

## THE EPIC OF EDEN: ISAIAH

# Session 1—First Things

- How many chapters are in the book of Isaiah? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why is Isaiah identified as the greatest of the major prophets?
  - Because of his statements about the \_\_\_\_\_
  - Isaiah is quoted more than \_\_\_\_\_ times in the New Testament
  - Isaiah is known as the \_\_\_\_\_ gospel
- What barriers do we encounter when studying the book of Isaiah?
  - What is a \_\_\_\_\_?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ is Isaiah talking to and \_\_\_\_\_?
  - How do I go about \_\_\_\_\_ prophecy?

## Prophet Talk in Biblical Studies

- Former vs. Latter Prophets
  - Former prophets include: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Latter prophets include: \_\_\_\_\_
- Major vs. Minor Prophets
  - Major prophets include: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Minor prophets include: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Difference? \_\_\_\_\_
- Office vs. Gift
  - Isaiah held the \_\_\_\_\_ of the prophet, not just the \_\_\_\_\_

## The Hermeneutics of Prophecy (*Hermeneutics = the science of interpreting Scripture*)

- Prophetic books are not \_\_\_\_\_
- Prophetic books are \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and are organized around \_\_\_\_\_
- The oracles are extremely \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ is king!
- What is our task? To \_\_\_\_\_ the other \_\_\_\_\_ of the conversation

## The Structure of the Book of Isaiah

Isaiah chapters _____ - _____	Isaiah chapters _____ - _____
<p>_____ Things . . .</p> <p><i>Israel's _____ and impending</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>A description of Israel as she _____</i></p>	<p>_____ Things . . .</p> <p><i>Israel's _____ of</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>after judgment</i></p> <p><i>A description of Israel as she _____</i></p>

## Three Different Audiences & Three Different Theological Movements

Isaiah's _____	Chapters _____ - _____	742-700 BCE	Yahweh's covenant _____ against [and the nations]
The _____	Chapters _____ - _____	605-539 BCE	Yahweh's _____ of Israel (and _____ of the nations)
The _____	Chapters _____ - _____	539-400 BCE	Yahweh's _____ for Israel . . . and the _____!

**Isaiah 42:9** *“Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things; before they spring forth I proclaim them to you.”*

Questions, comments, aha moments:

## THE EPIC OF EDEN: ISAIAH

# Session 2—The Office of the Prophet

### The Office of the Prophet

#### ■ Office vs. Gift

- Gift: A temporary \_\_\_\_\_ resulting in an \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (see Numbers 11:16–17, 24–25; 1 Samuel 10:10–11)
- Office: A \_\_\_\_\_ office in Israel's government (see Deuteronomy 13; 18)

#### ■ What is a theocracy?

- *theos* + *kratos* = “the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_”
- Three human officers: \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - In Israel's government it was the \_\_\_\_\_ who was the most powerful figure. Why? He \_\_\_\_\_ for God
- Legislation that defines the office of the prophet
  - Deuteronomy 13:1–5  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Deuteronomy 18:9–12  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Divine Intermediaries

- An omen is anything that is \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_ the future
  - Casual: Reading \_\_\_\_\_ in a mystical light
  - Contrived: Actively solicited \_\_\_\_\_
    - Extispicy: reading the \_\_\_\_\_ of a slaughtered animal

## ■ Deuteronomy 18:15

- “Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like me [Moses] from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him”
- In God’s kingdom it is “The \_\_\_\_\_ of God for the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. \_\_\_\_\_ to God”

## The Messenger of the Divine Council

### ■ The concept of the royal court in heaven

- The prophet was understood as a human who was caught up into the actual \_\_\_\_\_ of the Almighty
- Standard prophet-talk:
  - “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”
  - “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”
- The prophet is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Great King. He speaks \_\_\_\_\_ the word that he has heard
- Isaiah 6:1–9
  - What is happening to Isaiah? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is the authority that he has? \_\_\_\_\_

## The Prophetic (or Covenant) Lawsuit (*rib*)

- Yahweh is \_\_\_\_\_ his people. On what grounds? \_\_\_\_\_
- Language of the \_\_\_\_\_
- The prophet becomes Yahweh’s \_\_\_\_\_ who comes with \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_
- Standard format of a Prophetic Lawsuit
  - See pages 28–29 in the study guide
- Isaiah chapter 1 \_\_\_\_\_ the message of the book

**Isaiah 6:8** *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*

Questions, comments, aha moments:



## THE EPIC OF EDEN: ISAIAH

# Session 3—The Prophet as Poet and Rhetorician

### Genre

- When it comes to \_\_\_\_\_ one of the primary, critical questions you have to ask is: What sort of genre am I dealing with?
- What genre are the biblical prophets?
  - These \_\_\_\_\_ are meant to be \_\_\_\_\_ not necessarily to be \_\_\_\_\_

### The Nature of Rhetoric

- Rhetoric is a discipline of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ communication
- Effective rhetoric derives from:
  - Ethos: the perceived \_\_\_\_\_ of the speaker
    - Where does a prophet get their ethos? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Pathos: \_\_\_\_\_ appeal
    - The prophets love their \_\_\_\_\_, their \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_
  - Logos: \_\_\_\_\_
    - What is the prophets' content? \_\_\_\_\_
- In regular rhetoric, the speaker succeeds because they have effectively analyzed and adapted to the \_\_\_\_\_ of their \_\_\_\_\_
- The unique rhetoric of the prophet
  - The prophet cannot adapt/change his \_\_\_\_\_ to his audience

### The Nature of Poetry

- Poetry is defined as \_\_\_\_\_

- “A complex of \_\_\_\_\_ used in combinations and intensities that vary widely from composition to composition even within a single ‘genre’” (James Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981], 94)
- “A kind of ‘\_\_\_\_\_’ that marks the language as ‘\_\_\_\_\_’” (James Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981], 62)

## Hebrew Poetry

- Based on the “\_\_\_\_\_” (James Kugel)
- Based not on \_\_\_\_\_ but on \_\_\_\_\_
- Format that says: \_\_\_\_\_ and as a matter of fact \_\_\_\_\_
  - A and \_\_\_\_\_ so B
  - A and in \_\_\_\_\_ B
- Characteristics
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - Not so much \_\_\_\_\_ as there is \_\_\_\_\_
  - A rhythm of \_\_\_\_\_

## The Song of the Vineyard, Isaiah 5

- Isaiah 5:1-2, 5-7
  - Repetition of \_\_\_\_\_ action
  - Cultivated grapes (\_\_\_\_\_ grapes) vs. (wild) worthless grapes
  - Repetition of the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_
  - Vineyard of Yahweh of hosts = the \_\_\_\_\_
- Viticulture in ancient Israel
  - Grain, grapes, olives
  - Effort to create vineyard
    - Clear the \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_ the topsoil: terracing
    - Winepresses \_\_\_\_\_ out of the stone

- Isaiah has tapped into a \_\_\_\_\_ value system

- Everyone recognizes that the failed vineyard is an \_\_\_\_\_ disaster

- The audience hear that they themselves are the \_\_\_\_\_

- Matthew 21:33–46: Jesus pulls in the Song of the Vineyard

---

---

---

Questions, comments, aha moments:

## THE EPIC OF EDEN: ISAIAH

# Session 4—The Life and Times of Isaiah the Prophet: Part I, The Divided Monarchy

### The Divided Kingdom (Monarchy) 931-586 BCE

■ How did the United Kingdom of Israel become divided? \_\_\_\_\_ war in 931 BCE resulted in parallel kingdoms

● Northern Kingdom = \_\_\_\_\_

● Southern Kingdom = \_\_\_\_\_

In the south . . .

