

The Book of Job

The **Book of Job** deals with the suffering of innocent people, and raises the question: “**Why do bad things happen to good people?**” Like Job, we all know that God loves us, but we still find it to be confusing when suffering comes our way, even when it seems that we have done nothing to cause it (or to deserve it).

Job was a blameless and upright man who feared God and avoided evil. Tragedy then struck his family, and then struck him. Job never curses God, but Job continually asks God **WHY** these things have happened to him. Job’s friends, **Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar**, keep telling Job to examine his life and to determine what he has done to offend God, but Job insists that he is innocent of any wrong doing. In chapter 32, a younger man named **Elihu** speaks up and he becomes angry with Job for considering himself rather than God to be in the right. **In chapter 38 the Lord finally speaks to Job**, and God asks Job if he (Job) understands the wonders of God, how God created everything, and the reasons for what God does (or allows to happen). **In chapter 40 Job responds to the Lord**, stating that he “is of little account” and admits that he does not fully understand the ways of the Lord. **In the final chapter of this book, the Lord restores the prosperity of Job.** The Lord even gives to Job twice as much as he had before.

The question of the suffering of the innocent is one that has plagued humanity for hundreds of generations. But it is clear from the Gospels and other New Testament writings that not all suffering is a result of our sinfulness. In **John 9:1-5** Jesus answers the question that was posed to him about why a man was born blind: “*Was it his sin, or the sin of his parents that caused him to be born blind?*” Jesus replies, “*Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him.*” In **Revelation 21:4**, God proclaims, “*He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain, for the old order has passed away.*” In the next verse God says, “*Behold, I make all things new!*” Like Job, we may not always understand everything that happens in our world (like hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, and the like), but we do know that God has a plan for each one of us!

CHAPTER 1

- **Job** is a blameless and upright man who feared God and avoided evil. He is blessed with seven sons and three daughters, and many material possessions.

- **Satan** approaches **the Lord** and accuses Job of being faithful to God only because of his family and his wealth. Satan is convinced that Job will turn against God if he loses his family and his possessions. **The Lord disagrees.**
- All of Job's livestock are killed, and then his sons and daughters are killed.
- Despite these events, Job does not sin, nor does he turn away from God.

CHAPTER 2

- **Satan** inflicts **Job** with severe boils from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head, and his wife encourages him to, "*Curse God and die.*"
- **Job** refuses his wife's advice, and again says nothing sinful.
- Job's three friends, **Elphanz**, **Bildad**, and **Zophar** join Job, but for seven days and seven nights they sit with him without saying a word.

CHAPTER 3

- **Job** speaks out in anguish with the words, "*Perish the day I was born.*"

CHAPTER 4

- **Eliphaz** speaks to Job and he tells him, "*Those who plow for mischief and sow trouble, reap the same.*"

CHAPTER 5

- **Eliphaz** continues to speak to Job, asking him what he has done wrong.

CHAPTER 6

- **Job** answers Eliphaz, pointing out that he has "*not transgressed the commands of the Holy One.*"

CHAPTER 7

- **Job** continues his answer to Eliphaz, and then directs his words to God.

CHAPTER 8

- **Bildad** speaks to Job.

CHAPTER 9

- **Job** answers Bildad.

CHAPTER 10

- **Job** continues. He then asks God, "*Let me know why you oppose me.*"

CHAPTER 11

- **Zophar** speaks to Job and tries to explain Job's suffering: *"So you might learn that God will make you answer for your guilt."*

CHAPTER 12

- **Job** answers Zophar.

CHAPTER 13

- **Job** continues his answer to Zophar.

CHAPTER 14

- **Job** continues his answer to Zophar.

CHAPTER 15

- **Eliphaz** speaks a second time to Job.

CHAPTER 16

- **Job** answers Eliphaz and says, *"Wearisome comforters are you all!"*

CHAPTER 17

- **Job** continues his answer to Eliphaz and says, *"My spirit is broken, my lamp of life extinguished."*

CHAPTER 18

- **Bildad** speaks a second time to Job.

