**The Story of the Old Testament**

**Lecture #8 – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel**

**The Continued Progression of Fulfillment: Rebellion, Judgment & Future Fulfillment (Part I)**

1. **Worship**

*Healer (with Isaiah 53 intro)* by Hillsong.

1. **Quick Review of the Covenants**

Does anyone remember the **6 covenants**? Let’s review them. You will find me repeating myself over and over again on the main parts of the story because that is the only way that I can learn and, I believe, that anyone can learn (unless you have a photographic memory, and, in that case, I don’t like you very much!). So, here they are:

* **The Adamic Covenant (#1) – Genesis 2**
* **The Noahic Covenant (#2) – Genesis 9**
* **The Abrahamic Covenant (#3) – Genesis 12, 15, 17**
* **The Mosaic Covenant (#4) – Exodus 19-24**
* **The Davidic Covenant (#5) – 2 Samuel 7**
* **The New Covenant (#6) – Hint in Deuteronomy 30:6, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:22-32, Deut. 30:6**

1. **Introduction to the Prophets**
   1. **General Placement of the Prophets in the Storyline of the Old Testament**

All of the books that we will look at in this last section of the course, the prophets, were written after the division of the kingdom into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah and during the steady spiritual decline of both the northern and southern kingdoms leading to exile. Most of the prophets are set either before the exile or during the exile. Three of the prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are set after the return from the exile (“post-exilic”).

The fact that the prophets speak at this dark time of the history of the Lord’s covenant people is crucial in a proper understanding of how they function within the context of the Old Testament and the Bible as a whole.

* 1. **General Message & Role of the Prophets in the Old Testament**

The prophets spoke at a time in Israel’s history where the redemptive promises of the Lord no longer appeared to be making forward progress but, rather, appeared to be regressing. Had the Lord given up on his grand plan to restore all that was lost in the fall? Had he forgotten his promises to Noah, to Abraham, to David? The voice of the prophets cry out during this dark time to testify to the continued viability of the Lord’s redemptive promises and of a future time of fulfillment.

The prophets go about doing this by (1) exposing the spiritual condition of the people, (2) describing the impending judgment that is the result of the people’s spiritual condition, and (3) making it clear that judgment will not be the last word for the Lord’s covenant people because of a future day of fulfillment of the Lord’s promises.

* 1. **How the Prophets, as a Whole, Point to Jesus**

Generally, the prophets point to Jesus as the one who will bring about the fulfillment of all of the Lord’s redemptive promises. Every promise points to Jesus and is fulfilled in and through him!

1. **Isaiah (66 chapters – 3 ½ hours)**
   1. **Unique Placement of the Book of Isaiah in the Storyline of the Old Testament**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Timeline** | **Contemporary Prophets** | **Primary Audience** | **Contemporary Kings** | |
| **Judah** | **Israel** |
| 740-680 | Hosea, Amos, Micah | Judah | Uzziah  Jotham  Ahaz  Hezekiah  Manasseh | Pekahiah  Pekah  Hoshea |

The table above tells us several important things about Isaiah. Since the exile of Judah was in 586 B.C., Isaiah is a pre-exilic prophet. He is speaking to the people of Judah before their exile at the hands of Babylon. Hosea, Amos, and Micah (3 of the minor prophets examined later in this section) were contemporaries of Isaiah whose ministry was focused toward the northern kingdom of Israel.

Recall that the northern kingdom of Israel went into exile at the hands of the Assyrian empire in 722 B.C. Thus, The three kings of the northern kingdom during the time of Isaiah (Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea) were the last three kings of the northern kingdom and all “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.” The five kings of Judah during the life of Isaiah (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh) were a mixed bag. Uzziah (also called Azariah), Jotham, and Hezekiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.[[1]](#footnote-1) However, Ahaz and Manasseh did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.[[2]](#footnote-2)

* 1. **General Structure of the Book of Isaiah**

The book of Isaiah has 66 chapters. This has led some people to call the book of Isaiah a “miniature bible.”[[3]](#footnote-3) Schreiner divides the book as follows:

* Isaiah 1-35 – Threat from Assyria to the Southern Kingdom of Judah
* Isaiah 36-37 – The Lord’s Deliverance of Jerusalem From Assyria
* Isaiah 38-39 – The Babylonian Exile Proclaimed
* Isaiah 40-66 – The Return from the Babylonian Exile Proclaimed
  1. **Unique Message & Role of the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament**

The book of Isaiah graphically describes (1) the condition of the Lord’s covenant people as those who enjoyed the religious trappings of the covenant people without experiencing and pursuing the internal transformation required of the covenant people, (2) the Babylonian Exile that will eventually come about because of the condition of the Lord’s covenant people, and (3) the ultimate salvation of the Lord’s covenant people through the promised son of David and servant of the Lord in the form of a new exodus, new creation, and new Jerusalem wherein all the Lord’s promised restoration will ultimately come about.

* + 1. *The Condition of the Lord’s Covenant People*

When Isaiah was a prophet, the people were in the Promised Land but the downward progression of the people of the Lord was in full swing. The height of the kingdom of Israel under the reigns of David and Solomon was a distant memory. While not all was bad for Judah during this time as there were some good kings during Isaiah’s life reigning over the southern kingdom, the people are characterized in strikingly negative terms.

The sad state of the condition of the Lord’s covenant people is described at several points throughout the book of Isaiah. One of the most tragic descriptions is found in Isaiah 29:13: “Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me. . . .” The Lord’s people spoke of obedience but lived lives of disobedience. This tension between what they said to God and how they lived before him led to their comparison to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah! (1:10) As Schreiner notes, “it is hard to imagine them sinking any lower.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

Over and over again, the people of the Lord were called upon to be holy in light of the fact that their Lord is holy. The holiness of the Lord is highlighted throughout the book of Isaiah and is captured beautifully in one of the most familiar passages in the Old Testament, Isaiah 6:1-4. In these majestic verses we are allowed a glimpse into the throne room of heaven through the eyes of Isaiah: “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory! And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.”

The majestic holiness of the Lord is then immediately contrasted with the lack of holiness on the part of Isaiah and the Lord’s people in general: “And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

In light of the Isaiah’s remarkable encounter with the Lord, he saw things as they truly were. The Lord was holy but his people were not and, therefore, they were in serious trouble. The problem was that the Lord’s people did not see their precarious situation with such clarity. Schreiner rightly notes: “Israel though that it was righteous, for it found pleasure in drawing near to the Lord (58:2). Unfortunately, its people were greatly deceived (58:1). Injustice was rife in the land, for their religious devotion was contradicted by their oppression of workers and their failure to care for the poor and hungry (58:3-7).”[[5]](#footnote-5)

The battle between the line of restoration and the line of rebellion was being waged within the hearts and minds of the people of the Lord and the line of rebellion was having great victory. The enemy is the great deceiver and one of his greatest deceptions is to equate the outward appearance of religion with the inward substance of true faith.

With the heart and mind dulled to the requirement to live lives of grateful obedience in response to the Lord’s matchless grace, the people of the Lord gradually and tragically began to “act like the offspring of the serpent instead of the offspring of the woman (59:5).” Isaiah 59 captures this reality well: “[Y]our iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. . . . Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace.” (Isaiah 59:2-3, 7-8)

* + 1. *The Coming Judgment Upon the Lord’s Covenant People*

The people of Israel (broadly speaking of the northern and southern tribes here) are the Lord’s covenant people. Remember, we have defined a covenant as a bond that establishes an all-encompassing relationship. . . . It’s a claim on someone’s total loyalty and allegiance. It has an authority structure to it, with ongoing obligations, blessings, and curses.”[[6]](#footnote-6) We saw the blessings and the curses of the Lord’s covenant with his people graphically set forth in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.[[7]](#footnote-7) Israel was called to respond to the Lord’s gracious deliverance and election of them with grateful obedience so that they could be his treasured possession among all the nations and so they could be to the Lord a kingdom of priests and a holy nation mediating the Lord’s blessing to the nations in fulfillment of his promises to Abraham.