▸ the sons of \_\_\_\_\_ rule,

▸ the \_\_\_\_\_ is located,

▸ the \_\_\_\_\_ is serving

### Three Events that Shape Isaiah's Life

● Syro-Ephraimite Wars (734-732 BCE) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

● Collapse of the Northern Kingdom (722 BCE) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

● Sennacherib's Campaign (701 BCE) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Isaiah's Kings

● Uzziah \_\_\_\_\_

● Jotham \_\_\_\_\_

● Ahaz \_\_\_\_\_

- Hezekiah \_\_\_\_\_
- Manasseh \_\_\_\_\_

## Jeroboam's Cult (1 Kings 12:25-30)

### ■ Jeroboam I, first king of the Northern Kingdom

- Yahweh approved a \_\_\_\_\_ split of the kingdom, but did not approve a \_\_\_\_\_ split (see 1 Kings 11:26-12:24)
- In his insecurity, Jeroboam made \_\_\_\_\_ and set them up in \_\_\_\_\_ (the northern border of Israel) and \_\_\_\_\_ (the southern border of Israel)

### ■ The Golden Calf and Baal

- Represents the deity of \_\_\_\_\_
- Images of Baal portrayed according to his \_\_\_\_\_
  - Arm raised holding a lightning bolt = god of the \_\_\_\_\_
  - Mountains under his feet = god of the \_\_\_\_\_
  - Stalk of wheat = god of \_\_\_\_\_

### ■ Baal's companion, Asherah

- \_\_\_\_\_ goddess of the ancient world
- Pillar figurines of Asherah found in \_\_\_\_\_, always in a \_\_\_\_\_ context, not in temples

### ■ Syncretism

- Jeroboam blended the worship of Yahweh with the worship of Baal
- The reason the Northern Kingdom is cursed? \_\_\_\_\_

## Back to Isaiah

- Isaiah is preaching from \_\_\_\_\_
- His audience? \_\_\_\_\_
- He is aware of the \_\_\_\_\_ that has occurred
- He is speaking to his audience about their \_\_\_\_\_

**Hosea 8:5-6** "He has rejected your calf, O Samaria, saying, 'My anger burns against them!' How long will they be incapable of innocence? For from Israel is even this! A craftsman made it, so it is not God; Surely the calf of Samaria will be broken to pieces."

Questions, comments, aha moments:

## THE EPIC OF EDEN: ISAIAH

# Session 5—The Life and Times of Isaiah the Prophet: Part II, The Assyrian Empire

### The Assyrian Empire 745–612 BCE

#### ■ Who are the Assyrians?

- An empire that “instituted a level of \_\_\_\_\_ that disallowed \_\_\_\_\_”
- Rose in 745 BCE under Tiglath Pileser III
- Believed the best way to conquer the world was to:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ their opponents,
  - create a level of \_\_\_\_\_ that left their opponents unable to rebel in the future, and
  - take whole populations and \_\_\_\_\_ them to the far reaches of the empire

### The Assyrians in Israel’s Experience

#### ■ We cannot \_\_\_\_\_ Isaiah’s world without interacting with these three military events:

- Syro-Ephraimite Wars (734–732 BCE) (Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser III)
- Collapse of the Northern Kingdom (722 BCE) (Assyrian king Shalmaneser III)
- Sennacherib’s Campaign (701 BCE) (Sennacherib)

### The Assyrians in Real Space

- The Assyrians live in the \_\_\_\_\_ valley
- They understood the \_\_\_\_\_ River to be their natural boundary
- Tiglath Pileser III’s goal in leading military campaigns beyond the natural boundary of the Euphrates River was to control the \_\_\_\_\_. In order to do that he needed to control the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Ahaz the Faithless King and the Syro-Ephraimite War (Isaiah 7-12)

### ■ Isaiah 7:1-2

- Major players:
  - Pekah—king of \_\_\_\_\_
  - Rezin—king of \_\_\_\_\_
  - Ahaz—king of \_\_\_\_\_
  - Tabel—potential \_\_\_\_\_
- Why is the north attacking the south? They want to take \_\_\_\_\_ off the throne and place \_\_\_\_\_ on it

### ■ Isaiah 7:3-16

- More characters
  - Isaiah
  - Ahaz
  - Immanuel
- Assyrians on the move
  - Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and Aram-Damascus want to \_\_\_\_\_ the Assyrians
  - Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and Aram-Damascus want \_\_\_\_\_ to join them against the Assyrians
  - Ahaz says \_\_\_\_\_ so Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and Aram-Damascus march on \_\_\_\_\_
- What should Ahaz do?
  - He should call upon the \_\_\_\_\_
  - Instead he comes up with his \_\_\_\_\_ plan
- Isaiah tells Ahaz to ask for a \_\_\_\_\_
  - The sign is the child named \_\_\_\_\_
  - The message is not about the \_\_\_\_\_
  - The message is about the message the boy's \_\_\_\_\_ is bringing and the boy's \_\_\_\_\_
- Ahaz \_\_\_\_\_ the word of the prophet
- Ahaz's plan: he \_\_\_\_\_ gave the kingdom of God away to the Assyrians

■ Immanuel

- im (with) + nu (us) + el (God) = “God is with us”

■ The “virgin”

- Hebrew word is *almah* which may be mean:

- A young woman of \_\_\_\_\_ age
- A young woman until the \_\_\_\_\_ of her first child

- Greek translations

- Septuagint = *parthenos* = virgin
- Later Greek translations = *neanis* = young woman

- Matthew 1:18

- If the people would \_\_\_\_\_ God’s plan, God would \_\_\_\_\_ them, but if they were more \_\_\_\_\_ of Rome than their God, then God \_\_\_\_\_ save them

- The point: if Ahaz will trust in his true sovereign he will be \_\_\_\_\_ in ten to twelve years. If he follows his own plan God \_\_\_\_\_ him

