. Daniel

- a. 2:1-45—Colossal image of gold, silver, brass, and iron/clay; the kingdom, the Lord’s church to be established in the days of the fourth empire, Rome; Rome to be destroyed by little stone, the church/kingdom, which would fill the whole earth [four world empires would cover historical period of more than 1,000 years]



b. 7:1-14—Night visions of four beasts [representing Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome], the Son of man ascending to God in days of fourth beast to receive dominion and a kingdom, and the beast [Rome] slain

c. 8:1-27—Vision of ram and he-goat, Medo-Persia and Greece, including Alexander the Great and subsequent history in Intertestamental Period

d. 9:24-27—Prophecy of 490 years, by which time Christ would be anointed, be crucified, atone for sin, fulfill prophecy, bring in His new covenant, begin His reign over the kingdom, et al.

C. Many additional predictive prophecies, and their fulfillment, from the major prophets could be cited.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

A. The critic of miraculous, supernatural inspiration of the major prophets [of God's Word] is in a dilemma.

1. He must either acknowledge the existence of miraculous inspiration [which itself proves God's existence],
2. Or, he must explain away predictive, fulfilled prophecy.

B. The prophets are chockfull of the supernatural.

1. They were not just forthtellers but also were exact and accurate foretellers of the future.
2. To attempt to account for this ability as guesswork or extraordinary genius is impossible.
3. Proven, then, is the fact that the Bible is of God Almighty, Who is revealed in its sacred pages.

# CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES: HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE MAJOR PROPHETS

Daniel F. Cates

**TEXT:** Daniel 4:32, ". . . the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

## **INTRODUCTION:**

1. That God rules in the kingdoms of men has been said and proven by men--just as the fact was repeatedly evidenced through prophecy and its fulfillment!
2. In this study, a cursory glance shall be taken at a history of the nations of prophecy and at the prophecies of the Major Prophets pertaining to the nations presented (a full list of the prophesies and their fulfillments is impractical and impossible in the scope of this study [any not appreciating this fact could consider what it would take to study in any depth even a solitary passage like Jeremiah 25:15-33]).
3. Such a study can be nothing if it is not edifying; therefore, let all consider the evidence for the authenticity of God and His Word in this study of the *Historical Accuracy of the Major Prophets*.

## **I. A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY RELATIVE TO THE HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NATIONS OF PROPHECY (THE DATES OF THE MAJOR PROPHETS ARE IN PARENTHESES).**

3118	Egypt's dynasty I begins with Menes' reign; Upper and Lower Egypt united
c2000	Assyria ruled by Pazur-Ashur I
c1900	Babylon's dynasty I begins
1445	Israel's Mosaical age begins with the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai
1405	Israel enters Canaan under Joshua and begins occupying land (with resistance)
c1184	Agamemnon's Greeks destroy Priam's Troy
c1070-1025	Judgeship of Samuel ends age of the judges and opens the door for the monarchy
971-931	Solomon is the last of the kings of a united Israel
970-936	Hiram the Great reigns in Tyre as an ally of Samuel and supplier of temple supplies
931-913	Solomon's son, Rehoboam, reigns in Judah in his fathers' stead
931-910	Jeroboam, who had been banished by Solomon to Egypt, given kingship of Israel
853	Assyria and Israel (among others) meet in battle at Qarqar, a.k.a. Karkar
760	Jonah prophesied in Nineveh putting off Assyria's doom
753	Romulus and Remus found the city of Rome
751-671	Nubians take control of Egypt

<b>740-698</b>	<b><i>Career of Isaiah as prophet</i></b>
729	Assyrians gain rule of Babylon
724	Assyria besieges Samaria
721	Assyria takes Samaria deports many of her inhabitants and repopulates the land with other conquered peoples
721-711	Merodach-Baladan II of Babylon resists Assyria
716-687	Hezekiah's reign in Judah is highlighted by Sennacherib's overnight loss of 185,000
689	Babylon is razed by Assyria
680	Esarhaddon, who would carry Manasseh into captivity comes to the Assyrian throne
675	Egypt is attacked by Assyria
671-664	Assyrians rule Egypt
663	Assyria destroys Egypt's Thebes
<b>626-584</b>	<b><i>Career of Jeremiah as prophet</i></b>
614	Cyaxeres the Mede takes Asshur
612	Chaldean-Babylonians (Nabopolassar), Medes (Cyaxeres), & Scythians (Arbaces) take Nineveh
609	Egypt defeats Judah's Josiah at Megiddo in route to aiding Assyria against Babylon
609	Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar defeats Assyria and Egypt at Carchemish
606	Babylon overcomes Judah carries away Judah's seed royal
<b>606-536</b>	<b><i>Career of Daniel as prophet</i></b>
597	Babylon carries away Judah's skilled artisans
<b>593-571</b>	<b><i>Career of Ezekiel as prophet</i></b>
586	Babylon destroys Judah's Jerusalem and temple and carries away all but the poorest
575	Etruscans rule a growing Rome, keeping her in check
574	Babylon conquers Tyre, causing the Tyrians to relocate to an island position
547	Cyrus defeats Lydia's Croesus as Persian power expands
536	Persia conquers Babylon and Cyrus issues an allowance to return from captivity
535	Temple reconstruction begins under Zerubbabel
525-404	Persians increase rule to include Egypt
513	Scythians Defeat Persia causing Persia's focus to turn westward toward Europe
513-512	Persia defeats Thrace and Macedonia
c510-509	Romans overthrow the Etruscans and set up a republican government
499	Ionian Greeks revolt against Persia
490	Persia responds to Greek threat by fighting the Greeks at Marathon, and loses
485-465	Xerxes I, a.k.a. Ahasuerus, begins to reign in Persia
483	Xerxes' queen, Vashti, is deposed; a long search begins for her

	replacement--Esther
480	Having crossed the Hellespont, the victorious Xerxes is humbled at Thermopylae
480	Greece effectively ends Persia's hopes of controlling Greece at Salamis
338	Philip, a Macedonian, unites all Greece in the Battle of Chaeronea
336-323	Alexander the Great reigns in the stead of his assassinated father
334-332	Alexander crosses the Hellespont and defeats Darius III, Tyre, Gaza, and Egypt
331	Alexander finally defeats Darius III on the plain of Arbella at Gaugamela
323	Having reached India, Alexander dies in Babylon; his kingdom is divided seven ways
323-285	Ptolemy I Soter rules over a Hellenized Egypt
312-280	Seleucus I Nicator rules over a Hellenized Syria and parts eastward
301	The Battle of Ipsus consolidates Alexander's kingdom to four heads
202	Rome's Africanus defeats Carthage's Hannibal who moves to aid a despot (Syria?)
190	Rome defeats Syria's Antiochus III Magnus at the Battle of Magnesia
167	Syria's Antiochus IV Epiphanes orders all Palestine to offer swine to Zeus
167-166	Mattathias refuses to obey "Epimanes" ushering a period of rebellion; he soon dies
166-165	Antiochus IV Epiphanes fails to defeat Parthia in battle
163	Syria kills Eleazer Avaran, a son of Mattathias, in battle at Beth-Zechariah
160	Judas Maccabeus, the Hammer, successor of Mattathias, dies after brilliant victories
146	Rome destroys Carthage cementing her own position as ruler of the Mediterranean
142	Jonathan Apphus, another son of Mattathias, imprisoned by Syria
142-134	Simon Thassi, another son of Mattathias, reigns as High Priest
107	John Hyrcanus, a grand-son of Mattathias, destroys Gerizim's Samaritan temple
70	Pompey gains power as Roman consul with Marcus Licinius Crassus
60-54	Julius Caesar joins Pompey and Crassus in the First Triumvirate
37-4	Herod the Great is appointed king of Judaea; he lives and dies in infamy
27-AD 14	Octavian, a.k.a. Augustus, becomes first imperator of Rome, now an empire

AD 29	The Church, the kingdom of God, is established in the fulness of time
AD 68-69	Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, three minor Caesars, come and go quickly and violently
AD 69-79	Vespasian, besieger of Jerusalem and benefactor of Josephus, is appointed Caesar
AD 70	Titus, son of Vespasian, destroys the Jewish temple in Jerusalem
AD 73	The siege of Masada is completed ending the Jewish revolt

## **II. PROPHECIES PERTAINING TO THE NATIONS.**

### A. Assyria.

1. Would overrun Syria and Samaria (Isaiah 8:4-10; 10:5-6).
2. Would capture Egypt (Isaiah 20:2-6).
3. Would ally with Egypt (Isaiah 19:23-25; note God's role in 19:25)
4. Would periodically threaten Judah (Isaiah 7:17-25; note God's role in 7:18-20); ultimately would fail at Jerusalem's doorstep (37:21-35).
5. Would exceed her Divine mandate (Isaiah 10:7).
6. Would not go unpunished for her arrogance in thinking it was she and not God who was victorious (Isaiah 10:12-19; 14:25-27; 30:31; 31:8-9).

### B. Egypt (Dynastic and Ptolemaic).

1. Would be defeated by Assyria (Isaiah 20:2-6).
2. Would ally with Assyria (II Kings 23:29 [keep in mind that against can mean alongside; c.f., Jeremiah 46:2]; c.f., Isaiah 19:23 [most commentators apply this to the period of and after Alexander, but it fits pre-neo-Babylonian power as well]).
3. Would be defeated by Babylon (Jeremiah 43:8-13).
4. Would share political intrigue and in-fighting with Seleucid Syria (Daniel 11:5-20) since both were of a common political origin (8:8, 22; 11:4).
5. Would ally with Rome (Daniel 11:29-30).

### C. Greece.

1. Would rapidly supplant Medo-Persia as a world power (Daniel 2:32, 39; 7:6; c.f., 10:20).
2. Led by a great king (Daniel 11:3; 8:21), Greece would be aggressive (8:5).
3. Would be divided four ways when in her strength, but would not retain that strength afterward (Daniel 8:8, 22; 11:4; c.f., 7:6).

### D. Israel, also called Ephraim or Samaria, and Judah.

1. Israel would be attacked by Syria and Philistia due to her haughtiness (Isaiah 9:8-21; c.f., 28:1-8).
2. Israel would be spoiled by Assyria (Isaiah 8:4-7).
3. Israel would be cut off (ultimately) within sixty-five years of Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 7:8).
4. Judah would ultimately be destroyed (Jeremiah 9:25-26) by Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar (25:1-11), also called

Nebuchadrezzar and--more significantly--God's servant, undergoing three carryings away until "seventy years are accomplished" (25:12).

5. Both Israel and Judah would be restored together (Jeremiah 3:18-24; Ezekiel 37:16-22).
- E. Maccabean and Hasmonean Judaea.
1. Would have some ally with Seleucid Syria (Daniel 11:30-31), but others stand bravely and strongly against her (Daniel 11:32-34).
  2. Though some would fall, would be stronger for the persecution (Daniel 11:35).
- F. Medo-Persia, also called Media, Persia, or Elam.
1. Would supplant Babylon as a world power (Daniel 2:32, 39; 7:5).
  2. Would rise as two kingdoms (Daniel 7:5).
  3. Would conquer three important kingdoms in its rise to power (Daniel 7:5).
  4. Cyrus (named around two-hundred years before he fulfills the prophecies concerning himself [Isaiah 44:28; 5:1-4]) would conquer Babylon and issue an edict freeing God's people from captivity and hastening the rebuilding of the temple (Isaiah 41:2-3; 45:13; 46:11; 48:14-15; c.f. Ezra 1:1-2).
  5. Would ultimately be destroyed (Ezekiel 32:24-25).
- G. Neo-Babylonia, also called Babylon or Chaldea.
1. Would have great dominion, even over God's people (Jeremiah 28:14; 32:28; 34:2-3).
  2. Would destroy Tyre (Ezekiel 29:17-18).
  3. Would captivate Judah, but only for seventy years (Jeremiah 25:1-12; c.f., 42:11-12).
  4. Would destroy Egypt (Ezekiel 29:19-20; Jeremiah 46:13-26).
  5. Would be conquered by Media (Isaiah 13:17; 21:1-10).
  6. Would be humbled though had a swift rise (Daniel 7:4).
- H. Phoenicia (especially Tyre).
1. Would be destroyed by Babylon (Ezekiel 29:17-18; c.f., Jeremiah 25:22; Ezekiel 28:21-23; 32:30).
  2. Would be wholly destroyed "in the sea," Tyre becoming a place for the "spreading of nets" (Ezekiel 26:3-5, 12, 14; 27:32; 28:7,8, 18; c.f., Zechariah 9:2-4).
- I. Rome.
1. Would supplant Greece as the strongest of the aforementioned empires--but with inherent weakness (Daniel 2:33, 40-43; 7:7, 23-24).
  2. Would have a king different from the rest who replaced, as it were, three (Daniel 7:8, 24).
  3. Would witness the birth of the church (Daniel 2:44-45; 7:14; c.f., 9:24 [70 weeks=490 years=49 {7x7 (9:25)}] to rebuild under Nehemiah+434 {62x7} to the Messiah+3 1/2 until He would be cut off+3 1/2 until the non-Jewish Samaritans would have the kingdom

extended to them]).

4. Would destroy Jerusalem (Daniel 9:26).
- J. Syria (including Seleucid).
1. Would be defeated by Assyria (Isaiah 8:4).
  2. Would share political intrigue and in-fighting with Ptolemaic Egypt (Daniel 11:5-20) since both were of a common political origin (8:8, 22; 11:4).
  3. Would wear out the Jews during campaigns against Ptolemaic Egypt (Daniel 11:13-14).
  4. Would be defeated by Rome in "the isles" and face more political intrigue (Daniel 11:18-20).
  5. Would see a vile person arise out of small beginnings and out of proper succession in the position of his father who would fight against the south and the east and Judaea (Daniel 8:9, 23; 11:21-28).
  6. Would be granted some power by God (Daniel 8:24).
  7. Would fail to take a Rome-supported Ptolemaic Egypt; but would find allies in Judaea (Daniel 11:29-30).
  8. Would turn his attention to Jerusalem and effectively force Hellenism on the Jews (Daniel 11:30-36).
  9. In replacing Judaism with Hellenism (Daniel 8:10-12) and committing the abomination of desolation (8:13; 11:31), would rightly be said to be ruled by a "Madman."
  10. Would see her king die a natural, but horrible death (Daniel 8:25).

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The church's preparation is pictured through the prophesies of the Major Prophets.
  1. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. " (Daniel 2:44).
  2. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14).
  3. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3).
  4. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," (Galatians 4:4).

2. Indeed, God does rule in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:32) to the end that His Will be done (4:34-35; Psalm 103:19-21)!