But, if the nation turned from the Lord then they would experience the devastating curses clearly set forth in Leviticus 26:14-39 and Deuteronomy 28. These chapters make clear that if Israel forsakes the Lord as a people they will experience panic, wasting disease, famine, military defeat, severe discipline, futility, destruction, death, pestilence, hunger to the point of eating the flesh of their sons and daughters, separation, desperation, devastation, and exile.

The ultimate expression of judgment is exile, particularly the exile of the southern kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C. This is the curse that Isaiah primarily focuses upon.[[8]](#footnote-8) However, the exile of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. is also addressed[[9]](#footnote-9) as well as the judgment of the Gentile nations.[[10]](#footnote-10) Isaiah lived to see the northern kingdom of Israel’s experience of exile at the hands of Assyria in 722 B.C. but did not live to see Judah’s experience of exile at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 B.C.[[11]](#footnote-11)

We have already seen the devastation of the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C. in our discussion of 1-2 Kings. The Temple built by Solomon was destroyed, the king’s palace was destroyed, all the houses of Jerusalem were destroyed, and all the people but the poorest of the Land were sent into exile (2 Kings 25:9-11) Goldsworthy noted at this point of the story that: “The curses of the covenant, so plainly stated in Deuteronomy, are now reality.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

The significance of the Babylonian Exile was not primarily found in the destruction of structures or the moving of the people from one place to another but, rather, the fact that the progressive fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises that had been tracking to this point in the story started to appeared to stop and go in reverse.

But, Isaiah points to hope that extends beyond Israel and Judah’s experience of exile. That is the theme of the book to which we now turn.

* + 1. *The Promise of Salvation for the Lord’s Covenant People*

Isaiah points to a salvation that will triumph over judgment for the Lord’s covenant people. The salvation pronounced in Isaiah is the fulfillment of the promised restoration that we have been tracing through the Old Testament. The book of Isaiah answers several questions regarding the nature of this promised and coming restoration and salvation: (1) Who will be saved?, (2) How will They Be Saved?, (3) What will the experience of salvation be like?, (4) When will this ultimate salvation take place?, and (5) What is the ultimate goal and purpose of this promised and coming restoration and salvation?

* + - 1. *Who Will Be Saved?*

As we have seen to this point in our study of the Old Testament, not all of Abraham’s descendants inherited the promises made to him. Likewise, not all who count themselves as part of the nation of Israel (again, including both the northern and southern kingdoms) will enjoy the salvation promised by Isaiah.[[13]](#footnote-13) Isaiah 1:9 points to the “few survivors” that the Lord preserved so that his people would not be wiped out like Sodom and Gomorrah.[[14]](#footnote-14) Isaiah 4:3 likewise speaks of a holy remnant that remains in Jerusalem.[[15]](#footnote-15) As Schreiner notes: “The preservation of the remnant shows that there is hope for the future, that the final word is not judgment, but salvation.”[[16]](#footnote-16)

But, it is not only the “remnant” from the nation of Israel (northern and southern kingdoms) that will experience the salvation envisioned by Isaiah. Rather, Isaiah “dramatically and regularly forecasts salvation reaching to the ends of the earth, the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God.”[[17]](#footnote-17) For example, we hear the Lord calling out to the nations in Isaiah 45:22-23: “‘Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.’ By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’”

The Lord will preserve a remnant from Israel who will partake of the salvation envisioned by Isaiah and will also call people from every nation to participate in the coming salvation. This reality points us back to Genesis 12:1-3 where the Lord promised Abraham that all of the nations would be blessed through his descendants. The line of restoration will prevail in its battle against the line of rebellion! The Lord will fulfill his redemptive promises!

* + - 1. *How Will They Be Saved?*

The book of Isaiah gives great insight into how the salvation envisioned by the prophet will come about. First, the envisioned salvation will come about through the son of David who will be an eternal king over an eternal kingdom. This reality points us back to Davidic Covenant through which the Lord promised David that his line would produce such an eternal king who would reign over an eternal kingdom. Second, the envisioned salvation will come about a “servant of the Lord” who will bear the sins of the people. This is a new aspect of the salvation and restoration that we have been anticipating since it was promised back in Genesis 3:15.

* + - * 1. *The Coming Davidic King*

Schreiner rightly notes that: “[T]he prospect of future salvation [is] inseparable form the promise of a new David.”[[18]](#footnote-18) Isaiah famously speaks of this new David in Isaiah 9:2-3, 6-7: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. . . . For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”

The salvation envisioned in Isaiah is not separate from the salvation and restoration that has been anticipated to this point in our examination of the Old Testament. The Davidic Covenant remains central and Isaiah understood the importance and centrality of the Lord’s promise to David of a son who would reign as an eternal king over an eternal kingdom.

* + - * 1. *The Servant of the Lord*

Isaiah does give us new insight regarding the coming son of David. For, we learn that this son of David will also be the servant of the Lord who will bear the sins of the people. Isaiah 53, one of the most profound passages in the Bible, describes the servant of the Lord and his work as follows: “[H]e had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned-every one-to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.. . . . Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, *my servant*, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isaiah 53:1-6, 11)

While we are going to discuss in greater detail how the book of Isaiah points to Jesus, it is impossible not to make the connection here. Schreiner helpfully makes the connection and helps us see the necessity and significance of the promised son of David and servant of the Lord being one and the same: “[T]he servant of the Lord and the future Davidic king are the same person, for both are Spirit empowered and bring about the new creation Of course, this fits well with the NT witness. . . . Jesus is the Spirit-appointed Messiah, the royal son of David, the one who will bring in the kingdom of God. But he is also the servant of the Lord, the one who dies as a ransom to deliver his people from their sin (Matt. 20:28).”[[19]](#footnote-19)

* + - 1. *What Will the Experience of Salvation Be Like?*

The experience of the salvation envisioned by Isaiah, which constitutes the ultimate fulfillment of the Lord’s promises of restoration, will include (1) a new exodus and (2) a new creation.

* + - * 1. *The New Exodus*

The promised Davidic King and Suffering Servant will bring about a “new exodus.” This new exodus is first described as a return of the exiles to the Promised Land.[[20]](#footnote-20) Again and again throughout the book of Isaiah, the Lord promises that the judgment of exile will not be the last word for his people. The exile will come to an end and they will return to the Promised Land and experience the promised fulfillment and restoration.

But, we have already reviewed the experience of the people of Israel who returned to the Promised Land when we looked at the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The remnant that returned to the Promised Land were deeply discouraged and some even wept because the return did not bring about the promised restoration and fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises.

We saw that there was no Davidic King or Suffering Servant upon the remnant’s return. The Temple was rebuilt, but the glory of the Lord did not descend upon the Temple as it had upon the Tabernacle built under Moses’ leadership or the first Temple under Solomon’s leadership. The walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt but there were only a few people who resided within those walls. Goldsworthy helpfully puts it this way: “The problem is that although the structure of the kingdom portrayed by the prophets is there in outline, the substance is not. There is no glorious return, no magnificent temple set in the midst of the regenerated earth. It is clear also that the people have still not undergone that spiritual transformation that makes them perfectly the people of God. There is no magnificent reign of the Davidic prince.”[[21]](#footnote-21)

The “new exodus” envisioned by Isaiah then clearly points to a future time after the return of the exiles to the Promised Land. Isaiah has made clear to this point that the promised restoration and fulfillment will come about through a Davidic King and Suffering Servant who will rule and bear the sins of the people. This coming King and Servant will be the one who will bring about the ultimate expression of the envisioned “new exodus.”

* + - * 1. *The New Creation*

The envisioned “new exodus” will bring about a “new creation.” Recall that the big-picture story of the Bible is one of creation, fall, and restoration (or recreation). The Lord made everything and it was originally “very good.” But, the perfect order established by creation was destroyed in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve rebelled against the word of the Lord and sided with the serpent by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The rebellion of Adam and Eve not only caused them to experience separate from the Lord rather than intimacy with him. But, their rebellion also led to the injection of chaos into the created order and the unraveling of all things as captured and memorialized in the curses pronounced in Genesis 3. But, in the midst of the curses brought upon by the Fall is the central promise of restoration. The promise is that one day the offspring of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. In other words, all of the chaos that has entered into the created order will be destroyed. The serpent will be defeated and all things that were lost in the Fall will be restored.

