

Programme Progressions Ensemble  
BIBL 208

## The Writing Prophets



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## **Lesson 1 : Introduction**

### **A. The Purpose of the course:**

The purpose of this course is to give an introduction to prophecy in the Old Testament and to the books of the 'writing prophets' in particular. We have selected about 50 key chapters of the prophets for detailed study. We have also included 'application questions' in order to help you draw out the challenge and encouragement of the prophets' messages for your own and others' Christian lives.

In order to understand and interpret the prophets correctly, you need to realise that the prophets did not speak in a vacuum; their messages were addressed to specific people in specific situations. It is therefore critical to study the historical context in which the prophets spoke. We have thus included important background information that you will need to read attentively.

However, the messages of the prophets were not only intended for those who first heard them. They reach beyond the specific context in which they were spoken to also address the near and distant future. While some prophecies were partially or completely fulfilled in Old Testament times, many remained to be fulfilled. However, all of them ultimately pointed to the coming of Christ and his kingdom. Some began to be fulfilled with Christ's first coming, but others will only be completely fulfilled when Christ returns in glory. So these prophecies are a source of encouragement for us calling us to look forward to that great day.

### **B. Biblical prophets: read Ex 4:10-16**

1. A prophet is someone who is called by the one true God to be his messenger, as he is prompted by the Holy Spirit. The greatest of the prophets of Israel was Moses. Note how God describes his relationship with his prophet. (v 12, 15)
2. To what part of the body is a prophet compared? (v 16)

### **C. A prophet like Moses: read Dt 18:14-22**

1. What practice is forbidden in this passage?
2. What does God promise to do for Israel?
3. How do we know from this passage that the 'prophet like Moses' will be from among the people of Israel?' (vv 15,18)
4. For what reasons is a prophet to be put to death?
5. What test was given for the people to know if a prophet was not sent by God? (vv 21-22)
6. Compare this passage with Acts 3:17-26. Who, according to the apostle Peter, is the perfect fulfilment of Moses' prophecy?

**D. Historical Background 1: Moses (1527 – 1407 B.C.)**

God gave the Torah – the first five books of the Bible – through Moses. These books are the foundation stone of Israel's relationship with God.

The book of Genesis (studied in BIBL 202) begins with the creation and early history of mankind. Starting with chapter 12, it continues with the call of Abraham and the story of his family through the line of Isaac and Jacob. Joseph, Jacob's favourite son, is sold as a slave into Egypt. He later becomes Prime Minister of Egypt and is able to bring the whole family there in a time of famine.

The book of Exodus opens 400 years later. Jacob's descendants are now a large nation. The Egyptians, afraid of them, treat them harshly, but God delivers them through Moses. In the desert, at Mt Sinai, He makes His covenant – or solemn agreement - with them. As the sovereign Lord, who has saved them from slavery and death, He asks of them that they should serve and obey Him faithfully. In turn, they will benefit from his protection and blessing. But, if they disobey Him and are not faithful to the covenant, He will abandon them to their enemies. They will be defeated and will even go into exile, losing the land He has promised to give them. Yet, even then, not all hope will be lost. If they repent and return to the Lord, He will bring them back again to their own land and make them prosper.

The heart of the people's responsibilities under this covenant are found in the 10 commandments (Exodus 20), but the covenant also included many other laws (Exodus and Leviticus). A major part of the task of the prophets who came after Moses was to remind the people of their responsibilities according to the covenant, and to warn them what would happen if they did not keep their side of the agreement.

But the sin and weakness of the people of Israel were soon apparent. Even while Moses was receiving the covenant from God at Mt Sinai, they made a golden calf and fell into idol worship. Shortly afterwards, they lacked the faith to enter the land of Canaan and had to spend 40 years in the desert (Numbers). A whole generation died there (except for Joshua and Caleb) and it was their children who went into the promised land.

In Deuteronomy, Moses renews God's covenant with this new generation and exhorts them to remain faithful to God. Moses is about to die, but he assures them that God will send them other prophets to take his place. These prophets will bring to them the living word of God and they will not lack for guidance. They will also remind them of all the teaching that God has already given. The messages of a true prophet will never contradict the revelation that God has already given of Himself in earlier prophecies. Rather, they will build on these messages and apply them to the people of the prophet's own day. But the people must remain faithful to the covenant, or they will lose God's blessing. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua are studied in BIBL 203.

**Study questions on Historical Background 1:**

1. God used Moses to establish His covenant with the people of Israel and to give them His laws. What is the relationship between this covenant and the messages of the prophets?

2. What were the main reasons for which God sent the prophets?

### **E. Historical Background 2: From Moses to the ‘writing prophets’ (1407 – 780 B.C.)**

*Moses* died on Mt Nebo without entering the promised land and *Joshua*, his godly successor led the people in. During the lifetime of Joshua and his contemporaries, Israel followed the Lord and so was also successful in battle, conquering much of the land God had promised them.

However, in the next generation, the people turned away from God. As He had promised, he began to send his prophets to call them back to Himself and to obedience to His laws. The greatest of the prophets of this period was *Samuel*. He began his ministry around 1100 B.C. He travelled from town to town, proclaiming God’s word to the people and judging their important cases. God also used him to give the people victory over their enemies. Towards the end of his life, the people of Israel, wanting to be like the other nations and have a king to lead them in battle, asked for a king.

Following God’s guidance, Samuel anointed Saul, who tragically did not obey God fully. He was replaced by *David*, the greatest of all Israel’s kings, who reigned from 1011-971 B.C. The prophet *Nathan* is mentioned in the time of David. He rebuked David after his adultery with Bathsheba. Even the king was not above the prophet, who represented the voice of God Himself. David was also a prophet and many of his psalms contain predictions concerning the Messiah – the deliverer whom God would send.

Solomon, David’s son by Bathsheba, succeeded him as king and reigned from 971 to 931 B.C. In spite of his great wisdom, he turned away from God towards the end of his life. God’s judgment upon him was to divide his kingdom after his death. His son, Rehoboam, ruled over only 2 tribes – Judah and Benjamin, with his capital at Jerusalem – in the south of the country. In the north, Jeroboam broke away from Rehoboam and founded a kingdom of his own, consisting of the other 10 tribes.

Even though the southern kingdom - ‘Judah’ - remained more faithful to God than the northern one – ‘Israel’ (sometimes also called ‘Samaria’, after the name of the capital city), the message of the prophets was needed more urgently than ever. Ahab (874-853 B.C.), one of the kings of Israel, even attempted to wipe out the worship of God completely and replace it with that of the heathen god ‘Baal’. God raised up the prophet *Elijah* to confront him. Elijah triumphed over the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18).

As both Israel and Judah drifted further away from God, He also withdrew His promise to bless and protect them. They began to be in danger from foreign enemies. The prophets warned them that, just as Moses had prophesied in Deuteronomy, they were risking defeat, destruction and exile if they did not repent. They were not keeping their side of the covenant and so they would experience the punishments that God had warned them would come.

The period of history from the Judges to the return from exile is studied in BIBL 204.

#### **Study questions on Historical Background 2:**

1. Who were the most important prophets during this period?
2. Give some examples of their activity:

### **F. Historical Background 3: The 'writing prophets' (780 – 450 B.C.)**

From the eighth century B.C. we enter the period of the '*writing prophets*'. These are the books of the prophets that we find in our Bible. The difference between them and the earlier prophets we have mentioned is that these prophets made, or had made for them, systematic collections of their prophecies in writing. Of the earlier prophets only Moses had done this.

Among the first of these prophets, in chronological order was *Amos*, who prophesied around 760 B.C. He and *Hosea* both prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel, urging its people to repent. Neither the people nor the leaders heeded these warnings and the nation was finally destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. (2 Kings 17). The people of Israel were taken into exile and scattered among other nations. They never returned as a community to their own land. A mixed group of people was brought in to replace them – the ancestors of the 'Samaritans' about whom we read in the N.T.

The southern kingdom of Judah faced similar danger from the Assyrians. However, the godly king, Hezekiah (716-687 B.C.), encouraged by the prophet *Isaiah*, put his trust in God and was delivered (2 Kings 18-19; Isaiah 36-37). *Micah* also prophesied to Judah at this time.

Even though Jerusalem had escaped destruction at the hands of the Assyrians, Hezekiah's successors, with the exception of Josiah (640-609 B.C.), did not obey God wholeheartedly. *Jeremiah* warned them that God would not let them survive, any more than he had allowed the northern kingdom to continue in its sinful ways. The Babylonians, who had conquered the Assyrians and become the major power in the Middle East, attacked and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 B.C. Jeremiah's predictions had come true.

At this point it seemed that God's relationship with His people was over. The Babylonians had destroyed the temple and taken the leaders and many of the people of Judah away into exile in Babylon. Only some of the poorer people remained in Judah. But, through his prophets, God assured his people in exile that He still had a plan for them. Only, they must repent and seek him with all their heart. Although they had not kept their side of the covenant – and so had experienced the judgement that the prophets had warned them of – He would not abandon them completely. He would forgive them and even make a new covenant with them.