# AN INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF JEREMIAH

## Derrick Coble

**THESIS:** To give a better understanding of the book of Jeremiah and show the condition of fallen Judah as a lesson for all today.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

- A You know the sheep are in trouble when the shepherd is a friend to the wolf.
- B This is exactly what happened during the time that Jeremiah lived upon the earth. (Jer 50:6) My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away *on* the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. (Jer. 50:7) All that found them have devoured them
- C About 600 years before Christ, Judah found themselves facing difficult times.
- 1) Israel had been carried away into Assyrian captivity in 721 so Judah was now standing on their own to face their enemies.
  - 2) Unfortunately, their leaders were just as bad, if not worse than their enemies.
    - a) After Hezekiah's good reign Manasseh came into power and you would think that he might take after his father but he didn't (2 Kings 21)
      - (i) He seduced God's people to do more evil than the nations (9)
      - (ii) He made Judah sin with his idols (11)
      - (iii) He shed innocent blood very much til he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another (16)
    - b) When Manasseh died his son Amon reigned in his stead (2 Kings 21:20)
      - (i) He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord as his father.
      - (ii) He served the idols his father served (21)
      - (iii) He was so wicked that his own servants conspired against him and killed him in his own house (23)
- D Jeremiah was called to prophesy in a wicked world.
- E His main plea from God to the people of Judah throughout the whole book was to stop trusting in yourself and glorying in your earthly power and knowledge but start trusting in God and leave your evil ways—It is the same call that we have to change. (Jer 26:13) Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

### DISCUSSION:

#### **I JEREMIAH: THE MAN AND AUTHOR**

- A) The book of Jeremiah is not read that often.
- 1) He is the weeping prophet.
  - 2) His message is one of doom, which makes the book somber and sad.
  - 3) It is the second longest book of the major prophets (52 chapters) and by word count is the longest prophetic book in the Bible (42,659 words).
- B) Jeremiah was the author (Jer. 36).
- 1) He was commanded to take a roll of a book and write all the words that God spoke against Israel and Judah (v 2).

- 2) Jeremiah called his scribe, Baruch to write down what he spoke (v 4).
  - 3) Baruch went to the temple and read all that had been dictated to him (v 8).
- C) Who was Jeremiah? (Jer. 1:1-6)
- 1) Jeremiah's name means "exalted of Jehovah."
  - 2) He was the son of Hilkiyah who may have been the high priest who had a part in the reformation of 621 (2 Chron. 34:9).
  - 3) He was a priest from Anathoth in the land of Benjamin which was about three miles northeast of Jerusalem.
  - 4) He had been set apart to be a prophet before he was born.
  - 5) He would go where God sent and speak what God commanded.
  - 6) Jeremiah was born around 647 B.C. and most likely was twenty or twenty-one when he received the call to be a prophet in the thirteenth year of King Josiah (626 B.C.).
  - 7) He prophesied from 626 B.C. to about 586 B.C.
- D) Jeremiah knew his people had departed from God and he knew that he had to do something about it even though he was a little timid (Jer. 1:7; 20:7-9).
- 1) He was a caring individual who loved his nation and it was painful for him to be rejected and even plotted against by men of his own hometown (Jer. 9:1; 13:17; 11:19,21).
    - (a) This reminds us of Jesus (Luke 4:24; Mat. 23:37; Luke 19:41).
    - (b) This shows us the love and persistence we must have the and trials that we might have to endure (2 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 3:14).
  - 2) He showed his agony and the loneliness of the nation.
    - (a) God instructed him not to marry or attend any feasts or funerals (Jer. 16:2-9).
    - (b) His message matched his lifestyle.
    - (c) Jeremiah seemed to show them that a life without God is lonely.
    - (d) We understand the same principal today (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23-27; Eph. 2:12).
  - 3) He was physically abused because of his preaching (Jer. 20:1ff; 37:11ff).
    - (a) This reminds us of Paul and Jesus (2 Cor. 11:23-27; Mat. 27:26ff).
    - (b) We also might endure this type of punishment someday.
- E) Jeremiah has been called, "the bravest and grandest man of Old Testament history."

## **II JEREMIAH AND THE OTHER PROPHETS**

- A) Prophets were ordained by God (Deut. 18:9-22).
- B) A prophet is "one who under the influence of the Holy Spirit, speaks the words and thoughts of God, whether they relate to the past, present, or future."
  - 1) They are seers (1 Sam. 9:9)
  - 2) They are men of God (1 Sam. 9:6).
  - 3) They are servants of the Lord (1 Kings 14:18).
  - 4) They are men of the spirit (Micah 3:8).
  - 5) They are messengers of God (Isa. 42:19).
  - 6) They are watchmen (Ezek. 3:17).
- C) Jeremiah was contemporary with other writing prophets as a forth-teller and a fore-teller.
  - 1) Ezekiel, who preached in Babylon among the captives.
  - 2) Daniel, who gained favor in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar.
  - 3) Habbakuk and Zephaniah helped Jeremiah in Jerusalem.
  - 4) Nahum predicted the fall of Nineveh at the same time.

- D) Jeremiah had a special connection with Ezekiel and Daniel.
- 1) Daniel
    - (a) Taken to Babylon during the first assault against Jerusalem (606 B.C.).
    - (b) Daniel was among the ruling class (Dan. 1:3).
    - (c) He rose to a position of power in the Babylonian palace while Jeremiah was in Jerusalem.
  - 2) Ezekiel
    - (a) Taken during the second assault against Jerusalem (597 B.C.).
    - (b) He stayed with his countrymen in Babylon (Eze. 1:1-3).
- E) These three prophets (Jeremiah, priest in Jerusalem; Daniel, in the palace in Babylon; and Ezekiel, priest among Jews settled in Babylon) most likely stayed in contact as men of God.

### III **JEREMIAH AND THE LAST FIVE KINGS OF JUDAH**

- A) Jeremiah lived during the reign of the last five kings of Judah (2 Kings 22-25; 2 Chron. 34-36).
- B) After the evil rule of Amon, Josiah was the next ruler.
- 1) He was a good king who reigned for 31 years and carried out many reforms (2 Kings 22:2).
  - 2) He destroyed idolatry after finding the book of the Law in the temple.
  - 3) Jeremiah probably provided the king with guidance from God for 18 years.
  - 4) He was killed in battle by Pharaoh Necho of Egypt.
- C) The second king during Jeremiah's day was Jehoahaz (Shallum).
- 1) He was an evil king who only reigned for three months.
  - 2) He was deposed by Pharaoh Necho and carried captive to Egypt to die.
- D) The third king during Jeremiah's day was Jehoiakim.
- 1) He was an evil king (older brother of Jehoahaz) chosen by the Egyptian king who reigned eleven years.
  - 2) During his reign Nebuchadnezzar took the temple vessels and of the kings seed and princes to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:5-7; Dan. 1:1-4).
  - 3) During his reign the people went back into idolatry.
- E) The fourth king during Jeremiah's day was Jehoiachin (Coniah or Jeconiah).
- 1) He was the evil son of Jehoiakim who only reigned for three months and was taken captive to Babylon to remain in confinement for 37 years.
  - 2) Nebuchadnezzar returned during his reign and took the treasures from the temple and the king's house.
  - 3) Nebuchadnezzar took 10,000 captives (2 Kings 24:10-16).
- F) The fifth king during Jeremiah's day was Zedekiah (Mattaniah).
- 1) He was an evil king (brother of Coniah) who reigned for eleven years.
  - 2) He was a puppet king who conspired with Egypt to rebel against Babylon.
  - 3) Nebuchadnezzar returned the third time during his reign and the walls of the city were broken down, the temple destroyed, and the city burned (2 Kings 25:8-21).
- G) Jeremiah was present during all the events that happened during the lives of these kings and the events that transpired between them can be seen throughout the book.
- 1) In the reign of Josiah (1:1,2; 3:6-6:30).
  - 2) In the reign of Jehoahaz

- (a) No prophecies are dated under his reign.
- (b) Message concerning him (22:11,12).
- 3) In the reign of Jehoiakim (25-27; 35-36; 45)
- 4) In the reign of Jehoiachin.
  - (a) No prophecies are expressly attributed to this period.
  - (b) Message concerning him (22:24-30).
- 5) In the reign of Zedekiah (22-22:30; 28-34; 39).

#### **IV JEREMIAH AND HIS MESSAGE**

- A) Spiritual Messages (Frank Dunn)
  - 1) Jehovah's judgment of sin.
  - 2) Jehovah's suffering for sin.
  - 3) Jehovah's victory over sin.
- B) Jeremiah illustrated his point to Judah clearly.
  - 1) Rachel rising out of the tomb (31:15)
  - 2) Marred Girdle as a sign of corruption (13:1-10)
  - 3) Potter and clay (18:1-12)
  - 4) Good and bad figs (24:1-10)
  - 5) Cup of wine (25:15)
  - 6) Yoke on Jeremiah (27:2,12)
  - 7) Stones in a brick kiln (43:8-13)

#### **V JEREMIAH: AN EXPANDED OUTLINE**

- A) Section 1 = Six discourses stated in Josiah's reign
  - 1) Ch. 1:1-3:5
    - (a) 1:1-19 = called to prophetic office
    - (b) 2:1-3:5 = prophesying of 1<sup>st</sup> message to the sinful nation.
  - 2) Ch. 3:6-6:30
    - (a) 3:6-4:2 = Fate of ten tribes
    - (b) 4:3-6:30 = If Judah remains disloyal, Jerusalem will be destroyed and the people will be scattered among the heathen.
  - 3) Ch. 7:1-10:25
    - (a) 7:1-8:3 = Admonition against vain confidence in the temple and sacrifices.
    - (b) 8:4-9:21 = chides the people for being against all reformation.
    - (c) 9:22-10:25 = shows where true wisdom exists and the folly of idolatry
  - 4) Ch. 11:1-13:25
    - (a) 11:1-11:17 = people's disloyalty to the covenant.
    - (b) 11:18-12:17 = concrete examination of utter corruptness and tells them of impending doom.
    - (c) 13:1-13:27 = closes with a symbolic action of the marred girdle typical of exile.
  - 5) Ch. 14:1-17:27
    - (a) 14:1-17:4 = Illustration of impending judgment and exile for Judah's sins.
    - (b) 17:5-27 = closes with a general criticism concerning sin and how punishment can be escaped.
  - 6) Ch. 18:1-20:18

- (a) 18:1-20:13 = two oracles telling Judah what will happen to them unless they repent.
- (b) 20:14-20:18 = Jeremiah tells Judah who will exact the punishment
- B) Section 2 = Ch. 21-32
  - 1) Ch. 21:1-22:30 = prophecy uttered when Zephaniah was sent to Jerusalem to enquire as to the outcome of the Babylonian siege.
  - 2) Ch. 22 = Proceeds to evaluate three presiding kings
    - (a) 22:11,12 = Jehoahaz
    - (b) 22:18,23 = Jehoiakim
    - (c) 22:24-30 = Jehoiachin
  - 3) Ch. 23 = denunciation against false prophets in Jerusalem and in exile who held out false promises of peace.
  - 4) Ch. 24 = A symbolic message prophesying what it would be like after the capture of Jehoiachin.
  - 5) Ch. 25 = The fourth year of Jehoiachin in which Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem and besieged it.
  - 6) Ch. 26 = Beginning of Jehoiakim's reign. The message was delivered in the court of the Lord's house.
  - 7) Ch. 27 = Jeremiah keeps Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon, and Judah from fighting Babylon.
  - 8) Ch. 28 = Jeremiah opposes the false prophet Hananiah.
  - 9) Ch. 29 = Letter Jeremiah sent to the exiles in Babylon after the capture of Jehoiakim telling them to establish houses in Babylon.
  - 10) Ch. 30,31 = Jeremiah tells the nation that although the present suffering is grievous God will make a new covenant with them.
  - 11) Ch. 32 = Jeremiah buys a field and gave evidence of purchase to Baruch.
- C) Section 3 = Ch. 33-44
  - 1) Ch. 33 = Messianic prophecy and promise of the perpetuity of David's throne.
  - 2) Ch. 34 = During Nebuchadnezzar's siege and relates to announce to Zedekiah of his own captivity.
  - 3) Ch. 35 = prophecy concerning Rechabites (2 Kings 10:15).
  - 4) Ch. 36 = rewriting
  - 5) Ch. 37 = History of Zedekiah's reign. Jeremiah announces that Egypt would not help.
  - 6) Ch. 38 = account of Jeremiah's imprisonment under Zedekiah.
  - 7) Ch. 39 = History of the capture of the king and destruction of Jerusalem.
  - 8) Ch. 40 = Gedaliah warned about Ishmael
  - 9) Ch. 41 = Ishmael carried away all the captives that were in Mizpah and killed Gedaliah.
  - 10) Ch. 42 = Message of Jeremiah warning the remnant not to go to Egypt.
  - 11) Ch. 43-44 = History of how the people did not hearken to Jeremiah but set out for Egypt and Jeremiah explains the reasons.
- D) Section 4 = Ch. 45-52
  - 1) Ch. 45 = Brief message to Baruch.
  - 2) Ch. 46 = oracles against Egypt
  - 3) Ch. 47 = oracles against Philistia

- 4) Ch. 48 = oracles against Moab
- 5) Ch. 49 = oracles against Ammon, Edom, Damascus
- 6) Ch. 50,51 = oracles against Babylon
- 7) Ch. 52 = Historical appendix containing an account of the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans and the exile of Judah's inhabitants (cf. 2 Kings 24,25).

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# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Garland Elkins

A definition of the subject is in order. By the word, “significance,” we mean, “importance; consequence.” By “Virgin birth,” the reference, and definition is: “A girl or woman who has never had sexual intercourse.” Mary had never had intercourse. When the angel Gabriel appeared unto the virgin Mary, and announced to her that she would give birth to Jesus, the Messiah, we read: “And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” (Luke 1:34). The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 teaches that a virgin would conceive and bear a son. The passage reads: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). Isaiah predicted the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. He spoke the prophesy to king Ahaz. Ahaz was afraid of the alliance that Syria and Israel had formed against Judah. Isaiah was sent by the Lord to encourage Ahaz and to give him assurance that Judah would survive the danger. He predicted the birth of a child and pictured the enemies of Judah as desolate before the years of maturity should come to the child.

The critics who reject the virgin birth of Jesus reject prophesy and deny that a prophet could foretell such an event before it happened. They argue that it refers to some child born in the reign of Ahaz. Their theory rests on two ideas, (1) that the Hebrew word **almah** used in Isaiah 7:14 really means a young woman and does not mean a virgin. (2) That it would be no sign to Ahaz to say to him to say that Syria and Israel would be desolate before the child should be born.

## THE WORD ALMAH DOES MEAN VIRGIN.

The word **almah** does indeed mean virgin, and refers to the virgin Mary. The inspired apostle Matthew affirms that Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. The inspired writer Matthew wrote: “Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son. And they shall call his name Immanuel” (Mt. 1:22, 23). The other six times **almah** is used in the Old Testament it means virgin. The Jewish scholars translated the Septuagint version of the Old Testament (about 285 B.C.) rendered **almah** (Isaiah 7:14) by the Greek word *parthenos* which can only mean virgin. Martin Luther declared: “If a Jew or Christian can prove to me that in any passage of scripture **almah** means a married woman, I will give him 100 florins, although God alone knows where I may find them.” James Orr in his book **The Virgin Birth** quotes Luther and adds his comment that the “100 florins have never yet been claimed.”

## OBJECTIONS NOT VALID

The objection that such a prophesy as Isaiah 7:14 would offer no help to Ahaz is not valid. The prophesy that Ahaz’s nation would outline Syria and be strong and powerful after Syria was desolate. It would be enough for Ahaz to know that Syria would be destroyed while Judah would continue for a long time and could look for an unusual child, virgin born, Jesus the Christ (Mt. 1:21-25).

## SOME FURTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST



**Almah** is variously translated as virgin, maiden, and damsel. In Isaiah 7:14 it is translated “virgin in the KJV and ASV, but in the RSV it is rendered “young woman.” Edward J. Young states, “At the outset we may confidently assert that the word **almah** is never employed of a married woman.”<sup>1</sup>

If the word may be translated as “young woman,” it would be understood as “young unmarried woman.” The important question is the **almah**, the young unmarried woman of Isaiah 7:14, chaste or unchaste, pure or impure? If she is unmarried, unchaste, and impure, then this would not be a prophecy properly applied to the virgin Mary and the birth of Christ. If the **almah** of Isaiah 7:14 is pure, chaste, and unmarried, **the only way she could give birth to a son would be only as a virgin!** This is exactly what happened, and this was fulfilled one and only one time in history, and Matthew settles the matter: He wrote, “Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son. And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us” (Mt. 1:22, 23).

