

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### January 6: Isaiah 1-6 (Wade Stanley)

I hope you enjoy reading Isaiah 1-6 today. Here's a concise reading guide in a Google Doc. Feel free to print. However, please note that the timeline on page 2 is copyrighted.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RRbV-sTFwIlyOlr3NSCP8zLEQwSVa-x2y7I7aWAA3AQ/mobilebasic>

Intro to Isaiah

Isaiah ministered the word of the Lord to Judah and Jerusalem during the days of:

Uzziah: 2 Kings 15, 2 Chronicles 26

Jotham: 2 Kings 15, 2 Chronicles 27

Ahaz: 2 Kings 16, 2 Chronicles 28

Hezekiah: 2 Kings 18-20, 2 Chronicles 29-32

See timeline below

Isaiah touches on the following themes:

Exposing the contemporary depravity of Judah and Jerusalem

Warning the sinning Israelite about the impending judgment of God (including predictions of future calamities and corrections)

Warnings to the hostile Gentile nations

Promises concerning the Messiah and His kingdom

Key Segments in Chapters 1-6

1:12-18: Expresses God's frustration with perfunctory worship offered by a sinful people.

Urges the people to repent and extends a promise of renewal.

2:1-5: The coming glory of the Messiah's kingdom.

4:2-6: The restoration of the nation following her captivity which is ultimately fulfilled in the arrival of the Messiah.

5:1-7: A parable using a vineyard to represent Israel.

6:6-10: Isaiah is commissioned by God as a prophet.

(Timeline in link)

#### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:

Appreciate this! Very easy just to add to a Prophecy folder in my Google Drive for future study.

#### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

Nothing new under the sun. What was, is. A lot of "fat hearts" in abundance today!

#### **Comment:**

Christina McClung:

Thank you

## Comment:

Linda Whitworth Davis:

I really appreciate the introduction to the day's reading. It helps me stay on track as I read. Without it I can get bogged down and miss the meaning.

## Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Not sure. It's fine on my end. You should be able to simply click on it to see it. Then you can change the zoom to 200% and see the chart very easily. Under File you can select Make a Copy and then put it somewhere in your Google Drive.

## Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Chapter 6 lets us continue the thought of a refining fire. This is the only place where we read about these fairly mysterious celestial creatures called seraphs. Seraphs mean "fiery ones" and actually are also referred to when the COI encountered the "fiery serpents" and Moses put the bronze "fiery serpent" on the pole. These fiery beings, however, have 6 wings and seem to fly around in the presence of God and call praises constantly. The temple is filled with smoke due to their fiery nature. One of the "fiery ones" pulls a hot burning coal out of the altar and purifies Isaiah's words so he can volunteer to become the Lord's prophet. The scriptures seem to point out that angels are curious about us humans. I have to admit the curiosity goes both ways.

## Replies:

Steven Wright:

So wonderful and amazing how things fit together! Part of the group study at Legend yesterday concerned a discussion of the "Fiery ones" too!

Charles Fry:

Some of these visionary images may be things we can't completely sort out, but the imagery evokes awe and wonder.

Even though the song "Holy, Holy, Holy" has the line "cherubim and seraphim", I would suggest these are probably the same angelic class of beings, the honor guard of God's throne. Ezekiel's description of the living beings that he identified as cherubim in Ezekiel 1 and 10, and John's description of the living beings in Revelation 4, and Isaiah's description of the seraphim (literally fiery ones) in Isaiah 6 are most likely the same entities in different perspectives and circumstances. (Remember too that the cherubim who guarded the garden were associated with a flaming sword in Genesis 3). In Ezekiel the cherubim were bearing the throne of God as He approached Ezekiel in exile; in Isaiah there was consternation around the throne of God, about the plight of Judah and Israel; in Revelation there was the expectation around the throne of the appearance of the victorious Lion/Lamb who had triumphed. In both Ezekiel and Isaiah there was a fiery appearance (Ezekiel 1:13-14) about the beings. In both Ezekiel and Revelation they are calling out "Holy, holy, holy." In all three descriptions they are winged. Six wings are mentioned in Isaiah and Revelation, four in Ezekiel, where they are working as chariot bearers rather than in the throne room. All three visions picture them with eyes, mouths, hands, feet, voices. The features of lion, ox, eagle and man are associated with the beings in Ezekiel and Revelation.

I would guess that the temple Isaiah saw was filled with smoke for the same reason the temple John saw was filled with smoke, namely smoke from the altar of incense on which the prayers of saints are presented (Revelation 8:4). The altar (of incense) before the throne was the source of the coal that touched Isaiah's mouth. Remember that on the Day of Atonement the most holy place was to be enshrouded with smoke from the altar of incense which sat before the ark, before the priest approached the mercy seat, the throne of God between the cherubim.

I am reluctant about directly associating the fiery serpents of Numbers 21:6-7 with the seraphim/cherubim. First because the word fiery in Numbers does modify the word serpent or snake in the Hebrew text, and the word serpent or snake appears nowhere in Isaiah's description. Second because the "fiery serpents" of Israelite experience appear to have been ordinary physical creatures of the desert, like features such as scorpions and lack of water and food (see Deuteronomy 8:15-16), multiplied to plague proportions. Isaiah does reference a serpent's offspring in later visions as flying and fiery in connection with judgment against the nations in Isaiah 14:29 and 30:6, but again in the same context as lions and adders, suggesting that those fiery ones were venomous snakes.

Isaiah is great, both in terms of historical prophecies about the nations, and, most especially, the prophecies of the Christ. Mixed in with the warnings against continued rebellion and self indulgence, the messiah is already foreshadowed in 1:11, 18, 2:1-5, and 4:2-6.

Steven Wright:

I have only connected the "Fiery " part with the serpents of Num 21 being the effects of the Neuro toxins in the venom. With a similar word in the Hebrew to describe bright light (like fire), or ,burning pain.

Marc Hermon:

I'll try to clarify what I was saying. The transliterated word from the Hebrew, "saraph" H8314 which means "fiery ones" is used only seven times in the OT. Twice in Deu 8:15 & Num 21:6 translated as "fiery" as a descriptor of serpents. Three times in Num. 21:8, Isa. 14:29 & Isa. 30:6 as "fiery flying serpents" and twice it is transliterated (English letter for Hebrew letter) as "seraphim" in our reading Isa. 6: 2 & 6 where it seems to mean an angelic type being.

## Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Here is another thought along with a song to stick in your head the rest of the night. It is a significant proof of the deity of Jesus that John the apostle in John 12:41 when referring to Isaiah 6 says, "Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about Him". Then both the seraphim in Is. 6 and the cherubim in Rev. 4 both sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty". The writer of the song that we sing today felt the three Holies in these passages was a reference to God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit and thus the "Trinity" references in the song.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1TG\\_MmiQxU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1TG_MmiQxU)

"Holy, Holy, Holly"

## Replies:

Wade Stanley:

One cool piece of symbolism in Revelation 4:8 is the praise is 3 sets of three. 1. Holy, holy, holy; 2. Lord God Almighty; 3. Who was, and is, and is to come. Those little details are scattered all throughout the throne scenes in Revelation.

Charles Fry:

It's Divine. 😊

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Wade Stanley, for leading our Friday study in prophecy. I had to do a lot of studying outside the reading today. I think this category will be the most difficult for me so I appreciate everyone's comments & Wade's google reading/timeline. Today I'm going to focus on Isaiah's call to service. During Judah's dark hour, God's glory and majesty still filled the earth.

Someone needed to communicate the divine message to the people. After cleansing his heart, Isaiah responded to the Lord's call with the words "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah was willing to obey God and step out in faith to let God do extraordinary things through Him. We should be ready too. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15

## January 13 Isaiah 7-11 (John Morris)

January 13, 2017

Isaiah 7-11

Overview

- 7:1-16 – Syria and Israel (i.e., the Northern Kingdom) form a confederacy and threaten Judah (cf. 2 Kings 16:5-6), but God promises the plan will come to nothing and that both kingdoms will soon fall (cf. 8:4).
- 7:17-25 – In time to come, the same nation responsible for Syria and Israel's fall (i.e., Assyria) will also come against Judah, as will Egypt, and create considerable hardship for the people.
- 8:1-2 – God wants the upcoming prophecy to not only be written down, but to be inscribed in the presence of witnesses trusted by the people. When it is fulfilled, they will be able to testify that God's prophet did indeed predict the future.
- 8:3-4 – The child promised in 7:14-16 is born to Isaiah and his wife. This serves as a PART-ial fulfillment of the prophecy. Another Child will FULL-fill the prophecy in years to come.
- 8:5-10 – The coming Assyrian invasion of Judah predicted. "The king of Assyria...will reach up to the neck" (vs. 7-8)—that is, ALMOST drown the nation of Judah. A striking and perfect visual for Sennacherib's invasion in the days of Hezekiah (cf. Is. 36-37).
- 8:11-22 – God instructs Isaiah to trust Him, even though neither house of Israel does. Also, He prophecies of the people's coming suffering and what their response will be—not repentance, but bitterness: "they will be enraged and curse their king and their God" (cf. Rev. 16:11).
- 9:1-7 – But there is hope! Though the nation will be distressed, that distress will not last forever. Israel will rise again...physically, then spiritually. "Messiah is coming!"

