

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Week # 10– Adult Bible Study – 2025 & 2026

Discovering the Bible

Notes – The Exile

Nov. 11 & 12

Jeremiah 1:1-10, The Call of Jeremiah

Jeremiah 2:1-13, God's Message to Israel

Jeremiah 18:1-12, The Potter

Jeremiah 21:1-14, Jerusalem's Defeat

Jeremiah 31: 15-34, A New Covenant

Ezekiel 1:1-3:17, Ezekiel's Vision

Ezekiel 37:1-14, The Valley of Dry Bones

Isaiah 40:1-11, Proclaim the Good News

Isaiah 43:1-21, God Promises Rescue

Isaiah 45:1-13, God Chooses Cyrus

Isaiah 52:13-53:12, The Suffering Servant

1. The dates 721 BCE and 587 BCE are deeply significant for the people of Israel. First Israel, then Judah, was conquered and many people were led away into exile.
2. The literature of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and 2 Isaiah is a collection of many different kinds of rhetorical efforts, of varying shapes, no doubt offered in a variety of contexts.
3. The disordered mass of material now known as the prophets has been subjected to a long editorial process which eventuated in the canonical shape of the material as we have it.
4. The literature as it has now been shaped is intended to help the community of faith make two crucial and difficult
5. moves, relinquishment and receiving.
6. The year 587 is the occasion when the temple in Jerusalem was burned, the holy city was destroyed, the Davidic dynasty was terminated, the leading citizens deported.
7. The historical events that brought about The Exile are quite straightforward; Stronger nations prevailed over Israel. The reasons, understanding, and interpretation are not as apparent.
8. While the destruction of the Temple could have suggested the defeat of Israel's God, the prophets interpreted it differently. They affirmed God's sovereignty over all nations, including the Babylonians who served as His instrument of punishment.

9. According to Jewish interpretation, the Babylonian Exile profoundly transformed the faith of Israel, this period of crisis and displacement prompted deep theological reflection and laid the foundation for post-exilic Judaism.
10. **JEREMIAH** was a major prophet in the Hebrew Bible, often known as the "**weeping prophet**" due to his anguish over the impending destruction of the Kingdom of Judah.
11. Jeremiah ministered during a tumultuous period from around 626 to 586 BCE, spanning the reigns of Judah's last five kings,
12. **Jeremiah 18: 27-30** is a short segment that shifts focus to a new principle of justice. Each person will be responsible for their own sin and will die for their own iniquity. This highlights a move toward individual accountability under the coming new order
13. **Jeremiah 18: 31-34** is the pivotal part of the passage, introducing the concept of a "new covenant" that is distinct from the one made with their ancestors at Mount Sinai, which the people broke. The new covenant is characterized by an internal transformation.
14. According to the prophet Jeremiah, the exile's daily life involved building houses, planting gardens, and praying for the peace of their new community, But they were also instructed to maintain their commitment to God and not compromise their faith, even in the face of assimilation pressures.
15. **EZEKIEL** was a major Hebrew prophet and priest who lived during the **Babylonian Exile** in the 6th century BCE.
16. Ezekiel's name means "God strengthens." He was from a high-ranking priestly family in Jerusalem and was among the upper-class Judahites deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar II in 597 BCE.
17. **Ezekiel 37:1-14** is the vision of the valley of dry bones, a powerful metaphor for God's promised national and spiritual restoration of Israel from their Babylonian exile.
18. **ISAIAH** was a major biblical prophet who ministered in the Kingdom of Judah during the 8th century BCE
19. Isaiah's name, "Yesha'yahu" in Hebrew, means "Yahweh is salvation," a fitting name given the central theme of his prophecies.