Brother Guy N. Woods in an excellent article in **The Spiritual Sword** discusses Isaiah 7:14 and the word “virgin.”<sup>2</sup> His discussion follows:

#### **ISAIAH 7:14 AND THE WORD “VIRGIN”**

Among the most objectionable renderings appearing in the RSV is that of Isaiah 7:14, where the familiar words of the older translations, “Behold, a *virgin* shall conceive...” do not appear and are supplanted by the clause, “Behold, a *young woman* shall conceive...” It must at once appear, to the most casual observer, that if this rendering is a valid one, (1) the *virgin* birth is not taught in the Old Testament, and (2) Matthew’s attempt to make it so is in error! Defenders of the RSV among us often assert that we do not give up the virgin birth of our Lord by conceding that the RSV rendering of Isaiah 7:14 is correct, but such an assertion is both illogical and absurd, since Matthew, on whom they affect to rely for the doctrine in the New Testament, cites Isaiah 7:14, in support of his doctrine! If we give up the doctrine in Isaiah, we must logically reject it in Matthew, because Matthew supported it by Isaiah: “Now all of this was done, *that it might be fulfilled* which was spoken of the Lord *by the prophet*, saying, Behold, a *virgin* shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. 1:18-23). Matthew’s affirmation necessitates the conclusion that the word he used (*parthenos*) for “virgin” in 1:22, 23, is exactly equivalent to the word (*Almah*), which Isaiah used in 7:14, when he said, “Behold, the *Almah* shall conceive...”

Those who support the RSV’s rendering, “young woman,” seek to avoid this obvious difficulty by the allegation that (a) the reference in Isaiah is a “dual” one and (b) *Almah*, translated “virgin” in the older versions, does not necessarily signify a virgin. The “dual reference” theory, now gaining credence among “us,” alleges that there are *two* mothers and *two* infants contemplated in Isaiah and Matthew, one mother and child living in the days of Ahaz, contemporary with Isaiah, the other mother and child, being contemporary with Herod — Mary and Jesus!

It is easy to see how this “theory” would be acceptable to those who believe that the scriptures are all things to all men, but it is truly amazing that men assumed

to be trained in hermeneutics and who regard the Bible as a factual and straightforward document to be studied by the usual and ordinary rules of exegesis, could entertain such views! The difficulties which beset this view of the matter are both numerous and insuperable. (1) Isaiah's prophecy contemplate *The Virgin* (so the Hebrew), not "a virgin." Were the reference indefinite, it might with some reason be affirmed that so specific woman was contemplated; or, if so, there was both a primary and secondary fulfillment — the primary in Isaiah's day, the secondary in the birth of our Lord. This conclusion is precluded in the fact that *The Almah* would conceive and bear a son. How could one possibly assume, in the light of this fact, that "The Almah" actually meant two women, one a virgin the other a young woman, one of whom lived in Isaiah's time and the other in the days of Herod? Moreover, how is it possible for the word *Almah* as used by Isaiah, to mean no more than a young woman, *excluding* the idea of virgin, and the *same* word, when translated by Matthew, to *include* it? If to this objection is offered that the idea involved in the word "virgin" is not necessarily excluded in the phrase "young woman," the obvious answer is that, in this case, there were *two* virgin births, one occurring in the days of Ahaz and the other to Mary. Who was this first virgin? Was the birth miraculous? If yes, then the birth of Jesus was not unique; if no, then how could the *same* language describe the first birth as non-miraculous? The "dual reference theory" necessitates the conclusion that the virgin concept is *excluded* from Isaiah's original statement and *included* in Matthew's use of it. Words may indeed have typical significance, but any metaphorical usage bears the basic idea of the word used. Those who adopt the "dual reference" view abandon the simple and ordinary rules of interpretation.

Moreover, the son to be born to *the Almah* was to be called *Immanuel*, a word meaning, "God with us." The manner in which the prophet introduces this is significant: "And shall call his name Immanuel." In keeping with ordinary Hebraic usage, this does not merely mean that this is to be his proper name, but that he is to be called such *because he is such!* For a similar usage, consider, "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," (Isa. 9:6), designations not simply applied to him, but given him because he was *actually* Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. On the assumption that the "dual reference" theory is the correct one, not only were there *two* mothers and *two* sons contemplated in Isaiah's prophecy, there were *two Immanuel*s. Who was the Immanuel of Isaiah's day of whom it might properly be affirmed that he was "God with us?" Isaiah 7:14 is not the only instance of the use of the word by the prophet. It also occurs in 8:8, where the reference is to *one* Immanuel, the Lord of the land! Clearly, this was not some unidentified individual, born of an unknown mother, but the Immanuel of whom Matthew wrote in his remarkable identification of Jesus as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy which Isaiah received *from the Lord*: "Now all of this came to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken *by the Lord* through the prophet, saying, Behold, a *virgin* shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:18-23). It was the Lord who told the prophet that The Almah would bear Immanuel. If the woman of Isaiah 7:14 is not the virgin of Matthew 1:23, Matthew erred; if she is, the word

*parthenos* (virgin) which he used is exactly equivalent to *Almah* which Isaiah used. We thus have an inspired lexicography of the term, if we may assume that Matthew wrote by inspiration!

Apologists for the RSV are saying that the question is not whether *Almah* may refer to a virgin but whether it always does so. The effort is irrelevant because the point in issue is not what the word may mean *elsewhere* but what it means in Isaiah 7:14, and we have established by *inspired* testimony that here it means a *virgin*! So ought it to have been rendered, and the translators of the Revised Standard Version are justly liable to the charge of being influenced by liberalism in following the practice of all liberals in their rendering of this historic passage. Their translation, “young woman,” is indefensible on various grounds. Was she married or unmarried? If married, there is no proper relationship between Isaiah’s “young woman,” and Matthew’s “virgin,” the reference thereto is improper, and there is no Messianic significance to the passage whatsoever. If the “young woman” of Isaiah 7:14, was contemporary with Isaiah, and unmarried, the son born to her was illegitimate, and can have no identity without Lord. If she was pure, and unmarried, she gave birth to Immanuel as a virgin, as Matthew said she did, and so should the word *Almah* have been translated. There can never have been but one virgin birth.

Is there substance to the claim that *Almah* does not necessarily designate a virgin, but may indeed signify no more than a young woman? So some among us now affirm, alleging that “extra-biblical usage” supports this conclusion. The implication from this is that the word was used in Isaiah’s day in nonbiblical documents merely to signify a “young woman.” The truth is, there are no “extra-biblical” documents available to us from Isaiah’s day, and the implication is disingenuous at best. Talmudic usage hundreds of years removed, must not be allowed to oppose an affirmation of inspiration. The effort is identical with that of those who seek to sustain the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship on the ground that *psallo* once contained the idea of plucking or twanging. Such is not its meaning in the New Testament, and neither does the word *Almah* in Isaiah 7:14, mean anything other than a virgin. Its *biblical* usage is conclusive to this point. The word occurs in the following instances and in each obviously designates an unmarried woman and a true virgin (Psalm 65:15; Ex. 2:8; Prov. 30:19; Gen. 24:43, Song of Sol. 1:3; 6:8; and Isa. 7:14). Hence, the RSV rendering of Isaiah 7:14, is an improper one and ought to be rejected. The dangerous character of this “translation” is not only evident here, but elsewhere as other writers in this issue have shown, and we cannot recommend it. The American Standard Version of the Scriptures, a sound, faithful and accurate translation of the Greek New Testament, and the King James’ Version, revered and loved by our fathers and mothers, are translations which recognize the Messianic character of Isa. 7:14, and ought not to be set aside for works so obviously influenced by liberal concepts as was the Revised Standard Version. Our institutions of learning must not fail us in this matter. The Christian schools were established to be, and have long been bastions of truth, set for the defense of the gospel. They must, at all costs, remain so. Schools, like women, are honored and respected only so long as they preserve their reputations — such, once lost, *can never be regained*. These institutions ought to be in the forefront fighting for a pure faith and a faultless practice and when they

cease so to do they forfeit their rights to the respect and support of Bible loving people. Liberal-minded professors often talk of *academic freedom*. They must not forget that there is also *academic honesty*, and those who cannot conscientiously teach that which they were entrusted with ought to quit — not corrupt the minds of their students with liberal philosophies with which they were infected by denominational theologians.

#### ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Young, Edward J., **The Book of Isaiah** (William B. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1965), p. 287.
- <sup>2</sup> **The Spiritual Sword**, Vol. 11, April, 1980, No. 3; Thomas B. Warren, Editor, Garland Elkins, Associate Editor).

# THE GLORY OF GOD AS SEEN IN EZEKIEL ONE

Rom.15:4; Psa.103:1-13; 121; Ezek I

Gary Colley

## INTRODUCTION:

1. God's power and presence is manifested in many ways, but especially in revelation.
2. We should not think that any are too good to need the message of God; neither should we think that any are too bad to receive it!

## I THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

1. The "Major" and "Minor" prophets are determined by the amount of writing, not by the importance of the writer.
2. The period in which Ezekiel wrote is early in the Babylonian Exile, or some six centuries before the birth of Christ.
3. Judah was in apostasy.
  - A. Ezekiel received visions and drew his lessons of warning, reproof, condemnation.
4. His work as a prophet ended about 570 B.C.

## II. EZEKIEL WAS GIVEN VISIONS

1. The main design of his visions, evidently were to comfort his brethren in captivity.
  - A. The coming destruction of Jerusalem would come because of their idolatry.
  - B. He began to prophesy before the destruction of Jerusalem in the fifth month of the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, and "in the thirtieth year," either of his age or of the "new era of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, who began to reign in 625 B. C."

(Smith's Bible Dictionary).

#### **IV. TWO VISIONS IN EZEKIEL CHAPTER ONE**

1. We first acknowledge that these visions are difficult; we certainly claim no special understanding.
2. However, some of the visions are explained by the text itself and this we will examine.
3. The first vision revealed in the first chapter of Ezekiel is of four Cherubim, and four wheels (Ezek. 1: 1-14, 15-25).
4. He writes that "the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God" (Ezek. 1: 1,3)
5. In the vision he saw "a stormy wind (or whirlwind) come out of the north."
  - A. These are generally the symbols of God's presence (Ex.19:16-18; Job 38:1; Psa.50:3).
  - B. And out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures (Ezek. 1 :4-5,9,12,17; Jas. 1: 17).
  - C. Their wings were joined one to another (Absolute evidence of their readiness to execute the Divine Will where ever needed or desired).
  - D. All four of the creatures possessed the face of a man, of a lion on the right side, and the face of an ox on the left side, and the face of an eagle (in the rear part).
6. This description seems to represent the fullness of their endowments (Cf. Rev.4:4-6)
7. Ezekiel also observed a wheel in the middle of a wheel, at right angles with the first, thus making the four half circles to make four faces or sides.
  - A. The "eyes" denoted intelligence, pervaded by the spirit of the living creatures (Ezek.1 :20).

#### **V. THE SECOND VISION: "JEHOVAH'S CHARIOT"**

1. The second part is the vision of Divine Glory (Ezek.1 :26-28).
2. Here Ezekiel saw the Lord enthroned in glory upon the firmament above the cherubim (Cf. Rev.20:11-12).
2. The cherubim with their wheels, moving every way like  
A flash of lightning, seem to denote all the agencies by which God administers his government over the world.

A. God could force His will on man and make man to live in harmony with His will, but that would interfere with man's power of choice as a free moral agent.

3. Ezekiel saw visions, but no man or woman sees visions today (I Cor.13:8-13; Eph.4:8-16; Heb,1:1-2).

## **VI. EZEKIEL'S COMMISSION**

1. God spoke unto Ezekiel, and the Spirit entered into him enabling him to prophesy (Ezek 2:2).
2. In his commission he was sent to the house of Israel to speak only the words which Jehovah gave him (Ezek.3:1; 2:8).
3. To his honor he was true and faithful to his commission.

## **VII. GOD IS GLORIFIED THROUGH HIS SERVANTS**

1. We are to speak today only what the apostles, witnesses, or ambassadors spoke (Cf. Gal.1:8-9~ II Cor.5:7~ II Tim.2:2: I Pet.4:11)
  - A. No one today can or should claim the titles of apostle, witness, or ambassador for themselves.
  - B. The apostles were the authorized representatives of the King of kings, and Lord of lords (I Tim.6:15).
3. Though Ezekiel was permitted to see the visions befitting of angels, yet he is not to be exalted, and thus is justly called the "son of man."
4. He is to obey God in speaking, no matter how unpleasant or how difficult the task.

## **VIII. THUS WE ARE ALSO COMMANDED TO SPEAK TODAY (II Tim.4: 1-4).**

1. False prophets had "prophesied" only pleasant and popular teachings to Israel, to please the people, who are termed "this rebellious people."
2. The people were not accustomed to faithfully listening to God.
3. Ezekiel was commanded to, and did, speak faithfully the word of Jehovah.

## **IX. WHY DID THE PEOPLE REFUSE TO LISTEN?**

1. Israel had just recently been brought into captivity, they were not as yet ready to hear the message God.

2. Ezekiel was to speak what God gave him without hesitation, plainly and simply, as we are to do today (I Pet.4: 11; I Tim.4: 1).

## **X. THE PEOPLE'S HEART WAS HARD**

1. Ezekiel is told by God that "the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me" (Ezek.3 :7).

A. Have you ever heard of butting your head against a stone wall?

B. The reason being, "For all the house of Israel are of a hard forehead and of a stiff heart" (Ezek.3:7-8).

C. Jehovah tells Ezekiel not to let pity or to allow anything else keep him from speaking plainly and emphatically the word of God to them.

D. He should not fear them; "neither be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house" (Ezek.2:6).



# The Book of Isaiah

## Gary McDade

### THE MAN

The book of Isaiah opens with the establishment of the identity of the author. We read, “The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me” (Isa. 1:1-2). Five important facts asserted in regard to Isaiah from the beginning include his father being a man named Amoz, his writing immediately concerning people living in Judah and Jerusalem and all others who would be impacted by influences emanating from that epicenter, the time in which he is writing is contemporary with five kings of Judah—namely Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh, the source of his vision is divine, that is, “the Lord hath spoken,” and the exigency addressed is the rebellion against the benevolent God that was emerging from the very ones to whom he was writing.

Isaiah served as an official in King Uzziah’s court in Jerusalem. Jewish tradition suggests that Isaiah’s father Amoz was brother to King Amaziah of Judah (796-767 B.C.); if so, it would help explain Isaiah’s high position as a political and religious counselor in the king’s court. The Chronicler revealed, “Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write” (II Chron. 26:22). The historical date of 740 B.C. for the conclusion of Uzziah’s reign also marks the beginning of Isaiah’s prophetic ministry. Later during the reign of Hezekiah the Chronicles tell us Isaiah remains connected with royalty in Jerusalem, “Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel” (II Chron. 32:32). The continuation of Isaiah’s prophetic ministry through the reign of Hezekiah crosses the historical date of 701 B.C., the invasion of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, and Isaiah 37:38 where Sennacherib is succeeded by his son, Esarhaddon yields the view that Isaiah’s labors extended into the reign of Manasseh, who was for nine years co-regent with Hezekiah, and means that Isaiah’s ministry “lasted 53 years at least.” “Jewish tradition asserts that Isaiah was put to death during the reign of Manasseh (*Yebamoth* 49b, *Sanhedrin* 103b; cf. also 2 Kings 21:16)” (Young, I, 33). Perhaps the Hebrews writer is referring to Isaiah in Hebrews 11:37-38, “They were stoned, *they were sawn asunder*, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” (emphasis added). Isaiah is thought in Jewish tradition to have been martyred by being placed into a hollow carob tree and to have been “sawn asunder” with a wooden saw.