CHAPTER 19

- **Job** again answers Bildad, proclaiming his loyalty to God *"my Vindicator."*

CHAPTER 20

- **Zophar** speaks a second time to Job continuing his accusation of Job's guilt.

CHAPTER 21

- **Job** again answers Zophar, and raises the famous question, *"Why do the wicked survive, grow old, and become mighty in power?"*

CHAPTER 22

- **Eliphaz** speaks a third time to Job accusing him of wickedness.

CHAPTER 23

- **Job** again answers Eliphaz and admits, *“Indeed God has made my courage fall; the Almighty has put me in dismay.”*

CHAPTER 24

- **Job** continues his answer to Eliphaz.

CHAPTER 25

- **Bildad** speaks a third time to Job.

CHAPTER 26

- **Job** again answers Bildad.

CHAPTER 27

- **Job** continues his reply to Bildad and states, *“My justice I maintain and I will not relinquish it; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.”*

CHAPTER 28

- **Job** continues his reply to Bildad, with the theme of the quest for wisdom.

CHAPTER 29

- **Job** presents a final summary of his case by listing his attributes.

CHAPTER 30

- **Job** continues his presentation: *“I cry to you, but you do not answer me.”*

CHAPTER 31

- **Job** continues to speak and then dares to ask God for an answer.

CHAPTER 32

- **Elihu**, a younger man, speaks to Job, and he is angry with Job for considering himself rather than God to be in the right.

CHAPTER 33

- **Elihu** continues his speech to Job.

CHAPTER 34

- **Elihu** continues his speech to Job.

CHAPTER 35

- **Elihu** continues his speech to Job.

CHAPTER 36

- **Elihu** continues his speech to Job.

CHAPTER 37

- **Elihu** continues his speech to Job.

CHAPTER 38

- **The Lord** speaks to **Job** out of the storm, and the Lord starts to ask questions of Job: *“Who is this that obscures divine plans with words of ignorance?.....I will question you, and you tell me the answers!”*
- **The Lord** continues: *“Where were you when I founded the earth? Tell me if you have understanding. Who determined its size; do you know? Who stretched out the measuring line for it?”*

CHAPTER 39

- **The Lord** continues to speak to Job.

CHAPTER 40

- **The Lord** finishes speaking to Job.
- **Job** then replies, *“Behold, I am of little account; what can I answer you? I put my hand over my mouth.”*
- **The Lord** again speaks to Job and says, *“I will question you, and you tell me the answers!”*

CHAPTER 41

- **The Lord** continues speaking to Job.

CHAPTER 42

- **Job** answers the Lord by saying, *“I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be hindered.....Therefore I disown what I have said, and repent in dust and ashes.”*
- **The Lord** speaks to **Eliphaz** in anger for their words that they spoke to Job.
- In the end **the Lord** restores the prosperity of Job; the Lord even gives to Job twice as much as he had before. He then has **seven more sons** and **three more daughters**, and they were the most beautiful in the land.
- **Job** lives for one hundred and forty years, and then he dies, *“full of years.”*

The Psalms

The book of Psalms is a book of prayers and praises written in the form of songs. The Psalms were set to the accompaniment of stringed instruments and served as the Temple hymnbook for the Jewish people. There are four different types of Psalms: **#1) Psalms of Lament**, or a crying out for God's help and deliverance. **#2) Psalms of Thanksgiving**, consisting of praise to God for His gracious acts. **#3) Psalms of Enthronement**, which describe God's sovereign rule. **#4) Psalms of Wisdom**, which instruct the worshiper in the ways of wisdom and righteousness. **Many of the Psalms specifically anticipate the life and ministry of Jesus Christ who was born centuries later.** *Note the words of Jesus from Psalm 22 when He is dying on the cross.*

Of the **150** Psalms, **73** of them are attributed to **King David** ("by David" or "dedicated to David" or "in the style of David"). The rest of the Psalms are attributed to **Moses**, David's son **Solomon**, or **Asaph**, a chief musician during the reign of King David. Fifty of the Psalms were written by anonymous authors. *In some Bibles the Book of Psalms is divided into five books.*

