

CLASS 7: *The Exile: Surviving Religious Trauma* (2 Kings/Chronicles, Prophets)

Jax Church OT Survey Series Fall 2023

Words/People to Know					
Babylon	Nebuchadnezzar	Zedekiah	Daniel	Obadiah	Hananiah, Mishael, & Azariah
Jeremiah	Lamentations	Ezekiel	Joel	Day of the Lord	

Psalms 137:1 By the rivers of Babylon — there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion.

Name that Prophet

1. He wrote the shortest OT book
2. Confronts the Red-headed step-child
3. The moon turned to blood
4. The cry-baby prophet
5. The vegetarian
6. His Halloween decorations included resurrected dry-bones

I. Into Exile – How it Happened

(from CASKET EMPTY: Old Testament Study Guide by Carol Kaminski)

- *Israel's Assyrian exile 722 BC* (2 Kgs. 17:6, 23)
- *1st Deportation, 605 BC*: Nebuchadnezzar II defeated Egyptians & became king of Babylon; Babylon besieged Jerusalem; Daniel, King Jehoiakim, and nobles exiled to Babylon (Dan. 1:2, 2 Chron. 36:6-7)
- *2nd Deportation, 597 BC*: Babylon besieged Jerusalem again; King Jehoiachin, Ezekiel, and nobles are deported; Zedekiah made the new king for Judah by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs. 24:10-17)
- *3rd Deportation, 586 BC*: Zedekiah rebels but is crushed by Babylon; Zedekiah's sons killed in front of him before having his eyes gouged out; Jerusalem & Temple destroyed (2 Kgs. 25:1-7)
- During each victory over Judah, Babylon exiled Judeans to prevent future revolts and indoctrinate them

II. Why & What Now – God's Voice through the Prophets to Exiles

Jeremiah (627-570 BC), The Weeping Prophet

Background: Priest from Anathoth (Jer. 1:1), no wife or children at Yahweh's command (Jer. 16:1-3)

- Speaks during 605 to test King Jehoiakim (Jer. 25:1; 36:1, 45:1). Remained in Jerusalem after its razing in 586. Later, he traveled to Egypt with the remnant. Baruch records his prophecies (Jer. 36:1-4)

Outline: Proclaims the tragic end of Judah (2-25), then shreds of hope & survival strategies (26-52)

- Judah has committed spiritual adultery (Jer. 2:1-13), their hearts corrupted by sin (Jer. 17:1-13)
- **Lamentations:** Jeremiah grieves Jerusalem's fall & exile (Lam. 1:16) but finds hope (Lam. 3:22-24)
- Five Acrostic poems (each stanza starts with the next character of the Hebrew alphabet)
- Jeremiah sends a letter to elders to hunker down and do good in exile, awaiting their hope (Jer. 29:1-23)
- Judgment is proclaimed against the remnant, Babylon, and other neighboring nations (Ex. Jer. 50)
- Jeremiah provides assurance that God's ancient promises will come to pass, renewing His people's hearts, granting forgiveness, and establishing a new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34)

Daniel (605-536 BC), Living as Faithful Exiles

Background: Author is Daniel (Dan. 12:4) an alien government official for Babylon, Medo-Persia

- Contemporary of Ezekiel (Ezk. 14:14, 20; 28:3)
- Daniel's ministry began after the first deportation in 605 and continued until the end of captivity in 539
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego [AKA, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah] were exiled with Daniel

Outline: Chapters 1-6 are narrative, 7-12 prophecy/apocalyptic

- Daniel 2:4-7:28 is in Aramaic, demonstrating God's dominion over all nations and tongues
- Central to Daniel is the kingship of God (Dan. 2:44-45), displayed in both narrative and prophecy
- Daniel & his friends refuse Babylonian food, interpret dreams, disregard idols, and face persecution
- Daniel's prophecy proclaims God's reign with one who is coming to start an eternal rule (Dan. 7:13-14)

Ezekiel (592-570 BC), The Agony of Yahweh's Departure & Hope of His Return

Background: prophet & writer, deported to Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar invaded in 598, called five years later in 593 at the age of 30 when he would have begun his priestly duties (Ezk. 1:1; Num. 4:3)

- Ezekiel, empowered by God's Spirit, having consumed the scroll of God's message, is called to speak to the rebellious people of Israel as a watchman (Ezk. 2-3; see especially 3:4-9)
- Prophecies are full of symbolic actions and allegories, like eating bread cooked over cow dung (Ezk. 4:15-17) the death of his wife (24:15-27), the vine (15), and eagles (17:1-21)
- Depicts God's glorious presence leaving the temple—a sign of doom for Jerusalem (Ezk 11:23)
- Calls out Torah disobedience (Ezk 5:5-6), idolatry (14:6-8), and even child sacrifice (16:20-22)
- Calls princes, priests, and prophets corrupt. God looks for one who will stand in the gap, to ask for mercy and seek justice, but no one is found (Ezk. 22:23-31)
- God desires the Israel's repentance; but they are unable to take on a new heart (Ezk. 18:31-32)
- So, God aims to put a new heart and spirit into His people (Ezk. 36:16-38)
- Hope for Israel: Ezekiel prophesies life into dry bones (Ezk. 37), pointing to the day God's Spirit will be in His people (vv. 14)
- God's presence returns in a reversal of chapter 11 (Ezk. 43)

Joel (590? BC), The Creator Brings Judgment & Mercy

Background: Joel's name means "Yahweh is God"; son of Pethuel, unknown date

- God executes judgment with creation language—Ex: locusts in Joel 1:4-6 (corresponding to invading army in 2:1-11) or the sun darkening on this coming "Day of the Lord" (1:15; 2:1, 11, 31)
- The book centers on a call to repent with a promise of renewal (Joel 2:12-19), with God's mercy remaining (by restoring the land in 2:21-27, saving those who call on Him in Joel 2:30-32)
- On the Day of the Lord, God defeats the nations who rebel against him (3:1-15)
- In NT, Peter proclaims that Joel's day of God's Spirit being poured out was on Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21)

Obadiah (586?), Confronting the Disloyal Brother

Background: Obadiah means "servant of the Lord", a name shared with other OT characters

- More likely written during Babylonian exile, due to Edom gloating over Jerusalem's defeat (vv. 10-14)
- Speaks hope to the eventual triumph of God and justice against those complicit in oppression
- God's judgment against Edom (vv. 2-9), the reason (vv. 10-14), and ultimate deliverance (v. 14-21)
- Remember that Edom descends from Esau, the brother of Jacob. It's like family betrayal! (v. 10)
- The Day of the Lord will not spare Edom (v.15)

III. What's Next?

- Persia, led by King Cyrus, defeats Babylon in 539 BC
- King Cyrus allows exiles to return to Jerusalem and start rebuilding the temple
- Not all exiles end up returning, Persia still rules over Israel
- Could this be what the prophets envisioned?