



MTA - OLD TESTAMENT
THE EXILE

INTRODUCTION

Review: Stages in Israelite History

CREATION	<i>Genesis 1-11</i>
PATRIARCHS	<i>Genesis 12-50, Job</i>
EXODUS	<i>Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy</i>
CONQUEST	<i>Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel 1-7</i>
UNITED KINGDOM	<i>1 Samuel 8-31, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings 1-11, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles 1-9, Psalms, Proverbs Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon</i>
DIVIDED KINGDOM	<i>1 Kings 12-22, 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles 10-36, Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk</i>
EXILE	<i>Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther (inc. parts of Isaiah)</i>
RETURN	<i>Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi</i>

General Timeline

722 BC	Assyrians overthrow Israel
627-585	Jeremiah's ministry
605, 597	Early deportations
593	Ezekiel starts ministry
586	Fall of Jerusalem; mass deportation

Kings Involved

Josiah	640-609 BC
Jehoahaz	608 (3 months, then replaced by Pharaoh)
Jehoiakim	608-597
Jehoiachin	597 (3 months, then into exile)
Zedekiah	597-586

LAMENTATIONS

TITLE & DESCRIPTION

- **Heb:** אֵיכָה *Ekah* (=“ah!”/“how!”), also *Qinoth* (=“Laments”)
- **Gk:** *Threnoi* (=“Dirges”/“Laments”)
- **Lat:** *Threni* (=“Tears”/“Laments”)

- Lamentations is a dirge. It describes “the funeral of a city.”¹

AUTHOR & DATE

- Unnamed book
- Traditionally attributed to Jeremiah. Other names have been given.
- External evidence: Septuagint, Talmud, early writers such as Origen and Jerome.
- Internal evidence: Compare Lamentations and Jeremiah. See also 2 Chronicles 35:25.
- Lamentations gives all the appearance of an eyewitness report.
- The scenes in this graphic book were clearly penned by an eyewitness of Jerusalem’s siege and fall. Writing was presumably done soon after the destruction took place.

SETTING

Review three stages in Jeremiah’s ministry:

1. 627-605 BC - to Judah; Assyria and Egypt as threats
2. 605-586 BC - to Judah; Babylon as threat
3. 586-580 BC - to Jerusalem and Egypt, after Judah’s downfall

OUTLINE

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|-----------|------------------------|
| Chapter 1 | Seeing the Destruction |
| Chapter 2 | The Anger of Yahweh |
| Chapter 3 | The Cry for Mercy |
| Chapter 4 | Recalling the Siege |
| Chapter 5 | Prayer of Penitence |

THEMES

- Mourning over loss
- Confession of sin
- Hope for restoration

TEACHING/COMMENTARY

- 1:9, 11 - calling to Yahweh to “see”
- 1:21-22 - imprecation against enemies
- 2:5-6 - God has reason to punish
- 3:21-23 - “Great is your faithfulness!”
- 4:12-16 - acknowledging the guilt

¹ Jerome’s vulgate has “The Lamentations of Jeremiah.” Compare: La 1:2 - Jer 30:14; La 1:15 - Jer 8:21; La 1:16; 2:11 - Jer 9:1, 18; La 2:22 - Jer 6:25; La 4:21 - Jer 49:12

PSALMS ON THE EXILE

The psalms are commentaries on the events that happen in the life of Israel as a nation.
Sampling: Ps 74:1-9; Ps 79:1-7
Suggested reading: Psalm 137

EZEKIEL

TITLE & DESCRIPTION

- **Heb:** **יְהֶזְקֵאל**, *yehezke'l* (“God strengthens” or “strengthened by God”)
- **Gk & Lat:** *Iezekiel, Ezechiel*
- This is a message about judgment and reconstruction.