In Babylon itself, *Ezekiel* brought a message of hope to the exiles. *Jeremiah* had also foreseen that God would bring them back from exile after their punishment had lasted 70 years. *Daniel*, in Babylon, prayed that God would bring this to pass. He lived to see the Babylonians destroyed by the Persians. Soon afterwards, in 538 B.C., the Persian king Cyrus (as *Isaiah* had prophesied 200 years earlier) issued an edict allowing the people of Judah – the Jews - to return home.

Under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, they went back and began to rebuild the temple, which was completed in 516 B.C. with the encouragement of the prophets *Haggai* and *Zechariah*. The last prophet of the Old Testament, *Malachi*, urged the Jews to be obedient in their lives and faithful in their worship of God as they waited for God Himself to come to save His people.

Then, for over 400 years, there were no more prophets until the appearance of John the Baptist.

**Study questions on Historical Background 3:**

Refer to the time charts on pages 49 and 50 and circle all the prophets we have mentioned.

You will notice that the 'chronological order' of the prophets is not the same as the order in which we find them in the Bible. In the Bible, we find the four 'major' prophets (called 'major' because their books are longer) first, followed by the twelve 'minor' prophets. Below you will see a table of the ten writing prophets we have mentioned, with the biblical order in the first column. Rearrange them in chronological order in the second column and then put an approximate date for the time of their ministry next to them. Then note the people to whom they ministered: either the northern kingdom of 'Israel', the southern kingdom of 'Judah', the Jewish exiles in Babylon or the Jews who returned to Judah after the exile.

Two examples are done for you:

<b>Biblical Order</b>	<b>Chronological Order</b>	<b>Approximate Date</b>	<b>People they ministered to</b>
Isaiah	<i>Amos</i>	<i>760 B.C.</i>	<i>Northern kingdom of Israel</i>
Jeremiah			
Ezekiel			
Daniel			
Hosea			
Amos	<i>Ezekiel</i>	<i>593-571 B.C.</i>	<i>Exiles from Judah in Babylon</i>
Micah			
Haggai			
Zechariah			
Malachi			

**G. Conclusion**

As we study the prophets, we will see that, with the warnings of destruction, there are also promises of blessing if the people will repent. These blessings are often portrayed in material terms – victory over enemies, full harvests with peace and plenty. However, in spite of this, God's salvation is fundamentally spiritual. He will somehow intervene to save His people. He will make a new covenant with them under which they will freely and willingly obey Him and He will change their hearts to enable them to do this. He will remove the sins and wrongs which separate them from Him. A great king, in the line of David, will come to rule over them with perfect justice and establish the Kingdom of God on earth. All these hopes come together in the person of the 'Messiah' – the deliverer whom God will send.

In this course, we will study a selection of passages from the prophets, in order to gain a general idea of the messages they brought and their relevance both for us today and for our hope for the future.

Our selected passages are taken from: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

## AMOS

### Introduction

Amos was a shepherd, from the small town of Tekoa in the southern kingdom of Judah, about 16 km from Jerusalem. He was an ordinary person whom God called to be a prophet. Although he was a 'southerner', God sent him to prophesy to the northern kingdom of Israel. He preached around 760 B.C., during the reigns of Jeroboam II, king of Israel (782-753 B.C.) and Uzziah, king of Judah (767-740 B.C.) Both these kings were successful and their kingdoms prospered economically. But in Israel there was much injustice and exploitation of the poor. Amos was not afraid to confront the most important people in the land. He challenged the Israelites to obey God's law in their social lives. If they did not obey, he warned them that God would step in to destroy them because He could no longer tolerate their evil ways.

### A. Judgement to come on Israel: read 2:6 – 3:2

1. What sins have the people of Israel committed?
2. What images does the Lord use to describe his coming judgement?
3. What particular reason does God give for punishing Israel? (3:2)

### B. God's warnings to Israel: read 4:1-11

The prophets were to call the people to observe the covenant and to remind them of the consequences of failing to observe it. While warning of more severe judgement yet to come, Amos notes how God is already punishing Israel as he had threatened to do in Deuteronomy 28.

1. In the table below, note the part of each verse found in Amos and Deuteronomy that corresponds to the judgment promised. An example is done for you.

<b>Famine</b>	<b>Am 4:6</b>	<i>I gave you empty stomachs and lack of bread</i>	<b>Dt 28:17</b>	<i>Your basket and kneading trough will be cursed</i>
<b>Drought</b>	<b>Am 4:7-8</b>		<b>Dt 28:23</b>	
<b>Infected crops</b>	<b>Am 4:9a</b>		<b>Dt 28:22</b>	
<b>Insects</b>	<b>Am 4:9b</b>		<b>Dt 28:42</b>	
<b>Sickness</b>	<b>Am 4:10a</b>		<b>Dt 28:21</b>	
<b>War</b>	<b>Am 4:10b</b>		<b>Dt 28:25</b>	

2. Note God's purpose in sending these judgments on Israel. (v. 11)

3. When we encounter hardships as the Israelites did, we have a choice. We can blame God and turn away from Him, or we can turn *to* God for his help and mercy. Read Heb 12:5-10 and explain why the Lord continues to allow his people to face difficulties.

### **C. Israel's day of judgement: read 8:1-14**

1. The image used to show that Israel is about to be judged is a basket of ripe fruit. The Hebrew word for "ripe fruit" in v.1 is similar to the word used for "end-time" or "ripe time" in v.2. What reasons for the judgment are given? (8:1-6)

2. Various aspects of the judgment are mentioned. What strikes you in particular? (8:7-14)

### **D. The end comes: read 9:1-10**

1. How does Amos emphasise that the people of Israel cannot escape judgement? (9:1-6)

2. What note of hope is embedded in these verses of judgement? (9:8)

### **E. Promise of restoration: read 9:11-15**

1. We will see that while the prophets frequently warn of impending judgement, they also promise restoration after judgement. . Describe the different aspects of the restoration noted in these verses.

2. In Acts 15:13-21, the apostle James quotes Amos 9:11-12, following the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the 'Septuagint'). What fulfilment did he see of these verses?



3. Some aspects of the restoration promised by Amos still remain to be fulfilled. What are they? (Remember that the people of Israel, whom Amos addressed, did not return as a community from their exile, unlike the people of Judah).

4. As we saw in question 2, we can go to the New Testament to help us understand Old Testament prophecy. Newer revelation sheds light on older revelation and helps us to know how to interpret it.

a. In the NT, we discover a new understanding of those who constitute the people of Israel. Read Gal 3:28-29 and describe those who now make up the descendants of Abraham.

b. To discover the new promised land from which the new Israel will not be uprooted (Am 9:15), read Rev 21:1,2 and 22:1-5. What similarities do you see with 9:14-15?

## Lesson 2: Hosea & Isaiah pt 1

### **HOSEA: Introduction**

God grieves terribly when his people turn away from Him. He called the prophet Hosea to experience something of this suffering in his family life, as we read in chapters 1 to 3. He commanded Hosea to marry a woman who would be unfaithful to him in their marriage.

God had saved and delivered His people from Egypt and He expected them to love and serve Him in return, just as He loved them. At Sinai, He made a covenant with them and so committed Himself to them. In return, by accepting the covenant, they committed themselves to Him. He compared his relationship with them to a marriage. But what would He do, as a husband, if His people - His wife - were not faithful, if they broke their side of the covenant? Would He divorce them or even destroy them? Or would He try to win them back? What would Hosea do with his wife in such a situation?

Like Amos, Hosea prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel. He warned them that, unless they returned to God, they would be punished. Most of them did not listen. In 722 B.C. the Assyrians invaded and destroyed their country. The Israelites were taken into exile in various places of the Assyrian empire. (2 Kings 17).

#### **A. Hosea's times: read Hosea 1:1 – 2:1**

Find all the kings mentioned on the time chart on page 49. (1:1) What period of time did Hosea's ministry cover?