- 9:8-10:4 – Would have been nice if this section had been made one chapter. It is a unit unto itself. It concerns the coming destruction of the Northern Kingdom, and is divided into four stanzas, each ending with: “For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still” (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4). God can stretch out His hand for deliverance or destruction, or both simultaneously. And regardless of application, “The LORD’s hand is not shortened” (Is. 59:1). He can reach anyone, anywhere, anytime.
- 10:5-32 – God will use the king of Assyria to punish the sinful houses of Israel, but the sinful king of Assyria will eventually suffer God’s punishment, as well. Note vss. 24-26, where God promises those who dwell in Zion (i.e. Jerusalem) that they have nothing to fear from the Assyrians. This accords perfectly (as did 8:8) with the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem (Is. 36-37).
- 11:1-10 – The Branch, the Prince of Peace, the Root of Jesse is coming! A number of His characteristics, and the characteristics of His reign are here enumerated.
- 11:11-14 –We see similar predictions in Hosea 1:10-11, Amos 9:11-12, Zechariah 10:6-12 (and almost certainly some other places that aren’t coming to mind). Very figurative. Some of this may have had application to the return of the Jewish people after the captivity, but if so, much more is included. Here, Jesus is bringing together Jew and Gentile from all over the world into His kingdom (Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 3:11). Peoples not at peace before are at peace under the reign of the Prince of Peace. Furthermore, in vs. 14, we may be seeing the “conquest” of the gospel among those formerly opposed to God and His people.
- 11:15-16 – Again, this may have applied some to their return to the Promised Land after the captivity, but there may also be a spiritual application. God will remove all obstacles. If you are living in the land of captivity—that is, if you are living in sin, and want to be delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col. 1:13), the real “the Holy Land” (Zech. 2:12)--God will make it possible! He has broken down all barriers. “Whosoever will MAY COME!”

~~~~~

Messianic Prophecies in Today’s Reading  
(Isaiah has been called “the fifth gospel,” and with good reason!)

- Is. 7:14 (quoted in Mt. 1:23)
- Is. 9:1-2 (quoted in Mt. 4:15-16)
- Is. 9:6-7
- Is. 11 (vs. 10 quoted in Rom. 15:12)

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

Amen on the, "PART" and the "FULL" on 7:14! And thank you John, for this this good study!

### **Comment:**

Linda Whitworth Davis:

Very helpful commentary. Thanks! Had to do some rereading.

### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:

Very helpful overview. It's nice to read the paragraph synopsis and then read the verses. Anyone have any thoughts about the "Spirits" in 11:2? Is this describing the Spirit of the Lord as a triune Spirit or is this a listing of the 7 spirits mentioned in Rev. 5:6? (spirit of the Lord, wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge and fear of the Lord.)

## Replies:

Steven Wright:

The Holy Spirit. (Seven fold description - Mnemonic devise for memorization - a Hebrew liturgical thing).

John Morris:

Have never been entirely satisfied with any explanation I've heard on the "seven Spirits." Would love to know for sure what to make of it. Your explanation below is as good as any I've heard.

It would be nice to get some help from Isaiah on the question, though. =) But how does one delineate between Spirits? Is "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding" one Spirit or two? Is it to be understood as distinct from "the Spirit of the LORD" or just a description of Him?

By searching the entire book of Isaiah, one can come up with an assortment of possibilities for the "seven Spirits," all depending on how you break them up. Below is one collection, but I'm admittedly doubtful it's what John was telling us about:

1. "Spirit of the LORD" (11:2; 40:13; 59:19; 61:1; 63:14)
2. "Spirit of wisdom and understanding" (11:2)
3. "Spirit of counsel and might" (11:2)
4. "Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD" (11:2)
5. "spirit of judgment" (4:4)
6. "spirit of burning" (4:4)
7. "spirit of justice" (28:6)

Marc Hermon:

Interesting. I guess we just keep on reading..."For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" Heb. 4:12

Charles Fry:

Consider that the prophecy of the branch is introduced in 4:2-6. That includes reference to a spirit of judgment and fire. Then Isaiah 11:1-5 resumes the theme of the branch, and the spirit. Note that the Branch does judge with righteousness, etc in v.3-4. This is the character of the spirit previously mentioned in 4:4. So the Spirit of the Lord who rests on the Branch is a Spirit of judgment (4:4, 11:3-4), as well the other 6 characteristics mentioned in 11:2, wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, the fear of the Lord, 7 aspects of the Spirit.

Charles Fry:

Also, remember that the 7 branched lamp stand was a symbol of the Spirit (Zechariah 4:2, 6, 10, Revelation 4:5, 5:6). The 7 branched lamp stand had a central stem or trunk, and the six branches were arranged in pairs, 3 pairs (Exodus 25:32, 35) of branches, like the three pairs of attributes described in Isaiah 11:1-5, with the central branch or

trunk or stem being referenced as the Spirit of The Lord, which is also the Spirit of judgment and fire.

### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:

Eph 4:4 "one Spirit" but maybe the "perfect" ways in which it is manifested?

### **Comment:**

Thank you, John Morris! Your overview was a great help while reading the chapters. I am gaining a new appreciation for the book of Isaiah with all its Messianic prophecies.

### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

On our walk today Marc brought attention a fun Bible fact to me. Isaiah's son's name is the longest in Scripture. Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

"Swift to the spoil -quick to the plunder!"

## **January 20 Isaiah 12-17 (Wade Stanley)**

I hope you find Isaiah 12-17 a profitable study for today. Here is my concise outline of the chapters along with a very brief commentary about the King of Babylon (a.k.a. "Lucifer").

John and I would like to thank Charles Fry for supplying studies for the next three Fridays.

God be with you all.

---

## Isaiah 12-17

### **Highlights**

Chapter 12: a continuation of chapter 11

- Notice the continued occurrence of "in that day"
- An anticipation of the great joy ushered in by the Messiah and His kingdom

Chapter 13: prophesied judgment of Babylon (see verses 17 and 19)

- Language that typifies the fall of ruling powers: "Indeed the stars in the sky and their constellations no longer give out their light; the sun is darkened as soon as it rises, and the moon does not shine."

Isaiah 13:10 NET

- Compare verses 20-22 with <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/04/world/meast/iraq-babylon-tourism/>
- Kingdoms rise and fall according to God's will

Chapter 14: assorted judgments against the Gentile nations

- Verses 1-3: restoration of the captive Jews (taken captive by Babylon in 605, 597, and 586 BC; return begins in 536)

- Verses 4-23: judgment of the king of Babylon (more on this later)
- Verses 24-27: judgment of Assyria
- Verses 28-32: judgment of Philistia

Chapters 15- 16: judgment of Moab

Chapter 17: judgment of Syria

### **The King of Babylon**

In many translations, Isaiah 14:12-15 refers to the King of Babylon as Lucifer. Without question, the material preceding and following these four verses deals with the king of Babylon. However, Lucifer has been a traditional name of Satan, which leads to some confusion. So, is the passage talking about the King of Babylon or the Prince of this world? I believe the answer is yes.

The word “lucifer” comes from the Latin Vulgate and means “light bringer” or “shining one.” The Hebrew is “Helel son of Shachar” which is probably a name for the morning star (Venus) or the crescent moon. When translating Isaiah 14:12, the KJV translators retained a tradition that dates back to the third century. Because of Jesus’s statement concerning Satan in Luke 10:18 (“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven”), it was traditionally believed that the figure in Isaiah 14:12 was Satan (lucifer meaning “light bringer” or “shining one”). Since the Latin translations gradually grew to a dominate Western Christendom, Lucifer became another name for Satan. Contextually, though, it is clear that these verses deal with the King of Babylon. He rose bright as the “morning star” but in his pride he fell to the depths of Sheol. The account of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 is an excellent example of this prophecy’s fulfillment.

Although the passage does address the King of Babylon, I do believe there are Satanic undertones. Several times in scripture, we come across an archetype. Consider the following:

- “For you have said in your heart:  
‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’” ~ Isaiah 14:13-14
- “Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Because your heart is lifted up, And you say, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, In the midst of the seas,’ Yet you are a man, and not a god, Though you set your heart as the heart of a god” ~ Ezekiel 28:2 NKJV
- ““Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.” ~ Daniel 11:36-37 NKJV (prophecy of Antiochus Epiphanies, 2nd century ruler of the Greek Seleucid kingdom)
- “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” ~ 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 NKJV

All of these passages share a common thread: a man who exalts himself to a divine position out of an inflated sense of pride. What does Paul say was the sin that caused Satan’s fall? Pride. A pride that endeavored to lift him to a station beyond what God had created. So although these passages deal with the powers of the earth, those powers are certainly inspired and influenced by the Prince of this World.



## Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thanks Wade! And, thanks in advance, Charles Fry! Yes, the symbolic description of Satan and it's association with the proud King of Babylon, speaks to several points with regard to the indentity, motives, and operations of our adversary!

## Comment:

Charles Fry:

Good stuff! In this reading I especially like Isaiah 12:3-4a.

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord,

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

"In pride the wicked man does not seek Him, in all his thoughts there is no room for God."

Psalm 10:4. Thank you for the commentary, Wade. Prayers for you, John, the congregations in the Philippines and your family in the upcoming weeks. "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

## Comment:

Marc Hermon:

There have been rulers in their pride who have "claimed" to be the great morning star, but it's important to point out that there is only ONE who claimed it and was speaking the truth.

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." - Rev 22:16

All others, including Satan are lifting themselves up with pride and are just pretenders.

"And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light." - 2 Cor. 11:14

## Replies:

Wade Stanley:

"And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

2 Peter 1:19-21 ESV

## January 27 Isaiah 18-22 (Charles Fry)

Today's reading, for January 27: Isaiah 18-22

Isaiah: "Yahweh is Savior"

Isaiah's special title for The LORD is "the Holy One of Israel" (1:4), a name occurring 28 times in Isaiah.

Isaiah's special message is "Salvation is of the LORD," (12:2-3) using the word "salvation" 26 times.

We are in a section of Isaiah that began with praise in chapter 12, leading into prophecies of judgment of the nations and finally of the world, 12-24, and then again praise and glory for God's justice and mercy, 25-26.

12, joy in salvation, praise and thanksgiving.

13, Babylon to be brought down by Medes and thence uninhabited (about 150 years after Isaiah's death).

14, Babylon & Lucifer, ruler of Babylon, condemned beforehand. Condemnation on Assyria and Philistia as well.

15, judgment on Moab, weeping for these descendants of Lot.

16, more of the oracle concerning Moab's judgment.

17, judgment on Syria (Aram).

18, judgment on Cush (Ethiopia), but also a positive response from them.

19, judgment on Egypt, but again some from Egypt to remain and turn to the LORD, some Assyrians also.

20, imminent downfall of Egypt and Cush to Assyria.

21, doom for Babylon by Media, doom for Edom, seeking refuge in Arabia.

22, judgment on Jerusalem for improper response to crisis, preparing for war rather than repenting. Replacement of an unacceptable steward with one who is suitable.

23, judgment on Tyre and Sidon and their futile mythology, a seventy year span of removal.

24, judgment on the whole world, the corrupt city, but still a remnant remains for the LORD.

25, praise for God's justice, His deliverance, but not all remain to rejoice.

26, praise continued for God's mercy and justice, joy in the resurrection.

18:1-7, judgment on Cush, the upper Nile region below Egypt (Nubia), rulers of Egypt in the 25th Dynasty, 715 B.C.

1-2, who were the Cushites looking to for strength and success?

3-6, how did God deal the arrogant power of Cush?

7, where would the Cushites sometime look, and how would they present themselves?

How should we present ourselves to the LORD?

Chapters 19:1-20:6, judgment on Egypt and Cush.

19:1-25

1-3, who was coming to Egypt and why?

What would He do?

12-15, what had God given Egypt and why?

What could Egypt do about her circumstances?

18-20, who was coming to Egypt?

Note: the language of Canaan is Hebrew. Many Jews fled to Egypt in the days of Jeremiah, 100 years after this prophecy. A Jewish temple was erected in Egypt (or perhaps 2). Alexandria in Egypt became a center of Jewish scholarship, the source of the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. Remember that Apollos was from Alexandria (Acts 18:24)

19-22, was the future for Egypt totally hopeless? Why or why not?

23-25, what did God have in mind for these nations and when do you think He meant to do this?

20:1-6

What did Isaiah have to do and what was the point?

How do you think Isaiah might have felt about doing this?

What lesson might we learn from Isaiah's mission?

## Chapter 21

21:1-10, Babylon revisited

Why do you think Isaiah would include two statements of judgment on Babylon in this section?

9, where in the New Testament is this referred to, and what does it mean to us? (Rev. 18:2)

6-8, bearing in mind the parallel of verse 9, what do these verses teach us to do?

21:11-12, prophecy against Edom (Esau, Idumaea, Seir)

What do you understand this cryptic prophecy to mean?

21:13-17, prophecy against Arabia

16, what does this prophecy do for Isaiah's authority as a prophet?

## Chapter 22

22:1-25, prophecy against Jerusalem

1-3, what seems to have been the downfall of Jerusalem?

7-13, what steps did Jerusalem take to cope with their weak position?

What steps should Jerusalem have taken to cope with her weakness?

15,20-25, Shebna(youth) replaced by Eliakim(whom God establishes) son of Hilkiah(portion of Jehovah)

(see II Kings 18:18ff about these men)

In whom are the good prophecies about Eliakim completely fulfilled? What about the bad?

### Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Charles Fry! We truly benefit from your knowledge. Thanks for being a great example in diligently studying the Word. I appreciated the chapter-by-chapter headline/summary. It was good to review & look ahead. Additionally, you presented thought-provoking questions. I'd enjoy receiving answers. ;-) For now your chpt. 20 q's: God asked Isaiah to preach for 3 years naked & barefoot. I believe the point was to symbolize the Assyrians would not only overcome Egypt and Ethiopia, they would make all prisoners march into captivity completely naked. It seems Egypt and Cush were Judah's hope and boast. They looked to them for protection from Assyria. If they were hoping and boasting in Egypt and Cush for protection they were not looking to the Lord. Perhaps our lesson from Isaiah's mission is to not have false hope and boasting in men. During hours of need we should look to aid from the Lord.

### Comment:

Wendy Range:

Thank you for the outline; I agree with Ginger in that we benefit from your knowledge (but I should go get my own, right? :)). I'll try to answer an easier question you ask from 22:7-13 (not sure I'll get it exactly right). It seems Jerusalem was coping poorly on two fronts. First, they trusted in the physical, structural protections and schemes rather than the spiritual protections that would have come from faith in the Lord. That's a timeless mistake: trusting in the seen rather than the unseen, and giving credit to ourselves rather than God. Second, they were coping with their weakness by being flippant and proud, rather than sober, reverent, and humble. They completely and rebelliously turn down the Father's pleas for repentance. I'm not sure if they thought tomorrow literally was the day they would die, but they seemed to have no intention of spending another moment from then on pursuing righteousness. :(

## February 3 Isaiah 23-28 (Charles Fry)

Today's reading, for February 3: Isaiah 23-28

Remember, the thoughtful reading of the day's text is the primary purpose of this schedule. This post is rather long, but the reading itself takes only a few minutes, and the description of judgment in 24 with the contrasting praise for God's kindness and justice in 25-26 set the stage for many other prophecies about judgment and redemption.

Isaiah: "Yahweh is Savior"

Isaiah 12-26 Praise, judgment, and praise. (Continued)

23, judgment on Tyre and Sidon and their futile mythology, a seventy year span of removal.

24, judgment on the whole world, the corrupt city, but still a remnant remains for the LORD.

25, praise for God's justice, His deliverance, but not all remain to rejoice.

26, praise continued for God's mercy and justice, joy in the resurrection.

Isaiah 27-35 Redemption, accusations, redemption.

27, the gathering up of the remnant of Israel.

28, contrast between those who wear the LORD and those who are without control. The coming cornerstone, the expectation of produce. Hardship as a tool.

Chapter 23

23:1-18, prophecy against Tyre

4, what is the implied sin of Tyre and Sidon?

8-9, who was responsible for the things that would happen to Tyre?

What was God's purpose in dealing with Tyre this way?

15-18, how long would Tyre be desolate, and what would happen then?

Though Tyre herself would still be corrupt, who would she benefit?

Chapter 24

24:1-23, judgment on the whole earth, the world city

1-3, what would happen to the earth?

Who all would share in the downfall of the earth?

Is this a limited judgment, or the final judgment?

4-13, why does the earth suffer?

What have men done wrong? (esp. v.5 & Heb. 13:20)

According to verse 8 the gaiety will stop; according to verse 11, why will it stop?

What is the point of the illustration in verse 13?

14-16a, who celebrates in the midst of the dying earth and why?

16b-18a, why might the righteous be caught in a conflict of feelings—joy and dismay?

What should the righteous avoid?

18b-20, when was the last time the floodgates of heaven were opened? (Gen. 7:11)

How does the event described here compare to the flood?

Why will this happen to the earth?

When will the earth recover or be restored?

Isa. 24:21-23, who all will be judged and punished by the LORD?

Was this punishment going to occur immediately?

Can you think of another scripture with a description of events that sounds like verses 21-23?

Where will the opposition be after this judgment?

Where will the LORD be after this judgment?

Where will you be?

Chapter 25

25:1-12, praise follows judgment

1-5, what characteristics of God inspire this praise?

6-8, what was God going to prepare and where?

What is this called in the New Testament? (Heb. 12:22-23)

What would be destroyed forever?

9, who's going to be celebrating?

10-12, will everyone celebrate?

Recalling how God said He felt about Moab's suffering (15:5, 16:12), why is Moab the most appropriate example here?

What is "hell" compared to in this passage? (vv10-11)

## Chapter 26

26:1-21, praise continued

1-6, what kind of city lasts and what kind doesn't?

Who is kept in perfect peace?

7-11, what is the advantage of the righteous?

What is the basis for waiting on the LORD (8)?

When does God's servant desire His presence?

Why does it seem useless for God to give good things to the wicked?

12-15, what can the righteous take credit for?

Regardless of what happens to the lords of men, what happens to God's nation?

16-18, when did the LORD's nation come to Him?

Though we may suffer for the name of Christ, what is different about our sufferings and His?

The LORD's people here say they haven't done two different things, what are they?

19-21, what promise awaits the LORD's nation?

What does death accomplish for God's people?

What is on the earth that God is going to deal with finally?

## Chapter 27

27:1, Leviathan, the monster of the sea

Leviathan was a water creature of great might (see Job 41:1) and is sometimes used as a symbol of the wicked one who opposes God, as in Psalm 74:14.

Who in the Bible is identified as a serpent?

27:2-13, deliverance and fruitfulness of God's people

1-6, what kind of a time did Isaiah foresee?

When the LORD blesses and protects His people, what do they become?

What invitation does God issue to the unfruitful?

7-11, what did God intend to accomplish by bondage and captivity and the suffering of His people?

How does God feel about people who lack understanding and why should He feel this way?

12-13, how would the LORD gather His people?

What would accompany the gathering?

What would the gathered do?

## Chapter 28

28:1-4

What was Ephraim (Israel, the northern tribes) wearing for headgear?

What was to happen to Ephraim's beauty and pride?

What social ill went along with the pride of Ephraim?

28:5-6

At the LORD's chosen time, what would be the new headgear for His people?

What all will the LORD be at that time?

In view of the LORD's various roles here, where do we fit in—what role(s) do we have in that day?

28:7-10

Was the abuse of intoxicating substances in Isaiah's day a problem? How can you tell?

What was the consequence of this widespread abuse?

Does substance abuse affect God's people and the proclamation of the gospel today? If yes, then how?

What does verse 10 describe and what did it have to do with the teaching and learning problem of the preceding verses?

28:11-13

What all would happen in fulfillment of this prophecy? (note I Cor. 14:21)

What had God offered but His people had not accepted?

What was the problem of the approach to the Word of God described in vv10,13?

How should we approach the Word of God?

What happens when people's perspective on the Word of God is all bits and pieces, not seeing the unity of theme and purpose?

28:14-15

What was the false security of Jerusalem?

Is there any modern equivalent of this "covenant with death"?

Does dishonesty ever make a good refuge?

28:16-22

Who is this prophecy about?

We understand the prophecy of the cornerstone in a positive way, as Christians (I Pet. 2:6), but what would it mean to those with false security?

What would the coming of Christ, even the promise of that coming, mean for those who rejected the LORD's message through Isaiah?

Why can't you hide from trouble in bed?

What kind of work was God planning to do? What do you suppose it was?

What happens to mockers, in Isaiah's time or ours?

28:23-29

Does a farmer just keep doing the same thing over and over? Why or why not?

What can we say about the LORD's plan and work (recall v.21) from these verses?

According to verse 29 what function does the process of farming, or the course of nature serve?

## Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

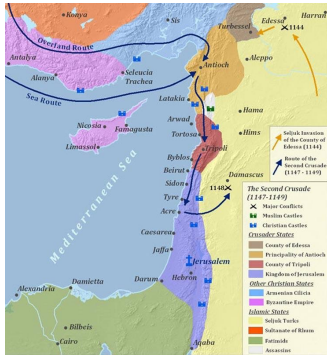
I can't believe I have to ask this question but where is Tyre and Sidon today and where was it back in that time?

## Comment:

Lebanon just north of Israel. On the Med. sea, I think David's friend sent cedars by sea down to David. Then they had to haul them over land to build David's palace.

## Comment:

Just looking at cities on this map, you'll see Jerusalem in the lower purple area, Caesarea on the coast. Continuing north along the coast we have Tyre and Sidon and Byblos. These three were major cities of ancient Phoenicia. Tyre and Sidon are in Lebanon today. North of Byblos is Antioch, and then east from there notice Aleppo, which is in northern Syria today, a scene of recent conflict, and south from Aleppo the city of Damascus, the ancient capitol of Aram, the modern capitol of Syria.



## Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Isa. 26:17 "we were in agony but we gave birth to wind." ;)

LuAnn Woody:

I can still hear in my mind Richard Riggins quoting "precept upon precept, line upon line; here a little, and there a little..."

## February 10 Isaiah 29-33 (Charles Fry)

Today's reading for February 10, 2017

Isaiah 29-33

29, Jerusalem's embarrassment and eventual cleansing.

30, the stubbornness that results in rejection, but still an outstretched offer of deliverance.

31, the futility of trusting man.

32, the coming righteous kingdom, the complacency of Judah's women.

33, the fearful reality of judgment.

### Chapter 29

29:1-8

Who or what is Ariel?

What was to happen to Ariel and why?

Would the enemies of Jerusalem always prevail? Why or why not?

Will the enemies of God's people ever satisfy their appetites for consumption and destruction?

Why or why not?

Where is Mt. Zion in God's thinking today? (See Hebrews 12:22ff)

29:9-12

Why were people failing to understand God's message to them?

Why do people today fail to understand God's message to them?

29:13-16

What was wrong with the "worship" of these people?

Does this ever happen now?

Who quoted from this passage and who was it applied to? (Matt. 15:7-9)

What was God yet going to do? (v.14) When was this? (1 Cor. 1:19)

What mistake were they making in their approach to life in general and religion in particular? (v. 16)

29:17-21

Were things going to stay as they were, or be changed? How?

In verse 9 those who "had it" threw it away, in verse 18 what happens?

What kind of people are pictured here as receiving and enjoying what God offers?

Who has no part in the promises of good things?

29:22-24

What does "redeem" mean, and what had God redeemed Abraham from?

When would Jacob be unashamed?  
Who would you like to see responding to God as in verse 23?  
From verse 24, who should we see as potential disciples?

Isaiah 30, the problem and the solution.

30:1-5, looking for help in the wrong place.

What are God's people thought of as?  
Of what value is an alliance that originates apart from God's Spirit?  
Of what value are plans that aren't God's plan?  
Who should God's people consult before taking action?  
Where was Judah looking for help?  
What was wrong with this?  
What value would this worldly alliance hold for God's people?  
What would the outcome of their alliance be?

30:6-7, Egypt's grandeur and emptiness.

What did it take to carry wealth into Egypt and win her favor?  
What value was there in winning Egypt's favor? Why?  
(note on "Rahab", v.7 in NIV and NKJV, "strength" in KJV, the word means insolence, boastful strength, pride. The word is used to describe Egypt as a monster.)

30:8-11, Israel avoiding reality.

What was Isaiah supposed to do and why?  
What was the character of the people Isaiah was talking to?  
In failing to hear Isaiah, whose instruction was rejected?  
What were these people looking for in religious leaders?  
Has this ever happened since?  
What is a true prophet or man of God supposed to do that they wanted to stop?

30:12-14, false security suddenly gone.

Who is speaking through Isaiah?  
What accompanied rejection of the message of God?  
What sort of structure had they built around themselves, and what would happen to it?  
What would remain of the wall of self-deception after reality broke through?  
If there is a lesson in this for today, what is it?

30:15-18, the offer, the answer, the way of God.

Where is God's answer found? What is it?  
Did Israel, or do people generally, like and accept this answer?  
What kind of answers do men, including Israel, often prefer?  
What is the outcome of this kind of ungodly, man-centered answer?  
How does the fate of being left a pole or banner on a mountain differ from Jesus encouragement that we are like a city set on a hill?  
How does the LORD feel about abandoning people to their fate?  
Is the LORD's role in dealing with rebels and backsliders active or passive?  
Where is the blessing found?

30:19-22, the outcome for those who wait on the LORD.

What happens when God hears His people's cry?  
How long does it take for God to respond?  
Was God here promising an end of hardship or something else? What?  
What would God's people who learned to wait on Him be separated from, willingly?

30:23-26, the blessings God had in mind for His people.

What sort of land did God want to give His people if they would cooperate?  
Has the LORD now bound up the bruises (v.26) or is this still ahead? Explain your thoughts.  
What might these promises mean to us, picture for us, if we wait on the LORD?

30:27-33, judgment for most.

What is coming?



How is He coming?  
Who or what is "the name of the LORD"?  
Where does His judgment seem to originate?  
How would the LORD's people feel about the judgment pictured here?  
Whether ancient historical events or the coming revelation of Christ, how does God end up dealing with most people and why?  
What kind of place is the destination of the object of God's wrath?  
What place like this is mentioned in the New Testament?

## Chapter 31

31:1-3, flesh or spirit?  
What was the mistake of going down to Egypt?  
How do people make similar mistakes today?  
Why would help that is "spirit" rather than "flesh" be better?  
What kind of help do we seek?  
31:4-5, a true deliverer.  
Who is the lion under consideration?  
Who can or cannot dissuade the Lord Almighty?  
Just where would the Lord do battle?  
Do you take these verses as an assurance or a warning? Explain...  
There seems to be a reference to the "Passover" in verse 5... in whom is the Passover fulfilled?  
31:6-9, Assyria's demise.  
What did the Lord intend to accomplish for those he called?  
Who claimed responsibility for the fall of Assyria, which wouldn't actually be complete until 612 B.C.?  
Where is the Lord's fire found? What does this mean to us?

## Chapter 32

32:1-8, the righteous king.  
When did a king begin to reign in righteousness, as Isaiah predicted?  
Does the king of righteousness rule alone?  
What do men become under the reign of the righteous king? (v.2)  
How does the description here differ from earlier descriptions of Isaiah's own time? (6:9-10)  
Once again, what does the Lord think of the selfish?  
How can one stand, if not by devising schemes?  
32:9-13, trouble soon.  
What was a problem among the women?  
What would soon shake the prevalent attitude?  
How soon would Isaiah's word be fulfilled?  
How should they be behaving, considering the true state of affairs?  
32:14-20, the source of deliverance.  
How long would the desolation of Israel last?  
When did this really change...or has it?  
What do you think these promises are really about? (note for example v.17 w/James 3:18)  
What are the Lord's people going to be completely separated from?

## Chapter 33

33:1, justice.  
In one sense, when does everyone stop destroying or betraying, and so receive justice?  
What do those who live by the sword die by? What has that to do with this verse?  
33:2-6, a psalm about real treasure.

What is the Lord to his people?  
What is the Lord to those not his?  
What is the problem of those things gained by force?  
What can you find in the presence of God, among his people?  
What makes the treasure available?  
33:7-9, apart from God.  
What happens in the absence of the fear of the Lord?  
33:10-23, how to stand the fire.  
When the Lord arises, what happens to the products of man?  
Who produces the fire that consumes mankind?  
Who is afraid of the fire?  
Who can withstand or escape the fire kindled by sinful man?  
How does such a person deal with evil and temptation?  
What will such a person see, and not see?  
In describing Zion, why does he mention ships that won't sail there?  
What do we call this Zion spoken of here?  
Who is (was) suffering from loose rigging and a shaky mast?  
What are some things that will be missing in Zion?

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

A lot of "Leonine" reference in this passage, and, "Ariel" of 29:1 and, "Zion" of 33:20 are the same; aka. Jerusalem

### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Charles Fry, for Isaiah posts these past weeks while John & Wade were away. Your wealth of knowledge is appreciated! Thanks for engaging everyday - it's a great encouragement.

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

Looking forward to a post in this Isaiah slot from Wade or John next week!

## **February 17 Isaiah 34-39 (John Morris)**

Reading for February 17, 2017

ISAIAH 34-39

Sorry for this being so late. It was already going to be an evening post, admittedly, but technical difficulties delayed it further.

Today's reading closes out the first section of Isaiah. Isaiah's organization parallels the Bible's — 66 chapters, divided into two parts of 39 and 27, respectively. The second part may have come late in Isaiah's life, and is noticeably different from the first. But Wade will get us started on that next week, God willing....

Chapters 34-35

These chapters constitute a single, distinct prophecy. It begins (chap. 34) with an assurance of future judgment on Israel's enemies—a general conclusion, of sorts, to all the denunciations

that have thus far accumulated: Syria and Samaria (chaps. 7-8), Assyria (chap. 10), Babylon (chaps. 13-14, 21), Moab (chap. 15-16), Damascus (chap. 17), Ethiopia (chap. 18), Egypt (chap. 19), and Tyre (chap. 23) (not an exhaustive list)—with special emphasis placed on Edom. The prophecy then turns its attention (chap. 35) to what would succeed that judgment, namely, the coming of Christ and His kingdom!

- 34:1-4 - The end of the national ‘powers that be’ (i.e. “the mountains,” “the host of heaven,” etc.) IS coming. In the sixth seal of Revelation, the Holy Spirit revisits the figurative language used here (Rev. 6:13-14).
- 34:5-7 – Along with the aforementioned nations, Edom will also not escape the judgment of God. God will make a sacrifice of them, as with Gog and Magog (Ezek. 39:17ff).
- 34:8-15 – More concerning Edom’s promised destruction. God, who alone can take vengeance, will do so “for the cause of Zion”—that is, because of Edom’s sins against Israel (e.g. Ps. 137:7). The nation’s ruin will be complete, its land becoming a waste, emptied of its people, and overrun by animals. Interestingly, there are 11 varieties of animals listed: (1) “pelican” (2) “porcupine” (3) “owl” (4) “raven” (5) “jackals” (6) “ostriches” (7) “wild beasts of the desert” (8) “wild goat” (9) “the night creature” (10) “arrow snake” (11) “hawks.” See Is. 13:19-22 for very similar predictions concerning Babylon.
- 34:16-17 – The predictions concerning Edom being overrun by animals WILL come to pass.

But the ruin and waste that will prevail in Edom are now figuratively set in striking contrast to the beauty and glory that will prevail in the coming kingdom of Christ.

- 35:1-2 – In the kingdom of Christ, even the desert will rejoice and blossom. The fabled beauty of Lebanon, Carmel, and Sharon are used as symbols of the glory and beauty of God’s blessings in Christ.
- 35:3-4 – These read as exhortations to those in the kingdom. One of the blessings we have in Christ is each other. We’re there to encourage one another to fight the good fight of faith and trust in the living God. The Hebrew writer quotes vs. 3 in making this very point (Heb. 12:12).
- 35:5-7 – More figurative language concerning the blessings of being in Christ, but also a likely allusion (vss. 5-6) to Jesus’ miracles which helped usher in the kingdom.
- 35:8-10 - “I know the Lord will make a way for me.” He’s made a “Highway” for us (compare 11:16), a clear path to life if we’ll walk in holiness. And though “this life is filled with sorrow and trouble here below,” in Christ, we are able to find joy even in our troubles, and comfort even in our griefs (vs. 10).

## Chapters 36-39

In these chapters, Isaiah inserts a narrative for which we can find parallel accounts in 2 Chron. 32 and 2 Kings 18:13-20:19. It details Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah, and his ultimate failure to capture Jerusalem, thus fulfilling prophecies uttered earlier in the book (Is. 8:7-8; 10:24-25). It also records for us Hezekiah’s “near death experience,” and events leading up to a new prophecy concerning Babylon’s future role as Judah’s judge. Below are a few highlights.

- 36:7 – A statement that has always stood out to me. True, some of those altars and high places that Hezekiah had destroyed probably WERE devoted to God. But they were not sanctioned by God. In this way, the Rabshakeh’s apparent flawed understanding of true

religion reminds me of how pure and undefiled religion continues to be misunderstood today. “Jesus said, ‘Judge not!’” “Christianity is a religion of love!” etc. Yes, but...

- 37:1-4 – I am moved by Hezekiah’s faith, his call for the prophet’s prayers, and his conviction that God was well able to silence the blasphemers. And, of course, God did. God rewards faith: “Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria...” (37:21ff).
- 37:36-37 – The demise of Sennacherib’s invasion force, and the end of his hopes of taking Jerusalem. Interestingly, Sennacherib’s own history of his invasion of Judah is available for us to read. It can be found on the Taylor prism, a six-sided clay prism, dated 704-681 BC, and inscribed in Assyrian cuneiform script. In the account, Sennacherib boasts of his victories over many cities in Judah (agreeing with the Biblical record), but must admit that, though he besieged Jerusalem, he never succeeded in taking it: “I made Hezekiah a prisoner in Jerusalem, like a bird in a cage” [but I couldn’t enter the cage! My addition. =) ].
- 38:7, 22- “And this is the sign....” “What is the sign....” Lots of signs in Isaiah. See chaps. 7, 19, 20, 37, 38, 55 and 66.
- 39:8 – At first reading, this might sound like a self-centered response, like Hezekiah caring only for the fact that trouble wouldn’t come in his times. But that would be misunderstanding him. Hezekiah knew from the law of Moses (Lev. 26:27-35), that if the nation were going to be carried away, it was because of continual sin, and therefore would be just and deserved (hence his statement in vs. 7, “The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!”). Secondly, he doesn’t just say that “At least there will be peace in my days,” but “At least there will be peace and TRUTH in my days.” Hezekiah was glad not only for the peace that would prevail during the remainder of his life, but for the reason for that peace—he would make sure God’s truth would continue to be honored. In light of these things, Hezekiah’s sentiments are noble and just.

## Comment:

Charles Fry:

I appreciate your thought on Hezekiah's attitude in 39:8. I've been rather more critical of Hezekiah's sentiment there. A number of translations render the passage "there will be peace and security" in my time. I've been inclined to view this visit from Isaiah as a rebuke, connected to the pride mentioned in 2 Chron 32:24-25, and to equate Hezekiah's thought with that of Eli in 1 Sam 3:18 (which wasn't the response God wanted from Eli). However, I see that the Septuagint translators understood Hezekiah's thought in the more positive way.

(NETS) 8 Then Hezekias said to Esaias, "The word of the Lord that he has spoken is good. Let there now be peace and righteousness in my days."

## February 24 Isaiah 40-44 (Wade Stanley)

I ran out of time to finish notes for Isaiah 40-44. Here's what I have. If you have questions about chapter 44, just ask below. Happy reading.

### Chapter 40

#### Verses 1-11: Messianic

- Verses 1-2: this message is intended to comfort Judah and Jerusalem following the Babylonian captivity (“For she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”)
- Verse 3: a forecast of John the Baptist

- Verses 3-5: exalted valleys, lowered hills, the crooked made straight are all metaphors that talk of the potential for reconciliation and justice from God through Jesus
- Verses 6-8: the passing nature of the world vs. the eternal nature of God's word
- Verses 9-11
  - "good tidings": Septuagint, "euaggelizo"; to declare or announce the good news (gospel)
  - Verse 10, "the Lord God": one of the numerous OT references to the divine nature of the Messiah
  - Verse 10, "His reward is with Him": compare with Revelation 22:12
  - Verse 11, "He will feed His flock like a shepherd": compare with John 10:1-4; 1 Peter 2:25 and 5:4

#### Verses 12-31: Magnifying the nature and virtues of God

- Verses 18-20: the first of many comparisons of the true and living God with idols
- Verse 22: helpful passage with apologetics
  - God "sits above the circle of the earth": an indication that the earth is not flat
  - "Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain": heavens are described this way a number of times in scripture; universe is expanding from a central point outward in every direction, or "stretching" if you will.
- Verses 27-31
  - Verse 27: Israel claims that God is unaware of what is happening to them and will not give them justice for the wrongs they have endured.
  - Verse 28: God has not fallen asleep; He knows what has happened to Israel.
  - Verses 29-31 are empowering: If we wait on the Lord, we will gain strength to endure.

### **Chapter 41**

#### Verses 1-7: A message to the Gentile nations

- Verse 1, "coastlands": descendants of Japheth (see Genesis 10:2-5); generally regarded as the nations that ring the Mediterranean Sea.
- Verse 2, "one from the east"
  - God has raised up a foe from the east
  - Assyria, Babylon, Medes, and Persians all come from the east
- Verses 5-7: The foes from the east threatened the Gentile nations of the Mediterranean, but they turned to their idols rather than repent.

#### Verses 8-16: Israel does not need to fear these foes

- Verses 8-9: God's help is predicated on his relationship with Abraham and His subsequent promises.
- "Fear not..": verses 10, 13, and 14
- Verse 10: God will be their strength -- remember 41:29-31
- Verse 14, "you worm Jacob": highlights the weakness and seeming insignificance of the Israelite nation
- Verse 15: "I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth"
  - "Mountains...and...hills": not to be understood literally; represents large and small nations
  - By God's power, Israel would grind her enemies into nothing

#### Verses 17-29: Israel is a spiritual wasteland

- At first glance, verses 17-21 appear to be literal, perhaps referring to a drought.
  - But why does God extend compassion to only the poor and needy?
  - Poor and needy: metaphor for those who are spiritually thirsting
  - God will satisfy the soul's longing, a theme that will be restated throughout the ensuing chapters.

- Verses 21-24: a challenge to the false gods
  - God is without counselor or instructor; He is the source of justice knowledge and understanding; He has revealed all from the very beginning (40:12-14, 21)
  - Can false gods (verses 22-23):
    - “Show the former things, what they were”?
    - “Declare to us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter”?
    - “Do good or do evil”?
  - Therefore, God concludes, “you are nothing, and your work is nothing” (verse 24)
- Verses 25-29, “I have raised up one from the north”: Babylon
  - Verse 26, “Who has declared from the beginning...”: in other words, who else has predicted the attack from Babylon?
  - Verse 28: the righteous are scarce among the children of Israel
  - Verse 29: recapitulation of verse 24; those who worship idols are as meaningless and worthless as the idols themselves.

## **Chapter 42**

### Verses 1-12: Messianic

- Verse 1: an important verse for Gentiles; one of a number of passages forecasting the inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom of the Messiah
- Verses 2-3: quoted in Matthew 12:16-20; a beautiful passage about the gentleness and lowliness of the Messiah
- Verse 4: He will not fail nor be discouraged
  - “Till He has established justice in the earth”: see 40:3-5; all crooked ways will be straightened; Jesus is God’s arbiter of justice
  - “The coastlands...”: another reference to the Gentile nations of the Mediterranean
- Verse 5: the description of God is the basis for the promise made in verses 6-7
- Verses 6-7: Promises the Father makes to the Messiah
  - “Give You as a covenant to the people”: the Messiah would be central figure in a covenant
  - Messiah was intended to open blind eyes and rescue prisoners
- Verse 9: compare with the challenge given to idols in 41:21
- Verses 10-12: those across the earth will praise God for what He accomplished through Jesus Christ

### Verses 13-25: God confronts the idols and the idolaters

- Verses 13-15: God has restrained His wrath for a time, but the moment for action quickly approaches
- Verses 16-22
  - The blind and deaf: those in Israel who have followed after idols
  - God will demonstrate the folly of idols; by the time of the Messiah, the Jews had purged idolatry
- Verse 19, “My servant”: not the servant at the beginning of the chapter but Israel (see 41:8)
- Verse 20: their sin has deceived and blinded Israel; they are unable to see their true condition
- Verse 22: idolatry has left Israel destitute, vulnerable, and captive
- Verses 23-25
  - Why was Israel left in the condition described in verse 22? For the sake of chastening
  - “Yet he did not know....Yet he did not take it to heart”: their hard-heartedness hindered the chastening of the Lord

## **Chapter 43**

### Verses 1-15: Words of comfort to Israel in the midst of the Babylonian captivity

- Verse 1

- In these chapters, God constantly brings us back to His role as Creator; here, He reminds Israel that He created humanity
- Another “fear not” -- compare with 41:10,13,14
- Verse 2
  - No calamities shall destroy the nation
  - “When you walk through the fire...”: literally fulfilled in the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (Daniel 3:21-26)
- Verse 4: God talks of His love for Israel and His willingness to do anything to preserve the nation.
- Verses 5-6
  - Another “fear not”
  - The captive Jews will be free to return to their homeland
- Verses 8-9: Can anyone among the nations make claims similar to God?
- Verses 10-13: God is unique and true and sovereign; it is His will to reclaim Israel and no nation can either stand in His way or carry out this task.
- Verses 14-15: God will redeem Israel from Babylon

Verses 16-28: God promises renewal but Israel’s treachery makes her unworthy of His mercy

- Verses 16-17: The promises that follow are predicated on these truths about God.
- Verses 18-21
  - God calls Israel to forget the past and look to a future of renewal
  - This seems to be Messianic
  - “Behold, I will do a new thing”
  - Building a road in the wilderness, bringing water to parched ground and to a parched people, and the whole of creation honoring God are all typical promises found in Messianic prophecies
- Verses 22-24: God offers hope to a people that have spurned His good graces
- Verses 25-28
  - God will forgive their transgressions if they repent
  - He challenges Judah to defend their conduct; but He sees no reason to stay His hand from punishing

**Chapter 44**

Verses 1-8: Messianic

- Verses 1-2
  - God entreats the descendants of Jacob to hear Him
  - “Jeshurun”: another name for Israel
  - “Jeshurun is a term of affection derived from the Hebrew verb יָשַׁר (yashar, "be upright")” (NET notes on Deuteronomy 32:15)
  - Also occurs in Deu 32:15; Deu 33:5; Deu 33:26.
- Verse 3-4
  - “Pour water on him who is thirsty”: God will satisfy the spiritual longings of man
  - Notice that water is poured and the Spirit is poured. This must be a reference to the Spirit’s role in the covenant of Christ (see John 7:37-39).
- Verse 5: under this covenant all would belong to the Lord, all could identify themselves with the house of Israel
- Verses 6-7: another proclamation of God’s uniqueness and sovereignty set forth as a challenge to the false gods worshipped by His people and their neighbors
- Verse 8: another “do not be afraid” because their God is a rock

Verses 9-22: the folly of idolatry exposed

- Verses 9-11: Idolaters are ignorant of their true state; if they understood, they would be ashamed.

- Verses 12-17: man worships gods made from the same materials over which they have dominion and that they use for utilitarian purposes.
- Verses 18-20: their deceived hearts prevent them from seeing the folly of their ways.

Verses 23-28: rejoicing in the true and living God

- Verse 25: sounds a lot like 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
- Verse 26: another promise to the future generations of captives who will see Jerusalem destroyed and Judah laid waste by the Babylonians
- Verse 28: it was Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, who released the first wave of captives to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (see 2 Chron 36:22-23, Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah)

Comment:  
Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade.

Comment:  
Charles Fry:  
Splendid content, thanks, Wade.  
I love the songs, "The Shepherd's Song" from 40:11 and the chorus of "Teach Me Lord to Wait" from 40:31.

The Maranatha Singers version of "The Shepherd's Song" can be found here:  
<http://worshipsong.com/songs/songdetails/shepherd-s-song>  
"Shepherd's Song"

Comment:  
Marc Hermon:  
Isaiah 44 is a scathing mockery of ludicrous idol worship.

Comment:  
Ginger Hermon:  
Wow! Thanks, Wade Stanley. Your notes were a tremendous help. I really like how you described Isaiah 40:29-31. It's Empowering: if we wait on the Lord we will gain strength to endure.

## **March 3 Isaiah 45-50 (John Morris)**

Reading for March 3, 2017  
ISAIAH 45-50

### **ISAIAH 45:1-13: CYRUS IS COMING**

• 1 – “to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut” – a prediction of how Cyrus would be able to conquer Babylon in 538 BC, some 150 years later. The Euphrates River ran through the city of Babylon, and was flanked by gated walls, allowing the people access to the River by day, barring would-be intruders from the city by night. The gates were left open the night of Cyrus’ sneak attack, and his men were not only able to walk under the outer walls through the drained riverbed of the Euphrates (which they had temporarily drained into a nearby lake), but were then able to march right into the city! All this is recorded by Herodotus, who also, interestingly, mentions the party that Belshazzar was having that night (Herodotus 1.191; Dan. 5:1-4).



- 2 – “I will break in pieces the gates of bronze” – the gates around the city, as well as those along the river, were of bronze (Herodotus 1.179-180).
- 3-4 – Three times God emphasizes that He called Cyrus by name. This ability to prophecy with specificity highlights God’s omniscience and ability to see the future.
- 8 – Compare to Hos. 10:12. A beautiful metaphor for the condition of the nation of Israel upon their return to the Promised Land, a return enabled by Cyrus (vs. 13).
- 13 – Cyrus’ command to allow the exiles to return and rebuild the city predicted (see 2 Chron. 26:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4)

#### ISAIAH 45:14-25: GOD ALONE SAVES

- 14 – After speaking of the return to Israel, the prophecy now seems to look forward to the coming of the Messianic kingdom, and its inclusion of the Gentiles (see notes on Is. 11:12-16)
- 18 – “I am the LORD, and there is no other.” For the sixth time in this section of the book God affirms that there is “no other” God. Altogether, He states this nine times in Isaiah (all found in chapters 44-46).
- 23 – “That to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath.” Language applied to Jesus in Phil. 2:10-11. Jesus IS God!

#### ISAIAH 46:1-13: GOD HAS REAL POWER. IDOLS HAVE NOTHING.

- 1 – “Bel” and “Nebo” were Babylonian/Chaldean deities: “BELshazzar” “NEBuchadnezzar.” These gods were powerless, and would not be able to save them from the coming Persians (vs. 11).
- 5-7 – More on the contrast between God and the idols.
- 11 – “a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country” – Just like Nebuchadnezzar had been described as an “eagle” by Jeremiah (49:22) and Ezekiel (17:3), so Cyrus is now described as a “bird of prey.” Nebuchadnezzar came to Judah “from the north” (Jer. 6:22); Cyrus will come to Babylon “from the east.”

#### ISAIAH 47:1-11: BABYLON WILL BE HUMBLLED

- 1-3 – Babylon is metaphorically depicted as a woman of royalty, accustomed to luxury, being called down from her throne to the dust and reduced to the lowest labor (“take the millstones and grind the meal”). Furthermore, she is exposed to embarrassment and shame.
- 6 – Babylon had been God’s chosen instrument to punish Judah, but Babylon had been excessive and merciless, even toward the elderly. Jeremiah lamented this fact (Lam. 5:12).
- 7-8 – “I shall be a lady forever.” “I am, and there is no one else besides me....” Sounds a little like Babylon’s greatest king (Dan. 4:30). Bob Dylan called it “the disease of conceit.” 1 Cor. 10:12- “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”
- 9 – “in a moment, in one day” (see Dan. 5:30-31)

- 10 – “Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you” – “Knowledge puffs up” (1 Cor. 8:1)

#### ISAIAH 47:12-15: THE OCCULT OFFERS NO HOPE

• 12-13 – “enchantments...sorceries...astrologers...stargazers...monthly prognosticators....” Sounds like the lists in Daniel (2:2, 48; 4:7; 5:7) of all those who Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar turned to for help. Ezekiel gives us additional information about how Nebuchadnezzar made decisions: “For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver” (Ezek. 21:21). God sarcastically encourages the Babylonians to make use of all this “help,” to see if it will save them from the judgment He has promised.

- 14-15 – They will not even be able to save themselves, much less you!

#### ISAIAH 48:1-8: FULFILLED PROPHECY SHOULD FOSTER FAITH IN ISRAEL

• 1-2 – Israel talked like they were faithful servants, but their devotion fell far short of their declarations.

• 3-5 – Because of the hardness of Israel’s heart, God had predicted events far in advance of their fulfillment, so that when the fulfillment came, the nation would know HE was at work in the affairs of men, not idols.

• 6a – You, Israel, have witnessed the undeniable fulfillment of My prophetic predictions. Will you not testify to this truth?

