

THE WHOLE BIBLE: 66 BOOKS IN 10 WEEKS

Isaiah - Daniel

INTRODUCTION TO PROPHETS

- 17 books of Bible | “Major Prophets” and “Minor Prophets”
- prophets rose in prominence in face of faithless kings

Role of prophets in Israel

- typically think of “prophesy” as predictions of future
- for most part, prophets were covenant prosecutors

Mode of communication – symbolic actions

- Isaiah lived naked and barefoot for 3 years (Is. 20)
- Ezekiel lies prostrate in miniature city for 14 months (Ezek. 4)
- Hosea marries a prostitute | Jeremiah forbidden from marrying

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH

- most well-known of Prophetic books
- beautiful language of a future redemption
– “comfort, comfort my people” (chapter 40)

Isaiah 1:10-17 | Sin of God’s people

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom!

Give ear to the teaching of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!

¹¹ “What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?”
says the LORD;

I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of well-fed beasts;

I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of goats.

¹² When you come to appear before me,
who has required of you
this trampling of my courts?

¹³ Bring no more vain offerings;
incense is an abomination to me.

New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations –
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.

¹⁴ Your new moons and your appointed feasts
my soul hates;

they have become a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them.

¹⁵ When you spread out your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

¹⁶ Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,

¹⁷ learn to do good;
seek justice,

correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless,
plead the widow’s cause.

Isaiah 53:3-7 | The “Servant of the Lord”

³ He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.

Acts 8:27-34 | Who is the Servant of the Lord?

²⁷ And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

³² Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. ³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” ³⁴ And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH

- writing 100 years after Isaiah | “weeping prophet”
- during last years of Judah and witness of destruction of Jerusalem

A long-suffering prophet

- preached to sin-hardened nation, prosperous and self-assured
- called to a difficult ministry of rejection

Jeremiah 29:1-7 | Letter to exiles in Babylon

¹ These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ⁴ “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS

- no author inscription, but many consider written by Jeremiah
- eye-witness account of siege and destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC)

Lamentations 1:1-2 | Opening lament

¹ How lonely sits the city
that was full of people!
How like a widow has she become,
she who was great among the nations!

She who was a princess among the provinces
has become a slave.

² She weeps bitterly in the night,
with tears on her cheeks;
among all her lovers
she has none to comfort her;
all her friends have dealt treacherously with her;
they have become her enemies.

Description of siege conditions in Jerusalem

^{1:11} All her people groan
as they search for bread;
they trade their treasures for food
to revive their strength.
^{2:12} They cry to their mothers,
“Where is bread and wine?”
as they faint like a wounded man
in the streets of the city,
as their life is poured out
on their mothers’ bosom.
^{4:4} The tongue of the nursing infant sticks
to the roof of its mouth for thirst;
the children beg for food,
but no one gives to them.
^{4:9} Happier were the victims of the sword
than the victims of hunger,
who wasted away, pierced
by lack of the fruits of the field.
^{4:10} The hands of compassionate women
have boiled their own children;
they became their food
during the destruction of the daughter of my people.

Lamentations 3:19-23 | Word of hope

¹⁹ Remember my affliction and my wanderings,
the wormwood and the gall!
²⁰ My soul continually remembers it
and is bowed down within me.
²¹ But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
²² The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
²³ they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL

- writing shortly after Jeremiah
- prophet among the community of exiles in Babylon

Ezekiel 36:24-28 | The New Covenant of the Spirit

²⁴I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. ²⁸You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Ezekiel 37 | The Valley of Dry Bones

¹The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. ²And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. ³And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” ⁴Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL

- Daniel is part of the young generation of Jews living in exile
- both familiar (narrative) and unfamiliar (prophesies)
 - first part: question of assimilation
 - second part: assurance of God’s control over history

Daniel 3 | Worship the Golden Image

⁴And the herald proclaimed aloud, “You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ⁵that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace.” ⁷Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

Daniel 2:31-35 | Nebuchadnezzar’s dream

³¹You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. ³²The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, ³³its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Notes:

Introduction to Prophets

- 17 books of Bible | “Major Prophets” and “Minor Prophets”
 - in chronological order: Majors, then Minors

Prophets rose in prominence in face of faithless kings

- as kings apostatized, prophets arose to call people back in repentance

Role of prophets in Israel

- typically think of “prophesy” as predictions of future
 - only Daniel contains specific events and dates
 - otherwise, prophesies spoke broadly of Messiah and KOG
- for most part, prophets were covenant prosecutors
 - remind people of laws of Mosaic Covenant
 - warn of judgment and exile | natural consequence

Mode of communication – symbolic actions

- extreme actions to awaken a complacent people
- Isaiah lived naked and barefoot for 3 years (Is. 20)
 - symbolizes captives taken away into exile naked and in shame
- Ezekiel lies prostrate in miniature city for 14 months (Ezek. 4)
 - builds miniature city with bricks and siege-works
 - makes his daily meal cooked over human dung
- Hosea marries a prostitute | Jeremiah forbidden from marrying
 - Hosea: Israel as unfaithful wife
 - Jeremiah: Israel will be cut off from the land of living
 - Ezekiel’s wife dies at early age – forbidden mourning

Not an easy thing to be called as a prophet of God

- prophets were ignored, beaten and imprisoned, and suffered in life

Introduction to Isaiah

- most well-known of Prophetic books
- beautiful language of a future redemption for God’s people
 - “comfort, comfort my people” (chapter 40)
- one of earlier writing prophets – during reign of Hezekiah

Isaiah 1:10-17

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!
¹¹ “What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
says the LORD;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of well-fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of goats.
¹² When you come to appear before me,
who has required of you
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New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations –
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.
¹⁴ Your new moons and your appointed feasts
my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me;
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¹⁵ When you spread out your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers,
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¹⁶ Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,
¹⁷ learn to do good;
seek justice,
correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless,
plead the widow’s cause.