## Isaiah 9:2-7 The Child

- God is sending a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

**Isaiah 7:9** *“If you will not believe, you will not stand at all.” (Richter’s translation)*

Questions, comments, aha moments:



## THE EPIC OF EDEN: ISAIAH

# Session 6—Hezekiah and the “Poster Child” of Biblical Archaeology

Hezekiah: an [\_\_\_\_\_] faithful king

- Real Time (see timeline): Sennacherib’s campaign in 701 BCE

### Hezekiah vs. Sennacherib (Isaiah 36–39)

- The “Poster Child” of Biblical Archaeology

- The perfect picture of the blending of the \_\_\_\_\_ discipline with the \_\_\_\_\_ discipline
- Three biblical accounts
  - 2 Kings 18–19: the \_\_\_\_\_-exilic national history of Israel
  - Isaiah 36–38: the \_\_\_\_\_ account
  - 2 Chronicles 32: the \_\_\_\_\_-exilic account
- A treasure trove of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ evidence

- In Assyria

- 705 BCE: King Sargon II dies and Sennacherib inherits the throne
- Region-wide \_\_\_\_\_ against Assyria
- Sennacherib begins his campaign against the \_\_\_\_\_

- In Judah

- Hezekiah rebels and makes preparations for \_\_\_\_\_, specifically siege (2 Chronicles 32:1–8; 2 Kings 18:2–7)

Preparations	Archaeological Evidence
Secure his _____ source	The Siloam Tunnel/Hezekiah's Tunnel The Siloam Tunnel Inscription
Refortify his _____ city	The Broad Wall in Jerusalem
Refortify _____	Excavations prove Assyrian destruction Sennacherib's marble panels depict the battle at Lachish
Stockpile _____	"Iemelek jars" _____ to the king

- Sennacherib comes from Lachish to Jerusalem, and mocks Hezekiah for his \_\_\_\_\_ in Yahweh (Isaiah 36:1–7; 2 Kings 18:7–20, 29–30)
- Hezekiah \_\_\_\_\_ God and his prophet (Isaiah 37:6–7)
- Yahweh \_\_\_\_\_ victory (Isaiah 37:28–35)

- Sennacherib's account of his campaign on the Taylor Prism

- Names \_\_\_\_\_
- Does not claim \_\_\_\_\_ over Jerusalem

*"As for \_\_\_\_\_, the Judean, I besieged forty-six of his fortified cities and surrounding smaller towns, which were without number . . . He himself I locked up within \_\_\_\_\_ his royal city, like a bird in a cage . . . He, Hezekiah was overwhelmed by the awesome splendor of my lordship . . ."*

## Judah's Perspective

- They have been \_\_\_\_\_ from the superpower of the ancient Near East
- This is the story of a king who \_\_\_\_\_ to believe and as a result received the \_\_\_\_\_ of his God

**Isaiah 37:20** *"And now, O Yahweh our God, deliver us from his hand so that all the kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Yahweh, are God!" (Richter's translation)*

Questions, comments, aha moments:

## THE EPIC OF EDEN: ISAIAH

# Session 7—The Message of the Latter Things

### The Literary (and Theological) Structure of the Book

Isaiah 1–39 The Former Things	Isaiah 40–66 The Latter Things
Israel as she _____	Israel as she _____
Audience? Isaiah's lifetime [742–700 BC]	Audience? The Exile [chapters 40–55] 605–539 BC The Return [chapters 56–66] 539–400 BC
Era of prosperity and peace The audience _____ to believe Isaiah's message	Time of profound anxiety Survivors are looking back at their past with _____ and _____

### Real Time: What Happened in 587/586 BC?

- The \_\_\_\_\_ have defeated the Assyrians and are now the new superpower
  - Nebuchadnezzar marches on Judah
  - The Southern Kingdom of Judah collapses and Jerusalem is destroyed
  - The people of Israel are dragged off into \_\_\_\_\_ in Babylon because they \_\_\_\_\_ the message of the prophet
- The audience
  - They are fully aware that they have lost \_\_\_\_\_ due to their own stupidity
  - They believe there are no more \_\_\_\_\_

### The Message of Isaiah 40

- Into this situation a voice cries out, “Comfort, O comfort my people . . .” (Isa. 40:1–2)
- The language of \_\_\_\_\_

- Yahweh is \_\_\_\_\_ on Babylon to bring the exiles home
- He is coming with his \_\_\_\_\_
- He is marching with his \_\_\_\_\_ —the captives themselves become the soldiers of his army

■ The incomplete return of the exiles

- Babylonians conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire and Cyrus the Great (539 BC)
- The Edict of Cyrus allows the exiles to go home; a \_\_\_\_\_ returns to Israel
- The return is \_\_\_\_\_
  - The post-exilic prophets continue to speak of a \_\_\_\_\_ that is not yet complete
  - The intertestamental books (written between the return and the coming of Jesus) talk about the scattered ones that need to come \_\_\_\_\_
  - Everyone in the community of faith realizes that they've come home but the \_\_\_\_\_ has not been restored

## Isaiah 40:3 in the New Testament

■ The “voice crying out in the wilderness”

- Every one of the gospel writers announces the ministry of the Christ with the ministry of \_\_\_\_\_
- Each of the gospel writers recognizes that John the Baptist is a prophet tasked with identifying the \_\_\_\_\_!

■ In this restoration Yahweh, the Creator of the cosmos, is going to march on the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and every exile of \_\_\_\_\_ is coming home!

■ “Be Ye Glad”

**Isaiah 40:1–3** “Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God. ‘Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the LORD’S hand Double for all her sins.’ A voice is calling, ‘Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.’”

Questions, comments, aha moments:

## THE EPIC OF EDEN: ISAIAH

# Session 8—The Book of Isaiah and the Servant

### The Servant [42:1-53:12]

- Who is the hero of the latter things? The \_\_\_\_\_
- Who is the foil? The \_\_\_\_\_

### The Servant Songs

The Songs	The Servant Described as . . .
Isaiah 42:1-9	Someone who _____ clearly God's will and thereby brings about justice A light to the Gentiles
Isaiah 49:1-13	_____ clearly God's command Rescues the exiles A light for the Gentiles
Isaiah 50:4-11	_____ faithfully One who truly knows Yahweh and suffers as a result True light vs. false light
Isaiah 52:13-53:12	One whose death will somehow _____ his people from their failures, but will be _____
[Isaiah 61:1-4]	Jesus reads this passage in the synagogue about himself

### Isaiah 53—Who is this person?

- Possible suggestions:
  - Israel
  - The Remnant

- Ideal Israel
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Zerubbabel
- Moses
- Hezekiah

- The former things chronicle the problem: Israel has \_\_\_\_\_ as Yahweh's servant (Isaiah 42:18–20)
- The latter things introduce Yahweh's solution to the problem: a \_\_\_\_\_ who:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ clearly God's will (42)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ clearly God's command (49)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ faithfully (50)
  - Whose death will somehow \_\_\_\_\_ his people from their failure (52–53)
  - As Christians the answer is obvious: \_\_\_\_\_

## The New Testament

- Matthew 8:14–17: “He himself took our infirmities”
- John 12:37–38: “Who has believed our message?”
- Matthew 11:2–6: “Tell John what you \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_”
- Jesus is viewed by the New Testament writers as the second Servant, the new Israel, the one who  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Isaiah 42:1** “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights.”