The First Book of Psalms: Psalms 1 to 41

PSALM 1

- True Happiness in God's Law

PSALM 2

- A Psalm for a Royal Coronation

PSALM 3

- Threatened but Trusting

PSALM 4

- Trust in God

PSALM 5

- Prayer for Divine Help

PSALM 6

- Prayer in Distress

PSALM 7

- God the Vindicator
- *“O Lord, my God, in you I take refuge; save me... and rescue me.”*

PSALM 8

- Divine Majesty and Human Dignity
- *“O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name over all the earth!”*

PSALMS 9 and 10

- Thanksgiving for Victory – and – Prayer for Justice against Oppressors
- *“Rise, O Lord! O God, lift up your hand! Forget not the afflicted!”*

PSALM 11

- Confidence in the Presence of God

PSALM 12

- Prayer against Evil Tongues

PSALM 13

- Prayer in Time of Illness

PSALM 14

- A Lament over Widespread Corruption

PSALM 15

- The Righteous Israelite

PSALM 16

- God the Supreme God
- *Note that this is a “miktam” of David, but its meaning is unknown.*

PSALM 17

- Prayer for Rescue from Persecutors
- *“I will call upon you, for you will answer me, O God.”*

PSALM 18

- A King’s Thanksgiving for Victory
- *“I love you, O Lord, my strength... My God, my rock of refuge....”*

PSALM 19

- God's Glory in the Heavens and in the Law
- *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the sky proclaims His craft."*

PSALM 20

- A Prayer for the King in Time of War

PSALM 21

- Thanksgiving and Assurances of the King

PSALM 22

- The Prayer of an Innocent Person – The Passion and Triumph of the Messiah
- *Note the connection of this Psalm to the words of Jesus as He is crucified.*

PSALM 23

- The Lord, Shepherd and Host
- *"The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want."*

PSALM 24

- The Glory of God in Procession to Zion
- *"The Lord's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it. For He founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers."*

PSALM 25

- Confident Prayer for Forgiveness and Guidance
- *"To you I lift up my soul, O Lord, my God. In you I trust..."*

PSALM 26

- Prayer of Innocence

PSALM 27

- Trust in God
- *"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?"*
- *"One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord..."*

PSALM 28

- Petition and Thanksgiving

PSALM 29

- The Lord of Majesty Acclaimed as King of the World

PSALM 30

- Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Death

PSALM 31

- Prayer in Distress and Thanksgiving for Escape
- *“You are my rock and my fortress... you will lead me and guide me.”*
- *“Into your hands I commend my spirit.” The words of Jesus (Luke 23:46)*

PSALM 32

- Remission of Sin
- *Note that this is a “maskil” of David, but its meaning is unknown.*

PSALM 33

- Praise of the Lord’s Power and Providence

PSALM 34

- Thanks giving to God Who Delivers the Just
- *“I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall be ever in my mouth.”*

PSALM 35

- Prayer for Help against Unjust Enemies

PSALM 36

- Human Wickedness and Divine Providence

PSALM 37

- The Fate of Sinners and the Reward of the Just
- **NOTE:** *Each section begins with a letter from the Hebrew alphabet.*

PSALM 38

- Prayer of an Afflicted Sinner
- *“Indeed I acknowledge my guilt; I grieve over my sin.”*

PSALM 39

- The Vanity of Life – and the Brevity of Life

PSALM 40

- Gratitude and Prayer for Help

PSALM 41

- Thanksgiving after Sickness
- *“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from all eternity and forever.”*

The Second Book of Psalms: Psalms 42 to 72

PSALMS 42 and 43

- Longing for God’s Presence in the Temple
- *“As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God.”*

PSALM 44

- God’s Past Favor and Israel’s Present Need
- *“Awake! Why are you asleep, O Lord? Arise! Cast us not off forever!”*

PSALM 45

- Song for a Royal Wedding – A Nuptial Ode for the Messianic King

PSALM 46

- God, the Protector of Zion, the Refuge of Israel

PSALM 47

- The Ruler of All the Nations
- *“For God’s are the guardians (the rulers) of the earth; He is supreme.”*

