

BGM BIBLE COLLEGE

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY LECTURE 19

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

THE NATURE OF THE BOOK

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah is also called “**The Book of Salvation**,” and some have named it “**The Gospel of Isaiah**,” for within it lieth a vast message concerning redemption. The name *Isaiah* signified “**Jehovah is Salvation**.” In this book are found **eleven Songs of Deliverance**. Through the prophecies of Isaiah the full story of Christ is declared—His birth, His lineage from David, His ministry in Galilee, His rejection, His Spirit-anointed service, His atonement, His sufferings, and His burial in the tomb of a rich man.

Isaiah is also called the **Little Bible**, for as the Holy Scriptures contain sixty-six books, even so Isaiah contained **sixty-six chapters**. The first **thirty-nine chapters** speak of the Law and Judgment; the final **twenty-seven chapters** proclaim prophecies of Christ and teachings concerning the age of grace. At the close of the book is the prophecy of **the new heavens and the new earth**.

PROPHET ISAIAH

THE PERSON OF THE PROPHET

Isaiah is known as **the Prophet of Deliverance**. He belonged unto a royal household. He was the son of Amoz, who according to Jewish tradition was the brother of King Amaziah of Judah.

His ministry lay chiefly within the kingdom of Judah. His wife also was a prophetess (Isaiah 8:3). He was contemporary with Hosea and Micah. He ministered through the reigns of five kings—Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and, according to tradition, Manasseh—covering nearly sixty years. Tradition declared that Manasseh slew Isaiah, sawing him asunder, and many believe that **Hebrews 11:37** referred unto him.

AUTHORSHIP

Generally Isaiah is held to be the author of the entire book; nevertheless chapters **40–66** pertain unto the period of captivity, causing some to suggest that the latter portion was written by another.

DATE OF WRITING

The book was written in the **eighth century B.C.**, yet beginning at chapter forty it becomes evident that the message is addressed to those in captivity. Therefore, many maintain that the final portion was written in the **sixth or fifth century B.C.**, almost one hundred and fifty years after Isaiah’s time.

PURPOSE AND MESSAGE

The purpose of the writing was to declare unto the people their sins and the judgment of the LORD. Other purposes include proclaiming God's forgiveness, His deliverance, and the restoration of Israel. The message is clear: **Jehovah is a faithful God, keeping covenant and showing mercy.** Ahaz and Hezekiah stand as examples—Ahaz sought help from Assyria, but Hezekiah placed his trust wholly in the LORD.

OUTLINE OF ISAIAH

I. The Assyrian Period (Chapters 1–39)

The Book of Judgment—judgment, burdens, woes, the Assyrian invasion, and the healing of Hezekiah.

II. The Babylonian Period (Chapters 40–66)

The Book of Comfort—a message of restoration for the captives, the promise of the Messiah, and prophecies of the glory to come.

JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

Jeremiah ministered in a troubled age. His ministry followed nearly seventy years after that of Isaiah. At this time Assyria was losing its power, and Egypt and Babylon were striving for dominion. Judah likewise was weakening—economically, politically, and spiritually. Seeing these things, Jeremiah warned the people to return unto the LORD. His call was unto repentance and turning again unto God.

Jeremiah ministered during the reigns of the last five kings of Judah, which were among the darkest days (**2 Kings 22–25**). Under Manasseh the Temple was defiled, the priests were corrupted, and most of the prophets uttered false visions (Jeremiah 5:31). Yet the people rejected Jeremiah's message, and afterward Judah went into Babylonian captivity.

PROPHET JEREMIAH

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah. He was but young when the LORD called him (**Jeremiah 1:7–10**). Because his message was one of repentance, he was an unpopular prophet. He was mocked, threatened, cursed, starved, beaten, and even imprisoned. A faithful companion stood by him—**Baruch**, who shared Jeremiah's sorrows and trials.

Jeremiah was contemporary with Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Daniel, and Ezekiel. His ministry unfolded in **three stages**:

1. He warned the people when Assyria and Egypt threatened them.
2. He declared the coming judgment of God when Judah feared Babylon.
3. After the fall of Judah, he ministered in Jerusalem and later in Egypt. Though Babylon invaded Judah, Jeremiah remained in Jerusalem, afterward being taken to Egypt where, as tradition saith, he died.

WHY JEREMIAH IS CALLED “THE WEeping PROPHEt”?

Jeremiah is known as the **weeping, lamenting, and broken-hearted prophet** for the following reasons:

1. He sorrowed over the sins of the nation and their refusal to repent.
2. He mourned because he foresaw the destruction soon to fall upon Jerusalem.
3. He grieved because the chosen people of God were about to go into captivity.
4. He sorrowed because he knew the only way of escape, yet the nation refused to receive it.
5. He wept because the heart of God was burning within him—a heart broken for His people—which is seen clearly in the Book of Lamentations.

THE HEART OF JEREMIAH’S MESSAGE

1. He called the nation unto **repentance**.
2. He declared that if they would not hear, **the judgment of God** would surely come.
3. Yet even so, if they would obey, **restoration from the LORD** would follow.

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS — UNIQUE FEATURES

Lamentations was written in the most sorrowful hour of prophetic history. All that earlier prophets had foretold had now come to pass. For this cause Jeremiah lamented and mourned.

I. Its Hebrew Titles Reveal Its Nature

1. **Ekhah** — “How?” “Alas!” — The opening word of chapters 1, 2, and 4.
2. **Qinoth** — “Lamentations,” “Dirges” — for the book is a collection of funeral songs.