AUTHOR & DATE

- Ezekiel is the traditional author – a priest called to be a prophet.
- Identification is in 1:3 and 24:24. First person used throughout the book.²

SETTING

- Recall Nebuchadnezzar’s three-stage subjugation of Jerusalem (605, 597, 586 BC).
- Ezekiel’s ministry would have been from c. 593-570, in Babylon. He was one of the exiles.³

OUTLINE

Chapters 1-3	Introduction (Commission)
Chapters 4-24	Judah’s Fall
Chapters 25-32	Judah’s Foes
Chapters 33-48	Judah’s Future

THEMES

- Condemnation-consolation
- Sinfulness of man
- God’s justice⁴
- God’s glory
- God’s Messiah

² The style and language are consistent throughout the book. There seems to be no good reason to overthrow the strong evidence in favor of Ezekiel’s authorship.

³ We, like Ezekiel, live as exiles and foreigners. We establish a “Judean enclave” – to be countercultural.

⁴ Good idea to review Deuteronomy 28-29 (promised blessings and curses). It goes back somewhat to Genesis Chapters 1-4. God sends us back into to the world to be disciplined by the world.

- The theme of Ezekiel’s prophecy is that the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity are necessary measures for the God of grace to employ if He is to correct His disobedient people and draw them back from complete and permanent apostasy. – G. Archer.

TEACHING/COMMENTARY

- 1:1, 4 – “I saw” (prophets are “seers”)
- 3:7-9 – strengthened by God
- 3:16-21 – being the Lord’s Watchman (“hear” and “warn”)

IMAGES OF JUDGMENT

- 4:1-3 – the Jerusalem diorama
- 5:1-4, 9-12 – the sharp sword
- 10:15-19 – the Temple Glory departs
- 14:12-14 – judgment can’t be diverted
- 16:1-15 – an unfaithful bride

Oracles Against Foreign Nations

25:1-7	Ammon - rejoiced over Israel’s suffering
25:8-11	Moab – derided (cursed) Israel
25:12-14	Edom - took revenge on Judah
25:15 -17	Philistia – acted vengefully
26:1- 28:19	Tyre – delighted in Jerusalem’s downfall
28:20-26	Sidon – disregarded God
29:1-32:32	Egypt – had an arrogant self-image

[T]he Exile was a period of testing ideas about God. Was the divine presence limited to Palestine? Was God impotent against the gods of Babylon? Could Yahweh be worshipped in a strange land? The theology of Ezekiel was suited to this new situation. - W. S. La Sor

Future Renewal

36:24-28,36	New Heart
37:1-10	New Life
40-43	New Temple

DANIEL

TITLE & DESCRIPTION

- **Heb:** דַּנְיֵאֵל *Daniye’l* (=“God is my Judge”)
- **Gk & Lat:** *Daniel*
- This is the record of Daniel’s personal story and visions from God.

AUTHOR

- Daniel claimed to write this book (12:4).⁵
- Note use of the first person from 7:2 onward.
- Christ attributed a quote from 9:27 to “the prophet Daniel” (Matthew 24:15).

DATE & SETTING

- Daniel was among those taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.
- He served as prophet and government official under the Babylonians as well as under the Medo-Persians.
- Time period: c. 605-536 BC.

OUTLINE

- Daniel 1 Introduction
- Daniel 2-7 God over the Gentile nations
- Daniel 8-12 The Future of God’s people

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- 1 Personal History
- 2 Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream of the Great Image
- 3 Nebuchadnezzar’s Image of Gold
- 4 Nebuchadnezzar’s Vision of a Great Tree
- 5 Belshazzar and the Handwriting on the Wall
- 6 Darius’ Foolish Decree
- 7 Daniel’s Vision of the Four Beasts
- 8 Daniel’s Vision of the Ram and Goat
- 9 Daniel’s Vision of the Seventy Weeks
- 10-12 Daniel’s Vision of Israel’s Future

THEMES

- God’s sovereignty
- God’s judgment
- God’s servants
- God’s Messiah

TEACHING/COMMENTARY

Chapter 1

- Introduction to the setting as well as the main characters.
- God’s sovereignty (1:2, 9, 17).
- Daniel’s resolve (1:8).