#### **B. Hosea's wife and children (1:2-9)**

1. Imagine Hosea's feelings. How do you think he felt about God's command? How did he respond? (1:2) *Note: 'an adulterous wife'. This may mean that God was warning Hosea that Gomer would not be faithful to him after they were married, or that she was a harlot even before the marriage.*

2. Complete the table giving the children's names and their meanings and the reasons given for them (1:3-9): *Note: Jezreel. This word in Hebrew means 'God sows (or plants)'. It was the name of a town, with its surrounding plain, in Northern Israel. Jehu, king of the northern kingdom (841-814 B.C.) had obeyed God by stamping out the worship of Baal, beginning in Jezreel. But later he went too far and killed many other people as well. (2 Kings 9-10)*

Name	Meaning	Reason given
<b>Jezreel</b>	<b>God plants</b>	<i>A warning that God will now punish Israel for the massacre committed by King Jehu at Jezreel.</i>
<b>Lo-Ruhamah</b>		
<b>Lo-Ammi</b>		

#### **C. A wonderful future is prophesied for the Israelites (1:10 – 2:1)**

*(Translator's note: the English and French versions have slightly different chapter and verse numbering for Hosea chapters 1 and 2. The English version has 11 verses in c.1, while the French has only 9. So 1:10 in English corresponds to 2:1 in French; 1:11 (E) = 2:2 (F); 2:1 (E) = 2:3 (F) etc. Chapter 2 has 23 verses in English, but 25 in French. From chapter 3 the chapter and verse numbering is the same)*

1. What future blessings does God promise for the Israelites?

2. Read Rom. 9:23-26 and explain how Paul saw one aspect of the accomplishment of this.

**D. Israel to be punished for her unfaithfulness: read 2:2-13.**

1. How has Israel been unfaithful to God?

2. How will He now punish her?

**E. God brings Israel back to Himself: read 2:14-20**

1. How will God bring Israel back?

2. What will be the results?

3. Explain how the relationship between Christ and the church is a fulfilment of v 16 (*v 18 en Segond*). See Eph 5:23-27.

4. Note how vv 19-20 (*21-22 in Segond*) are fulfilled in Rev 19:7-9.

5. Think about what it means to be married to someone. What implications are there for you personally in being "married" to Christ as part of his bride?

**F. The curses of the children's names reversed (2:21-23)**

Complete the table:

Name	Meaning	Curse turned to blessing
<b>Jezreel</b>		<i>God will now 'plant' Israel and give them agricultural blessings and security</i>
<b>Lo Ruhamah</b>		
<b>Lo Ammi</b>		

**G. Hosea rescues his wife and brings her back: read 3:1-5**

1. What did God command Hosea to do?
  
2. How does this reflect the love of God for His people? (see Ro 5:6-8)
  
3. What encouragement can we draw from this?
  
4. We see a partial fulfilment of verse 5 in the NT. Read Matthew 21:8-9 and describe this fulfilment.

**ISAIAH (part 1) : Introduction**

Isaiah is the greatest of all the OT prophets and the one most quoted in the NT. He prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah around 740 to 700 B.C. There was much corruption in both Israel and Judah at this time. God's judgment fell on the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C., when they were defeated and exiled by the Assyrians. But the people of Judah were in great danger too. In 701 the Assyrians attacked them and devastated the whole country. Isaiah urged the godly king Hezekiah (716-687 B.C.) to trust in God and Jerusalem was miraculously saved (Isaiah 36-37).

But Isaiah's vision went much further than his immediate circumstances. He knew that God would, in time, punish the people of Judah for their sins, even if they had escaped from the Assyrians.

Even king Hezekiah wavered sometimes in his trust in God. In Isaiah 39 we see him welcoming envoys from Babylon and putting more trust in an alliance with them than in God Himself. Isaiah rebuked him and warned him that God would use the Babylonians to punish the people of Judah. They would be defeated in battle and taken into exile. This prediction was fulfilled about 100 years later. The Babylonians invaded Judah several times and finally destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 B.C.

However, Isaiah also foresaw that this would not be the end of Judah. God's love for His people was too strong for that. After a time of exile and punishment, He would forgive them and bring a remnant back to their own country. Isaiah even named the person whom God would use to do this: Cyrus, king of the Persians (44:28 - 45:1). This prediction duly came true: in 539 B.C. Cyrus defeated the Babylonians and, a year later, issued a decree allowing the Jewish exiles in Babylon to return home and to start rebuilding the temple (2 Chron. 36:22-23 and Ezra 1).

But even these historical events do not exhaust Isaiah's prophecy. He foresaw that God would intervene in a special way, not only to bring the people back to Himself, but also to remove their sins. This would happen through a 'Suffering Servant' who would take these sins on himself. Isaiah 53 is one of the key prophecies of the OT. It was fulfilled in Christ's death and resurrection.

Now read Isaiah 1:1-31

**A. Isaiah's times (1:1)**

Find all the kings mentioned on the time-chart on page 49. What period of time did Isaiah's ministry cover?

**B. Rebellious Israel (1:2-20)**

1. Why does the Lord despise the people's sacrifices and festivals even though he has commanded them? (1:1-15)
  
2. What does the Lord command his people to do? (1:16-20).
  
3. What does the Lord promise to do for them?
  
4. We might conclude from this passage and others like it in the OT that obedience to God's law will result in God's forgiveness and acceptance. Yet we know that God instituted the sacrificial system to provide atonement and forgiveness for sin (Lv 16) because of man's inability to keep the Law. The NT again brings us clarification and helps us to interpret passages like these.
  - a. Read Ro 3:19-20 and note what Paul says about good works and God's acceptance of us.
  
  - b. The Law was given to help us see that we can never meet God's requirement of perfection. Note how Paul further explains the purpose of the Law in Gal 3:23-25.

**C. Israel is God's vineyard but bears bad fruit: read 5:1-7**

1. What message did the prophet want to communicate through his use of the image of the vineyard?
  
2. As Christian believers, we are branches of God's true vine, Jesus. How can we bear good fruit? See John 15:1-8.

**D. Israel's sins denounced: read 5:8-24**

1. Complete the following table, giving the sins Isaiah denounced and the punishment he predicted would come. Some examples are done for you:

<b>Verses</b>	<b>Sins denounced</b>	<b>Punishment predicted</b>
8-10	<i>Economic exploitation</i>	<i>Desolation and poverty</i>
11-17		
18-19	<i>Deceit and mocking God</i>	
20		
21		
22-23		

2. What was Israel's fundamental sin? (v 24)

**E. Isaiah's call: read 6:1-13**

1. What aspects of God's character are emphasised in this chapter? (6:1-10, especially vv 1-4)

2. Describe the different steps in the process of Isaiah's calling. (6:1-10)

3. Some elements of Isaiah's experience are similar to those of every Christian. Use the N.T. references to identify these. You may be able to add others too. Rom.3:23; I Cor. 6:11; Eph. 2:8-10.

4. After a tree has been cut down, new shoots can later grow from its stump. How did God use this image to give the Israelites hope for the future? (6:11-13)

**F. A Son is given: read Isaiah 9:1-7**

(Translator's note: Segond has one more verse in c.8 than NIV. Segond 8:23 = NIV 9:1; Seg 9:1 = NIV 9:2 etc)

1. Note the fulfilment of vv 1-2 as described in Matthew 4:12-17.

2. Describe some of the yokes and oppressors that will be destroyed (v 4 check Segond). See John 8:31-36, 1 Corinthians 15:24-26.

3. Note how the child to be born is described in v 6. What indications do you see of his divinity?

4. What characterises the Son's government in vv 6-7 (5-6 in Segond and Semeur)?

5. Read Luke 1:30-33 and compare these verses with vv 6-7.

### Lesson 3: Isaiah (part 2)

#### **A. Righteous reign of the Branch: read 11:1-10**

1. Note how Jesus claims to be a fulfilment of verse 1 in Rev 22:16 (remembering that Jesse was the father of David).

2. Describe two of the ways that the Branch will bear fruit (v.1). Read John 15:5 and John 17:1-2. Can you think of others?

3. In the table below, note the fulfilment of the rest of this passage by summing up the relevant parts of the NT verses given. Some examples are done for you. (N.B. The whole of Christ's life and ministry are a fulfilment of this passage. These NT verses provide just one example of each aspect.)

<b>Isaiah</b>	<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>NT</b>	<b>Fulfilment</b>
11:2	The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him	Mt 3:16	
11:2	The spirit of wisdom and understanding	Lk 2:47	
11:2	The spirit of counsel and strength	Lk 8:24	
11:2	The spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord	Mt 11:27	<i>Only the Son knows the Father</i>
11:3	He will delight in the fear of the Lord	Jn 6:38	
11:3	He will not judge by what His eyes see	Jn 2:23-25	
11:4	With righteousness He will judge the poor	Rev 19:11	
11:4	He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth	Rev 19:15	
11:5	Righteousness and faithfulness will be his belts	Rev 19:11	<i>Jesus is called Faithful and True</i>
11:6-9	They will not hurt in all my holy mountain	Rev 21:1-4	
11:9	The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord	Phil 2:9-11	
11:10	The root of Jesse will stand as a signal for the peoples	Jn 12:32-33	
11:10	His resting place will be glorious	Mk 16:19	

#### **B. God comforts His people: read 40:1-11**

In this chapter, Isaiah foresees that God will deliver the Israelites from their captivity in exile in Babylon and bring them back to Judah. What do these verses tell us about the character of God and His word?

**C. God's infinite greatness: read 40:12-26.**

In this table, note the various ways that Isaiah brings out God's infinite greatness by summing up Isaiah's comparisons. An example is given.

<b>References</b>	<b>Comparisons</b>
Is 40:12	<i>God is so much greater than all of his creation</i>
Is 40:13-14	
Is 40:15-17	
Is 40:21-22	
Is 40:23-25	
Is 40:26	

**D. God's concern for His people: read 40:27-31**

1. The exiles from Judah in Babylon would feel that God had forgotten and abandoned them. What answer does God give them?