This cosmic restoration is what is envisioned by the “new creation” pronounced by Isaiah. There are several passages in Isaiah that describe what this “new creation” will be like. One such passage that is particularly powerful is found in Isaiah 11:2-10. This passage speaks of the nature of the one who will bring about the “new creation” and what this “new creation” will be like under his rule: “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth . . . . Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together . . . . The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as the signal for the peoples-of him shall the nations inquire and his resting place shall be glorious.”

In this great passage we learn that the coming Davidic King and Suffering Servant will be filled with the Spirit, walk in the fear of the Lord (a connection to the wisdom literature) and bring about the restoration of all things lost in the Fall. The description of restoration here is shocking and difficult for us to comprehend. The author intentionally puts together two things in harmony that currently are at war with one another. In the current state of things, the wolf would devour the lamb, the leopard would devour the young goat, the lion would devour the fattened calf, the cobra would strike the nursing child likely killing him or her, the adder would strike the weaned child likely killing him or her.

But all of this tension, adversity, and disorder shall be resolved in the “new creation” for “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9) The scope and beauty of the coming restoration through the Davidic King and Suffering Servant us truly beyond the ability of our limited minds to fully comprehend. It is more beautiful than the greatest expression of beauty that we have encountered. It is more stirring than the greatest book we have ever read, or movie we have ever seen, or song we have ever sung. For, it is the beauty behind every true expression of beauty. The creation longs for this day of restoration. And we, as part of the creation, join in this great longing. It is the ultimate desire behind every desire within us.

* + - 1. *When Will The Salvation Take Place?*

The salvation envisioned by Isaiah will take place when the promised son of David rises to the throne of the promised eternal kingdom of restoration and fulfillment and when the coming servant of the Lord bears the sins of the redeemed people of the Lord. As we have previously noted, this does not occur when the remnant returns to the Promised Land.

And, as we will see, the coming of the Davidic King, Suffering Servant, New Exodus, and New Creation do not come to pass as the Old Testament comes to a conclusion. The remnant of Israel is left waiting on a future time of fulfillment as the curtain closes on the period of the Old Testament. Peter captures the state of the Old Testament saints well: “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.” (1 Peter 1:10-12)

As we will discuss below, the salvation envisioned by Isaiah comes about through Jesus Christ. He is the Davidic King who reigns over the eternal kingdom of restoration and fulfillment. He is the Suffering Servant who bears the sins of the people. He brings about the New Exodus through which the people are freed from the bondage to this present world and brought into the glorious freedom of his eternal kingdom of restoration and fulfillment. He brings about the New Creation wherein all things that were lost in the Fall are restored to an even greater state of perfection, beauty, and order.

* + - 1. *What is the Ultimate Goal and Purpose of Salvation?*

The ultimate goal and purpose of the salvation envisioned by Isaiah is the *glory of God*. There are numerous passages throughout the book of Isaiah that point to the centrality of the glory of God:

* *Isaiah 40:5 –* “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”
* *Isaiah 41:16* – “And you shall rejoice in the Lord; in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.”
* *Isaiah 42:8* – “I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.”
* *Isaiah 42:12* – “Let them give glory to the Lord, and declare his praise in the coastlands.”
* *Isaiah 43:6-7* – “I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”
* *Isaiah 48:11* – “For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.”

The book of Isaiah paints the picture of a God who is greater and more glorious than we could ever imagine. He is progressively working all things according to his sovereign plan and in his perfect timing. The glory of the Lord is the goal of all of creation and all of history. May, by his grace, he make it the goal of our lives!

* 1. **Unique Way that the Book of Isaiah Points to Jesus**

The unique way that the book of Isaiah points to Jesus is by speaking of him as both the promised son of David who will be the eternal king over the eternal kingdom of restoration and fulfillment and the servant of the Lord who will bear the sin of the redeemed people of the Lord who will bring about the new exodus and the new creation!

1. **Jeremiah (52 chapters – 4 hours)**
   1. **Unique Placement of the Book of Jeremiah in the Storyline of the Old Testament**

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| **Timeline** | **Contemporary Prophets** | **Primary Audience** | **Contemporary Kings** | |
| **Judah** | **Israel** |
| 626-580+/- | Habakkuk  Daniel  Ezekiel | Judah | Josiah  Jehoahaz  Jehoiakim  Johoiachin  Zedekiah | No kings; already experienced exile |

The first king of Judah that reigned during the life of Jeremiah, Josiah, was the last good king over the southern kingdom of Judah. We learn in 2 Kings 22-23 that he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and brought about great reforms within the Land to bring about obedience among the Lord’s people. He repaired the temple, found the Book of the Law, read it to the people, and brought about a temporary revival.

However, as we saw through our study of 1-2 Kings, all of the kings that came after Josiah did evil in the sight of the Lord. Jehoahaz did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and was removed from power by an Egyptian Pharaoh and died in Egypt. (2 Kings 23:33-34) Jehoakim was placed upon the throne by that same Egyptian Pharoah, did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the first phases of the Babylonian Exile began under his reign. (2 Kings 23:37, 24:3-4) Jehoiachin also did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and the Babylonian Exile began to take a fuller form under his reign. (2 Kings 24:9-10, 14) Zedekiah was put on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and the Babylonian Exile came into full bloom under his reign with the destruction of the Temple, the king’s palace, every house in Jerusalem, and the exile of all the people but the poorest in the land.

* 1. **General Structure of the Book of Jeremiah[[22]](#footnote-22)**

1. Introduction (1)
2. Prophecies About Judah (2-45)
3. Prophecies About the Nations (46-51)
4. Conclusion (52)
   1. **Unique Role & Message of the Book of Jeremiah in the Old Testament**

Jeremiah lived during a dark period of Israel’s history and the tone of the book that bears his name captures that tone well. As Schreiner notes: “Doubtless the theme of judgment dominates the book.”[[23]](#footnote-23) But, judgment is not the final word for the Lord’s covenant people found in the book. For, a future day of salvation is pronounced through a “new covenant.”

We will look at the book of Jeremiah by examining Jeremiah’s description of (1) the condition of the Lord’s covenant people, (2) the coming judgment upon the Lord’s covenant people, and (3) the promised salvation for the Lord’s covenant people.

* + 1. *The Condition of the Lord’s Covenant People*

The condition of the Lord’s people during the time of Jeremiah was not good, to say the least. Jeremiah 2 captures the essence of the state of the people in Jeremiah 2. The Lord recounts Israel’s journey as his covenant people. He recounts pasts seasons of faithfulness: “I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest.” (Jeremiah 2:2-3)

After remembering the past faithfulness of the people, the Lord poses a devastating question: “What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthlessness, and became worthless? (Jeremiah 2:4) Because the fathers pursued worthlessness and became worthless they “defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination. The priests did not say, ‘Where is the Lord?’ Those who handle the law did not know me; the shepherds transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit.” (Jeremiah 2:7-8)

The Lord then changes the focus from the fathers to the current generation’s rejection of the Lord: “Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.” (Jeremiah 2:11-13)

The people’s forsaking of the Lord is graphically described in the book of Jeremiah in terms of spiritual adultery.[[24]](#footnote-24) Jeremiah 3:1-3 is a particularly clear example of this description: “If a man divorces his wife and she goes from and becomes another man’s wife, will he return to her? Would not that land be greatly polluted? You have played the whore with many lovers; and would you return to me? Declares the Lord. Lift up your eyes to the bare heights, and see! Where have you not been ravished? By the waysides you have sat awaiting lovers like an Arab in the wilderness. You have polluted the land with your vile whoredom. Therefore the showers have been withheld, and the spring rain has not come; yet you have the forehead of a whore; you refuse to be ashamed.” Wow. That is graphic language. It is hard to imagine a more stinging rebuke from the Lord.