• 6b-8 – Still more future events are being revealed right now—that is, Cyrus’ coming and your subsequent deliverance from Babylon. Israel, you could not have known about any of this until just now, because: “The secret things belong to the LORD our God” (Deut. 29:29).

#### ISAIAH 48:9-22: ISRAEL SHALL RETURN

• 9 – It is not because of any merit on Israel’s part that God will spare them complete annihilation. He will spare them and bring them back for His name’s sake and His praise. And this is not self-seeking on His part. For the world to be saved, God’s glory must remain intact. God was merciful to Israel, so that the nations could see His compassion, and come to know Him.

• 10-11 – God also punished Israel with the captivity for His name’s sake. The captivity purged Israel of much of its wickedness and idolatry—wickedness and idolatry that was profaning His name.

• 14-15 – What God has promised concerning Cyrus will be accomplished.

• 18-19 – God laments the sins of Israel that forced Him to punish them with the captivity, and also the losses that came about as a result.

• 20-21 – But the return from Babylon will come to pass! Happy days are on the horizon! And just as God provided water for the nation when it wandered in the wilderness toward the Promised Land the first time, so God will supply all needs on this second migration back home.

• 22 – This statement almost leaps off the page. It seems to come out of nowhere, as it speaks to things so very different from what we’ve just been reading. Perhaps that is why it is there. We must ever keep in mind that God’s good things are only for those who serve Him.

#### ISAIAH 49:1-26: THE MESSIAH WILL BE A LIGHT TO ALL PEOPLE

- 1 – The chapter begins with Jesus speaking to the “coastlands,” the Gentile nations that surround the Mediterranean that Wade commented on last week (see his notes on 41:1).
- 6 – I love this verse! God said it was too small a thing for Jesus to save only Israel. God had BIGGER things in mind. We are thankful He did.
- 8 – Quoted by Paul in 2 Cor. 6:2
- 19-21 – The Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) will be too populous for the Promised Land!
- 23 – “Kings shall be your foster fathers....” Though the kingdom is made primarily of those not highly esteemed by the world (1 Cor. 1:26-29), some even among royalty will make Christ their king and His people their people (Rev. 21:24).
- 25-26 – This promise is sure. The nation WILL be delivered from captivity, and God will bring confusion on her enemies, both physical and spiritual. Even now, as the enemies of the church seem to be growing stronger and more numerous, we can have confidence that God will be the final victor and will share the victory with us (Zech. 14:3-5; Rev. 20:9-10).

#### ISAIAH 50:1-3: WHY THE JEWS WERE PUNISHED

- 1 – God depicts Himself as the husband of His people (comp. 54:5; Jer. 3:14), and states that He has divorced the nation. He also states that she is responsible for having sold herself into slavery.
- 2-3 – This has happened because the people did not respond to God when He called to them through the prophets. It has NOT happened because He lacked the power to deliver them. He is the maker of the earth and the heavens!

#### ISAIAH 50:4-11: THE MESSIAH SPEAKS

- 4 – Jesus’ words and wisdom are from God, and are for “him who is weary” (comp. Mt. 11:28- “you who are weary and burdened” (NIV)).
- 5 – Jesus obeyed the Father (Heb. 10:7).
- 6 – “I gave My back to those who struck Me” (Mt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15; Lk. 18:33; Jn. 19:1); “My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard” (the New Testament gives no additional detail about this); “I did not hide My face from shame and spitting” (Lk. 17:32).
- 10 – The one who walks in darkness should trust in the LORD who will give him light.
- 11 – The wicked kindle their own light, which pales in comparison to the light God gives, as sparks pale in comparison with the sun. “It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23), but many try anyway. For their stubborn refusal to trust in the LORD, the hand of the Messiah (our final judge, Mt. 25; 2 Cor. 5:10) will give them torment. These last two verses remind me of the closing of Psalm 2: “Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”

## Comment

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, John! Very helpful to me!

## Comment

Ginger Hermon:

Well, it only took me 3 months to miss a day. :- ( Got home last night & unfortunately my earth suit was too worn out for Friday's reading. Thankfully, through everyone's encouragement and a new day provided by God, I was able to catch up. So glad we have this group on FB. Helps to keep me accountable. John Morris - You are an excellent teacher! Thank you for assisting with our reading this week. What a blessing you are to the Kingdom! Really appreciated you pointing out this info: "I am the LORD, and there is no other." For the sixth time in this section of the book God affirms that there is "no other" God. Altogether, He states this nine times in Isaiah (all found in chapters 44-46). God Alone Saves!

## Replies:

John Morris:

What an encourager you are, Ginger Hermon. Thanks for that shot in the arm!

## March 10 Isaiah 51-55 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning everyone. Here are my notes from Isaiah 51-55. I think I have offered explanations for the more challenging passages. If I missed something, please let me know.

After starting chapter 53, I decided to not offer too many comments. This allowed me to complete the assignment for this week. I also know that chapter 53 is the most familiar passage in Isaiah.

Feel free to comment below if you so desire.

### Chapter 51

Verses 1-2: God reminds Israel of their humble beginnings

- This is a call to the faithful
- Remember your humble beginnings -- hewn from a rock, dug out of a hole
- God did not call an entire nation, He called Abraham alone

Verse 3: Isaiah promises comfort and renewal for the people of God.

Verses 4-8: Messianic

- Verses 4-5: elements of the gospel
  - Law proceeding from God
  - Justice will become a light
  - Righteousness is near
  - Salvation has gone forth
  - The coastlands (Gentiles) will wait upon the Lord
- Verse 6 is a definite allusion to the judgment of the world

- Verses 7-8: He tells the faithful to endure because their righteousness will outlast the wicked

Verses 9-11: Isaiah urges God to act

- Verse 9: he calls upon God to vanquish the enemies of Israel as He did in former times
- Verse 10: reference to the crossing of the Red Sea
- Verse 11: the joyful restoration of Jerusalem and Judah following captivity

Verses 12-16: God calls to His people to remember

- Verses 12-13: reminiscent of Matthew 10:28; their irrational fear of man has caused them to forget their Creator
- Verse 14: the captive will not remain in custody for long
- Verses 15-16: another reminder that God is Creator, that He has called them, that He will preserve them, that He has spoken to them through the prophets

Verses 17-20: Isaiah issues a “wake up call” to Jerusalem

- Verse 17, “drunk at the hand of the Lord”
  - God has permitted His people to embrace idolatry; consider
  - Isaiah compares their spiritual state with inebriation (see verses 21-22); compare with Deuteronomy 28:15, 28-29 and Psalm 60:3
- Verse 18: a total leadership vacuum
- Verse 19: Isaiah cannot comfort the guilty as they face destruction, famine, and sword

Verses 21-23: God calls out to the spiritually inebriated

- Verse 22: Jerusalem has reached its drink limit
- Verse 23: God will not abandon His people entirely
  - He will not excuse them from the consequences, but the consequences will not entirely destroy them.
  - The cup will be turned over to their adversaries who thought they would utterly destroy Israel; compare with Jeremiah 25:17-29 and Isaiah 49:25-26

Isaiah 52

Verses 1-2: Isaiah urges Jerusalem to repent and make herself ready for the coming of the Lord.

- Verse 1:
  - A time is coming when the adversary will not touch Jerusalem
  - Most likely applies to the spiritual Jerusalem, the city of the Messiah
  - “Put on your beautiful garments”: compare with Revelation 21:2
- Verse 2
  - Sitting in the dust emblematic of repentance
  - A call to joy and liberty

Verses 3-6: God bemoans the plight of His people

- Verse 3, “you shall be redeemed without money”
  - Most likely refers to their liberation from captivity
  - The passage has strong Messianic undertones as well; reminiscent of 1 Peter 1:18-19
- Verses 4-5: Israel’s sordid history is a litany of failed leadership
- Verse 6: God will do something for His people that will make His name known among them.

Verses 7-12: Isaiah rejoices in the salvation of God

- In this section, the intended audience is mixed.
  - Some parts are Messianic, some are intended for those in captivity.
  - However, the messages for the captives can be spiritually applied to those who live in the Messianic age.
- Verse 7: quoted by Paul in Romans 10:15

- We often quote Romans 10:17 to demonstrate that the word of God is the source of faith.
- In context, Paul is urging Christians to take the message of the gospel to Israel.
- Verse 8: those who see the messengers on the horizon will rejoice
- Verse 9: the good news of Jesus is the message of comfort to Zion
- Verse 10, “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God”: Matthew 28:19-20
- Verses 11-12: at face value, these verses seem to apply to the captives.
  - God urges Israel to depart from the midst of their captors and purify themselves from the taint of association with idolatry (compare to 48:20 as well as Jeremiah 50:8, 51:6, 51:45).
  - The return to Jerusalem was gradual
  - Reminiscent of 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, note especially verse 17
  - Also compare with Revelation 18:1-7

Verses 13-15: Messianic; God describes His Servant, Jesus

- The chapter break is deceiving; this section belongs with chapter 53.
- Verse 13, “Behold my servant”
  - The same servant described in 42:1
  - “...he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted”: points to the glorification of the Messiah upon His ascension to the right hand of God
  - Compare with Psalm 2:6-9 and 110:1-2
- Verse 14: foretells the physical abuse suffered by the Messiah at the hands of His persecutors; chapter 53 will expand this further
- Verse 15
  - “...sprinkle many nations”: see 1 Peter 1:2, Hebrews 10:22
  - “...for that which was not told them they see...”: see 1 Corinthians 2:6-9

#### Chapter 53

- Verse 1: a continuation of the thought in 52:15 concerning the kings of the earth.
- Verses 2-3: the humble origins and life of the Messiah
  - Verse 2, “like a root out of dry ground”: the line of descent from David to Jesus was no longer regarded
  - Verse 2 also talks about Jesus’s plain and common appearance
- Verse 3: the rejection, loneliness, and sorrow at the hands of man suffered by Jesus
- Verses 4-6: Jesus suffered and died for our sins
- Verses 7-9: the solitude and injustice suffered by Jesus in life and death
- Verses 10-12: His suffering was not in vain.

#### Chapter 54

It appears that the entire chapter is dedicated to the Messianic kingdom.

- In the middle of an extensive passage about the Messiah
  - Messianic elements in 52:7-12
  - Detailed descriptions of the Messiah, His mission, and His suffering in 52:13 - 53:12
  - The darkness of 53 is followed by rejoicing at the salvation accomplished by the Messiah in 54
- Paul quotes Isaiah 54:1 in Galatians 4:27 and says it applies to the covenant of Christ via the promise to Abraham and “his seed”

Verses 1-3: God calls His people to celebrate the renewal of His people and the expansion of His kingdom.

- Verse 1: compare with Galatians 4:21-31
  - “Children of the desolate”
    - The children of Sarah, the children of the freewoman, the children of promise, the children of Jerusalem above, Mt. Zion

- The church
- “Children of the married woman”
  - The children of Hagar, the children of the bondwoman, the children of slavery, the children of earthly Jerusalem, Mt. Sinai
  - Those who remain under the Old Covenant
- Verse 3, “your descendents will inherit the nations”
  - The universality of the Messianic kingdom
  - Compare with Isaiah 60:10-13 and 61:5-9

Verses 4-10: God has redeemed His people from reproach and He promises that His favor will endure.

- Verses 4-8
  - Applies to the Jews: God will redeem them from captivity and restore His relationship with them, culminating with the arrival of Jesus and the kingdom of God.
  - Applies to Gentiles: they would no longer be “strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”
- Verse 9, “the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth”
  - Affirms a worldwide, and not a localized, flood event in the days of Noah
  - If this is not true, then God’s promise of renewal in this passage is false
- Verse 10, “covenant of peace”: see Colossians 1:19-20 and Ephesians 2:14-18

Verses 11-17: A message to Jerusalem, Messianic

- Verses 11-12
  - “foundations...pinnacles...gates...walls” all point to Jerusalem
  - Not literal Jerusalem, but spiritual Jerusalem; compare with Revelation 21:10-21
- Verse 13,
  - “all your children”: the children of Jerusalem; see comments on verse 1
  - “taught by the Lord”: compare with another Messianic prophecy in 2:3 as well as John 6:45
- Verse 14
  - “In righteousness you shall be established”: compare with 2 Peter 3:13
  - No fear or terror: Hebrews 2:14-15, Hebrews 12:20-24
- Verses 15-17: Jerusalem above is protected from her enemies

Isaiah 55

Verses 1-5: the conclusion of an extensive stretch of Messianic prophecies

- Verses 1-2: compare with John 4:10-14, 6:26-33, 7:37-39
- Verse 3, “make with you an everlasting covenant...David”: clear reference to Jesus and covenant He would inaugurate
- Verse 5: another reference to the inclusion of the Gentiles

Verses 6-13: urging the captives to return to God

- Verses 6-7: now is the time for repentance; it will not last forever
- Verses 8-9: it is impossible for us to fathom the mind of God
- Verses 10-11: with an analogy, God illustrates how His word will accomplish its purpose; a great passage to bear in mind when we are sharing the gospel with others!
- Verses 12-13: the liberation of His people will be an occasion for great rejoicing

## **Comment:**

Steven Wright:  
Thanks Wade!

## Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Wade, in particular for the comparisons!

## Comment:

Marc Hermon:

It's amazing how much information was given about the coming Messiah so that people wouldn't miss him. Isa. 53:9 is one of my favorites. "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, (died with thieves) but given a grave with the rich in his death. (Joseph gave him his tomb).

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Wade, I cannot thank you enough for these notes. This is the first I've studied Isaiah all the way through so I am very blessed to have your & John's guidance. I am surprised Marc did not bring attention to Isaiah 53:7 (a favorite verse for us both) It's a great scripture to memorize & equip ourselves with when we are tempted. "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open His mouth." I really need to work on being silent before men, just as our Lord was.

## March 17 Isaiah 56-61 (John Morris)

Reading for March 17, 2017

ISAIAH 56-61

### CHAPTER 56

- 56:1-2: Salvation is approaching! Though this probably looks, in the short term, to the nation's deliverance from Babylon, it ultimately heralds the coming of "the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Mt. 6:33). And since all that is coming, the people should repent and live in obedience, putting themselves in a proper frame of mind to receive the blessings that are coming. This harmonizes with the stated purpose for John the Immerser's work (Lk. 1:16-17).
- 56:3-8: A figurative and very memorable description of the inclusiveness of the coming kingdom, also described as God's "house" (56:5)—in other words, His temple (comp. Eph. 2:21). Foreigners (Gentiles), who had no place among God's chosen people, and eunuchs, some of whom were excluded from the Jewish assembly (Deut. 23:1), are now welcomed, honored, and their worship accepted...provided they are obedient (comp. Ac. 10:35). Note that vs. 7 is quoted by Jesus during His second and final cleansing of the temple: "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves'" (Lk. 19:46).
- 56:9-12: A less pleasant part of this chapter. God calls the beasts of the field to come and devour the blind, ignorant, dumb, sleeping, lazy, greedy leaders of His people (comp. Jer. 12:9). Who are these devouring beasts? Likely, the Babylonians. And how will the leaders respond to this warning? Let's party! (vs. 12). Reminds me of Amos 6:3-7.

### CHAPTER 57

- 57:1-2: An amazing couple of verses. God calls attention to the fact that the righteous are dying. How, we are not told. Perhaps this is prophetic of the coming persecutions of



Manasseh (2 Kings 21:16), or it may speak instead (or also) of the righteous dying premature deaths in other ways. Whatever the case, there is a trend of the righteous dying prematurely, and God points out that no one is noticing this phenomenon! Through death, the righteous are escaping the present and coming evils (for the faithful, there are things worse than death), and the evil are not taking it to heart.

- 57:3-10: More on Judah's sins. Here an idol, there an idol, everywhere an idol, idol. They had objects of worship in groves of trees, in valleys, under the clefts of rocks, by streams, on mountaintops, even behind doors and doorposts. Additionally, Judah, in her harlotry, went to great lengths to seek help/favors from others nations (vs. 9), rather than trust in the living God ("even descended to Sheol" probably expresses how they sought far and wide for foreign aid). And though all this sinning resulted only in fatigue and futility, at no point did the nation ever see the hopelessness of it all, and sorrow for their sins.

- 57:11-13: The nation "lied" to God by breaking their promise to remain faithful to Him (Ex. 19:8). God asks, "Is it not because I have held My peace from of old that you do not fear Me?" (vs. 11). Reminds me of Eccl. 8:11. Vs. 13 is the clincher. The idols will ultimately just be dust in the wind. Those who trust in God will inherit His blessings.

- 57:14-19: An order is given to prepare a path by which God's purposes and His people can advance (vs. 14). God gives grace to the humble (vs. 15), and though He was rightfully angry at the sinful nation, He will not stay that way forever. The sin of the people is regarded by God as a sickness which He will heal (vs. 18), and what was lost will be restored (God's good favor, the land, the temple, the priesthood, the worship, etc.). By blessing them in this way, and thus prompting them to give thanks, He will "create the fruit of the lips" (comp. Heb. 13:15).

- 57:20-21: While the righteous enjoy peace, "the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest." Compare vs. 21 with Is. 48:22.

## CHAPTER 58

- 58:1: God commands Isaiah to make a proclamation concerning the people's sin.

- 58:2-12: The people gave the appearance of wanting to follow after God (vs. 2), engaging in fasting, but then wondered why God did not respect their prayer and fasting (vs. 3). The answer lay in the fact that their fasting was not accompanied by godly living. God tells them what kind of life should accompany a fast (vs. 6-10), and promises that He will guide and guard them when they so fast. Furthermore, "[t]hose from among you shall build the old waste places," etc. (vs. 12). God would bring a repentant portion of the people back from captivity to rebuild the temple, their homes, the wall, the streets. And their success in that work would not go unnoticed by those observing them (comp. Neh. 6:15-16). Might just add that when we repent, even if after years of destructive sinning, God enables the rebuilding of what was broken down. We can rebuild lives, marriages, relationships, character, even abilities. And this work of God in us will not go unnoticed (Mt. 5:16).

- 58:13-14: If they will put God first in their lives, He promises they will enjoy His blessings (Mt. 6:33).

## CHAPTER 59

- 59:1-8: Judah has become a land of rampant iniquity. The people hands are covered in blood, possibly alluding to child sacrifices (Ps. 106:38). They are liars, violent, unjust, and others whom they involve in their sin are destroyed ("They hatch vipers' and...he who eats of

their eggs dies” (vs. 5)). Their prayers are not heard by a holy God (vs. 2), and theirs is the lot of the wicked: “whoever takes that way shall not have peace” (comp. 48:22 and 57:21).

- 59:9-19: In vss. 9-11, we hear the people speak about their circumstances, the consequences of sin (note the transition from “they” in the preceding verses to “we” and “us” in these). In their condition of spiritual estrangement, the people seek to remedy their problems themselves, but without success. Like those who are blind, they grope for a wall to give them orientation, but are unable to find their footing. Like groaning, moaning animals, they bemoan their sad state. Hopelessness has set in. The days before the nation’s fall were dark and difficult, and fraught with disappointment. Without God, there was no one to save them! In vss. 12-15a, Isaiah and/or the people admit the reality of the nation’s sins, and in vss. 15b-21, God determines to intervene. God was displeased with what was happening not only inside the nation, but outside the nation, as well, among the Gentiles. Metaphorically dressing Himself in garments that should sound familiar to us (comp. vs. 17 with Eph. 6:17, 17 and 1 Thess. 5:8), God, thus prepared, will repay His enemies both inside and outside Judah, and His work of judgment will be so striking that His name will be glorified among peoples in the east and west (vs. 19).

- 59:20-21: Once again, after promising to punish His enemies, God promises to send the Messiah, the Redeemer. In vs. 21, the “you” is singular, so it seems God is speaking to the Messiah rather than the nation (the “them” of vs. 21). If correct, here God promises the Spirit to the Jesus (cf. 42:1; Mt. 3:16), that His words will be in Jesus’ mouth (cf. 50:4; Jn. 15:1), and that those words will not depart from the Jesus’ mouth, nor from the mouths of the His descendants. Who are the Jesus’ descendants? Christians! This is why Jesus is called the “Everlasting Father” (Is. 9:6), and why He called the disciples “little children” (Jn. 13:33), and promised them that He would not leave them orphans (Jn. 14:18).

## CHAPTER 60

Here begins what has been called the most optimistic portion of the book (chs. 60-62). After learning of the Redeemer’s coming (59:20), we now are informed about what wonderful changes He brings.

- 60:1-2: The feminine singular pronoun indicates God is speaking to Zion, His people. Their day has come. They are told to “arise” (perhaps indicating they are in a lowly place--sorrow and repentance), because the “light” and “glory” of God are about to shine down on them (which would include, among many other blessings, the forgiveness of sins!).

- 60:3-5a: The Gentiles are attracted to Zion (the church), which now shines the light of Christ into a dark world. Even kings are drawn to the truth. People from all over the world are flowing into the kingdom (comp. 2:2-3), and this causes those in the kingdom to beam with joy (vs. 5a).

- 60:5b-9: The wealth of the world is flowing into Zion. But not camels, dromedaries, silver, gold, incense, flocks, and rams, literally. Those coming into the kingdom are bringing their best—that is, what God requires. And they are figuratively laying it on the altar of God (vs. 7), offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God (1 Pet. 2:5).

- 60:10-14: Here the subject matter of the previous two sections is combined. Foreigners (Gentiles), former enemies of God’s people (vs. 14), will help in the construction of Zion (vs. 10), and the best that the Gentiles have to offer will be poured into the construction of God’s temple (vs. 11, 13). The gates of Zion will never be shut, so that the flow of new converts is never obstructed (vs. 11).

• 60:15-18: God promises His blessings to Zion, the church. Zion of old was forsaken and left desolate for a time, but that will never be true of the church. The new Zion will be an upgrade on every level when compared to its predecessor. Gold will replace bronze, silver will replace iron, bronze will replace wood, etc. This new covenant is a better covenant established on better promises (Heb. 8:6). In the church there is peace, safety, salvation, and praise (vs. 18).

• 60:19-22: The subject of light that started the chapter is revisited. These verses do not say that there will be no sun or moon, only that they will not serve as the sources of light in the new Zion. In the church, the LORD is the light. In these verses, especially, we begin to see what may be a blending of the blessings of the church on earth, which is a temporary colony of heaven, with the blessings of the future glorified church, the new Jerusalem (the two may have less distinction in God's mind than they in ours): "For the LORD will be to you an everlasting light" (vs. 20; Rev. 21:23); "And the days of your mourning shall be ended" (vs. 20; Rev. 21:4); "Also your people shall be righteous" (vs. 21; 2 Pet. 3:13).

## CHAPTER 61

• 61:1-3: Vss. 1-2a were read and proclaimed fulfilled by Jesus in Nazareth (Lk. 4:18-19).

• 61:4-7: More about the nature of the kingdom of the Messiah. As predicted in 58:12, the kingdom of God will typified by rebuilding what was before broken down. The restored (Christians) will be restorers (perhaps, Peter had some of this in mind in Ac. 3:21). Again, Gentiles are mentioned as having a place in the coming kingdom. God reveals, also, that members of the Messiah's kingdom will be priests (vs. 6) (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

• 61:8-9: For the 14th and final time, God begins a declaration with, "I, the LORD." God requires justice in those who serve Him, and He will bless those in the kingdom to such an extent that all will know that they are, in fact, "the posterity whom the LORD has blessed."

• 61:10-11: Here, perhaps, the church speaks in the first person. She is rejoicing, clothed in salvation and righteousness, certain that the LORD will cause righteousness and praise (to Him) to appear before the eyes of the world. The world is not righteous and does not praise God, but it witnesses both in the church. And if souls have eyes to see and ears to hear, they will be inspired to join the bride in both!

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

John Morris: Thank you - once again - for an excellent commentary on chapters from Isaiah. I really appreciate this verse: Isa 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." We are to put on the "Robes of Righteousness" in order to get ready for the coming of Jesus Christ. Rev. 19:7, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

## March 26 Isaiah 62-66 (Wade Stanley)

Isaiah 62-66

Good morning all. Next week, we begin the book of Jeremiah, a book that you should find quite relevant in our times. For the present, we finish with five glorious chapters from Isaiah. If you have been keeping up with the reading, you will see the familiar themes of repentance,

captivity, restoration, and the Messianic kingdom are recapitulated. You will also notice in these chapter some familiar phrasing for both heaven and hell.

Enjoy the reading!

#### Isaiah 62

Jerusalem would no longer suffer the ignominy of captivity and oppression at the hands of her enemies. The Lord will restore glory to Zion, an occasion which demands rejoicing and joy. The whole chapter is a promise of restoration that is ultimately fulfilled with the coming of Christ and the advent of His kingdom (aka Jerusalem and Zion) upon earth.

Verses 1-5: Jerusalem will one day shine as a beacon of righteousness to the nations of the Gentiles.

Verses 6-7: The watchmen of Jerusalem will not cease to declare God's good works.

Verses 8-9: Jerusalem will enjoy the harvest of God's blessings once again.

Verses 10-12: Jerusalem is to prepare for the approach of salvation from God.

#### Isaiah 63

Verses 1-6: Isaiah questions and the Lord answers

This passage certainly has Messianic undertones: God's judgment is depicted as a winepress is echoed in Revelation 14:18-20 (most likely a proleptic representation of the final judgment of mankind)

Also has relevance to the faithful Israelite who is suffering the consequences for the nation's long history of spiritual infidelity; God will execute vengeance on those who sought Israel's annihilation.

Verses 7-13: Isaiah and God recall Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

Notice the tenderness of God toward His people in these verses; juxtaposed with the fierce wrath expressed in the previous verses

Verse 10: rebellion grieves the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 4:30)

Verses 14-19: Isaiah intercedes for Israel, crying out for God's mercy

#### Isaiah 64

Verses 1-7: Isaiah contrasts the goodness and severity of God and mourns the spiritually destitute state of the nation.

Verses 8-12: Isaiah pleads again for God's mercy, anticipating the destruction and woes suffered by the future generation led into captivity.

#### Isaiah 65

Verses 1-7: God articulates his frustration with Israel

Verse 1 refers to the Gentiles (quoted in Romans 10:20); reminiscent of Hosea 1:10, Romans 9:24-26, 30

Verse 2 refers to Israel and is quoted by Paul in Romans 10:21

Israel has scorned the love of God with their never-ending idolatry

Verses 8-12: God will not utterly destroy the nation, but much of it will perish for their perpetual infidelity

Verses 13-25: Messianic; a vision of the blessings ushered in by the redeeming work of Jesus

Verses 13-14: "My servants" are representative of those who follow "My Servant" (42:1); God will satisfy every longing of those who follow after the Christ and will give them reason to rejoice

Verse 15: the name of Israel will no longer be unique to the biological descents of Abraham  
Compare with Romans 9:6

"Call His servants by another name": at Antioch they were first called Christians in Acts 11:26

Verse 17: compare with 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1

Verses 18-19: Jerusalem represents the heavenly city

Verses 20-25: Not to be taken literally; the Jerusalem to come will transcend death, sickness, transience, vanity, etc.; a place of bliss and peace where man dwells in communion with God

Isaiah 66

Verses 1-2: foreshadows the spiritual nature of the kingdom to come; man cannot build a dwelling place for God; He delights in the living sacrifice

Verses 3-5: those who have sown to the flesh will reap corruption

Verses 7-24: Messianic

Verses 7-11: Zion and Jerusalem are figurative of the church as it exists in both heaven and earth

Verses 12-17: the righteous will rejoice at salvation; wrath awaits the wicked

Verses 18-21: the righteous will be taken from among the nations to serve God in His temple (once again figurative of the church)

Verses 22-24: the kingdom to come will be eternal; the wicked will perish in everlasting fire

## Comments:

LuAnn Woody:

It is like a treasure hunt reading Isaiah. You see the little gems that pop up later in the New Testament. Thanks!

## Comments:

Steven Wright:

Thanks Wade!

## Comments:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Wade Stanley, John Morris & Charles Fry for leading our studies in Isaiah. I have a new-found appreciation for this book. Isaiah gives such strong proof that the Bible came from God. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies in Isaiah exactly.

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### March 31: Jeremiah 1-6 (John Morris)

Reading for March 31, 2017

JEREMIAH 1-6

#### INTRODUCTION

Just a few words of introduction. Isaiah, whose prophecies we just finished reading, began his ministry in the year of Uzziah's death (Is. 6:1) (739 BC). Jeremiah, however, began his ministry over a century later, in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (Jer. 1:2) (627 BC). Jeremiah may have prophesied for a time alongside Zephaniah during the reign of Josiah (Zeph. 1:1). Both addressed Judah and Jerusalem's persistent sins and the ultimate consequence of those sins — conquest and destruction at the hands of Babylon. Jeremiah was also contemporary with Ezekiel and Daniel, though they both did their prophesying on the other side of the Euphrates.

As opposed to Isaiah's frequent figurative imagery, Jeremiah tends more toward straightforward rebukes and calls to repentance. Several ideas and phrases are repeated throughout the book (sometimes more than ten times), and in general, the book is notably easier to understand upon first reading than much of Isaiah. Jeremiah prophesied in Judah until the eleventh year of Zedekiah (Jer. 1:3) (586 BC), at which time he saw Jerusalem fall for the third and final time to Babylon. He continued to prophesy afterward, however, even when forcibly removed by some of his own people to Egypt (Jer. 43:4-7). Faithful to the last, his last recorded sermons were delivered on foreign soil.

For this week, I'll just comment on a few verses throughout the first six chapters, and not try to summarize everything. Time is a bit more limited. Hope what's here can still be edifying.

#### CHAPTER 1

- 1:1: Jeremiah was a priest (hence a Levite and a descendant of Aaron), and may have been the son of the same Hilkiah who found the Book of the Law in the temple in the days of Josiah (2 Chron. 34:14ff). If so, he was a prophet-priest whose father was the high priest.
- 1:5-9: God had ordained before Jeremiah's birth that he would be a prophet. Jeremiah was young (estimates range from 8 to 25) when God called him to this, and felt unequal to the task, but God promised to empower and protect him. Jeremiah was to be "a prophet to the nations," speaking not only to Judah, but to many other nations, as well (evident later in the book).
- 1:11-12: "What do you see?" This question appears seven times in the Bible. Jeremiah saw an almond branch, emblematic of God's readiness to perform His word, since the almond tree blossoms early in the year, in January. The Jews called it "the wakeful tree," since it was the first to awake from winter slumber.

#### CHAPTER 2

- 2:2: “your youth” refers to the early years of the nation’s development, when God brought them out of Egypt (cf. Hos. 2:15).
- 2:3: “all that devour him will offend; disaster will come upon them” – during those days of their infancy, the nation enjoyed God’s divine protection; any nation that harmed them was harmed by God.
- 2:16: “Noph” (Memphis) and “Tahpanhes” were important cities in Egypt. Egypt would break Judah’s crown, fulfilled in the death of Josiah at the hands of Pharaoh Necho (2 Chron. 35:23-24), and perhaps also in the imprisonment (by Necho) of his successor, Jehoahaz, (2 Kings 23:31-33).
- 2:30: “your sword has devoured your prophets” – Jesus talked about this (Mt. 23:37).

### CHAPTER 3

- 3:1: Though the Law of Moses did not permit a divorced-remarried-divorced-again woman to return to her first husband (Deut. 24:1-4), God, who is rich in mercy, was willing to take Judah back if she would but return to Him. “Yet return to me” is the first of five pleas to “return” in this chapter (vss. 7, 12, 14, 22). The passage, of course, is based on the premise that God, the nation’s husband—just like Jesus is the betrothed husband of the church (2 Cor. 11:2)—had, in fact, divorced Judah, something affirmed more clearly in 3:8 (cf. Hos. 2:2).
- 3:3: “the showers have been withheld, and there has been no latter rain” (cf. Hag. 1:10-11).
- 3:11-13: God invites Israel to return, the northern ten tribes who had already been conquered and carried away captive by Assyria long ago (722 BC). Repentance is open to all, all the time.
- 3:14: “one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” If even the smallest number of those from among the captive northern tribes should repent, God will bring those few back to Zion. God is more interested in quality than quantity.
- 3:16: This is the last reference to the ark of the covenant in the Old Testament. It’s particularly noteworthy in light of the nature of the prophecy.
- 3:17-18: These predictions (and some might also include those in vss. 14-16) seem to be what we sometimes call a “dual prophecy.” They were somewhat filled in the Jews’ return to the Promised Land after 70 years of captivity, but were not FULL-filled until the church (e.g. “all the nations shall be gathered to it”). The idea of Judah and Israel coming together is a repeated theme in Old Testament Messianic prophecies (cf. Is. 11:12-13; Hos. 1:11; Zech. 10:6).

### CHAPTER 4

- 4:1-2: God continues to plead with those of the ten northern tribes to “return.”
- 4:3: God now turns his attention back to Judah and Jerusalem. “Break up your fallow ground” (cf. Hos. 10:12).
- 4:10: Jeremiah reveals his lack of understanding about how God’s past promises of peace to the nation can be reconciled with the coming pain and anguish. The expression, “the sword reaches to the heart” is indicative of that deeply felt pain. Simeon used a similar expression when speaking to Mary about how Jesus’ experiences would affect her: “yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also” (Lk. 2:35).

- 4:16: “watchers” – besiegers of the city. This interpretation agrees contextually with the following verse, and is also supported by the literal rendering of 2 Sam. 11:16 where Joab’s behavior while besieging a city is described: “And it came to pass, when Joab KEPT WATCH upon the city, that he assigned Uriah unto the place where he knew that valiant men were” (ASV). After all, what does a besieging army do but “watch” the city?
- 4:19: “I am pained in my heart!” Jeremiah experiences extreme anguish over what is coming to his people. He had already mentioned that the coming sorrow “reaches to the heart” (4:10).
- 4:22: God responds to Jeremiah’s pained words in vss. 19-21. The punishment is justified.
- 4:23-26: Jeremiah, satisfied by God’s stated justification, describes what he sees for Judah after the destruction: waste, instability, de-population, ruin.

## CHAPTER 5

- 5:1-2: God instructs Jeremiah to go throughout the streets of Jerusalem, searching for faithful people. What he finds will vindicate God’s decision to judge.
- 5:4-5: Jeremiah finds that the common people are exactly what God said they were, but supposes/hopes he’ll find things to be different among “the great men.” Instead, he finds they are just as bad: “these have altogether broken the yoke and burst the bonds” (cf. Ps. 2:2-3).
- 5:10: “Take away her branches, for they are not the LORD’s” (cf. Jn. 15:2a, 6).
- 5:13: “the prophets become wind” (cf. Job 6:26; 8:2; 16:3). The prophets are windbags.
- 5:31: “But what will you do in the end?” There is a high price to be paid for ignoring the real answers to the real questions of life. God’s rewards are for those who hear and heed.

## CHAPTER 6

- 6:3: The leaders of the besieging armies of Babylon are likened to shepherds with their flocks.
- 6:4-5: The Babylonians are depicted as planning a surprise attack at noon, a time when opposing armies usually rested. They are also shown planning a nocturnal, sneak attack, one designed to breach the walls, thus allowing them to get at Jerusalem’s palaces.
- 6:13-14: The prophets and the priests have spoken words of comfort to the people which have eased their minds, but it’s a false sense of security. The leaders’ lies don’t change the reality of the coming invasion.
- 6:16: This reminds me of Jesus’ words to Ephesus: “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the first works” (Rev. 2:5). Sometimes the secret to fixing the present is what we learned in the past. Hopefully, Ephesus chose to remember and reform, thus faring better than these Jews.
- 6:20: Judah was still going to great lengths to keep the external rituals of the Law. They were bringing “incense from Sheba,” which was 1,500 miles south of Jerusalem in SW Arabia, and “sweet cane [calamus] from a far country,” maybe India. Lots of trouble, but ultimately for nothing. Samuel’s words to Saul in 1 Sam. 15:22-23 apply here.



- 6:22-23: God describes the ruthless Babylonians to the people.
- 6:24-26: The people respond to God's words in anguish and fear.
- 6:27-30: God speaks more to Jeremiah about how the coming punishment is justified.

## Comments:

Charles Fry:

Jeremiah is indeed, in many ways, an easier read than Isaiah, with many snippets of personal story woven into the prophetic messages. Jeremiah, with his scribe and ally Baruch, is at that critical juncture where the kingdom of David ends in the Babylonian captivity, only to be recovered by the Messiah to come. Jeremiah and Baruch (introduced in chapter 32) appear to have had the final hand in composing the collected history of Judges, Samuel and Kings. (Note that the final chapter of Jeremiah is also the final chapter of Kings.)

Good introduction, John Morris, good insights and highlights!

## Comments:

Marc Hermon:

The 7 "What do you see?" questions in the Bible intrigued me so I started researching them. I won't list them because that will take the fun out of everyone else looking them up. I indeed did find 7 times where the Lord or Lord's representative asked this question and always to the Lord's prophet. I did however find an 8th time it was asked but it was definitely not asked by the Lord's representative and it definitely was not asked of the Lord's prophet.

Thanks, John Morris, for stirring the mind!

## Replies:

John Morris:

Marc Hermon: I'm terribly curious about the eighth. Did you use something other than the inspired NKJV? ;) Would like to know, though. Would a private message be a possibility?

Marc Hermon:

Admittedly, it is "What DID you see?" in the NKJV but is "What do you see?" in the other versions. I Samuel 28:13 (Saul and the witch of Endor)

Charles Fry:

Marc Hermon, for whatever it's worth, it is in fact different Hebrew verbage than the 7 John referenced. The tense is a "Qal Perfect" and in numerous other instances the same Hebrew verb and tense is rendered a past tense in the English (ie Genesis 7:1), but many translations put it as stated, "What do you see?" in the Samuel passage. "The king said to her, "Don't be afraid! What have you seen?" The woman replied to Saul, "I have seen one like a god coming up from the ground!" 1 Sam 28:13 NET

Marc Hermon:

I was just talking about this to Ginger. I think the translators must have thought that "What DO you see?" made more sense since it seems like she was having the vision right in front of him instead of it being in the past.

Charles Fry:

I think so. That scene is quite dramatic, and also puzzling to sort out just what was happening. Rather more happened, and different, and more disturbing than the medium expected, it seems. Translators make some difficult decisions trying to present.

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

So many fascinating points you brought to our attention, John Morris! Thank you!

## April 7: Jeremiah 7-11 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning everyone. Our study of Jeremiah continues today. Here are a few notes on chapters 7-11 for your convenience.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KPahGbLT7OLHLCDO40ntMZZ2HOGMgg5n-q7SZxIzHk/mobilebasic>

Jeremiah 7

Verses 1-7: God sends Jeremiah to the temple to urge the people to repentance

Verses 8-15: Judah's double-mindedness

- As a nation, Judah lives in perpetual immorality, worships false gods and yet believes God approves of their behavior.
- Shiloh was the dwelling place of the tabernacle for centuries.
  - Shiloh means "place of rest"
  - In a remote region of Ephraim
  - Tabernacle erected there in Joshua 18:1-10
  - Shiloh ceased to be the dwelling place of God when the Ark of the Covenant was used in the war with Philistia (see 1 Samuel 4)
  - The Lord uses Shiloh to illustrate what awaits Judah should she refuse to repent
- Jeremiah 26 expands this message and reports how Jeremiah was received.

Verses 16-20: Intercession is worthless; God will pour out His wrath because of Judah's hardness of heart

Verses 21-27: Judah has continually resisted the words of the prophets since the day she left Egypt

Verses 28-34: God will abandon His people

- They do not receive correction
- Truth cannot be found on anyone's lips
- They have resorted to sacrificing their children (Valley of the Son of Hinnom = Gehenna; more on child sacrifice in chapter 19)
- God has no choice but to punish Judah for her sins.

Jeremiah 8

Verses 1-3

Verses 4-7: Though it defies reason, Judah refused to heed the word of the Lord, thus her destiny is sealed.

Verses 8-13:

- The wise men of Judah claim that the nation is faithful while they reject the prophets, lie, covet, and console the nation with empty words of comfort.
- Verse 12: Judah's depravity is so deep that there is no shame for their sin

Verses 14-16: What the people of Judah will say among themselves as destruction is imminent.

Verses 17-19: God acknowledges the pain that this punishment will inflict; and yet the crimes of Judah do not permit Him to reconsider.

Verse 20: Judah will one day recognize that the Lord will not deliver them.

Verses 21-22: Jeremiah mourns for his people; this continues in chapter 9.

Jeremiah 9

Verses 1-2: The prophet's expression of deep sorrow continues from the end of chapter 8.

Verses 3-11

- God says that Judah is full of lies and liars; no one can be trusted; the land is full of treachery; for this, among other things, they will be punished.
- Verse 10: Jeremiah interjects another lamentation on behalf of his nation.
- Verse 11: God promises that Jerusalem will be laid waste; a dwelling place for wild animals with no human inhabitants

Verses 12-16

- Verse 12: Jeremiah searches for a fellow Jew who will understand what awaits Judah and will openly declare it along with him.
- Verses 13-16
  - God reiterates Judah's unwillingness to obey the law
  - Note verse 14, "they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts": a judgment oft repeated in Jeremiah
  - Bitter punishment and dispersion among the Gentiles await the people of Judah

Verses 17-21: God invites those women who are skilled at mourning to grieve over Judah and teach their daughters likewise.

Verses 22-26

- Verses 23-24 remind us that true riches, wisdom and might are found in understanding the Lord and His character
- Judah will suffer the same fate as the uncircumcised nations who have resisted Jehovah.

Jeremiah 10

Verses 1-17: This section echoes the follies of idolatry exposed in Isaiah 44.

- Verse 2, "do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven": it was common for pagan religions to seek guidance from the heavenly bodies
- Verse 5: there is no reason to fear or regard the gods of other cultures
- Verses 6-10: Jeremiah compares and contrasts idols with the true and living God.
- Verse 11: God, who made all things, will destroy the creation of man's hands.
- Verses 12-17: Jeremiah celebrates the magnificence of God, His awesome power, and the stupidity of worshipping idols

Verses 18-25

- Verse 18: God will cast His people from the land because of their idolatry.

- Verses 19-25: Jeremiah mourns for his people
  - Verse 21, “the shepherds have become dull-hearted”: prophets often refer to false prophets, priests, princes, and elders of the people shepherds; Judah’s leaders have failed her
  - Verse 23, “I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps”: a recapitulation of 9:14, “they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts”

Jeremiah 11

Verses 1-8: God urges Judah to return to the covenant quoted in verse 4 with which Jeremiah heartily agrees.

Verses 9-17: Further comments on the general state of Judah

- Verse 10: Judah has followed in the paths of her forefathers
- Verse 13: Idolatry is ubiquitous
- Verse 14: Jeremiah is again told not to intercede on Judah’s behalf
- Verse 16: What was once beautiful in the Lord’s eyes is now fit for destruction

Verses 18-23: Jeremiah has risked his life to proclaim these tidings to an obstinate and treacherous nation; evil men threaten his life; he trusts that God will preserve and deliver him

## Comments:

Charles Fry:

Good overview, Wade. Shiloh, and the Queen of Heaven, and the Valley of Ben Hinnom, and the problem of substituting religious ritual for obedience, lots of important themes highlighting what doesn't work. There is no substitute for obeying the message of "my servants the prophets."

## April 14: Jeremiah 12-16 (John Morris)

Reading for April 14, 2017

JEREMIAH 12-16

This portion of Jeremiah contains considerable back-and-forth between Jeremiah and God. Jeremiah is suffering, and has a lot on his mind. He makes inquiries, requests, observations, and God responds to all of them. Finally, however, in weakness, Jeremiah complains against God for not relieving him of his pain. Even prophets stumble. This transgression endangers Jeremiah’s future as a prophet, and God calls him to repent, promising him all the help he will need to fulfill his ministry.

This week, like two weeks ago, we’ll hit highlights, sometimes even highlights of highlights.

### CHAPTER 12

- 12:1-4: Jeremiah wants to know why God is allowing the wicked to prosper. He cites himself as one whom God knows is faithful, and calls for God to take vengeance on the wicked. The land is mourning (drought), the wildlife is dying, and all because of these people’s wickedness. And to add insult to injury, the wicked are sure that Jeremiah will never see the fulfillment of all his prophecies of doom. He’s a joke. They don’t take him seriously.

- 12:5: God answers in a way Jeremiah almost certainly didn't expect. Paraphrasing, "If this seems too much for you to bear, Jeremiah, what will you do when the future hardships come? There are greater trials coming your way. You've not seen the worst yet."

- 12:6: As an example of what He is talking about, God shares with Jeremiah that even his own family is not to be trusted anymore. They may be speaking kindly to his face, but behind his back they are against him. They have even enlisted the help of others to bring him down.

- 12:7-10: Note how God speaks of His people and their place: "the dearly beloved of My soul" (vs. 7); "My heritage" (vs. 8); "My vineyard," "My portion," and "My pleasant portion" (vs. 10). It wasn't because He didn't love them that God punished Judah. They forced His hand.

- 12:14-15: A promise to Judah's neighboring nations, as well as Judah. All are going to be taken captive, and exported to foreign soil. But God will also return them to their native lands in time to come (cf. 48:47; 49:6).

- 12:16: This may be Messianic. In the future, if the Gentiles will live by God's law, they will have a place in the midst of the Israel of God.

## CHAPTER 13

- 13:1-11: Pretty straightforward. God would occasionally have the prophets go to great lengths to learn or teach something (cf. 1 Kings 20:35-42; Is. 20:1-4; Hos. 1-3; Ezek. 4; 12:3-14; 24:15-24). From Jerusalem to the nearest point of the Euphrates would have been a journey of well over 300 miles. The Euphrates may have been selected due to its connection with Babylon, the nation's future home.

- 13:17: "My soul will weep in secret for your pride." Pride goes before destruction, and when Judah falls, Jeremiah will privately cry over what brought them down. Jeremiah is not called the weeping prophet without reason (cf. 9:1, 10; 14:17).

- 13:23: Though these words speak to the nation's propensities, and their predictable behavior, they are not to be understood as indicating that repentance is impossible for them. Four verses later, God still pleads with them...

- 13:27: Their sins are many, and the hole they've dug for themselves deep. But with God nothing will be impossible. God still holds out hope to them: "Will you still not be made clean?"

## CHAPTER 14

- 14:1-6: Discussion of the drought and consequent famine.

- 14:8: Jeremiah is distressed by God's unwillingness to deliver Judah from its present distress (drought, famine, etc.). He likens God to a non-Israelite and to a traveler who is only passing through the land. In other words, God seems to him to be acting like a disinterested bystander who has no vested interest in the people.

- 14:9: Jeremiah asks why God is acting like a man who is astonished to the point of being unable to act, or like a soldier who hasn't the strength to save. It's not that Jeremiah believes that God can't save, only that He seems to be behaving AS IF He can't save. Jeremiah is distraught and doesn't understand.

• 14:11: Three times in Jeremiah, God commands the prophet, “Do not pray for this people” (cf. 7:16; 11:14). The nation had long persisted in its willful rejection of God, had become worse even than the northern kingdom had been, and God had finally determined what the nation’s fate would be. Nationwide repentance might have moved God to relent from the disaster, but no longer would intercessions on behalf of this recalcitrant nation move the needle. Their sin was finally going to find them out.

• 14:12: God won’t hear, because it’s not sincere (cf. 12:2). God hates empty ritualism.

## CHAPTER 15

• 15:4: What did Manasseh do? See 2 Kings 21; 2 Chron. 33:1-9

• 15:10: Jeremiah’s anguish over his own circumstances (particularly, the persecution he was enduring (cf. 15:15)) prompted him to wish he’d never been born. Job felt the same way at one point (Job 3).

• 15:11-12: God reassures Jeremiah with three promises: (1) “it will be well with your remnant” (NASB- “I will set you free for purposes of good” (ESV & NIV read similarly))- in other words, these trials will not last forever; (2) “I will cause the enemy to intercede with you”- in time, Jeremiah’s enemies would actually turn to him for help (cf. 21:1-2; 37:3; 42:1-3); (3) “Can anyone break iron, the northern iron and the bronze?”- the iron from the north (region of the Black Sea) was the best iron going, and bronze was one of the strongest metals known to them at the time. God had made Jeremiah like iron and bronze (1:18-19), and his enemies would not be able to break him.

• 15:18: Jeremiah lets his pain get the best of him, and after citing his faithfulness (vs. 16-17), complains against God for letting him be run through the ringer when he’s been a good boy. He even suggests that God has been unreliable and deceptive, not delivering him from trouble when He said He would. Like Job before him, Jeremiah (as my grandpa used to say) let himself get “a little big for his britches.”

• 15:19-20: God calls Jeremiah to repent of this attitude and these accusations. He tells him to keep the good that is in his heart, get rid of the bad, and upon doing so, he’ll be able to resume his role as prophet. But he mustn’t let his detractors drag him down. Let them change their minds and come to you, Jeremiah, not the other way around! And, again, God promises that He WILL strengthen and deliver him.

## CHAPTER 16

• 16:1-4: Reminiscent of Jesus’ words to those in Jerusalem (Mt. 24:19), and Paul’s to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 7:26).

• 16:14-15: Once again, after pronouncing terrible judgments, God reminds them that hope is on the horizon. Yes, there will be a captivity, but there will also be a return!