Questions, comments, aha moments:

## THE EPIC OF EDEN: ISAIAH

# Session 9—The Book of Isaiah and the Idol

### The Servant's Foil: the Idol

#### ■ What is an idol?

- The \_\_\_\_\_ manifestation of one of the many deities of the ancient world
- They \_\_\_\_\_ their gods by making statues of them and believed these statues to be the incarnation of their deities. They called them *‘elōhim* (“gods”) or a *sélem* (an “image”)
- Israel calls an idol a *pésel* (“a thing \_\_\_\_\_”)

### Polytheism vs. Monotheism

#### ■ Polytheism

- The deities themselves \_\_\_\_\_ from “primordial stuff”
- Multiple gods mean multiple \_\_\_\_\_ of power
- Multiple sources of power means \_\_\_\_\_ power
- Deities \_\_\_\_\_ and pantheons grow
- Deities \_\_\_\_\_ humans (to clothe them, feed them, take them out hunting, and to keep them happy)
- As deities derive from “primordial stuff” they may be \_\_\_\_\_ by “primordial stuff”  
= magic

#### ■ Monotheism

- Exodus 20:3–4: “no other \_\_\_\_\_ before Me”
- Deuteronomy 12:1–5: “\_\_\_\_\_ their idols”
- Deuteronomy 6:4: the \_\_\_\_\_ of ancient Israel—“Hear oh Israel! Yahweh is our God! Yahweh alone!”

### What Do the Idols Look Like?

- The Babylonian *mīs-pi* ritual (the “opening of the mouth” or “mouth washing” ritual)

- Image was \_\_\_\_\_ in a special locale within the temple
- Ritual \_\_\_\_\_ of the image
- \_\_\_\_\_ determines if image is to be formed and when
- Artisans are chosen in the same fashion (by divination)
- Finest of items used in design
- Either \_\_\_\_\_ out of wood (overcast with precious metal) or cast from metal (mold)
- While the image is being crafted it is \_\_\_\_\_
- Image is placed in a sacred \_\_\_\_\_ or orchard next to a canal with its face directed toward the sunrise
- As it awaits the dawn, the statue undergoes “divine \_\_\_\_\_”
- At dawn, the statue is “\_\_\_\_\_” and the “mouth-washing” ritual is performed
- Image is \_\_\_\_\_ by water
- Craftsmen then ritually \_\_\_\_\_ from the process

## Isaiah's Take?

### ■ Isaiah 44: The Idol Parody Song

- 1–5 So who \_\_\_\_\_ who?
- 6–8 Israel's commission as \_\_\_\_\_
- 9–11 Irony of “mere \_\_\_\_\_” here
- 12–17 Irony of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the craftsman, what sort of “god” is this?
- 18–20 Israel's \_\_\_\_\_ condition

Questions, comments, aha moments:



## THE EPIC OF EDEN: ISAIAH

# Session 10—The Restoration

### Biblical Implications?

#### ■ Humanity . . .

- Was created in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God (Gen. 1:26–27)
- Rebelled against the role of being God’s representation on this planet and is \_\_\_\_\_ from the garden. This first \_\_\_\_\_ has failed
- The second servant chooses the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of their idols and \_\_\_\_\_ (Isa. 44:18–19)
- We are going to need a \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 53:1–6: Who is this servant?

#### ■ Jesus is . . .

- “He himself took our \_\_\_\_\_” (Matt. 8:14, 17)
- “Who has \_\_\_\_\_ our message?” (John 12:37–38)
- Jesus is speaking in code so that John will recognize that Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 11:2–6)
- “the \_\_\_\_\_ of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15)
- “the exact \_\_\_\_\_” of God’s being (Heb. 1:3)
- The one who repairs the image in us, making us \_\_\_\_\_ creations (2 Cor. 5:17)
- The one to whose \_\_\_\_\_ we are being conformed (Rom. 8:29)
- The \_\_\_\_\_ self into which we are being transformed (Col. 3:9–10)

- In Christ we are restored to our God-ordained role as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Almighty

## The task of the made-new image bearers?

<b>Isaiah 43:10, 12</b> “You are my _____”	<b>Acts 1:8</b> “You shall be my _____”
<b>Isaiah 49:6</b> “I will give you as a _____ to the nations”	<b>John 8:12</b> “I am the _____ of the world” <b>Matthew 5:14</b> “You are the _____ of the world”

**Isaiah 66:8** “Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be delivered in one moment?” (NRSV)

Questions, comments, aha moments:

## WEEK ONE

# First Things

### A Word from the Author

As we consider plunging into this great book of Isaiah, we are dealing once again with the *Great Barrier* . . . the cultural and historical barrier that stands between us and them. How desperately we want to hear what Isaiah has to say to us, but we stand at a distance. When it comes to studying the Prophets, the distance is literary as well. What *is* a prophetic book? Why are there so many of them in the Old Testament? How are they organized? These issues were transparent to the ancient Israelites, but they are a whole new realm for us.

### Real Time and Space

Let's start with what the prophetic books are. What books can you expect to find in the Old Testament? The technical term is the "canon." Out of the many written psalms, recorded histories, and preached oracles, these are the pieces that the community of faith identify as inspired by God and therefore having authority over the people of God. The Greek word *kanōn* derives from a word meaning "reed" or "bar" and came to mean "ruler" or "measuring stick"—the idea is that these books, and these alone, have been

# WEEK ONE

measured and found worthy of sacred status. The Protestant Christian canon of the Old Testament includes the same list of books as the Jewish canon, but organizes them differently. In this collection, the writing “Prophets” are gathered into one file folder and placed in their perceived chronological order. (See figure 1.)

