

Bible Overview

Prophets

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel

Isaiah

Author: Isaiah

Time: 740 – 690 B.C.

Summary: Isaiah ministered in the southern kingdom of Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He deals with the coming judgment on Judah due to its idolatry and apostasy. He urges the kings and the people to put their trust in God rather than in alliances with other nations. He comforts his people with the realisation that God loves those who are faithful to him and keep his commandments. He speaks of the future Messiah who would come to redeem the nation and restore the Kingdom.

Key verse:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (9:6)

Main people: Isaiah; the kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah

THE BOOK OF JUDGEMENT chs 1–39

1. Rebuke and promise 1:1 – 6:13

- a) Rebellion confronted with judgment and grace 1:1–31
- b) Punishment for sin as preparation for glory 2:1 – 4:6
- c) Judgment and exile in store for the nation 5:1–30
- d) Isaiah's unique commission from God 6:1–13

2. Prophecies about Judah 7:1 – 12:6

- a) Ahaz warned not to fear the Arameans and Israelites 7:1–25
- b) Isaiah's son and David's son 8:1 – 9:7
- c) Judgement against Israel 9:8 – 10:4
- d) Assyrian empire crushed; glorious empire to come 10:5 – 12:6

3. Judgment against the nations 13:1 – 23:18

- a) Against Babylon and its ruler 13:1 – 14:27
- b) Against Philistia 14:28–32
- c) Against Moab 15:1 – 16:14
- d) Against Aram and Israel 17:1–14
- e) Against Cush 18:1–7
- f) Against Egypt 19:1 – 20:6
- g) Against Babylon 21:1–10
- h) Against Edom 21:11–12
- i) Against Arabia 21:13–17
- j) Against Jerusalem 22:1–25
- k) Against Tyre 23:1–18

4. Judgment and promise 24:1 – 27:13

- a) Universal judgment upon universal sin 24:1–23
- b) God praised as deliverer and comforter of Zion 25:1– 26:21
- c) Oppressors to be punished but God's people preserved 27:1–13

5. Six woes upon the unbelievers of Israel 28:1 – 33:24

- a) Woe to Ephraim (Samaria) and to Judah 28:1–29
- b) Woe to Jerusalem 29:1–14
- c) Woe to those who rely on foreign alliances 29:15–24
- d) Woe to the obstinate nation 30:1–33
- e) Woe to those who rely on Egypt 31:1 – 32:20
- f) Woe to Assyria—but blessing for God's people 33:1–24

6. More prophecies of judgement and promise 34:1 – 35:10

- a) Destruction of the nations 34:1–17
- b) Blessing on the way of holiness 35:1–10

7. Historical interlude 36:1 – 39:8

- a) Jerusalem preserved from Assyrian threat 36:1 – 37:38
- b) God extends Hezekiah's life 38:1–22
- c) The Babylonian exile predicted 39:1–8

THE BOOK OF COMFORT chs 40–66

8. The deliverance and restoration of Israel 40:1–48:22

- a) Comfort for God's people 40:1–41:29
- b) The Lord's servant 42:1–25
- c) The regathering and renewal of Israel 43:1–44:5
- d) The only God 44:6–47:15
- e) The Lord's exhortations to his people 48:1–22

9. The servant's ministry and Israel's restoration 49:1–57:21

- a) The call and mission of the servant 49:1–7
- b) The restoration of Zion 49:8–26
- c) Israel's sin and the servant's obedience 50:1–11
- d) Everlasting salvation for Zion 51:1–52:12
- e) The suffering and glory of the Lord's servant 52:13–53:12
- f) The future glory of Zion 54:1–17
- g) The Lord's call to salvation 55:1–56:8
- h) The condemnation of the wicked in Israel 56:9–57:21

10. Everlasting deliverance and everlasting judgement 58:1–66:24

- a) False and true worship 58:1–14
- b) Zion's confession and redemption 59:1–21
- c) Zion's peace, prosperity, restoration and glory 60:1 – 63:6
- d) Prayer for divine deliverance 63:7–64:12
- e) The Lord's answer: mercy and judgement 65:1–66:24

Jeremiah

Author: Jeremiah and Baruch

Time: 630 – 575 B.C.

Summary: Jeremiah warns of the impending military force of Babylon that would destroy Jerusalem and enslave the Jews. He urges Jerusalem to turn from its wicked ways, but there is no response. He further warns of the false prophets who are leading the people astray with deceptive doctrines and falsehoods. He urges the Israelites to submit to the Babylonian authority as the instrument of God's judgment. They do not heed his warnings and the people are carried away to Babylon. He predicts that the captives will return after 70 years to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.

Key verse:

"If you do not listen, I will weep in secret because of your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly, overflowing with tears, because the Lord's flock will be taken captive" (13:17)

Main people: Jeremiah; important kings: Manasseh, Josiah, Zedekiah.