• 16:19-21: May be speaking to the Gentiles coming to the LORD under the New Covenant, or may just be speaking of how Gentiles would grow disenchanting with idolatry, and begin to look to the God of the Jews even before Christ came. This did occur (the temple in Jesus’ day had a court of the Gentiles, and remember Jn. 12:20). This phenomenon may have been predicted in Zech. 8:22-23.

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, John! Your notes are incredibly helpful. Prophecy is a subject I am least versed in so your knowledge gives excellent guidance as I study these passages. Thank you - and to all the brethren- for efforts in leading these daily readings.

## Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, John!

## Comment:

Yvonna Hartman:

I agree with Ginger. Really appreciate the good notes. I appreciate your work very much.

## April 21: Jeremiah 17-21 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning all. Please find the link to notes on Jeremiah 17-21 below. Happy reading!

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/13qSG9VmMOHvrCxnci-XPsjb37qMGEP5JYB2IPyMzkql/mobilebasic>

Jeremiah 17

Verses 1-4: Judah will go into captivity for her idolatry.

- Verse 1: A writing implement made of the strongest known metal tipped with the hardest of all rocks has imprinted the sins of Judah; their conscience and the altar of God testify against them.
- Verses 2-3: Describes the wide-ranging proliferation of idolatry.

Verses 5-8

- Verses 5-6: An inverted echo of Psalm 1.
- Verses 7-8: An echo of Psalm 1

Verses 9-13:

- Jeremiah refers to the deceitfulness of man's heart
  - The numerous statements about the heart show us that the Judah of Jeremiah's day was led by its feelings rather than sound reason and judgment.
  - Because our hearts are untrustworthy, we need an objective guide.
  - The Lord can help us know our heart.
- Verse 11: Idolatry, though a huge problem, is not the factor leading to the nation's demise: ill-gotten wealth has also plagued the nation.
- Verse 13: Jeremiah reiterates that the wicked will come to nothing

Verses 14-18: Jeremiah pleads for God to remember that he is faithful servant who is surrounded by enemies.

Verses 19-27: Jeremiah told to preach at the People's Gate

- The people's gate is probably the east gate of the temple grounds
- Jeremiah is sent to urge the people to faithfully keep the Sabbath

Jeremiah 18

Verses 1-10: Like the potter with the clay, God exercises sovereign power over the nations of the world.

Verses 11-12: God offers Judah an opportunity to repent and avoid the impending destruction; they respond with defeat and continue following their hearts.

Verses 13-17:

- Verse 14: Why does Judah forsake the very best of what God offers?
- Verse 15
  - “Ancient paths”: the paths of righteousness blazed by their forefathers who followed after God.
  - “To walk in pathways and not on a highway”: pathways are crooked and change elevation; a highway is straight and flat
- Verse 16: God will make an example of Judah to her neighbors

Verses 18-23: For his unpopular message, Jeremiah becomes a target for persecution; he prays for God to deliver him from his enemies

Jeremiah 19

Verses 1-2: Jeremiah is sent to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom

- Location is also mentioned in 7:31-32
  - “Son of Hinnom”: Heb., Ben-Himmon; Gr., Gehenna
  - Same valley Jesus uses as an analogy for hell (e.g. Mark 10:43-48)
  - Valley on the west and south side of Jerusalem
  - Also known as “Topheth” (verse 6): means, “place of fire”
- The precise location of the Potsherd Gate is unknown; likely where the potters disposed of the broken pieces of pottery

Verses 3-9: God curses the valley and Jerusalem

- Jews were worshipping Molech (aka Milcom), an Ammonite god, in the valley
  - The Israelites are first warned against the worship of this god in Leviticus 18:21, “And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech....”
  - Again he warns in Leviticus 20:2 “ 'Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones.' ”
  - Apparently, the worship of this god was first introduced by Solomon in 1 Kings 11:7, “Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon.”
  - In Jeremiah 32:35, God laments Israel's unfaithfulness with these words, “And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.”
  - Led by King Josiah, Judah destroyed the places of Molech worship in 2 Kings 23:10, “And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech.”
  - Yet, as we will see, Josiah's reforms were short lived – the worship of Molech did return to Gehenna following Josiah's death.
- While all idolatry is a grievous affront, the worship of Molech was a particularly despicable set of actions.
  - The image itself consisted of a hollow brass figure fashioned into a man's body with outstretched arms and a bull's head topped by a royal crown.
  - The priest would kindle a fire within the image until it glowed red hot.
  - Once heated, the worshiper would place their baby or small child on the outstretched arms as a sacrifice to Molech.



- As the baby screamed in agony, musicians nearby would beat drums and play flutes hoping to drown out the noise and lessen the pain for the parent.
- These unspeakable abominations took place in Gehenna.

Verses 10-15: After God compares his sovereignty with the potter in chapter 18, he sends Jeremiah to the valley where marred and broken vessels are cast, thus symbolizing God casting his people to destruction for their sins.

Jeremiah 20

Verses 1-2: Jeremiah is imprisoned for his message of repentance and impending destruction.

Verses 3-6: God will avenge Jeremiah's wrongful imprisonment at the hands of Pashhur (who He names Magor-Missabib, "terror is everywhere").

Verses 7-10: In a prayer, Jeremiah recounts the pressures he has faced for preaching such an unpopular message

- Verses 7-8: Jeremiah was openly mocked
- Verse 9: He tried to suppress the word of God, but could not hold it back.
- Verse 10: Jeremiah's own words were used as a weapon against him; even his friends sought for an occasion to harm him

Verses 11-13: Jeremiah follows his words of despair with words of faith, trust and confidence that the Lord will not forget his sacrifices

Verses 14-18: Like Job, Jeremiah has reached a point of real depression where he wishes he had not been born

**Note:** The chapters of Jeremiah are not in chronological order. If we were studying this book in the order the events took place, we would jump from 20:18 to chapter 25.

Jeremiah 21

**Note:** Chapters 21-29 foretell the judgement of Judah and her neighbors that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon carried out on God's behalf.

Verses 1-2: King Zedekiah is the final king of Judah before the Babylonian captivity; Judah is a vassal state whose rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar has provoked this final conflict (see 2 Chronicles 36:11-14).

Verses 3-10: God urges Jerusalem to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar because the Babylonians are carrying out God's judgment; those who refuse to leave Jerusalem will die in a horrific manner; those who surrender and defect will live.

Verses 11-14: The house of David will not escape the judgment of God for its failure to lead the people in paths of righteousness

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

Thanks for the great outline brother!

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Wade!

## Comment:

Charles Fry:

God both tells us the condition of our hearts and offers a solution to our heart problem.

When we visited Israel several years ago I wanted to know where the Valley of Ben Hinnom was in our ramblings. The area the guide identified as the old valley was substantially filled in, not much declivity anymore. It was green and mown, a sports park, and there were youths playing soccer there as we drove by.

## Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

So thankful it's not used as the area for "unspeakable abominations" any longer. I can't even imagine witnessing the worship of Molech. It's not surprising Jesus uses the valley as an analogy for hell. Mike Warner spoke on hell this Sunday morning @ Pleasant Hill and referred to this passage.

## April 28: Jeremiah 22-26 (John Morris)

Prophecy: April 28, 2017

JEREMIAH 22-26

### CHAPTER 22

This chapter contains prophecies that were uttered before those in chapter 21. As we encounter elsewhere in the prophets, Jeremiah's oracles are not always organized chronologically. Chapter 21 began with a word to Judah's last king, Zedekiah. Chapter 22 will concern itself with his three predecessors: Jehoahaz (Shallum) (22:11), Jehoiakim (22:18), and Jehoiachin (22:24).

- 22:1-5: The "king of Judah" is probably Jehoiakim. Zedekiah was told in the previous chapter that all hope of deliverance from Babylon was gone. In these verses, however, God holds out hope to the king, indicating a previous monarch. Additionally, vss. 11-12 indicate that Jehoahaz will not return from his captivity in a foreign land. Jehoahaz was Jehoiakim's immediate predecessor, but had been deposed and carried off to Egypt by Pharaoh Necho, who then replaced him with Jehoiakim (2 Chron. 36:2-4). The question of Jehoahaz's possible return and resumption of power was likely on the minds of the people during Jehoiakim's reign. Note, by the way, how God swears by Himself in vs. 5. He did this, occasionally, "because He could swear by no one greater" (Heb. 6:13).

- 22:6-7: Gilead and Lebanon were both noted in antiquity for the grandeur of their forests, Lebanon for its cedars, particularly. God was going to bring down the royal house and the nation, figuratively making the lush forest "a wilderness." This prediction—"You are...the head of Lebanon...they shall cut down your choice cedars"—may also be connected to vss. 14-15a. Jehoiakim's royal residence (new and/or remodeled) was paneled with cedar, the height of luxury (cf. 1 Kings 6:9; 7:3, 7; Hag. 1:4). This palace was going down with the nation. "O inhabitant of Lebanon, making your nest in the cedars, how gracious will you be when pangs come upon you, like the pain of a woman in labor?" (vs. 23).

- 22:18-19: Jehoiakim's death would not be lamented by the people, as was his father's (2 Chron. 35:25). Nor would he receive the customary burial of a king. Instead, his body would

be dragged outside the city, and left to the elements and the wildlife. We have no record of the fulfillment of this prophecy. Significantly, however, Kings and Chronicles make no mention of a burial for Jehoiakim.

- 22:24-30: After Jehoiakim's death, his son Jehoiachin (Coniah) came to power. He was a carbon copy of his father (2 Kings 24:9), and his end would be equally disastrous.

## CHAPTER 23

- 23:3-4: Speaking of the return after the captivity, and the superior shepherds God gave the people (e.g. Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah), but may also look to the Messianic kingdom in which God has given His people good shepherds (pastors/elders).

- 23:5-6: Unquestionably Messianic. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, "the Branch" (cf. Is. 11:1; Zech. 6:12) is coming.

Beginning in vs. 9, the false prophets become the theme for the rest of the chapter.

- 23:9-10: Jeremiah is emotionally twisted in knots over the false prophets, God's pronouncements on the nation, the sins of the people, and the physical consequences ("the land mourns"—drought) already being endured because of these things.

- 23:15: God had pronounced the same judgment on the people (cf. 9:15). Ironically, these prophets, who made their living from what came out of their mouths, were going to perish by what goes into their mouths...figuratively speaking, of course.

- 23:20: See 30:24 for same sentiment. The expression "latter days" refers to the time of final fulfillment of any given prophecy, not always to the final "last/latter days." Here, it seems to refer to the long-predicted conquest by Babylon. When the Jews finally endured their punishment, some would come to see, as a result, how foolish they had been; they would be able to look at God's judgment and "understand it perfectly." Proper punishment is good for the soul.

- 23:23-24: cf. Prov. 15:3

- 23:30-32: Three times the triune God says, "I am against" the false prophets.

## CHAPTER 24

This chapter constitutes a single, self-contained prophecy. It came "after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) the son of Jehoiakim"—that is, sometime after the second "carrying away (597 BC). The people of Judah are likened to "two baskets of summer figs" (see Amos 8 where God employs "summer fruit" in a vision about Israel), some very good, and some really rotten. The good represent those already carried away into Babylon. From among them, a remnant would return and enjoy a physical and spiritual revival in the Promised Land. The bad represent the remainder of the nation. Bad days are coming for them (586 BC). They will reap the rewards of their stubborn rebellion.

## CHAPTER 25

- 25:1: "fourth year of Jehoiakim" (605 BC). This year was very significant. Egypt and Babylon had been vying for supremacy, and in this year, Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish, thus establishing Babylon as the unquestioned world power in the Middle East. Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem for the first time not long after this historic victory.

- 25:11: First of three references in Jeremiah to the 70 years of captivity (cf. 25:12; 29:10).
- 25:15: It appears that we here begin to read about a vision Jeremiah had. He is told to take “this wine cup of fury” from the hand of God (which he does in vs. 17) to many nations and cause them to drink it. This is a familiar symbol in prophecy (Is. 51:17, 22; Rev. 16:19). One source comments on this: “Some relate it to the practice recorded in Numbers 5:11-31 where a woman suspected of adultery was required to drink a loathsome potion with disastrous results to her if she were guilty. Others suggest that the figure may go back to the practice of giving those who were marked for execution some brew to tranquilize them and render them incapable of struggle.” Whatever the case, all the nations listed in vss. 18-26 were being forewarned by Jeremiah that they would feel the fury of Almighty God.
- 25:30: “The LORD will roar” (cf. Amos 1:2)
- 25:31: “the LORD...will plead His case” (cf. Hos. 4:1)
- 25:38: “He has left His lair like the lion...” This is a frightening thought, to have God characterized in this way. “It is fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31).

## CHAPTER 26

Pretty straightforward narrative in this chapter.

- 26:1, 3: See comments on 22:1-5. In Jehoiakim’s day, God was still willing to relent concerning the Babylonian captivity. If we will repent, God will relent.
- 26:6: “like Shiloh....” Shiloh had been made the home of the tabernacle in Joshua’s day, and was home to the ark of the covenant, until Samuel’s day. Nevertheless, because of Israel’s wickedness, God had allowed the ark to be taken by the Philistines, and apparently, the tabernacle taken or destroyed (when the ark was returned, it never went back to the tabernacle). God destroyed His house once before, and was willing to do so again.
- 26:18: Jeremiah’s prophetic word confirmed!
- 26:24: Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, was a man of considerable influence. He is mentioned repeatedly in 2 Chronicles, 2 Kings, and Jeremiah. He protected Jeremiah from what the princes, people, priests, and (false) prophets would otherwise have done to him (vs. 16).

## Comment:

Charles Fry:

Good stuff, thank you, John!

I like the fact that several individuals named in Jeremiah have also turned up as names and titles on clay bulla (the bit of clay an official seal was pressed into as a signature), including Ahikam son of Shaphan. See the bit from The Archaeological Study Bible on 2 Kings 22:13 below.

(Arch SB) "The discovery of the Book of the Law caused great consternation on the part of King Josiah, who sent a delegation of five officials to Huldah the prophetess to “inquire of the Lord” (2Ki 22:13): Hilkiyah, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan and Asaiah. The names of four of the delegation members have been found on four seals and three bullaediscovered in Israel:

Hilkiah was the high priest who discovered the scroll of the law (v. 8). His name appears on a seal and a bulla of his son Azariah, who was also a priest and the grandfather of Ezra (1Ch 6:13-14; 9:11; Ezr 7:1). Hilkiah's name also appears on a seal of another son named Hanan. "Another bulla reads "Ahikam son of Shaphan," as in 2 Kings 22:12. No doubt Ahikam was a scribe like his father, who read the scroll of the law to Josiah (v. 10). It was Ahikam who later saved Jeremiah from death at the hands of the priests, prophets and people following the prophet's temple sermon (Jer 26:24). The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar appointed Ahikam's son Gedaliah governor of Judah after the fall of Jerusalem (2Ki 25:22). Fingerprints visible on the edge of the bulla are almost certainly those of Ahikam himself."

### Replies:

John Morris:

Didn't know we had any bullae besides the one of Baruch's that had fingerprints. Very cool.

### Comment:

Charles Fry:

Elnathan, the official who brought back the prophet Uriah from Egypt, is one of several intriguing characters in Jeremiah's story.

<http://www.livwat.com/articles/10053.html>

### Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, John!

## May 5: Jeremiah 27-31 (Wade Stanley)

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vtmReQTMrFwKtsC-W2N\\_qLBJUZxbd\\_Q5ySiPrSnJRZE/mobilebasic](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vtmReQTMrFwKtsC-W2N_qLBJUZxbd_Q5ySiPrSnJRZE/mobilebasic)

Jeremiah 27

Verses 1-11: God urges the nations that surround Judah to subjugate themselves to Nebuchadnezzar, God's chosen vessel to execute judgment.

Verses 12-15: God rebukes Zedekiah for listening to the false prophets who are encouraging rebellion against Babylon.

Verses 16-18: God rebukes the priests and the public for believing the false prophets' testimony.

Verse 19-22: God assures the nation that, contrary to the message of the false prophets, the temple will be sacked and its contents carried to Jerusalem until the days of Judah's punishment are fulfilled.

Jeremiah 28

Verses 1-4: Hananiah is identified as one of the false prophets who is promising that the house of the Lord will soon be restored and Jeconiah and the captive Jews will be returned to Judah.

Verses 5-9: Jeremiah confronts Hananiah and says a fulfillment of a prophecy attests to the origin of the prophet's message.

Verses 10-17: Undeterred by Jeremiah, Hananiah breaks the yokes worn by God's prophet and proclaims that Judah will enjoy peace; God reiterates His message and curses Hananiah to his death.

#### Jeremiah 29

Verses 1-4: This chapter contains a letter from Jeremiah to those captive Jews in Babylon.

Verses 5-9: God warns the people about the false prophets who promise a quick exit from Babylon; He encourages the people to settle in Babylon and resume the activities of daily living.

Verses 10-14: At the conclusion of the seventy years, if the captives will pray to God, He will hear them and restore them (see Daniel 9).

Verses 15-20: Those Jews who remain in Jerusalem who are contemplating rebellion will suffer for their lack of submission to God.

Verses 21-23: God condemns two false prophets by name.

Verses 24-32: God rebukes one of the priests in Babylon who has not imprisoned the false prophets circulating among the captives and has encouraged sedition.

#### Jeremiah 30

Verses 1-4: Jeremiah begins a book addressed to those who would return from captivity in the distant future.

Verses 5-11: A day approaches when God will judge those who held Judah captive and liberate a remnant of His people. Verse 9 is Messianic.

Verses 12-17: The chastening of God is the only cure for what has ailed the nation of Judah; those enemies who have sought their destruction will be destroyed.

Verses 18-24: God will reconstitute the nation and restore His relationship with this future generation.

#### Jeremiah 31

Verses 1-6: God expresses His deep love for Judah and His desire for their restoration.

Verses 7-14: Judah's restoration shall be an occasion for great rejoicing.

Verses 15-26: God will hear the tears of anguish and will respond with mercy; He urges the nation to repentance and promises to fully satisfy their longing hearts.

Verses 27-30: A parable circulated among the contemporary Jews, blaming their captivity on the actions of their forefathers; God will demonstrate that the parable is utterly false.

Verses 31-34: A promise of the new covenant; quoted by the writer of Hebrews in chapter 8.

Verses 35-37: The promises of God are sure.

Verses 38-40: A promise that Jerusalem will one day be restored.

## Comment:

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade!

## Comment:

Joanne Caffie:  
Is this the same king Nebuchadnezzar that involved Daniel, Shadrach, etc.?

## Replies:

Wade Stanley:  
Yes. Jeremiah and Daniel were prophesying during the same era. Daniel was in Babylon, Jeremiah in Judah.

Joanne Caffie:  
But after all the horrible things the king did to the Israelites why would (or did) God request them to bow down to him?

Wade Stanley:  
Babylon was God's instrument to punish the children of Israel for centuries of sin. By rebelling against Babylon, Israel was resisting the will of God. God was telling them to accept their punishment.

Charles Fry:  
And it isn't "bow" in the sense of worship, but in the sense of obedience to ruling authorities. It is the same principle taught by Jesus, Paul, and Peter, to obey and honor governing authorities set in place by God.

Along with that principle, Jehoiakim had pledged fealty to Nebuchadnezzar in 605 BC as the price of continuing to rule. He broke that pledge. His successor Zedekiah pledged fealty to Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC as the price of his throne, and he broke that pledge. God takes oaths (covenants) very seriously. Nebuchadnezzar's wars against Judah and Jerusalem were directly motivated by their rebellions against his authority, which they had promised to obey.

## May 12: Jeremiah 32-36 (John Morris)

Reading for May 12, 2017  
PROPHECY: JEREMIAH 32-36

### CHAPTER 32

• 32:1: "tenth year of Zedekiah." 587 BC. Zedekiah reigned eleven years, and Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

• 32:2: "the court of the prison" (NKJV) or "the court(yard) of the guard" (NAS/ESV/NIV). This was part of, or adjoined, the royal palace (cf. Neh. 3:25), and was probably where the guard had its quarters.

• 32:7: This chapter is the only time we ever encounter the name Hanamel in Scripture. His father, Shallum, may have been the husband of Huldah the prophetess (2 Kings 22:14).

- 32:12: The first appearance of Baruch in Jeremiah. He will play a significant role as Jeremiah's scribe later in the book, reappearing in chs. 36, 43, and 45.
- 32:41: "with all My heart and with all My soul." God sets the example for us concerning how to go about doing His will.

## CHAPTER 33

- 33:7: As God so often does, after asserting that He will judge the nation for its wickedness, He follows that up with the promise of the return and revival. And as in 30:3 and elsewhere, God also states that the return will include captives from both the northern and southern kingdoms.
- 33:11: The first part of this verse reminds me of a similar prediction in Zech. 8:4, 5—empty, desolate cities shall again ring with the sounds of happy people. Better yet, though, the latter part of the verse describes that the people will be bringing true, heartfelt praise to God.

Vss. 14-22 are unquestionably Messianic.

- 33:15: "A Branch of righteousness" (cf. Is. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8; 6:12).
- 33:17: Even now, Jesus sits on the throne of David! (cf. Ac. 2:10; Mk. 11:9-10)
- 33:18: Even now, there is a royal priesthood, serving under the guidance of their great high priest (cf. Heb. 4:14-15), that is offering up spiritual sacrifices! (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5)
- 33:22: The references to the stars and sand take us back to God's promises to Abraham (cf. Genesis 15:5; 22:1). All who are a part of the "royal priesthood" are the spiritual descendants of David ("royal"), Levi ("priesthood"), and Abraham (cf. Gal. 3:7).
- 33:24: The "two families" are either Israel and Judah or David and Levi. Contextually, the latter is more likely.

## CHAPTER 34

- 34:5: Zedekiah will receive a royal funeral, accompanied by the burning of incense or spices, and the people will lament his death. This stands in stark contrast to what God predicted would become of his brother, Jehoiakim (cf. 22:18-19).
- 34:7: "Lachish and Azekah; for only these fortified cities remained of the cities of Judah." And Lachish, apparently, was the last one left standing. We have correspondence from this time period between Lachish and central headquarters in Jerusalem. In Letter 4 of "The Lachish Letters," the commanding officer at Lachish writes to Jerusalem: "This letter certifies to The Commanding Officer/Jerusalem that I remain on duty to carry out your orders. Judah's signal fire at Lachish still burns, even after the [only other remaining] signal fire at Azekah has gone out!"
- 34:21-22: "which has gone back from you." Nebuchadnezzar's army had raised the siege, apparently, to go and intercept the Egyptian army that was coming to Zedekiah's aid (cf. 37:7-9). The Babylonians defeated them, the Egyptians went back home, and the Babylonians returned to resume their siege.



## CHAPTER 35

Typical of Jeremiah, we are now asked to switch chronological gears and go back in time to the days of Jehoiakim. The Rechabites are presented to Jeremiah as a striking example of long-standing obedience, even to an earthly father. They are contrasted with the nation of Judah that has a long-standing history of disobedience to the God of heaven! Judah God will punish with death, the Rechabites God will reward with life (35:19).

## CHAPTER 36

This entire chapter is straightforward narrative.

- 36:5: “I am confined.” Under what circumstances we don’t know. Jeremiah experienced imprisonment multiple times (cf. 20:2; 32:2; 37:15; 38:6), but we have no record of it under Jehoiakim’s reign. Judging from his statement, he may have been under some royal edict prohibiting him from entering the temple to preach.
- 36:30: Agreeing with 22:18-19.
- 36:32: Multiple bullae (singular: bulla)--ancient clay seals baked hard by fire--from Jeremiah’s day have been discovered, and at least two have been found that once belonged to “Baruch the son of Neriah the scribe.” One of them preserves the imprint of a finger. Since the seal belonged to Baruch, it is very possible that we have a fingerprint of the very man who penned the book of Jeremiah! You can Google for images, if interested.

### Comment:

Butch O’Neal:  
Thank you, John!

### Comment:

Charles Fry:  
Another good read and good notes.  
I like Jeremiah 32:10-12 in reference to Revelation 5:1.  
Jeremiah 32:14 in reference to 2 Corinthians 4:7  
Jeremiah 32:18 in reference to Genesis 15:8-21

Connecting Jeremiah 34:1-3, the siege of Jerusalem under Zedekiah, to Jeremiah 34:8-11, the people of Jerusalem, under siege, freeing their slaves, to Jeremiah 34:15, God was pleased that they freed the slaves (with a covenant vow). Then the siege was broken, as the Babylonians went to repel an approaching Egyptian army, Jeremiah 37:5 w/34:22 (cheating, looking ahead), and during the respite the men of Judah recanted their covenant oath and forced their slaves back into service, Jeremiah 34:16ff, bringing the severe divine rebuke for their faithlessness in 34:17-22, and the imminent return of the Babylonian army to finish what they had started. God is faithful to his covenants, even passing between the pieces himself in the person of Jesus on the middle cross. He has no pleasure in oath breakers.

### Comment:

Charles Fry:  
Oh, and yes, Baruch, excellent character, largely unsung hero of the faith and contributor to our Bible! And the bullae with his name (and another with his brother's name) are excellent testimony to the historicity of Jeremiah.

## May 19: Jeremiah 37-41 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning all. Today's section of Jeremiah is biographical and very accessible. Here is my summary of the highlights. Happy reading!

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Cg5tnwLPuAE8EOh7UYXwDV-o3obYYghdXr6G2GJZOKA/mobilebasic>

### Jeremiah 37

Verses 1-5: Babylon laid siege to Jerusalem because Zedekiah refused to submit to God's punishment; the Egyptian army breaks the siege.

Verses 6-10: Jeremiah is to warn Zedekiah that Egypt's appearance and Babylon's retreat should not be taken as a sign of relief; God will overthrow Jerusalem even if Judah defeated the Chaldeans.

Verses 11-21: Jeremiah is accused of defecting to the Chaldeans and is locked up; he continues to tell Zedekiah the truth and reminds the king that those prophets who promised that Babylon would not rise against Judah are gone; Jeremiah remains incarcerated.

### Jeremiah 38

Verses 1-6: The king's counselors convince Zedekiah to silence Jeremiah; the king turns the prophet over to them; Jeremiah is imprisoned in what appears to be an abandoned cistern.

- Archaeological Study Bible: A cistern is a collection chamber that gathers runoff. Cisterns typically have a bottle or bell shape, with a narrow top to prevent evaporation. The entire interior is coated with plaster, so that every drop of water is preserved. Water was drawn from a cistern in the same fashion as from a well. Homes could have private cisterns (see 2Ki 18:31; Pr 5:15); in fact, excavations at Tell en-Nasbeh, a site north of Jerusalem that is usually identified as the Biblical Mizpah, revealed 50 cisterns from the ninth century b.c. Cities had larger, public cisterns. In the temple area of Jerusalem, for example, excavators discovered 37 large cisterns, the largest of which is known as the "Great Sea." About 14 yards (13 m) deep, it can hold over two million gallons (9, 917 cu yd) of water! Also in Jerusalem is the Pool of Siloam, constructed by Hezekiah (2Ch 32:30) and embellished by Herod — the Upper Pool of Isaiah 7:3. In order to ensure a steady and reliable supply of water to this reservoir, Hezekiah undertook the construction of a tunnel aqueduct that travels over 547 yards (500 m) through solid rock from the spring to the cistern. Dry cisterns also served as detention cells (Ge 37:22–24; Jer 38:6).
- This may have been an attempt at cruel irony in light of God's comparison of Judah's unfaithfulness to a cracked cistern (see 2:13).

Verses 7-13: An Ethiopian eunuch rescues Jeremiah.

Verses 14-18: With the king's promise of protection, Jeremiah speaks freely, urging the king to surrender Jerusalem and thereby save both the city and the royal house.

Verses 19-23: Jeremiah urges the king to not fear those Jews who have defected to Babylon; if Zedekiah surrenders, he will live and the city will be saved.

Verses 24-28: Zedekiah commands Jeremiah to conceal their conversation from the counselors who seek his life.

### Jeremiah 39

Verses 1-10: Jerusalem is besieged; Zedekiah and his men of war attempt an escape but are captured; Nebuchadnezzar executes the royal family and the nobles of Judah in front of Zedekiah, removes his eyes, and takes him in chains to Babylon; much of Judah is carried away into captivity; Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, leaves a few poor people in the land of Judah.

Verses 11-18: Jeremiah is left to the care of Nebuzaradan who frees him and allows him to circulate among the people; God also promises to protect Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian eunuch who rescued Jeremiah.

### Jeremiah 40

Verses 1-6: Nebuzaradan gives Jeremiah the option of either returning to Judah or going on to Babylon; he ultimately urges the prophet to return to Judah.

Verses 7-12: Gedaliah, governor of Judah, urges the remaining Jews to live in peace as subjects of Babylon; Jews from other lands return to enjoy the fruits of abundant harvests.

Verses 13-16: Gedaliah receives reports that the Ammonite king contracted an assassin to remove the governor; Gedaliah is undisturbed by these rumors.

### Jeremiah 41

Verses 1-3: Ishmael assassinated Gedaliah.

Verses 4-10: Ishmael kills pilgrims from the north and takes the inhabitants of Mizpah captive to Ammon.

Verses 11-18: Johanan stands against Ishmael and rallies those taken captive by the agent of the Ammonites; they dwell near Bethlehem for a time and intend to escape to Egypt a time with the intention of moving on to Egypt.

### Comment:

Steven Wright:

Maybe just a problem on my end, but I don't seem to have complete out line?

### Comment:

Doug Twaddell:

When I tap the link, I don't get all of it either.

### Comment:

Wade Stanley:

Hmm, not sure. It works for me. Here's another attempt at the link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Cg5tnwLPuAE8EOh7UYXwDV-o3obYYghdXr6G2GJZOKA>

### Replies:

Steven Wright:

Same. It quits in the 42:11 - section With "fo"

Butch O'Neal:

Yup, me too. Same as Steve. (41:11)

Wade Stanley:

Sorry guys, that was just an incomplete sentence that has now been completed.

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

THANK YOU, Wade!

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

Ishmael the assassin is another of those characters in Jeremiah whose name (and partial fingerprint) has turned up on a hardened clay bullae.

King Zedekiah is such a tragic figure, a man who knew the truth and seemed to even believe it, but didn't have the courage to stand on the truth he knew.

### **Comment:**

Kevin Crittenden:

When Gedaliah was put in charge of the remnant and the Jews that had been scattered elsewhere returned, I assume that they took over the inheritance of those who had been taken into captivity. Now when the people later returned from Babylon, did they get their inheritance back or had they lost it for good?

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

You might say, that was the plan...

In 597 B.C.

2 Kings 24:14-17

14 He carried into exile all Jerusalem: all the officers and fighting men, and all the craftsmen and artisans — a total of ten thousand. Only the poorest people of the land were left.

15 Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. He also took from Jerusalem to Babylon the king's mother, his wives, his officials and the leading men of the land. 16 The king of Babylon also deported to Babylon the entire force of seven thousand fighting men, strong and fit for war, and a thousand craftsmen and artisans. 17 He made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah.

NIV

Note especially v14b. Yes, the poorest people of the land were left to work the land. This is before the destruction of temple and city of Jerusalem. Then 11 years later when Zedekiah rebelled...

In 586 B.C.

2 Kings 25:11-12

11 Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile the people who remained in the city, along with the rest of the populace and those who had gone over to the king of Babylon.

12 But the commander left behind some of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields.

NIV

Again, note v12, the poorest people, this time "some of" the poorest people left behind to keep the land in production. And Gedaliah to govern them. There were fugitives both times who had hidden or fled, that came back once the immediate threat was over. But then Ishmael murdered Gedaliah most of the scattered remnant in Judah joined together and went as refugees to Egypt, leaving very few people in and around Jerusalem.

2 Kings 25:25-26

25 In the seventh month, however, Ishmael son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, who was of royal blood, came with ten men and assassinated Gedaliah and also the men of Judah and the Babylonians who were with him at Mizpah. 26 At this, all the people from the least to the greatest, together with the army officers, fled to Egypt for fear of the Babylonians.

NIV

So the writer of Chronicles observes that the land was nearly empty, and at rest for the 70 years.

2 Chron 36:20-21

20 He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. 21 The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah.

NIV

In the midst of the siege of Jerusalem, Jeremiah in 587 had prophesied that people would return and resume their ownership and buying and selling of the land (Jeremiah 32, especially v.43-44).

When Ezra wrote of the return of the exiles after 70 years he mentions them returning and settling "in their own towns... in their towns" (Ezra 2:70). From the rest of the story in Ezra-Nehemiah we know there were people in the land who opposed the return of the Jews and rebuilding of Jerusalem, but generally they were people in the surrounding territories rather than occupants of Jerusalem and its satellite communities.

## Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you!

## May 26: Jeremiah 42-46 (John Morris)

Reading for May 26, 2017

JEREMIAH 42-46

### CHAPTER 42

• 42:1-6: The leaders of the rag-tag, Egypt-bound remnant approach Jeremiah, and probably panic-stricken, request that he ask God to tell them what to do. They promise to do whatever God says.

• 42:7: For reasons unknown to us, God makes Jeremiah and the remnant wait ten days for His direction. Good things come to those who wait, though.

• 42:9-18, 22: God instructs them to remain in Judah, assuring them that He will protect them from Nebuchadnezzar (who they fear will punish them for Gedaliah's murder, 41:18). If they refuse, however, and continue into Egypt, God promises that famine, disease, and sword will

overtake them there. It's the ultimate test. Will they trust in God, or lean on their own understanding? We face the same test. How are we doing, my brethren? I need to do better!!

## CHAPTER 43

- 43:1-3: Not surprisingly, the leaders of the remnant accuse Jeremiah of speaking false words. Inexplicably, however, they accuse Baruch (who was among them, 43:6) of putting him up to it! Baruch was his intimate companion, and perhaps an easier target than Jeremiah (the aged, venerable, and whose prophecies had thus far all come true!).

- 43:5: “all the remnant of Judah who had returned to dwell in the land of Judah, from all the nations where they had been driven.” Jews who had returned from Moab, Ammon, Edom, and elsewhere (cf. 40:11-12).

- 43:7: “Tahpanhes.” Pronounced like “Japanese.” Or...at least, that's how I say it. =) One author writes of this place: “Tahpanhes was situated at the eastern edge of the Egyptian Delta, some seven miles west of the Suez Canal. At one time before it dried up, the Pelusior branch of the Nile flowed past the site. The city was one of the major fortresses guarding the eastern entrance into Egypt. It was also an important commercial center since all the caravans going to and from Egypt passed through this city. The site was excavated by Sir Flinders Petrie, the famous British archaeologist, in 1886. He found the native name of the place to be Qasr Bent el Yehudi, ‘palace of the Judean's daughter.’ This name had for centuries preserved the memory of the visit of Zedekiah's daughters following the collapse of the kingdom of Judah.”

- 43:8-13: Jeremiah's first oracle in Egypt, probably delivered while the remnant was forced to wait at Tahpanhes to secure permission to travel in Egypt. As is evidenced earlier in the book, and in other works of prophecy, God believes in visual aids.

## CHAPTER 44

- 44:1: The renegade remnant settled in various localities in Egypt.

- 44:7-10: May we humble ourselves, learn from the word of the Lord and His chastening, and not be like these Jews. After all they'd lost, still they persisted in their idolatry!

- 44:17-18: This misinterpretation of their own history is so sad. Valiant efforts had been made to suppress the practice of idolatry during Josiah's reign, and it may have been then that these Jews had ceased worshipping the queen of heaven. But Josiah's reforms (as noble as they were) had been top-down, and the people's hearts weren't in them. The problems that had afflicted the nation since Josiah's death weren't due to a failure to worship the queen of heaven, but due to the people's failure to truly turn to God.

- 44:28: A small remnant of the remnant will escape God's judgment in Egypt, and return to Judah. Was Jeremiah in this remnant? Impossible to know, but we can hope so.

- 44:29: “And this shall be a sign to you....” To prove that this word was, in fact, from God and not from Jeremiah's imagination.

## CHAPTER 45

This is the shortest chapter in Jeremiah, and closes out the lengthy section of narrative we've been enjoying. We met Baruch for the first time in chapter 32, and hear about him for the last time here. This chapter takes us back in time, as it came “in the fourth year of Jehoiakim” (605

BC), the same year as Babylon's pivotal victory over Egypt at Carchemish (see notes on 25:1) just before Babylon's first assault on Jerusalem.

Baruch is overcome with sorrow (vs. 3), though why we are not told. Very possibly it is because of all the pronouncements of doom he's been hearing from, and writing down for, Jeremiah (cf. 36:1-4, 32). Perhaps in an effort to help him get out of himself, God reminds Baruch that He is about to destroy a place and nation He built over generations with great love and care (vs. 4). Baruch isn't the only one with something to hurt about! Finally, God warns Baruch against selfish ambition, and gives him, instead, something to be thankful for (thankfulness and selfishness don't co-exist very well)—his life will be spared in the coming desolation. Not many of his countrymen can say that.

## CHAPTER 46

Starting in this chapter, and running all the way to chapter 51, is a compilation of many of Jeremiah's prophecies to other nations: Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, Elam, and Babylon. This chapter, specifically, predicts Pharaoh Necho's defeat by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish (vss. 2-12), as well as Nebuchadnezzar's eventual attack on Egypt, itself (vss. 13-26) (cf. 43:8-13). Finally, it closes with a promise to Israel that they will someday return to their land, that though God will erase from history the nations around them, they still have a future and a hope (Jer. 29:11).

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

Baruch is one of the less noticed heroes of the faith, but incredibly important in the plans that God had for his word. I suspect that Baruch's distress was due to his mandate to assist Jeremiah, which meant sharing danger and rejection, without much comfort or reward in the circumstances. He was a trained professional scribe, most likely with good career opportunities in government service, except for being tied to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 36:19 (NIV)

19 Then the officials said to Baruch, "You and Jeremiah, go and hide. Don't let anyone know where you are."

I also imagine that Baruch is the editor/compiler of the finished book of Jeremiah, and the author of the last chapter (note the last verse of Jeremiah 51), and so also the author of the last chapter of Kings. Jeremiah seemingly prophesied in Egypt in his final days, but someone, most likely Baruch, carried his work to Babylon, maybe around 560 BC (Jeremiah 52:31). We know the book was available for Daniel to study and understand in Babylon in time for the restoration of Jerusalem (Daniel 9:1-2) around 538 BC.

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:  
Thanks brother!

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, brother John!

## June 1: Jeremiah 47-51 (Wade Stanley)

Hi everyone. Lord willing, our family will be on the road early tomorrow morning, on our way to Indiana for a VBS with Martinsville. Consequently, I am posting the notes for Jeremiah 47-52 today. It's a really long assignment. Here are my notes as concise as I could make them. God be with you.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/16LeGfISa8QBdu2xk16eW0ysU2-XXqEiYWDRyHOsASyc/mobilebasic>

### Chapter 47

Verses 1-7: This chapter continues the Lord's word against the nations (see 46:1). Philistia, the ancient enemy of Judah, has entered the Lord's crosshairs. The destruction will come from the north (verse 2) and will be carried out by Nebuchadnezzar in 604 BC. Gaza and Ashkelon are mentioned by name. He also mentions that Tyre and Sidon, the cities of the Phoenicians, will be cut off from helping Philistia.

### Chapter 48

Verses 1-3: Moab, another ancient foe of Judah, is the subject of this lengthy prophecy. Josephus believed this was fulfilled in the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (582 BC). Nebo, Kirjathaim, and Heshbon were all Moabite cities that were taken by Israel and allotted to the house of Reuben. Later, Moses designated Heshbon as a Levitical city.

Verses 4-10: Typical urgings to flee the coming destruction. Chemosh, the national god of Moab, is mentioned in verse 7.

Verses 11-17: Moab settled into a pattern of confident ease, having avoided the turmoil experienced by her neighbors. God assures us that this will change.

Verses 18-29: God promises to humble the proud cities of Moab; none will escape His judgment and the power of Moab will be broken; intoxicating drink is once again used to illustrate the mindlessness and debauchery of antagonistic foreign powers.

- Verse 27 tells us why God's fury was directed at Moab.
- Another fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you" (Genesis 12:3).

Verses 30-39: Contrary to what one might think, Moab's fall was not reason for God to rejoice. He laments that their pride had brought Him to this point and with His foresight He is moved by the anguish of the Moabites.

Verses 40-47: The prophecy draws to a conclusion by reiterating many of the themes expressed earlier. Like Egypt, Moab's destruction would not be complete annihilation. Josephus tells us that Cyrus the Great restored the remnants of the Moabite people. However, they never rose to prominence again.

### Chapter 49

Verses 1-6: Jeremiah prophesies against the Ammonites. Milcom, also known as Molech, the national God of the Ammonites is mentioned in verse 1. Like Moab, Ammon will suffer destruction, but the remnants will be restored (verse 6). Josephus says that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Ammon in 582 BC.



Verses 7-22: God directs His attention against Judah's southern foe, Edom. Typical prophetic warnings, descriptions and predictions.

Verses 23-27: Israel's enemy to the north, the Aramaeans and their capital city Damascus, is the next recipient of God's wrath. Hadad was a Aramaean deity. Ben-Hadad (literally "son of Hadad") is a reference to the king of Aram.

Verses 28-33: In 599, Nebuchadnezzar attacked Arab tribesman. Kedar, a region in northern Arabia, and Hazor, another kingdom in northern Arabia (whose exact territory is unknown) are the two victims of Nebuchadnezzar's assault.

Verses 34-39: Elam was located in the southern part of modern Iran. The Elamites were traditional enemies of both the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

#### Chapters 50-51

Intro: God dedicated much of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry to warnings about the successful conquerings of Babylon. In these two chapters, we learn that Babylon itself will be conquered. Persia (sometimes called Medo-Persia) led by Cyrus the Great would wrest control of the Middle East from Babylon. Daniel 5 offers an interesting insight into this momentous event. In a figurative sense, Babylon is antithetical to Jerusalem. Babylon is the city of confusion, a city built by man's defiance of God, a symbol of worldliness and godlessness. Compare with Revelation 18.

50:1-3: The gods of Babylon -- Bel and Merodach -- as well as the nation they represent will be conquered by a nation from the north (Persia).

50:4-20: God urges the captive Jews to leave Babylon when it is vanquished. Proud Babylon will be reduced to nothing; the city itself, the crown jewel of the ancient world, would eventually be abandoned forever. Israel and Judah will be pardoned and restored.

50:21-32: God will humble Babylon and repay her according to her works.

50:33-40: God's judgment is predicated on Babylon's mistreatment of His people. He reiterates that Babylon will be forsaken and includes a comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah.

50:41-46: More rumblings about the coming enemy. Babylon cannot stand against the judgment of the Lord and the earth will see it.

51:1-10: Though undeserved, God has not forsaken Israel and Judah. He urges His people to leave. Through conquering and alliances, Babylon has influenced many nations thus making her fall painful for many. The presence of God's people could have helped Babylon but they are left with no choice but to abandon her.

51:11-32: The time for war has arrived; through providence God has arrayed Babylon's enemies against her; in language reminiscent of Isaiah, Jeremiah compares the true and living God to the inanimate idols worshipped by Babylon; Babylon's defenders are disheartened and abandon their posts.

51:33-44: More variations on the theme of impending destruction.

51:45-51: God beseeches His people to abandon Babylon, to remember God and Jerusalem, and to repent of what they allowed to happen to the temple.

51:52-58: God brings His prophecy against Babylon to a climax, recapitulating earlier themes and assuring everyone that though Babylon is powerful and seemingly impregnable, it will fall.

51:59-64: The final words of Jeremiah's book command Seraiah, the quartermaster of Zedekiah, to read the words of this prophecy against Babylon when he arrives in the city, to pray for God's fulfillment, and to visually demonstrate the catastrophe that awaits Babylon.

Chapter 52

This chapter is a nearly exact parallel to the conclusion of 2 Kings. It was likely inserted at a later time by Baruch as a capstone to this final prophecy.

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thanks, Wade! Prayers for safe travels!

### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Wade Stanley! We're so thankful to you and John Morris for excellent commentaries on books of prophecy! Marc and I haven't commented recently but we're still doing the study daily. This weekend we enjoyed reading out loud while we drove to and from St. Louis. Read further in Kings and Chronicles for detailed history. God bless your travels.

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### June 9: Lamentations 1-5 (John Morris)

Reading for June 9, 2017

#### LAMENTATIONS

For the first time in our reading of the prophets this year, a day is devoted to an entire book. We'll see this repeatedly as we move through the Minor Prophets, God permitting, but today serves as a first.

The Jews of antiquity appear to have treated Lamentations as an addendum to Jeremiah (that is, included it as a part of Jeremiah in their Bible, which grouped many of the books differently than we do). The book expresses deep sadness over the destruction of Jerusalem that Jeremiah had predicted would come, and though we cannot speak with absolute certainty on the point, there is strong evidence to suggest that Jeremiah was, in fact, the book's author. He is credited with its authorship as early as 200 BC, named as the author in the Jewish Talmud, and was uniformly regarded as such by the ancient, so-called "church fathers" (REALLY don't like that descriptor, but it communicates). The book certainly reads like Jeremiah, both in content and in sentiment. Lamentation 3:48, for example: "My eyes overflow with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people" (see also 2:11). Sounds just like the man we've come to know as the weeping prophet (Jer. 9:1; 14:17).

Lamentations is written in poetic form. The first four chapters (dirges) are alphabetic acrostics, chapters 1, 2, and 4 each having their successive verses begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet (22 verses corresponding to Hebrew's 22 letters). Chapter 3, containing 66 verses, is a different type of alphabet acrostic (more complicated in form), and then chapter 5, which closes out the book, is not an acrostic at all, though still poetic. Interestingly, Hebrew poetry generally does not involve rhyme, but does make use of rhythm. One author points out: "The metrical structure used in the Book of Lamentations is known as the Qinah or lament rhythm. This is the meter most commonly used in the ancient Near East for chanting dirges over the dead or lamenting national calamities. In Qinah rhythm the second line of each verse is one stress shorter than the first line. As a rule in Lamentations the pattern is three stresses in the first line, two in the second, and three in the third line. This meter, practically obscured in English translation, becomes apparent as one reads the Hebrew text aloud." Would be cool to hear.

Lamentations is not the easiest book to outline, since content is so similar from one chapter to the next, but the following breakdown (which I've borrowed) may serve to provide at least a basic framework:

- Chapter 1: A Widowed City
- Chapter 2: A Broken People
- Chapter 3: A Suffering Prophet
- Chapter 4: A Ruined Kingdom
- Chapter 5: A Penitent Nation

Sorry to make comments so brief, but gonna have to leave it at that this week. Just one helpful hint: 1:1-11 contains the laments of the prophet (again, probably Jeremiah), but 1:11-16, 18-22 actually personifies the city, and has Jerusalem, itself, weeping its/her past sins and subsequent fall. Can make it a little confusing at first, but makes it especially memorable in the end.

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:  
Good stuff bro!

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:  
Do notice the hope of Lamentations at the very center of the book, 3:21-42, especially 22-24 which you can sing from Songs of Faith and Praise in RSV wording. "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases..."

### **Replies:**

Steven Wright:  
We sang that at VBS this week!

### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:  
<https://youtu.be/rFkwvVHtyMM>  
"The Book of Lamentations Reading"

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:  
Thanks, John!

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### June 16: Ezekiel 1-6 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning all. Please find below a link to my notes on the opening chapters to Ezekiel. I also linked within the notes a short summary of the book. I hope both will help you.

We are entering into the territory of prophecy that often leaves many bewildered. I encourage you just to push through it and, if nothing else, center in on the major themes contained in these incredible apocalyptic visions.

Happy reading to you all!

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-odjZH-yMjy1aYkEwVKQ4SP-jYLDdv4sR\\_Ltf7iyn3c/mobilebasic](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-odjZH-yMjy1aYkEwVKQ4SP-jYLDdv4sR_Ltf7iyn3c/mobilebasic)

#### Chapter 1

Ezekiel 1 contains one of the most intriguing piece of imagery in the entire Bible. The entire chapter is a description of God's throne, His retinue, and the awesome glory that surrounds Him.