2. How are God's people to obtain strength?

3. Can you share an experience of how has God worked in your own life according to the principle set out in vv 27-31?

**E. The servant of the Lord: read 42:1-9**

1. The mission of God's servant is not simply to the people of Israel. Which verses show this?

2. What will the servant bring to the nations?

3. Explain how Jn 8:12 is a fulfilment of verse 6.



4. The Servant will open blind eyes (v 7). Describe one fulfilment of this promise as noted in Mt 20:30-34.

5. One of the reasons that Jesus performed physical miracles was to demonstrate that he was able to perform spiritual miracles. Note how Jesus opened spiritual eyes in Luke 24:44-45.

6. The church, as the body of Christ, continues the Servant's mission. Read Acts 13:44-48 and explain how Paul applies Is 42:6 and Is 49:6

7. How do you, as Jesus' disciple, share in this mission?

### **F. The suffering servant: read 52:13- 53:12**

To see how closely this prophecy, given 700 years before the birth of Christ, is fulfilled in his life, death and resurrection, complete the following table:

<b>Isaiah</b>	<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>NT verses</b>	<b>Fulfilment</b>
53:2	The servant comes from a humble background	John 1:44-46	<i>Jesus came from the unimportant town of Nazareth, from a simple family</i>
53:3-4	Most people reject the servant's message	John 12:37-38	
53:4-6	The servant takes the sins of the people on himself	I Peter 2:24	
53:5	He was pierced for our transgressions	Jn 19:18, 33-34	
53:7	The servant does not try to defend himself	Mk 15:3-5.	
53:9	The servant dies with the wicked	Luke 23:32-33	
53:9	The servant is associated with a rich man in his death	Matt. 27:57-60	
53:10-11	God restores His servant to life	Matt. 28:1-10	
53:11-12	God honours His servant	Phil. 2:9-11	

**G. The community of those who follow the Servant: read chapter 54**

1. Consider how some of the prophecies of this chapter have begun to be fulfilled in the church (while others wait to be fulfilled in the new, heavenly Jerusalem).. Complete the following table and add other NT references if you can. (Use a concordance if you have one.) An example is done for you.

<i>Reference in Isaiah</i>	<i>Isaiah's vision</i>	<i>Reference in NT</i>	<i>Example of N.T. fulfilment</i>
54:1	Joy	Jn. 15:11	<i>Jesus desires that his joy be made complete in us.</i>
54:2-3	Growth	Acts 1:8	
54:4	Fearlessness	Acts 4:13; 18:9-10	
54:10	God's constant love and presence	Matt. 28:20	
54:13	All to be taught of the Lord	Jn 14:25-26	
54:17	Freedom from accusation or condemnation	Rom. 8:33-35	

2. In which of these areas does your local church need to grow?

3. How can you help to make your local fellowship more like this glorious picture?

**H. God's invitation: read chapter 55**

1. Which aspect of the invitation in verses 1-3 strikes you most?

2. Read v 1 again and then Rev 21:5-7, 22:17. What kind of people is God's invitation given to?

3. Describe some of the ways that God made Jesus "a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples" (Is. 55:4). John 18:36-37; Matt 28:16-20

4. What does God promise that His people will do in v.5?

5. How was this fulfilled in the witness of the early church? See Acts 10:34-35,44-45 and Romans 15:18-21.

6. What aspects of God's invitation are emphasised in vv 6-7?

7. What image does the prophet use to convey God's greatness in vv 8-9?

8. List ways that the promise made concerning the word of God (the Scriptures) in vv 10-11 can encourage you.

9. Verses 12-13 remind us that the prophet is addressing the community of Israelite exiles in Babylon who will one day return to their land. What reason does God give for these promises?

## Lesson 4: Jeremiah

### Introduction

Jeremiah came from a priestly family and was called to be a prophet when he was still young. God warned him that he would face fierce opposition. This was to include beatings and public humiliation as well as clashes with false prophets.

Most of Jeremiah's ministry took place during the last 40 years of the kingdom of Judah. During all this time Judah was in great danger from the powerful empire of Babylon. Jeremiah constantly warned the people that they must turn back to God, or He would use the Babylonians to judge them.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, attacked Jerusalem three times between 605 B.C. and 586 B.C. In the first of these attacks he deported Daniel and other young men from the royal family and the nobility to Babylon (Daniel 1:1-7). Eight years later, in 597 BC, he took into exile King Jehoiachin, the leaders of the people and 10,000 other captives (including the prophet Ezekiel). Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah, an uncle of Jehoiachin, king in his place.

At this time many of the Jews, both those in exile and those who still remained in Judah, were still hoping that all this was only a temporary setback. They thought that God would soon intervene and that Jehoiachin, the rightful king, and the others would be able to return. Some false prophets encouraged them in this.

But Jeremiah warned them that Babylon's time of domination would last 70 years (counting from the first deportation in 605 BC). It would not come to an end quickly. Even worse, God's judgement on Judah was not finished. Unless they repented they would suffer still worse things. Jeremiah's warning came true. A few years later, the Babylonians invaded Judah for the third time. They destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple and killed or exiled most of the people (586 B.C.). Only a few of the poorest of the people were left.

However, Jeremiah did not only prophesy judgement and disaster. He also looked forward to the time when God would bring his people back to their country, after a period of 70 years of disciplining and punishment in exile. He prophesied that God would make a new covenant with them and pour out His blessings on them again.

In 539, approximately 70 years after Babylon's domination had begun, the Persians under King Cyrus defeated the Babylonians. A year later, Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Jewish exiles to return home and rebuild the temple. As Jeremiah had prophesied, God had mercy on His people and brought them back to their land. Jeremiah's promise of the new covenant was fulfilled in Jesus.

Jeremiah faced many inner struggles as he delivered his message of impending disaster. But he remained faithful to God and did not turn back. After the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah was forced to accompany some of the survivors to Egypt (43:4-7). There too, he warned them that their idolatry would lead to God's judgement coming upon them.

### **A. Jeremiah's times: read chapter 1:1-3**

Refer to the time chart on page 50 for the historical period of Jeremiah's prophecies. When did he begin his ministry and how long did it last?

### **B. Jeremiah's call: read 1:4-19**

1. What were the steps in God's call to Jeremiah? (1:4-10)

2. In what way did Jeremiah resemble Moses? (see Exodus 4:10-13)

3. Jeremiah was to 'uproot and tear down': he would announce God's judgement on Judah and other peoples. But he was also to 'build and plant': he would announce God's restoration and blessing, following the time of judgement. Destruction would come first. From where would the destroyers of Judah come? (1:13-15)

4. Why will God punish His people? (1:16)

5. What final encouragement and warning did God give Jeremiah? (1:17-19)

6. What challenges and encouragements for ourselves can we find in this chapter, particularly if we are called to speak up for God in a hostile situation?

### **C. Jeremiah's sermon in the temple: read 7:1-15**

1. What did Jeremiah challenge the people to do? (7:1-8)

2. In what circumstances did Jesus quote v.11? (see Mark 11:15-17)

3. What did Jeremiah warn the people would happen to them? (7:12-15) Read Ps 78:58-61 to see what happened at Shiloh. *Note: In the time of the Judges, Shiloh was the location of the tabernacle and thus the central place of worship for the Israelites.*

### **D. God's judgement will certainly come: read 7:16 – 8:3**

1. According to vv 16-26, what were the main tasks of the prophets?

2. The valley of slaughter (7:30 – 8:3) This terrifying picture ends this section. How do you think Jeremiah had the strength to give such a devastating message?

**E. Lessons from the Potter (1): read 18:1-12**

*Note: This message is addressed to the “House of Israel” (v 6). As both the kingdoms of Judah and Israel were descendants of Jacob ( also called Israel), those from the kingdom of Judah are also referred to as Israelites and the “House of Israel” by Biblical writers. (This was especially true after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel).*

1. What do we learn about God from the image of the potter?
2. What did the people of Judah have to do in order to avert God’s judgement?
3. What do people today have to do in order to avert God's judgement? (See Jn 3:16-18 and Acts 26:19-21)

**F. Lessons from the Potter (2): read 19:1-13**

1. What sins had the people of Judah been guilty of? (vv 1-6)
2. How did Jeremiah use the pot to bring out the finality of God’s judgement on Judah? (vv 10-13)

**G. Jeremiah’s letter to the exiles: read 29:1-14**

*Re-read the introduction for the historical background to this letter. Jeremiah is addressing the Jews who went into exile with King Jehoiachin in 597 B.C.*

1. What practical advice did Jeremiah give to the Jews who had been exiled to Babylon? (29:4-9)
2. What did God promise to do for Judah when the 70 years of judgement were over? (29:10-14)

**H. The restoration of Israel and Judah: read 30:1-11**

What blessings does God promise for Israel and Judah? Complete the following table. An example is done for you:

<b>Jeremiah</b>	<b>Blessings Promised</b>
30:1-3	<i>Return from captivity and restoration to their own land.</i>
30:8	
30:9	
30:10	
30:11	

**I. God judges Israel's enemies: read Jer 30:12-17**

1. Because God is holy, he must punish his people when they do wrong. However, He never forgets his love for them. This can lead him to act in ways we might not expect. In these verses God surprises us twice by promising to do the unexpected. In the first blank column, note God’s follow-up action, and in the last column, explain why it is surprising.