20. Isaiah was married to a woman referred to as "the prophetess" and had at least two sons, whose names (Shear-jashub, "A remnant will return," and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, "Spoil speeds, prey hastens") were also prophetic signs.
21. Isaiah delivered a message of both judgment for social injustice and idolatry, and hope for a future king from the line of David (the Messiah) who would establish God's kingdom of justice and peace on Earth.
22. **Isaiah 40:1-11** offers a powerful message of **comfort, hope, and restoration** for God's people after a time of judgment and exile
23. This passage marks a significant transition in the book of Isaiah from messages of coming judgment to those of salvation and new beginnings
24. **Isaiah 43:1-21** is a message of comfort, assurance, and hope from God to the nation of Israel, who were in exile in Babylon as punishment for their sins.
25. God instructs the people not to dwell excessively on past deliverances (like the Exodus from Egypt), because He is about to do something even greater and "new" (vv. 16-19).
26. **Isaiah 45:1-13** God asserts that He is the only true God and has complete control over world events and leaders. He "anoints" Cyrus, a pagan king, for a specific purpose and demonstrates that God's plan does not rely on human belief or virtue, only on His own sovereign choice.
27. **Isaiah 52:13-53:12** From a Jewish perspective, Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is most often interpreted as referring to the nation of Israel as the suffering servant, who is despised and afflicted for the sake of the world but will ultimately be vindicated and exalted.
28. While a Messianic interpretation exists in early Jewish texts, the prevailing view identifies the servant as the collective people of Israel, not an individual.
29. From a Christian perspective, this section describes the suffering of the Lord's Servant, who is ultimately exalted after enduring suffering for the sins of others.
30. Christians interpret this as a prophecy of Jesus Christ, who suffered, died, and was resurrected for the salvation of the world.
31. The Book of Isaiah is one of the most important and frequently quoted Old Testament books in the New Testament, particularly for its detailed prophecies about the life, sacrificial death, and return of a Messiah.

32. Ancient Jewish tradition holds that Isaiah was martyred during the reign of the evil King Manasseh by being "sawn in two"

REFLECTIONS

1. Jeremiah was known as the "weeping prophet" due to the emotional toll of his ministry (Jeremiah 9:1; 20:14-18). What does his emotional honesty teach us about expressing our struggles and lamentations to God?
2. Despite severe warnings of judgment, Jeremiah 29:11 offers a message of hope: "For I know the plans I have for you... plans to give you hope and a future." How can this promise be applied to your life during times of "exile" or unwanted circumstances?
3. The phrase "Then they will know that I am the LORD" is repeated often in Ezekiel. How do you recognize God's sovereignty and authority in your own life and in world events?
4. Ezekiel emphasizes individual accountability, stating that "the soul who sins is the one who will die" (Chapter 18). How does this principle affect your view of personal responsibility for your choices and actions, regardless of your background or environment?
5. Ezekiel is commissioned as a "watchman" responsible for warning the people (Chapters 3 and 33). What does it mean to be a "watchman" in today's context, and how can you faithfully communicate truth and warnings to those around you?
6. Isaiah presents God as both a righteous judge who punishes sin and a compassionate redeemer who offers salvation. How do you reconcile these two aspects of God's character in your own understanding, and how do they impact your daily life?
7. Isaiah ministered during times of political turmoil and national instability. How can the themes of the book help you to trust God more during times of personal or societal instability today?
8. What does it mean that God promises to make a path and sustain life where it seems impossible?
9. God tells His people, "Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing!" (Isaiah 43:18-19). What "former things" might God be calling you to forget or move past in your life to embrace the "new thing" He is doing?

Old Testament Prophets' Timeline

AUDIENCE COLOR KEY: green=Israel; blue=Judah; pink=Exiles in Babylon; tan=misc. nations

note: exact dates approximate as many reputable sources vary, though general history and timeline valid.