PSALM 48

- The Splendor of the Invincible City – Thanksgiving for Jerusalem

PSALM 49

- Confidence in God Rather than in Riches
- *“But God will redeem me from the power of the nether world.”*

PSALM 50

- The Acceptable Sacrifice
- *“He that offers praise as a sacrifice glorifies me.”*

PSALM 51

- The Miserere: Prayer of Repentance (for David's sin with Bathsheba)
- *"Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense."*
- *"O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise."*

PSALM 52

- The Deceitful Tongue

PSALM 53

- A Lament over Widespread Corruption
- *The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." Their deeds are corrupt.*

PSALM 54

- Confident Prayer in Great Peril
- *"O God, by your name, save me and by your might defend my cause."*

PSALM 55

- A Lament over Betrayal by a Disloyal Companion

PSALM 56

- Trust in God, the Helper in Need

PSALM 57

- Confident Prayer for Deliverance
- *"My heart is steadfast, O God; my heart is steadfast. I will sing praise."*

PSALM 58

- The Dethroning of Unjust Rulers
- *"The just man shall be glad when he sees vengeance."*

PSALM 59

- Complaint Against Bloodthirsty Enemies
- *"Arise; punish all the nations; have no pity on any worthless traitors."*
- *"Consume them in wrath; consume, till they are no more."*

PSALM 60

- Lament after Defeat in Battle

PSALM 61

- Prayer of the King in Time of Danger

PSALM 62

- Trust in God Alone
- *“Only in God is my soul at rest; from Him comes my salvation.”*

PSALM 63

- Ardent Longing for God

PSALM 64

- Treacherous Conspirators Punished by God

PSALM 65

- Thanksgiving for God’s Blessings

PSALM 66

- Praise of God, Israel’s Deliverer

PSALM 67

- Harvest Thanks and Petition – That All May Worship God

PSALM 68

- The Exodus and Conquest, Pledge of Future Help

PSALM 69

- A Cry of Anguish in Great Distress

PSALM 70

- Prayer for Divine Help

PSALM 71

- Prayer in Time of Old Age
- *“O God, be not far from me; my God, make haste to help me.”*

PSALM 72

- A Prayer for the King – A Psalm of Solomon
- *“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous deeds.”*

Third Book of Psalms: Psalms 73 to 89

PSALM 73

- The Trial of the Just (The False Happiness of the Wicked)

PSALM 74

- Prayer at the Destruction of the Temple

PSALM 75

- God the Judge of the World (God the Just Judge of the Wicked)
- *“But as for me, I will exult forever.”*

PSALM 76

- God Defends Zion (Thanksgiving for the Overthrow of Israel’s Foes)

PSALM 77

- Confidence in God during National Distress (Lament and Comfort)
- *“O God, your way is holy; what great god is there like our God?”*

PSALM 78

- A New Beginning in Zion and David (God’s Goodness)

PSALM 79

- A Prayer for Jerusalem (at the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple)
- *“O Lord, how long? Will you be angry forever?”*
- *“Help us, O God, our savior... deliver us, and pardon our sins...”*

PSALM 80

- Prayer to Restore God’s Vineyard
- *“O shepherd of Israel, hearken, O guide of the flock of Joseph.”*

PSALM 81

- Festive Song with an Admonition to Fidelity
- *“Sing joyfully to God our strength; acclaim the God of Jacob.”*

PSALM 82

- The Downfall of Unjust Gods (The Judgment against Wicked Judges)

PSALM 83

- Prayer Against a Hostile Alliance

PSALM 84

- Prayer of a Pilgrim to Jerusalem (Desire for the Sanctuary)
- *“How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!”*

PSALM 85

- Prayer for Divine Favor (Prayer for Complete Restoration)
- *“Show us O Lord your kindness, and grant us your salvation.”*

PSALM 86

- Prayer in Time of Distress
- *“Incline your ear, O Lord; answer me, for I am afflicted and poor.”*

PSALM 87

- Zion: The True Birthplace of the Diaspora Pilgrims

PSALM 88

- A Despairing Lament (Lament and Prayer in Affliction)
- *“But I, O Lord, cry out to you; with my morning prayer I wait upon you.”*