How were the people unaware of their spiritual adultery? How could they not be aware of the tragic state of their relationship with the Lord? The answer is found in what we have already seen in the book of Isaiah. Like the description of the people in Isaiah, the people of Israel failed to detect the wandering of their heart from the Lord because they continued to adhere “to the external trappings of religion, devoting themselves to temple worship (chap. 7) and to the offering of sacrifices (6:21; 7:21-22; 11:15; 14:12).”[[25]](#footnote-25) As we saw in Isaiah, this type of deception is particularly dangerous because it is hard to detect. It is easy to gauge one’s relationship with the Lord by measuring outward adherence to man-man religious rules. However, it is a more difficult task to lay one’s heart bare before the Lord and honestly assess one’s spiritual condition. The Lord spoke to this type of deception in Jeremiah 7:4-5 by making it clear that living a life of grateful obedience was immeasurably more important than participating in outward religious activities: “Do not trust these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.’ ‘For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.”

In sum, the covenant people of the Lord had not only refused to obey him, they had rejected him. Schreiner puts it this way: “Violating the covenant must not be construed merely as failing to keep God’s commands. Judah rejected its covenant Lord, who had saved them and delivered them from enemies.”[[26]](#footnote-26) We know enough of the story by now to know that trouble is in the horizon when the people of the Lord reject him and walk in disobedience to his revealed will.

* + 1. *The Coming Judgment Upon the Lord’s Covenant People*

The trouble in the horizon becomes manifest in the Babylonian exile, which occurs during Jeremiah’s lifetime. Jeremiah warned the people of the coming judgment throughout the book, but they would not heed the warning and repent:[[27]](#footnote-27)

* In Jeremiah 5:14-17, the Lord tells the people that he is bringing upon Israel a “nation from afar” that is made up of “mighty warriors” who will bring destruction upon them;
* In Jeremiah 6:1-9, the Lord warns the people to “flee for safety” because “disaster looms out of the north, and great destruction” because “there is nothing but oppression” among his people;
* In Jeremiah 21:7, the Lord makes the coming judgment even more explicit: “I will give Zedekiah king of Judah and his servants and the people in this city who survive the pestilence, sword, and famine into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their lives. He shall strike them down with the edge of the sword. He shall not pity them or spare them or have compassion.”
* In Jeremiah 25:1-9, 11 we get even greater detail about the Lord’s coming judgment: “[T]he word of the Lord has come to me and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened. You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the Lord persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets, saying, ‘Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever. Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.’ Yet you have not listened to me, declares the Lord, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm. Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Because you have not obeyed my words, behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the Lord, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land and its inhabitants . . . . This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”

Jeremiah’s warning fell upon deaf ears because, as Schreiner notes: “Judah . . . was unmoved and untroubled by its whoredom. Its people thought that they had matured, but in fact they had become accustomed to their sins, to the point where they did not even blush at their abominations anymore.”[[28]](#footnote-28) As a result, Jeremiah’s warnings became reality in 586 B.C.: “In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, a breach was made in the city [Jerusalem] . . . . The king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah at Riblah before his eyes, and the king of Babylon slaughtered all the nobles of Judah. He put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon. The Chaldeans burned the king’s house and the house of the people, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, carried into exile to Babylon the rest of the people who were left in the city, those who had deserted to him, and the people who remained. Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, left in the land of Judah some of the poor people who owned nothing, and gave them vineyard and fields at the same time.” (Jeremiah 39:2, 6-10)

The ultimate curse of the covenant had come upon the people. As Goldsworthy puts it: “The curses of the covenant, so plainly stated in Deuteronomy, are now reality.”[[29]](#footnote-29) But, the experience of the curses of the covenant would one day be trumped by its blessings. It is to this reality that we now turn.

* + 1. *The Promised Salvation for the Lord’s Covenant People*

The book of Jeremiah makes clear that judgment, particularly in the form of the Babylonian Exile, will not be the last word for his people. In Jeremiah 29:10-14, we hear the Lord reassuring those who have already been taken to Babylon that: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with *all your heart*. I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you to exile.”

The “new exodus” that we saw in Isaiah is clearly contemplated here. But, as we noted in Isaiah, the “new exodus” includes both the remnant’s return to the Promised Land and a future time of restoration. This time of future restoration will come, according to Jeremiah, when the people of the Lord seek him with all of their hearts. But, how are they going to do that? The entire story of the Old Testament has shown that the people of Israel have a heart problem. That is, their love for the Lord is divided, at best, and entirely absent, at worst.

The solution for this problem in the book of Jeremiah is found in the promise of a “new covenant.” We have previously seen hints of a time when the Lord would fix Israel’s “heart problem” and do something new in the midst of his people. For example, Moses gave us this hint in Deuteronomy 30:6: “[T]he Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all of your heard and with all of your soul, that you may live.” The story of the Old Testament makes it clear that such a circumcision of the heart has not yet taken place.

Jeremiah makes it clear that the circumcision spoken of in Deuteronomy 30:6 is still to come. In Jeremiah 24:7 the Lord says: “I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.” This coming change of heart is more fully spelled out in Jeremiah 31:31-34: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

This is one of the most significant passages in the Old Testament. The New Covenant is expressly pronounced here. This is the last covenant in the Old Testament, and the Bible as a whole, and is the means through which all the promises that have gone before will be fulfilled. The promise of restoration in Genesis 3:15 will be fulfilled through this New Covenant. The promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 and to David in 2 Samuel 7 will be fulfilled through this New Covenant.

We are told here that the New Covenant will be different than the Mosaic Covenant that we looked at in our study of Exodus. What is so different about this promised New Covenant? While the people of Israel broke the Mosaic Covenant, the Lord’s people will not be able to break the New Covenant![[30]](#footnote-30) This is because the Lord is going to write his law upon their hearts so that there will be an intimate knowledge of the Lord and the sins of the people will be forgiven and remembered no more! The heart problem of the Lord’s people will once and for all be cured by his forgiveness and an intimate knowledge of him.

The fundamental difference between the Mosaic and New Covenant then is the once and for all forgiveness of the sins of the people. Schreiner helpfully provides: “The basis of this transformation is the forgiveness of sins (31:34), in which sins will be remembered no more. ‘The forgiveness of which this verse speaks is so comprehensive that sin has finally been dealt with in the experience of the nation and individual believer.’[[31]](#footnote-31)

But, how will this forgiveness be accomplished and this New Covenant be brought about? That is the question to which we now turn.

* 1. **Unique Way that the Book of Jeremiah Points to Jesus**

Like Isaiah, Jeremiah points to the desperate and tragic state of the Lord’s people. Like Isaiah, Jeremiah makes clear that the Lord will bring about judgment upon his people because of their rebellion against him. Like Isaiah, Jeremiah makes clear that judgment will not be the last word for his people. But, Jeremiah uniquely points to the nature of this future salvation in the express promise of a New Covenant through which the sins of the people will be forgiven and his law will be written upon their heart.

Schreiner notes: “Canonically, the promise of the new covenant is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, through whom the law has been written on the hearts of his people (Rom. 2:25-29; 2 Cor. 3:4-11), since he has fully and finally forgiven the sins of his people through the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 8-10).”[[32]](#footnote-32)

We now have a clearer picture of the path of fulfillment of the promises that have come before. In Genesis 3:15 the Lord promised that everything that was lost in the fall would be restored through the offspring of the woman. The Noahic Covenant makes it clear that this restoration will be cosmic in scope. The Abrahamic Covenant makes clear that this restoration will be accomplished through the provision of the Promised Land, Numerous Offspring, and Worldwide Blessing. The Mosaic Covenant offered a potential means of the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham if the people of Israel walked in obedience to the stipulations of that covenant (i.e., lived lives of grateful obedience to the Lord’s revealed will). They would be his treasured possession and a kingdom of priests mediating the Lord’s presence to the nations. However, Israel again and again rebelled against the Lord and broke the stipulations of the covenant. They spiraled downward and the Lord made new promises to David that one of his sons would be an eternal king who ruled over an eternal kingdom through will all of the promised restoration would come about. But, as David and Solomon died the kingdom spiraled downward to division and ultimately to exile. Something more was needed – a change within the hearts of the people. This change would be accomplished through the New Covenant, where the people’s sins would be forgiven and the law would be written on their heart.

Putting Isaiah and Jeremiah together, we clearly see the future time of restoration will come through the son of David who will reign and the Suffering Servant who will bring about the needed forgiveness. We have previously seen that the son of David and Suffering Servant find their identity in the person of Jesus Christ and it is Jesus Christ who will provide the forgiveness of the people necessary for the inauguration of the New Covenant!