Ezekiel 1 is also our first taste of apocalyptic literature. The word "apocalypse" simply means "to uncover or reveal." This represents the beginning of a fascinating (and at times perplexing) phase in prophecy when God communicates with His prophets through heavily symbolic dreams and visions. Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah will all receive such visions many of which are difficult to understand. As we venture into this thought-provoking realm, it is best to bear a couple of things in mind.

1. If a literal explanation/interpretation does not make sense, then we should interpret the prophecy from a symbolic perspective.
2. The simplest explanation/interpretation is generally the best.
3. We should use the Bible's rich palette of idioms, metaphors, and other assorted literary devices to unlock the meaning of the symbolism in a given passage.

With that in mind, let's wade into the chapter.

Verses 1-3: see Summary of Ezekiel

[https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://drive.google.com/open?id%253D12YMmHf4ABqIf63mEwpOwiTN5oFvi4YmgWeDcsJHdHIQ%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;ust%3D1515563209113000%26amp;usg%3DAFQjCNEM6WazTFcwXpTP-vziMBJ\\_w6eTMA&sa=D&ust=1515563209130000&usg=AFQjCNF9OmU\\_Pn9mbcZSpYOhNGXbRzZm1Q](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://drive.google.com/open?id%253D12YMmHf4ABqIf63mEwpOwiTN5oFvi4YmgWeDcsJHdHIQ%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;ust%3D1515563209113000%26amp;usg%3DAFQjCNEM6WazTFcwXpTP-vziMBJ_w6eTMA&sa=D&ust=1515563209130000&usg=AFQjCNF9OmU_Pn9mbcZSpYOhNGXbRzZm1Q)

Verses 4-14: Ezekiel sees what Isaiah calls seraphim (chapter 6). Later, Ezekiel tells us that these are cherubim (see 10:18-22). Like Ezekiel, John calls these "living creatures" (see Revelation 4:6-8). Though the descriptions vary from prophet to prophet, the similarities are such that we can safely conclude that these are the same creatures. The prophets vary in their descriptions due to personal perspective and the visual context in which they are seen. In

each case, the cherubim/seraphim/living creatures dwell in the presence of God, a detail that is consistent from the Garden of Eden, to the tabernacle, to the ark of the covenant, to the temple, etc. Here are a few intriguing aspects to Ezekiel's description:

1. They come from the north (verse 4). Having grown acquainted with both Jeremiah and Isaiah, you know that both Assyria and Babylon were enemies who would come from the north. The whirlwind from the north with clouds and raging fire prefigure the terrible wrath of God Almighty.
2. They do not turn when they changed direction (verse 9). Each creature had four faces, therefore it was not necessary for them to turn in order to change direction. They would always be moving forward because a face was pointing the direction they traveled.
3. The four faces -- man, lion, ox, and eagle -- communicate the special station occupied by these beings. Man, created in the image of God, is called to subdue the created realm. The lion is known as the king of all wild animals; the ox is considered the greatest among domesticated animals; the eagle is the greatest among all fowl. Cherubim, therefore, occupy the highest echelons in angelic hierarchy.
4. Notice that their movement is directed by the spirit (verse 12). The exact identity of "the spirit" is left to interpretation. However, I think the Spirit of God fits the bill best. The angelic hosts are messengers dispatched and directed by God. Both the Spirit and the angels are the primary communicators in apocalyptic literature and serve to transport, animate, reveal, interpret, act out, interact, etc.
5. Much more can be said about the appearance of the living creatures. Each piece of imagery is chosen to reflect a particular aspect of their character and/or nature.

Verses 15-21: As we will see, the throne of God is a mobile unit powered by the angels and directed by the Spirit. Ezekiel describes the wheels and dwells on the directions these wheels would take. The overriding message is these wheels can any direction and therefore anywhere on the earth, depicting the omnipresence of God. Daniel describes the throne of God as "a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire" (7:9). See also Psalm 104:3-4.

Verses 22-28: The crystal clear firmament represents the dwelling place of God from which the Almighty speaks. God is anthropomorphised and described in very vague terms. Given that no man has seen God at any time (John 1:18), this is likely a representation of God, acted out by one of the many angels involved in this vision (notice how Ezekiel uses the word "likeness" throughout, especially verse 28, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord."). Ezekiel's view of God is similar to Daniel's (7:9-10) and John's (Revelation 4). The surpassing glory of this vision drives Ezekiel into a prostrate position in which he hears God speak to him.

## Chapter 2

Verses 1-5: Ezekiel ends chapter 1 lying prostrate before the presence and glory of the Lord. Through the Spirit, God enables him to stand. God commissions Ezekiel to be a prophet and sends him to a people who will refuse to listen to him.

Verses 6-8: Though his words will provoke animosity from the people, Ezekiel is to speak the words of God regardless of his reception.

Verses 9-10: The scroll of the book represents the content of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry.

## Chapter 3

Verses 1-3: Consuming the scroll represents Ezekiel consuming the word of the Lord; to the righteous man it is sweet but to the rebellious it will be bitter.

Verses 4-9: Ezekiel is being sent to his own countrymen; God assures him that what the prophet says will not be received because they are God's words; just as God enables Ezekiel to stand; so too He strengthens him to speak without being intimidated.

Verses 10-15: Ezekiel's initial vision concludes; he returns to the River Chebar full of righteous indignation and yet dumbfounded by the incredible vision he has witnessed.

Verses 16-21: As a watchman, Ezekiel is to warn the wicked; if he does so, God will not hold the prophet responsible; if he fails to warn the wicked, Ezekiel will be held responsible.

Verses 23-27: The vision of God's glory returns and the prophet falls prostrate again; the Lord enables him to stand a second time; God warns the prophet that chains and resistance await him; it appears that God will limit Ezekiel's communication with the people to the prophetic message alone.

#### Chapter 4

Verses 1-3: God instructs Ezekiel to make a replica of Jerusalem which, at this point, is under the rule of Babylon and has not been destroyed; Ezekiel is to enact a siege, forecasting what will happen to the holy city in a few short years.

#### Verses 4-8

- "House of Israel": represents the northern kingdom that split off after Solomon during the reign of Jeroboam I
- "House of Judah": the southern kingdom (Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, and refugees from the north) that maintained the Davidic line of succession
- 390 days + 40 days = 430 days which represents a period of 430 years
  - The first temple was dedicated in the year 966 B.C. Cyrus, king of Persia, would return the first Jewish captives to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple in 536 B.C., a period, uncoincidentally, of 430 years.
  - This "prophecy-in-action" illustrates the failure of the Jewish nation to keep the temple of the Lord's house consecrated.
  - The northern kingdom abandoned God and was ruled by a succession of unrighteous kings; for this reason, they bear a greater responsibility in the prophecy.

Verses 9-16: This portion of the prophecy illustrates the conditions of Jerusalem during the coming siege. The inhabitants would resort to desperate measures in order to survive, wasting away due to malnutrition and dehydration.

#### Chapter 5

Verses 1-4: Ezekiel is to illustrate the various ways Jerusalem will perish -- by fire, by sword, and by captivity. Those who escape the sword and fire will not ultimately escape the judgment of God.

Verses 5-17: The depth of Jerusalem's sins far exceeds those of the surrounding nations. She was set in their midst to be a light. Her syncretism and outright rebellion warrant a uniquely severe response from God.

#### Chapter 6

Verses 1-7: As one reads through the books of Kings and Chronicles, one notices the prominence of "the high places." Not only would God direct His wrath against the city of Jerusalem, He also would cast judgment on the numerous shrines, altars, etc. scattered across the land. Here is a nice article from the Archaeological Study Bible on the topic.

[https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://docs.google.com/document/d/1eyy6Mhhr8\\_UMuuw4lz5V5y8VFpgebc4pelod8ICKpw/edit?usp%253Dsharing%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;ust%3D1515563209121000%26amp;usg%3DAFQjCNHp6RIGZuqzE29QJwMjPpLB1hOaCA&sa=D&ust=1515563209132000&u sg=AFQjCNGC\\_WgKlrugGct57sk0p48H4C18MA](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://docs.google.com/document/d/1eyy6Mhhr8_UMuuw4lz5V5y8VFpgebc4pelod8ICKpw/edit?usp%253Dsharing%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;ust%3D1515563209121000%26amp;usg%3DAFQjCNHp6RIGZuqzE29QJwMjPpLB1hOaCA&sa=D&ust=1515563209132000&u sg=AFQjCNGC_WgKlrugGct57sk0p48H4C18MA)

Verses 8-10: God would preserve a remnant of the Jewish people among the nations where they were scattered. Verse 9 offers an insightful look into the impact of Israel's idolatry on God.

Verses 11-14: Those Jews who heard of God's impending wrath should grieve for those who would suffer.

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:  
Thank you, Wade!

### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:  
That was an incredible resource of help to me as I read these chapters, Wade! Thank you! I think it's safe to say if we have a future 2 week meeting & choose to cover prophecies you and John Morris are going to be well prepared & seasoned for the task. 😊 If we do this 7 Bible study again I'd prefer to switch the day prophecies fall on. For me my mind is most tired Friday night & it's the subject which requires most focus. Therefore your notes give excellent guidance. Thx again!

### **Replies:**

Ginger Hermon:  
Just last night I was asking marc if a tornado was ever referenced in the Bible. He said there were places "whirlwind" or "windstorm" was mentioned. Here it is in Ezekiel 1:4.



## **June 23: Ezekiel 7-12 (John Morris)**

Reading for June 23, 2017  
EZEKIEL 7-12

Highlights, as usual.

### **CHAPTER 7**

• 7:4: "My eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity." Frightening to contemplate. Similar statements appear in Jeremiah. God says this five times in Ezekiel (5:11; 7:4, 9; 8:18; 9:10), instructing His heavenly executioners to be of the same mind in 9:5. Notice also the repetition of "I will repay" (7:3, 4, 8, 9). God is about to do what only He can (Heb. 10:30).

• 7:5-7: Ezekiel may have been an eloquent orator (33:32). God has use for such a gift. Can you imagine the force with which these words may have been proclaimed? "Behold, it has



COME! An end has COME, the end has COME...Behold, it has COME! Doom has COME...the time has COME....”

- 7:10-11: “The rod has blossomed, pride has budded. Violence has risen up into a rod of wickedness.” Possibly, the intended meaning is this: “the rod” is Babylon, the tool with which God will punish Judah (cf. Is. 10:5); “blossomed” indicates the time for punishment has come; “pride has budded” speaks to the arrogance of Babylon (Jer. 50:31): “Violence has risen up into a rod of wickedness” refers to the violent sins of Judah (7:23; 8:17; 9:9) and that this wickedness is what has brought on the upcoming judgment.

- 7:12-13: No use being concerned about selling or buying property. It will soon all belong to Babylon (7:24).

- 7:23: “It was customary to lead away captives in a row with a chain passed from the neck of one to the other.” It appears Ezekiel may have been commanded to make a chain to symbolize the coming captivity.

## CHAPTER 8

Chapters 8-11 comprise a single visionary experience of Ezekiel’s. Ezekiel is transported from Babylon to the land of Judah to behold the people’s sins, their destruction, the departure of God’s glory from the Temple, and is called to speak words of both doom and hope to his countrymen.

- 8:1: “sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month.” Fourteen months after the vision of chapter 1 (1:1-2).

- 8:2-3: Ezekiel again sees the same likeness he saw in 1:26-27, “the likeness of the glory of the LORD” (1:28). Note how the work of the Spirit is connected with “the form of a hand.” Reminds me of Dan. 5 and of Jesus’ description of the Holy Spirit as “the finger of God.”

- 8:3-15: Ezekiel is shown four separate examples of Judah’s sins, all being perpetrated within the temple precincts! First, he is shown an idolatrous image set up at the north entrance to the Temple’s inner court (8:3-5). This may have been the carved image of Asherah set up by King Manasseh (2 Kings 21:7). Whatever the case, it rightly provoked God to jealousy...and this was only the tip of the iceberg. Secondly, he is shown 70 men of the elders of Israel burning incense to false gods they had taken the pains to have depicted on the walls (again within the temple precincts) (8:9-12). Thirdly, he is made to witness women mourning the supposed annual death of the false god, Tammuz (8:14). Fourthly and finally, Ezekiel is brought into the inner court of the Temple, to its very door, where he sees 25 men with their backs to the God of heaven, worshipping the sun in the east (8:16-17)! Note how God says each time, “you will see greater abominations” (8:6, 13, 15). Each sin was more aggravated and egregious than the one before it. All sin can earn us death, but not all sin is equal.

## CHAPTER 9

- 9:1-2: While in the inner court, Ezekiel hears God call upon six men (probably angels) to execute His will for Jerusalem. They are armed, and come from the north, the direction from which the armies of Babylon will come. Among them (the sixth or a seventh?) is another, this one clothed in white, armed for writing not killing. He had, not an “inkhorn” (NKJV), but rather a “writing case” (NAS/ESV) or “writing kit” (NIV) at his side. “A scribe carried his pens and receptacle for mixing ink in a case. Sometimes these cases were made of silver. They were elaborately and beautifully engraved.”

• 9:3-5: God dismounts, so to speak, from His chariot (more on this in ch. 10) and moves to the door of the Temple to give direction to the man with the writing case. The man is to put a mark on the foreheads of those whose hearts ache over the sins of Jerusalem, those who are like Lot was (2 Pet. 2:8). These will be spared the coming destruction (9:6). Like so many other symbols in Revelation, the mark on the forehead (Rev. 13:16; 14:9; 20:4) makes its first appearance in the Old Testament.

## CHAPTER 10

Oh boy. This chapter (in connection with chapter 1) could make for pages and pages of notes. And we would still have more questions than answers. One of those instances where we've been given enough to satisfy our needs, but not nearly enough to satisfy our curiosities. =) There are some definite takeaways, though. Will just note a few things.

• 10:1-2: Ezekiel again sees God's throne-chariot (cf. 1:26): the cherubim, the firmament (expanse) above the cherubim, the throne, and the wheels. Why call it a chariot? This arrangement appears to carry God (hence, the wheels) from place to place (10:19; 11:22-23; cf. Ps. 18:10), and the cherubim in God's presence in the Temple were so designated in 1 Chron. 28:18. On an entirely different note, note how coals of fire are scattered over the city that is to be destroyed, and how this symbol is revisited in Rev. 8:5.

• 10:10-11: "a wheel in the middle of a wheel." Perhaps arranged in a gyroscope-like fashion. From the top, might have looked like an "X." This might help explain how the wheels could move in any direction without having to be turned (vs. 11).

• 10:14: The four faces listed in chapter 1 were: man, lion, ox, eagle (1:10). Here, they are: man, lion, cherub, eagle. The face of the ox appears to be replaced by the face of a cherub; however, Ezekiel says, "And the likeness of their faces was the same as the faces which I had seen by the River Chebar..." (10:22). Hmm. Sounds like the ox face may have been the primary face of a cherub. At least this is one possible take on it. Why would that be? I don't know. Perhaps because oxen are the servants of men, as cherubim are the servants of God?

• 10:18-19: The one event in this chapter we mustn't miss. The Temple sanctuary is abandoned by God. He will leave the Temple precincts altogether in 11:22-23. Judah now loses the presence and protection of the God whom they have rejected.

## CHAPTER 11

• 11:1-4: Ezekiel is brought to the east gate of the LORD's house, the same location where the glory of the LORD has temporarily stopped on its way out (10:19). Ezekiel is confronted with 25 men of standing (same as the 25 in 8:16?) who are giving wicked counsel to the people. Translations differ in vs. 3 (build or not build?), but the advice was subversive, however it was intended. Their reference to "the caldron" was prompted by Jeremiah's prophecy of a seething pot (Jer. 1:13).

• 11:13: While prophesying of the judgments to befall Jerusalem, Ezekiel sees Pelatiah the son of Benaiah (one of the wicked counselors, vs. 1), drop dead. Was this just part of the vision, or was it an actual event incorporated into the vision? Don't know. But Ezekiel falls on his face, as he did in 9:8, fearing that God intends to destroy even the remnant of Judah.

• 11:16-20: Words of hope! The people will be protected while in foreign lands, and will again be reassembled in the Promised Land. Vss. 19-20 look to the day when God will work in the hearts of the spiritual Israel of God (Gal. 3:7; 6:16). This theme will be revisited in chapter 37.

• 11:24-25: Ezekiel is taken by the Spirit back to Chaldea/Babylon, and the vision begun in 8:2 comes to a close. And what a ride it was. Faithful to his calling, Ezekiel shares with the captives what he has seen.

## CHAPTER 12

Pretty straightforward. More evidence that God believes in visual aids.

• 12:26: Reminds me of Eccl. 8:11- "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil."

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, John! Again, very helpful.

### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

I need to catch up on the prophecy study. In the meantime please know how much we appreciate your notes, John! It really makes a difference when I study. Thanks much!

## **June 30: Ezekiel 13-18 (Wade Stanley)**

Good morning all. Here are some notes on Ezekiel 13-18. The chapters for today's reading are fairly straightforward and do not require a great deal of exposition. If you have ever wrestled with the doctrine of original sin or the companion doctrine of Total Depravity, you will find Ezekiel 18 to be a real help.

I hope to see some of you this next week, if God wills. For those who cannot be with us, I look forward to a happy reunion in the future. May God be with you.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-M2soxGjfhQvj0oh0LWkNDM4plrjcFxbNtAKLaDQ\\_68/mobilebasic](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-M2soxGjfhQvj0oh0LWkNDM4plrjcFxbNtAKLaDQ_68/mobilebasic)

### Ezekiel 13

Verses 1-9: A condemnation familiar to all of the major prophets. Others claimed to be sent from God and prophesied lies. Ezekiel, like his predecessor Isaiah and his contemporary Jeremiah, condemns those who declare, "Thus says the Lord," to whom God has never revealed himself. God stands against these sowers of lies.

Verses 10-16: The NKJV fails to accurately convey the metaphor employed by God in these verses. The parable illustrates the misleading message of peace proclaimed by the peddlers of falsehood. Their message is like whitewashing an unstable wall. The collapse of Judah is inevitable and no attempt to say otherwise will alter God's intention.

Verses 17-23: More indications of how deeply paganism had penetrated into Judean society. God casts His gaze toward the women of Judah who had adopted pagan superstitions, practiced divination, and helped lead the people into such abominations as human sacrifice. Their ministry has grieved the righteous and emboldened the wicked.

#### Ezekiel 14

Verses 1-5: The leaders of the exiled Jews seek an audience with Ezekiel to inquire after God's will. God is insulted by their double-mindedness. He seeks a people of full-hearted devotion.

Verses 6-11: God urges both the false prophet and those who seek out the false prophets to repent.

Verses 12-20: God will not be deterred from His present course of action. Even if luminaries of faith (such as Noah or Job or Daniel) were present in Jerusalem and Judah, their righteousness would only be sufficient to deliver their own souls.

Verses 21-23: God comforts His people with the promise that He will not utterly destroy the nation. A small portion would be preserved for future posterity.

#### Ezekiel 15

Verses 1-8: God illustrates how Jerusalem's persistent unfaithfulness has made her utterly useless to Him.

#### Ezekiel 16

This chapter catalogues the sins of Jerusalem and offers a perspective as to how depraved she was in the eyes of God. From God's vantage point, Jerusalem sank to greater depths than her companion capital to the north, Samaria, and was guilty of a greater affront than Sodom and Gomorrah. I have heard it said, and believe it to be true, that Ezekiel 16 is among the saddest chapters in the entire Bible.

#### Ezekiel 17

Verses 1-15: Another parable that illustrates Jerusalem's current state of affairs and in particular highlights the futility of their rebellion.

Verses 16-21: Those who have led Jerusalem in this ill-advised course of action will be held accountable.

Verses 22-24: Once again, God ends a bleak message with a glimmer of hope. He will not utterly destroy His people, but will preserve a remnant that will rise from the ashes of captivity.

#### Ezekiel 18

Verses 1-2: The captives in Babylon were circulating a proverb that blamed their predicament on their forefathers.

Verses 3-20: God goes to great lengths to explain that He holds guilty individuals accountable for their own sins. The guilt for sin does not pass from one generation to the next. Nor is the righteousness of a father passed on to his children. This chapter is one of the most powerful arguments against the concept of original sin in the Bible.

Verses 21-24: A wicked man who repents will be forgiven and a righteous man who sins will be condemned.

Verses 25-29: God fails to see how his policy is unfair. He could destroy the wicked man who repents and yet He chooses to forgive. God is both just and a justifier.

Verses 30-32: He ends with a plea to turn from their wickedness.

## Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, brother Wade!

## July 7: Ezekiel 19-24 (John Morris)

Reading for July 7, 2017

EZEKIEL 19-24

### CHAPTER 19

This chapter laments the end of three of Judah's kings, and the final fall of the nation. Vs. 4 describes the demise of Jehoahaz: "they brought him with chains to the land of Egypt" (2 Kings 23:33-34). Vs. 9 details the end of either Jehoiakim or Jehoiachin, each of whom was taken to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:6, 10). Vs. 14 speaks of the results of Zedekiah being deposed —no one left to rule in Jerusalem. With the removal of Zedekiah from the throne of David came the removal of Judah from the nations of men.

### CHAPTER 20

The dating of the chapter indicates that Ezekiel has now been functioning in his prophetic office for two years, one month and five days (comp. 1:1-2). The chapter begins with elders of Israel approaching Ezekiel to inquire of the LORD. God makes it plain he will not be inquired of by these men when they are unfaithful men representing an unfaithful nation. God summarizes past and present unfaithfulness, reiterates the coming judgment on Judah, but also speaks to the nation's hopeful future after the purging. Vs. 45 begins a new section, and in the Hebrew Bible serves as the first verse of chapter 21 (a better arrangement than ours). Vss. 45-48 could be called The Parable of the Forest Fire. Ezekiel prophesies in highly figurative language "against the south," the entire nation of Judah viewed from the perspective of the Babylonians who will be arriving from the north. Interestingly, in vs. 49, we learn that the people don't like the figurative language. In chapter 21, God speaks plainly for them.

### CHAPTER 21

This word "sword" appears 16 times in this chapter. The sword is "sharpened," "polished," "made bright," "grasped," "drawn," and "at the ready." Because of national depravity, the sword of the LORD will come against Judah, and later against Ammon. Note how in vs. 21, we are given a glimpse into how Nebuchadnezzar (pre-Daniel 4) used pagan rituals to make important military decisions.

### CHAPTER 22

In this chapter, God begins to call Jerusalem "the bloody city" (22:2; 24:6, 9). He uses the title three times, and it is one He used of only one other city in the Bible—murderous, Assyrian Nineveh (Nah. 3:1). Jerusalem has become a violent and vile place. There are sins of avarice and oppression, religious sins, sexual sins. Blood is on the people's hands, figuratively and literally. Punishment is deserved, and punishment is coming.

## CHAPTER 23

The Parable of the Two Sisters. Israel (the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom) both had a history of spiritual adultery, turning to other nations and their gods. Judah watched Israel suffer for her sins, but instead of learning from her demise, decided to outdo her in pursuing sin! Very graphic language here concerning how God sees us when we turn to other gods (some modern examples: wealth, status, education, comfort, family, government, self, etc.). When God's own special people give their hearts to other gods, it's like a good man's wife making her bed for, and sharing it with, another man! Judah willfully persisted in her adultery for generations, and so finally, God let her have her lovers! But they didn't really love her. They were takers, not givers. The harsh treatment she received from them, sadly, she brought on herself.

## CHAPTER 24

Jerusalem is likened to a pot filled with pieces of meat (the people). The pot is also full of scum, however (the people's sins)! People will be removed from Jerusalem (vs. 6), consumed within its walls (vs. 10), and finally, the polluted city itself will be destroyed (vs. 11) like the unclean house of a leper (Lev. 14:45).

Sometimes God commands very difficult things. Ezekiel is commanded to internalize his sorrow over his wife's death, and not engage in any of the normal expressions of emotional pain. When asked by the populous why he behaves so, he tells them his actions are prophetic. Judah is going to lose the things that are most precious to it—the temple, their stronghold, their children—and when they do, ordinary expressions of grief, either because of shock and/or circumstances will not take place (Jer. 16:6-7). In captivity, the people will have to mourn among themselves, and pine away in the awareness that they brought all this horror upon themselves (vs. 23).

### Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

John Morris: Thank you! As you said, very graphic language in the reading Friday. It's so important for us to avoid spiritual adultery. As always, thanks to you and Wade for teaching books of prophecy. It's a great blessing to have your knowledge in this study. Your details, overall history and spiritual application is greatly appreciated. I've gleaned much more than I would have by just reading it on my own. BTW... We sure missed your family at campout this year. Absolutely understand but wanted you to know how often we thought about each of you. Continued prayers for Amber's pregnancy. As always, Bethany was a delight. Thx for letting her attend w/Rick & Lynne. :-)

## July 14: Ezekiel 25-30 (Wade Stanley)

Sorry for the late post today! I had an allergy/cold thing hit yesterday afternoon that led to a Benadryl fog for the morning. Nothing serious, just inconvenient with partly cloudy skies in the ol' grey matter.

Here are some notes for Ezekiel 25-30. I wrote some more extensive notes on Ezekiel 26 because it is a COOL prophecy. Hope all of it helps. Happy reading!

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xUeNq2okbBUFTm7EIH9utfYVA7-GjUojJNLv0WNM5Bs/mobilebasic>

## Ezekiel 25

Verses 1-7: God condemns Ammon for rejoicing over the desolation and captivity of Judah. Most likely carried out by Nebuchadnezzar per 21:18-20, but could also refer to the nomadic peoples to the east of Ammon.

Verses 8-11: Moving clockwise, God turns His gaze from the east of Judah to the south. Moab, like Ammon, rejoiced at Judah's downfall and would suffer the same punishment as her kinsmen to the northeast.

Verses 12-14: In Obadiah 10-14, God accuses Edom of aiding Babylon against Judah, thus earning God's condemnation.

Verses 15-17: The Philistines, Israel's ancient enemies who lived along the Mediterranean coast southwest of Judah, would also feel the fury of God's wrath. God calls them the Cherethites, most likely a reference to their origin on the island of Crete.

## Ezekiel 26

Introduction: This prophecy commences nearly two years after the material in chapters 24-25. Ezekiel wrote this prophecy in either February or March, 586 B.C. Later that year, Jerusalem and Judah finally succumbed to Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 2: Tyre, like Ammon, Moab, and Edom before her, saw the downfall of Jerusalem as an opportunity for gain.

### Verses 3-6

- "And they": The many nations that come against Tyre
- Complete desolation
  - "shall destroy the walls...break down the towers"
  - "scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock"
  - "it shall be a place for spreading of nets"
- Great wealth is plundered
  - "it shall become plunder for the nations"
  - 27:12ff talks of Tyre's tremendous wealth
- "daughter villages" discussed in verse 8

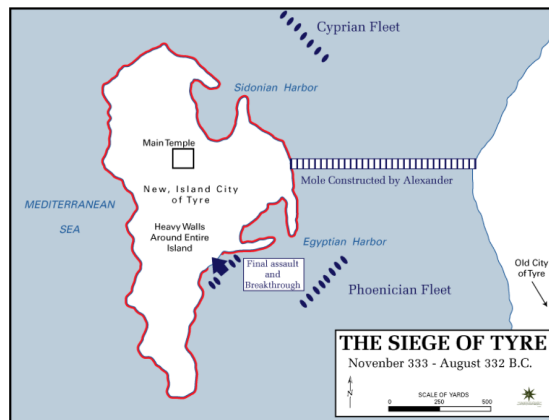
### Verses 7-11

- Nebuchadnezzar the first to conquer Tyre; ancient historians disagree as to the length of the siege, anywhere from 5-13 years.
  - Ancient records are scarce
  - List of foreign kings in Babylon two years after the siege – Tyre's king at the head of list.
  - Verifying this through archaeology virtually impossible thanks to Alexander the Great
- "He will slay with the sword your daughter villages in the fields..."
  - NASB: "daughters on the mainland"
  - RSV: "daughters on the mainland"
  - ESV: "daughters on the mainland"
  - NIV: "settlements on the mainland"
  - Nebuchadnezzar's campaign was directed against mainland Tyre
- Babylonians had no naval power
  - "heap a siege mound"
  - "build a wall against you"
  - "raise a defense against you"
  - "direct his battering rams against your walls and with his axes he will break down your towers"

- After Nebuchadnezzar conquered the mainland, the city moved to an island just off the coast.

Verses 12-14: the second wave

- “They will...”
  - Multiple nations (see verse 3)
  - The destruction of Tyre was the work of more than one nation.
- Alexander the Great – 332 B.C.
  - Requested admittance to offer sacrifice to Hercules
  - The island city refused, inviting him to offer on the ancient altar in Old Tyre.
  - Insulted, ATG laid siege to the island
- Statements to notice
  - Verse 4: “make her like the top of a rock”
  - Verse 5: “a place for spreading nets”
  - Verse 12: “they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water”
  - Verse 14: “I will make you like the top of a rock”
  - Verse 14: “you shall be a place for the spreading nets”
  - ATG used the stones and timber from the old city of Tyre left from Nebuchadnezzar to build a mole out to the island city.



Verses 15-17: The Phoenician people, merchants without peer in the ancient world, would be brought to their knees. The reports of their downfall would ripple throughout the Mediterranean world.

Verses 18-21: Tyre would join the ranks of other pagan nations conquered by God, cast aside into the dustbin of history.

Ezekiel 27

Verses 1-2: God commands Ezekiel to lament the downfall of Tyre. Similar to the sentiments expressed by the angels concerning spiritual Babylon in Revelation 18.

Verses 3-11: God describes the majesty of the Tyrian ships and the military power the city was able to project across the Mediterranean.

Verses 12-24: An extensive list of the cities and peoples stretching from the Middle East to Asia Minor to southern Europe with whom Tyre conducted business.



### Verses 25-36

- Tarshish: a Phoenician city whose exact location is unknown. Possibilities include:
  - Tartessus in southwestern Spain. This would be appropriate to the story, for it would have been difficult to sail any farther from Nineveh (book of Jonah).
  - The island of Sardinia. A ninth-century b.c. Phoenician inscription suggests the possible presence of Tarshish there.
  - Carthage in North Africa. This is supported by the Septuagint version of Ezekiel 27:12, which identifies Carthage with Tarshish (but there was also a Carthage in Spain).
  - Tarsus in Anatolia (modern Turkey). This city would later become the hometown of Paul.
- The trading partners of Tyre are described in a general state of mourning that eventually turns to scorn.

### Ezekiel 28

Verses 1-5: Like the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14, the king of Tyre is a proud figurehead whose commercial wealth and military might have inflamed his heart. God resorts to sarcasm in order to help “bring him back to earth.”

Verses 6-10: God will bring other nations against Tyre to humble her.

Verses 11-19: Again, like the king of Babylon, this lamentation regarding the king of Tyre compares favorably with the characteristics of Satan. As I mentioned in my notes on Isaiah 14, I see these kings as archetypal figures, men whose wealth and power have brought them to the very pinnacles of human civilization. The pride that accompanies such accomplishments is reminiscent of Satan who fell through pride. The prince of this world influences world leaders.

Verses 20-24: Sidon was the companion city of Tyre.

Verses 25-26: God promises to return the captive Israelites to their homeland as He executes judgment on their neighboring enemies.

### Ezekiel 29

Verses 1-7: God sets His sites upon Egypt, the oldest enemy of His people and the country to which they looked for protection against Babylon (notice verses 6-7). God also uses the imagery of a great sea monster to represent Pharaoh and his kingdom, imagery reminiscent of Job 40, Daniel 7, and Revelation 13.

Verses 8-16: The Egypt of Ezekiel’s day faced a similar fate to Ammon, Moab, and Philistia. However, God would not utterly destroy Egypt. A remnant would return, but Egypt would never rise to her former glory, a prediction that history confirms.

Verses 17-21: The conquering of Egypt was Nebuchadnezzar’s reward for the long siege against Tyre that yielded little wealth in return.

### Ezekiel 30

Verses 1-9: The fall of Egypt and her allies would serve as an object lesson to the surrounding Gentile nations. Note verse 8, “Then they will know that I am the Lord.” This was a lesson Egypt failed to learn some 900 years prior when Pharaoh withstood God all the way to the shores of the Red Sea.

Verses 10-12: Nebuchadnezzar would carry out God’s will. A fragmentary clay tablet says that Nebuchadnezzar attacked Thebes, the most prominent of all Egyptian cities, in 569 B.C.

Verses 13-19: Various Egyptian cities are listed to indicate how God would thoroughly defeat Egypt by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

Verses 20-26: Pharaoh Hophra lost to Nebuchadnezzar in 588 B.C. Ezekiel gives us the date of April 29, 587, indicating that this first victory precluded Nebuchadnezzar's ultimate triumph.

## Comment:

Charles Fry:

Regarding the typology of these rulers lifted up with pride, I appreciate the ESV following the Septuagint in Ezekiel 29:3 and 32:2 regarding Pharaoh as a dragon, which highlights the later descriptive language in Revelation:

"speak, and say, Thus says the Lord God:

'Behold, I am against you,  
Pharaoh king of Egypt,  
the great dragon that lies  
in the midst of his streams,  
that says, 'My Nile is my own;  
I made it for myself.'"

The Septuagint also has a reference to Nebuchadnezzar as a dragon in Jeremiah,

"King Nabouchodonosor of Babylon has devoured me;

he has apportioned me;

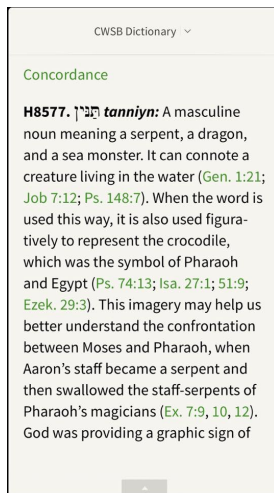
he has seized me, a slim vessel;

he has swallowed me like a dragon;

he has filled his belly with my delicacies."

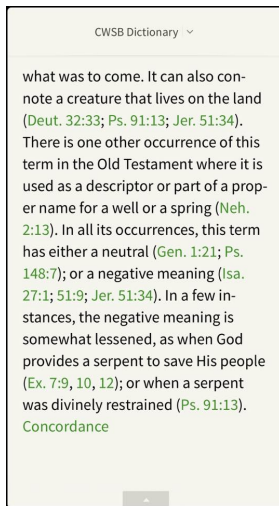
## Comment:

Denise Waits:



## Comment:

Denise Waits:



### Comment:

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade!

### Comment:

Marc Hermon:  
Ginger said she was going to bed last night to read the prophecy study in Ezekiel. When I finally came to bed she was asleep with her Bible on her lap. I woke her up and asked if she finished it. She said she only got through chapter 28. I asked her if she got too Tyred.

### Comment:

Ginger Hermon:  
Thank you, Wade. We sincerely appreciate your efforts with the study. Praying for your health.

## July 21: Ezekiel 31-36 (John Morris)

Reading for June 21, 2017  
EZEKIEL 31-36

Highlights.

### CHAPTER 31

This chapter contains a prediction of the fall of Egypt to Babylon. It came about a month before Jerusalem's walls were penetrated by Nebuchadnezzar's armies (Jer. 39:2) (587 BC). Pharaoh is called to consider Assyria, fallen to Babylon 35 years before, as evidence of how pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

- 31:8: The Assyrian Empire is likened to a mighty cedar of Lebanon (vs. 3), one so great and grand that even the trees of Eden would not have towered above her, nor excelled her in beauty. The symbolism is reminiscent of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 4:10ff).
- 31:14: God cut down the strong, well-watered tree of Assyria so that other wealthy and richly resourced nations would learn to not exalt themselves in pride.
- 31:14-18: Note the repetition of "depths of the earth" (3x), "hell" (Sheol) (3x), and "the Pit" (2x). Each will be referenced again in chapter 32. Each seems to refer to what the New

Testament calls “Hades,” the realm of the dead. As men have an end, so also do the nations made up of them; therefore, no nation should think of itself more highly than it ought to think. Pharaoh needed to hear that...and so does America.

## CHAPTER 32

- 32:1-2a: A little over a year and a half after the fall of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:2), Ezekiel is told to take up a prophetic lamentation, a dirge, for Pharaoh and Egypt. What follows expands upon what was revealed in the previous chapter.
- 32:2: Pharaoh is likened to a lion and “a monster in the seas” (NKJV) that enters rivers and muddies their waters with its feet. This second comparison was made three chapters earlier (29:3-4), and raises the question, “Just what kind of monster?” The Hebrew is “tannin” (#8577), appears throughout the Old Testament, and the KJV translators often rendered it “dragon.” An exhaustive list of the appearances of “tannin” in the Bible, along with an interesting discussion of its identity, can be found at <https://answersingenesis.org/dinosaurs/tannin-sea-serpent-dinosaur-snake-dragon-or-jackal/>
- 32:7-8: The figurative language of authorities being stripped of their power (see also Is.13:10; Joel 2:31).
- 32:17: The following prophecy came two weeks after the one just completed (32:1). Egypt will fall, and join Assyria (vs. 22), Elam (vs. 24), Meschech and Tubal (vs. 26), Edom (vs. 29), the princes of the north (vs. 30), and the Sidonians (vs. 30) in “the Pit” (vs. 28)/ “hell/Sheol” (vs. 21)/ “the depths (lower parts) of the earth” (vss. 18, 24).
- 32:31-32: These verses may be intended as irony. In death, Pharaoh will be “comforted” by the fact that he will not be alone, but in the company of those other nations who fell as he did.

## CHAPTER 33

- 33:7-9: God revisits what He said to Ezekiel in 3:17-19. Something for us to take to heart. Evangelism is not a failure when no one listens; evangelism is a failure when no one preaches. Failure to share the good news is rooted in a lack of faith and love, and without faith and love, how will we deliver our souls?
- 33:10-11: These are words of despair, the words of the captives in Babylon after Jerusalem’s fall. Feeling the crushing weight of their guilt, and seeing now its far-reaching consequences, they wonder to Ezekiel, “how can we live?” Is there any hope? Are we ourselves to die in God’s judgment as so many of our countrymen have? They felt forsaken, hopeless, and desperate. But God, who is rich in mercy, assures them that He does not take pleasure in the death of sinners, but desires that all repent and live! (2 Pet. 3:9)
- 33:12-16: The past is not what matters. It’s all prologue. What matters is NOW.
- 33:17-20- “The way of the Lord is not fair.” A repeated refrain in Ezekiel’s day (18:25, 29). Good thing God is “not fair” by some men’s standards. None of us is good enough to get into heaven on his/her own merits (Eph. 2:8-9), and each one of us has EARNED hell (Rom. 6:23). I’m thankful for God’s sense of fairness.
- 33:21-22: The prophecy in 24:25-27 is fulfilled.

## CHAPTER 34

- 34:2-6: The leaders of the people were not concerned with the welfare of the people. The people were a means to line their own pockets and/or fill their own stomachs. “Fleece the flock” was their motto. And the nation had suffered on every level because of it. Here, btw, we have a great description of the business of a shepherd/pastor/elder: feed the flock, strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring back what was driven away, seek what was lost.

- 34:15: Compare Ps. 23:2

- 34:23-24: Unquestionably Messianic. Jesus is called David, as elsewhere (Jer. 30:9; Hos. 3:5, et al.), just as John the Baptist was called Elijah (Mal. 4:5; Mt. 17:11-13).

## CHAPTER 35

- 35:2: This prophecy against Mount Seir is against Edom. The last verse of the chapter reveals that, as does the rest of Scripture (Gen. 36:9; Josh. 24:4). Mount Seir, situated in Edom, stands for the entire nation.

- 35:5, 10-11: The Edomites had an “ancient hatred” for Israel which may have been rooted in Jacob supplanting Esau, “stealing” his birthright, receiving the blessing, and finally, receiving the Promised Land. Edom wanted that land (see 35:10). Amos tells us Edom’s “anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever” (Amos 1:11). Edom had revealed this anger and hatred toward Israel in the days of the exodus (Num. 20:18-21), and he had showed it yet again by aiding the Babylonians in taking Jerusalem (vs. 5) (Obadiah 10-14?) and rejoicing in its fall (Ps. 137:7).

## CHAPTER 36

- 36:1-15: Ezekiel prophesies to the actual land of Israel (the mountains, the hills, the rivers, the valleys, etc.). Edom has its sights on you, hoping to possess you (35:10; 36:2), but you shall continue to belong to Israel (vs. 8). There is no future for the other nations (vs. 7), including Edom (Mal. 1:3-5), but the Promised Land will once again be plowed and populated by Israel (vss. 9-12). When these things come to pass, the land, itself, will be vindicated of the derogatory things said about it during the captivity (vss. 13-15).

- 36:24-27: We read these same promises back in 11:17-20. God will bring back the captives to the Promised Land, cleanse them of their idolatry, and give them a tender heart to obey Him. Vs. 27, however, looks to a time beyond the return, when the Spirit of God, received at baptism, will dwell in the hearts of Christians, working in them “to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13; Rom. 8:13).

- 36:31: A description of godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:9-10).

<https://answersingenesis.org/dinosaurs/tannin-sea-serpent-dinosaur-snake-dragon-or-jackal/>

## **Comment:**

Butch O’Neal:

Thank you, brother John!

## **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you so much, John Morris! I was able to complete the reading last night but had not read your post or link until now. Very interesting reads. Your notes and summaries are extremely helpful. The study on prophecy has been the most challenging for me. However, I think I like allegories. I'm getting used to them anyways :-). I really appreciate having your and Wade's knowledge to point me to history. I wish I studied scripture more when I was younger. Now it's a goal for the rest of my life, Lord willing.

## **July 28: Ezekiel 37-42 (Wade Stanley)**

Good morning friends. It is with great regret that I offer the following very brief commentary on Ezekiel 37-42. The past two weeks have been quite busy, especially the past seven days. Frankly, I have run out of time and can offer a few sparse comments. Hopefully what I have to say will help you.

We are entering the most challenging portion of Ezekiel and, arguably, the most challenging portion of all the prophetic books in the Bible. Charles, Steven, John, or others, feel free to chime in if you are so inclined and have the time to do so.

Ezekiel 37: A prophecy about the restoration of the nation of Israel (see verse 11). By His power, God would breathe life into the exiled nation and unite all of the tribes. Verses 24ff are Messianic.

Ezekiel 38-39: In all likelihood, this prophecy forecasts the triumphant victory led by the Maccabees over the forces of Antiochus Epiphanes. Daniel also speaks to this victory in chapters 8 and 11.

Ezekiel 40-42: Ezekiel is carried by vision to view and tour a new temple dedicated to God. The dimensions and general design rule out the possibility that this was an actual blueprint for a rebuilt temple. The scale and scope of the temple are conveyed to instill a sense of confidence that the temple which now lies in shambles will one day be rebuilt. It is also possible that God intends to point our attention to the temple which His Son, the descendent of David, would build.

Happy reading my friends! May God go with you!

## **Comment:**

Janet Gordon Gentry:

Thanks, Wade. Hope everything is well with you and yours. We are looking forward to the day you bring your family out with you!

## **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, brother Wade!

## Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Wade! I appreciate your work and perspective on this! In regards to chapters 38 and 39, I would concur with you that the gist pertains to the situation of Antiochus Epiphanes, who is also referred to by Daniel in chapters 8 - 11. regarding the latter, I have always had a sense of duality, and/or multifaceted presentation regarding Daniels reference. that is, there he (Daniel) was after the fact of Antiochus Epiphanes, and yet, he was forecasting events both of the destruction of Jerusalem and, the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ. This is the sense of Jesus reference also in (Matthew 24) where he cannot be literally speaking Antiochus Epiphanes, since that event came long before . . .but he is using the imagery so as to be analogous to the previous event, but actually forecasting an upcoming event, that is, the destruction of Jerusalem. below appears a very good article i found on the subject. In light of this discussion, i would be very interested in the thoughts of others regarding this:

## Replies:

Steven Wright:

If a group of Christians sat down to list perplexing passages, it wouldn't take long for someone to mention Matthew 24:15-16: "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

The reasons for uncertainty are easy to list. What is an abomination? What abomination does Jesus have in mind? One that belongs to his generation, or one from the last days? What is the connection between the prophecies of Daniel and Jesus? Who is "the reader," and what should he or she understand? In what sense should readers "flee to the mountains"? Should they obey literally or metaphorically?

As always, the first step is to read the text in literary, cultural, historical, and canonical contexts. Then we analyze the structure of the passage and do the necessary lexical and grammatical work. We begin with the key phrase, "abomination of desolation."

The term "abomination" (Hebrew *toevah* and *siqqus*) appears more than 100 times in the Old Testament and just a few times in the New Testament. An abomination is normally a great sin, commonly worthy of death. Readers immersed in current debates about sexual ethics may first think an abomination is a sexual sin. Indeed, Scripture calls sexual sins like adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality abominations (e.g., Leviticus 18:22, 29-30). But more often throughout the Bible "abomination" refers to major covenant violations, especially idolatry (in Deuteronomy alone, see 7:25, 13:6-16, 17:2-5, 18:9-12, 27:15, 32:16). In the historical books, "abomination" always describes idolatry, often with child sacrifice (1 Kings 11:7, 2 Kings 23:13). Abomination also refers to idolatry in the prophets, including Daniel 9 and 11. (Daniel uses *siqqus*, a term that always appears in connection with idolatry.)

The interpretation of Daniel 9-11 is difficult and disputed, but it does have some fixed points, and the nature of the abomination that causes desolation is one of them. Daniel 9:26-27 refers to a prince who will destroy the city (Jerusalem) along with its temple and sacrifices, "and on the wings of abominations shall come one who makes desolate."

Two chapters later there is another reference to an "abomination" in connection to the temple: "forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate" (11:31).

Scholars generally agree that the first reference of these prophecies is the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes IV, who ruled Palestine from 175-64 B.C. Antiochus treated Israel with such violence and contempt that they rebelled against him. When he came to

suppress the rebellion, his forces entered the temple, stopped the regular sacrifices, set up an idol of or altar for Zeus, and apparently offered swine there as a sacrifice. This is an abomination because it is idolatry, and it brings desolation because it defiles the holy place at the heart of Israel. This act was the abomination “of” desolation, the abomination “causing” desolation.

#### Larger Structure

Having surveyed the original meaning of “abomination of desolation” in Daniel, we now to turn Matthew 24:15-16, first looking at the larger structure of Matthew 24. These verses come in the context of the Olivet Discourse, which begins with Jesus telling his disciples that the temple will be destroyed (24:1-2). The disciples then asked Jesus to explain: “When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?” (24:3).

The disciples probably thought they were asking one question. The fall of Jerusalem, Jesus' return, and the end of the age were one complex event in their minds. It may seem to us that they asked three questions:

1. When will the temple fall?
2. What is the sign of Jesus' return?
3. What is the sign of the close of this age?

But a close reading shows that Jesus heard and answered two questions. Evangelical scholars will disagree about how much of this passage is devoted to each question, but they generally agree that 24:3-35 mostly refers to events leading up to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. The segment ends with Jesus promising “this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place” (24:35). A generation normally lasts 40 years in Scripture, and Jerusalem and its temple did fall within 40 years, as Jesus said. So his core prediction was fulfilled by AD 70. (Space forbids that I address double and partial fulfillments of elements of 24:3-35. The interested reader may consult orthodox commentaries.) Then, in 24:36, Jesus starts to speak exclusively about “that day”—that is, the last day.

In 24:4-14, the Jesus is preparing his disciples for events—most of them extremely difficult—that will take place in their lifetime. These troubles are not signs of the end; the disciples must be ready to “stand firm” through them (24:4-8, 13). Then he says, “When you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation . . . '—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

This prophecy makes sense only with reference to the fall of Jerusalem. It cannot possibly apply to Jesus' return. When he comes it will be pointless for an unbeliever to try to flee. And a believer will not want to flee. For the same reason, the following command not to go back to get a cloak and the woe for nursing mothers who must flee cannot refer to Jesus' return. But they make perfect sense if Jesus predicts that another abomination of desolation, like Antiochus Epiphanes of Daniel, is coming. Indeed, that abomination did come in Roman form in AD 70. The Roman armies were always an abomination because they carried with them idolatrous images of the emperor, whom they worshiped. And those armies brought desolation because their commander leveled the city and entered the holy of holies, defiling it.

The line “let the reader understand” (24:15) means that those who read Matthew—which would have been written before AD 70—must be ready to flee when they see Roman armies besieging Jerusalem. Indeed, the parallel account in Luke 21 makes this point explicit: “when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies . . . flee to the mountains” (Luke 21:10-24). In fact, many Christians did flee, sparing their lives, when they saw Rome's armies coming. Eusebius, the first great historian of the church, says that when the Romans fell upon Jerusalem, “the church at Jerusalem . . . left the city, and moved to a town called Pella.”<sup>[1]</sup> So Jesus, ever the Good Shepherd, told the first Christians how to survive those most harrowing years of the church's infancy.

A wise preacher dealing with this passage may find particular value in focusing on this point. When Jesus gives instruction concerning future events, his purpose is not to



satiating our curiosity or answer all of our speculative questions. Instead, his purpose is to protect and guide and instruct his people. Jesus gave relatively little attention to the question "When?" and much toward the question "How shall we live faithfully?" Preaching on such texts today should be shaped by Jesus' concern for the welfare and endurance of his church.

---

[1] Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, trans. Christian Cruse (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1955), 86-87.

Dan Doriani serves as vice president of strategic academic projects and professor of theology and ethics at Covenant Theological Seminary. He previously served as senior pastor of Central Presbyterian Church in Clayton, Missouri.

## **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

Yes, 37:24ff is messianic, except I would start that messianic segment in v.15. The two sticks/one Israel prophecy is often cited by LDS missionaries going door to door, but this is to be understood in the context of Christ's redemptive work (John 10:16, Ephesians 2:13-22). The one King is Jesus, who is signified by David (just as John the Baptist was "the Elijah who was to come" Matt 17:10-13, see Acts 2:29-36). We know the covenant in v26 was established by Jesus through his blood (Matt 26:27-28, Heb 8:7ff). We also have Paul citing Ezekiel 37:23b, 27 in 2 Cor 6:16 in reference to Christians and the church. The language of King and Israel and land and covenant is to be understood in the context of the Christ and his kingdom.