Historical setting: After division of the kingdom into Israel and Judah, recorded in 1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17

Prophet	Audience	Kings who ruled at the same time	Approximate Dates, all BC	Historical happenings at the time of the prophet, plus comments on the content of their books
Elijah	Israel	Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram	870-845	Kingdom split about 930, all sinful kings in Israel through Israel's history, kings a mixture of good and bad in Judah.
Elisha	Israel	Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz	845-800	Disciple of Elijah. Preaches to a sinful people who worshipped idols, not Jehovah God. Some individual (e.g. Naaman) success, no national repentance.
Jonah	Nineveh	Jeroboam II	760-753	Jonah first a prophet of victory to Israel; then called to preach to Nineveh capital of Assyria, a violent and cruel enemy. Finally obeys and Nineveh repents, though it doesn't last.
Amos	Israel	Jeroboam II	765-754	Israel powerful and complacent, pagan worship, neglect of the poor, calls for justice. Resotoration after judgement promised which is a pattern in many prophets.
Hosea	Israel	Jeroboam II	758-725	Though his message is of love and forgiveness, Israel does not repent, continues in spiritual decline. Though materially prosperous and religiously active, Israel goes into captivity in 722, conquered by Assyria.

Historical setting: Israel conquered by Assyria, prophecies now warning Judah, recorded 2 Kings 18-2 Kings 25

Additional history of Judah primarily in 1-2 Chronicles; fall of Jerusalem and edict to return in 2 Chron. 36

Isaiah	Judah	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh	760-673	Begins preaching to Judah before Israel falls. Assyria threatens but does not conquer Judah. Book reflects God's eternal view.
Micah	Judah	Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh	738-698	Preaches same time as Isaiah, warns of judgement if no repentance. Defines what God requires in Micah 6:8.
Nahum	Nineveh	Manasseh, Amon, Josiah	658-615	Assyrian repentance under Jonah doesn't last. Final destruction of Assyria/Nineveh by Babylonians.
Zephaniah	Judah	Josiah	640-609	Last revival in Judah under Josiah, but not enough.
Habakkuk	Judah	Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin	608-598	Babylon conquered Assyria; Judah in process of its downfall. Questions why God uses pagan nations for His purposes.
Jeremiah	Judah	Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah	650-582	Messages not in order. Records the last days of Judah, the prior series of deportations before final destruction in 587 BC. Wrote at the same time as Ezekiel and Daniel who were deported early on. Writes Lamentations after fall of Judah.
Obediah	Edom	uncertain	?	Judgement of Edom. Date not certain, message timeless. Do not rejoice over or take advantage of the fall of others.

Historical setting: Babylon conquers Judah, a series of deportations, final destruction 607 BC, recorded in 2 Kings 24, 25

Ezekiel	Exiles in Babylon	Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, in Judah; Babylonian rulers there	620-570	Under captivity, God continues speaking to his people; obedience still required, he was a priest and spoke to the people in Babylon. Also numerous future, end-time prophecies.
Daniel	Exiles in Babylon	Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah in Judah; Babylonian rulers there	620-540	One of the earliest deported to Babylon, lived there during the destruction, deportation, and return of the people. His prophecies span human history.

Historical setting: Israel allowed to return & rebuild, recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, captives who stayed in Esther

Joel	Judah	Governor Zerubbabel?	?	Date not certain, message timeless. Restoration promised.
Haggai	Judah	Governor Zerubbabel	520	Returned to the land, Temple rebuilding stalled, preached priority of finishing God's work. Preached with Zechariah.
Zechariah	Judah	Governor Zerubbabel	522-509	Messages, challenges to complete the tasks of God.
Malachi	Judah	not certain, perhaps some overlap with Nehemiah	435	People back in the land, Temple rebuilt. The people persisted in sin. Challenges to repent. Blessings for obedience.

After these books 400 "Silent years" No written word from God, but God at work in history preparing for the Messiah.

Notes by The Rev. Janice Y. Cook, Executive Associate Pastor, The Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe, California

Primary Source: Discovering the Bible: A New Generation, published by The Kerygma Program, Pittsburgh, PA. Boyd Lien, author.