Hebrew Bible	Christian Old Testament
<b>The Law (<i>Torah</i>):</b> Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	<b>The Pentateuch:</b> Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
<b>The Prophets (<i>Nevi'im</i>):</b> Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi	<b>The Historical Books:</b> Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
<b>The Writings (<i>Ketuvim</i>):</b> Psalms, Proverbs, Job The Five Scrolls: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 & 2 Chronicles	<b>Poetry &amp; Wisdom:</b> Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
	<b>The Prophets:</b> Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
<b>The Apocrypha</b> <i>A final collection of books sometimes included in the Bible is known as the Apocrypha. Some of this collection is included in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox canons, but it was excluded from the Protestant and Jewish canons. The word itself means “secret” or “obscure,” and the title comes from the fact that the authorship of the books is either unknown or considered spurious. These books include: Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus [Wisdom of ben Sirach], Baruch, Additions to Daniel, 1 &amp; 2 Maccabees.</i>	

Figure 1.

## DAY ONE

# Meet the Prophets

### First Contact

What do you think of when you hear the word *prophet*? What about someone like Abraham Lincoln or Martin Luther King Jr. or Billy Graham? Why do you think America has identified these leaders as prophets? How does a society respond to individuals with these sorts of gifts?

### Into the Book

Open up the table of contents of your Bible. If your Bible is like mine, the listing of the Old Testament books takes up a single page. Scan through the books' titles. If you dare, put a colored dot or dash or even underline every one of the books you think belongs to the prophets. How many have you found? How would you categorize them? Are there some that are much longer than others?

Now find the book of Isaiah. Where does this book fall in the list? Why do you think it was placed there?

Now turn in your Bible to the book of Isaiah. What is the page number of the opening chapter?

Flip through the book. How many chapters are in it?

Keeping a bookmark at Isaiah 1, go back to your table of contents and find the book of Hosea. Go to that page. Flip through that book and count how many chapters it has. Keep flipping pages until you hit the book of Micah. How many chapters there? How would you account for the differing lengths of these books?

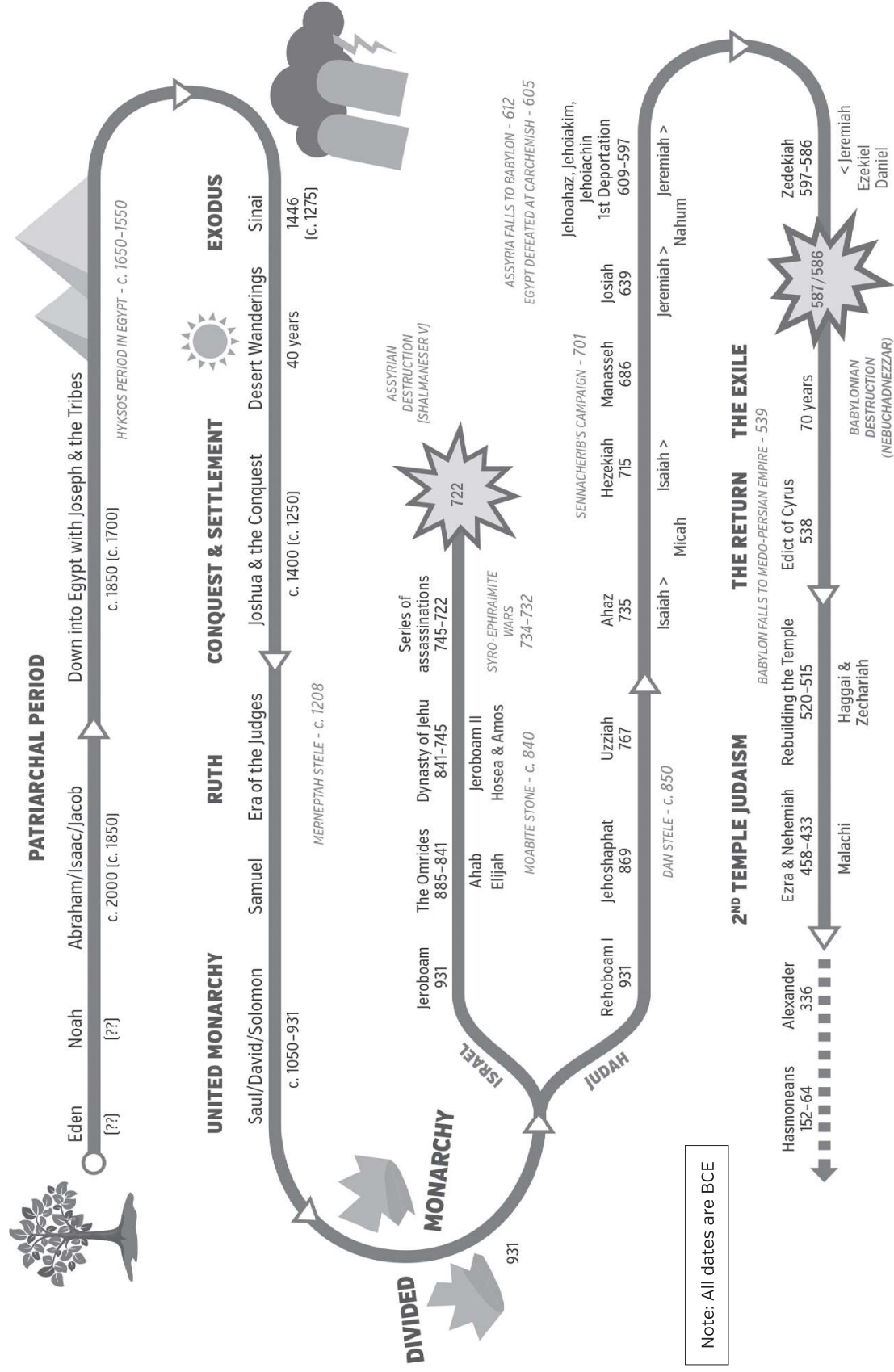
Now read the opening verses of the book of Isaiah, the book of Hosea, and the book of Micah. Write here what is common between the opening verses of each of these books.

## Real People, Real Places, Real Faith

As we will learn in our first lesson, the books of the prophets are not biographies of the prophets themselves. Rather, they are collections of the prophets' sermons. Sometimes these sermons are the result of visions they had seen, experiences they'd had, or a direct word they'd heard from God and been commanded to speak. Each of the prophets was a *very* public figure. All spoke to the nation, and most expressly to the king. Their job was to confront the people of Israel when they were failing to keep their covenant with God. When Israel broke that covenant, the leaders of the nation were *supposed* to lead them back. When the leaders didn't, the prophets launched. And boy, did they launch. Note that each of the prophets identifies his tenure by the kings under which he served. Take a moment to find and circle Isaiah's kings on the time line on page 5.

## Our People, Our Places, Our Faith

Have you ever been involved in a Christian community where corruption has been allowed to continue unchecked? Or have you as an outsider ever *watched* while a supposedly Christian community abused the voiceless?



---

What *is* a prophetic book? Why are there so many of them in the Old Testament? How are they organized? These issues were transparent to the ancient Israelites, but they are a whole new realm for us.