Ch 38-39 likely has reference, initial fulfillment, in the intertestamental period of Israel's history, as suggested by Wade Stanley and Steven Wright above, but there are aspects of this prophecy that are referenced or echoed in Revelation as the nations reject Jesus and are hostile toward his people (Christians, the church, see Revelation 20:8-9). Neither this prophecy nor John's later visions provide a timetable or roadmap of history, but do emphasize the broad hostility of deluded nations toward the Lamb and his called chosen people, and affirm that deliverance does not come through political process or force of arms but only through God's intervention. The ingathering described in 39:25-29 must have begun on the day of Pentecost, considering v29 (see Peter's proclamation of the outpouring of the Spirit as specific fulfillment of prophecy in Acts 2).

The Great Temple and its services and circumstances in 40-48 has enough in common with the language describing the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22 (and considering Heb 9-10) that I believe we are looking at two perspective views of the same thing which has partial fulfillment in the church but ultimate fulfillment in the presence of God. There is an emphasis in both a grandeur of scale and structure, and holiness of usage that is far beyond human experience and capacity. Giving God his due was a message for Ezekiel's generation, and John's, and ours.

## **Comment:**

Steven Wright:  
Thank you Charles!

## **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:  
Thanks, Wade! Your work abounds for the Lord and His kingdom. We have prayed for the college bible study this week @ Smart Road. Thanks for your, Charles and Steves feedback on

today's assigned chapters. I'm sure marc and I weren't the only ones singing this song while studying tonight! 😊

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=mVoPG9HtYF8>

“Delta Rhythm Boys-Dry Bones”

## August 4: Ezekiel 43-48 (John Morris)

Reading for August 4, 2017 (tomorrow)

EZEKIEL 43-48

Posting a day early. Headed to Denver, this morning, for Jefferson Avenue’s “Colorado August Meeting.” Have time to post just a few remarks which I hope can be helpful.

As was indicated, last week, these last chapters of Ezekiel are dedicated to a lengthy, detailed, and highly figurative depiction of the coming kingdom of God, seemingly both in its earthly and eternal glory. In our minds, the two phases may be very distinct, but to Him “who inhabits eternity” (Is. 57:15), perhaps not so much. Similar overlap occurred in the latter chapters of Isaiah.

Ezekiel 40-48 is the second of three great architectural visions in the Bible. The first was the pattern of the tabernacle Moses beheld on the mountain (Ex. 25:40), the third the New Jerusalem which John saw coming down out of heaven in Rev. 21-22. The similarities between Ezekiel and John’s visions are several and striking, and interestingly, both were set on high mountains from which to get the best view (Ezek. 40:2; Rev. 21:10).

On a macro level, the vision highlights a few overarching truths. (1) In the future kingdom of God, worship will be central. (2) God will dwell among His people. (3) Life-giving blessings will flow from the presence of God (43:1-12 is my favorite part of the vision). (4) God has a well-thought out plan for the future of His people.

### CHAPTER 43

- 43:1-5: Nineteen years earlier, Ezekiel had witnessed the glory of the LORD leaving the temple by the eastern gate (8:1; 10:18-19; 11:22-23). Now he sees God returning! This marks a new beginning in God’s dealings with His people.
- 43:7: The temple tour proceeded in silence, except for five occasions (40:45; 41:4, 22; 42:13; 43:7). The first four times, Ezekiel’s heavenly tour guide was the one who spoke. This last time, God speaks. He says His house will be holy (1 Pet. 1:16).
- 43:13-27: Highlighting the importance of worship in terms Ezekiel and his hearers could relate to, an elaborate altar and its proper use is described.

### CHAPTER 44

- 44:3: Our introduction to “the prince,” a recurring figure throughout the remainder of the prophecy. Almost certainly fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the “Prince of Peace” (cf. 34:24; 37:25).
- 44:6-27: Purity of priesthood and worship is emphasized.

### CHAPTER 45

• 45:1-8: As in the days of Joshua, once again the land is divided by lot into inheritance, though only a “holy” portion (vss. 1-4), a portion for the Levites (vs. 5), a portion for “the city,” and a section for the prince are mentioned here. Later, in chapter 48, the remainder of the land will be divided. More importance is given to symmetry than to geographic realities, indicating to us the symbolic nature of the vision.

• 45:9-25: More on worship, which gives me pause. This prophecy is fulfilled in those who “worship Him in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:24). God is looking for people like this (Jn. 4:23). Is worship the priority for me it ought to be?

## CHAPTER 46

• 46:9: Requiring the worshippers to exit via the opposite gate made for orderly flow of traffic. But perhaps it also teaches us that worship should change us, that we should leave the experience different than when we came.

## CHAPTER 47

• 47:1-12: John saw a “pure river of water of life...proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1). Here, Ezekiel sees something very similar, an ever-deepening, life-giving river flowing SE from the temple (God’s presence), all the way to the Dead Sea, whose waters it heals. It gives life wherever it goes, though some locations remain unchanged (vs. 11), perhaps indicative of those who refuse the life that is found in Christ Jesus. Note the similarities between vs. 12 and Rev. 22:2.

• 47:13-21: Here, the boundaries of the land are given. In chapter 48, the division of the land will be the subject.

• 47:22-23: In the future, Gentiles will have an inheritance with Jews in “the Holy Land” (Zech. 2:12). See Eph. 2:11ff.

## CHAPTER 48

• 48:1-29: A new allotment of the Promised Land is described. The entire territory of Israel is to be divided into twelve parallel portions running from east to west. Unlike in the days of Joshua, even Reuben, Gad, and all of Manasseh are located within the borders of the Promised Land.

• 48:30-35: As if to set us up for Rev. 21-22, the vision ends with a brief description of the city. Like the New Jerusalem John saw, this one has twelve gates (cf. Rev. 21:21). The city’s most outstanding quality, though? “THE LORD IS THERE” (cf. Rev. 21:3).

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

Thank you brother John! Good travels and good meeting!

### **Comment:**

Butch O’Neal:

Thank you, brother John!

**Comment:**

Marc Hermon:

Why do we meet with the church? Because the Lord is there!

**Replies:**

Denise Waits:

Matthew 18:20 (CSB)

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them.”

**Comment:**

Steven Dallas Thompson:

Denise Waits, I like your comment.

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### August 11: Daniel 1-6 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning all. Please find a guide to today's reading below. There are a couple of embedded links to other documents. Please let me know if you have trouble opening anything.

Happy reading!

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ypf2A6EfSdZUKwwwuLGRDwMxq2KLrg0K\\_Fmpyq012t0/mobilebasic](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ypf2A6EfSdZUKwwwuLGRDwMxq2KLrg0K_Fmpyq012t0/mobilebasic)

#### Chapter 1

Daniel and his three friends were taken to Babylon in the first wave of captives in ~606/605 BC. The first chapter shows the moral fiber of this young man who took a principled stand far from home. These four youths commit themselves to a life of integrity in the earliest days of their captivity. Chapters 3 and 6 show the consistency with which they held to their convictions even in the face of near-certain death.

#### Chapter 2

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B8zorFt46MawcHFWQkFWRXFGemM>

#### Chapter 3

Verse 1: From the Archaeological Study Bible, "Large statues of this kind, though made of wood, were plated with gold. This particular statute was 90 feet (27 m) high and probably represented the god Nabu, whose name formed the first element in Nebuchadnezzar's name."

Verses 16-18: Among the most inspiring statements of pure conviction in the Bible. These three men acknowledge that God does have the power to deliver them, but that may not be His will. Regardless, they resolve not to bow down to the image.

Verse 25: Some speculate that the fourth being in the furnace is a Christophany, a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus. If you consult newer translations, you will notice that the being appears god-like to the Babylonian observers. In all likelihood, this is an angel sent to preserve the lives of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abed-Nego. See Isaiah 43:2.

#### Chapter 4

This chapter, though loaded with symbolism, is fairly straightforward, especially given that the dream is interpreted for us. We once again encounter the archetype seen with Isaiah's description of the king of Babylon as well as what God says about the king of Tyre.

It is comforting to think that we may see Nebuchadnezzar one day with the Lord. The last years of his reign are clouded in obscurity, especially for a man who rose so quickly to the pinnacle of his age. These seven years of delusional behavior likely took place in those latter years which means his final recorded words in chapter 4 leave us with hope that the humility learned by this son of pride may save his soul.

#### Chapter 5

The irresponsibility and decadence of this event is staggering. On this night, Babylon is surrounded by the combined forces of the Medes and Persians. In the two short decades

since Nebuchadnezzar's rise, Babylon has quickly fallen and now stands on the precipice of ruin. Daniel, still serving Babylon nearly 70 years after his captivity, displays his God-given ability for interpretation once again.

Darius the Mede is made ruler of Babylon at the end of this chapter (~538 BC). In a rather confusing bit of history, he shares the same name as another Persian ruler. It appears that Darius the Mede served as viceroy over Babylon for Cyrus the Great (who we meet in chapter 6) while the latter continued his military campaigns in the Middle East. After two years, Darius is relieved and Cyrus assumes rule over Babylon. To help clarify, I assembled this brief overview of the successive rulers of Babylon, Persia, and Greece:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B8zorFt46MawenVnbFpBcHNheEE>

## Chapter 6

The annals of ancient history testify of many effective and influential kings of men. Daniel served two of the greatest -- Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus the Great. God in his providence placed a man above reproach in position of great influence. Cyrus obviously held Daniel in high esteem as this chapter testifies. And it is through the influence of Daniel that a second ruler of men is compelled to praise the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Jewish tradition holds that it was Daniel who convinced Cyrus to return the first Jewish refugees to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (see the early chapters of Ezra). Tradition also holds that Daniel shared Isaiah 44:28-45:7 with the Persian king.

### Comment:

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade!

### Comment:

Ginger Hermon:  
Marc read all 6 chapters during the car ride home from stl. Full attention from the kids the entire time. In my opinion 6 of the best chapters in the Bible. I love seeing Holy Scriptures through the eyes of a child. Thanks for your notes, Wade. I love this book!

## August 18: Daniel 7-12 (John Morris)

Reading for August 18, 2017  
DANIEL 7-12

It's been difficult to know just what to include in the following. By necessity, had to go with something somewhat skeletal, but know that it has resulted in creating considerable voids. I know we all don't have equal exposure to these prophecies, and so all of this will be old hat to some, and some of it may be quite new to others. Feel free to ask for clarification. Hope your reading today was blessed!

### CHAPTER 7

- 7:4: The beast "like a lion" is the kingdom of Babylon. Over time, the kingdom became less of a threat to the surrounding nations, and perhaps more humane. The symbolism here may well apply not only to the nation, but to Nebuchadnezzar himself.

- 7:5: "another beast...like a bear." The Persian (Medo-Persian) Empire. Raised up on one side, since the kingdom was dominated by the Persian portion (cf. 8:3, 20). Three ribs may

represent three conquests which were integral to its rise among nations, possibly Egypt, Lydia, and Babylon.

- 7:6: “another, like a leopard.” The Macedonian/Greek Empire. Its initial conquests under Alexander the Great were historically quick, and with Alexander’s death, power over the conquered lands fell primarily into the hands of his four generals (cf. 8:8): Ptolemy, Seleucus, Lysimachus, Cassander (btw, have song, will sing, if anyone’s interested =)).

- 7:7: “a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong.” Rome. Its iron teeth match up with the iron legs and feet in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (cf. 2:33,40) and its bronze nails (2:19) represent the enormous influence Greek culture, philosophy, architecture, religion, etc. had in the Empire. The ten horns represent the “barbarian” kings/kingdoms (7:24) which assumed power as/after the Western Roman Empire collapsed. Ten may be literal or figurative.

- 7:8-27: This little horn seems to symbolize the papacy, whose rise to prominence began among the barbarian kingdoms (it was initially aided by the power vacuum in the west, created by absent and/or weak Roman imperial authority, and eventually the removal of the Roman emperor altogether in 476 AD). The pope’s words and works during the so-called dark ages, particularly, but well beyond, have certainly fit the description given of the little horn’s words and works. It is my understanding that this little horn is synonymous with the “man of sin” in 2 Thess. 2:3-10.

## CHAPTER 8

- 8:3-4: “a ram which had two horns.” Medo-Persia, the higher horn being the Persians. The two horns correspond to the image’s two arms (2:32) and the bear-like creature’s two sides (7:5). The Medo-Persian Empire’s conquests did, in fact, stretch westward from Shushan (where Daniel was in this vision) into Babylon, Syria, and Asia Minor; northward into Armenia; and southward into Israel, Egypt, and even Ethiopia.

- 8:5-8: “a male goat came from the west.” This is Greece (8:21). Enraged by Persia’s former attempts under Xerxes to conquer Greece, Alexander and his soldiers moved to break the Persian Empire (then ruled by Darius III), and did so successfully. Alexander, however (the notable horn), died young, and after the battle of Ipsus (301 BC), the empire fell into the hands of his four generals (see above).

- 8:9-27: Another “little horn,” but unlike the one in the previous chapter, this one arises out of one of the four Greek kingdoms. This is almost universally understood to be Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the eighth king of the Seleucid Empire (Seleucus was one of the four generals). He reigned from 175 to 164/3 BC. His fulfillment of these predictions can be read about in the Jewish books of 1 and 2 Maccabees (1 Maccabees being the more reliable of the two). Antiochus IV Epiphanes waged a war on the faith of the Jews, attempting by force to make them idolaters. His most memorable crime was sacrificing a pig on the altar of burnt offering and setting up an idol in the temple precincts. He ultimately failed in his attempt to paganize the Jews, was struck by God and died. His exploits and those of the faithful Jews (led by Judas Maccabeus) who opposed him will be revisited at length in ch. 11.

## CHAPTER 9

- 9:1-3: In the first year of Persian rule over Babylon, Daniel comes to understand by reading Scripture that God intended the captivity to last 70 years. Realizing the expiration date was near, and conscious of the people’s sins that caused the captivity, he devotes himself to prayer and fasting.

- 9:4-19: Daniel's prayer.
- 9:20-23: God sends Gabriel in response to Daniel's devotions. Prayer and fasting sometimes precede unexpected blessings!
- 9:24-27: The famed "Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks." As with every passage in the second half of this book (but to an even greater degree), there's a lot here! 70 weeks = 490 days, prophetically standing for 490 years (one rotation of the Earth representing one revolution of the Earth (comp. Ezek. 4:5-6)). This period of 490 years is broken up into various parts. We'll notice a few. Daniel is told that in 483 years (69 weeks) from Artaxerxes' decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Neh. 2:1-8), the Messiah will come (fulfilled at Jesus' baptism when He was anointed with the Holy Spirit). This specific timeline helps explain why the Jews were anticipating the Son of God's arrival during John the Baptist's ministry (Lk. 3:15). Daniel is also told that 3 1/2 years after Messiah's manifestation, He will be killed (vs. 26-27), and that His death will bring an end to sacrifices and offerings (cf. Heb. 9-10). The remaining 3 1/2 years (the second half of the 70th week) is then devoted to confirming the New Covenant (vs. 27)—that is, to the best of my understanding, to bring the Gentiles into the kingdom of God, as well (Ac. 10). The prophecy closes out (last half of vs. 27) with a prediction of the Romans bringing desolation on Jerusalem in 70 AD, an event closely connected with Christ's coming and ministry; Jesus, Himself, said that Jerusalem's destruction was the result of the Jews' rejection of Him (Mt. 23:37-38).

## DANIEL 10

- 10:1-3: Two years after Cyrus made his momentous decree (Ezra 1:1-4), Daniel engages in a partial fast for three weeks. His mourning may be connected to the opposition his countrymen were facing in Jerusalem as they attempted to rebuild the temple (Ezra 4:4-5).
- 10:4-14: A heavenly personage appears to Daniel. Again, fasting (even partial) and prayer are followed by an unexpected blessing! This heavenly being is not named, but appears at least one other time in the book (12:7ff), and his description is very similar to what we read in Rev. 1:13-16. He is not Divine, since he requires the aid of Michael the archangel to move past one of Satan's angels (the prince of the kingdom of Persia) who withstood him for three weeks, delaying his meeting with Daniel. Like Gabriel who was sent in ch. 9, this heavenly being has some prophetic words for Daniel.
- 10:15-19: Daniel's response to this being is similar to John's response in Rev. 1:17.
- 10:20-21: Another glimpse (like vs. 13) into what is happening in the heavenly places simultaneously with events here on Earth. I don't claim to understand it, but there is an obvious interplay between the worlds that is fascinating to contemplate! Compare Rev. 12:7-11.

## DANIEL 11

The predictions in this chapter are especially troublesome for skeptics. The predictions are not in highly symbolic, apocalyptic language (like Revelation), but quite straightforward, explicit, and undeniably accurate. This chapter, more than any other, drives skeptics' futile efforts to date Daniel to the 2nd century BC or later, three hundred-plus years after it was actually written. They want the accurate predications to POST-date the events!

- 11:2-4: Prophecies concerning Persia and Greece. Three more Persian kings were coming after Cyrus (who was reigning at the time, vs. 1): Cambyses, Smerdis, and Xerxes. Xerxes, as was mentioned earlier, will stir up Persia in an attempt to annex Greece. "Then a mighty king



shall arise.” This is Alexander the Great, and for the third time in the book, the four kingdoms that succeeded his short-lived united kingdom are referenced (7:6; 8:8).

- 11:5-9: Early history of the interplay between the Greek Ptolemaic and Seleucid Kingdoms.
- 11:10-19: More Ptolemaic and Seleucid history, specifically conflicts between Antiochus III the Great (223-187 BC), Ptolemy IV Philopater (222-205 BC), and Ptolemy V Epiphanes (205-182 BC).
- 11:20: Seleucus IV (187-175 BC), Antiochus IV Epiphanes’ brother
- 11:21-39: More on Antiochus IV Epiphanes. An amplification of 8:9-26.
- 11:40-43: I’m not sure. As far as I know, we have no record of a fourth campaign by Antiochus IV Epiphanes into Egypt. That doesn’t mean there wasn’t one—absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence—it just means history is silent (as far as I know). It has been suggested that these verses may simply be a recapitulation of the life of Antiochus. Maybe. Perhaps they refer to something farther into the future, though?
- 11:44-45: This may have a clearer interpretation. While trying to put down the Maccabean revolt in Palestine, Antiochus received news that insurrection was afoot in Parthia (north) and Armenia (east), and so left on an expedition to quell it. His armies were in the field in Judea during this time, possibly fulfilling the prediction, “he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas (Mediterranean) and the glorious holy mountain (Zion in Jerusalem).” He came close to having total victory over the Jews, but ultimately failed, and died a miserable death that even he acknowledged was punishment from God for what he had done. No one helped him, because no one could.

## CHAPTER 12

- 12:1-2: Like others among the prophets, Daniel here seems to get a glimpse of the end, the resurrection!
- 12:3: “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” Sure sounds like our times.
- 12:7: “time, times, and half a time.” One year, two years, half a year—that is, 3 ½ years. We saw this very expression earlier in 7:25. This timeframe, like so many predictions in Scripture, may have multiple applications. Firstly, perhaps to Antiochus Epiphanes (Josephus says the he put a stop to the daily sacrifice in the temple for 3 ½ years), and later, to the little horn of Daniel 7, the man of sin, the papacy (more on that below). The similarities between the behavior of Antiochus and the papacy are striking, and both are depicted as little horns. The first seems to anticipate and foreshadow the second.
- 12:11-12: Here is perhaps the single most challenging prophecy in the book. It mentions the daily sacrifice being taken away and the abomination of desolation, which makes us think of the heinous acts of Antiochus Epiphanes (11:31). If we attempt to interpret it that way, then 1,290 days may be a more exact accounting of how much time elapsed from Antiochus desecrating the temple to the Maccabees purifying the temple. 1,335 days, then, might be the time that elapsed from the desecration of the temple to the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. I only submit these as possibilities, however, and know of no way to prove them.

I will go ahead and share what I believe is another possible (secondary?) understanding. If we apply the so-called “day for a year principle” (seen in Ezek. 4:5-6, and evident in the prophecy of the 70 weeks), then this chapter may be giving us a progression of three very long time

periods: (1) “a time, times, and half a time” (1,260 days/years) (7:25; Rev. 12:6, 14; etc.); (2) “1,290 days/years”; and (3) “1,335 days/years.”

If the 1,260 years is, in fact (as I believe), providing a starting and ending point for the papacy’s greatest power (~533 AD to ~1793 AD), then the other two numbers would have some application to the papacy, as well. I will submit, as a possibility, that the three numbers are marking stages in the process of the papacy’s gradual loss of power. In 1793 (end of 1,260 years), the events of the French Revolution brought papal supremacy crashing down in events that forever changed the world. In 1823 (end of 1,290 years), Pope Leo XII was elected who determined to make the guiding theme of his pontificate, not politics, but religious renewal. Popes had been stressing the papacy’s political role for centuries, and this was a huge shift in focus and exercise of influence. In 1868 (end of 1,335 years), the First Vatican Council was called for the purpose of declaring papal infallibility an official doctrine of the Catholic Church. This decision triggered events which quickly resulted in the papacy’s total loss of temporal power. The popes had ruled over the Papal States for over a thousand years, had their own standing armies, etc. They were kings. But due to that decision in 1868, they lost that. Within two years, Rome was incorporated into the new Italian state, and the pope declared himself a “prisoner in the Vatican.” Those of that time who lived to see it were, in fact, blessed.

- 12:13: Let’s live so that God can say this to us!

### **Comment:**

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, John! Definitely a challenging book.

### **Comment:**

Butch O’Neal:

Thank you, John! This is very helpful!

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

Thank you very much brother John! I saw this come in last night, but, we were having some company with us in our home at the time. I was just now able to read your study! Very good! Oh and SING IT! Btw :)

### **Replies:**

Ginger Hermon:

Likewise, John! Thank u so much. Lord willing I'll be able to catch up on the Friday study soon. In the meantime thx again for your efforts! This group is a great blessing!



### **Comment:**

Cassie Crane:

This was timely for me, John. Thank you so much for the work that went into this, it was helpful!

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

That's a big chunk to summarize! 😊

Amidst the unfolding and troublesome times, I especially like the assurances:

Daniel 2:44 (NIV-WS)

44 “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

Daniel 7:13-14 (NIV-WS)

13 “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Matthew 26:63-65 (NIV-WS)

63 But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

64 “You have said so,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy.

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### August 25: Hosea 1-7 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning all!

After reviewing Hosea 1-6 this week, I decided that a brief summary was all that was needed for today.

Hosea ministered to the northern 10 tribes (known as both Israel and Ephraim throughout) as well as to Judah. Hosea was a contemporary of Isaiah whose ministry concerned the southern kingdom.

The unique feature of Hosea is the "living allegory" enacted by the prophet. He is told to marry an unfaithful woman who would remain unfaithful and bear illegitimate children. In this, the prophet's relationship with his wife would mirror God's relationship with his people.

As you read through Hosea, you will notice many of the familiar themes from previous prophets -- exposure of immorality, predictions of a coming captivity, the redemption of God's people, and the approach of the Messiah. Having flexed your interpretational muscles elsewhere, I am confident you will easily pick up the gist of Hosea's message. Feel free to post questions and/or comments below.

Happy reading!

#### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade!

#### **Comment:**

Kevin Crittenden:  
Thank you Wade! Just an off-the-wall thought: Is there some connection between the name Hosea and the word of praise Hosanna?

#### **Replies:**

Charles Fry:  
Psalms 118:25 (NIV)  
25 Lord, save us!  
Lord, grant us success!

Hosanna in the NT is transliterated from the phrase in the Psalms, "Lord save us." The Hebrew word "save" is the root of the name Hosea, Hoshea, Joshua, and Jesus.

## September 2: Hosea 8-14 (John Morris)

Reading for September 1, 2017  
HOSEA 8-14

Hope you were blessed by yesterday's reading (Rev. 1:3).  
How 'bout one highlighted verse/passage per chapter?

8:7- "They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind." Nine times Ecclesiastes speaks of "grasping for the wind." Wind comes and goes, is impossible to capture, and fleeting. It's a perfect symbol for things that are vain and empty. The northern kingdom had poured immense time, treasure, and trouble into serving false gods and courting the favor of heathen nations. All this was vanity and grasping for the wind! What would it yield? What would be the harvest? The whirlwind. Whirlwinds are connected with God's judgment (Ezek. 1:4; Zech. 7:14). The harvest would be worse than than what they'd sown! The law of unintended consequences. A law of the harvest remains in place for us, today (Gal. 6:7-8).

9:10- "I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season." The nation had once been a true delight to God, like grapes one might happen upon while wandering in the wilderness, hot and hungry. The first figs of the year were considered a delicacy (Jer. 24:2), and Israel had been like the first figs of the first year—that is, the tree (the nation) had not only been a delight, but had shown promise and appeared it was going to fulfill its purpose. But the nation went after Baal. In Jesus' day, the nation would be likened to a fig tree again (Mk. 11:12-14).

10:12- A verse of hope! A fallow field, a life allowed to fall into unfruitfulness, can be replowed and replanted! God will come and rain righteousness on that soul. But we must be serious and sincere farmers. We will seek Him and find Him when we search for Him with our whole heart (Jer. 29:12-13).

11:1-4, 8-9- Perhaps more frequently than any of the other prophets, Hosea speaks of the nation's youth, its early days (see also 2:15; 9:10). God reminisces about how it used to be. In these verses, God talks about the love He had for Israel in its youth, how He gently reared the nation to maturity (cf. Ezek. 16:1-14). He thinks back to how He was merciful to them, like a farmer who would lift the yoke from his animal to give it a rest, and then stoop and handfeed it. In vss. 8-9, God's heart for the nation is still such that He cannot bear to destroy them completely. The full force of His anger will not be exerted.

12:4-6- A lot could be said about these verses. Jacob wrestled with the angel, even while his hip was out of socket. He cried during the struggle. Why? He wanted the Lord's blessing! He knew He needed the Lord. How bad do we want the Lord's blessing? How bad do we think we need it? Only by the help of God can we do His will (vs. 6; Jn. 15:5; Phil. 2:13).

13:1- "When Ephraim spoke, trembling." When Ephraim feared the Lord, that is, and possessed a measure of humility and sense of dependency on God, he was exalted. When he turned to Baal, that all ended. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (Jas. 4:10).

14:2- "we will offer the sacrifices of our lips." The Septuagint rendered this passage "the fruit of our lips." This may be where the Hebrew writer, guided by inspiration, got the expression (Heb. 13:15).

**Comment:**

Debbie Bolinger:  
So true!!!

**Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, John!

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### September 9: Joel 1-3 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning everyone! Our reading for today is Joel 1-3. Here are a few things to help the reading along.

Joel was a prophet sent to Judah (the southern kingdom) probably during the 7th century. Unlike Hosea, the prophet's personal life does not enter the book in any way.

The first 1.5 chapters of Joel predict a pestilence of locust that will fall upon Judah. You will find God's customary urgings to mourning and repentance interspersed. On a side note, I have often wondered if the plague of locusts did not prefigure the conquering of Babylon. This section is rife with military imagery and the connections are many. I have come to lean toward a more literal interpretation, but I do not rule out the possibility of this pestilence serving as a "living allegory."

Throughout the book you will find "the day of the Lord" several times. In my estimation, these references do not predict the ultimate "day of the Lord" when "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess." Instead, I believe these warn of a day of judgment against Judah as well as her Gentile enemies (see chapter 3). Perhaps chapter 3 does prefigure the final day when God's retributive acts will be carried out against all who do not know Him and who have not obeyed the gospel of Jesus. I think it more likely that chapter 3 is concerned with the more immediate threats of Philistia and Phoenicia.

The end of chapter 2 is Messianic and I know it will be familiar. This passage forms the foundation for Peter's declaration of the risen Christ in Acts 2.

Have a blessed day. Keep your garments clean and your lamps trimmed!

#### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade!

#### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:  
Thank you brother Wade!

#### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:  
Excellent summary, Wade! Thanks for starting and ending the day by edifying the brethren!  
(Maddy just got back from Iowa Bible Study. Good turnout. 😊)

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### September 15: Amos 1-4 (John Morris)

Reading for September 15, 2017

Amos 1-4

#### THE MAN

Amos was from Tekoa (1:1), a community six miles south of Bethlehem, the ruins of which still bear the name Takua, today. Before his prophetic call, Amos was a sheepbreeder (1:1; 7:14) and a “tender of sycamore fruit” (a type of fig) (7:14). Unlike many prophets, he did not have a prophetic ancestry (7:14; comp. 1 Sam. 10:10-12) which may explain why he doesn’t mention his father’s name in the preface to his prophecy (unlike Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Jonah, and Zechariah).

#### HIS TIME

Amos prophesied “in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel” (1:1), making him a contemporary of Hosea, Isaiah, and possibly Jonah. During this period, the people of Israel had grown prosperous and presumptuous, in love with lavish living (Amos 6:1, 4-6) and little concerned with God’s claim on their lives. Amos speaks often of the people’s fine homes: their “palaces” (3:10, 11; 6:8), “houses of ivory” (3:15), “houses of hewn stone” (5:11), the “winter house” and the “summer house” (3:15). The people had become absorbed with creating a little piece of Paradise here on Earth, as in Haggai’s day (Hag. 1:2-4). A sense of physical security and spiritual apathy prevailed. Very much like our own time.

#### THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book of Amos can be broken up in a number of ways, but the following works for me:

- (1) Amos’ preaching in Israel (chaps. 1-6)
- (2) Amos’ probable preaching in Judah (chap. 8-9)
- (3) The link between the two, comprising three visions (7:1-8) and the narrative of Amos’ expulsion from the northern kingdom (7:9-17)

#### COMMENTS ON CHAPTERS 1-4

From 1:3-2:3, we read pronouncements of God’s judgment on six surrounding Gentile nations. Each pronouncement follows a five-part pattern:

- (1) “Thus says the LORD”
- (2) “For three transgressions of \_\_\_\_, and for four” (a literary device, comp. Prov. 6:16; 30:15ff)
- (3) “I will not turn away its punishment”
- (4) “Because....”
- (5) “I will send/kindle a fire...devours its/the palaces”

After pronouncing judgment on these Gentiles nations, God then turns His attention to Judah and Israel, following the same five-part pattern with Judah, but omitting the fifth point with Israel (2:4-8)—the chapters that follow will serve as an extended substitute.

In chapter three, God assures that the punishment He has promised through the prophets will come to pass. “God is not a man, that He should lie” (Num. 23:19). He speaks of the coming



Assyrians in vs. 11 as “an adversary”, describing three things that will transpire when they come to conquer. They will (1) “be all around the land” (2) “sap your strength from you” and (3) “your palaces shall be plundered.” He says they will even destroy the “altars of Bethel” (vs. 14) —that is, the altars set up in the headquarters of the nation’s idolatrous religion (7:13). Neither they, nor their gods, will escape. All this was fulfilled in 722 BC when Samaria, the capital city, was taken.

In chapter four, God reminds the nation of all the measures He had already taken to bring them to repentance: famine (vs. 6); drought (vss. 7-8); destruction of crops (vs. 9); death through plague and military loss (vs. 10); near decimation (vs. 11). All of these had been Divine attempts to spur a change of heart, but none had worked. After each one, God has to say, “Yet you have not returned to Me” (vss. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11). Hardness of heart was their undoing.

### **Comment:**

Butch O’Neal:  
Thank you, John!

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:  
Good content, John.

A side note on the book and its timing, regarding the earthquake mentioned to fix the date for the prophecies of Amos mentioned in the introduction (1:1-3), it is very likely that was intended as corroboration of Amos’s message when the book was written. While the captivity of the land is in view several years away, Amos alluded several times to the rising and falling of the land (8:8, 9:5 for example), breaking down of walls, houses, palaces, temples etc (6:11, 9:1, 7:9, 9:9) and by way of contrast promises the rebuilding of David’s fallen tent/walls/ruins in 9:11. Amos alluded to the shaking God would unleash, two years before it happened, affirming his legitimacy as a prophet. The Israeli archaeologist, Yigael Yadin, in excavations at Hazor (1956) found evidence of significant earthquake damage which he dated to about 760 BC, the time frame of Amos.

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:  
Always a fave, Amos!

### **Replies:**

Kevin Crittenden:  
So was Andy.

## **September 22: Amos 5-9 (Wade Stanley)**

Something is amiss in Amos! A few highlights from my reading.

5:18-19: There were those who yearned for God’s judgment upon the heathen. Such an infatuation betrays the deeply-deceived mentality of a nation mired in iniquity. Never do they consider whether God’s judgment might fall upon them.

5:21-23: The hypocrisy of Israel makes her attempts to worship God empty. He is utterly disgusted.

5:24-27: The disloyalty of Israel stretches back to their earliest days.

6:3-7: The powerful are described as indolent, opulent, and dissolute. An Epicurean spirit has prevailed. They are indifferent to the moral decline to which they contribute and ignore the warnings of impending wrath.

7:1-9: God shows Amos a series of visions. Amos intercedes for Israel in the first two and God relents. The third will come to pass.

8:11-12: A forecast of the time when divine inspiration would stop. The intertestamental period fits this well.

9:11-15: The book ends with a glimmer of hope, the coming kingdom of the Messiah.

**Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade!

**Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:  
Great summary on these chapters, Wade; thanks! Hate evil, love good!

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### September 29: Obadiah (John Morris)

Reading for September 29, 2017

Obadiah

Obadiah is one of only five one-chapter books in the Bible, making it the most minor of the Minor Prophets (so named for their length). Of those five, it is the only one in the Old Testament. Without looking, what are the other four? =)

#### THE MAN, OBADIAH

Of the man, we know nothing certain, except that he was a prophet of God. There are 13 other men in the Old Testament with his name, but none can be conclusively identified with him.

#### THE TIME OF OBADIAH

The date of the book cannot be nailed down conclusively, either. Obadiah mentions a sack of Jerusalem (vs. 11), which helps a little. We know of at least four biblically-recorded occasions when this took place:

- (1) By the Egyptians (1 Kings 14:25-26; 2 Chron. 12:1-12)
- (2) By the Arabians and the Philistines (2 Chron. 21:16-17)
- (3) By Israel (northern kingdom) (2 Kings 14:8-14; 2 Chron. 25:17-24)
- (4) By Babylon

How to know for sure which one Obadiah is referencing, however, presents challenges (the Jewish Massorettes (c. 500-1000 AD), interestingly, who gave us our present order of the books, placed Obadiah early in the Minor Prophets indicating they thought it had an early date. But, of course, theirs is just another opinion).

Personally, I like the idea that Obadiah was a contemporary of Jeremiah's, and prophesying against Edom around 586 BC, after Jerusalem had fallen to Babylon. I'll mention three reasons for this seeming plausible:

- (1) The similarity between Obad. 1:1 and Jer. 49:13-14 is striking
- (2) Ps. 137:7 tells us what the Edomites were saying when Jerusalem fell to Babylon: "Raze it, raze it, to its very foundation!" That fits well with Obad. 1:12-14.
- (3) God's extermination of the Gentile nations bordering Israel (e.g. Ammon, Moab, the Philistines) was much nearer in Jeremiah's day than it would have been at the earlier dates, which matches up well with Obad. 1:15-16.

#### THE MESSAGE OF OBADIAH

Here is something certain. Edom would fall because of her pride and violence against Israel. Her dwellings in the mountains (vs. 3-4), her money (vs. 6), her alliances (vs. 7), her wise men (vs. 8), her military (vs. 9) would not save her. There is a price to be paid when one, in bitterness, fights against the people of God.

But though Edom would be destroyed, there would be deliverance in Zion (vs. 17-21). Starting in vs. 17, we may be seeing one of those so-called “dual prophecies.” The physical nation of Israel would continue to thrive and prosper in their own land long into the future, but Edom would not (cf. Mal. 1:2-5).

In fulfillment of vs. 18, Edom would fall to Israel at the hands of the Maccabees in 185 BC, then again to the Jewish ruler and high priest John Hyrcanus about 50 years later. Finally “no survivor [would] remain of the house of Esau” after the Romans killed most of them in 70 AD (they had let 20,000 into Jerusalem before they destroyed it), and the few survivors that remained took refuge among the desert tribes, only to be absorbed into their communities and disappear from history.

In vss. 19-20, we see Israel (both physical and spiritual, perhaps) prospering.

In vs. 21, “saviors/deliverers” come to Mount Zion. Who are these saviors/deliverers? Could they be those who preached the gospel, the message of deliverance from sin and death? They certainly preached it first in Zion/Jerusalem (Ac. 2), as Isaiah may have been telling us they would: “For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (2:3). They also preached it in the church, spiritual Mount Zion (Heb. 12:22-24). Did those who preached “judge the mountains of Esau?” If “the mountains of Esau” are symbolic of God’s enemies (as Mount Zion is symbolic of the church), yes. The message of Christ judges (Is. 2:4; Heb. 4:12). So finally, with the truth proclaimed, and sinners judged by that truth, “the kingdom shall be the LORD’s” (vs. 21).

### **Comment:**

Shelia Welte:

I have never completely understood the chronological order of Obadiah. Thank you for your explanation...that make me need to look up a couple of those passages that I am not familiar with. I am happy to say I could name the other 4 books with only 1 chapter--Philemon, 2&3 John and Jude--as we read them for Bible time as a family this summer. Guess you never know when something like that is going to come in useful :)

### **Comment:**

Butch O’Neal

Thank you, John!

### **Comment:**

Joanne Caffie:

Thr last verse uses the term 'saviours'. Can someone make this statement more clearly? Thx

### **Replies:**

John Morris:

When someone preaches the gospel to another, and it is obeyed, the "preacher" becomes a “savior” (1 Cor. 7:16; 9:22). The “saviors” in the last verse may be the apostles who first preached the gospel in Jerusalem (see last paragraph above). Because their preaching was heeded, they were “saviors.”

John Morris:

Thinking about this more... God is "the Savior of all men, ESPECIALLY of those who believe" (1 Tim. 4:10). Whether people heed God's call or not, He's still their Savior.

With that biblical precedent in mind, the apostles were/are "saviors" whether their preaching was/is heeded or not.

John Morris:

How can the apostles rightly be called by a term that is applied to the Lord, Himself? I think of it this way: They were apostles and saviors. The Lord Jesus is THE Apostle (Heb. 3:1) and THE Savior (Jn. 4:42).

Joanne Caffie:

I can relate John 4:42 but not I John 3 :1

John Morris:

Joanne Caffie Oops, listed the incorrect passage. 1 Jn. 3:1 should have been Heb. 3:1. It's been corrected in the comment.

Joanne Caffie:

Now I c... 😊

Charles Fry:

The Hebrew word for "saviors" ("deliverers" NIV) was applied to Moses ("came to their rescue")

Exodus 2:17 (NIV)

17 Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock.

And to Israel (Joshua 10:6, "save us"), and to the judges of Israel (Judges 3:9, 15, for example, many similar references), and to Saul (1 Sam 9:16), etc. it is used many times of the Lord, and of those people the Lord raised up to deliver/rescue/save others.

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### October 6: Jonah 1-4 (Wade Stanley)

Good day to you all! We have a whale of a good reading assignment for today. Sorry if you find my humor tough to swallow. I should stop before I go overboard!

The book of Jonah is the most familiar of all the books of prophecy. Among the prophets, Jonah is unusual because it is entirely narrative. It is also unusual because it is concerned with provoking a Gentile nation to repentance. The prophet's ministry to Assyria likely occurred during the eighth century B.C., one hundred years in advance of Nahum who prophesied the end of Assyria.

The precise location of the city of Tarshish is unknown. Here is a short article from the Archaeological Study Bible.

-----

"Where is Tarshish?"

It is impossible to say with certainty where Tarshish was located. What is known is that Nineveh was to the east and that Jonah was trying to get as far as possible from Nineveh by boarding a ship and sailing westward. If Tarshish were a specific port, it certainly would have been located somewhere along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, as may be suggested by several Old Testament texts (Ps 48:7; Isa 23:6; Eze 27:25) and by an inscription of Esarhaddon of Assyria. Many suggest that it was a city associated with mining and metallurgy, since the name Tarshish may be derived from a word referring to smelting or refining (see also Eze 27:12). Places that could satisfy these requirements include:

\* Tartessus in southwestern Spain. This would be appropriate to the story, for it would have been difficult to sail any farther from Nineveh.

\* The island of Sardinia. A ninth-century b.c. Phoenician inscription suggests the possible presence of Tarshish there.

\* Carthage in North Africa ("Map 14"). This is supported by the Septuagint version of Ezekiel 27:12, which identifies Carthage with Tarshish (but there was also a Carthage in Spain).

\* Tarsus in Anatolia (modern Turkey). This city would later become the hometown of Paul.

Some scholars, however, believe that the term "Tarshish" refers not to a specific location but simply to the "open sea." If this is the case, the author's intent may have been simply to describe Jonah as going off to sea. The church father Jerome, in his commentary on Jonah, accepted this interpretation.

-----

Jonah's prayer in the second chapter contains Messianic undertones. I am always struck by how Jonah sees the great fish as God's means of rescuing him from death and not God's punishment.

If we judge a prophet's success on the basis of the numbers who repent at his preaching, Jonah far exceeds any other messenger from God including Jesus during His ministry among us. The fact that Jonah was such a reluctant and downright rebellious preacher makes his "success" remarkable.

Enjoy the reading! Keep your lamps trimmed and burning. Don't allow what's happening these days to distract you from your calling. Lift up your heads -- your redemption draws nigh!

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal  
Thank you, Wade!

### **Comment:**

Cherris Lehman::  
Nice song in the blue book. Mike Manning taught it to us at a two week study at Gregory Blvd. one year!

### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:  
I feel like I should throw you some shade for this post.

### **Replies:**

Wade Stanley:  
Maybe I'm out of my gourd.

Charles Fry:  
Where is that "aargh" emoticon?! 😬

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:  
Thanks Wade! But, I wish you would stop fishing for laughs, but since we are in the game, one might say, for instance, that God told Jonah to "get up and go to Nineveh" but in the end God had to make the fish spit up to flow him to Nineveh!

### **Comment:**

Wade Stanley:  
<thinking emoji>

### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:  
In my NIV study Bible, at the beginning of each chapter it says Theme: and then a blank line for you to fill it out. Throughout the year in this 7 Bible Studies I've been writing a quick phrase about the chapter. For Jonah Ch. 1 I was prepared to write, "Jonah flees from God and is swallowed by a fish". After reading, however, I wrote "Jonah turns the hearts of sailors to the Lord". In verse 5 the sailors cried out to their own gods. In vs. 14-16 they cried out to THE LORD, offered sacrifices and made vows to HIM! Thought I would give Jonah a break since God did.

**Comment:**

Paul Rutherford:

I really can't 'fathom' your humor. 🤔

**Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Punny, Wade! Thank you for these good notes. It's interesting God appointed a worm. Even the itty-bitties can have big jobs. Jonah gets a worm's eye view on Nivevah.



# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### October 13: Micah 1-7 (John Morris)

Reading for October 13, 2017

MICAH

#### THE MAN

We don't know much about Micah, himself. Interestingly, he carried the same name (in abbreviated form) as Micaiah the son of Imlah who prophesied in the days of Ahab and Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22). Their name means "Who is like YHWH?" Micah was from "Moresheth" (1:1), perhaps the same location as "Moresheth Gath" mentioned later in the chapter (1:14), but we can't be certain. It may have been located at the site about five miles west of Gath (known today as Tell ej-Judeidah).

#### HIS TIME

Micah prophesied "in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (1:1) which made him contemporary with Isaiah and Hosea (see 1:1 of each book). In those years, Judah saw both prosperity and disaster—prosperity in the days of Jotham and Hezekiah (though Hezekiah's reign saw considerable hardship, as well), and disaster in the days of Ahaz. Jotham and Hezekiah were God-fearing men. Ahaz, on the other hand, seems to have set out to see just how wicked he could be (2 Kings 16:10-16; 2 Chron. 28:2-4, 22-25, 29). The good of Jotham and Hezekiah, as wonderful as it was, however, had little lasting impact on the spiritual state of the general population (2 Chron. 27:2). Even Hezekiah's historic reforms seemed to have elicited little more than superficial and/or temporary change in the nation. Micah takes no notice of them, whatsoever.

#### THE BOOK

Micah prophesies to both Israel and Judah, and the sins he rebukes are primarily those of the ruling class. Early in the book, he singles out the capital cities (1:5), and then repeatedly addresses himself to the heads, rulers, princes, priests, and prophets (3:1, 9, 11; 7:3).

Within the book, there is considerable Messianic content (e.g. chap. 4:1-5; 5:2). Isaiah, as we noted earlier this year, is sometimes called "the fifth gospel" because of his many Messianic predictions. Micah, however, his "Minor" contemporary, was permitted to make a number of such predictions, himself.

The book is organized into three parts:

- Chaps. 1-2: Judgment on Israel and Judah & salvation of a remnant.
- Chaps. 3-5: Sinful prophets and leaders & lots of Messianic prophecy.
- Chaps. 6-7: God prosecutes His case against Israel & promises future blessings.

Each section begins with a call to "Hear" (1:2; 3:1; 6:1), so should be read with "ears to hear."

May YHWH bless your reading today.

## **Comment:**

Charles Fry::

In the excellent content of Micah's messages, I love the climactic "What does the Lord require of you?"

Micah 6:6-8 (RSV)

6 "With what shall I come before the Lord,  
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?

7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,  
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

8 He has showed you, O man, what is good;

and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?

Cheating and Violence to Be Punished

Thank you, John!

## **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, John!

## **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Very interesting & helpful John! Thank you!!! Whenever I previously thought of Micah I could only confirm the prophecy of Jesus' birth came from him. Now I have a new, deeper perspective.

Thanks for pointing out the call to hear. I also appreciated Charles' verses above.

I liked Micah 7:18 which says, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy."

There were at least 3 or 4 references asking "Who is like God..." in proclaiming, in prophesying, in pleading, and in pardoning. This is a book about God's judgement and redemption.

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### October 20: Nahum 1-3 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning everyone! It's a beautiful morning in south Missouri at the tail end of a wonderful week with beautiful brethren. Our assignment for today is the book of Nahum.

We know nothing about Nahum except that he hailed from Elkosh, a village whose location is unknown. In 3:8-10, he mentions the destruction of Thebes in Egypt which took place in 663 BC. Given the book's dedication to the ultimate judgment of Assyria, it was likely written in the latter half of the 7th century BC. Nineveh was conquered by a coalition of nations led by Babylon in 612.

The book is dedicated in its entirety to condemning Assyria. Since the time of Jonah, Assyria served as God's tool to punish the northern kingdom of Israel and had nearly conquered Judah in the days of Hezekiah. You will notice tones of vengeance toward Assyria intermingled with assurances of deliverance and preservation directed to Judah. God will respond with justice to the barbaric cruelty of the Assyrians.

The Archaeological Study Bible provides a few good insights:

It was common practice for peoples in the ancient world to identify their deities with observable, awe-inspiring natural phenomena (1:3-6).

Nineveh's wall, which was almost 8 miles (13 km) long with 15 gates, was surrounded by a moat 150 feet (nearly 46 m) wide. The moat had to be filled in before attackers could reach the city wall. The "protective shield" refers to a large defensive shelter covered with hides to deflect stones and arrows (2:5).