Isaiah was married and had two children, sons. His wife is not mentioned by name but simply is referred to as “the prophetess,” possibly referring to the fact that she was married to the prophet (Isa. 8:3). Their two sons were Shearjashub (Isa. 7:1-7) and Mahershalalhashbaz (Isa. 8:1-4). Isaiah’s prophetic office was tied to his family through the naming of his sons in such a way as to reflect two key elements of his prophecy as will be discussed under the next heading.

Isaiah put himself into his work, and he was a man of great ability. Nelson’s Bible Dictionary says, “Isaiah was a writer of considerable literary skill. The poetry of his book is magnificent in its sweep. A person of strong emotion and deep feelings, Isaiah also was a man of

steadfast devotion to the Lord. His vision of God and His holiness in the Temple influenced his messages during his long ministry.” Edward J. Young, a conservative scholar who has written the premier work on Isaiah in three volumes, offers this meaningful observation:

Isaiah is thought to have received his call on the day that Uzziah the king sought to sacrifice and was smitten with leprosy. He was in his study when the heavenly voice informed him that Micah had been sent and had been smitten on the cheek. Amos had been sent and had been reviled. Isaiah replied, “Here am I, send me.” (Vol. I, 4).

### **THE MESSAGE**

The man Isaiah is neither detached from nor dispassionate toward his message as the naming of his sons shows. Isaiah’s first son is named Shearjashub (Isa. 7:1-7) which means “a remnant shall return.” The name Shearjashub underscored his father’s prophecy that only a remnant of the people would return from years in captivity in a foreign land because of the current sins of the nation of Israel. Mahershalalhashbaz (Isa. 8:1-4) meaning “hasten the booty or spoils of war” symbolized the doom and destruction of the nations of Syria and Israel to the north of Judah because of their alliance against Jerusalem. One who proclaims God’s word as a scholar may convey a kind of distant academic attitude toward his message and while there is no prophet who exceeds Isaiah for scholarship with him it was personal.

*Magnificum et grave exordium!*—E.F. Rosenmüller

In chapter one Isaiah lays the foundation for the whole book. He began with “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward” (vv. 2-4). Although their sins seem to leave them irretrievably banished from favor before God, Isaiah gives them hope: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (vv. 16-20).

Again, the observations from Edward J. Young are welcome: “The first chapter is an introduction to the entire book, containing the basic themes of Isaiah’s ministry, namely, the sinfulness of Judah and Jerusalem (vv. 3-8), the tender appeals of the Lord (vv. 16-19), the certainty of the coming judgment (vv. 24, 25, 29-31), and the blessedness of the salvation to come (vv. 26, 27)” (Vol. I, 27). The point of Isaiah’s prophecy is directed toward ten “burdens.” (1) The burden of Babylon, 13:1; (2) The burden of Assyria, 14:25, 28; (3) The burden of Moab, 15:1; (4) The burden of Damascus, 17:1; (5) The burden of Egypt, 19:1; (6) The burden of “the wilderness of the sea,” 21:1; (7) The burden of Dumah, 21:11; (8) The burden against Arabia, 21:13; (9) The burden of the valley of vision, 22:1; and (10) The burden of Tyre, 23:1.

## ISAIAH: A Teaching Outline

### Part One: Prophecies of Condemnation (1:1--35:10)

- |      |   |             |
|------|---|-------------|
| I.   | Prophecies Against Judah                | 1:1-12:6    |
| II.  | The Prophecies Against Other Nations    | 13:1--23:18 |
| III. | The Prophecies of the Day of the Lord   | 24:1--27:13 |
| IV.  | The Prophecies of Judgment and Blessing | 28:1--35:10 |

### Part Two: Historical Material (36:1--39:8)

- |      |                                      |             |
|------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| I.   | Hezekiah's Deliverance from Assyria  | 36:1--37:38 |
| II.  | Hezekiah's Deliverance from Sickness | 38          |
| III. | Hezekiah's Sin                       | 39          |

### Part Three: The Prophecies of Comfort (40:1--66:24)

- |      |  |             |
|------|--|-------------|
| I.   | The Prophecies of Israel's Deliverance     | 40:1--48:22 |
| II.  | The Prophecy of Israel's Deliverer         | 49:1--57:21 |
| III. | The Prophecies of Israel's Glorious Future | 58:1--66:24 |

(From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright© 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers).

For versatility of expression and brilliancy of imagery Isaiah had no superior, not even a rival. His style marks the climax of Hebrew literary art. Both his periods and Genius and descriptions are most finished and sublime. He is a perfect artist in words. Beauty and strength are characteristic of his entire book. Epigrams and metaphors, particularly of flood, storm and sound (Isa. 1:13; 5:18, 22; 8:8; 10:22; 28:17, 20; 30:28, 30), interrogation and dialogue (6:8; 10:8-9), antithesis and alliteration (1:18; 3:24; 17:10, 12), hyperbole and parable (2:7; 5:1-7; 28:23-29), even paranomasia [*sic*, paronomasia], or play upon words (5:7; 7:9), characterize Isaiah's book as the great masterpiece of Hebrew literature. He is also famous for his richness of vocabulary and synonyms. For example, Ezekiel uses 1,535 words; Jeremiah 1,653; the Psalmists 2,170; while Isaiah uses 2,186. Isaiah was also an orator: Jerome likened him to Demosthenes; and a poet: he frequently elaborates his messages in rhythmic or poetic style (12; 25:1-5; 26:1-12; 38:10-20; 42:1-4; 49:1-9; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12; 60:1-62:12; 66:5-24); and in several instances slips into elegiac rhythm, e.g., in 37:22-29 there is a fine taunting poem on Sennacherib, and in 14:4-23 another on the king of Babylon. As Driver observes, "Isaiah's poetical genius is superb." (From International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright© 1996 by BibleSoft).

Isaiah's designation of God as "the Holy One of Israel" is a keynote in Isaiah's prophetic ministry "occurring in all 26 times, 12 in chapters 1-39 and 14 in 40-66. It was the Holy God whom Isaiah saw in vision in the Temple (chap. 6), and with this designation he delighted to refer to Him. This Holy One, who had appeared to Isaiah and whose prophet Isaiah was, was the One whom the nation had spurned" (Young, I, 47).

### THE MESSIAH

Isaiah was allowed to see hundreds of years down the stream of time to the virgin birth, the vicarious death, the kingship, and the kingdom of Christ, which is the church of Christ. “The anointed one,” the Messiah, which being interpreted is the Christ (John 1:41) would provide the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of Israel and Judah that Isaiah was exposing and that ultimately the world would need to avert disaster and eternal ruin.

**Isaiah 2:1-5**

“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.”

**Isaiah 7:14**

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

**Isaiah 9:6-7**

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

**Isaiah 11:1-4**

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.”

**Isaiah 35:8**

“And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”

**Isaiah 40:1-5**

“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

**Isaiah 42:1-4**

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.”

**Isaiah 49:7-11**

“Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.”

**Isaiah 53**

“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

**Isaiah 61:1-3**

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of

praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.”

### **Isaiah 62:1-7**

“For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marryeth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”

### **THE MAJOR ISSUE**

Today the subject of the authorship of the book in general and the unified authorship of Isaiah in particular clearly is the leading issue challenging the book of Isaiah. The general subject of this issue is known as theological liberalism and, brethren, theological liberalism has made its way into the church of Christ! A current source of this theological liberalism that the pioneers and founders never dreamed nor desired should ever, ever happen is our own Christian universities. Two in particular that are becoming increasingly militant on this issue are Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas and Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. For example, in their book, *God’s Holy Fire*, authored by professors from their so-called College of Biblical Studies the authors rip the prophet Daniel from his sixth century B.C. setting and plopp him into the second century B.C. even though the prophet Ezekiel specifically affirmed his contemporary place along with him in the sixth century B.C. (Ezek. 14:14, 20). Kenneth L. Cukrowski, Mark W. Hamilton, and James W. Thompson wrote, “Daniel was primarily concerned to show that God had acted in the past and would act again among Jews groaning under the misrule of the Greek-speaking Seleucid kings of *the second century B.C.*” (Cukrowski, 143-144, emphasis added). Search in vain if you will to find where these “scholars” believe Daniel actually lived in the sixth century B.C. and his material known as the book of Daniel was handed down through oral tradition and codified in the second century B.C. You cannot deny Daniel and keep Ezekiel. And, the news is out, you cannot deny Daniel and keep the hope of eternal life because Jesus Christ the Savior said, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, *spoken of by Daniel the prophet*, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)” (Mt. 24:15, emphasis added). Have the brain children of theological liberalism, also known as German Rationalism, at ACU not considered the fact that if Jesus Christ knew not whereof he spoke in Matthew 24:15 when he affirmed that Daniel, the sixth century B.C. prophet of the book bearing his name, “spoke” then Jesus was wrong and is, thereby, disqualified to serve as the Savior of the world? What is to me even more amazing is that members of the churches of Christ seem so apathetic about this all-out, frontal attack on the inspiration of the Bible, and they sit silently by as these wolves without even the shroud of sheep’s clothing pillage and plunder the precious body of Christ! Mark Hamilton is announced by ACU to be the editor of a soon-to-be-released set of commentaries that denies the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch!

Also, a former professor of Bible at Oklahoma Christian University, Glenn Pemberton, “vigorously advocates” the multiple authorship of Isaiah heresy (*The Christian Courier*, 1-3). (Pemberton has since taken a position as Chair of the Bible, Missions, and Ministry at ACU). The “multiple authorship of Isaiah” heresy holds that more than one person wrote the book of Isaiah. Two and as many as three different authors are credited with posing as one single author named Isaiah. The dual authorship position divides the book into chapters 1-39 and 40-66. However, Isaiah uniquely refers to God as “the Holy One of Israel” in both of these supposed sections (Isa. 1:4; 17:7; 37:23; and 45:11; 55:5; 60:14). Therefore, if one author did not write this book, multiple authors evidently were endeavoring to perpetrate a fraud by posing as one man. And, since the multiple authorship idea originated 1870 years after the personal ministry of Christ who knew nothing of it in the first century, then Jesus knowingly or unknowingly assisted in the perpetration of a fraud by quoting from the book and attributing it to Isaiah! Jesus Christ attributed the words in both sections 1-39 and 40-66 to the prophet Isaiah! (cf. Mt. 13:14—Isa. 6:9; Mt. 15:7; Mk. 7:6—Isa. 29:13; and Mt. 12:16-21—Isa. 42:1-4; Lk. 4:16-21—Isa. 61:1-2). Jesus said from the cross, “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30) meaning the fulfillment of all the prophets taught concerning his life and personal ministry. After his resurrection Jesus said, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44, emphasis added). “All things must be fulfilled” concerning him, even the things written in the Messianic prophet Isaiah’s book! So, down goes the challenge to the authorship of Isaiah “world without end”!

Do not expect help in defending the inspiration of the Bible from the so-called *Christian Chronicle*, the public relations arm of OCU, because the school thinks it has shielded itself from the false teaching of this paper (circulation ca. 100,000 per month) by establishing an independent board of directors and editor. Lynn McMillon, the Editor, President, and CEO of it, has started inventing words to justify the advocating of damnable doctrine carried in the paper from time to time for which he directly and personally is responsible. In a recent edition he combined the words “advertisement” and “editorial” to form the non-word “advertorial.” For years he has tried to disclaim responsibility for error taught in the paper by saying it is “journalism” and only items under the heading of editorials are his responsibility and nothing else in the paper constitutes “teaching.” Well, not even he is satisfied with that foolishness any longer because he now is down to inventing words to be able to live with himself for all the false teaching coming out of OCU and its infamous paper. Somebody needs to read I Timothy 6:3-5, “If *any man* teach otherwise, and consent not to *wholesome words*, even *the words* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, [obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, NKJV] whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself” (emphasis added). Even if people in colleges and universities choose not to honor and respect the words of the Bible, surely they ought to give some credence to the words of the dictionary lest they betray the attempt to appear intelligent! Friends, the inspiration of the Bible, “the word of Christ,” must be believed and defended!

I am sorry to have to say it, but these heathens have spit in Moses’ face and are not even being shut out of the camp for seven seconds much less seven days! (Num. 12:14). Has the thought of why the local congregations, in which these professors worship and some even serve in the elderships and pulpits of these local congregations, have never withdrawn fellowship from these men been considered by anyone? Possibly what has happened over the years is that the

unwillingness and even failure to apply the teaching of the Bible practically in the area of withdrawal of fellowship has generated growing disregard, disrespect, and even disdain for the scriptures themselves! It may well be that we have reached a point in the brotherhood where the gargantuan financial and political power enjoyed by the so-called Christian schools has hamstrung the local congregations into submission to the whims of these loose cannon professors. Unwilling to submit to their departures, we hesitate not to urge independent, autonomous local churches of Christ to employ the means of heaven's design to protect and promulgate the church of Christ by confronting and when necessary—and it will be necessary—withdrawing from these college professors (II Thess. 3:6, 10) marking them for everyone to see and avoid both in the local congregations and on the college campuses (Rom. 16:17-18). The eternal word of God mandates in Titus 3:10-11 that “a man that is an heretic [factious, ASV; divisive, NKJV] after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted [perverted, ASV; warped, NKJV] and sinneth, being condemned of himself.” Brethren, the attack on the church of Christ and the word of God is documented and known by every informed member of the church; the time has come for elders, preachers, and members to move into action! The GQ Buzzer has sounded; get out from under your rack!

### **THE MANDATE**

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

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# LESSONS FROM WOMEN IN ISAIAH

Irene C. Taylor

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages, women have been a strong influence on society. If she is good, the standard (moral) of society rests on a higher plain. She more likely instills these higher standards in her children and thus contributes in retaining these higher standards for posterity. If she is not good, she quickly influences society downward by her own low standards (morals) and those standards she instills in her children.

In Isaiah we view those from both spectrums of society and note the scope of their influence on society. Though unnamed, they nevertheless provide graphic lessons for us so that our lives may be more like God would desire.

## I. A LOOK AT THE DOWNGRADED SOCIETY OF JERUSALEM

A. In the early verses of Isaiah 3, the prophet severely censures the rulers.

1. The condition of Judah came about because they refused to obey Him (V. 8).
2. The rulers engaged in open oppression of the poor and lived wickedly.

B. The prophet then zeroes in on the conduct of the wanton women (vs. 16ff).

1. He considers these women as largely contributing to Judah's downfall.
2. They are described as haughty, proud and arrogant.

a. Note the graphic descriptions found in verses 16-24.

b. They seek attention, act seductively.

(1). They walk with outstretched necks.

(2) They have wanton eyes.

(3) They walk with mincing steps.

(a). Webster describes mincing steps as short, affected steps.

(4) They have tinkling feet.

(a). They wore anklet bands with bells to make noise to attract attention.

(5) They wore many adornments for show.

C. Their conduct and lack of character will bring complete change (vs. 24ff).

1. Instead of sweet spices, there will be rotteness and the odor of decay.
2. Instead of attractive hair, there will be baldness.

3. Instead of a robe (as worn at gala affairs) there will be sackcloth, symbol of grief.
4. Instead of beauty, there will be branding as a slave or captive.