1. The prophet's call 1

2. Prophetic oracles against Jerusalem and Judah 2–35

- a) Early discourses 2–6
- b) Temple message 7–10
- c) Covenant and conspiracy 11–13
- d) Messages concerning the drought 14–15
- e) Disaster and comfort 16:1–17:18
- f) Command to keep the Sabbath holy 17:19–27
- g) Lessons from the potter 18–20
- h) Condemnation of kings, prophets and people 21–24
- i) Foretelling the Babylonian exile 25–29
- j) Promises of restoration 30–33
- k) Historical appendix 34–35

3. Sufferings and persecutions of Jeremiah 36–38

- a) Burning Jeremiah's scroll 36
- b) Imprisoning Jeremiah 37–38

4. The fall of Jerusalem and its aftermath 39–45

- a) The fall itself 39
- b) Accession and assassination of Gedaliah 40:1–41:15

- c) Migration to Egypt 41:16–43:13
- d) Prophecy against those in Egypt 44
- e) Historical appendix: promise to Baruch 45

5. Prophecies against the nations 46–51

- a) Against Egypt 46:1–28
- b) Against Philistia 47:1–7
- c) Against Moab 48:1–47
- d) Against Ammon 49:1–6
- e) Against Edom 49:7–22
- f) Against Damascus 49:23–27
- g) Against Arabia 49:28–33
- h) Against Elam 49:34–39
- i) Against Babylon 50–51

6. Historical appendix 52

- a) Judah's fall and captivity 52:1–30
- b) Jehoiachin's liberation 52:31–34

Lamentations

Author: Jeremiah

Time: 580 B.C.

Summary: Lamentation means "to express suffering". In this book, Jeremiah expressed his sorrow regarding the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity of the nation at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar's army. The book describes and explains the afflictions brought against the city of Jerusalem as well as surrounding nations who scoffed at Jerusalem's affliction. He emphasises that this is the result of divine judgment for the sins of the people. The book underlines lessons that Jerusalem should learn from to its afflictions: the vanity of glory, leadership and pride.

The entire book is poetic. Each of its five laments contains 22 verses (except the third which has 66 = 3 times 22) reflecting the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The first four laments

are alphabetic acrostics (the verses of which begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet).

Key verse:

"How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave" (1:1)

1. Jerusalem's misery and desolation 1:1–22

2. The Lord's anger against his people 2:1–22

3. Judah's complaint—and basis for consolation 3:1–66

4. The contrast between Zion's past and present 4:1–22

5. Judah's appeal for God's forgiveness 5:1–22

Ezekiel

Author: Ezekiel

Time: 593 – 560 B.C.

Summary: This book records the activity of the prophet Ezekiel who lived in Babylon during the Jewish exile. His message was directed to fellow captives and to Jews still present in Palestine. Both groups refuse to listen and remain unwilling to accept the rule of Babylon. Ezekiel proclaimed good news to the exiles that Israel, after being chastened, would be restored and God's kingdom would rise. This yet future kingdom will last forever and God's people will never again be cast out.

Key verses:

"O my people, I am going from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel . . . I will put my Spirit in you and you will live" (37:12,14).

Main people: Ezekiel

1. Prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem 1:1 – 24:27

- a) Introduction: The call of Ezekiel 1:1 – 3:27
- b) Symbolic acts showing the siege of Jerusalem 4:1–5:17
- c) Oracles explaining divine judgement 6:1–7:27
- d) Vision of the corrupted temple 8:1 –11:25
- e) Symbolic acts showing Jerusalem's exile 12:1 – 28
- f) Oracles explaining divine judgement 13:1–24:27

2. Oracles against foreign nations 25:1 – 32:32

- a) Ammon 25:1–7
- b) Moab 25:8–11
- c) Edom 25:12–14
- d) Philistia 25:15–17
- e) Tyre 26:1 – 28:19
- f) Sidon 28:20–26
- g) Egypt 29:1 – 32:32

3. Prophecies of the restoration of Israel 33:1 – 39:29

- a) The watchman 33:1–33
- b) The Lord as the good shepherd 34:1–31
- c) Oracles against Edom 35:1–15
- d) Israel to be restored and made fruitful 36:1– 37:28
- e) The final battle 38:1–39:29

4. Vision of the new temple 40–48

- a) Description of the new Temple 40:1 – 43:27
- b) Duties and land allotment 44–48

Daniel

Author: Daniel

Time: 605 – 535 B.C.

Summary: The book of Daniel predicts the destiny of two opposing powers: The Kingdom of Men and the Kingdom of God, stressing that "the Most High rules in the Kingdom of Men".

Daniel's prophecies generally do not deal with Israel, but the nations that control Israel. Daniel contains prophecies that span the time from Daniel's day until the coming kingdom of God.

Key verse:

"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure for ever" (2:44).

Main people: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego; Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar; Persian king Darius.

Language: The book was written in Hebrew with an Aramaic section in the middle (from 2:4b to 7:28).

1. Prologue: the setting 1

- a) Daniel and his friends taken captive 1:1–7
- b) The young men are faithful 1:8–16
- c) The young men are elevated to high positions 1:17–21

2. The destinies of the nations of the world 2–7

- a) Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a large statue 2
- b) Nebuchadnezzar's gold image 3
- c) Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an enormous tree 4
- d) Belshazzar's and Babylon's downfall 5
- e) Daniel's deliverance 6
- f) Daniel's dream of four beasts 7

3. The destiny of the nation of Israel 8–12

- a) Daniel's vision of a ram and a goat 8
- b) Daniel's prayer and his vision of the 70 "sevens" 9
- c) Daniel's vision of a man 10:1–11:1
- d) Daniel's vision of the kings of the south and the north 11:2–11:45
- e) The end times 12