The lion is an appropriate image for Assyria, which was known for its viciousness. Nineveh itself contained numerous lion sculptures (2:11).

The Assyrian king Sargon II boasted of having erected a pyramid of chopped-off heads in front of an enemy's city. Other Assyrian kings stacked corpses like cordwood by the gates of defeated cities (3:3).

Atrocities against civilians were common in ancient warfare: Infants were routinely killed, leaders often put in chains and lots cast to determine which prisoners of war would be taken into exile and resettled in other lands (3:10).

Nineveh's destruction was so complete that the decimated city was never rebuilt. Within a few centuries it was covered with windblown sand, leaving no trace except a mound that is known today as Tell Kuyunjik, "the mound of many sheep" (3:19).

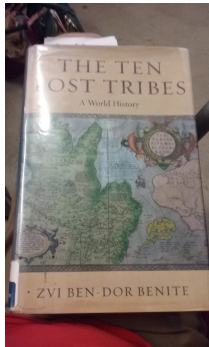
Happy reading to you all!

## Comment:

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, brother Wade!

## Comment:

Steven Wright:  
Where did they all go?



## Replies:

Steven Wright:  
I had only just begun to read this book when I made this post. Not a recommend! Having by now investigated it, I will say that while it does address the issues in a more or less scholarly way, it is a disappointment over all.

Wade Stanley:  
Thanks for making us aware!

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:  
Fascinating, Wade! Thanks for sharing those insights from the Archaeological Study Bible. Would you bring that with you to Iowa Friday? I'd like to look at it if you don't mind. I'm wondering if I'd like to purchase one. Thanks again. And! I gotta mention marc and I giggled at 3:13. But perhaps only a girl should bring that up here. 🤔

## Replies:

Wade Stanley:  
I have the Archaeological Study Bible on a Bible app, Olive Tree. I purchased it while it was on sale earlier this year. I'll be glad to show it to you on my tablet.

## Comment:

Joanne Caffie:  
Just 2 be clear, Nineveh repented in the time of Jonah but was later utterly destroyed?

## Replies:

Wade Stanley:

Yes Joanne, about 150 years later. We don't know for sure when Jonah went to Nineveh, but it was likely in the early 700's BC. Nahum prophesied in the latter half of the 600's BC. Nineveh was destroyed in 612 BC. So the fruits of repentance they showed in the time of Jonah had departed from the nation.

Joanne Caffie:

Sounds like the USA 🙄😏😭

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### October 27: Habakkuk 1-3 (John Morris)

Reading for October 27, 2017

HABAKKUK

Happy Friday, everyone!

Today we tackle Habakkuk, a book I first heard taught by brother Dwain Stoops some 15+ years ago in Ozark, MO. Dwain pointed out that the book's contents could be summed up with three "P's." First, Habbakuk is PERPLEXED, then he begins to PERCIEVE, and finally he PRAISES. I think we'll find this to be true.

#### WHEN DID HABAKKUK PROPHECY?

Habakkuk doesn't tell us when he prophesied, but internal evidence strongly suggests it was during the reign of Josiah (641-609 BC). God tells Habakkuk that, within Habakkuk's lifetime, He was going raise up the Chaldeans to punish His people, and states that this prediction would be regarded, even by Habakkuk, as unbelievable (1:5-11). The reasons for this are rooted in history. The Assyrian nation was still going VERY strong during the early years of Josiah's reign (you can read up on Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, if interested—his reign (669-633 BC) has been likened to Rome's Augustan period). In 625 BC, however, eight years after Ashurbanipal's death, history began to take an unexpected turn. Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, declared Babylonian independence from Assyria. This, of course, led to war between Assyria and Babylon, and eventually, resulted in Nebuchadnezzar (army general at the time) conquering the Assyrian capital in 612 BC! The remainder of the Assyrian army fled to Haran, but only to be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's reorganized forces three years later (609 BC). "How the mighty have fallen!" Nebuchadnezzar then went on to defeat Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish in 605 BC, thus sealing the deal on who was going to be the new world power. No one could have seen all this coming. Only a few months later in 605 BC, Babylon paid a visit to Jerusalem, and began carrying away its people and wealth (thus starting the 70 years of captivity).

#### ABOUT THE BOOK

The book, itself, is unique among the prophets in that there is no public preaching. The first two chapters are a dialogue between Habakkuk and God, the third chapter a song. As an aid to reading, the following shows who is talking when:

1:1-4: Habakkuk

1:5-11: God

1:12-2:2a: Habakkuk

2:2b-20: God

3:1-19: Habakkuk

Concerning the song in chapter three, apparently Habakkuk was a musician, as well as a prophet and an inspired lyricist. 3:19 contains these words: "To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments." This is almost identical to a note that appears four times in Psalms (4:1; 6:1; 54:1; 55:1). Also, the expression "my instruments" seems to indicate that either the song

was to be performed using instruments in Habakkuk's possession, and/or instruments of his own design (remember that David designed his own instruments: 1 Chron. 23:5; Amos 6:5). Fascinating to think about. That Habakkuk could write a song intended for "the Chief Musician" may also indicate that he was among the Levites whose special duty it was to praise the LORD with instruments (1 Chron. 23:3-5). If not, he at least had connections.

#### THE FLOW OF THE BOOK

- 1:1-4: Habakkuk is wondering why God is permitting wickedness and lawlessness to persist in Judah.
- 1:5-11: God informs Habakkuk that He's not permitting it indefinitely, but that He's raising a nation to judge Judah.
- 1:12-2:2a: Habakkuk asks God why He's going to judge Judah with a wicked, idolatrous nation that should be judged, itself.
- 2:2b-20: God explains that Babylon will not escape its own judgment. Using five woes (2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19), God explains that Babylon will pay for its sins, as well.
- 3:1-19: Habakkuk praises the God who does all things well, has delivered His people in time past, and who can be trusted with the future. The musical prayer, and thus the book, closes with a powerful expression of Habakkuk's faith (3:17-19).

#### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

Thanks John! Gotta love those musicians and song writers!

#### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, brother John!

#### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, John! So many golden nuggets you brought forth from this book. Very interesting! I'm grateful for your edification.

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### November 3: Zephaniah 1-3 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning, all!

Zephaniah ministered the word of the Lord in the latter days of the kingdom of Judah. This makes the prophet a contemporary of Jeremiah. The great reformer Josiah sat on David's throne and his repentance was rewarded with a delay of God's wrath. A future generation would suffer the consequences for centuries of inconsistency and periods of outright rebellion. Zephaniah reminds those living in the days of this reprieve that judgment approaches.

Here are a few highlights:

1:4-6: God's ultimate objective was to cure Judah of her infidelity. Traditionally, Baal was the chief god adopted by the unfaithful. Baal, though, was not alone. The worship of Milcom (known elsewhere as Molech), an Ammonite god, proliferated as well. You may recall that the worship of Milcom/Molech included the sacrifice of children, an abominable practice that Jeremiah was also called to condemn in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom.

Chapter 2 focuses on the traditional enemies of Judah: Philistia, Ammon, Moab, etc. Notice the references to "the remnant." In Zephaniah, the remnant typically refers to those Jews who survive the captivity in Babylon and return to the Homeland.

2:4-7: The great cities of the Philistines — Ashkelon and Gaza — would also face God's retributive judgment. In future days, Philistia would be wiped out and the remnant will occupy their territory.

2:15: Note what Nineveh says about herself and compare with Babylon (Isaiah 47:8), Tyre (Ezekiel 28:2), Egypt (Ezekiel 29:3) and spiritual Babylon (Revelation 18:7).

Chapter 3 begins by condemning Jerusalem in her current state. A forecast of the future follows. Judah will emerge from her captivity purified. Her people, scattered across the Middle East and Africa, will return to reconstitute the nation. The relationship between God and Judah will be restored.

May God be with you and keep you this day!

#### **Comment:**

Joyfully Nellie:

Good thoughts!

It is nice to remember that God relationship with us can always be restored too!

#### **Replies:**

Joanne Caffie:

Amen



**Comment:**

Steven Wright:

Thanks for the study brother! YaHoWaH make his face to shine up on you, and give you peace!

**Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, brother Wade!

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### November 10: Haggai 1-2 (John Morris)

Reading for November 11, 2017

HAGGAI

Happy Friday, everyone!

Today's reading introduces us to the first of the three post-exilic prophets. Haggai began his prophetic ministry on August 29, 520 BC (1:1), more than fifteen years after the first exiles had returned to the Promised Land, and at a time when they desperately needed to be stirred up to good works.

Upon returning in 538 BC, the exiles had immediately set about rebuilding the temple (Ezra 3:1-11). Not long thereafter, however, the locals began to oppose their efforts, and eventually succeeded in convincing the Persian government (Artaxerxes) to forcibly shut down construction. Revival was stymied. The faithful would have to patiently pray for a change, and wait on the LORD to see what He would do. And perhaps they did at first. They just didn't wait long enough.

Nothing changed during Artaxerxes' administration, but then Darius I assumed power in 522 BC. Here, now, was an opportunity to appeal the decision of the previous administration! Or just resume construction, and see what the new government would do. But no such action was taken. Life had become comfortable. Life at home was good. The idea of working on the LORD's house had lost its appeal. Two years of Darius' reign passed, and the returned exiles didn't return to their work.

Enter Haggai.

- 1:4- "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"
- 1:9- "...My house...is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house."
- 1:5, 7- "Consider your ways!"

Haggai faithfully preached a word of exhortation to the leaders and to the people. And they responded! It took 23 days (1:1, 15), but they responded. In all seriousness, I've wondered if one of those "old-fashioned," protracted meetings might benefit us in more ways than we might imagine. I've heard it said to at the end of a week meeting that it seemed like the momentum was just beginning to build. I felt the same way. What if such a meeting were to go longer?

After the work had persisted for a month, God offered words of encouragement to the people to help them keep on keepin' on (2:1-9). These words included a prophecy of the coming King and the coming kingdom (2:6-9; Heb. 12:26-28).

After the work had persisted for three months (2:10-14), God called the people, through Haggai, to accompany their labor and sacrifices with moral purity. And He promised them that

the days of poor harvests and hard times would now be coming to an end (1:6-11; 2:15-19). Interesting that He waited three months before He told them that. Thoughts?

Finally, Haggai ends with some promises. God will throw down the Gentile kingdoms that have opposed Him and His people, and will accomplish His purposes through “Zerubbabel My servant” (2:23). This is one of those “dual prophecies.” The LORD speaks here to “Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah” (the man who would have been king had the nation been independent), but also speaks to Another, One who would be a descendant of Zerubbabel, as He was of David (Mt. 1:12-16)—Jesus Christ, the builder of the third and final temple, the church (cf. Zech. 4:9; Mt. 16:18).

### **Comment:**

Butch O’Neal:  
Thank you, John!

### **Comment:**

Joanne Caffie:  
In my little mind I feel that God sometimes need me to eat a few pieces if humble pie before revealing greater things to me. I have learned that humble pie only taste good with the 1st few bites. 😞 But as I continue to eat more my focus is turned away from myself and more towards Him. #justmyhumbleopinion

### **Replies:**

Joanne Caffie:  
Ok, so now my little mind is trying 2 get bigger & after re-reading this post I can't figure out y I posted this reply 🤔🤔🤔

So my question is did God wait 2 reveal this information ir did Hagai wait 2 reveal this information? Because my little mind jumped 2 the conclusion that God waited which is y I came up with the humble pie scenario. #thoughts2clearmyunderstanding?

John Morris:

Joanne Caffie: Since the LORD Himself includes the date in His words (2:18), the timing of the promise must have been His doing. It came just after the time of planting; hence, His reference to the seed not being in the barn, but the plants not having yet yielded fruit (2:19). I think the delay of three months may simply have been God giving the people time to demonstrate perseverance (an important quality of true repentance). Were they going to follow through on this rebuilding effort...or was this going to be like a lot of New Year's resolutions? Once perseverance had been demonstrated, the promise came! Good things come to those who wait.

Charles Fry:

The prophetic word came at the right time, the time when God wanted Haggai to speak. God generally dealt with prophetic messages in successive revelations, not all at once, with individual prophets and connections between prophets. After three months of effort, it was the right time for a quiz, a reminder, a pep talk.

John Morris:

Charles Fry: His timing was perfect and purposeful...and no doubt, for multiple reasons. Thanks for this.

Charles Fry:

Our timing was pretty much simultaneous, John Morris. 😊

Various recent lessons and challenges have pushed that theme of "just the right time" and "when the time had fully come" in my thoughts.

Joanne Caffie:

So I guess my theory (or thinking) of chewing on some humble pie for a couple of months or so was headed in the right direction. It just makes sense that the Lord waits to see if there will be even a slight commitment towards being obedient

## **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Amen, John! What an inspiration. The people of Judah listened! "Be strong and work!" (2:4) David used these words when he encouraged Solomon to build the temple. Haggai continued to preach to the Jews, encouraging them with the hope of future glory in the temple and a victory to come over the enemies of God's people. It takes time to build momentum but once it's done look at all that's accomplished for God's glory!

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### November 17: Zechariah 1-7 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning everyone.

Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai and like Haggai was commissioned by God to stir the remnant of Judah to rebuild the temple. His ministry is chock full of apocalyptic prophecy which makes interpreting this book difficult. Quite frankly, it may be the most difficult book of prophecy to unravel. I do not know what will help you comprehend this book in one reading. So, I decided to give you my outline of the first eight chapters. Even though it is reserved for next week, I included chapter 8 since it completes what is discussed in chapter 7. I do not think that will hurt John's feelings since he has some tough material to cover in 9-14!

Happy reading everyone!

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/q0igzjagy0gyg5u/Zechariah%201-8%20for%20FB.docx?dl=0>

- I. Historical context of Zechariah
  - A. Israel in Babylonian captivity
    1. II Kings 21:10-14
    2. II Chron. 36:5-8 Jerusalem first conquered by Nebuchadnezzar in 606 B.C. during the reign of Jehoiakim
    3. II Kings 24:8-16 Jerusalem conquered a second time in 597 by Nebuchadnezzar during the reign of Jehoiachin
    4. II Kings 25 Jerusalem conquered a third time by Nebuchadnezzar and razed by Nebuzaradan in 586 – this is the destruction of the temple.
  - B. The Babylonian captivity lasted 70 years
    1. Jer. 25:12
    2. II Chron. 36:20-21
  - C. A prophet is involved in each of these successive waves
    1. Daniel 1:1-7 Daniel taken to Babylon during the first wave under Jehoiakim
    2. Ezekiel 1:1-3 Ezekiel taken to Babylon during the second wave under Jehoiachin
    3. Jeremiah 39 Jeremiah lives through the final conquering of Jerusalem, remains in Judah, writes Lamentations
  - D. Babylon conquered by Medo-Persia in 538
    1. Darius the Mede serves as viceroy of Babylon for two years (538-537)
    2. Cyrus begins his rule of Babylon in 536; sends first wave of captives back to Jerusalem under Jeshua and Zerubbabel.
    3. Construction on temple delayed during Cambyses' reign.
  - E. Darius I comes to the throne in 521
    1. Haggai and Zechariah appear during Darius' second year (Hag. 1:1, Zech. 1:1, Ezra 5:1)
    2. Darius issues decree in Ezra 6
    3. Temple finished in 516.
  - F. Historical events that follow the completion of the temple
    1. Judah remains under Persian rule until it is conquered by Greece in 331 B.C. (defeat at Gaugemela)
    2. Hellenization of Jews
      - a. Greek influence on the nation of Judah which eventually leads to apostasy
      - b. “The Dispersion” -- Jews scattered throughout the Mediterranean world thanks to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities
      - c. Translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek (the Septuagint; approx. 250-150 B.C.)
      - d. Development of the synagogue system
    3. The Maccabean revolt (167-164 B.C.)
    4. Judea conquered by Rome in 63 B.C.
    5. The appearance, crucifixion, and resurrection of our Lord
    6. The church and its future glory
- II. 1:1-6 Introduction, call to repentance
  - A. Verse 1

1. “eighth month of the second year of Darius”
    - a. Zechariah is contemporary with Haggai – just two months following the beginning of Haggai's recorded message (Hag. 1:1)
    - b. Darius
      - i. The third king of Persia whose reign began in 521.
      - ii. Prior to his reign, Israel was prevented from working on the temple due to political interference
      - iii. Allowed Jeshua and Zerubbabel to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (see Ezra 5-6).
  2. “the word of the Lord came”
    - a. Typical phrase indicative of prophetic inspiration
    - b. Five times in the first six verses, the message of God is highlighted by the phrase, “says the Lord”.
  3. “the son of Iddo the prophet”
    - a. Iddo, along with Zechariah, was one of the priests who returned with Zerubbabel to rebuild the temple (see Neh. 12:4,16).
    - b. Zechariah possessed the same prophetic heritage with Jeremiah and Ezekiel – he was also of priestly lineage.
- B. Verses 2-3
1. “the Lord has been very angry with your fathers”
    - a. Israel was punished for her inability to keep the covenant made with God.
      - i. By her adulterous ways, the pure light of God was obscured to the Gentile world.
      - ii. Into her hands were placed the oracles of God – she was entrusted with a great honor and failed to live up to her portion.
      - iii. Israel was given prophetic warning after warning yet continued to disobey.
    - b. A reminder of the condition Israel existed in before captivity when the fathers were turned away from God.
  2. “Return to Me...and I will return to you”
    - a. Our relationship with God is always contingent upon our willingness to turn our lives toward Him.
    - b. See James 4:8.
- C. Verses 4-6
1. “Do not be like your fathers” another reminder of their heritage.
  2. “to whom the former prophets....”
    - a. The message of the prophets prior to captivity was repent and change your ways (see II Kin. 17:13).
    - b. The fathers of these current Israelites refused their message in favor of following their own heart.
    - c. This generation of Israelites has the opportunity to reverse the trend and take heed to the word of God.
    - d. The conduct of the fathers is God's ground for appeal through Zechariah.
  3. “but they did not hear nor heed Me” They would not accept the message of

warning

4. “Yet surely My words and My statutes...”
  - a. Both the fathers and the prophets of that previous generation had long gone to their graves.
  - b. But the word of the Lord endures as a reminder and testimony of God's fidelity.
5. “Just as the Lord of hosts...”
  - a. Those who went into exile recognized their faults and consequently proclaimed God's justice.
  - b. And now, their posterity could look about them and see the effects of their rebellion in Jerusalem and its surrounding villages.
  - c. The word of God stood fulfilled by the testimony of their fathers and the surrounding destruction.

### III. 1:7-17: Vision #1

#### A. Verses 7-11 The vision

1. “a man riding on a red horse”
  - a. Man apparently rode the horse and then dismounted when among the myrtle trees.
  - b. He is the same man mentioned in verse 10 who identifies the horses.
  - c. He is also identified in verse 11 as the, “Angel of the Lord, who stood among the myrtle trees”.
  - d. Behind him stand three colored horses: red, sorrel, and white.
2. “Then I said, 'My lord, what are these?' So the angel who talked with me said to me, 'I will show you what they are.'”
  - a. Accompanying Zechariah is this angelic being responsible for explaining various aspects of the visions.
  - b. This is a common practice in prophetic visions
    - i. Daniel found angelic assistance in chapters 7-12
    - ii. John was accompanied by angel throughout the vision in Revelation (1:1)
3. “stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow”
  - a. “myrtle trees” A beautiful, Oriental plant known for its pleasant fragrance.
  - b. Trees symbolic of people
    - i. Jdg. 9:7-15 parable spoken by Jotham against Abimelech uses trees as symbolic of people
    - ii. Dan. 4:1-27 Nebuchadnezzar symbolized by the great tree
    - iii. Mt. 7:17-19 false teachers and teachings compared with a tree and its fruit
    - iv. Mk. 8:24 the blind man saw, “men like trees, walking”
  - c. “in the hollow” or in a bottom – an area flooded out, perhaps like a swamp.
  - d. God's beautiful plant – his people – were placed in a lowly estate.
4. “red, sorrel, and white” Colors are prophetically significant.
  - a. “red” color of blood, symbol of war and destruction
  - b. “white” symbol of purity and/or uninhibited victory



- c. “sorrel” a mixed color
- 5. “to and fro throughout the earth,”
  - a. God has sent his messengers to watch over the affairs of the earth, particularly in the case of angels.
  - b. This symbolism is repeated in Zech. 6:4-7
  - c. Gen. 18:20-21 Angels sent to discover the state of things in Sodom and Gomorrah
- 6. “and behold, all the earth is resting quietly”
  - a. In this case, the messengers return with a report of peace among the nations.
  - b. The current ruler of Persia – Darius I, the son of Hystaspes -- rose to his throne amidst great political turmoil (Durant, OOH, pp. 354-55).
  - c. Now, with his throne established in the second year, the kingdom was enjoying a time of peace and prosperity.
  - d. Yet this period of peace will not endure -- in Haggai 2:6-8, God promises to shake the kingdoms of the earth again.
- B. Verses 12-17 A promise of Jerusalem's restoration
  - 1. “how long will you not have mercy”
    - a. The seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah in 25:11-12 were close to expiring.
      - i. Some would date the 70 years from the captivity of Judah until the fall of Babylon to Cyrus (606-536 B.C.).
      - ii. Others would date it from the destruction of the temple to the completion of its rebuilding (586-516 B.C.)
      - iii. The Angel is probably was referring to this second set of 70 years.
    - b. Now the Angel was curious when the Lord would show His mercy toward the people of Israel.
    - c. The Lord responded with “good and comforting words”, which are contained in verses 14-17.
  - 2. “I am zealous (jealous) for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal (jealousy)”
    - a. Here the Lord expresses His true feeling concerning the children of Israel.
    - b. This could be taken two separate ways:
      - i. God is jealous because Israel has committed adultery with the god's of other nations. (“The term jealousy implies divine love which cannot be despised and Jehovah's refusal to be supplanted in affection by another” -- Hailey's Commentary on the MP's)
      - ii. He also could be jealous for their good – she has been treated unjustly by those nations and He will avenge this injustice.
  - 3. “I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease”
    - a. In this case, probably refers to the Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians.
    - b. These nations assisted God with the punishment of His people -- “for I was a little angry, and they helped”.
    - c. Yet, they desired evil against the nation of Israel
      - i. The Chaldeans were unmerciful and unjust (see Is. 47:6)
      - ii. The book of Esther demonstrates Persia's malicious intent against Israel

- d. Like Babylon, Medo Persia suffered demise.
  - i. Beginning with the loss to the Greeks at Marathon, Persia steadily lost battle after battle, culminating with its loss to Alexander at Gaugamela.
  - ii. The judgment of God was exercised against the nation which acted so poorly against His people.
- 4. "I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it"
  - a. Although the refugees had returned and the construction process was underway, God guarantees its construction would be completed and His name reestablished.
  - b. This promise indicates an obedient answer to His call in verse 3 -- "Return to Me... and I will return to you".
- 5. "a surveyor's line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem"
  - a. The line was stretched over Jerusalem prior to its destruction -- II Kg. 21:13
  - b. Now, it would be stretched once more in its rebuilding – compare Jer. 31:38-40.
  - c. In this language, God is demonstrating His endorsement of the rebuilding just as He did its previous destruction.
- 6. "My cities shall spread out through prosperity"
  - a. The Lord promised in Deut. 30:5-10 to bless the people with prosperity should they demonstrate faithfulness
  - b. He renews that promise offering His people comfort and reestablishes His name in the city of Jerusalem.

#### IV. 1:18-21 Vision #2

##### A. "four horns"

- 1. Horns represent kingdoms or powers.
- 2. These four horns "have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem" -- the four nations which have served as oppressors and captors of God's people.
  - a. Is. 52:4
  - b. Egypt (II Kings 23:28-37)
    - i. Killed King Josiah in battle.
    - ii. Imprisoned his son Jehoahaz
    - iii. Placed Jehoiakim as the king of Israel
    - iv. Forced the nation to pay them tribute
  - c. Assyria
    - i. Carries Napthali off to captivity (II Kings 15:27-30)
    - ii. Carries the remaining 9 northern tribes off to captivity (II Kings 17)
  - d. Babylon
    - i. Carried all of Jerusalem into captivity during Jehoiachin's reign (II Kings 24)
    - ii. City of Jerusalem razed during Zedekiah's reign (II Kings 25)
  - e. Medo-Persia.
    - i. Following Cyrus, prevented the building of the temple.
    - ii. Planned a genocide of the Jewish people (book of Esther).

B. “four craftsmen”

1. These are a measure of judgment against those four horns which have scattered Judah.
  - a. The northern ten tribes were scattered among all the nations because of their adultery with idols.
  - b. Judah, in symbolic language, represents the faithful of God – the pre-eminent tribe which gives birth to the Messiah.
  - c. The Lord is demonstrating His mercy toward the faithful by exacting vengeance upon those nations which, “helped – but with evil intent” (v. 15).
2. These four craftsmen will perform the following:
  - a. They will “terrify” the four horns
  - b. They will “cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it”.
3. These four craftsmen represent the nations which succeeded each empire in power.
  - a. Egypt succeeded by Assyria
  - b. Assyria succeeded by Babylon
  - c. Babylon succeeded by Medo-Persia
  - d. Medo-Persian succeeded by Greece
  - e. See 2:8-9 for supporting information
  - f. See Joel 3:1-8

V. 2:1-13 Vision #3

A. Verses 1-5 “behold, a measuring line in his hand”

1. “measuring line”
  - a. Symbolic of a rebuilding, revitalization, restoration.
  - b. Pointing forward to the complete rebuilding of Jerusalem that occurred over the next 80-90 years – cross reference with 1:16.
2. “And there was the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him, who said to him, 'Run, speak to this young man, saying..’”
  - a. The question becomes, who is the young man? The one with the measuring line or Zechariah?
  - b. The man with the measuring line seems concerned with the restoration of the physical city of Jerusalem.
  - c. Yet, the remainder of the chapter carries a very spiritual meaning with it.
3. “shall be inhabited as towns without walls”
  - a. Walls were the primary means of defense in the ancient world – a city without walls was susceptible to attack.
  - b. This prophesy by Zechariah occurred in 520 B.C.; the wall of Jerusalem was not finished until the time of Nehemiah – 444 B.C.
  - c. Yet the reason for not rebuilding the wall is interesting, “because of the multitude of men and livestock in it”.
    - i. Josephus refers to the swelling population of Jerusalem throughout the first century which necessitated the building of additional walls under Agrippa (JW, 5.4.2)

- ii. However, the swelling population of Jerusalem in the physical sense is probably not what is intended – as verse 5 alludes, Jerusalem did not need a wall because God protected her.
    - iii. It is the spiritual Jerusalem, the church, which seems to be the point (compare 2:10-11).
  - 4. “For I, says the Lord, will be a wall of fire all around her”
    - a. During those years of rebuilding, Jerusalem would dwell under the protective hand of God working through the Persian Empire was at its height during this time
      - i. In 1:11, the spirits sent out over the earth reported that, “all the earth was resting quietly”.
      - ii. God expresses His anger, “with the nations at ease” in 1:15.
      - iii. The Persian empire was at its most stable point during the reconstruction of the temple and Jerusalem.
      - iv. This stability, created by God, provided a protective environment in which an unwallled city could be rebuilt and refortified.
    - b. Yet, the Lord also points out Jerusalem does not need a wall due to His protective presence
- B. Verses 6-9 Impending judgment upon the North
  - 1. “land of the North”
    - a. Refers to the kingdom of Babylon and/or Assyria – see Jer 1:13-14, Jer 4:6, Jer 6:1
    - b. The attacks of Assyria and Babylon always came from the North.
    - c. Parallel to other passages calling His people out of Babylon – Is. 48:20, 52:11
    - d. In the spiritual sense, Babylon represents apostasy, religious confusion out of which God invites His people – see Rev. 1:4
  - 2. “for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven”
    - a. During the time of Esther, the children of Israel were scattered among the 127 provinces of the Persian Empire.
    - b. From Ethiopia to India, God's people had a presence within the empire.
  - 3. “you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon”
    - a. The daughter of Babylon signifies the people who dwell in Babylon.
    - b. This was a call to His people which dwelt among the inhabitants of Babylon.
    - c. In other words, escape the corruptive influences surrounding you and come back to the land of your God.
  - 4. “apple of His eye”
    - a. This refers to the delicate part of the eye which causes great discomfort or pain when touched.
    - b. When God's people are harmed, it brings grief and pain to Him as well.
  - 5. “I will shake My hand against them” this seemingly innocuous act forecasts the doom of these nations.
  - 6. “they shall become spoil for their servants” see notes on the “four craftsmen” of ch. 1

C. Verses 10-13 Messianic prophecy

1. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion"
  - a. "daughter of Zion" as opposed to those who remain with the daughter of Babylon
  - b. A call to rejoicing for the prospect of the Messiah.
  - c. Similar language used in Is. 54:1, Zeph. 3:14-15, Is. 12:6 – all of which point to the Messiah.
2. "I will dwell in your midst"
  - a. Different than the promises made earlier in 2:5 -- "I will be the glory in her midst" -- which refers to the rebuilding and reoccupation of the temple.
  - b. See John 1:14
3. "Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day"
  - a. A forecast of the Gentiles' inclusion and adoption into God's family.
  - b. See Is. 2:2-4

VI. 3:1-10 Vision #4

A. Verses 1-7 Consecration of Joshua the High Priest

1. "Joshua the High Priest"
  - a. Joshua was the son of Jehozadak (or Jozadak), the high priest who went into captivity (I Chr. 6:14, Ezra 3:2).
  - b. Joshua, as the high priest, represented the people before God.
2. "Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him"
  - a. The name of Satan means: opponent, adversary.
  - b. Thus, Satan stands to oppose the people of God.
  - c. He would have much to accuse the priesthood.
    - i. They failed to distinguish between clean and unclean (Ezek. 22:26)
    - ii. They left the nation ignorant concerning the law (Hosea 4:6)
    - iii. Took advantage of the people's sin for their own gain (Hosea 4:8)
    - iv. They instructed for money (Mic. 3:11)
  - d. This is how Satan apparently conducted himself until the crucifixion of Christ (Revelation 12)
3. "The Lord rebuke you Satan"
  - a. A common response from the angelic host to Satan – Jude 9.
  - b. God is the only one fit to condemn Satan; the rest of creation should not take this role upon themselves.
4. "Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"
  - a. God has declared His choice of Jerusalem three times in this book (1:17, 2:12, 3:2).
  - b. The nation has been placed in the fires of captivity, chastened for their conduct.
  - c. Now God is showing His mercy by allowing them to return to their land and reinstating His house among them.
5. "Joshua was clothed with filthy garments"
  - a. Emblematic of the accumulated sin of the nation, which is removed (see Jer. 50:19-20).

- b. The guilt is removed, fresh garments are placed upon the High Priest and his consecration is completed with the clean turban placed on his head.
  - c. The nation would be fully restored before God with the priesthood functioning as it should under the Old Law.
6. “thus says the Lord of hosts”
- a. “admonished”: gave warning; solemnly and earnestly charged him
  - b. Two conditions which Joshua must meet:
    - i. “If you will walk in My ways” His personal conduct as high priest
    - ii. “And if you will keep My command” His faithfulness to his duties
    - iii. Two conditions many of his predecessors failed to meet as high priest.
  - c. Three promises if those conditions are met:
    - i. “you shall judge My house” responsible for executing judgment as high priest over the nation of Israel. (Deut. 17 and 19)
    - ii. “have charge of My courts” responsible for overseeing the Lord's house
    - iii. “I will give you places to walk among these who stand here” access to God would be reinstated.
- B. Verses 8-10 Messianic prophecy
1. “Hear, O Joshua...you and your companions who sit before you”
    - a. Represents a change – a call to listen, to take note.
    - b. This message was not simply for Joshua, but rather for the entire priesthood.
  2. “for they are a wondrous sign”
    - a. This must refer to Joshua and his companions in the preceding statements.
    - b. The Levitical priesthood served to point forward to a greater priesthood.
  3. “the BRANCH”
    - a. Isaiah (4:2, 11:1-10) and Jeremiah (23:5, 33:15) both introduced the coming Branch, but always as a descendant of Judah through David – this pointed to His kingship.
    - b. But in this context, the Branch is connected with the priesthood as well – a point further emphasized in 6:9-15.
  4. “the stone”
    - a. Another reference to Jesus as we see in Ps. 118:22, Is. 28:16.
    - b. The connection between the Branch and the stone is found within the context.
      - i. God draws Joshua's attention to the prophecy -- “Hear, O Joshua”.
      - ii. Then two “For behold's”
        - a) “My Servant the Branch”
        - b) “The stone”
      - iii. The Branch was first brought to Joshua's attention, then God says He has laid the stone before Joshua.
    - c. The purpose, it would seem, is to connect the Branch and the stone to the same individual.
  5. “upon the stone are seven eyes”
    - a. These seven eyes see all which happens upon earth (4:10)
    - b. Rev. 1:4 Seven spirits before the throne of God which are depicted as lamps

(Rev. 4:5)

- c. Rev. 3:2 Jesus possesses the seven spirits
  - d. Rev. 5:6 The Lamb has seven eyes which were the seven Spirits of God.
6. "I will engrave its inscription"
7. "And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day"
- a. Must refer to the crucifixion – the iniquity of the world was paid for in a single day through the sacrifice of Christ.
  - b. This removal of iniquity would yield an environment of prosperity, peace, and safety.

#### VII. 4:1-14: Vision #5

##### A. Verses 1-5 and 11-14

- 1. "...there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it"
  - a. Differs from the lampstand in the temple/tabernacle in three respects:
    - i. Had a bowl or reservoir on top
    - ii. Pipes fed the oil to the lamp
    - iii. The oil was provided by the two trees
  - b. The lampstand represents God's people irrespective of time: the people of God are responsible for holding up the light (Matt. 5:14-15, Php. 2:15, Rev. 1:20 ).
- 2. "on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps."
  - a. The fuel for the lamps – oil – is representative of the Holy Spirit (I Sam. 16:13, Ax. 10:38)
  - b. Revelation 4:5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.
  - c. When Zechariah asks, "What are these?" in verse 4, he is referring to the lamps (v. 10).

##### B. Verses 6-10 Message to Zerubbabel

- 1. "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit"
  - a. God does not accomplish His will by human means – see Hos. 1:7.
  - b. God works through His Spirit to accomplish His will.
- 2. "O great mountain"
  - a. In prophetic language, the mountain represents a kingdom or form of government.
  - b. The government under Cambyses had opposed the rebuilding of the temple.
  - c. The interference cause by the Persian government was pompous and blasphemous, prompting the question by God, "Who are you?".
- 3. "Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain!"
  - a. Thanks to the revolt prior to the reign of Darius I, that opposing government was removed – leveled like a plain.
  - b. God accomplished this by working through His Spirit.
- 4. "And he shall bring forth the capstone"
  - a. The project would be finished despite the interference of the Persian Empire.
  - b. It was God's will that this would be accomplished.

- c. Verse 9 confirms this.
  - 5. "For who has despised the day of small things?"
    - a. To the eyes of the elders of Israel, the temple currently under construction paled in comparison to the one constructed under Solomon (see Ezra 3:12, Hag. 2:3).
    - b. Yet, this temple will see greater things in its latter days than the first ever saw in its existence (Hag. 2:9).
  - 6. "for these seven"
    - a. The aforementioned seven eyes, symbolic of the Spirit of God.
    - b. "rejoice to see the plumb line"
      - i. The plumb line is used to measure the straightness of a wall.
      - ii. God rejoices in the construction of this temple.
    - c. If God rejoices in its construction, why should the people mourn that it does not live up to the former in appearance?
- C. Verses 11-14
- 1. "Two olive trees are by it"
    - a. "What are these two olive trees--at the right of the lampstand and at its left?...These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."
    - b. "These are the two anointed ones..."      A parallel picture is offered in Revelation 11.
      - i. They are identified as God's witnesses (see Deut. 17:6, Matt. 18:16).
      - ii. They prophesy against the earth.
      - iii. They pronounce judgment against the world.
      - iv. They stand before God.
      - v. They are invested with divine powers (shut heaven, turn water to blood, strike the earth with plagues)
    - c. Using both pictures in Zech. 4 and Rev. 11 in conjunction with the principle, "by the mouth of two or three witnesses...", the two testaments fulfill these descriptions completely.
  - 2. "And I further answered and said to him, 'What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?'"
    - a. Unlike the candlestick in the tabernacle which the priests had to replenish, this candlestick has a constant source of fuel.
    - b. The fuel comes through two branches that supply the Holy Spirit to the candlestick.
    - c. A branch symbolizes a person (3:8, Rom. 11:16-19)
    - d. The two branches are Zechariah and Haggai whose prophetic ministry is a part of the revelation of God and supplies the people of their time with strength from God.
  - 3. From the inspired word of God as revealed through these prophets flowed the Holy Spirit whose words provided the necessary encouragement and inspiration to finish the rebuilding project.



VIII.5:1-4: Vision #6

- A. "a flying scroll": represents a revelation given from God – see Ez. 2:9-3:1 and Rev. 5:1-7
- B. "Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits.": The dimensions (30 feet long, 15 feet wide) correspond with the most holy place in the tabernacle and Solomon's porch in the temple (I Ki. 6:3)
- C. "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth"
  - 1. The "flying scroll" of great dimension – the revelation of God – contains within it a curse.
  - 2. Disagreement among translators about whether this is "the whole earth" or the "whole land"
    - a. Hebrew word refers to the entire world in 4:10, 14.
    - b. The "whole land," which would refer to the hereditary territory of Israel, is more likely because it is juxtaposed with "the land of Shinar" in verse 11.
- D. "Every thief shall be expelled" represents the condemnation of sin against one's neighbor.
- E. "Every perjurer shall be expelled" represents the condemnation of one who sins against God (as verse 4 makes plain).
- F. Verse 4: The dissemination of God's revelation will spark a time of moral reformation.

IX. 5:5-11: Vision #7

- A. "basket": the interpreting angel says, "This (the basket) is their resemblance throughout the earth"
  - 1. Vision 7 seems to tie back to vision 6
  - 2. The basket and its contents represent the condemned in verses 3-4
- B. "a woman sitting inside the basket": immoral women were often used by the prophets to represent the wickedness of Judah (Isaiah 1:21), Israel (2:5), and of the cities of Samaria and Judah (Ezekiel 23)
- C. "two women...wings like the wings of a stork": God's instruments to remove wickedness from the land
- D. "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar"
  - 1. Shinar is the ancient name of Babylon
  - 2. Allusion to Babylon as the symbolic seat of wickedness for the world
  - 3. Wickedness would be removed from Judah and it would be taken to its "rightful place"

X. 6:1-8: Vision #8

- A. Verses 1-8 The vision
  - 1. "four chariots"
    - a. Four "spirits of heaven" -- spirits of influence
      - i. Also called four winds (see Jer. 49:36, Dan. 7:2)
      - ii. Colors
        - a) "red horses" -- blood, carnage, war
        - b) "black horses" -- death
        - c) "white horses" -- absolute victory

- d) “dappled horses” -- ?
    - iii. Compare with Ezekiel 14:21 and 5:16-17
  - b. Identify with the horses of the first chapter and the eyes of Jehovah that walk or observe “to and fro throughout the earth”.
  - c. They are sent throughout the earth to scatter, destroy, or stir depending upon the will of God.
2. “two mountains...of bronze”
  - a. Mountains refer to government, the color bronze symbolizes the Greek empire as identified in Daniel 2.
  - b. Two mountains of bronze mean two Greek governments.
    - i. The four spirits who have “their station before the Lord of all the earth” came from between the two mountains.
    - ii. They are sent to a “north country” and a “south country”.
    - iii. Must refer to the Selucids and Ptolemies.
  - c. White and black sent to the North country – the Selucids.
    - i. This portion tried to oppress and destroy the nation of Israel.
    - ii. It was eventually conquered and brought to ruin by Rome (see 2:8-9).
  - d. Dapple horses sent to the South country – the Ptolemies.
  - e. Compare and contrast with Daniel 11.
3. “have given rest to My Spirit”
  - a. Once God has dealt justly with unrighteousness, He can be at peace.
  - b. See Ez. 5:13 and 16:42
- XI. 6:9-15 Joshua crowned
- A. “receive the gift” -- the “silver and gold” which are then crafted into an elaborate crown.
    - 1. These were not separate crowns, rather one crown intertwined from two elements.
    - 2. The marriage between two precious elements symbolizes the combining of two precious offices.
  - B. “and set it on the head of Joshua...the high priest”
    - 1. Here we have the marriage of religious and civil government.
    - 2. This must be symbolic of Jesus Christ – the “High Priest” of our confession as well as our Lord.
    - 3. The symbolic identity of Joshua is confirmed by verse 12, “Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH!”
  - C. Five remarks are made concerning the Man, the BRANCH:
    - 1. “From His place He shall branch out”
      - a. He would grow up as a “root out of dry ground” (Is. 53:2).
      - b. The house of David was in a state of decay (Amos 9:11)
    - 2. “He shall build the temple of the Lord”
      - a. They were in the midst of building a temple as Zechariah prophesied; this temple would be completed by Zerubbabel (see 4:9).
      - b. This was different temple as born out by Eph. 2:21, I Pet. 2:5, Heb. 3:6.
    - 3. “He shall bear the glory”

- a. “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9)
  - b. “Who being the brightness of His glory” (Heb. 1:3)
  - 4. “He shall be a priest on His throne”
    - a. Under the Old Law, the priesthood and civil authority were kept separate.
    - b. However, this man would be the antitype of Melchizedek – a man in whom was vested both civil and religious authority.
  - 5. “And the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”
    - a. There would be no conflict between the office of Priest and King.
    - b. Through His role as High Priest, He is able to bring about peace between man and God.
    - c. Through His role as King, He provides peace within His kingdom.
  - D. “Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the Lord”: those Jews who were dispersed as well as Gentiles
- XII. 7:1 – 8:23            Questions about fasting; learn from the fathers; restoration of Jerusalem
- A. 7:1-7                Fasting
- 1. Verses 1-3
    - a. “fourth year of King Darius” approx. 518 B.C., 2 years before temple completion
    - b. “Should I weep in the fifth month and fast as I have done for so many years?”
      - i. Under the Old Law, only the Day of Atonement required a fast.
      - ii. According to Jewish tradition, while in captivity, the children of Israel established certain days of fasting for the purpose of remembering their demise.
        - a) Fourth Month, Ninth Day:            Nebuchadnezzar conquers Jerusalem (Jer. 39:2, 52:6-7)
        - b) Fifth Month, Tenth Day: Temple and City of Jerusalem destroyed by fire (Jer. 52:12-13)
        - c) Seventh Month, Third Day:            Murder of Gedaliah and flight to Egypt (Jer. 41)
        - d) Tenth Month, Tenth Day: Siege of Jerusalem begins (Jer. 39:1)
      - iii. Now that the captivity has ceased, they wonder, "Should we continue these established traditions?"
  - 2. Verses 4-7
    - a. “did you really fast for Me – for Me?”
      - i. The only fast mandated by God occurred on the Day of Atonement when they were to afflict their souls (Is. 58:5).
      - ii. So their sacrifice of food was not out of service to God, but rather self-pity for their condition.
      - iii. Fasting is not a tool used to garner God's favor, nor will they continue to curry it through empty offerings.
    - b. “Should you not have obeyed the words which the Lord proclaimed”
      - i. Once again, obedience means more to the Lord than sacrifice.
      - ii. If their fathers had listened to the voice of God rather than following their

- own hearts, there would be no need for fasting.
        - iii. The lesson then for these people would not be maintaining the empty traditions of their fathers, but rather to learn from their mistakes.
  - B. 7:8-14 Lessons from the fathers
    - 1. Verses 8-10 What the Lord truly values
      - a. These principles are well founded in the Old Law
        - i. Ex. 22:21-26
        - ii. Deuteronomy 10:17-19 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. (18) He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. (19) Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.
      - b. “everyone to his brother”
        - i. “Execute true justice”
        - ii. “Show mercy and compassion”
        - iii. See Mic. 6:8, Hos. 12:6
      - c. “Do not oppress”
        - i. “the widow or the fatherless”
        - ii. “the alien or the poor”
        - iii. See Is. 1:17, 23
      - d. “Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother” -- see Mic. 2:1, 3
    - 2. Verses 11-14
      - a. “But they” (their fathers)
        - i. “refused to heed” they were given the same instructions as these people just received; their fathers refused to comply.
        - ii. “shrugged their shoulders” they turned their shoulder to God and ignored Him – see Neh. 9:29.
        - iii. “and stopped their ears” see Is. 6:9-10
      - b. “they made their hearts like flint”
        - i. The summative result of these acts was a hardened, stubborn, rebellious heart – see Ez. 3:9
        - ii. Note that both the law and the words of the prophets were given by His Spirit – see Neh. 9:30.
      - c. “just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so they called out and I would not listen”
        - i. The people did not heed what the Lord had to say.
        - ii. So, in return, the Lord took no heed when they tried to speak with Him.
- C. 8:1-23 Promise of restoration
  - 1. Verses 1-8 A vision of the restored
    - a. “Lord of hosts”
      - i. This phrase occurs in Zechariah 46 times – 15 times in the 8th chapter alone.
      - ii. “hosts” refers to a great multitude or army.

- iii. This phrase would inspire the reader's confidence in the restoration and preservation power of God.
  - b. “zealous for Zion with great zeal”
    - i. The Lord is anxiously committed to the restoration of the Hebrew nation and, in particular, the reconstitution of Jerusalem.
    - ii. This zeal is reiterated with the additional articulation of the Lord's fervor – His burning love for His people.
  - c. “I will return to Zion”
    - i. “and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem”
      - a) True, that God would reestablish His presence once the temple was finished.
      - b) Yet this seems to point forward to an even greater time, where the complete fulfillment would take place in the kingdom of His Son.
    - ii. “Jerusalem shall be called”
      - a) The name Jerusalem means “foundation of peace”.
      - b) Now the Lord will be expanding her name to include the following descriptive phrases:
        - 1) “City of Truth”
        - 2) “The Mountain of the Lord of hosts”
        - 3) “The Holy Mountain”
  - d. “in the streets of Jerusalem”
    - i. “Old men and old women shall again sit”
      - a) Those who by reason of age are feeble -- “each one with his staff in his hand because of great age”.
      - b) During this time, the very aged would be able to live and prosper in peace.
    - ii. “shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets”
      - a) The normal activities of children would be restored.
      - b) See Lam. 2:11, 19
    - iii. This picture indicates peace and prosperity.
      - a) In times of war, famine, and distress, often the very old and the very young will be the first to die due to weakness.
      - b) In this time, Jerusalem will dwell in a completely safe condition.
  - e. “If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people...”
    - i. At this time, the remnant must think such a vision is completely beyond possibility.
    - ii. Yet, what seems “marvelous” -- to be beyond one's power – was in fact quite simple in the eyes of God.
    - iii. Such a restoration remains easy for the Lord to accomplish, despite how impossible it may seem to our eyes.
  - f. “Behold I will save My people...”
    - i. The people of God would be drawn from all directions.
    - ii. The state of affairs prior to the captivity would be restored.

- iii. “They shall be My people...”
      - a) God would once again identify the Israelites while they would again claim Him.
      - b) This relationship would be founded upon, “truth and righteousness”.
- 2. Verses 9-13 A call to work
  - a. “Let your hands be strong”
    - i. Based on the information given in 7:1, Zerubbabel laid the foundation 18 years ago and the construction resumed two years previous.
    - ii. The Lord is encouraging those who have heard the teachings of Haggai and Zechariah to continue applying themselves to the task at hand.
    - iii. The Lord has given them much reason to joyously finish the task.
  - b. “For before these days”
    - i. This refers to time period following the remnant's return, the laying of the foundation, and the first phase of temple construction.
    - ii. During that time, there was no blessing because the people were not working.
  - c. “But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days”
    - i. Peace in the land was always God's reward for those who follow His will (see Lev. 26:3-6).
    - ii. Though the nation once was disdained for its position, it would now be highly regarded (see Mic. 5:7)
    - iii. The promise of blessing closes with an admonishment, “let your hands be strong”; in other words, get to work!
- 3. Verses 14-17 God's favor comes through obedience
  - a. “Just as I determined...”
    - i. Despite multiple warnings, the fathers provoked the wrath of God because of their disobedience.
    - ii. With the same determination, God will now show favor upon their children as they seek to restore Jerusalem.
  - b. “These are the things you shall do”
    - i. “Speak each man the truth to his neighbor”