II. Structure

Lamentations contained **five chapters**, that is, five laments:

1. **Chapter 1** — Lament over the city of Jerusalem.
2. **Chapter 2** — the true cause of destruction: not Babylon, but the disobedience of God’s people.
3. **Chapter 3** — A cry for justice against the enemies of God’s people.
4. **Chapter 4** — Further lament over the destruction of Jerusalem.
5. **Chapter 5** — A final plea for God’s people.

III. Fourfold Object of Jeremiah’s Lament

He lamented over:

1. The people of Judah.
2. The city of Jerusalem.
3. The Temple of Solomon.
4. The land of Palestine.

IV. Written for the Babylonian Captives

The Book of Lamentations was composed for those carried away into Babylon.

V. The Compassion of God within the Book

Amidst the sorrow, the mercy of the LORD shined forth, for His compassions fail not.

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

The Historical Setting of Ezekiel

When the prophet Ezekiel began to utter his prophecies, it had been an hundred and twenty years since the kingdom of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, had gone into the Assyrian captivity. The kingdom of Judah, the Southern Kingdom, was now being carried away into the Babylonian captivity; and this captivity was gradual, extending over many years. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken captive ten thousand souls in the second deportation of Judah. These captives were chiefly of the royal household; and among them was Ezekiel. Ezekiel was carried away during the reign of king Jehoiachin.

Ezekiel was the son of a priest; and the meaning of his name is, “*God strengthened*,” or “*God gives strength*.” The LORD called Ezekiel to stand with holy boldness for the honour of His Name. Ezekiel was born in the days of King Josiah, reared in Jerusalem, and was five and twenty years of age when he was carried away captive. At thirty years of age the LORD called him. The LORD Spoke unto Ezekiel chiefly by visions. Though he dwelt in Babylonian captivity, yet he enjoyed a measure of liberty and lived in his own house; and his house became a gathering place for fellowship among the believing captives. After being taken into captivity, Ezekiel ministered for two and twenty years.

Four Principal Divisions of the Book

1. The Calling of Ezekiel (**Chapters 1–3**)
2. Prophecies concerning the Fall of Jerusalem (**Chapters 4–24**)
3. Judgments upon the Nations round about (**Chapters 25–32**)
4. Prophecies of Restoration and Consolation (**Chapters 33–48**)

Some of the Unique Features of the Book of Ezekiel

The Glory of the LORD

The chief emphasis of this book is the **Glory of the LORD**. Ezekiel declared that because of idolatry and the worship of false gods, the glory of the LORD departed from the Temple.

Symbolic and Prophetic Actions

The LORD commanded Ezekiel to perform many prophetic signs:

1. He shut himself within his house, signifying the hardship of being carried away captive.
2. He portrayed upon a tile the city of Jerusalem, declaring its siege.

3. He lay upon his left side three hundred and ninety days, and upon his right side forty days, signifying the years of Israel's and Judah's iniquity and the afflictions of captivity.
4. He baked unclean bread and did eat it, signifying the scarcity and defilement of food in captivity.
5. He shaved his head and beard, dividing the hair, to show forth that the people should be scattered from land to land.

The Work of the Holy Ghost

In this book there is strong emphasis upon the operations of the Spirit of God.

The Vision of Restoration

Ezekiel beheld the mighty vision of the restoration of God's people.

Judgment upon Evil Shepherds

The LORD denounced judgment upon the evil shepherds that destroy and scatter the flock.

The Refrain Repeated Seventy Times

The solemn refrain, "*And ye shall know that I am the LORD,*" appeared seventy times. Through judgments and afflictions the LORD teaches His people that Jehovah alone is the living and true God.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The Historical Setting of Daniel

It is believed that Daniel was born in the days of King Josiah, when the kingdom of Judah was drawing nigh to the Babylonian captivity. Daniel was among the first captives carried away into Babylon. It is understood that Daniel spent the remainder of his life in Babylon, and beheld with his own eyes the overthrow of Babylon by the Medes and Persians. It may well be that Daniel witnessed the earliest events connected with the return of the Jews to their homeland.

Daniel was a contemporary of Ezekiel, and was carried away some eight years before Ezekiel. Daniel was highly educated, and in captivity distinguished himself, together with his three companions. His wisdom and the prophetic gift of interpreting dreams made him renowned in the courts of Babylon. Daniel spent the greater part of his life serving as counsellor to king Nebuchadnezzar. He lived under four kings—Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. Daniel is one of the few men of whom the Holy Scriptures record no fault or wrongdoing. He lived to be about ninety years old.

Some Unique Features of the Book of Daniel

1. Daniel held high office among the Gentiles.
2. The Scriptures do not state that he was called to be a prophet, yet he functioned prophetically.

3. Much of his prophetic labour concerned the Gentile nations; thus he may be termed *a prophet unto the Gentiles*.
4. A large portion of the book is written in the Aramaic tongue.
5. The book is chiefly apocalyptic in nature.
Thus Daniel greatly helped in the understanding of eschatology and of the Book of Revelation.

Outline of the Book of Daniel

1. **The Personal History of Daniel** (**Chapters 1–6**)
2. **Prophetic Revelations concerning the Gentile Powers** (**Chapters 2–7**)
3. **Prophecies concerning the Future of God's People** (**Chapters 8–12**)

Important Material within the Book of Daniel

1. The deliverance of Daniel's companions from the fiery furnace.
2. The deliverance of Daniel from the lions' den.
3. The prophecy of the **Seventy Weeks**.