<b>Jer</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Jer</b>	<b>Follow-up action</b>	<b>Why surprising</b>
30:14	For I have struck you as an enemy would	30:17a		
30:15	<u>I</u> have done these things to you	30:16		

2. Israel faced enemies because of God's judgement on her, but God's people today (who are no longer under condemnation) continue to face enemies. What encouragement is there in this passage for a believer facing persecution? (See also 2 Thes. 1:3-10)

**J. The new covenant: read 31:27-34**

Some of Jeremiah’s prophecies were fulfilled by the defeat of Babylon and in the return of the people of Judah to their own land permitted by Cyrus in 538 B.C. However, many others, including the fulfilment of this ‘new covenant’ prophecy, had to wait for the coming of Christ.

1. In the table that follows, summarize the different aspects of Jeremiah's prophecy found in each verse noted, and then match the passages from the NT which refer to the fulfilment (see below).

Verses	Summary	NT Verses
Jer 31:31		
Jer 31:32		
Jer 31:33a	<i>I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts</i>	
Jer 31:33b		
Jer 31:34a		
Jer 31:34b		

2. Now match the passages from the NT which refer to the fulfilment.

John 17:3

Hebrews 8:7-13

Luke 22:19-20

2 Corinthians 3:1-3

Hebrews 10:10-18

Revelation 21:1-3

3. As believers in Christ, we have entered into this 'new covenant'. Note some of the privileges which this gives us and how they apply to you personally.

### **K. The Davidic kingdom: read 33:14-18**

1. Describe the similarities between the righteous Branch of David and the servant of Isaiah 42:1-4 (see pages 16-17).

2. Jesus is the perfect fulfilment of the prophecies of both v 17 and v 18. Recall how he fulfils the prophecy of v 17. (See Luke 1:30-33)

3. To see how Jesus fulfils v 18, read Heb 7:23-28. There was a long series of priests in the OT. As each one died he was replaced by another. How is Jesus able to have a permanent priesthood? (Heb 7:23-24)

4. What is Jesus able to do for us as our permanent High Priest? (Heb 7:25)

5. The OT priests were constantly offering sacrifices to obtain the forgiveness of sins. Why is it not necessary for Jesus to repeatedly offer sacrifices? (Heb 7:27)



## Lesson 5: Ezekiel

### Introduction

Ezekiel, like Jeremiah and Daniel, lived through the dark days of the end of the kingdom of Judah. In 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar made the second of his three attacks on Jerusalem. He took King Jehoiachin and about 10,000 other captives into exile in Babylon, including the prophet Ezekiel. Nebuchadnezzar also replaced Jehoiachin as king in Judah with his uncle, Zedekiah.

Nine years later, in 588 B.C., King Zedekiah, encouraged by Jewish nationalists and thinking that he would receive help from Egypt, rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonian army came and besieged the city. After a long siege, they captured it in 586 B.C. Then they completely destroyed both the city and the temple. Most of the Jews who survived were deported to Babylon and only a few of the poorest people were left behind. It seemed as if God had abandoned his people and that their history was finished.

Ezekiel wrote the first half of his book (chapters 1-24) between 593 B.C. and 587 B.C., while he was an exile in Babylon, before the fall of Jerusalem. Many of the Jews were hoping that God would somehow save them and that they would be able to return home. But Ezekiel warned them plainly that God's judgement on their nation was not over. Unless they, and the Jews still in Jerusalem, repented and turned back to God, He would allow their city to be destroyed. There was no such repentance and so destruction came.

Chapters 25 to 32 concern God's judgments on other nations.

Chapters 33 to 48, written after the fall of Jerusalem, bring a message of hope. Ezekiel prophesied to the people that God would miraculously renew them. He would also bring them back to their own land, where they could live in peace.

### **A. Ezekiel's vision of God's glory: read chapter 1**

*Note: 1:1 – 'the 30<sup>th</sup> year'. This was probably the 30<sup>th</sup> year of Ezekiel's age. 1:2 'The fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin': this was the year 593 B.C.*

1. What impression do you think this vision made upon Ezekiel? (see especially verses 25-28)
  
2. What does this vision teach us about the God we serve?

### **B. Ezekiel's call and message: read 2:1 – 3:3**

1. Like others of the prophets, Ezekiel had a very difficult task. What made it so difficult?
  
2. What difficulties do you encounter in your own context that are similar to those in Ezekiel's situation?

3. What was the content of the scroll? (2:10)

4. Why do you think it tasted 'sweet' in Ezekiel's mouth? (Compare with Psalms 19:10 and 119:103)  
*(Translator's note: all references from the Psalms are slightly different in French, eg Ps 19:11)*

### **C. Ezekiel as a watchman: read 3:16-21**

1. What responsibility did God entrust to Ezekiel?

2. Ezekiel had a special calling from God that resulted in special responsibility. In some ways, Christians have a similar obligation. Note how. See 1 Pe 3:13-16 and Col 4:3-6.

### **D. Man's responsibility: read 18:1-20**

1. The people of Israel in exile were tempted to blame their fathers for what had happened to them and to ignore their own responsibilities. On what principle does God judge?

2. What characterises a righteous man?

3. While Christians should seek to live like the righteous man of this passage, note what Paul says about the existence of righteous people in Rom 3:9-12.

4. Now explain man's only hope. See Rom 3:21-24.

### **E. The fall of Jerusalem - a message to the survivors: read 33:21-33**

1. What warning did Ezekiel, from Babylon, give concerning the survivors left in the land of Judah? (21-29)

2. What response did Ezekiel get from his fellow exiles in Babylon? (30-33)

3. How does James give a similar warning to Christians about their response to God's word? Read James 1:22-25.

**F. A good shepherd for Israel: read 34:1-24**

1. Why does the Lord condemn the shepherds (leaders) of Israel? (vv 1-9)

2. How can we apply these verses to those who shepherd God's flock (the church) today? In other words, what do their responsibilities include? (v 4)

3. Who else will be judged? (v 17-22)

4. What implications are there for those who make up God's flock, the church, today? (Phil 2:2-4)

5. To discover how Jesus fulfils God's promise to care for his sheep, complete the following table by matching the NT passages given with the promises from Ezekiel. An example is given.

Luke 19:10  
Luke 4:40

Matthew 11:28-30  
John 10:16

Luke 9: 14-17  
Mark 5:15

John 10:11  
Luke 23:3

<b>Ezekiel</b>	<b>Promise</b>	<b>Fulfilment in Jesus</b>
34:11	I myself will search for my sheep and seek them out	<i>Lk 19:10</i>
34:13	I will feed them on the mountains of Israel	
34:15	I will lead them to rest	
34:16	I will bring back the scattered	
34:16	I will bind up the broken	
34:16	I will strengthen the sick	
34:23	God's servant David to be their shepherd	
34:24	God's servant David to be their prince	

**G. God's holy name: read 36:16-24**

1. How do you think Judah's exile profaned God's name (v 20) ?

2. Why did God promise to rescue the people of Israel?

**H. A new heart and a new spirit: read 36:25-32**

1. How will God accomplish a radical spiritual change in the people?

2. How are these promises fulfilled under the new covenant? Complete the following table. The first one is done for you. Add other N.T. references if you can.

<b>Promise in Ezekiel</b>	<b>Fulfilment in N.T.</b>	<b>N.T. reference</b>
Cleansing (25)	<i>The believer is cleansed through the blood of Christ</i>	I John 1:7
A new heart (26)		Eph. 4:20-24
God's Spirit within (27)		Acts 2:38
Obedience to God's laws (27)		Ro 8:3-4
Becoming God's own people (28)		1 Peter 2:9-10

**I. Land and people restored: read 36:33-38**

We have seen that the promises we studied in the table above (vv 25-32) were only realized with Christ's coming and the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Likewise, the promises in vv 33-38 will only be truly fulfilled with Christ's second coming, even though they were partially fulfilled in OT times. Note how in the new heaven and new earth:

1. Describe what replaces the ruined cities and desolated landscape. See Rev 21:1-3, 10-12; Rev 22:1-2

2. Describe the numerous 'flocks' of people. See Rev 7:9-10

**J. The valley of dry bones: read 37:1-14**

1. What did the 'dry bones' represent? (v 11)

2. Who actually brought the dry bones brought to life and how?

3. What was the prophet's involvement in this?

4. How does God give spiritual life today? See John 3:3-8 and Eph. 2:4-6.

5. What is our part in this? See Eph 2:8-9

6. Read Jn 11:38-43 and describe a fulfilment of v 12-13.

6. Describe the type of bodies that believers will receive when the Lord "opens the graves of his people and brings them up from them" (v13). See 1 Co 15:42-44,53-55.