D. Note the prophet's wife (Isaiah 8).

1. She is called a prophetess because of her relationship with Isaiah.
2. She bears a son who was named Maher-shalal-hash-baz (the spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth).
  - a. This was a sign of the impending calamity about to befall Judah.
  - b. Assyria was soon to take them captive.

## **II. SALVATION WILL COME THROUGH THE INSTRUMENT OF A GOOD WOMAN**

A. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

1. Almah means virgin--one who has not known man.
2. It never designates a married woman or an impure woman.
3. It is not unusual for a young woman to be with child, married or unmarried.

B. This is to be a sign. Re-read verse 14.

c. This is a one time event.

1. To claim a dual fulfillment removes the uniqueness intended by the sign.
2. For one unmarried to be with child removes the ability to be a virgin at delivery, negating the miracle.
3. If a miracle child arrived in Isaiah's time, who was the mother?
4. What was the name of the child?
5. Was He God Incarnate?
6. Why are we not privy to his mission in life?
7. Why was there a need for a second Incarnation eight centuries later?

D. Observe the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14.

1. Discuss Matthew 1:21-23.
2. His mother's name was Mary, chosen of God (1:18).
3. He was to be called Jesus (Saviour 1:21), Emmanuel (God with us 1:23).

4. God used a good woman to bring His Son to earth to save and upgrade humanity.

### **III. SOME LESSONS LEARNED**

1. Our manner of attire does matter greatly.
2. Modest attire does not attract undue attention either by wearing too little or too much.
3. Our conduct matters greatly.
4. It affects not only our personal influence but the conduct of those about us and those yet unborn.
5. God can work wonders through the cooperation of good people who are willing to follow in His steps.

### **CONCLUSION**

We have seen the lasting influence of womanhood, both bad and good. God has placed woman in the world to influence and help man. What kind of influence will you and I wield? What kind of legacy will we leave our children? How will we influence our friends and neighbors?

We have opportunity to improve the moral standards of the world or go along with the crowd. May God grant each of us the strength and courage to speak up, live right and spread His Way to those about us.

NOTE: Much of the material for this outline was taken from the following sources:

A Commentary On Isaiah by Homer Hailey

Challenging Dangers Of Modern Versions by Robert, R. Taylor, Jr.

# "TAKE MY BRETHREN THE PROPHETS ... FOR AN EXAMPLE OF SUFFERING"

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

## INTRODUCTION

- A. New Testament penmen were never far removed from employing the extraordinary examples of Old Testament worthies both touching their teaching and the exemplary lives they lived amidst the deepest of sufferings to which they were constantly subject.
- B. James is surely of this order. In James 2 he mentioned both Abraham and Rahab and in James 5 presents portrayals of Job and Elijah.
- C. Suffering and sainthood go hand-in-hand among the grand and great of the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament.
- D. Likewise, they are linked with us. Paul stated in 2 Timothy 3:2, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

## I. AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

- A. It reads in full, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (James 5:10).
- B. The courageous components of this tremendous text.
  - 1. "Take"--This is an emphatic verb of action. They were not to be passive or lax in submitting to it.
  - 2. "My brethren"--Some fifteen times in this practical epistle his readers are addressed as such. The rich men who were so oppressive in James 5:1-6 were not addressed by such a precious term.
  - 3. "The prophets"--These were God's mouthpieces or His spokesmen. The late and lamented G. C. Brewer used to say that priests were men who had been to the people and were on the way to God with an offering or sacrifice while prophets were men who had been to God and were on their way to the people with a divine message. These words distinguish the two offices in both testaments.
  - 4. "Who have spoken in the name of the Lord"--They spoke/wrote by His authority and at His bidding. The message was the Lord's--not theirs. Thousands of times in 'the Scriptures, they claimed such inspiration for their messages.
  - 5. "For an example of suffering affliction"--What they left as a sacrificial legacy is eminently worthy of our earnest emulation. This is a must to us--not an option. They suffered; so must we.

## II. OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

- A. Moses suffered from both the Egyptians prior to the exodus as well as his own brethren in that weary wilderness for forty long and difficult years. They rejected him and even spoke of stoning him.
- B. Samuel was rejected when old and feared death at Saul's hands (1 Sam. 8,16).

- C. David is called a prophet in Acts 2:30. He suffered ridicule from an older brother, Eliab, in 1 Kings 17, from Saul in the final chapters of 1 Samuel and from his aroused enemies during his forty-year reign in Hebron and Jerusalem.
- D. Elijah from Ahab and Jezebel. Ahab hunted him as an enemy during the extended famine and Jezebel vowed to kill him subsequent to his victory over the forces of Baal on Mt. Carmel in 1 Kings 18,19.
- E. Micaiah suffered at the hands of wicked King Ahab in 1 Kings 22.
- F. Elisha faced death threats from an Israelite king in 2 Kings 6.
- G. Isaiah--may have been sawn asunder. Tradition so states and is alluded to in Hebrews 11:37.
- H. Jeremiah suffered much from the four final kings of Judah-Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Coniah and Zedekiah over 22~ years they reigned subsequent to the untimely death of the just Josiah. This was especially true under Jehoiakim and Zedekiah who ruled 22 of these years.
- I. Daniel and the three Hebrew children in Daniel 3-6 suffered much and very unjustly.
- J. What Jesus said in Matthew 5:12 and Matthew 23:37 as well as what Stephen declared in Acts 7:51-52.

### **III. NEW TESTAMENT PROPHETS AND SAINTS**

- A. John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod Antipas in Matthew 14 and Mark 6.
- B. Jesus and what they did to Him in His ministry, during His trials and at the crucifixion.
- C. Peter and John in Acts 4.
- D. All the apostles in Acts 5.
- E. Stephen in Acts 7.
- F. Saints by Saul in Acts 7,8,9.
- G. James, John's brother, in Acts 12.
- H. Peter imprisoned in Acts 12 amidst threats of death the next day.
- I. Paul from his conversion in Damascus of Syria till the time Rome killed him.
- J. The early church instigated by both Jews and Romans.

### **IV. STILL APPLICABLE TO US TODAY**

- A. As long as we have error and its proponents in the world those exposing such will be opposed and persecuted.
- B. It is futile on our part to think and act otherwise.
- C. James knew that and fortified the brethren relative to it and in preparation for its sure arrival.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Suffering for truth and .doing it courageously is a real test to the depths of our devotion to God, the Christ, the Holy Spirit and truth (Matt. 5:10-12).



# TEACHING CHILDREN LESSONS FROM THE WOMEN OF THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Sheila McDade

The book of Jeremiah presents God's final effort to save Jerusalem. Let's back up and see how Jerusalem got into such a dire situation. After the fulfillment of the land promise God set up Judges to govern his people. It didn't take long for them to want to be like the nations around them and have a king. It was profane that they should prefer a man rather than God to be their king. Samuel felt he was being rejected as priest and prophet, but God told him, "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (I Samuel 8:7).

God selected Saul as the first king of Israel, David as the second, and Solomon as the third. They each reigned 40 years, so the United Kingdom lasted 120 years. The kingdom divided when Rehoboam became king of 2 tribes and Jeroboam king over 10 tribes. The division took place because Solomon had profaned God's law (I Kings 11:11-12) which resulted in much dissension among God's people. Thus began the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom.

## **OUTLINE OF HISTORY:**

The Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom war for 80 years.  
The Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom have peace for 80 years.  
The Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom war again for 50 years.  
Elijah and Elisha warned the Northern Kingdom of impending captivity.  
The Northern Kingdom is carried away into captivity by the Assyrians.  
Isaiah, Nathan, Jeremiah, Joel, and Zephaniah warned the Southern Kingdom.  
The Southern Kingdom is carried away into captivity by the Babylonians.

Sin and war weakened God's people while foreign nations grew strong. Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon battled for world dominance. Assyria took the Northern Kingdom captive. Isaiah's prophecies spared Jerusalem from Assyrian captivity about 100 years before Jeremiah lived. Then Babylon defeated Assyria and thereby gained world supremacy. King Nebuchadnezzar ruled the powerful Babylonian Empire which was located by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers where life began in the garden of Eden.

At the time of Jeremiah Babylon had carried away most of the Southern Kingdom, only Jerusalem was left. Jeremiah plead with the people, "I have seen thine adulteries and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe

unto thee, O Jerusalem! Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?" (Jeremiah 13:27). The sins of the people are listed in Ezekiel 22— Idolatry, murder, deceit, mistreatment of orphans and widows, profaned the sabbath, slanders, lewdness, immodesty, immorality, adultery, incest, bribery, cheating, extortion, dishonesty, lying, uncleanness, conspiracy, thieves, law breakers, and vexation of the poor.

False prophets told the people what they wanted to hear. "Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets, Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land" (Jeremiah 23:15). Jeremiah spoke the truth but was considered a liar. The inhabitants of Jerusalem didn't even believe in God much less his prophet, "Every man is brutish in his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them" (Jeremiah 10:14).

Their cities had been destroyed and their people were taken captive. "The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open them; Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive" (Jeremiah 13:9). Their land was devastated. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place upon man, and upon beast and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn and shall not be quenched" (Jeremiah 7:20). Yet, the horrors of war did not turn their hearts back to God. They knew God's prophets had rightly predicted the fall of the Northern Kingdom, and they had seen Assyria take them captive, yet they would not repent. The Southern Kingdom suffered the same fate as the Northern Kingdom until only the city of Jerusalem was left. Yet, they did not repent. Jerusalem was one city against Babylon, a world power. Their strong men, their young men, their wealthy, their educated, their beautiful were taken captive by Babylon. They would not turn to God because of their idolatry. "For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal" (Jeremiah 11:13).

The lives of the women were spent in grief over the loss of their husbands and sons. "For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion . . . Yet hear the word of the Lord, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbor lamentation. For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces to cut off the children from without and the young men from the streets" (Jeremiah 9:19-20). Their husbands left for war never to return. ". . . Even the carcasses of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvestman, and none shall gather them" (Jeremiah 9:22). Their husbands and sons were captive in a brutal land far away. They were left with children to care for who had nothing to look forward to but more violence. "For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! For my soul is wearied because of murderers" (Jeremiah 4:31). The children were not taught about a loving God and his law. "But they are altogether brutish and foolish; the stock is a doctrine of vanities" (Jeremiah 10:8). The mothers had to watch their children starve to death and some mothers actually ate their own children (Lamentations 2:20).



The book of Psalms refers to Babylonian Captivity in chapter 137. We do not know who wrote this psalm, but it looks as if it was written after the exile. “Commentators mostly favor a post-exilic date for this psalm, resting their opinion on the verb tenses in the opening verses, which appear to look back on the Babylonian Captivity as past” (Guthrie, Motyer, Stibbs, Wiseman; *Erdmann’s The New Bible Commentary: Revised*; p. 536).

### **Psalm 137**

<sup>1</sup>By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

<sup>2</sup>We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

<sup>3</sup>For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

<sup>4</sup>How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?

<sup>5</sup>If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

<sup>6</sup>If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

<sup>7</sup>Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

<sup>8</sup>O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

<sup>9</sup>Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.”

Jeremiah pled with the inhabitants of Jerusalem his entire life. “Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart. . . .” (Jeremiah 11:8, 13). Jeremiah’s life was threatened for the prophetic message God put in his mouth. “Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears” (Jeremiah 26:11). He was put in prison, starved, and tortured. “Then they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon . . . They let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire” (Jeremiah 38:6). Jeremiah was rescued by Ebedmelech, an Ethiopian in the king’s house. “And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. So they drew up Jeremiah with cords and took him up out of the dungeon . . .” (Jeremiah 38:12-13). We do not know how Jeremiah died, but he was in Jerusalem when it was assaulted. “So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was there when Jerusalem was taken” (Jeremiah 38:28).

### **Prophets Contemporary with Jeremiah**

**Ezekiel** was a fellow priest somewhat younger than Jeremiah who preached in Babylon among the captives.

**Daniel** was a man of royal blood who served in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar.

**Habakkuk and Zephaniah** helped Jeremiah in Jerusalem.

**Nahum** predicted the fall of Nineveh.

**Obadiah** predicted the ruin of Edom.

The last chapter of Jeremiah should be read as an introduction to Lamentations. It expresses Jeremiah's sorrow over the city which he had done his best to save.

Just outside the north wall of Jerusalem is a place called "Jeremiah's grotto," where tradition says Jeremiah wept bitter tears and composed this book. This grotto is under a knoll that is called Golgotha. The suffering prophet wept where later the suffering Savior died (*DeHoff's Bible Handbook*, p. 150).

Jeremiah was sad and crying. God was angry. His wrath was kindled because his people had forgotten him. "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jeremiah 2:32).

Should we teach our children about the wrath of God? Many years ago I was in a women's class at the *Training For Service* that once was held annually at Harding Academy in Memphis. The teacher was telling us how to teach children. She said we should emphasize that 8 souls were saved when Noah built the ark and not tell the children about everyone on earth drowning in the flood. I was shocked speechless. How can you do that? How can you teach the Bible so one sided? Look at this passage, "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man" (Genesis 7:21). Why would you omit such an important point in the account?

We expose children to fantasy that makes them frightened like the big bad wolf in the story of *Little Red Ridding Hood* and movies like *Harry Potter*. Children will naturally see things that are horrifying like car wrecks and damaging storms that take lives. Tragedy is all too common to try to hide it from them. When a child loses a family member to death they may attend the funeral or at least are told about why they will never see grandpa again.

When parents or teachers fib to a child they lose credibility and confuse the child. Parents must stop trying to convince their children mermaids, tooth fairies, and Santa Claus exist, and be more truthful. Have you seen the yard art of Santa looking into the manger at the Christ child? Or, have you seen pictures of a black Jesus? These things are profane and offend the God of heaven and should offend us.

I had a family member once who told their child not to worry when her little dog died because he went to heaven, up in the sky, and now he is a star! She even had the little toddler point to the stars at night and say the dog's name. Most parents don't go that far, but they do tell their children when someone dies that they went to heaven which shows the parent doesn't know what really happens at death. When I hear this I think either the adult has never studied Luke 16 or they are sacrificing truth for an easy answer.

I have been teaching children for over 30 years and for all 30 years my students' first answer when I ask them what happens when you die has been, "You become an angel." Parents tell this to their children. It is an easy answer. Why not tell the child the truth? It is reassuring to

a child that all children are safe. Angels carry you away to be comforted. Evil people will not be allowed in heaven. Only evil people will be in hell.

Teach the book of Jeremiah to children. Don't be afraid to tell children about the wrath of God. It is so unfortunate that parents and teachers underestimate children.

Challenge them to memorize Bible facts.  
Challenge them to know Bible names.  
Challenge them to know Bible vocabulary.

Motivate them to love Bible study.  
Motivate them to want to know more.  
Motivate them to love truth.

Convince them they are children of God.  
Convince them Bible history is their history.  
Convince them of the urgency to reach the lost.

When my youngest son was very small he came up to me one day and said, "When are we going to get a sheep so we can love God?" I found out that his Bible class had taught about Jesus the Good Shepherd one Sunday and David the shepherd boy the next. If we only tell our children about sheep and angels they are going to have a strange view of the Bible. Much of the written material for the Primary and Junior Departments in Bible schools skips around so much that it is confusing to teach it. The teenage material is geared to topical subjects assuming the basics have been mastered. Children need to learn the chronological order of events and learn Bible vocabulary. If they don't learn it from their Bible teachers and parents they will be on their own. The Israelites forgot God. I'm afraid children of our generation will never have known him.

In closing, I hope you have noticed my repeated use of the word *profane*. This is my vocabulary word for you.