1. **Lamentations (5 chapters – 18 minutes)**
   1. **Unique Placement of the Book of Lamentations in the Storyline of the Old Testament**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Author** | **Date** | **Primary Audience** | **Contemporary Kings** | |
| **Judah** | **Israel** |
| Jeremiah[[33]](#footnote-33) | 586-538 B.C. | Judah | No kings; exile just occurred | No kings; already experienced exile |

* 1. **General Structure of the Book of Lamentations**

1. The City (1)
2. The Wrath of God (2)
3. The Compassions of God (3)
4. The Sins of All Classes (4)
5. The Prayer (5)
   1. **Unique Message & Role of the Book of Lamentations in the Old Testament**

The book of Lamentations sets the suffering left in the wake of the devastation of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. to poetry.[[34]](#footnote-34) Four of the five chapters in the book of Lamentations are acrostic – meaning that the chapter proceeds from the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet to the last.[[35]](#footnote-35) The third chapter goes through the Hebrew alphabet three times, showing it is the climax of the book.[[36]](#footnote-36) The last chapter leaves the acrostic structure and simply sets forth a desperate and honest prayer for the Lord to restore what was lost in the Babylonian Exile.[[37]](#footnote-37)

We first encountered the devastation of Jerusalem in 2 Kings 25:1-21. The scene was recounted in 2 Chronicles 36:17-21. The scene is again highlighted from a theological perspective in Jeremiah 39:2-10. This most crucial moment in the history of the people of the Lord is now set to song as we enter into the book of Lamentations. As Schreiner notes, “Lamentations lingers over the suffering and anguish in Israel.”[[38]](#footnote-38)

This suffering was brought about from the Lord for the people had broken his covenant stipulations and were experiencing the curses clearly set forth in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. The author realizes this for he notes: “You have brought the day your announced . . . .” (Lamentations 1:21) Schreiner rightly notes: “The calamity that struck Israel fulfills what the Lord ordained and what he prophesied would happen (see Lev. 26; Deut. 28) if they violated covenant stipulations.”[[39]](#footnote-39)

The bitterness of the Lord’s judgment is captured powerfully through Jeremiah’s suffering: “My eyes are spent with weeping; my stomach churns; my bile is poured out to the ground because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, because infants and babies faint in the streets of the city.” (Lamentations 2:11) And, again in Lamentations 3:4-9: “He has made my flesh and my skin waste away; he has broken my bones; he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago. He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has made my chains heavy; though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer; he has blocked my ways with blocks of stones . . . .” The sweetness of the Lord’s blessings and presence are a distant memory for Jeremiah in the wake of his devastating judgment. The hopelessness of Jeremiah’s state is captured in Lamentations 3:17-18: “[M]y soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, ‘My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the Lord.’”

But, as we have seen in the other prophetic books, judgment would not be the last word for the Lord’s covenant people. Schreiner rightly notes: “[J]udgment is not the last word. Hope is. The Lord’s covenant promises are not withdrawn from his people. He will have mercy on his people again and be faithful to them.”[[40]](#footnote-40) Jeremiah sprinkles this hope throughout the dark and devastating poetry that constitutes the majority of the book:[[41]](#footnote-41)

* *Lamentations 1:9* – “O Lord, behold my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed!”
* *Lamentations 1:11 –* “Look, O Lord, and see, for I am despised.”
* *Lamentations 2:20* – “Look, O Lord, and see!”
* *Lamentations 3:19-26* – “[T]his I call to mind, and therefore I have hope; ‘The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.’ The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.”

Jeremiah’s hope in the midst of the destruction of every physical manifestation of the Lord’s presence with his people and the progressive fulfillment of his redemption promises in and through them is the steadfast love, mercies, and faithfulness of the Lord that have no end. The Lord promised to restore what was lost in the Fall. The Lord promised land, numerous offspring, and worldwide blessing to Abraham. The Lord promised that a Davidic King would come and rule over an eternal kingdom through which the promised restoration would take place. The Lord promised a servant of the Lord who would, once and for all, bear the sins of the people and bring about a new and more profound exodus and a new creation that manifests the perfect fulfillment and restoration envisioned under the reign of the eternal Davidic King. The Lord had promised to enter into the New Covenant with his people through which their sins would be forgiven and they would be given a new heart that would be able to love and worship the Lord and, finally, live lives of grateful obedience to his revealed will.

The Lord will fulfill his covenant promises. Jeremiah knows this and thus he proclaims that “‘The Lord is my portion, says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.’” (Lamentations 3:24) When all seems lost, the faithfulness of the Lord always remains. In the worst of times, the Lord’s people are called to wait for and seek him and his salvation.

But, as we have seen throughout our study, only those who respond to the Lord’s revealed will with grateful obedience will experience the fulfillment of the Lord’s sure and trustworthy promises. Therefore, Jeremiah issues this call upon the Lord’s people: “Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord! Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven; ‘We have transgressed and rebelled . . . .” (Lamentations 3:40-42)

The book of Lamentations ends with a prayer extending through the entirety of its last chapter – Lamentations 5.[[42]](#footnote-42) Jeremiah prays that the Lord would look upon his people and have mercy upon them for their situation is bleak and intense tragedy has become their lot:[[43]](#footnote-43)

* Their inheritance is lost;
* They have become orphans;
* They are weary and under an oppressive rule;
* They are without a deliverer;
* Their women are raped;
* Great disrespect is shown to their leaders;
* Their young men are compelled into forced labor;
* Music no longer fills the streets;
* Joy has ceased;
* Their hearts have become sick;
* Their eyes have grown dim.
  1. **Unique Way that the Book of Lamentations Points to Jesus**

Schreiner helps us greatly here: “The special contribution of Lamentations is to confront us with the terrible reality of the wrath of God, and so bars the way to any resolution less than the one the New Testament finally provides.’ The agony and desolation of standing under God’s wrath, so powerfully communicated in Lamentations, finds its apex in the suffering of Jesus the Christ, who was forsaken by God. The giving oneself up to suffering in Lamentations (3:27-30) anticipates the Isaianic servant of the Lord who willingly bears suffering, though in the latter case he does so for the sins of his people. . . . Hence, the forgiveness pleaded for and the hope persisting in Lamentations find their resolution in the sufferings and glories of Jesus Christ, for the hope in Lamentations reaches its goal in the resurrection of the Christ.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

The reality of the wrath of God is often lost in the contemporary church. The reality that the wrath of God will be poured out upon those who are not in Christ to an even greater extent than it was poured out upon Jerusalem in 586 B.C. is not a reality that is in the forefront of most of our minds. But this is a deep and profound reality. The wrath of God, for every individual, was either fully satisfied by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ or will be satisfied through judgment at the end of all things. Thanks be to God the Father for hiding us in Christ and for the fact that no more wrath remains for us who are in him.