### **K. Application**

Look back at the passages of Ezekiel that you have read. What do you find most challenging or encouraging in his example to us or in his prophecies?

## Lesson 6: Daniel

### Introduction

In 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, attacked Judah for the first time and carried away some of the finest young men of the nobility into exile. Daniel was one of them. He was probably aged about 16 at this time. The first 6 chapters of the book of Daniel tell how he and his friends remained faithful to God in the face of fierce testing.

The events of chapters 1-4 took place during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC). Those of chapters 5-6 occurred at the very end of the reign of Belshazzar (553-539 BC) and the beginning of that of Darius the Mede, who captured Babylon in 539.

The second part of the book (chapters 7 to 12) relates a series of visions given to Daniel. These concern the destinies of the pagan empires that dominated the world of Daniel's day. These were, firstly, Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, and secondly the Medes and Persians, under Cyrus and his successors. They were followed by Greece and then by Rome. What part did these huge empires play in God's plans and how did they relate to God's kingdom and His people? Daniel's visions gave him answers to these questions – and encouraged him and his readers to remain faithful to God in difficult times. In His time, God would build His kingdom and judge evil and wrong.

### A. Training in Babylon and eating the king's food: read chapter 1

1. Why might Daniel and his friends have been unwilling to eat the food the king was offering them? (See Exodus 34:14-15; Deut 14:3-21)

2. What attitude does their refusal to eat the king's food indicate?

3. How did God honour them for this?

4. However, God does not always reward his people materially for their obedience. Read Jer 37:15-16 and note the treatment that the faithful prophet Jeremiah received.

### B. Nebuchadnezzar's dream: read chapter 2:1-23

*Note: the events of this chapter followed almost immediately after chapter 1. Daniel was still a young man.*

1. How did Daniel react to the crisis? (vv 13-18)

2. To whom did Daniel give the credit for his ability to interpret the king's dream? (vv.19-23)

2. List several qualities/attributes of God that allow Daniel to interpret the king's dream.

**Read 2:24-35**

3. What happens to the statue? (vv. 34-35)

4. What happens to the stone? (v. 35)

**Read 2:36-49**

5. Re-read the introduction concerning the four empires in Daniel's interpretation of the dream and describe the part of the statue that corresponds to each empire (2:31-43):

a. Babylonian empire:

b. Medo-Persian Empire:

c. Greek Empire:

d. Roman Empire:

6. What does the stone symbolise in this dream? (vv 44-45)

7. How is the stone interpreted in the NT ? See Psalm 118:19-24; Matt 21:42-44; I Pet. 2:4-8

8. Explain the relationship between the stone and the everlasting kingdom that God will set up. (vv. 34-35, 44-45) See Mark 1:14-15; Matt. 12:25-28; Rev 11:15-18

**C. Belshazzar's feast and downfall: read chapter 5**

*Notes: the events of this chapter took place on the last night of Belshazzar's life. Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar (in 5:2, 11, 13 & 18, 'father' means 'forefather' or 'ancestor'). The identity of 'Darius the Mede' (5:30-31) is not certain. 'Darius the Mede' may be another name or title for 'Cyrus the Persian', or he may be one of Cyrus' generals. He should not be confused with 'Darius the Great', who succeeded Cyrus' son Cambyses as ruler of the Persian Empire, from 521 to 486 BC, and who is mentioned in Ezra 4-6.*

1. What does this chapter teach us about Belshazzar's attitude to God?

2. What do we learn about the character of Daniel from the way he responded to Belshazzar's request?

3. What do we learn about the character of God from this chapter?

**D. Daniel in the lions' den: read chapter 6**

1. What tactics did Satan use to attack Daniel?

2. What was Daniel's reaction to the new law?

3. Compare Daniel's attitude with that of Peter and John in Acts 4:18-20.

4. Compare and contrast Daniel's experience of deliverance with the experiences of James and Peter in Acts 12:1-11. What does this teach us about deliverance from danger and trials?

***FOR FURTHER STUDY***

Look back over chapters 1,2, 5 and 6 and note several ways in which Daniel is an example for us to follow

**Note on Apocalyptic literature**

The first part of Daniel (ch 1-6) primarily recounts historical events. The second part (ch 7-12) focuses on the future, both near and distant, and is written in an apocalyptic style. Apocalyptic writing contains many symbols, visions and prophecies. This type of revelation was usually given during oppressive conditions in order to encourage the people of God. It often contains symbols and numbers whose meanings are hard to understand. We can sometimes find help interpreting some of these symbols and numbers in other parts of Scripture, but it is important not to concentrate too much on trying to understand every detail. It is better to focus on the larger picture and the main truths that the prophet is trying to teach: God rules history and will bring it to its glorious fulfilment in Christ. So look for the encouragement that the prophet is seeking to give.



**E. God's judgment and the coming of the Son of Man: read 7:1-14**

*Note: Daniel's vision concerns the same series of four empires as in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2. These were: 1. Babylon, 2. The joint empire of the Medes and Persians, 3. Greece and 4. Rome.*

1. Describe how God's judgement takes place. (verses 9-11)

2. Read Matt. 26:62-64 and describe the context in which verse 13 is referred to.

3. Complete the following table, which shows how some elements of Daniel's prophecy have been fulfilled, while others still wait to be fulfilled:

<b>Prophecy in Daniel 7</b>	<b>Fulfilment has happened</b>	<b>Fulfilment still awaited</b>
The Son of Man received in heaven by God (v.13)	Hebrews 1:1 <i>After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven</i>	
The Son of Man given all authority (v.14)	Matt. 28:18	
<b>Prophecy in Daniel 7</b>	<b>Fulfilment has happened</b>	<b>Fulfilment still awaited</b>
The Son of Man returns in glory (v.13)		Matt 24:29-31
God's final judgement (vv 9-11)		Rev. 20:10-15
The Son of Man receives universal worship from all peoples (v.14)		Rev 7:9-10
The Son of Man rules forever (v. 14)		Rev. 11:15

**F. God's people – the saints – share in the possession of the kingdom: read 7:15-28**

1. Which 3 verses in this passage tell us that the saints will share in the possession of God's kingdom?
  
2. Note the various ways Revelation describes the fulfilment of this prophecy in Rev 3:21; 5:9-10, and 22:3-5.
  
3. What must the saints endure first? (verses 21 & 25)
  
4. What encouragement can we draw from Daniel's vision?

## **Lesson 7: Haggai and Zechariah**

### **Introduction**

The Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. The following year he made a decree allowing the Jewish exiles to return home and rebuild their temple. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel (a descendant of David), and Joshua, the High Priest, 50,000 of the exiles returned.

The returnees quickly laid the foundation of the temple and built the altar in 536. But then discouragement set in. The living conditions in Jerusalem and Judea were hard. The surrounding peoples did all they could to discourage the Jews from completing the work. For 16 years little was done. Then, in 520 B.C., the prophet Haggai, soon followed by Zechariah, called the people to action.

### **HAGGAI**

#### **A. The temple remains a ruin: read Hag 1:1-15**

1. To whom did the word of the Lord come through Haggai? (v 1)
2. Describe the Lord's complaint. (vv 2-4)
3. How had the Lord attempted to get the people's attention? (vv 5-11)
4. Compare this passage with Dt 28:23-24 and Am 4:7-8 and note the similarities.
5. What was the response of the people to the Haggai's exhortation? (v 12-15)
6. What encouragement did the Lord give the people?

#### **B. Former and future glory of the temple: read Hag 2:1-9**

1. Some of those seeing the new temple constructed could compare it to the earlier temple that Solomon had built. Note what troubled them. (v 3)

2. What promises does the Lord give to encourage them? (vv 4-8)

3. As the people of Judah continued to work on the temple, they were again harassed by governors and officials from neighbouring provinces who tried to bring the reconstruction to a halt. These officials wrote to the head of the empire, King Darius, who then had a search made for earlier decrees concerning the temple. Read Ezra 6:1-12 and note the instructions that Darius made to these officials.

4. Explain how Ezra 6:8-10 fulfils the prophecy Haggai gave in Hag 2:7-8.

5. The earlier temple that Solomon had built was not only filled with glory because of all the gold and silver it contained; it was also filled with another kind of glory. Read 1 Kg 8:10-11 and 2 Ch 7:1-3 and describe this other glory. (*N.B. The cloud was the same one which had led the Israelites in the desert.*)

6. Reread Hag 2:9. As a building, the second temple never did attain the physical glory of the first temple. But it did receive greater glory than the first. Read Hb 1:3, Jn 1:14, and Lk 2:27-32 and explain how the coming of Jesus to this temple was a fulfilment of this promise.

7. The second temple thus received two kinds of "glory," one physical – the gifts of the nations - and one spiritual – the visit of Christ. These two fulfilments anticipate an even greater fulfilment that will take place in the new Jerusalem regarding God's 'temple' and its glory . Read Rev 21:22-26 and describe this ultimate fulfilment.