---

A historical example of a faith community that delayed confronting evil is the Catholic Church and their sale of indulgences in the Middle Ages. Indulgences were payments that served as an aspect of penance designed to absolve people from their sins. The corruption of this practice matured to the point where priests were leveraging the poor by their fear of hell to give more and more money to the pope's building projects. One Catholic leader, Johann Tetzel, became famous for his slogan: "As soon as a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs." Martin Luther, a Catholic priest, stood up against this practice in his Ninety-Five Theses, which triggered the Reformation. His courage bought him excommunication from the Catholic Church—but it freed the community of faith from this despicable practice. A voice like Martin Luther's is critical to the health of the church. But the price of *being* a Martin Luther is high. Who have you known in your lifetime who paid the price for speaking up?



## DAY TWO

# The Prophet's Authority

### First Contact

A famous quotation often credited to Edmund Burke states: “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” At first blush, all of us affirm this. But what if you happen to be the good man who is being called upon to do something?

### Into the Book

In Israel's world *Yahweh* is truly the king of the country, and the prophets are among several human officers who carry out his will. So in this story, we find that it is the prophet Samuel who *hears* God's word for the country and who *carries it out*. *The prophet is the spokesman of Yahweh himself*, and to our great surprise, the human prophet has authority over the human king. Take a look at your time line and find Samuel. You will notice that he falls between the Era of the Judges and the United Monarchy. Samuel was the last judge of Israel, and also a prophet. In the narrative in 1 Samuel 8, we find that “the elders of Israel” came to Samuel, demanding that he appoint a king over Israel to rule over them so they could be “like all the [other] nations” (vv. 4–5). After seeking Yahweh, Samuel listened to their request. In today's

## WEEK ONE

study we will read about Samuel's role in selecting and appointing the first kings of Israel, Saul and David. Here we will witness the prophet acting as king-maker and king-breaker.

Read 1 Samuel 9:1–17; 10:1–13; 15:1–31; and 16:1–13.

- Who are the characters involved in the readings in chapters 9 and 10? List them here.
- What does Yahweh tell Samuel to do (9:15–17)?
- What two things does Samuel do to Saul to announce him as king (10:1)?
- What does Yahweh through Samuel command Saul to do to the Amalekites (15:1–3)?
- In what way does Saul disobey Yahweh's command (15:7–25)?
- What is the result of Saul's disobedience (15:26)?
- What does Samuel do and announce to Saul (15:27–29)?
- To whom does Yahweh send Samuel after Saul's rejection as king (16:1)?
- What does Samuel do to David (16:12)?
- In God's government, who has the authority to make and break kings?

## Real People, Real Places, Real Faith

Even though Samuel is Yahweh's prophet and spokesperson, he is still human, and he still experiences real feelings and real fears. In the passage for today, we get a glimpse into Samuel's feelings about going to find Saul's replacement. In 1 Samuel 16:2 Samuel says to Yahweh, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me" (NRSV). In response, Yahweh tells him exactly what to do, and we are told that "Samuel did what the LORD commanded" (1 Sam. 16:4 NRSV). If you had been Samuel, do you think you would have responded in the same way? If not, how would you have responded?

## Our People, Our Places, Our Faith

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Of course we all affirm this, and none of us would ever choose to be the good person who chose to do nothing in the face of injustice. But as we've seen, even champions of the faith can look into the eyes of injustice and feel fear. Thought for the day: Fear is not a mark of cowardice. But fear that keeps us from at least attempting to do what we know is right, *that* is cowardice.

## DAY THREE

# The Concept of Covenant and the Ten Commandments

### First Contact

Have you ever been asked to memorize the Ten Commandments? If asked now, would you be able to recite them? How about five of them? How about the first one? Have you ever wondered why the first one *is* the first one?

### Into the Book

When Yahweh establishes his relationship with Israel at Sinai, he does so by means of a “covenant” or in Hebrew, a *bēʾrît*. In this covenant Yahweh will be Israel’s sovereign Lord, or “suzerain,” and Israel will be his subject nation, or “vassal.” As Yahweh’s vassal, Israel is identified as Yahweh’s people, gifted with the Promised Land, and expected to give unquestioned loyalty to Yahweh and his law. If Israel keeps her commitments, she will keep the

## DAY THREE

Promised Land and all the blessings that come with it. If Israel refuses to keep the covenant, she will lose the Promised Land and experience all the atrocities of war and exile (see Richter 2008, 69–91).

Today we will look at the covenant that Yahweh makes with Israel at Sinai found in Exodus 20. This is a chapter of the Old Testament you already know very well, even if you don't know that you know it very well. This is the Ten Commandments!

Read Exodus 20:1–21.

- Whom does Yahweh say that he is?
- What does Yahweh say that he had done?
- What is the first commandment Yahweh gives to Israel? What does this communicate about the relationship between Yahweh and Israel?
- After establishing who he is, what obligations or expectations does Yahweh place on Israel? Underline them or list them here.

Now read Deuteronomy 27:11–28:68, focusing on 28:1–2, 15, 58–68.

- What does Yahweh promise if the Israelites obey his commandments?
- What does he promise if they do not obey his commandments?

**Suzerain:** *A king or state that exercises dominion over a lesser king or state.*

**Vassal:** *A king or state that owes allegiance to and is dependent upon a more powerful king or state.*

## Real People, Real Places, Real Faith

If one were to distill all the promises of God's covenant to Israel into a single statement, it would be: "If you accept this covenant and remember to obey, you will keep the land and all the good blessings that come with it, but if you violate this covenant and disobey, you will lose the land and all its good blessings." If you are like me, reading Deuteronomy 28:58–68 makes your palms begin to sweat. Moreover, how could God do all these things to people he loves? But if you look at this passage carefully, what you really see is not God *acting* against his people, but God *allowing* others to act against them. The consequences listed here in the curses of the Sinai covenant all involve the natural results of conquest by an enemy nation. In other words, the curse of this covenant is that God will remove his hand of protection from Israel. And as Israel only stands through his strength . . . they will fall. And fall hard they will.

## Our People, Our Places, Our Faith

Often my students ask me, "How could the Israelites have been so stupid to just *ignore* the covenant? Didn't they know what was at stake?!" The answer is yes, of course they knew what was at stake. But they had managed to redefine and rationalize these Ten Commandments and their own behavior so it no longer seemed to them they were disobeying anything. Any similarities between Israel and us?

## WEEK TWO

# The Office of the Prophet

### A Word from the Author

Humans . . . we always want to know what's on the other side, don't we? Left alone with a newspaper, most of us just *might* take a peep at our horoscopes. Or we might find ourselves secretly hoping that the fortune cookie at the Chinese restaurant has the key to next week's business encounter, or the Dove chocolate we're unwrapping might truly speak into our hidden talents. And what about being able to *control* the future? Who among us has ever worn our lucky socks to the big basketball game? Or our lucky scarf to the job interview? All of these are (granted, silly) examples of a very ancient human impulse—to try to discover what the gods are thinking, and thereby control our own fates.

# THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

“Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things,  
before they spring forth I declare them to you!” 42:9

ISAIAH 1-39					ISAIAH 40-66				
Former things . . . Israel's sin and impending judgment					Latter things . . . Israel's hope of restoration after judgment				
1-6	7-12	13-23	24-27	28-35	36-39	40-43	44-53	54-63	64-66
<b>Introduction:</b> The Problem: Judah's Sin	Ahaz: A Faithless King	Oracles against the Nations	The "Little Apocalypse"	A Series of Woes against Israel	Hezekiah: An [Almost] Faithful King	<b>Transition:</b> The Solution: Yahweh's Transformation and Restoration of Israel	"Who Will You Serve?"	The Restoration of Israel and the Nations	<b>Summary of All:</b> "Can a Land Be Born in a Single Day?"
1	Introduction of lawsuit								
2-4	Summary oracles								
5	Poetic reiteration								
6	Denouement: the introduction of Isaiah								
7-9:7	The children-name-signs								
9:8-10:4	"His anger does not turn away"								
10:5-34	Judgment against Assyria								
11:1-12:6	Salvation for Israel and a hymn of praise								
13-14	Babylon and "The Day of Yahweh"								
15-17	Philistia, Moab, Damascus								
18-20	Egypt								
21-22	Babylon and Judah								
23	Tyre								
24	Cosmological judgment and coming kingdom								
25	Hymn of praise for new order								
26	Resurrection after death								
27	"In that day" Leviathan slain; Jacob exonerated								
28-31	Drunken Ephraim; sinful Ariel; rebellious children								
32-34	Resolution: a righteous king and judgment								
35	Hymn of redemption								
36-37	Hezekiah, Sennacherib and Isaiah								
38	Hezekiah (and Israel's) temporary reprieve								
39	Hezekiah's foolishness: Babylon is coming								
40-41	The restoration begins!								
42	The new servant								
43	The new thing (The exiles come home!)								
44	The servant vs. the idol								
45-48	The idols and those who serve them humiliated; Yahweh delivers [cf. Cyrus]								
49-53	Yahweh reclaims his people by the work of his servant								
54	Judgment has its limits; there is a script								
55-56	Come to the waters								
57-58	The fate of the wicked								
59-62	The fate of the righteous								
63	The winepress of Yahweh								
64	Israel finally understands, "Our Father"								
65	Yahweh will restore: a new heaven and earth								
66	"I extend peace like a river"								

“For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall  
not be remembered or come to mind!” 65:17 (NRSV, emphasis mine)



## Real Time and Space

It is important to realize that Israel's world is a *polytheistic* world. This means that everyone around Israel believes in many deities. And, of course, these deities are constantly battling it out to see who got to run the show. This left the typical worshipper believing that they needed to keep *all* the gods happy or bad things would happen. Not a happy place.

In addition, the people of the ancient Near East imagine the world of the gods to be similar to the world of humans. As a result, they envision the world of the gods as an extended family of sorts, with a fairly stable pecking order: the high god, El; his son and emerging replacement, Baal; the “queen of heaven,” Asherah; and a bevy of lesser gods as well. The ancients believe that these gods would meet together as a divine council to make decisions. The scene is described in the ancient literature as something between a tumultuous meeting of the British Parliament and a riotous royal banquet! Once a decision is hammered out, the higher gods will choose a lesser deity to bring the news to humanity. As you'll learn in lecture, Israel's God condescends to this perception of the divine world in the Israelite mind. But as is typical of Israelite religion, Yahweh tweaks this perception such that it could operate within the truth of his revealed character—the only and omnipotent God of heaven and earth. Israel's God is one without rivals, and his knowledge is complete. So as we'll see, this image of the divine council is going to have to shift a bit.

This week we will examine biblical passages that illustrate how both the prophets and the divine council in Israel differ from those in surrounding cultures.

## DAY ONE

# The Prophet as Theocratic Office

### First Contact

When was the last time you looked at your horoscope? If that was too long ago to remember, how about a fortune cookie? Why did you read it? In the back corner of your mind, what were you hoping for?

### Into the Book

On Day Three of Week One, we saw how the covenant at Mount Sinai established the relationship between Yahweh and Israel as a suzerain/vassal relationship in which Yahweh was Israel's sovereign Lord. The covenant also established Israel as a nation ruled by God, or a theocracy.

How did God ordain that his theocratic nation be administered? By three theocratic offices staffed by human representatives: the prophet, priest and king. (Richter 2008, 176)

Read Deuteronomy 18:9–22.

- Read verse 9 in several different versions if possible. How are the practices of the other nations described?
- In verses 10–11, underline those things that the Israelites are not to imitate.
- Whose words should be in the mouth of the prophet?
- What will happen to those who do not heed the words that the prophet speaks in Yahweh's name?

## Real People, Real Places, Real Faith

Divine intermediaries, or mediators between the gods and humans, are well-known throughout the ancient Near East. Outside of Israel, people desperate to hear from the gods seek to communicate by means of omens (anything that foreshadows the future). Omens could be observed in random events or actively solicited. A *random* event that may portend a future event could be something like an enormous flock of birds landing in your front yard. A *solicited* omen might be communication sought via incubation or extispicy (analyzing the entrails of an animal) or astrology (observing the paths of the stars).

In the ancient world, kings would consult divine intermediaries regarding important decisions, such as military campaigns, building projects, appointing civil servants, and so forth. For example, Ezekiel 21:21 contains an allusion to this: “For the king of Babylon [Nebuchadnezzar] stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination; he shakes the arrows, he consults the household idols, he looks at the liver.”

These means of seeking to hear from the gods may sound silly to us. But imagine being one of those desperate souls wanting and seeking a word from the gods and this was the only way you knew how to do it. What would you do?

## Our People, Our Places, Our Faith

In my many years of discipling others, I have seen for myself how very much God's people want to hear from him. In the passage for today's study, God promises Israel that he will not conceal his will or expect his people to beg, steal, or buy it. Rather, he promises that he will speak clearly to the prophet, and the prophet will speak clearly to the people. *And* the community of faith made sure that the most important of God's words were written down for following generations. As of today, right now, what do you want to hear from God? In this new covenant of ours, where God has actually come to live within *every* believer, and Jesus himself has become our prophet, priest, and king, how do you and your study group think we can hear from God?

## DAY TWO

# The Prophet as Covenant Keeper

### First Contact

Has someone ever broken a contract with you? A car dealer who sold you a lemon? A contractor who never followed through on what you paid for? A spouse who walked out on a marriage? When you tried to advocate for yourself in this situation, how did it go?