    - ii. “Give judgment in you gates for truth, justice, and peace”
    - iii. “Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor”
    - iv. “And do not love a false oath”
    - v. As we find in 7:9-10, these were all failures of the fathers.
- 4. Verses 18-23 Mourning turns to joy
  - a. “the fast of the....” The fasts Israel has adopted in order to commemorate these terrible events in their history.
  - b. “shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts”
    - i. What once were solemn, morbid occasions would be transformed into moments of rejoicing.
    - ii. There was no sense in commemorating events that represented Judah's chastening.

- iii. If God changed how He viewed the people and the land, then why should the people not change how they viewed their own position?
- iv. The difference becomes the change from, “look what we lost” to “look what we have”.
- v. What will truly please God will be their love of “truth and peace”.
- c. “the inhabitants of one city shall go to another”
  - i. There would be common encouragement among the people to attend to the matters of the Lord's house.
  - ii. The people would be eager and earnest to serve the Lord.
- d. “ten men from every language...shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man”
  - i. Because of their disbursement among the nations, the Jews would be the gateway for nations to come to God.
  - ii. We see in Cornelius, the Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia, and other places that the Gentile world was profoundly affected by the spread of Judaism beyond the borders of Israel.
  - iii. In this is the complete fulfillment of the statement in verse 13 – the change from a curse among the nations to a blessing.

2:17-22)

## Comment:

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade!

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:  
Yes, this was difficult! I felt like I was reading the OT Revelation. If we do the 7 Bible Study next year I'd like to have prophecy earlier in the week or on Saturday. Friday night is tough for me; I need my mind to be more fresh. 😊 Thanks for your notes, Wade. I got 100% more from the reading because of it. Thanks for a full day of edifying the brethren. Prayerfully the Iowa College Bible Study went well.

## November 24: Zechariah 8-14 (John Morris)

Reading for November 24, 2017  
ZECHARIAH 8-14

Happy Day-After-Thanksgiving!

Below are a few comments on chapter 8, a brief introduction to chapters 9-14, and then a note about the attached PDF.

### CHAPTER 8

God assures the nation that He is still zealous for Zion, and that He will return to Jerusalem in the future (recall His departure in Ezek. 10:18-19 and 11:22-23), as will the people. The city will again thrive in days to come (vss. 4-5). So will the nation's agriculture (vs. 12). Interestingly, God foretells of a time when not only the Jews, but the Gentiles also, will seek the LORD in Jerusalem (vss. 20-23). This may find its ultimate fulfillment in the church, though it is noteworthy that the Gentiles were seeking God in Jerusalem prior to the Lord's coming (Jn. 12:1, 20; Ac. 8:27); the temple at Jerusalem even had a "court of the Gentiles."

### CHAPTERS 9-14

Here are some of the most difficult chapters in the entire Old Testament. Utterly fascinating, but unquestionably challenging. Chapters 1-8 had three dated sections, but these have no dates, so it's unknown when Zechariah received them. And whereas the content of chapters 1-8 bore upon the immediate interests of the people of Zechariah's time, chapters 9-14 have a much wider range, dealing extensively with things relevant to the age of the Messiah, and for people of all times. Interestingly, chapters 9-14 are the most quoted section of the prophets in the gospel narratives concerning Jesus' suffering and death.

If interested, you can check out the PDF containing my notes on Zechariah 9-14. Time was not going to permit a post of satisfactory length on these chapters, and I didn't want to give them short shrift, so decided to go this route. The notes are cumbersome, admittedly, and in need of revision (the hard copy is riddled with accumulated additions, etc.), but I hope they can be useful, nonetheless.

The LORD bless and keep you, and give you peace.

**Please click the link below for the 40-page PDF file.**



[https://lookaside.fbsbx.com/file/Zechariah%209-14.pdf?token=AWynLSHIWEfo2GM290DzBllmkXxkciwCvs1VcE4SNrhRTPHqwj-G0M11MYZ\\_GGUmY5XRenKoy4y3Z-tzHFU87Ykr3yLuhxOwQNRdxjuBkxerOAcTjtNQALJmPpfFbeVyb6WRHcboNuoUYfPaTSjZxu5wb36y7Y9BoGz\\_w1X3dR6T0mJVwbEsf8RnUZ5SVB47uu11hB4VNNGyZFnVpHLxWIOc](https://lookaside.fbsbx.com/file/Zechariah%209-14.pdf?token=AWynLSHIWEfo2GM290DzBllmkXxkciwCvs1VcE4SNrhRTPHqwj-G0M11MYZ_GGUmY5XRenKoy4y3Z-tzHFU87Ykr3yLuhxOwQNRdxjuBkxerOAcTjtNQALJmPpfFbeVyb6WRHcboNuoUYfPaTSjZxu5wb36y7Y9BoGz_w1X3dR6T0mJVwbEsf8RnUZ5SVB47uu11hB4VNNGyZFnVpHLxWIOc)

### **Comments:**

Steven Wright:

Thanks John! 2. ESV- "mixed people" I like this one best. I try to stay away from the use of the term "race" and I avoid the other related divisive/derisive man-made terms also. "I will sow them among the peoples"

1. This idea expressed in Hos. 1:11; 2:23- "I will sow her for Myself in the earth"

2. NOTE

a. God is gathering them together (vs. 8), and yet...

b. He is also sowing them "among the peoples and they shall remember Me in far countries" and some of them went to North America.

### **Comments:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, John!

### **Comments:**

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, John! Prior to this year I had very little study in prophecy. Your notes have helped so much!

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### December 1: Malachi 1-4 (Wade Stanley)

Malachi is the final book of prophecy in the Old Testament both chronologically and canonically. While we cannot precisely nail down when Malachi ministered to Judah, there are a few internal clues that lead us to a general time period.

1:7-10: We read of sacrifices being offered at the temple.

1:8: At the time of Malachi's writing, the Jews were under the rule of a governor.

2:11: There was a problem with Jewish men marrying foreign wives, a problem that existed during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

These internal clues suggest that Malachi was written at some point during the fifth century B.C.

Unfaithfulness is the principle theme of Malachi. The priests were unfaithful to God by allowing the people to offer substandard sacrifices (1:6-14) and by being lax with the covenant in general (2:1-9). The people showed their unfaithfulness by treating the covenant of marriage with contempt (2:10-16). God will condemn the unfaithful (2:17-3:5) and therefore urges His people to repent (3:6-7).

One of the interesting features of Malachi is how God uses the objections of the people against them. Their excuses do not stand up to divine scrutiny. The righteous, however, will stand (3:16-18).

Chapter 4 is most certainly Messianic. Notice the prediction of John the Baptizer in 4:5-6.

Only four more weeks of prophecy to go! On to Revelation...

### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:

4:6 is an interesting verse. "Turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers". I think there is a lot of possibilities here but the general idea is that the "children" of Israel are in a bad place during the time of Malachi and will be for the 400 year intertestamental period and then the final opportunity will arise when God the Father will once again turn his heart towards his children and offer them salvation through His son. John the Baptist will call out, "Repent" and return to the faith of your fathers, in particular Abraham (a new Son will carry the wood up the Mount.) I think Jesus refers to all of this in John 8:25-42 which is too much to paste here but verse 39 is probably key when Jesus accuses them of no longer being children of Abraham. "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."

**Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade!

**Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:  
Thank you, Wade! Where has this year gone? This month in Revelation will really fly!

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### December 8: Revelation 1-6 (John Morris)

Reading for December 8, 2017

REVELATION 1-6

Today, we jump into the last book of God's written record, the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Revelation is the account of an extended visionary experience had by the apostle John during his exile on the island of Patmos during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian. Patmos is a small, rocky island (8 mi. long x 5 mi. wide) in the Aegean Sea, about 40 miles W of the nearest point on the Asian mainland (western Turkey, today). The best evidence indicates that John saw the Revelation near the end of Domitian's reign (AD 96), meaning that he would have been a very aged man at the time, nearing the end of his life. The "powers that be" had banished him from his home, time had stripped him of his strength. But God was not hindered in using him for great good. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God..." (Rom. 8:28).

#### CHAPTER 1:

John is "in the Spirit" on the Lord's Day, and while in this state, is brought face to face with "One like the Son of Man" ("one like a son of man" - NAS/ESV/NIV). The description of this being is strikingly similar to the description of the heavenly man who visited Daniel (Dan. 10:4-6), yet the words are the clearly the words of the Lord Jesus: "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."

#### CHAPTERS 2-3

Jesus commands John to write to the messengers of the seven churches of Asia. These were members of their respective congregations (2:24). Each letter follows a sevenfold structure:

- (1) To whom the letter is sent: "To the angel of the church of..."
- (2) By whom the letter is sent: In each letter, Jesus offers a brief description of himself. When pieced together, they recreate the description given in chapter 1.
- (3) A statement showing Jesus has full knowledge of their situation: "I know your works" "I know your tribulation" "I know where you dwell"
- (4) A description of the condition of the church: commendation, and in the case of five of the congregations, criticism, as well.
- (5) A warning/admonition to persevere or repent
- (6) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the seven church."
- (7) A promise to those who "overcome"

#### CHAPTER 4-5

John is called to enter into heaven, and there sees the throne of God and its environs. The description hearkens back to visions seen by Isaiah (ch. 6) and Ezekiel (chs. 1 and 11). God is holding a scroll, and the only one worthy to open is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins

of the world. The heavenly host around the throne praise the Lamb and His God, and the stage is now set for the Lamb to open the seals.

## CHAPTER 6

The first six seals. There are a number of schools of interpretation concerning Revelation, but the historicist view has long made sense to me, and continues to as the years go by. As a result, I understand the remaining symbols of the book to provide a prophetic panorama of the history of the world, beginning with events that began to transpire soon after John saw the Revelation (1:1, 3; 22:6) and stretching all the way to the end of time (20:11ff). For a good comparison of the different views of Revelation, as well as a useful resource for historical details, you can check out Steve Gregg's book, "Revelation: Four Views: A Parallel Commentary."

The first four seals all have horses. This reminds us of Zechariah 1:7-8 and 6:1-8. This commonality seems to indicate that this group of seals share a common thread. That common thread, I believe, is war. Horses were the tanks of the ancient world.

In the first seal, we see the Roman Empire experiencing vast military success, as it did during the near century-long Age of the Antonines, particularly under Emperor Trajan (AD 98-117) soon after the Revelation was given. The white horse, and garland on the rider's head, symbolize military victory, since they were granted to a victorious general upon his return to Rome. The bow was the known weapon of the Cretans, from whose stock the first emperor in this epoch, Nerva, sprang.

In the second seal, we see civil war within the Empire. The red horse indicates bloodshed. Peace is taken from "the earth" (a reference to the Roman world in Revelation), and the sword serves as the instrument by which "people should kill one another." The aforementioned Age of the Antonines ended in AD 180. From AD 192-284, the Empire saw near endless upheaval. During that time, 32 emperors and 27 pretenders alternately cast each other from the throne by incessant warfare.

In the third seal, we see the common consequences of extended war (within and without the Empire): taxation and scarcity of food. Scales, in those days, were used in taxation. And eating "bread by weight" is a biblical expression for scarcity of food (Lev. 26:26; Ezek. 4:16). The prices listed for wheat and barley here are famine prices, exorbitantly high. During the incessant warfare of this period, Rome increased its burdens on the people. Emperor Caracalla (AD 218-222), for example, granted citizenship to all free men of the Empire, but only so he could tax them more. Edward Gibbon (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*) references "the land tax, the capitation and heavy contributions of corn, wine, oil, and wheat, exacted from the provinces for the use of the court, the army and the capital." During these days, landowners deliberately reduced production, and even destroyed their crops, to avoid the oppressive taxation. This led the government to issue an edict forbidding the destruction of olive trees and grapevines ("do not harm the oil and the wine").

In the fourth seal, we see more consequences of relentless warfare and lack of food—death ("pale" is certainly the color of death) by sword, starvation, disease, and even wild animals as the weak and sickly (and shrinking) population's ability to protect itself is diminished. Edward Gibbon tells us that from AD 248-296, "five thousand persons died daily in Rome; and many towns that escaped the hands of the barbarians were entirely depopulated." He also states that sword, famine, and pestilence were responsible for this wreaking of havoc in the Empire. Additionally, Eusebius (the "father of church history") adds: "Death waged a desolating war with...famine and pestilence...Men wasted to mere skeletons, stumbled hither and thither like mere shadows, trembling and tottering. They fell down in the streets...Some indeed were already the food for dogs" (*Ecclesiastical History*, 3:6).

In the fifth seal, our attention is drawn away from warfare to a new subject. Here, we see the persecution of the saints, perhaps the persecutions under Emperors Maximian and Diocletian which stretched from AD 270-304. For Diocletian's part, he had been counseled by his advisors that the Empire's trouble was rooted in its abandonment of the Roman gods. This, of course, was the fault of the Christians, so they had to go. Christians were prohibited from assembling, meeting houses were burned to the ground, scriptures destroyed, our brethren massacred. The deceased faithful are wondering how long the Lord will permit this to go on.

In the sixth seal comes the answer. A LOT could be said here, but I'm running out time! Diocletian abdicates the throne, and Constantine assumes power. Constantine issued the Edict of Toleration which gave formal and legal recognition to Christianity, accepted Christianity, himself (though he imperfectly understood it), and almost overnight, the world changed for Christians. It was shaken to its foundations. The old powers in the pagan political heavens were cast down, and so striking were the events that it appeared to the enemies of the faith as if Christ Himself was making war on them...which, He may well have been. Sorry so little on this last seal. Lord willing, Dan Huff and I are headed to Colorado in about 35 minutes. For further study on this seal, you can check out: Is. 34:4; Rev. 16:20; Hos. 10:8; Lk. 23:30 and many more!

The Lord bless and keep you today.

### **Comment:**

Rev 5 "WORTHY IS THE LAMB!"

"Agnus Dei" Latin for Lamb of God  
<https://youtu.be/7RzWrznHlvY>

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, John! Rich stuff! My prayers for you and Dan's travels!

### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Most excellent notes, John! Thank you so much for walking us through the first 6 chapters of Revelation. Your discipline in studying academics and God's Word is a blessing to all of us. May the good Lord bless your fellowship with Dan and brethren in CO.

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright's

Most excellent! Thank you John!

### **Comment:**

Doug Twaddell:

Thanks John. It has always struck me that when no one can open the seal, not even the "strong angel," John weeps thinking this important information will go unknown. I think about what kind of magnificent being and display he probably believed he was about to witness when told that the "Lion of Judah" was going to arrive and open it. Then to see "a lamb as if it had been slain" opening the scroll. What an amazing object lesson in the importance of the sacrifice of Christ and the symbolism as the Passover lamb. God be with you and Dan.

## **Comment:**

Lowell Hermon:

The bow of the Cretans was proof enough for me that the historical approach to interpret the book was the correct way to go.

## **Comment:**

Fred Brady:

Thanks, Mark. Always appreciate study from Revelation.

# **December 15: Revelation 7-11 (Wade Stanley)**

## Introduction

I have attached a general outline of the book of Revelation that organizes it into five visions. Organizing it in this way helps me to better digest the book as a whole. Notice that each vision ends with a proleptic view of the day of judgment which serves as God's signpost that the vision has concluded.

Chapters 7-11 chronicles the middle to the end of John's second vision in Revelation. Here are a few comments.

## Chapter 7: God preserves His people

In the fifth seal, we see those who have died for their faith at the hands of a persecuting powers ask God for vengeance. Chapter 7 shows an angel "sealing" 144,000 from twelve of the tribes of Jacob. (Note: Ephraim and Dan are excluded from the list. Dan was the first tribe to succumb to idolatry in the time of the judges. Ephraim, the royal tribe of the northern kingdom, led Israel into idolatry and captivity.) The ceremony represents God claiming ownership of His people and pledging to preserve their souls through a time of great tribulation should they remain faithful (see verses 14-17).

## Chapter 8: The conquering of the Western Roman Empire

The seventh seal is a direct response to the prayers in seal #5 (see verses 3-5). From the seventh seal comes the seven trumpets, God's judgment upon the power of Rome which co-opted, corrupted, and suppressed His church. In trumpets 1-4, the Western Roman Empire is conquered; in trumpets 5-6, the Byzantine empire (or the Roman empire of the east) is conquered.

Trumpet 1: Goths under Alaric sack Rome (410 A.D.)

Trumpet 2: Vandals conquer northern Europe, north Africa, destroy the Roman fleet at Carthage, sail to Rome and sack it

Trumpet 3: Attila the Hun conquers eastern and central Europe

Trumpet 4: Conglomeration of Germanic tribes conquer Rome

Chapter 9: The conquering of the Byzantine empire

Trumpet 5: The rise of the Mohammed and the Arab Muslim power; the Abassid caliphate is established and so begins the “Golden Age of Islam”

Trumpet 6: The rise of the Turkish Muslim power (eventually becomes the Ottoman empire); successive bids to conquer Constantinople; Constantinople is conquered in 1453.

## Chapter 10

Like the sixth seal, the sixth trumpet has an interlude. John consumes a little book which, in my estimation, represents the remainder of Revelation following the seventh trumpet. The seals and trumpets are connected to the material in chapters 12 and onward by two elements: the 144,000 (depicted in both chapters 7 and 14) and a time period referred to variously at 1,260 days, 42 months, or time, times and 1/2 a time. This particular vision is about to draw to a close, but there is more to say about what will transpire in the future. It will be revealed from a different perspective.

## Chapter 11

John is tasked with measuring the church. As we will see in chapters 12, 13 and 17, Satan will work hard to oppose the church with both hard power (persecution) and soft power (apostasy). The trees represent the testimony of the word of God.

Chapter 11 concludes with a proleptic vision of the day of judgement, signaling the conclusion of the second vision. However, the sealed of chapter 7, the consumption of the little book, and the time period of 1,260 days connect us to the events depicted in visions 3 and 4.

Happy reading!

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/417si7vtj6r0pp0/General%20Outline.docx?dl=0>



- I. Prologue: 1:1-8
- II. Vision 1: 1:9-3:22
  - A. 1:9-16: John sees a representation of the glorified Christ
  - B. 1:17-20: The vision interpreted
  - C. 2:1-3:22: Letters to the seven churches of Asia
- III. Vision 2: chapters 4-11
  - A. 4:1: "I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven"
  - B. 4:2-5:14: Throne scene
  - C. 6:1-8:5: The seven seals
  - D. 8:6-11:19: The seven trumpets
  - E. 11:15-19: The seventh trumpet is the judgment day
- IV. Vision 3: chapters 12-14
  - A. 12:1: "a great sign appeared in heaven"
  - B. 12: Satan versus the servants of God
  - C. 13: Manifestations of Satanic power in the world
  - D. 14:1-13: God's people preserved through persecution
  - E. 14:14-20: The judgment day
- V. Vision 4: chapters 15-20
  - A. 15:1: "then I saw another sign in heaven"
  - B. 15: Prelude to the 7 bowls of wrath
  - C. 16: The seven bowls of wrath
  - D. 17: The beast and harlot interpreted
  - E. 18: Woes
  - F. 19-20: The judgment day
- VI. Vision 5: chapters 21-22:5
  - A. 21:2: "Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God"
  - B. 21:3-8: God restores His dwelling with people; the wicked cast out of His presence
  - C. 21:9-27: John tours the city
  - D. 22:1-5: The river of water of life, the tree of life
- VII. Epilogue: 22:6-21

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade!

### **Comment:**

Francisco Pagulayan:  
Wade good idea, it can help better understanding, good job my brother

### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:  
You and John make Revelation an easy study. Thank you for these most excellent notes, Wade!  
And I can't help but post good memories from Rick Sparks during the 2014 2 week meeting.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wcze7EGorOk&feature=youtu.be>  
"The Four Lads-Istanbul"

### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:  
That was so nice you said it twice!

### **Replies:**

Wade Stanley:  
Whoops. Christopher Valdivieso sent me a message about that but, admittedly, I was not firing on all cylinders this morning. I could not figure out what he was talking about.  
Thanks guys!

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:  
Nice work! Thanks bro!

## **December 22: Revelation 12-17 (John Morris)**

Reading for December 22, 2017  
REVELATION 12-17

Today, we continue our overview of Revelation, and in doing so, touch upon some of its most challenging chapters.

Revelation is divided up into two main sets of visions. The first runs from 4:1 to 11:18, the second from 11:19 to 19:21. As a result, we'll be spending today perusing the majority of the second part. I'll do my best to keep it light, yet informative. The nature of the content will make that challenging, though. =)

### **CHAPTER 12**

John sees a woman who represents the church. She is clothed with the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4:2)—that is, Jesus Christ. She stands upon the lesser light of the Old Covenant, and has her head crowned with the twelve apostles (stars served as symbols of

human messengers earlier in the book (1:20; 2:24)). The church is in pain (persecution), but preparing for greater growth (symbolized by the coming childbirth). In light of this, the “male Child” cannot be Christ, who was born under the law, but Christians, born of the bride of Christ (Is. 66:7; Gal. 4:26; Philemon 1:10). Verse 5 does not pose an insurmountable challenge to this interpretation, since Christians, because of their connection with the Savior, will also “rule all nations with a rod of iron” (2:26-27).

But the growing church has an enemy—the pagan Roman Empire (see “ten horns” of Dan. 7:7) animated by Satan, the dragon. He intends to kill her offspring using the empire-wide persecutions of Maxentius and Diocletian (AD 270-304) whose purposes were to completely eradicate Christianity from the Empire.

But God had a different plan. He was not willing to see His saints perish from the earth, so “the male child was caught up to God and His throne.” God provided them protection, and changed the way the world viewed His people. Diocletian, incredibly, abdicated office of his own free will, Constantine (a professed Christian) came to power, and Christians, in less than a generation, went from being threatened by their government to being protected by it! In fact, before the fourth century was over, they would witness the complete overthrow of paganism in the Empire.

All of these events on earth were accompanied by (ran parallel to?) events in heaven (compare Dan. 10:13, 30-11:1). Satan lost in both realms.

But the dragon was not done trying to destroy the saints. Cast down to the earth, his intentions remained the same. Only his methods changed. He continued to wage war on the church, but now, by means of a revamped beast, a renovated Roman Empire, if you will—the beast we’re about to read about in the next chapter (13:1-8). This phase of his efforts went on for “a time and times and half a time” (12:14) (3 ½ years), an epoch also styled as “1,260 days” (12:6) and “42 months” (11:2)—1,260 prophetic days (years), as I understand it. This time period is described in three different ways in the Bible, but seven times altogether. During this time, the church was in “the wilderness,” out of the public eye and hidden, for the most part, from historians, but alive and well, nourished and protected by her God (12:6, 14).

## CHAPTER 13

John now sees Satan’s new vehicle for persecution. This beast possesses seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns just like the “fiery red dragon” of 12:3 (and is, therefore, a Roman power), but has some significant additional qualities. Noteworthy among them is that this beast is worshipped, and speaks blasphemies against God and His church. That this is the dragon’s new tool for persecuting God’s people during their time in the wilderness is indicated in vss. 5-7.

But there’s another beast (13:11-18). This one, unlike the beast before it, does not arise out of the sea, but out of the earth. He’s distinct from the “first beast” of the chapter, but works in close connection with him (“in his presence”), and on his behalf. He supports the first beast by causing the world to worship him. He claims divine authority—the authority of the Lamb of God (“horns like a lamb”)—and works “signs” to prove it, but he’s really a deceiver, and his words are those of the dragon (“spoke like a dragon”). He is elsewhere called the “false prophet” (19:20).

Who are these beasts? The best explanation I have found is that they are representations of the political and ecclesiastical power of papal Rome—Rome as she continued to wield authority over Europe, even after the dissolution of the Empire. It is a fact of history that the Roman Catholic Church gradually stepped into the vacuum left by the waning Roman Imperial

authority, and eventually morphed into a religious version of the Roman Empire. Says historian C. Warren Hollister (and I'll try not to do too much quoting):

"Before the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West...Trinitarian Christianity had absorbed and turned to its own purposes much of Rome's heritage in political organization and law, carrying on the Roman administrative and legal tradition into the medieval and modern world. The Church modeled its canon law on Roman civil law. The secular leadership of the Roman Empire gave way to the spiritual leadership of the Roman Church. The pope assumed the old Roman republican and imperial title of pontifex maximus (supreme pontiff) and preserved much of the imperial ritual of the later Empire. In this organizational sense, the medieval Church has been described as a ghost of the Roman Empire."

The political arm of the Roman Catholic Church (the first beast) for centuries crowned and cowed kings, mustered armies, fought wars, acquired territory, did all the things that political entities do. But it also killed Christians, perhaps millions of them, murdering them in the name of the Lord, calling them "heretics." And the kings and commoners of Europe put up with it. Why? Because they believed the "Church" spoke with the authority of Christ. The second beast, embodied in the clergy (with special emphasis on the college of cardinals, perhaps), told them they courted eternal damnation if they didn't submit to the demands of the "Church." Pages upon pages upon pages of historical quotations would bear this out. Just as 13:16-17 states, "heretics" were denied even the right of engaging in simple commerce, because they wouldn't conform.

There isn't enough space to build the case for all this here, but we don't want to leave this chapter without commenting on 13:17-18. What is the meaning of the "number of the beast," "the number of his name"? It's something we have to calculate, John says. Irenaeus seems to have hit the nail on the head back in the second century AD. He submitted the name "Lateinos" (the Greek spelling of the Latin name "Latinus," the man who reputedly served as the founder of the Latin people). Like the Romans, the Greeks used letters for numbers, and if you add up the values of the letters in Lateinos, you get 666.

This all fits. Rome is the ancient capital of the Latins. The Romans spoke Latin. The Roman Catholic Church for centuries performed all its services in Latin, the meetings of its high officials are still conducted in Latin, and it has long been known, even officially, as the Latin Church (to distinguish it from the Greek Church).

#### CHAPTER 14

This chapter serves as an interlude, as did chapter 7. After hearing that such terrible things are in store for the saints, God offers some encouragement. Even though there will be a great deceiver who will succeed in causing so many to worship the beast in Rome, there will continue to be a pure church, undefiled, made up of souls who follow the true Lamb wherever He goes, and among whom He stands (14:1-5). And the day will come, after many dark centuries of persecution and deceit, when the true gospel will again be proclaimed openly and to a large audience (14:6-7) (Restoration Movement?), spiritual Babylon (14:8; 17:5, 9) will fall, those who worshipped the beast will receive their reward (14:9-11), and the ripe righteous will be gathered to God.

#### CHAPTER 15

This is the prelude to the seven judgments (bowls) that will finally consume spiritual Babylon and bring the world to a close. Some of this remains unfulfilled. Note how the bowls are called the "seven plagues" in vs. 6. Reminds us of the ten plagues of Egypt. God used those to judge a godless power that persecuted His people, but afterward delivered Israel. Similarly, the seven bowls describe a progressive erosion of papal Rome's power (Daniel and Paul both

describe this process with the word “consume” (Dan. 7:26; 2 Thess. 2:8), distinct from the idea of “destroy”) which will precede the final deliverance of the Israel of God.

## CHAPTER 16

Said I was going to make this post “light.” If I haven’t already failed in that, I will for sure if I get into very much detail here. Will just mention a few highlights on the first six bowls, and acknowledge now that it remains to be seen how the seventh will be fulfilled. We can only speculate.

Note how the first four bowls parallel the first four trumpets: Earth, Sea, Rivers & Springs, Sun. Also, notice how the timeframes of the first four bowls roughly coincide (end of the 18th century, very early 19th century), though each depicts a separate aspect of the crisis that befell the papacy at that time.

First bowl: This is poured out on those who worshipped the beast. This “foul and loathsome sore” seems to be the French Revolution (1793). In that historic upheaval, moral corruption (atheism, murder, etc.) featured prominently. France was always more significant than other European countries in its role as papal supporter, and was known as “the eldest son of the church.” When it killed 24,000 Catholic priests and turned 40,000 Catholic churches into stables, it was evident that the papal power had taken a severe hit.

Second bowl: This judgment concerned the sea. France, Spain, and Portugal were the only papal-supporting nations who possessed a navy. Of these, France was the most formidable. In the great naval war between France and England that began in 1793 (and continued for 20 years), the naval resources of France and Spain that the pope had once been able to call upon were dramatically reduced by disastrous defeats at the hands of the British. Nearly 200 “ships of the line” were destroyed, 300-400 frigates, and countless other seagoing vessels of war and commerce.

Third bowl: This bowl is poured out on the rivers and springs of water. Beginning in 1793, France launched invasions against Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Northern Italy (northern Italy is crowded with rivers). These wars occurred on the Rhine and Po, as well as on other streams. B. W. Johnson writes: “In 1796, [Napoleon], age 27, led a French army across the Alps. On the river system of Italy, on the Rhone, the Po and its tributaries, he battled with the Austrians and their allies. It is remarkable that every one of his great conflicts were fought upon the rivers.” Significantly, all the affected regions were papal states and territories.

Oh, and one other point. Vs. 6 mentions that this judgment is good and right, because “they have shed the blood of saints and prophets.” History bears out that in the very regions of these rivers (Rhine, Danube, Po), multitudes of believers had been murdered at the command of the popes.

Fourth bowl: This bowl is poured out on the sun. The sun is a symbol for a prominent authority (Gen. 1- the sun “rules” the day; in Joseph’s dream, the sun is his father). After the pouring, it says, “power was given to HIM to scorch men with fire.” The sun is a “him,” and that him is almost certainly Napoleon Bonaparte. He was the brightest and mightiest star in the time period under consideration, and Europe was certainly scorched by the intensity of his heat. From 1796 to 1815, Napoleon was engaged in unceasing war. It is estimated that 2,000,000 men perished in those wars. And, of course, who knows how many more suffered or died as a result of the conditions the wars created?

Fifth bowl: The “throne of the beast” would be Rome. This may refer to events that began to transpire in late 1797 when the French commander-in-chief, Berthier, was ordered to advance rapidly into the papacy’s territories. Upon entering Rome, the French military engaged in a

systematic pillaging of the city. The possessions of the “Church,” as well as those of the Roman nobility, were plundered and/or destroyed, and the city was forced to make an enormous contribution of money, food, and animals to the French. Additionally, Pope Pius VI was forcibly removed from the Vatican, and sent as a prisoner to France where he later died.

Sixth bowl: This bowl fast forwards a bit to the 20th century. The Euphrates was connected with the Turks in the sixth trumpet, and probably refers to the same power here. The Turkish (Ottoman) Empire gradually declined in strength and land (“dried up”), until its final dissolution in 1922. Who are the “kings of the east”? Perhaps the modern Muslim nations in the Middle East which have come into existence since the Ottoman Empire’s collapse. Is the phrase “so that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared” referring only to the rise of those nations, or to something they are yet to bring about? I don’t know, but I wonder about the latter.

As for the rest of this bowl, I can only speculate. We have an “unholy trinity” here: the dragon (Satan), “the beast” (the first beast of Rev. 13), and “the false prophet” (the second beast of Rev. 13 (19:20)). And unclean spirits (false doctrines, 1 Tim. 4) like frogs are coming out of their mouths. Is this past, present, or future? Again, I don’t know, but the pope has certainly been playing a bigger role in international affairs in recent years, getting more global and ecumenical. Are these efforts part of his contribution to bringing the nations (Gog and Magog) together to surround the camp of the saints for the final spiritual showdown, “the battle of that great day of God Almighty”? (16:14-16; 20:7-10) We shall just have to wait and see.

Seventh bowl: This one is unique in that it is poured out into the air. Again, it is impossible to know with certainty what unfulfilled prophecy is predicting, but ours is certainly the era of the air: airplanes, airwaves, air warfare, etc. Are the hailstones in vs. 21 bombs, missiles? Maybe. Maybe not. What is certain is that the foundations of this world are not indestructible. The day is coming, and it may not be very far away, when the Lord is going to destroy the earth and the works that are in it. Already, our world is increasingly “filled with violence” as it was in the days of Noah (Gen. 6). As the end nears, Babylon “the great city” (14:8; 18:10) will suffer division of some kind. Political? Theological? Again, we’ll just have to wait and see. But let’s keep our eyes open, brethren, not only looking around, but looking up. The world will blaspheme when these difficult days come. But we can rejoice. Our redemption draws near!!

## CHAPTER 17

This chapter and the next focus in on the identity and final destruction of papal Rome.

### **Comment:**

Christopher Valdivieso:

Good summary! The humanism and religious hostility of the Revolution lingers in French society to this day.

### **Comment:**

Butch O’Neal:

Thank you, John!

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

I don't want to stir a pot of varied interpretation here in Rev., but I think the male child in chapter 12 can be Christ. The description of the woman evokes recollection of Joseph's dream in Genesis 37:9-10, where the sun, moon, and 12 stars (Joseph's brothers being 11 stars, himself the 12th as Jacob interpreted the dream). God associated the 12 patriarchs with his

people, as well as the 12 apostles. I think we are looking at God's people described as his wife (remember Hosea, for example, in the OT) and the bride of Christ (as in Eph 5:22ff in th NT), the barren woman who nevertheless had great progeny. The wedding supper of the Lamb encompasses the redeemed of all ages, the names of the 12 apostles and the 12 tribes of Israel identify the foundation stones and gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. The singular language describing the male child, the reference to his authority in 12:5, as in Psalm 2:7-9, cited in Heb 1:5 of Jesus as well as the references in Rev 2:27, 19:15 where the prophecy of the rod of iron is attached to Jesus, point most obviously to that identity. Yes, Jesus says the one who overcomes "to the end" will share with him in 2:27, but he's the one, the son, who was appointed to this and has achieved this authority.

The language also stirs recollection of Isaiah 9:6, "to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders."

It was when victory seemed to be in Satan's grasp that through death Jesus overcame the one who had the power of death and freed those who had been in fear of death (Heb 2:14-15), which enabled believers to become children of God, identified as Jesus' brethren in the preceding verses of Heb 2. Christians are the children of the woman in Rev 12:17, the objects of the dragon's wrath, but Jesus surely is that firstborn male child who the dragon tried repeatedly to destroy before his conception, while he was an infant, and repeatedly in his life.

The breadth of this sign as a cosmic event, not merely a historical episode, is also alluded to by mention of Michael, identified in Daniel as the "great prince who protects your people" (12:1), and reference to the casting down of Satan, a shared victory accomplished by the blood of the Lamb, point to the inclusion of faithful Israel and Christians. The achievement of Rev 12:10 is proclaimed in Acts 2, the kingdom and authority of the Christ had come, Jesus reigned on the throne as promised to and through David.

## Replies:

John Morris:

I understand your overall position, I think, and the reasons you give for it. Could you help me with your understanding of 12:11? Do you see the overcoming in that verse and the casting down of Satan to be concurrent? If so, how does "the word of their testimony" and the fact "they did not love their lives to the death" factor into the above interpretation? Thanks!

Marc Hermon:

The last time I taught this book I settled on this idea also. We all agree that this woman is clearly symbolic and not the Mary with a halo of stars standing on the moon that you see in Christian art. I struggled having her represent the Jewish people but then switching the symbolism to the church when she goes into hiding for 1260 years. The symbolism of the male child representing Christ is too strong for me to explain it in other ways especially when reading the last verse when the dragon goes after the rest of her offspring (those that have the testimony of Jesus). These problems seem to go away when we explain the woman as God's betrothed or God's people. Whether the children of Israel or the Church, whenever they or we are disobedient God has compared it to adultery. Symbolizing her more generically as God's people fits with the imagery of her being clothed with the Sun (light of Christ and the church) while standing on the foundation of the lesser light (the 1st Testament). I think this same type of symbolism can be used in Rev 21 when we have the next change in the ages. We read Rev 21 as a description of heaven but isn't it really a description of the church? Again, I think the answer is simply Yes! It is once again a description of God's people.

As a side note I heard a Muslim speaker one time that said they were very offended with Christian art because it represented Christianity "stomping" on Islam whenever Mary was pictured standing on the crescent moon. I decided not to argue with him because perhaps after the crusades some Christian artists actually did interpret the passage that way. It's been difficult for each generation since the 1st century to not read their own life events into the symbolism. Most people today want it to still be a book of prophecy rather than primarily a book of history. As Charles Dickens wrote, each generation thinks of itself in the superlative degree.

Charles Fry:

John, you're not trying to be tricky, but concurrent is a tricky word and I don't want to say more than I understand. Yet, here I go. Ha!

When Jesus said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." (Luke 10:48) was he referring to a primeval event in space/time history shortly after the beginning, that he witnessed as the divine Word, or was he referring to the consequences of the ministry of the 70, perhaps ironically, which was the context of the comment? I tend to think the latter, especially in view of the next two verses there in Luke, but I've heard the former taught, and particularly connected to Isaiah 14:12, and can't definitely say it isn't what Jesus meant, or at least alluded to (even if he was using hyperbole and irony in addressing the disciples enthusiasm about the power and success they had enjoyed). But I don't think what John hears in Revelation 12:11 describes a primeval event, even if it was foreordained in the same sense that the death of the Lamb was foreordained, speaking of what is not as though it were already accomplished.

In Rev 13:8 John does refer to "the Lamb that was slain from the creation [foundation] of the world." Jesus did die in space/time history at "just the right time" (Romans 5:6, Galatians 4:4) in about 33 A.D., but in terms of the cosmic purposes of God, the "eternal covenant" (Hebrews 13:20) and shedding of Jesus' blood was determined before the creation itself (1 Peter 1:19-20, Ephesians 1:4, Titus 1:2). Thus, I don't want to be overly narrow in limiting God's eternal purposes (overcoming sin, destroying the devil's work, 1 John 3:8) to a singular event in human history. There is a purposeful interconnected process from Alpha to Omega, from beginning to end, involving promises and covenants and prophecies and commandments.

In historical terms, there surely is a climactic change of status for Satan and his team when the blood of the Lamb is shed; the dragon being defeated through death, the devil's access to the assemblies of the sons of God (Job 1-2) as the accuser has been revoked by the atonement of Jesus (Romans 8:28-39), and the strong man has been bound and his house plundered (Matthew 12:29). The prince of this world has been driven out and he stands condemned (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11). The blood of Jesus must connect to the casting down of the dragon, both the cosmic achievement and the personal participation in victory.

How then does the testimony and facing death connect, in Revelation 12:11? Notice the emphasis on the testimony of believers in Revelation (1:2, 9, 6:9, 11:7, 12:11, 12:17, 17:6, 19:10 esp., & 20:4). The testimony, I think, applies even to the faithful angels (ie Jude 9, various examples of angels identifying themselves as servants of the Lord, including Rev 19:10, 22:8-9), but especially applies to people willing to die for their faith. It is the "spirit of prophecy". This (personal) victory is possible only because of the blood of the Lamb, and is shared by those who lived by faith before the cross, and after the cross (Hebrews 11-12, noting especially 11:35-38, 11:39-40 w/ 12:1-3, 23, Hebrews 9:15). For the believer following Jesus we have the assurance that we can resist the devil successfully, with God's help (James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:9). The victory of saints (and



angels) over the dragon and his host depends upon the blood of the Lamb, and the testimony (of faith). From the foundation of the world, until now, this is the victory. It was made real in human history in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It is real for anyone who is "crucified with Christ." and "lives "by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20). So, yes, I would say it is concurrent, the redemption of all the saved is concurrent with the casting down of Satan by the blood of the Lamb, no matter when we come to participate in the atoning blood of Jesus or when our testimony is given. It all depends upon the blood shed on the cross..

## **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you so much, John! As I mentioned to Wade last week, your knowledge of history and prophecy have been extremely insightful and edifying. Thank you so much for the details covering chapters 12-1; it was very helpful!

## **December 29: Revelation 18-22 (Wade Stanley)**

Hello everyone! Here is our final look at prophecy for 2017.

In vision 3 (chapters 12-14), we are introduced to the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (aka the second beast) who oppose God and His people. Vision 4 (chapters 15-19) forecasts the judgment of the beast and false prophet (aka the second beast in chapter 13). The retributive bowls are poured out against the two agents of the dragon (chapter 16). In chapter 17, John sees the harlot Babylon the Great riding atop the powers of the world. The great harlot is juxtaposed with the woman of chapter 12 who represents the people of God from Adam and Seth forward. The Bible is a tale of two cities and two women: Jerusalem and Babylon. The harlot represents the spirit of rebellion first led by Nimrod, propagated by ensuing generations through idolatry, and culminating with an apostasy which clothes itself with the name of Jesus Christ. The powers of the earth have been both accomplices to and beneficiaries of her rise.

Chapter 18 describes the fall of the apostate church. Enriched by commerce and emboldened by her political dominance, she thought of herself as unassailable. In a short time period, she is reduced to a shell of her former self. Her fall is a wonder to the world. God urges His people to "come out of her," bringing to mind His entreaties to those Jews who remained scattered abroad following captivity.

Chapter 19 offers another proleptic vision of the judgment day. Verses 6-8 talks of the marriage supper of the bride and of the Lamb which awaits those who reject apostasy and hold true to the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Vision 5, the final vision of Revelation, begins in 19:11, "Then I saw heaven opened..." Vision 5 shows the conclusive victories of Jesus over the beast, the false prophet, and the dragon. Our Savior appears as a synthesis of the various ways that He is described throughout the book: 1:13-16, 6:2 (note: in the past, I have believed that seal #1 represents the age of the Antonines. However, the imagery of 6:2 along with the symmetry of the book seems to better fit Jesus as the rider on the white horse.), and 14:14-20. Our Lord's victory over the beast and false prophet will end with both entities and their followers thrown into the lake of fire. I believe this is the battle called Armageddon in chapter 16. However, I do not subscribe to the literal interpretation of Armageddon favored and sensationalized by futurists.

Chapter 20 is, perhaps, the most difficult chapter of a difficult book. It offers a different perspective of Armageddon, this time with a view toward the fate of the dragon, Satan. In other words, I see 19:11-21 and 20:1-10 as concurrent and not successive events.

Since my overarching view of Revelation comes from the historicist perspective, I am led to conclude that Satan has either been bound or has been loosed. Admittedly, others may have a more refined interpretation of chapter 20. I am confident enough to say this: during this time period of binding, Satan's power to deceive nations will be limited, a power he exercised without restraint in chapters 13 onward. The time period of 1,000 years represents a long period of time from a human perspective, but a short period from God's perspective. Numerous passages in both the Old and New Testaments use the number 1,000 and the time period of 1,000 years in this way. The first resurrection is experienced by everyone who is buried with Christ in baptism. Those true Christians who are raised with Christ to walk in newness of life and hold true to Him to death will go to be with Him (see Philippians 1:18-23). The second death, hell, has no dominion over those who are raised with Christ!

When Satan is loosed to deceive the nations once more, he will use his influence to gather the world (represented as Gog and Magog) against the church in one final, but futile, attempt to conquer God's people (aka Armageddon). God will deliver His people and cast Satan into hell.

20:11-15 gives us the final prophetic view of the day of judgment. Death and Hades, the final enemies of mankind, are cast into the lake of fire along with all those who are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Chapters 21-22 show us the heavenly Jerusalem in all of its resplendent and transcendent glory. In a book heavy with symbolism, the descriptions of Jerusalem are not to be understood literally. At the center of the closing chapters is the ultimate thrust of Revelation: the Lamb is victorious over all enemies and God accomplishes His ultimate objective of restoring His communion with mankind that was lost in Eden. The book concludes with assorted warnings and invitations, urging us to take the message of the revelation to heart and to be prepared for the Lord's return.

I will join the chorus in thanking Marc for organizing this venture through the Bible. I also thank John for joining in early on and trading weeks with me throughout the year. Thanks also to Charles for stepping in a couple of times, including when John and I were in the Philippines. I could not imagine two better companions with which to lead these weekly commentaries.

I leave you with the words of our Lord and His apostle, John:

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Revelation 22:20-21).

### **Comment:**

Beverly Schoonover Wattenbarger:

Thank you Wade and also John for your time and input to this study. I am looking forward to continuing on in 2018. God bless you both and your families

### **Comment:**

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Wade! Very much!!

### **Comment:**

Yvonna Hartman:

Thank you Wade for your work and also for John's work. I have benefited from this year long study.

### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:

Oh! So that's how it ends! Victory in Christ!

### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:

You should have titled your post, "...and that's why it's obvious that Magog is North Korea!"

Would've really drew the reader in. 🤔

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

Wade and John, you have done an admirable job of presenting the prophets in brief, in some ways perhaps very challenging due to these books being less familiar to many brethren. Thank you for interesting and informative comments, brothers.

### **Replies:**

Wade Stanley:

And a hearty thanks to you as well. You helped cover some gaps and made some helpful comments along the way. Team effort!

Lowell Hermon:

Go Team!

### **Comment:**

Gaylene Green:

Thanks to all!

### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Wade & John: I thank God for you, dear brothers! Friday's lessons were likely the most difficult to present. Yet, it could be debated as the most important. Fulfilled prophecy is one of the best evidences I know of that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Prophecy can be used as a very effective tool of evangelism. Every aspect of the life of Jesus was prophesied - and fulfilled. Prophecy assures us that Jesus is coming back, that He will resurrect us, and that He will take us to live forever with our Lord in heavenly Jerusalem! Prophetic knowledge encourages patient waiting, earnest watching, serving, having hope and holy living. I'm grateful for the significant time you put toward Friday studies. It helped transform my daily living - to constantly think about scriptures and consider His return, which I anxiously anticipate. The book of Revelation promises blessings to those who read/hear it and obey it (Rev. 1:3). We have been blessed indeed. Thanks for participating in this spiritual feast!

### **Comment:**

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you Wade and John!