1. **Ezekiel (48 chapters – 3 ½ hours)**
   1. **Unique Placement of the Book of Ezekiel in the Storyline of the Old Testament**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Timeline** | **Contemporary Prophets** | **Primary Audience** | **Contemporary Kings** | |
| **Judah** | **Israel** |
| 592-570 | Daniel  Jeremiah | Judah | Zedekiah | No kings; already experienced exile |

Ezekiel was likely born in 623 B.C. and grew up during King Josiah’s reign.[[45]](#footnote-45) Recall that Josiah was the last righteous king in Judah. All those who came after him increased in wickedness, leading to the exile in 586 B.C. Jeremiah was a contemporary of Ezekiel, was likely born about 20 years before him, and began his ministry before Ezekiel.[[46]](#footnote-46) It is therefore likely that Ezekiel was familiar with the ministry of Jeremiah.[[47]](#footnote-47) Daniel was also a contemporary of Ezekiel and Daniel’s ministry extended to around 536 B.C., which is of a longer duration than the ministry of Ezekiel.[[48]](#footnote-48)

* 1. **General Structure of the Book of Ezekiel[[49]](#footnote-49)**

1. Ezekiel’s Calling (1-3)
2. Coming Judgment Upon Judah (4-24)
3. Coming Judgment Upon the Nations (25-32)
4. Future Blessings for Israel (33-48)
   1. **Unique Message & Role of the Book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament**
      1. *The Condition of the Lord’s Covenant People*

Ezekiel is writing during a dark period for the Lord’s covenant people. They have turned away from the Lord and are living in rebellion against him. Ezekiel provides some of the most shocking and graphic descriptions of the nature of this rebellion. Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel describes the rebellion of the people in terms of spiritual adultery. As Schreiner notes, “the language used is shocking and X-rated.”[[50]](#footnote-50)

There is a tendency among religious people to allow one’s familiarity with the things of the Lord to desensitize oneself to the seriousness and tragic nature of their sin. Ezekiel cuts through all of this with his graphic descriptions. In Ezekiel 16, the Lord’s gracious work among his people is described as saving an abandoned baby and nourishing her and making her flourish so that she grew up and entered into a covenant relationship with the Lord whereby her nakedness was covered and she was washed, fed, and clothed in beautiful clothing and jewelry. She grew exceedingly beautiful and was known among the nations for her beauty that the Lord had bestowed upon her. (Ezekiel 16:1-14)

But, rather than resting in her covenant relationship with the Lord, she “trusted in your beauty and played the whore because of your renown and lavished your whorings on any passerby; your beauty became his.” (Ezekiel 16:15) And, further, she continued to make “your beauty an abomination, offering yourself to any passerby and multiplying your whoring.” (Ezekiel 16:25) The people’s spiritually adultery took a devastating toll upon them: “How sick is your heart, declares the Lord God, because you did all these things, the deeds of a brazen prostitute . . . Yet you were not like a prostitute, because you scorned payment. Adulterous wife, who receives strangers instead of her husband! Men give gifts to all prostitutes, but you gave your gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from every side with your whorings. So you were different from other women in your whorings. No one solicited you to play the whore, and you gave payment, while no payment was given to you; therefore you were different.” (Ezekiel 16:30-34)

Ezekiel 16 is not a pleasant or “devotional” chapter, but truth is not always pleasing to the ear, at first. But, truth is the path to healing. The Lord’s people needed a potent dose of truth to expose the reality of their spiritual condition. For, in Ezekiel 12:2 we get a clear picture of the people’s blindness: “Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes to see, but see not, who have ears to hear, but hear not. . . .” Ezekiel 16 is a strong word for the purpose of helping the blind to see and the deaf to hear. But, the people of the Lord had become so hardened to the Lord that even this potent message couldn’t break through. It is because of this devastating condition of the Lord’s covenant people that judgment is in the horizon. It is to this judgment that we now turn.

* + 1. *The Coming Judgment Upon the Lord’s Covenant People*

A unique character of the book of Ezekiel is the prophet’s strange and physical depiction of the Lord’s impending judgment brought about by the spiritual adultery of his covenant people:[[51]](#footnote-51)

* In *Ezekiel 4:1-3*, the prophet was told to build a model that illustrated the coming siege of Jerusalem;
* In *Ezekiel 4:4-17*, the prophet was told to lay on his left side for 390 days and his right side for 40 days symbolizing the punishment that was in the horizon;
* In *Ezekiel 5:1-12*, the prophet was told to take a sharp sword and shave his head and beard. He was then instructed to burn 1/3 of the shavings, strike 1/3 of the shavings with a sword, and scatter 1/3 of the shavings to the wind. The destruction of the shavings forecasted the destruction of the people. For 1/3 of the people will die of pestilence, 1/3 shall die by the sword, and 1/3 shall be scattered to the winds. (Ezekiel 5:12) The impending judgment is fierce and disastrous.
* In *Ezekiel 12:1-7*, the prophet was told to act out the coming exile by packing up a back and leaving in the sight of the people. In these verses, we get insight into the hope of all of these physical illustrations: “Perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious house.” (Ezekiel 12:3) The Lord continues to call out for his people to turn from their adulteries and return to him, their covenant Lord.

Despite the explicit description of the spiritual adultery of the Lord’s covenant people and the physical depictions of the impending judgment resulting from their spiritual adultery, the people refused to relent and return to the Lord. As a result, the promised judgment came in Ezekiel 24. The chapter begins with the siege of Jerusalem which is symbolized by a cooking pot and concludes with a graphic description of the pain that the people will finally feel with the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem becomes a reality.

In Ezekiel 24:16-17 we read: “Son of man, behold, I am about to take the delight of your eyes from you at a stroke; yet you shall not mourn or weep, nor shall your tears run down. Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead.” The Lord was taking away Ezekiel’s wife as a graphic demonstration of the taking away of Jerusalem from his people. As Mark Dever puts it: “The adequately communicate his feelings for his people, God could not summon language more deep, more intimate, more loving, and more involved than the language of a relationship between a man and his wife. As Ezekiel lost his wife (“the delight of your eyes”), so the people would lose Jerusalem (“the delight of their eyes”). Both of these losses were a dim shadow of God’s loss of his people Israel, whom he had called and made, whom he had cared for and delighted in, and whom he, in his holy and jealous love, would now judge.”[[52]](#footnote-52)

Ezekiel 18 makes an important contribution to our discussion of the Lord’s judgment upon his people. There are some who believe that the Lord is equally satisfied in the extension of grace and of judgment. However, that view doesn’t square with the testimony of Ezekiel 18:23 or 18:32, which provide in turn: “Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?” and “For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.” The justice of the Lord requires judgment upon wickedness, but the Lord does not take pleasure in the exercise of such judgment. It is true that the expression of the Lord’s judgment is perfect and results in his glorification – for everything that the Lord does is glorious. However, the Lord takes greater pleasure in extending his endless grace than his perfect wrath.

The Lord’s greater desire to extend grace will be satisfied, for judgment is not the last word for his people. There is a future day of salvation and it is to that promise of salvation that we now turn.

* + 1. *The Promised Salvation for the Lord’s Covenant People*

Ezekiel provides us with some unique contributions in its description of the nature of the future salvation for the Lord’s people. In Ezekiel 11:17-20 we read that exile will not be the last word for the Lord’s people, for he will bring them back to the Promised Land and remove their sins from them and “I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”

We have previously seen the promise of a new heart in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah. But, the promise of a “new spirit” is new and profound. This promise is picked up again and expounded upon in Ezekiel 36:25-27: “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statues and be careful to obey mu rules.”

Putting the message of salvation in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel together to this point, we have learned that:

* A Davidic King will rule over an eternal kingdom;
* The Davidic King’s rule will be inaugurated through his dual role as the Suffering Servant who will bear the sins of the people and provide permanent forgiveness of their sins;
* This permanent forgiveness is described as a new exodus which brings them from their spiritual adultery and bondage into the eternal kingdom over which the Davidic King rules and within which a new creation has come about;
* A New Covenant will govern the relationship between the Lord and his people in this coming eternal kingdom. This New Covenant is different than the Mosaic/Old Covenant because it can not be broken. Unlike the people under the Mosaic/Old Covenant, the people of the New Covenant have experienced true and permanent forgiveness and have new hearts and the Spirit within them who gives them the desire and ability to walk in grateful obedience to the Lord’s revealed will!