What does profane mean?

**Not concerned with religion or religious purposes**

**Secular** (of or relating to the worldly)

**Temporal**

**Exclusion of religion and religious consideration**

**Not holy because not consecrated**

**Impure or defiled**

**Serving to debase or defile what is holy**

**Irreverent**

**Not possessing esoteric or expert knowledge**

Describe a profane person.

**Blasphemous--impiously irreverent**  
**Impious--lacking in reverence or proper respect**  
**Irreverent--not showing honor or respect**  
**Sacrilegious--an outrageous violation of what is sacred to God**  
**Coarse--offensive to good taste or moral principles**  
**Lewd--obscene**  
**Vulgar--lacking taste; morally crude**  
**Worldly--devoted or relating to this world and its pursuits rather than to religion**  
**Debased--to lowered in status, esteem, quality or character**  
**Capable of Desecration--violating the sanctity of**  
**Disrespectful--lack of esteem**  
**Impudent--marked by contemptuous or cocky boldness or disregard of others**  
**Insolent--insulting contemptuous speech or conduct: boldness or effrontery**  
**Capable of Effrontery--shameless boldness; insolence**  
**Temerarious--unreasonable or foolhardy contempt of danger or opposition**

Some clear examples of the profane.

<b>Dishonor Christ</b>	<b>Robes worn for religious show</b>	<b>Christian rock music</b>
<b>Disobedient to parents</b>	<b>Religious T-shirts</b>	<b>Religious yard art</b>
<b>Uncontrolled tongue</b>	<b>Crucifixes</b>	<b>Tattoos</b> (Lev. 19:28; 21:5)
<b>Using God's name in vain</b>	<b>Saying "Lord" as an expletive</b>	

What are some Bible references to profane?

<b>Ezek. 44:23</b>	<b>"And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane</b>
<b>Heb. 12:16</b>	<b>"lest there be any profane person, as Esau who for one morsel. . . ."</b>
<b>1 Tim. 1:9</b>	<b>"that the law is not made for a righteous man but for . . . profane, for murders of fathers. . . ."</b>
<b>Lev. 18:21</b>	<b>" . . . nor profane God's name"</b>
<b>Lev. 19:12</b>	<b>" . . . nor profane God's name"</b>
<b>Lev. 21:6</b>	<b>" . . . nor profane God's name"</b>
<b>Lev. 22:2</b>	<b>" . . . nor profane God's name"</b>
<b>Acts 24:16</b>	<b>" . . . profane the temple . . ."</b>
<b>Neh. 13:18</b>	<b>" . . . ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath"</b>
<b>Mal. 1:12-14</b>	<b>they profaned the table of the Lord with torn, lame, and sick sacrifices</b>
<b>Jer. 23:15</b>	<b>the people were punished for the profaneness of the prophets</b>

I hope you will add this word to your everyday vocabulary and when you use it you will think about the fall of Jerusalem and Jeremiah pleading with the people who were so profane they provoked the wrath of God.

## PROFANE PRAYERS

Do not pray before icons  
or signs of the cross.  
Don't bow before images  
of the carpenter's son.

It is profane to have  
rubies represent His blood,  
His spittle enamel,  
and tears out of pearl.  
Remember His death  
not with cold graven stone,  
But by honoring His request  
with bread and fruit of the vine.

--Sheila McDade

# THE NATURE OF GOD

(as seen in the major prophets)

Tim Hayes

## INTRODUCTION:

1. The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament.
  - a. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).
    - i. “...with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning” (ASV).
    - ii. ...variableness... = a change, a transmission from one condition to another, a transmutation.
    - iii. ...shadow... = overshadowing or shadowing-over; indicating a shadowing-over of mutability; not caused by the mutability of God.
  - b. In response to the inquiry of Moses, God described Himself as “I AM” (Exodus 3:14).
    - i. God was not telling His name as much as He was speaking of His nature.
    - ii. God was emphatically proclaiming that He has always been, that He is and that He will always be without change.
2. Nature = the inherent or essential qualities of anything.
3. The nature of God can be presented in one word, **LOVE**.
  - a. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. 7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (I John 4:1-10).

- i. The record of John reports that God, His nature – love, is manifested and culminated in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
    - ii. John writes that Jesus Christ is the “propitiation” (atonement) for our sins.
    - iii. The word propitiation or atonement not only points to the Christ but also of the shadow of these things as presented in I & II Chronicles through the “mercy seat” (I Chronicles 28:11).
  - b. The desire of God, for man’s salvation, is presented from the opening pages of the book of Genesis to the time when John lays the pen of inspiration down at the close of the book of Revelation.
- 4. The nature of God is clearly presented through the major prophets by:
  - a. God’s example of **LONGSUFFERING**
  - b. God’s demand for **OBEDIENCE**
  - c. God’s assurance of **VICTORY**
  - d. God’s aspiration for **EVANGELISM**

## I. GOD’S EXAMPLE OF LONGSUFFERING

### A. In retrospect

#### 1. Isaiah seemingly looks back

- a. “The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. 2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. 3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. 4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. 5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. 6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. 7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. 8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. 9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah” (Isaiah 1:1-9).

### B. In aspect

- 1. God addressed the following nations as recorded in Isaiah 1-19: Israel, Judah, Moab, Damascus (Syria), Ethiopia, and Egypt.
- 2. God addressed the following nations as recorded in Ezekiel 25-32 Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre and Egypt.

3. God had been longsuffering with these nations or else they would not have been in existence but now forewarned them of their judgment to come.

C. In prospect

1. God spoke of the time to come when the Gentiles would obey
  - a. I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name” (Isaiah 65:1).
  - b. “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. 5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. 19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. 20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. 21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Romans 10).



## II. GOD'S DEMAND FOR OBEDIENCE

### A. From his children

#### 1. God sought those who were obedient

- a. "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. 2 And though they say, The LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely. 3 O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return. 4 Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God. 5 I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the LORD, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds" (Jeremiah 5:1-5).

### B. From those gone astray

#### 1. Jeremiah's temple sermon

- a. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; 14 Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. 15 And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. 16 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee. 17 Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger" (Jeremiah 7:13-18).
- b. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. 24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward" (Jeremiah 7:23-24).

### C. From all the world

#### 1. King Nebuchadnezzar made this report

- a. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: 35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his

hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? 36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. 37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (Daniel 4:34-37).

### III. GOD'S ASSURANCE OF VICTORY

#### A. For ones day

##### 1. Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah give proof

- a. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? 15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. 17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up"(Daniel 3:14-18).

#### B. For ones life

##### 1. Daniel lives for this victory

- a. "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8).

#### C. For ones eternity

##### 1. Foretold by Ezekiel

- a. "The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, 16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: 17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. 18 And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? 19 Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. 20 And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine

hand before their eyes. 21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: 22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: 23 Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. 24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. 26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. 27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28 And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (Ezekiel 37:15-28).

#### IV. GOD’S ASPIRATION FOR EVANGELISM

##### A. Salvation of souls

1. “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. 18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. 19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul” (Ezekiel 3:17-19).
2. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. 21 ¶ But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. 22 All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. 23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? 24 But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth

according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. 25 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? 26 When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. 27 Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. 28 Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. 29 Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? 30 ¶ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye” (Ezekiel 18:20-32).

## B. Service of the saints

### 1. Much of the task of Ezekiel was to edify the captives.

#### a. The valley of dry bones

- i. “The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, 2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. 4 Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. 5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD. 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. 9 Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. 11 Then he said unto me, Son of

man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. 12 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13 And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, 14 And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD” (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

### C. Solace of the sorrowed

#### 1. God offered hope to the hopeless

- a. “Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones. 18 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. 19 And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead. 20 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve” (Jeremiah 50:17-20).

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. May a better understanding of the nature of God as seen through the major prophets help all to better understand God’s desire to man and mans responsibility to God.

# Overview of Lamentations

## The Tears of Jeremiah

### Todd Clippard

#### A LOOK AT THE BOOK

1. The name of Lamentations as given in the Septuagint is the ATears of Jeremiah@ and contains this preface:

AAnd it came to pass, after Israel was taken captive, and Jerusalem made desolate, that Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented with lamentation over Jerusalem.@
2. Author - Jeremiah of Anathoth, prophet of God and eyewitness to Nebuchadnezzar=s destruction of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 52:12-23).
3. Date - shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem @ 586 B.C.
4. Composition:
  - a. The composition and form of Lamentations 1-4 is similar to that of Psalms 119, wherein each 8 verse section begins with a specific letter of the Hebrew alphabet - verses 1-8 begin with aleph, verses 9-16 begin with beth, etc.
  - b. Lamentations differs in that chapters 1, 2, and 4 are written in acrostic form using the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet in succession - verse 1 begins with aleph, verse 2 with beth, etc. Thus, chapters 1, 2, and 4 contain 22 verses each (chapter 5 also contains 22 verses but in irregular arrangement). However, Chapter 3 contains the style in triplicate, so there are 66 verses in the chapter.
  - c. As Psalm 119 expresses the scope of David=s love for God=s law as extending Afrom A to Z,@ Lamentations expresses the entire scope of Jeremiah=s deep sorrow for and disappointment in Judah.
5. Division of the Book
  - a. Each chapter serves as a separate lament with unique emphasis. In his book, Know Your Bible (p 278), Frank J. Dunn divides the book into 5 sections:
    - i. Chapter 1 - the **way** of wickedness;
    - ii. Chapter 2 - the **wrath** of God;
    - iii. Chapter 3 - the **weight** of sorrow;
    - iv. Chapter 4 - the **want** of help;
    - v. Chapter 5 - the **wreck** of iniquity.
  - b. In chapter three, amidst the sins and sufferings of Judah (chapters 1-2) and the picture and perfection of her fall (chapters 4-5) one is confronted with the undeniable, never-ending compassion of God (vv 22-36):

AIt is of the Lord=s mercies that we are not consumed because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion says my soul; therefore I will hope in

him. The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him@ (vv 22-25).@

Finally, chapter 3 also contains a call to examination and repentance (vv 40-41).

### **KEY PASSAGES, THOUGHTS, APPLICATIONS**<sup>i</sup>

**\*Key Passage 1:1** AHow doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!@

**Thought B** After the third carrying away of 586 B.C., only a few poor folks were left behind as Afor vinedressers and husbandmen@ (Jer 52:16). Jerusalem, once the bustling center of Jewish life, sits idle as a lonely widow. She who was once served as a princess is now become the servant. ATributary@ (Strong=s # 5422) = a forced laborer, one who brings or pays tribute (cf Joshua 16:10, 17:13). Imagine sitting atop some mountain looking down on a completely destroyed and deserted Memphis, Nashville, etc.

**Application B** How many church buildings once filled with hundreds of members, the crying of babies, the joy of fellowship, the zeal of evangelism now stand empty...empty of the true joy and fervor that should characterize every church of Christ? How many congregations once served others through the support of missions and various benevolent works, but now struggle simply to keep open the doors?

**\*Key Passage 1:7** AJerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths.@

**Thought B** God=s people were being carried away into captivity, and even then their only thoughts were of the pleasant things of former days. There appears to be no repentance or mourning over sin, only a despair over the loss of this world=s goods.

**Application B** Desire for pleasant things can pervert a proper perspective of what is really valuable in this life. To understand the nature of true riches, consider all the blessings you possess that cannot be purchased with money.

**\*Key passage 1:8-9** AJerusalem has grievously sinned; therefore she is removed . . . she remembers not her last end.@

**Thought B** Judah is reaping the wages of her transgressions (cf 1 Kin 8:46). Furthermore, she never so much as ceased from sin long enough to consider the ultimate recompense and end of her works. Numerous Divine admonitions come to mind: ABut if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out@ (Num 32:23)... AThe way of transgressors is hard@ (Prov 13:15)... AFor they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind@ (Hos 8:7)... ABe not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap@ (Gal 6:7)... AFor the wages of sin is death@ (Rom 6:23). Finally, Judah considered not the example of Israel and the calamities wrought by sin (Lev 26:29; Deut 28:53-57; 2 Kings 6:28-29; Lam 2:20).

**Application B** The pleasures of sin are seasonal (Heb 11:25), but her fruit is bitter and lingering. Many Christians, though finding forgiveness of sins, continue to struggle with the consequences of their previous decisions and actions. **What fruit did you have then in the things wherein you are now ashamed?** (Rom 6:21).

**\*Key Passage B 1:12-22** **Is it nothing to you, all ye who pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.** (v 12).

**Thought B** After opening with Zion's pitiful predicament (vv 1-7) and the causes thereof (vv 8-11), Jeremiah now speaks as if he were Jerusalem. The city's destruction was so utterly devastating and the plight of the people so sickening (cf 2:20) that surely someone among the surrounding nations would notice, but such was not to be. Former friends and allies had all forsaken her.

**Application B** While not a parallel in every way, (e.g., Jesus did not suffer for his own sins - cf 1:14), Jerusalem's lament pictures and prefigures Jesus' in several ways. Her intense suffering pictures that of Christ (cf Isa 53:3-4, 10-11; Heb 5:7); her rejection by the nations and failure to find any to help (cf v 21; Isa 49:7; 53:3; Psa 22:1, 6); the consumption of her physical strength (Psa 22:14-15; Luke 23:26; John 19:28); the derision and contempt of enemies and scorners (cf v 7, 21, 2:15-16; Psa 22:7-8; Matt 27:39-44).

**\*Key Passage B 2:6** **And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if were a garden: he destroyed his places of the assembly: the Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest.**

**Thought B** Consider all the preparations (1 Chr 29:2-3), manpower (1 Kings 5:13-16), and celebrations (1 Kings 8:1-30) associated with the building of the temple, yet God took it away in violence because of the sins of his people. In like fashion, Jesus threatened to remove the candlestick of those churches

**Application B** This verse should close the mouths of those who say, **God just wants to be worshipped; he doesn't care who or how.** Furthermore, it serves as warning to brethren, faithful and otherwise, who are leaving the authority of Scripture in matters pertaining to worship. Finally, we are also admonished to guard our lives so that we might be fit worshipers (Isa 1:15; 59:1-3; John 4:23). **Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams** (1 Sam 15:22-23).

**\*Key Passage B 2:15-16** **All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, >Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth? All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, >We have swallowed her up: certainly this the day that we looked for: we have found, we have seen it.=**

**Thought B** It seems the pride of the Jews knew no bounds. They were haughty and self-absorbed. As **God's children,** they looked down upon, yea even scorned other nations as being beneath them. Such an attitude created envy and hatred among those >round about. Like



David, by their deeds they had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme (2 Sam 12:14).

**Application B** Pride should be swallowed before it escapes one's lips lest one should be forced to feed his own words. Far too often members of the Lord's body have paraded their righteousness and doctrinal correctness in front of the world, instead of humbly and respectfully living it before them.

**\*Key Passage B 2:17** The Lord hath done that which he had devised: he that fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries.

**Thought B** Throughout the course of Jewish history God had promised this very thing: >Serve me and be blessed or forsake me and be cursed (Deut 30:15-20). God's word is neither diminished nor negated by the passage of time. Hiel the Bethelite learned this lesson the hard way (1 Kings 16:34, cf Josh 6:26).

**Application B** I must live my life according to the sure promises of God, both positive (2 Tim 2:19) and negative (Rom 2:2). I must teach and preach in view of the steadfastness of the word (2 Cor 1:20). Jesus' resurrection from the dead is our proof that will come again to judge the living and the dead (Acts 17:30-31; 2 Tim 4:1).