Isaiah condemns the people for 2 things:

- empty religiosity – on surface, people were still devout but hearts far from God
– religion without heart is vile to God
- neglect of social justice – absence of affirmative care for poor

Isaiah's "Servant of the Lord"

- Israel was supposed to be God's servant
 - a light to Gentiles | "all families blessed through you"
 - Israel supposed city on hill, community of justice
- but God will send a true Israelite, who will fulfill

- 4 songs – most famous is chapters 52-53, Man of Sorrows

Isaiah 53:3-7 | The Servant will be the sin-bearer of Israel

³ He was despised and rejected by men;

a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;

yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions;
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upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
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⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way;

and the LORD has laid on him
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⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;

like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.

The Servant will be righteous and innocent

- and yet, he will bear Israel's sins – rejected and suffer
- through his substitutionary suffering, God's people will be redeemed

Acts 8:27-34 | Who is the Servant of the Lord?

²⁷ And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship²⁸ and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

³² Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth."³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."³⁴ And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?"

Introduction to Jeremiah

- writing 100 years after Isaiah | "weeping prophet"
- during last years of Judah and witness of destruction of Jerusalem

A long-suffering prophet

- preached to sin-hardened nation, prosperous and self-assured

Called to an extremely difficult ministry of constant rejection

- in 25 years of ministry, only had 2 converts
 - Baruch, his secretary
 - Ebed-melech, Ethiopian eunuch served king
- almost universally mocked and rejected
- repeatedly imprisoned and beaten | constantly threatened w/ death
 - put in stocks to be mocked
 - during siege, threw into cistern (sunk in mud, buried alive)
- suffered depression, doubt, feelings of abandonment
 - often cry out to God, full of despair and doubt
- Jeremiah was called to be faithful, not successful
 - called to warn God's people for last time
- died in exile in Egypt | taken by officials fleeing south

Jeremiah's letter to exiles

- how should exiles conduct themselves in pagan Babylon?
- relevant – how should Christians live among non-believers?

Jeremiah 29:1-7 | Letter to exiles in Babylon

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Astounding answer

- first, not disaster but part of God's plan for his people
- posture of God's people shifts from theocracy to holy minority
- rather than separating (stay pure), or try to conquer (take over), maintain a “faithful presence” among unbelievers
- seek “welfare” (shalom) of the city | seek common good
- God's plan is no longer nation-state, but dispersed exiles (church)

Introduction to Lamentations

- no author inscription, but many consider written by Jeremiah
- eye-witness account of siege and destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC)

Lamentations 1:1-2 | Opening lament

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that was full of people!
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² She weeps bitterly in the night,
with tears on her cheeks;
among all her lovers
she has none to comfort her;
all her friends have dealt treacherously with her;
they have become her enemies.

Description of siege conditions

^{1:11} All her people groan
as they search for bread;
they trade their treasures for food
to revive their strength.
^{2:12} They cry to their mothers,
“Where is bread and wine?”
as they faint like a wounded man
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^{4:4} The tongue of the nursing infant sticks
to the roof of its mouth for thirst;
the children beg for food,
but no one gives to them.
^{4:9} Happier were the victims of the sword
than the victims of hunger,
who wasted away, pierced
by lack of the fruits of the field.
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have boiled their own children;
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²¹ But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
²² The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
²³ they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

This is one most famous passages in Bible – v. 22-23

- but lift from context and diminish the glory and beauty of it
- in midst of utter devastation and destruction and death
- see full, rich colors of this utterance
- deep hope and trust in God

Introduction to Ezekiel

- writing shortly after Jeremiah
- prophet among the community of exiles in Babylon

Ezekiel 36:24-27 | The New Covenant of the Spirit

²⁴I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. ²⁸You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

What is the New Covenant?

- Jer. 31 – “behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with house of Israel and House of Israel.”
- Old Covenant (Mosaic) failed to make God’s people holy
- law is powerless to produce what it commands
- problem is heart – heart is wicked, and law of God evokes rebellion
- in New Covenant, God will pour out his Spirit into his people
- our hearts will be transformed | relationship to law changed
- Christ is mediator of New Covenant
- Last Supper – “this cup is new covenant in my blood”
- his death changes our relationship to God

Immediately after New Covenant – vision of dry bones

- God needs to radically intervene to rescue us
- salvation is not moral instruction, but bringing dead to life
- salvation is resurrection

Ezekiel 37 | The Valley of Dry Bones

¹The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. ²And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. ³And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” ⁴Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶And I will

lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

Introduction to Daniel

- Daniel is part of the young generation of Jews living in exile
- both familiar (narrative) and unfamiliar (prophesies)
 - first part: question of assimilation
 - second part: assurance of God’s control over history

Question of assimilation resonates today

- God’s people no longer live in Israel, but dispersed among unbelievers
- enormous pressure to conform and bow down to idols of culture
- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are commanded to bow down

Daniel 3 | Worship the Golden Image

⁴And the herald proclaimed aloud, “You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ⁵that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace.” ⁷Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

The friends will not compromise – only God is to be worshipped

- even the threat of death does not change convictions

Daniel 2:31-35 | Nebuchadnezzar's dream

³¹ You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening.

³² The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴ As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Vision of the Kingdom of God filling whole earth

- God's people in exile are not pawns or victims of gears of history
- but God is orchestrating all history to his ends
- Kingdom of God starts out in seeming weakness, but grow and grow until fills whole earth