The present experience of the Lord’s people could hardly be further from this description of the Lord’s future salvation. The dissonance between Israel’s present reality and the future day of salvation is captured beautifully in Ezekiel 37. The present reality of the Lord’s people was pictured as a valley of lifeless and dry bones. The Lord then poses the question: “Son of man, can these bones live?” (Ezekiel 37:3) Ezekiel wisely answered: “O Lord God, you know.” Then, the Lord speaks profound words that graphically illustrate the power and nature of redemption: “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live and you shall know that I am the Lord.” (Ezekiel 37:4-6)

So, Ezekiel obeys the Lord and prophesies over the dry bones. And “there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.’ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on the feet, and exceedingly great army.” (Ezekiel 37:7-10)

These powerful verses make clear that the current “dry bones” experience of the Lord’s people in exile will, on the future day of salvation, be turned into an experience of life through the power and presence of the Spirit. The Lord “will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.” (Ezekiel 37:14)

Ezekiel also emphasizes that this future salvation will come through the reign of the coming Davidic King and a New Covenant: “My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. . . . I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them.” (Ezekiel 37:24, 26) There is a new aspect to the Davidic King here, however. In Isaiah we learned that the Davidic King would also be the Suffering Servant. In Ezekiel we learn that the Davidic King will also be the people’s shepherd. Schreiner notes the implications of this reality: “Yahweh promises that he will become the shepherd for Israel, that he will seek out the sheep who have been lost, heal those who are injured, help those who are weak, and bring back those who are scattered.”[[53]](#footnote-53)

The last 9 chapters of Ezekiel (chapters 40-48) describe the future salvation for the Lord’s covenant people in terms of a “new temple.” There are many different interpretive options for these chapters that have been adopted by the church over the years, many with valid textual support. However, I think Schreiner rightly concludes that: “The new temple does not constitute the rebuilding of the old one. The details are not a plan for physical rebuilding. . . . The temple represents a new Eden, a cosmic mountain (40:2) where Yahweh dwells with his people.”[[54]](#footnote-54) This “new temple” will be where the glory of the Lord is present (Ezekiel 43:5), the Lord will dwell in the midst of his people forever (Ezekiel 43:7), and “[t]hat which defiles God’s holy name will be a distant memory”[[55]](#footnote-55) (Ezekiel 43:7).

The “new temple” promised in Ezekiel “is fulfilled in the new heaven and new hearth that are coming (see Rev. 21-22), where the new creation is described as a temple to signify that the whole earth is indwelt by God, that God’s presence fills the entire cosmos.”[[56]](#footnote-56)

Finally, the book of Ezekiel reminds us that all of the Lord’s acts in and through his covenant people are for his glory, and his glory alone: “Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.” (Ezekiel 36:22-23)

* 1. **Unique Way that the Book of Ezekiel Points to Jesus**

The book of Ezekiel uniquely points to Jesus in several ways. The work of Jesus is what enables the people to have the new heart of flesh in Ezekiel 11. The work of Jesus is what enables the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within the Lord’s people. The work of Jesus is what brings life from death (dry bones). Jesus is the new David who will be the good shepherd. Jesus is the one who brings about the ultimately reality set forth in Revelation 21-22 with the Lord and his people enjoying perfect relationship for all of eternity.

1. **Daniel (12 chapters – 1 hour)** 
   1. **Unique Placement of the Book of Daniel in the Storyline of the Old Testament**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Timeline** | **Contemporary Prophets** | **Primary Audience** | **Contemporary Kings** | |
| **Judah** | **Israel** |
| 603-530 | Jeremiah  Ezekiel  Habakkuk | Judah | Jehoiakim  Jhoiachin  Zerubbabel  Zedekiah | No kings; already experienced exile |

* 1. **General Structure/Flow of the Book of Daniel**

1. Chapter 1: Faithfulness of Daniel & Co.
2. Chapter 2: Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream
3. Chapter 3: Deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego
4. Chapter 4: Nebuchadnezzar Humbled
5. Chapter 5: Belshazzar Humbled
6. Chapter 6: Deliverance of Daniel
7. Chapter 7: Interpretation of Daniel’s Dream
8. Chapter 8-12: Expression of Yahweh’s Sovereignty Over History
   1. **Unique Message & Role of the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament**

As we have done in connection with our examination of the other major prophets, we will look at the book Daniel’s unique message and role of the Old Testament by looking at how the book describes (1) the condition *and call* of the Lord’s covenant people, (2) the *present*/coming judgment upon the Lord’s covenant people, and (3) the promised salvation for the Lord’s covenant people.

* + 1. *The Condition and Call of the Lord’s Covenant People*

The book of Daniel speaks to those who are experiencing exile in the land of Babylon and calls upon them “to recognize that God rules over all and will bring in his kingdom, and therefore they should not compromise with paganism.”[[57]](#footnote-57)

As we mentioned during our examination of 1-2 Kings, the Babylonian Exile occurred over a period of time and culminated in 586 B.C. with the destruction of Jerusalem. The beginning of the exile was under Jehoiakim’s rule and the book of Daniel begins there. Nebuchadnezzar is seen (1) taking some vessels from the Temple and placing them in the temple of his god and (2) taking certain people into exile “of the royal family and of the nobility, youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand I the king’s palace . . . .” (Daniel 1:3-4)

Given that the book of Daniel is primarily written to those who have already experienced exile (even if before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.), the book does not add much to the dismal description of the spiritual condition of the Lord’s covenant people that the previous prophets have clearly set forth. That being said, Daniel recognizes that the spiritual adultery of the Lord’s people was the cause of the exile and confesses the people’s rebellion in Daniel 9:5-6: “[W]e have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who speak in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.”

But, not all of the Lord’s covenant people have rebelled against and rejected the Lord of the covenant. The fact that the righteous are caught in the judgment expressed upon the wicked in is accordance with the nuanced view of life and reality that we saw in our study of the books of Job and Ecclesiastes.

Daniel, the book’s namesake, was included with the select group that was taken into exile and is presented as a picture of a blessed and faithful life in the midst of exile. Of significant note, the Lord gave Daniel “learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” such that there was no one who could compare to Daniel and his friends. (Daniel 1: 17-20)

In Daniel 3-6 we have a graphic picture of Hannah’s hymn that we encountered in our study of 1-2 Samuel.[[58]](#footnote-58) As you recall, the theological thrust of Hannah’s hymn is that the Lord will humble the proud and raise up the humble. Daniel and his friends are pictures of humility for they chose to worship and obey the sovereign Lord of all creation rather than their captors. Nebuchadnezzar and his son Belshazzar pictures of pride for they exalt themselves rather than the sovereign Lord of all creation. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are raised up through deliverance and Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar are humbled through judgment. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego responded to the threat of death for failing to worship Nebuchadnezzar in a manner similar to Esther: “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. . . . [O]ur God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” (Daniel 3:16-18)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walked through the furnace without being touched by the flames resulting in the worship of the Lord by Nebuchadnezzar: “Blessed by the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.” (Daniel 3:28)

Daniel was similarly cast into the lion’s den for refusing to obey Darius’ decree that prayers only be made to him. Daniel was delivered from the lion’s den without a scratch resulting in the worship of the Lord by Darius and the issuing of a decree that all the people under his rule “are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for his is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”[[59]](#footnote-59) (Daniel 6:25-27)

Daniel 4 and 5 illustrate the other side of Hannah’s hymn – the Lord will humble the proud. Nebuchadnezzar surveyed his kingdom and boasted: “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30) As the words were on his lips, the Lord rebuked him and Nebuchadnezzar was driven from his glorious throne and “ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles’ feathers, and his nails were like birds’ claws.” (Daniel 4:33) When Nebuchadnezzar regained his senses he, once again, praised the Lord: “for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, ‘What have you done?’” (Daniel 4:34-35)

Nebuchadnezzar’s son, Belshazzar, likewise exalted himself in Daniel 5 by throwing a party and drinking out of the vessels that were taken from the Temple in Jerusalem. As they drank from the vessels, they “praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.” (Daniel 5:4) Fingers appeared out of nowhere and wrote “Mene, Mene; Tekel, and Parsin” on the wall. Daniel alone was able to interpret the writing and his interpretation made clear that the proud Belshazzar was to be humbled: “Mene, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; Tekel, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; Peres, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” (Daniel 5:25-28) That very night Belshazzar was killed and Darius the Mede rose to power. (Daniel 5:30-31)

The rebellion of the Lord’s covenant people resulted in their exile. However, the Lord’s people were not to abandon hope in the midst of their exile but, rather, like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, they were to humble themselves before the Lord so that he could experience the Lord’s presence during the exile and ultimate deliverance from the exile in his perfect timing. The Lord’s humbling of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar made it clear that he was sovereign over all things, even the powers that had been used to accomplish the exile of his covenant people from the Promised Land! It is to this sovereign Lord that the remnant are to humble themselves and look to for deliverance and hope.