**\* Key Passage 3:22-24** All is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

**Thought B** After hitting absolute rock bottom, the prodigal son came to himself and realized the goodness and mercy of his father (Luke 15:15-21). Jerusalem has here been brought low but still recognizes the goodness and mercy of God though her punishment has been severe. The birth of every day is testimony to the love and mercy of God (Psa 30:5).

**Application B** Many want to blame God for life's difficulties (e.g., Why is God doing this to me? etc.). Some believers unwittingly do the same when, misquoting 1 Corinthians 10:13, they say >The Lord promised not to more on us than we can bear.= That's not what the passage says! Though Jerusalem knew their present state was the result of God's will, she also knew that she alone must shoulder the blame for the present distress. She understood Psalm 103:12, He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

**\*Key Passage B 3:25-26** The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

**Thought B** This may be an allusion to the seventy year exile of Jeremiah 29. Jeremiah sent the Babylonian exiles a message of hope: build houses and plant gardens (v 5), marry, have children, find spouses for your children, continue to flourish and grow (v 6). Be peaceful; be prayerful; be patient, and when your time is up I will bring you home (vv 7-10).

**Application B** May we never grow impatient while awaiting the salvation of the Lord B Afor ye

have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise@ (Heb 10:36). One is also reminded of Isaiah 40:31 - ABut they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.@ Finally, Psalm 27:14 - AWait on the Lord, be of good courage and he shall strengthen they heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.@

## ENDNOTES

1. There are too many Akey passages@ for our limited time and space. I tried to select a few that seemed (at least to me) particularly pertinent to our present day and time B TC.
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# PICTURES OF CHRIST IN THE MAJOR PROPHETS

## Troy E. McNutt

### INTRODUCTION:

1. *Webster* defines the term “picture” as, “a description so vivid as to suggest a mental image.”
2. We all cherish our photographs (pictures) of our loved ones.
3. We hang them on the wall, frame them on our desk, even carry them in our wallets or purses.
4. In Scripture, we have pictures (images) of our Saviour being described by inspired men of God.
5. The Major Prophets ( Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel) have much to say about our Lord and Saviour; but we will only be able to touch on a few of them because of our time limits.

### I. THE PROPHET ISAIAH

#### A. Isaiah 7:14--The Virgin Birth of Christ

1. One of the best known prophecies pertaining to our Lord besides Isaiah 53.
2. Bro. Elkins has spoken on this subject previous to our lecture. Please refer to his comments. We will only mention it briefly.
3. The Virgin Birth is first mentioned back in Genesis 3:15--referring to “her seed.”
  - a. Genesis 3:15 shows that “woman’s seed” would produce a **man child** without the fertilization of the man.
  - b. Galatians 4:4---says that “Christ was made of a woman.”
4. The setting of the prophecy found in Isaiah 7 deals with Syria and Ephriam threatening Judah and King Ahaz. Isaiah advised Ahaz not to rely on their allies among the heathen nations for deliverance. Isaiah encouraged Ahaz to ask for a sign but Ahaz refused. Nonetheless, Isaiah said God would give the house of David a sign. It would not only be sign to Ahaz for his comfort but a sign to the nation of Judah as long as Judah remained. The sign would be a miraculous event, the birth of a son whose name would be “Immanuel.”

5. Who else could fulfill such a prophecy but Jesus Christ.

6. Matthew 1:18-25 shows the fulfillment .

a. Joseph must have been comforted and reassured by the Holy Spirit that Mary's conception was the work of God, not man.

b. Matthew by divine revelation put to rest the critics when he stated, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child."

c. Who can deny it?

B. Isaiah 9:6-7--Wonderful, Counsellor, Prince of Peace.

1. Notice that it was a man child!

2. Such an individual would be identified by such divine terms that could refer only to the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

3. Who else could this have reference to?

4. Who else was begotten of Deity and born of a woman?

5. He was the "Prince of Peace."

a. Came to bring peace between God and man (Eph. 2:17).

b. Came to bring peace between Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:14-17).

c. Came to bring peace between man and man (Matt. 5:9).

d. Came to bring peace to man with himself (Phil. 4:7).

C. Isaiah 11:1--"...a Branch shall grow out of his roots."

1. Reference should also be made to Jeremiah 23:5-- "...I will raise unto David a righteous Branch."

2. Reference should also be made to Zechariah 3:8-- "Behold I will bring my servant the Branch."

3. The word "branch" can be used in Scripture both literal and figurative senses.

a. Can be literal shoot from a vine or tree that puts forth a branch.

- b. Can be used to describe the prosperity of putting one's faith in God (Proverbs 11:28; John 15:1ff).
- 4. Goes back to Jesse--II Sam. 7:12-13. A Branch would grow out of his roots. God made a promise to David that out of his seed would come a king who would establish His kingdom.
- 5. Peter cites the fulfillment of this prophecy in Acts 2:29-36 on the day of Pentecost.
- 6. Zechariah mentions six things regarding the "Branch": \*
  - a. The Branch would grow up out of His place (vs12).
  - b. He shall build the temple of the Lord (vs. 12)
  - c. He shall bear the glory (vs.13).
  - d. He shall sit and rule upon His throne (vs. 13).
  - e. He shall be a priest upon His throne (vs. 13).
  - f. The counsel of peace shall be between them both (vs. 13).

#### D. Isaiah 53--Christ's Sufferings

1. He was likened unto a tender plant(vs.2)--a twig of a fallen tree.
2. He would be as a "root out of a dry ground" (vs.2)--Jesus came from a seed line that was nearly extinct.
3. He would have "no form nor comeliness" (vs.2)--average looking person, nothing about his beauty to draw one's attention.
4. He was "despised and rejected of men" (vs.3)--John 1:10-11--"His own received him not."
5. He was a man of "sorrows and acquainted with grief" (vs. 3)--not his own sorrows and grief but the grief and sorrows of the world. Man's spiritual condition caused His deep concern. (cf. Isa. 1)
6. He was not "esteemed" (vs.3)--man did not see the importance of His message.
7. He "bore our grief, carried our sorrows and we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God(vs.4)-- the sickness of sin; His sinlessness and our sins being

borne and people thought he was being punished by God (Rom. 5:6-9; John 3:16). (Cf. Job 1,2).

8. He was “wounded and bruised for our transgressions” (vs. 5)

- a. Hands and feet pierced with nails (Psa. 22:16).
- b. Side pierced with a sword (John 19:34).
- c. Died so that others might live (Luke 23:34).
- d. Died with a forgiving spirit (Luke 23:34).

9. He was as a “sheep before her shearer” (vs.7)

- a. He opened not his mouth.
- b. He was spit upon, smitten with a reed, beaten by the Romans.
- c. He was mocked, cursed, he was crucified for all of mankind.

10. He was smitten for “our transgressions” (vs. 8).

- a. “My righteous servant shall justify many.”
- b. “He shall bear their iniquities.”

## **II. THE PROPHET JEREMIAH**

A. Jeremiah 31:31-34

1. God promised a new covenant with Israel and Judah that would be fulfilled ultimately through Jesus Christ the Messiah.
2. Compare 2 Cor. 3:6-18. A better covenant; not one that killeth but giveth life.
3. Jeremiah 31:31-34 is quoted by the Hebrew writer thus the fulfillment of said prophecy (Hebrews 8:6-13).
  - A. The old was on a table of stones; the new will be written on the heart.
  - B. Under the old, one was born in covenant relationship; under the new one is born by water (John 3:5). Under the old one was born then taught; under the new, one is taught then born (John 6:44,45).

C. Under the old, one's sins were brought to one's remembrance; under the new one's sins are forgiven.

### **III. THE PROPHET EZEKIEL**

#### A. Ezekiel 17:22-24 Christ the Tender Twig

1. Through an allegory Ezekiel describes the Lord Jesus as a tender twig that will grow into a great cedar where the birds will come and dwell.

A. Becomes a nesting place for all the nations of the earth=church.

B. Its growth will be so great that all the earth will recognize it.

2. It (the cedar tree) will flourish forever; representative of the Lord's church.

3. Christ being the head of the church (Eph. 1:22,23); therefore the context of the passage is Messianic.

#### B. Ezekiel 34 -- The Good Shepherd

1. Compare to John 10:1-18

2. The good shepherd is come to deliver his people from opposition.

3. The good shepherd will feed the flock (vs. 23).

4. The good shepherd will lead the flock (vs. 23).

5. The good shepherd will defend the flock (vs. 26).

6. The good shepherd will bring peace (vs. 25).

7. The sheep will hear the voice of the good shepherd (John 10:3)

8. The sheep know the voice of the good shepherd (John 10:4).

9. The good shepherd lays his life down freely (John 10:18).

10. Who could this shepherd be? Jesus Christ!!!

### **IV. THE PROPHET DANIEL**

#### A. Daniel 7:13,14 --Son of man

1. Four kingdoms mentioned:



- a. Lion = Babylon
- b. Bear = Medes & Persians
- c. Leopard = Greeks
- d. Diverse Beast = Romans

2. All four of the nations made their contributions to the world:

- a. Babylon--synagogues.
- b. Medes& Persians--strict law and order.
- c. Greeks--culture and language.
- d. Romans--universal peace and transportation.
- e. Compare Daniel 7:12 with above--"...Yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."

3. Son of man--dominion, glory and a kingdom.

a. Dominion

- 1) I Cor. 15:27
- 2) Eph. 1:20-23
- 3) Col. 1:16; 2:10

b. Glory

- 1) Phil. 2:9-11
- 2) Matt. 5:14-16
- 3) Matt. 16:27,28

c. Kingdom

- 1) Matt. 16:18,19
- 2) Mark 9:1
- 3) Luke 24:49
- 4) Acts 2
- 5) Col. 1:13
- 6) 1 Cor. 15:24
- 7) Heb. 12:28
- 8) Rev. 1:9

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. We have only touched the hem of the garment with these few passages.
2. Many more are mentioned in the Major Prophets; one must investigate the Scriptures in order to learn from God's Divine Word all the mentions of the Christ.

\* From Billy Bland in *Major Lessons From the Major Prophets*, pgs.212-220.

# Daniel's Seventy Weeks

## Daniel Chapter Nine

### Wade Webster

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Although the commentators differ widely on the interpretation of the prophecy, all are agreed on its difficulty. As early as 400 A.D., Jerome, the man who did the Vulgate translation, revealed that he knew of nine distinct interpretations of the seventy weeks (Butler 381).
  - a. Having just perused page upon page of material, I am in full agreement with their astute assessment.
  - b. I am reminded of a story told about one of Charles Spurgeon's preaching students. As the story goes, it was the custom of the students who were out of school on Fridays to gather at Spurgeon's home. The students met underneath one of the large oak trees and would give extemporaneous talks. On the occasion under consideration, a young preacher was given the topic of Zacchaeus. The young preacher stood up nervously and announced that he had three points: First, Zacchaeus was a wee little man, and so was he. Second, Zacchaeus was up a tree, and so was he. Third, Zacchaeus quickly came down, and so must he. I feel like that young preacher with this topic.
2. For sure, the communicator has countless hurdles to clear in communicating the message of the prophecy to an audience that varies in age and acquaintance with the text. Never has the keep it simple rule been more applicable.
3. It seems to me that the complete context of the ninth chapter of Daniel must be considered before a conclusion can be reached. I am convinced the prophecy came as a result of Daniel's study and supplication which are mentioned in the first two-thirds of the text.
- 4.

#### **Discussion:**

#### **I AS A STUDENT, DANIEL UNDERSTOOD JEREMIAH'S PROPHECY**

- a. Daniel was a student of God's word. He "understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem" (Dan. 9:2).
  - i. Understood means "to discern, to perceive, to observe, to pay attention to, to be intelligent...to understand" (Baker 125, #995). In the reflexive sense, it means "to consider diligently."
  - ii. "Books" has reference to the inspired books. Daniel seems to have had a thorough knowledge of the precepts and ordinances of God given through Moses (Dan. 9:11, 13; cf. Lev. 26; Deut. 28). For sure, "books" also includes the writings of the prophets. Daniel specifically referred to that which had been written by Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2). He may have also had access to that which was written by Isaiah (Isa. 13-14; cf. 39:7). Since Daniel served during the reign of Cyrus, he may have pointed out to Cyrus what God's word said

- about him (Isa. 43-48). Clearly, Daniel was a student of God's word. I am reminded of the apostle Paul who asked for the parchments to be brought to him (2 Tim. 4:13).
- iii. Daniel understood from Jeremiah's prophecy that the captivity was to be seventy years (Jer. 25:1-12; 29:10). No doubt, great sympathy welled up in Daniel's heart as he considered the hardships that his fellow-prophet faced.
  - iv. Jeremiah's prophecy coupled with the recent change in world-ruling kingdoms convinced Daniel that the captivity was just about complete (Dan. 9:1; 2:36-45). Great hope must have filled Daniel's heart, even though evidence of its imminent fulfillment had not yet darkened the horizon. I am again reminded of Paul who in the midst of a great storm at sea assured his fellow-passengers that not a life would be lost according to God's promise (Acts 27:20-25). Although Paul and his shipmates had not seen the sun or stars for many days, Paul was confident that God would keep His promise.
  - v. No doubt, Daniel could have allowed many things to hinder him in his study of God's word. By this time in the context of the book, he was an old man in a strange land. Rex Turner Sr. suggests that Daniel would have been 106 at this time (304). Others suggest that he would have been 80 or better. His Bible could have grown dusty in the days that he spent in captivity. If seven days without prayer can make one weak, just imagine what seventy years without Bible study could do.
  - vi. Could God have rewarded Daniel for his diligence by giving him an additional prophecy to fill his heart with joy? The tenth chapter seems to suggest such. We read, "And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: **for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words**" (Dan. 10:10-12).
- b. Daniel's study should cause us to do much soul-searching today (2 Cor. 13:5).
- i. Are we students of God's word today? Paul encouraged Timothy to study to show himself approved unto God (2 Tim. 2:15).
  - ii. Do we strive to understand what God has said? It is not enough to read God's word, we must understand what we read (Acts 8:30; Eph. 5:17).
  - iii. Do we know the book like he did? We are to search the Scriptures (the inspired books) daily (John 5:39; Acts 17:11).

- iv. Are our hearts filled with hope at the promises of God? By His divine power God has given unto us “exceeding great and precious promises” (2 Pet. 1:4).
- v. Are we allowing things to keep us from study? We must crave God’s word as a newborn craves milk (1 Pet. 2:2). We must not let anyone or anything hinder us from running after God’s word (Gal. 5:7).
- vi. Are we missing out on greater blessings because we are not using the blessings that God has already given? God is able to make “all grace abound” if we are willing to do our part (2 Cor. 9:6-10).