**ZECHARIAH**

Zechariah joined Haggai in encouraging the people to move ahead with the rebuilding of the temple. He also looked forward to the end times: how God would deal with the sin of the people and how he would establish his kingdom. He gave several important prophecies about the Messiah, the deliverer whom God would send. Like Daniel, much of Zechariah is apocalyptic: visionary and full of symbols.

**A. God cleanses and commissions Joshua, the High Priest: read chapter 3:1-7**

1. What did God do for Joshua? (3:1-5)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What was Joshua's role in this? (3:1-5)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Note how God clothes his people in the NT.
  - a) Gal 3: 26-27
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) Rev 19:6-8
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. After Joshua had been cleansed, he was given a promise with a condition. (3:6-7)  
What was the condition?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What was the promise?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What has God prepared for the Christian after his conversion? (Eph.2:10)

**B. The coming of the Messiah: read 3:8-10**

1. Recall who the Branch symbolizes here. (Is 11:1; Jer 33:15; if necessary, see pp 16-17)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What will happen when the Branch comes (v 9)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Verse 10 gives the result of the Messiah's work. "Sitting under each others' vines and fig trees" was a proverbial expression for a time of peace and prosperity. How can we as Christian believers promote peace with one another? (Rom. 12:16-18)

**C. Symbolic crowns: read 6: 9-15**

1. What does the Lord ask Zechariah to do with the silver and gold brought by the exiles from Babylon?
2. What name does God assign to Joshua the high priest?
3. List all that the Branch will do.
4. Joshua did rebuild the temple of the Lord, but he also symbolized another temple-builder to come. Read Eph 2:19-22 and 1 Pet 2:4-5 and explain how and with what Jesus is building his temple.
5. While Joshua did not become a priest on a throne, Jesus did. Read Heb 10:10-14 and describe how.

**D. Jerusalem's king comes: read 9:9-10**

1. Notice how Jerusalem's future king is described. What qualities do we see in him that are not usually associated with kings?
2. How did Jesus fulfil the prophecy of verse 9? See Matt. 21:1-11.
3. What was to be his mission (verse 10)?
4. How did Jesus begin to achieve this? See Eph. 2:11-18.
5. How does the church continue this mission? See, for example, Acts 11:19-21.
6. Explain how Phil 2:9-11 fulfils the last part of the prophecy of verse 10.

**E. The mourning of Jerusalem: read 12:10-14**

1. How was one aspect of v 10 fulfilled during Jesus' crucifixion? See John 19:31-37.
2. How and when will the second aspect (the mourning) be fulfilled? See Revelation 1:7.

**F. The fountain for cleansing from sin: read 13:1**

Zechariah has already mentioned the removal of sin in 3:9. How will this "fountain" cleanse from sin and impurity? See Revelation 7:13-14 and 1 Jn 1:7.

**G. The striking of the shepherd and the desertion of the sheep: read 13:7-9**

1. How was this passage fulfilled in the life of Jesus? See Mark 14:27, 46-50.
2. What should be our attitude to someone who, like Peter has denied his faith under pressure and later repents? (John 21:15-17)
3. In Zechariah's prophecy, what is the final result of the striking of the shepherd?

## Lesson 8: Malachi

Malachi prophesied at some time between 470 and 400 B.C. Following the edict of the Persian king, Cyrus, the Jews had returned from their exile in Babylon in 538 B.C. Encouraged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, they had successfully completed the rebuilding of the temple (516 B.C.). But their living conditions continued to be difficult and they began to feel that God had not kept all His promises to bless them.

However, in various ways, they themselves were no longer fully faithful to God. The priests accepted second-rate offerings. The people were marrying foreign women and divorcing their first wives. They were not giving their tithes and offerings in full.

Malachi strongly attacked these sins. He warned the people that, far from God not keeping His promises to them, it was they who were being unfaithful to Him. Moreover, God would come soon and they would be judged for their sins if they did not repent.

Malachi spoke out for God. He then took the people's replies and showed them that it was God who was in the right, not them. Some of the people paid attention to Malachi's words, and so received a promise of blessing (3:16 – 4:3). But the wicked were warned that they would face His judgement.

The book ends with a promise that God will send the prophet Elijah before the day of judgement comes. This was fulfilled in the preaching of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus. And yet, in God's mercy, Jesus did not come first of all to judge, but rather to offer forgiveness and salvation (John 3:16-17). At his second coming, he will carry out judgement and Malachi's prophecy will be completely fulfilled.

### **A. The sins of the priests: read 1:6 – 2:9**

1. What sins were the priests guilty of? (1:7-8)
2. What vision of God did the prophet have? (1:11 & 14)
3. What punishment did God threaten the priests with? (2:1-4)
4. How should the priests have been living and working? (2:5-7)
5. How can we apply this to church leaders today? See I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.



**B. The sins of the people: read 2:10-16**

1. Why did God require that his people marry only among each other and not from the surrounding peoples? See Deut. 7:1-6.
2. Compare this teaching with 1 Cor. 7:39 and 2 Cor. 6:14 – 7:1. Why is it important for a Christian to marry a fellow believer?
3. Why did God refuse to answer the people's prayers? (2:13-16).
4. In 1 Peter 3:7 why does Peter urge husbands to treat their wives with consideration and respect?

**C. The people's complaint and the prophet's reply: read 2:17 – 3:5**

1. What complaint did the people make against God? (2:17)
2. What did the prophet tell them that God would do? (3:1)  
*Note on 3:1. The 'messenger' prepares the way for the Lord. Then the Lord himself is described as the 'messenger of the covenant'. The work that the Lord will do is described in 3:2-5.*
3. How was the prophecy of 3:1 fulfilled in the N.T.? See Mark 1:1-8.
4. What will the Lord do when He comes? (3a)
5. In the NT, all believers are called priests (1 Pe 2:4, Rev 1:6). Read 1 Pe 1:3-7 and Ja 1:2-4 and note how the Lord refines his NT priests.
6. Explain how the prophecy of 3:3b-4 is thus fulfilled in the church today. See 1 Pe 2:4-5 and Rom 12:1.

7. What situations in your own area demonstrate that the evil practices mentioned in verse 5 are still a problem today?

8. Describe how and when the judgement of 3:5 will be completely fulfilled. See Rev 21:1,8.

**D. Israel robs God: read 3:6-12**

1. How was Israel robbing God? (3:8-10)

2. What did God promise to do if Israel would give the tithes in full? (3:10-12)

3. Compare this with Luke 6:38 and 2 Cor. 9:6-11.

4. Discuss how, as Christians, we should be giving of our goods. See Romans 12:8, 13; I Cor. 16:1-3.

How much?

How often?

To whom?

**E. Muttering against God: read 3:13-18**

If a Christian complains that life is unfair like those of Malachi's day (v 15), how can we help and counsel them? See also Romans 5:1-5 and 8:18; James 1:2-4.

**F. The day of judgement and the messenger: read 4:1-6**

(Translator's note: the French Bible does not have a chapter 4. It continues chapter 3 instead. 4:1 Eng = 3:19 Fr; 4:2 = 3:20 etc)

1. What will happen on the day of judgement? (4:1-3)

2. We can understand the promise of verse 5 to mean that God will send a great prophet like Elijah to warn the people before the day of judgement comes. Jesus made it clear in Matt. 17:10-13 that John the Baptist was this prophet. Complete the table below, which brings out some of the parallels between John and Elijah. (An example is given.)

<b>Prophecy in Malachi</b>	<b>Fulfilment in N.T.</b>
3:1 The messenger comes to prepare the way.	Mark 1:1-8; Luke 1:76-79  <i>John preaches and baptises to prepare the way for Jesus.</i>
4:5 The messenger is a great prophet like Elijah	Luke 1:13-17 (especially verse 17)
4:6 The messenger will 'turn the hearts of the fathers to their children...'	Luke 1:17
See also 2 Kings 1:7-8	Mark 1:6

**F. Consider if adjustments need to be made in your life and thinking as a result of reading this book? Look at the following areas:**

1. Worship
  
2. Responsibilities of church leaders
  
3. Marriage and divorce
  
4. Blaming God and complaining
  
5. Any unrepented sin
  
6. Giving

## Lesson 9 The Prophets' focus: The coming of the Messiah and his kingdom

### Introduction

And [Jesus] said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in *all that the prophets have spoken!* Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory? Then beginning with Moses and with *all the prophets*, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." Lk 24:25-27

The prophets, through all of their messages, were ultimately pointing to the person and work of Jesus Christ, and to his coming kingdom. God sovereignly ordained the history of the kingdom of Israel so that it would foreshadow and anticipate the kingdom that Jesus would bring in and reign over. In the first part of this lesson, we are going to review the prophecies that we have seen that specifically point to the person of Christ and his work of redemption. To those we have already seen, we will add others that we didn't have time to study. In the latter part of the lesson, we will review the prophecies that point to Christ's kingdom, and again add some others.