* + 1. *The Present & Coming Judgment Upon the Lord’s Covenant People*

As the book is written to those of the Lord’s covenant people who have already experienced the exile, the book of Daniel does not add significantly to the description of the coming judgment. For, in a very real way for the people who have already been taken to Babylon, the worse of the judgment has already come about. However, the book of Daniel does implicitly describe the nature of the judgment as it describes the slow and gradual process through which the promised salvation will come about. The implication being that judgment remains until the promised salvation comes.

* + 1. *The Promised Salvation for the Lord’s Covenant People*

The most significant contribution of the book of Daniel for our purposes is its description of the coming salvation for the Lord’s covenant people. Even from the first chapter, we are given an indication that exile and judgment will not be the last word for the Lord’s covenant people for “Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.” (Daniel 1:21) This is a clear reference to Cyrus’ decree that ended the Babylonian Exile!

Daniel 2 and 7-12 give us insight into the process through which the coming salvation will come about. David Platt suggests that these verses could be described as the book of Revelation for the Old Testament.[[60]](#footnote-60) The breadth of these chapters is vast. We are taken from the period of the exile to the second coming of Jesus Christ![[61]](#footnote-61) Schreiner notes that these chapters “sketch out the future until the arrival of the kingdom of God.”[[62]](#footnote-62) As readers, we must admit that there is mystery in these chapters. Throughout the history of the church, there has been no shortage of interpretations for these chapters.

We do not have time or space here to adequately discuss the alternative interpretations that have been presented throughout time. We do not even have time to adequately and thoroughly present any single interpretative option. In these few paragraphs our aim is simply to capture the general thrust of what Daniel is trying to communicate to his audience about the nature of the coming salvation and how that message fits within the overall structure and message of the Old Testament.

With those qualifications behind us, what can we glean from these majestic and rich chapters? From a big-picture perspective, we can glean at least two (2) insights into the nature of the promised salvation for the Lord’s people: (1) the process that will bring about the promised salvation will take much longer than originally anticipated, (2) the salvation will be brought about by a “son of man.”

Daniel 2 and 7 contain dreams and the interpretation of those dreams. In Chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar is the dreamer and Daniel is the interpreter. In Chapter 7, Daniel is the dreamer as is given the interpretation by an angel. Both dreams speak, in figurative language, of a lineage of pagan nations that will ultimately be defeated by the Lord. The sovereign Lord will have the last word and that word will be one of victory. The head of the serpent will be crushed.

In Daniel 2, the picture is of a large statute that “stands for human governments that represent a subversion of what God intended when he made human beings in his image.”[[63]](#footnote-63) A stone crushed and brought down the statute and “became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” (Daniel 2:34-35) The stone is a picture of the kingdom of the Lord that will triumph and reign over all other kingdoms, for “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever. . . .” (Daniel 3:44) This brings Genesis 3:15 to our mind. There will be a battle between the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman until the serpent’s head is crushed by the promised offspring of the serpent, who is a son of Abraham, and the promised son of David.

From Daniel 2, it becomes clear that “history will last longer than expected, but the people of God should be full of hope, for the kingdoms of the world will not endure. Only the kingdom of God will remain.”[[64]](#footnote-64) We have already noted at several points through out study of 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, and the prophets that the remnant’s return to the Promised Land did not bring about the ultimate fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises. Daniel confirms this conclusion. The restoration of all things will come at a point in the future. The promises remain but the Lord’s timeline is not rushed. We learn in Daniel 9:24 that the coming of the promised kingdom of restoration would not come about in 70 years when the remnant returns to the Promised Land, but rather in “seventy weeks.” As Schreiner notes: “That is, the exile would fully end not after seventy years, but after 490 years.”[[65]](#footnote-65)

In Daniel 7, the lineage of pagan nations is described in terms of four beasts – a lion, bear, leopard, and terrifying, dreadful, and a exceedingly strong animal. The pagan nations are described as beats because “they are cruel and rapacious, destroying and devastating those under their rule.”[[66]](#footnote-66) As in Daniel 2, however, the pagan nations will not have the last word for the Ancient of Days reigns over them all. (Daniel 7:9-12) The kingdom of the Ancient of Days is then given to a “son of man”: “[B]ehold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13-14)

Daniel 8-12 provide more details to the “span of history sketched in by chapter 2 and 7.”[[67]](#footnote-67) These details are beyond the scope of our review of this great book, but through all of these chapters we are reminded of the Lord’s sovereignty and that the Lord “changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding . . . .” (Daniel 2:21)

* 1. **Unique Way that the Book of Daniel Points to Jesus**

Daniel points to Jesus in unique and significant ways. Jesus is the rock that brings down the great statue of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and the son of man who is given the kingdom of the Ancient of Days and who will reign forever and ever! As Schreiner notes: “Jesus is the Son of Man, the king, the stone, who represents the saints. The saints triumph insofar as they belong to him and are united to him. His victory is their victory. The Son of Man will crush the head of the serpent, the ferocious and beastly kingdoms that oppress human beings and advance evil.”[[68]](#footnote-68)

1. 2 Kings 15:3-4; 2 Kings 15:34-35; 2 Kings 18:3, 5-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2 Kings 16:2-4; 2 Kings 21:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. David Platt, Secret Church Material for Old Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 328. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 329. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology In the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), \_\_\_. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Schreiner notes: “We immediately see that Isaiah is covenantal, for the punishments visited upon Israel were due to its violation of covenantal stipulations.” Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 328. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Isaiah 40-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Isaiah 9:8-10:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Isaiah 13-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The prophet Isaiah died around 680 B.C., around 94 years before the southern kingdom of Judah’s complete exile at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 B.C. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Goldsworthy, According to Plan, 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 334. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 334. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 334. See also Isaiah 11:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 334. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 345. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 334. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 344-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See Isaiah 11:11-16; 40:1-5; 43:1-7, 15-21; 48:20-21; 49:24-26. Thank you to Graeme Goldsworthy for pointing me to this powerful verses regarding the new exodus. See Goldsworthy, According to Plan, 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Goldsworthy, According to Plan, 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Adapted from Dr. Constable’s outline provided at [www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/jeremiah.pdf](http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/jeremiah.pdf). (last visited November 21, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 350. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Jeremiah 2:20; 3:1-3, 6, 8-9; 13:27). Thank you to Dr. Schreiner for pointing out this theme and collecting these citations. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 352. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 352. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 352. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Jeremiah 5:14-17; 6:1-9. Collection of citations comes from Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 351. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 353. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Goldsworthy, According to Plan, 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Schreiner provides: “A new covenant is promised, which would be different from the Sinai covenant (31:31-32), for although the Lord was gracious to his people in liberating them from Egypt, Israel did not abide by the stipulations of the covenant. By way of contrast, ‘it will not be possible to breach the new covenant.’ The new covenant is of a different character, for now the Lord will write his law on the hearts of his people so that they will obey him (31:33). Israel would experience what it means for Yahweh to be their God and to live as his people. ‘The new covenant . . . is a way of solving the basic problem identified in earlier parts of the book . . . , namely, the failure of the covenant people to be faithful.’” Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 361. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 362. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 362. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. While not all scholars believe that Jeremiah is the author, I side with Dr. Constable and many others in holding to such authorship for the book. For a good discussion, see Dr. Constable’s discussion at www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/lamentations.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 365 (“Lamentations contemplates poetically what happened to the people of the covenant when they were exiled to Babylon in 586 B.C.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 365. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 365. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 365. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 366. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 368. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 366. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 369. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 369 (“The whole of chapter 5 is a prayer to the Lord.”) [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Lamentations 5:1-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 370-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Constable, www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/ezekiel.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Constable, www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/ezekiel.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Constable, www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/ezekiel.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Constable, www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/ezekiel.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Adapted from Dr. Constable’s work on Ezekiel found at www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/ezekiel.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 376. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 374. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Mark Dever, The Message of the Old Testament, 645. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 382. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 384. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 384. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 386. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 387. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. 1 Samuel 2:1-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. We also saw Darius acting on behalf of the remnant that returned to the Promised Land at several points in our study of Ezra (see Ezra 6). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. David Platt, Old Testament Radical Material, Daniel. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. David Platt, Old Testament Radical Material, Daniel. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 390. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 391. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 391. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 394. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 392. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 393. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 393. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)