## **II AS A SINNER, DANIEL UNDERSTOOD ISRAEL’S PROBLEM**

- c. Likely, it is hard for us to think of Daniel as a sinner. After all, like Joseph, no specific sin is ever attributed to him. In fact, even as a young man in a strange land, he purposed not to defile himself with the king’s food (Dan. 1:8-21). He lived such a good life that his enemies could find no fault in him (Dan. 6:4-5). Yet, we know ultimately that he fell into the same class as all men (Rom. 3:23). In the ninth chapter of the book that bears his name, Daniel humbly identified himself as a sinful man. Please note the following:
  - i. He sought God’s face “by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” (Dan. 9:3). Fasting, sackcloth, and ashes were outward expressions of inward sorrow and penitence (Joel 2:13-14). Throughout the book we see Daniel at prayer (Dan. 2, 6).
  - ii. He made his “confession” unto God (Dan. 9:4). The context makes clear that it was sins that were being confessed (Jam. 5:16). Daniel possessed a contrite heart (Psa. 34:18; 51:17; Isa. 57:15; 66:2). It should be noted that Daniel was praying at the time of the evening oblation or sacrifice. The time of the evening oblation was three in the afternoon, the time that Christ died on the cross (Phillips 144). The prophecy will clearly be about Christ who will put an end to sin. He will be the Lamb that will take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The sixth chapter reveals that Daniel prayed three times a day, no matter what (Dan. 6:10).
  - iii. He included himself in the sins of Israel. Multiple times in his prayer he confesses, “**We have sinned**” (Dan. 9:5, 8, 11, 15). He includes himself in the failure of Israel to heed the voice of God’s prophets (Dan. 9:6, 10). Although Daniel was a prophet himself, he didn’t excuse himself from hearing and heeding other prophets of God. Preachers and elders would do well to make this same application today.
  - iv. His prayer is interrupted as he prays, “O Lord, hear; **O Lord, forgive...**” (Dan. 9:19). The context makes clear that Daniel was asking for forgiveness for Israel and for himself. In the twentieth verse, we read, “And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and **confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel**, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of

- my God” (Dan. 9:20). Pay special attention to the little word *my* in the verse – my sin, my people, my supplication, my God.
- v. Daniel understood that Israel’s problem was sin. It is important to note that Daniel didn’t blame God for what had come upon Israel. In fact, he repeatedly spoke of the righteousness of God (Dan. 9:7, 14, 16, 18). God had warned Israel of what would happen if they didn’t let the land have its Sabbaths (Lev. 25:2-7; 26:34-35). Because they deprived the land of its rest for 70 Sabbaths, God deprived them of their land for 70 years (2 Chron. 36:20-21).
  - vi. It seems clear from the context of Daniel that God gave Daniel the prophecy of the seventy weeks and other prophecies because of his penitence.
    1. Please note that the prophecy came as Daniel was confessing his sin and the sin of his people (Dan. 9:20). The timing was not accidental. Gabriel was “caused” to fly swiftly (Dan. 9:21). Please note that Gabriel came by “commandment” (Dan. 9:23).
    2. As noted above, the tent chapter connects penitence and prophecy. We read, “And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: **for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words**” (Dan. 10:10-12).
    3. Someone has observed that it takes about 3 minutes to read Daniel’s prayer. Thus, they have reasoned that it took Gabriel only 3 minutes to come from heaven to earth (McGee 586). Whatever the case, God is interested in our prayers and can answer them very quickly (Isa. 65:24).
  - d. Daniel’s supplication for forgiveness should cause us to examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5).
    - i. We need to seek God’s face by prayer and godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:8-10).
    - ii. We need to make confession of our sins (1 John 1:7-9; Jam. 5:16).
    - iii. We need to deal with the mote in our own eyes so that we can see clearly to deal with the beam in our brother’s eye (Mt. 7:1-5).
    - iv. We need to seek God’s forgiveness (Mt. 6:12, 15).
    - v. We need to understand that God is righteous in His dealings with us (1 John 1:5-10). We are the ones who have been guilty of unrighteousness (1 John 3:4).

### III AS A SEER, DANIEL UNDERSTOOD GOD’S PLAN

- e. Daniel was a seer or a prophet of God. God showed His humble servant His plans for the future (Isa. 46:10).
  - i. Consider some of the things that God showed Daniel about the future:
    - 1. In the second chapter, God revealed to His servant Daniel the rise and fall of four earthly kingdoms (Dan. 2:19-23, 27-30, 36-45). Daniel saw from the Babylonian Empire of his day all the way to the Roman Empire of Christ's day. Most importantly, he saw the indestructible kingdom of God (Dan. 2:44).
    - 2. In the fourth chapter, God showed Daniel what was going to happen to Nebuchadnezzar to humble him (Dan. 2:19-27). Daniel saw the seven years of illness that would cause the king to dwell among the beasts and to eat grass as oxen.
    - 3. In the fifth chapter, God showed Daniel the imminent death of Belshazzar and fall of Babylon (Dan. 5:17-31).
    - 4. In the seventh chapter, God showed Daniel a vision of four kings that would arise (Dan. 7:1-8, 17). Most importantly, he showed him the Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven to receive an eternal kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14). As you know, this took place when Jesus ascended back to His Father. His kingdom is in the world today (Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:5). When Jesus comes again, it will be to deliver up His kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-26).
    - 5. In the eighth chapter, God showed Daniel the fall of the Medo-Persian Empire and the coming of Alexander the Great (Dan. 8). The tenth and eleventh chapters will record the fall of these kingdoms.
  - ii. Let's turn our focus to the amazing prophecy found in the ninth chapter of Daniel.
    - 1. Please note as we begin that Gabriel was sent to give Daniel "skill and understanding" (Dan. 9:22). God wanted Daniel to "understand the matter" and to consider the vision (Dan. 9:23).
    - 2. In the twenty-fourth verse God showed Daniel that seventy weeks were determined upon his countrymen (Jews) and city (Jerusalem). The number seventy connects the end of the chapter with the beginning (Dan. 9:2). The people were nearing the end of a seventy year captivity because they had not given the land its rest for 490 years (cf. 2 Chron. 36:21). God was now going to show Daniel 490 years into the future. Commentators are generally agreed that "weeks" has reference to years (cf. Num. 14:33-34; Ezek. 4:5-6). It should be noted that weeks is a generic term meaning "sevens" or "units of seven." Thus, Daniel was seeing a vision of seventy sevens (490). We must determine from

the context whether the vision has reference to days, weeks, or years. Someone has noted that when you walk into a doughnut shop and ask for a dozen, they know that you mean doughnuts. Since Daniel's prayer was all about years of captivity (Dan. 9:2), it seems reasonable that the answer to that prayer would have also been about years. Each day stands for a year. Thus, seventy weeks (490 days) has reference to 490 years.

3. It is important to note that the seventy weeks were divided into three groupings of seven:
  - a. Seven weeks (Dan. 9:25) – This first period of 49 years would be marked by “troubulous times.” The times under consideration were likely those experienced by Nehemiah (Neh. 4:1ff; 6:1ff; 9:36-37).
  - b. Sixty-two weeks (Dan. 9:25-26) – The second period of 434 years brings us to the time of Christ (Dan. 9:25; cf. Lk. 3:21-22; Acts 10:38; Lk. 4:1, 18).
  - c. One week (9:26-27) – The third period of seven years brings us to the cross. In the midst of the week, after 3 ½ years, Jesus was slain (Workman 316-317).
4. The seventy weeks were determined “to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy” (Dan. 9:24). The captivity looked back over 490 years to the beginning of their sin in robbing the land of its Sabbaths. The prophecy looked forward 490 years to “an end of sins” (Dan. 9:24). Six purposes are spelled out in this prophecy. Each deserves a small consideration:
  - a. **To finish the transgression** – By the end of 490 years, the full end of the desolation brought upon Israel for her sins would be complete. It is interesting to note that Isaiah used the same three terms that Daniel used here for sin and also connected them to Calvary – transgression (Isa. 53:5, 8, 12), sin (53:10, 12), and iniquity (53:5, 6, 11).
  - b. **To make an end of sins** – By the end of 490 years a way would be provided wherein sins could be forgiven or blotted out entirely (Mt. 1:21; 20:28; 26:28; John 1:29; Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:20; 1 Pet. 2:24; Rev. 1:5). Although the coming of Christ did not eradicate evil from the earth, it did introduce the system by which could provide a powerful and permanent



solution to the problem of sin (Heb. 9:26). Daniel had been praying for the forgiveness of sins, now God tells him about what is to happen to sin in the future.

- c. **To make reconciliation for iniquity** - By the end of 490 years, a system of reconciliation would be established through which the sinner could be brought back to God (Rom. 5:6-10; 2 Cor. 5:19).
  - d. **To bring in everlasting righteousness** - The “everlasting righteousness” that Daniel spoke of has reference to the gospel dispensation. It has reference to Christ and His gospel (Acts 7:52; 22:14; Isa. 53:11; Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-26).
  - e. **To seal up the vision and prophecy** - When the Messiah came, “vision and prophecy” were sealed up or finished. The prophecies concerning Christ were no longer awaiting fulfillment. There was no need for prophetic predictions of Christ after John the Baptist (Mt. 11:13). Furthermore, with the completion of the New Testament, visions and prophecy would no longer be needed (1 Cor. 13:8-13; Eph. 4:11-16).
  - f. **To anoint the most Holy** - The anointing of the “most Holy” has reference to Jesus (cf. Zech. 6:13). He was anointed with the Holy Spirit at the commencement of His ministry (Mt. 3:16; Acts 10:38; Lk. 4:1, 18; Isa. 61:1; Psa. 2:2; Acts 4:26-27; Psa. 45:7; Heb. 1:9). The title “Christ” means “anointed.” In the Old Testament anointing was a rite of inauguration of the three offices of priest (Ex. 28:41), king (1 Sam. 10:1), and prophet (1 Kings 19:16). As you know, Christ serves in each of these roles (Heb. 3:1; Mt. 21:5; Acts 3:20-23). When the Son of man ascended back to the Ancient of Days, he was anointed King of kings and Lord of lords (Dan. 7:13-14; Mk. 16:19).
5. The seventy weeks were to be numbered from the “going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince” (Dan. 9:25), who would be slain in the midst of the final week of Daniel’s prophecy (Dan. 9:26-27; cf. Isa. 53:8; Acts 8:32-33). Daniel’s prophecy revealed with pinpoint accuracy the exact time when the Messiah would come and be slain. The difficulty is in determining which of the three possible starting points one should take – Zerubbabel’s return (536 B.C.), Ezra’s

return (457 B.C.), or Nehemiah's return (444 B.C.). Let's consider each of these positions more closely:

- a. If one accepts Zerubbabel's return under the decree of Cyrus, then the starting date is 536 B.C. Ezra records some details of this return (Ezra 2-6). One problem with this starting point is that Cyrus' commission had to do with the rebuilding of the temple rather than the walls of the city (Isa. 44:24-28). Another problem with starting with Zerubbabel's return in 536 B.C. is the fact that it would end at 50 B.C., 80 years prior to the Lord's death.
- b. If one accepts Ezra's return under the first decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus, then the starting point is 457 B.C. The problem with this date is that Ezra's commission seems to have been to restore the law rather than to restore the walls of the city (Ezra 7:1-8). The strength of this position is the fact that it ends at A.D. 30 – the exact year of Christ's crucifixion (Zech. 13:1). Please note that 486 ½ is used instead of 490 because Christ was slain in the midst of the week (3 ½ years). The "midst of the week" (3 ½ years) represents the public ministry of Christ. Again, using Ezra's return as the starting point, the resulting date would be A.D. 26 – the year of the Lord's baptism and the beginning of his public ministry (Lk. 3:21-22; 4:1, 18). As you can see, these numbers seem to fit rather well. It seems logical to me to work from that which we can know (when the Lord's ministry started and when he died), back to that which is in question (when the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem went forth). This argument is made far more eloquently by Wayne Jackson and I urge you to read his thoughts on the matter (Christian Courier, Nov. 9, 1998, Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, ChristianCourier.com).
- c. If one accepts Nehemiah's return under the second commission of Artaxerxes Longimanus, then the starting point is 444 B.C. The strength of this position seems to be that the clearest command to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem came to Nehemiah (Neh. 1-2). The weakness of the position seems to be that the ending dates would be 42 B.C., twelve years after the Lord's death. Even using a 360 day year (Jewish calendar) as suggested by some, the

date seems to be off by a little (Whitcomb 131-132). For a thorough consideration of dating from Nehemiah's time, one should consult Rex Turner Sr.'s commentary, *Daniel: A Prophet of God*. Brother Turner shows from history how that the generally accepted dating of Xerxes' reign is off by twenty years which would reconcile the dates nicely so that Jesus would have opened up his personal ministry in the 483<sup>rd</sup> year and would have been slain 3 ½ years later (Turner, *Difficult Texts*, 393-395).

- d. Homer Hailey breaks rank with each of the above positions by suggesting that literal years were not intended at all. He writes, "As one reads the various efforts of commentators to make the 490 days 490 literal years, he is impressed by the failure of all such efforts. No satisfactory beginning point leads to a satisfactory inclusion and conclusion of the events of the seventy weeks passage. In light of the symbolic interpretation of Daniel's visions, it seems perfectly reasonable to believe that the seventy weeks are figurative also, and symbolize various periods of time in the history that lay ahead for the Jewish people" (Turner 186-187). He went on to argue that the seventy weeks "symbolize the entire period from the Decree of Cyrus allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans" (187). Clyde Woods takes this same position (Webster 181). Rex Turner Sr. pointedly addresses this approach and the implications of it (339-341).
6. Several phrases within the text point to Jesus' death. They are worthy of some consideration:
    - a. **"Messiah be cut off" (Dan. 9:26)** – Isaiah uses this very language in prophesying the death of Jesus. He wrote, "He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? **For he was cut off from the land of the living:** for the transgression of my people was he stricken" (Isa. 53:8; cf. John 11:49-52).
    - b. **"But not for himself" (Dan. 9:26)** – Jesus was not cut off for His own sins, but for ours (1 Pet. 2:22, 24). He was without sin (Heb. 4:15). He took our place and tasted death for us (Heb. 2:9). The ASV of 1901 translates the phrase as "and shall have nothing." If this is the correct rendering, then it has reference to

the fact that He sacrificed all in order to save us (2 Cor. 8:9; Mt. 8:20; 27:35).

- c. **“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for a week” (Dan. 9:27)** – Rex Turner suggests that for a period of seven years the ministry of Christ would be confined exclusively to His people – the Jews (Mt. 10:5-6). Although Christ was cut off in the midst of the week, His apostles completed the three and a half years of the prophecy. The eighth chapter of Acts marks the move of the gospel beyond the Jews (Acts 8:5). The firm covenant with many for a week had passed. Wayne Jackson suggests that the expression refers to the fact that the Messiah’s covenant would remain firm or prevail even though He was put to death.
  - d. **“In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (Dan. 9:27)** – When Jesus died on the cross as the Lamb of God, there was no longer a need for animal sacrifices to be offered (Heb. 7:11; 8:13; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:8-9). Although animal sacrifices continued to be offered by the Jews, they were no longer effectual. When Jesus died on the cross, the old law was nailed to the cross and a new law was enacted (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Jer. 31:31-34).
7. The “prince” that would “destroy the city and the sanctuary” as an overwhelming flood was Titus, the commander of the Roman army (Dan. 9:26, 27). Jesus referred back to this prophecy in His discussion with the disciples over the destruction of the city of Jerusalem (Mt. 24:15; cf. 24:1-34; 21:37-41; 22:1-7). It is important to note that this “prince” (Dan. 9:26) comes after the anointed prince mentioned already in the prophecy was cut off (Dan. 9:25). It is interesting to note that Josephus, the Jewish historian, recognized the destruction of Jerusalem as the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy. In his Antiquities of the Jews, he wrote, “Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them” (Antiquities of the Jews X.XI.7; as qtd. by Jackson).
- f. Today, God has not left us in the dark relative to His plans.
    - i. He told the apostles of how the gospel would spread (Acts 1:8).
    - ii. He told Paul of the coming departure from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-3).
    - iii. He has told us that Christ is coming again and about the beautiful land that awaits us when He does (John 14:1-3; Rev. 21:4; 22:1-3).

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. As you can see, the ninth chapter of Daniel is rich indeed. I'm sorry that I have not explored more of it.
2. I hope that in my discussion of it, you have seen Jesus. That is ultimately what God wanted Daniel and us to see.

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