### A. The birth of the Messiah and the preparation for his ministry

1. To complete the following table, match the following OT references to the verses given. Then match the NT verses which give examples of fulfillment of the OT passages. (They are found below the table). Look for verses that correspond to the highlighted phrases. An example is done for you.

1. Micah 5:2                      3. Is 9:6                      5. Is 7:13-14                      7. Hos 11:1  
2. Mal 4:5                      4. Is 40:3                      6. ~~Mal 3:1~~

OT Reference	OT Prophecy	NT Reference
	<b>A virgin will be with child</b> and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel...	
	<b>From you, Bethlehem, will come a ruler</b> over Israel whose origins are from days of eternity...	
	For to us a child is born, to us <b>a Son is given</b> ...	
	<b>Out of Egypt</b> I have called my son...	
	<b>A voice of one calling in the desert</b> prepare the way for the Lord...	
<i>Mal 3:1</i>	<b>My messenger will prepare the way</b> before me...	<i>Mt 11:9-11</i>
	<b>I will send Elijah the prophet</b> before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord...	

2. Now match these NT references.

1. ~~Mt 11:9-11~~                      3. Mt 2:13-15                      5. Mt 3:1-3                      7. Mt 17:10-13  
2. Lk 2:4-6                      4. Lk 1:30-31, 34                      6. Lk 1:35

**B. Christ's ministry before his crucifixion**

1. To complete this table, match the following OT references to the verses given. Then read the NT verses and explain how they show one fulfillment of the OT prophecy. An example is done for you.

1. Ps 78:2      3. Is 35:6      5. Is 53:4      7. ~~Is 61:1~~      9. Ezek 37:12  
 2. Is 35:5      4. Is 42:1      6. Is 55:5      8. Ezek 34:11

OT Reference	OT Prophecy	NT Reference	Fulfillment of OT prophecy
	I will put <b>my Spirit on him...</b>	Mt 3:16	
	The Lord has anointed me to <b>preach good news to the poor...</b>	Lk 4:16-21	
<i>Is 35:6</i>	<b>The lame will leap</b> like a deer...	Mk 2:10-12	<i>Jesus said to the paralytic, "Get up, and go home... He got up, took his mat, and walked out.</i>
	<b>I will</b> open your graves and <b>cause you to come up out of your graves...</b>	Lk 7:14-15	
	<b>He took up our infirmities</b> and carried our sorrows	Mt 8:16-17	
	I will open my mouth <b>in a parable...</b>	Mt 13:34	
	I Myself will <b>search for my sheep</b> and seek them out	Jn 10:14-16	
	Then the <b>eyes of the blind will be opened...</b>	Mt 20:33-34	
	A <b>nation that knows you not</b> will run to you	Jn 12:20-21	

**C. Christ's triumphal entry and crucifixion**

1. Following the pattern of Exercise A, match the following OT references to the verses given. Then match the NT verses which give examples of fulfillment of the OT passages. (They are found below the table). Look for verses that correspond to the highlighted phrases. An example is done for you.

- |              |                       |               |                |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Ps 22:7-8 | 4. <del>Is 53:5</del> | 7. Is 53:9b   | 10. Zech 9:9   |
| 2. Ps 22:16  | 5. Is 53:6            | 8. Is 53:10   | 11. Zech 12:10 |
| 3. Ps 22:18  | 6. Is 53:9a           | 9. Jonah 1:17 | 12. Zech 13:7  |

OT Reference	Prophecy	NT Reference
	<b>Your king is coming</b> to you,...humble and <b>mounted on a donkey.</b>	
	<b>Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered...</b>	
	They will look on me whom they have pierced <b>and they will mourn for him...</b>	
	<b>His grave</b> was assigned <b>with wicked men...</b>	
	<b>They pierced my hands and feet....</b>	
	<b>They divide my garments</b> among them, and <b>for my clothing they cast lots.</b>	
	<b>All who see me sneer at me...</b> saying, "Commit yourself to the Lord, let Him deliver him."	
<i>Is 53:5</i>	<b>He was pierced</b> for our transgressions...	<i>Jn 19:34</i>
	The Lord has caused <b>the iniquity of us all to fall on him</b>	
	He was <b>with a rich man in his death...</b>	
	And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and <b>Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights</b>	
	Though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, <b>he will see his offspring and prolong his days</b>	

2. Now match these NT passages

- |                |                |                |                          |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Mt 12:39-40 | 4. Mt 27:57-60 | 7. Lk 23:26-27 | 10. Jn 19:18a (Jn 20:25) |
| 2. Mt 26:31    | 5. Mt 28:1-10  | 8. Lk 23:32    | 11. <del>Jn 19:34</del>  |
| 3. Mt 27:41-43 | 6. Mark 15:24  | 9. Jn 12:12-15 | 12. 1 Pe 2:24            |

**D. The consequences of Jesus' life, death and resurrection**

Following the pattern of Exercise B, match the following OT references to the verses given. Then read the NT verses and explain how they show a fulfillment of the OT prophecy. An example is done for you.

- |              |                          |              |               |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Is 49:6   | 4. Ezek 37:14            | 7. Dn 7:14   | 10. Zech 6:13 |
| 2. Jer 33:17 | 5. <del>Ezek 37:24</del> | 8. Zech 3:9  | 11. Zech 9:10 |
| 3. Jer 33:18 | 6. Dn 7:13               | 9. Zech 6:12 | 12. Zech 13:1 |

OT verses	Prophecy	NT verses	Fulfilment
	<b>David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne</b> of the house of Israel	Lk 1:31-33	
<i>Ezek 37:24</i>	My servant David will be king over them and <b>they will have one shepherd</b>	Jn 10:11	<i>Jesus identifies himself as the Good Shepherd</i>
	I will <b>remove the sin</b> of that land <b>in one day</b>	Hb 10:14	
	<b>A fountain</b> will be opened... <b>to cleanse from sin</b> and impurity	Rev 7:13-14	
	One like a <b>Son of Man...</b> <b>approached the Ancient of Days</b> and was <b>led into his presence.</b>	Mk 16:19	
	<b>He was given authority, glory and sovereign power...</b>	Mt 28:18	
	He will be a <b>priest on his throne</b>	Hb 8:1	
	<b>The priests shall never lack a man before me</b> to prepare sacrifices continually	Hb 7:24-25	
	I will also make you a <b>light for the Gentiles</b> that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.	Jn 12:32	
	<b>He will speak peace</b> to the nations...	Eph 2:13-14	
	It is he who will <b>build the temple of the Lord...</b>	1 Pe 2:5, (Eph 2:21)	
	I will put <b>my Spirit within you...</b> (referring to the Spirit in God's people)	Jn 16:7	

### E. The Kingdom of the Messiah

Only a few of the prophecies concerning the restoration of the kingdom of Israel were realized in OT times. This is because most of the prophecies referred in a broader sense to the kingdom that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would bring in. Some prophecies began to be fulfilled with Christ's first coming, but many will only be completely fulfilled with Christ's second coming and the creation of the new heavens and earth. This situation is often described as "Already, But not Yet."

To complete this table, read the NT verses and explain how they show a fulfillment of the OT prophecy, some "Already" and some "Not yet." An example is given. (N.B. Remember, "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed (i.e. "Israelites") and heirs... Gal 3:29)

OT	Prophecy	NT	"Already" Fulfillment	NT	"Not yet" fully realized
Dan 2:44	<b>The God of heaven will set up a kingdom</b> which will ...endure forever	Mt 12:28	<i>Jesus said that with his coming the kingdom of God had come</i>	2 Tim 4:1	<i>Paul says that God's kingdom is also to come with Christ's return</i>
Is 9:7	<b>The Son will reign on David's throne</b> and over his kingdom... <b>forever</b>	Lk 1:31-33		Rev 11:15	
Dan7: 14	<b>All peoples, nations, and men of every language will worship him</b>	Acts 11:20-21		Rev 5:9	
Zech 9:10	<b>His rule will cover the earth</b>			Ph 2: 10-11	
Hos 1:10	The <b>Israelites will be like sand of the seashore</b> which cannot be measured	Acts 2:41,47		Rev 7:9	
Jer 31:31	I will make a <b>new covenant</b> with the house of Israel	Lk 22:19-20			
Jer 31:34	<b>They will all know me</b> from the least of them to the greatest	Jn 14:7		1 Co 13:12	
Hos 1:10	They will be called the <b>sons of the living God</b>	1 John 3:1			
Amos 9:15	I will plant Israel <b>in their own land never again to be uprooted</b>			Rev 21:1-2	
Is 59:18	He will <b>repay wrath to his enemies</b> and retribution to his foes			2 Thes 1:8-10	
Is 25:8	<b>He will swallow up death forever;</b> the Lord will wipe away tears from all faces	Jn 11:25		Rev 21:3-4	
Hos 2:19	<b>I will betroth you to me forever...</b> in righteousness and justice	Eph 5:29-32		Rev 19:7	



# Kings of the Divided Monarchy