### Into the Book

We saw last week (Day Two) that if Israel obeys the stipulations in the covenant, she will be blessed (i.e., keep the Promised Land). If she does not obey, she will be cursed (i.e., lose the Promised Land). The prophet's job is to keep these grievous ends from happening. Hence, the prophet is in many ways a diplomat, sent from the court of heaven itself, to warn God's people that disaster was on the horizon. The prophet's job is to remind God's people that the covenant is in jeopardy and to wave them away from the cliff and back into the arms of their God (see Richter 2008, 69–91).

## WEEK TWO

In our previous studies we have seen the power of the prophet as he stood before the king. We have seen the prophet as king-maker and king-breaker. Today we will see the prophet as a diplomat and attorney and hear his words as he delivers Yahweh's message, a covenant lawsuit, to his unfaithful vassal.

Read Isaiah 1:1–31.

■ Underline any courtroom language.

■ Complete the following chart.

Parts of the Covenant Lawsuit	Where Found in Isaiah 1
Summons to the offending party	
Recitation of the suzerain's generous acts given in former times to the offender	
Accusations against the offending party	
Lament	
Call to witnesses of the covenant/treaty	
Promised restoration	

## Real People, Real Places, Real Faith

How do you picture Isaiah delivering his messages? Do you see him walking along the dusty roads of Jerusalem, one man among the throngs of people? Do you imagine him perhaps as a street-corner preacher standing on a box, waving a scroll in his hand, shouting out to the passersby? Or do you imagine him as an activist shouting into a microphone? What about his audience? How do you picture them? Do you think they “hear” him? All of them or just factions? And if just factions, what sort of impact do you envisage his message having on the larger community?

Many don’t realize that one who held the office of the prophet in Israel is understood as a mix between a national religious leader (for example, a Billy Graham) and a powerful officer of government (e.g., the United States secretary of state). And as Isaiah is a member of an old and influential family, well educated, and a longtime resident of Jerusalem, he is most likely seen as a respected, white-collar adviser of the king. In other words, Isaiah is an insider. But he is an insider who dared to say what no one wanted to hear.

## Our People, Our Places, Our Faith

It is hard for any group or community to hear words of critique or judgment. It is always easier to name the critic “enemy” than to engage his or her criticism honestly. So too with Isaiah’s audience. But as Albus Dumbledore of Harry Potter fame once told Neville Longbottom, “It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to your enemies, but just as much to stand up to your friends” (Rowling 1997, 306). When was the last time you or your community (be it a work or church group) were called out on something by another insider? Did you find your first instinct to villainize your opponent? Think about that event again now . . . Was there something worth listening to in that event?

## The Standard Six-Part Form for a Prophetic Lawsuit (*rîb*)

### 1. **Summons to the offending party (Isa. 1:2–3, 10, 18; Jer. 2:2, 4)**

Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel, for the LORD has a case [*rîb*] against the inhabitants of the land . . . swearing, deception, murder, stealing and adultery. . . . Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. (Hosea 4:1–2, 6)

“Present your case [*rîb*],” the LORD says. “Bring forward your strong arguments.” (Isa. 41:21–22)

### 2. **Recitation of the suzerain’s generous acts given in former times to the offender (Isa. 1:1–3; Jer. 2:5–8, 20)**

“For she does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine and the oil, and lavished on her silver and gold, which they used for Baal.” (Hosea 2:8)

When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son. The more [He] called them, the more they went from [Him]. . . . Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them in My arms, but they did not know that I healed them. (Hosea 11:1–3)

### 3. **Accusations against the offending party (Isa. 1:4–17, 21–23; Jer. 2:5–11, 13, 29)**

The LORD arises to contend [*rîb*], and stands to judge the people. The LORD enters into judgment with the elders and princes of His people, “It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the plunder of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing My people, and grinding the face of the poor?” (Isa. 3:13–15)



Put the trumpet to your lips! Like an eagle the enemy comes against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed My covenant, and rebelled against My law. (Hosea 8:1)

**4. Lament (Isa. 1:21–23; Jer. 11:18–12:6; 20:14–18)**

Hear this word which I take up for you as a dirge, O house of Israel:  
She has fallen, she will not rise again—  
The virgin Israel.  
She lies neglected on her land;  
There is none to raise her up. (Amos 5:1–2)

**5. Call to witnesses of the covenant/treaty (Isa. 1:2; 5:3–4; Jer. 2:12)**

“And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard. What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it?” (Isa. 5:3–4)

Hear, O peoples, all of you. Listen, O earth and all it contains, and let the Lord [YHWH] be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple. (Mic. 1:2)

**6. Promised restoration (Isa. 1:18–20; 27–31; Jer. 4:1–2; 29:1–14)**

“Comfort, oh, comfort my people,” says your God. “Speak kindly to Jerusalem.  
Call out to her that her warfare is ended.  
Her iniquity has been removed.” (Isa. 40:1–2, author’s translation)

## DAY THREE

# The Prophet before Yahweh's Divine Council

### First Contact

Name one time in your life when you know that God told you to do something. Did you do it? Were you scared? How did hearing *his* instructions in the middle of *your* world impact you?

### Into the Book

In our introduction and first study for the week, you read about divine intermediaries and divine councils. If you need to refresh your memory, go back and re-read that now.

Today we are with Isaiah as *he* encounters Yahweh's divine council and receives his commission to become a divine intermediary—but in Yahweh's government each of these is significantly different from what we might find in Canaanite religion.

## DAY THREE

<b>6:1–5 The Call</b>	<b>6:6–8 The Cleansing</b>	<b>6:9–13 The Commission</b>
What does Isaiah see and hear?	What does the seraph do?	What does the Lord tell Isaiah to do?
What is described here? Where was Isaiah?	What is the reason for the seraph's actions?	
What is Isaiah's response to what/whom he sees?	What is Isaiah's response to the Lord's question?	

### Real People, Real Places, Real Faith

In the Canaanite divine council, it is typical that the big gods argue out their plans for humanity, and then command one of the lesser deities to take the news to the humans. In my classes I often relate this to the person in your family who is required to go get the remote control when it somehow winds up on the other side of the room. Although far less than a formal experiment, I can report that in all my classes the answer is always—the youngest. So too with the Canaanite divine council. It is always the lowest-ranking god at the table. In Yahweh's divine council this is *not* the case. Rather, here is the human prophet, who has been caught up into the very presence of the Almighty and is commissioned to bring God's word to God's people.

### Our People, Our Places, Our Faith

Recite Psalm 89:5–18 out loud. Let the words roll over you. This is our God.

*This page intentionally left blank*