Chapters 3-6

- Personal examples of conviction – Daniel and his three friends
 - God’s sovereign hand shown in the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar (see esp. 4:28-37).
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Chapters on Prophecy: 2, 7-12

Chapter 2

Part of Statue	Empire/Kingdom
Head of Gold	Babylon (625BC)
Chest and Arms of Silver	Persia/Media (539 BC)
Belly of Bronze	Greece (331 BC)
Legs of Iron	Rome (31 BC)

Chapter 9

- This is highly important chapter. The Messiah comes!
- “Seventy sevens” = $70 \times 7 \rightarrow 490$ years
- The decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 7:13-16/Neh 2:1-8) was in 458 BC (so compute $458 - 490 + 1$).
- Actually, during the last “seven”: AD 26-33

ISAIAH

[Portions only]

OUTLINE

- Isaiah 1-35 Prophecies of Condemnation
- Isaiah 36-39 Historical Parenthesis
- Isaiah 40-66 Prophecies of Comfort

TEACHING/COMMENTARY

- 13:1-14:27 - Babylon will be made desolate (see also 21:1-10).
- 26:1-21 - Israel is revived; a song of rejoicing for the consolation of Judah in the time of pain
- 34:1-17 - The destruction of Gentile powers is certain
- 39:1-8 - Judah falls into Babylon’s hands
- 46:1-47:15 - Yahweh destroys Babel’s gods⁶
- 48:1-21 - Based on these prophecies, the LORD exhorts Israel to expect deliverance

⁶ “Bel” is the Babylonian equivalent of Baal; Nebo, son of Marduk, was their god of writing and education. Because of the weakness of the gods of Babylon (they are not really gods at all!), they will be destroyed. Note 46.11, “bird of prey”=Cyrus of Persia (see also 41:2).

- [Isaiah's] theological scope is all-embracing, constantly reminding Israel that Yahweh is the living God, the Creator and majestic Sovereign—and Judge—of all that is, as well as the compassionate Redeemer of Israel. – G. Fee and D. Stuart

ESTHER

TITLE & DESCRIPTION

- **Heb:** הַדַּסָּה *Hadassah* (“myrtle,” 2:7)
- **Gk & Lat:** *Esther, Hester*
- This is a story of God’s preservation of Jews throughout the Persian Empire through Mordecai and his niece, Esther.

AUTHOR & DATE

- Author unknown
- Must have lived during the Persian period – evident knowledge of Persian history, customs and etiquette.
- Jewish nationalism is obvious.
- Must have been written soon after the death of Xerxes (ESV, “Ahasuerus”). See 10:2-3.

SETTING

- A great majority of Jews chose to remain in Persia rather than return to Palestine after the Exile.
- Most of the story takes place during a single year during the reign of Xerxes (486-465 BC).

OUTLINE

1:1-2:20	The Selection of Esther
2:21-4:17	The Plot by Haman
5:1-8:3	The Triumph of Mordecai
8:4-10:3	The Triumph of Israel

THEMES

- Persian rule/Israel’s enemies
- Providence & salvation

TEACHING/COMMENTARY

- 3:8-9 – a real threat to God’s people
- 4:1-3 – the humble reaction
- 4:12-14 – the challenge for Esther⁷
- 8-9 – the triumph of the Jews

⁷ A wonderful passage. Mordecai gets the message through that though she was queen, she need not think that she would escape death.

- “[W]hat the unschooled reader might regard as “just happening” is to be recognized instead as God’s own sovereignty lying behind, for example, Esther’s being chosen as queen...the king’s sleepless night in which discovers that he had failed to honor Mordecai...the fact that after a three-day fast Esther receives the gold scepter when she approaches the king unbidden...and so on throughout the book.” – G. Fee and D. Stuart

CONCLUSION: THE EXILE

- The topic of the Exile may be illuminated by a variety of ways.
- As with the rest of the OT, these passages on the Exile point to God’s perfect character.