PSALM 89

- A Lament over God’s Promise to David
- *“You are my father, my God, the Rock, my savior.”*

Fourth Book of Psalms: Psalm 90 to 106

PSALM 90

- God’s Eternity and Human Frailty (A Prayer of Moses, the man of God)

PSALM 91

- Security Under God’s Protection
- *“You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.’ ”*

PSALM 92

- A Hymn of Thanksgiving for God's Fidelity

PSALM 93

- God is a Mighty King (The Glory of the Lord's Kingdom)

PSALM 94

- A Prayer for Deliverance from the Wicked (A Warning to Oppressors)
- *"Happy the man whom you instruct O Lord whom by your law you teach."*

PSALM 95

- A Call to Praise and Obedience
- *"Come let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation."*

PSALM 96

- The Glories of the Lord, the King of the Universe
- *"Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all you lands."*
- *"He shall rule the world with justice and the peoples with his constancy."*

PSALM 97

- The Divine King, the Just Judge and Ruler of All

PSALM 98

- The Lord, the Victorious King and Just Judge
- *"He will rule the world with justice, and the peoples with equity."*

PSALM 99

- The Lord the Holy King

PSALM 100

- Processional Hymn

PSALM 101

- Norm for Life of Rulers

PSALM 102

- Prayer in Time of Distress

PSALM 103

- Praise of Divine Goodness
- *“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all my being, bless his holy name.”*

PSALM 104

- Praise of God the Creator

PSALM 105

- God’s Fidelity to His Promise

PSALM 106

- Israel’s Confession of Sin
- *“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good for his kindness endures forever.”*

Fifth Book of Psalms: Psalm 107 to 150

PSALM 107

- God the Savior of Those in Distress

PSALM 108

- Prayer for Victory

PSALM 109

- Prayer against a Slandering Enemy
- *“May his days be few, may another take his office.”* (Judas in Acts 1:20)

PSALM 110

- God Appoints the King both King and Priest – The Messiah

PSALM 111

- Praise of God for Goodness to Israel
- *“I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart...”*

PSALM 112

- The Blessings of the Just
- *“Happy the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commands.”*

PSALM 113

- Praise of God’s Care of the Poor

PSALM 114

- The Lord’s Wonders of the Exodus

PSALM 115

- The Greatness of the True God

PSALM 116

- Thanksgiving to God Who Saves from Death
- *“I love the Lord because he has heard my voice in supplication.”*
- *“I shall walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”*

PSALM 117

- The Nations Called to Praise **(The Shortest of All of the Psalms)**

PSALM 118

- Hymn of Thanksgiving to the Savior of Israel

PSALM 119

- A Prayer to God, the Lawgiver **(The Longest of All of the Psalms)**
- *NOTE: Each section begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet*

PSALM 120

- Prayer of a Returned Exile
- *“In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me.”*

PSALM 121

- The Lord My Guardian

PSALM 122

- A Pilgrim's Prayer for Jerusalem
- *"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!"* and *"Peace be within you!"*

PSALM 123

- Reliance on the Lord (Israel's Prayer in Persecution)

PSALM 124

- God, the Rescuer of the People

PSALM 125

- The Lord, the Protector of Israel

PSALM 126

- The Reversal of Zion's Fortunes (The People's Prayer for Full Restoration)

PSALM 127

- The Need of God's Blessings

PSALM 128

- The Happy home of the Just
- *"Happy are you who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways."*

PSALM 129

- Against Israel's Enemies (Prayer for the Overthrow of Israel's Foes)

PSALM 130

- Prayer for Pardon and Mercy
- *"Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!"*

PSALM 131

- Humble Trust in God

PSALM 132

- The Covenant between David and God

PSALM 133

- A vision of a Blessed Community (The Benefits of a Brotherly Concord)

PSALM 134

- Exhortation to the Night Watch to Bless God
- *“Come bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord.”*

PSALM 135

- Praise of God, the Ruler and Benefactor of Israel

PSALM 136

- Hymn of Thanksgiving for God’s Everlasting Love

PSALM 137

- Sorrow and Hope in Exile (The Exile’s Remembrance of Zion)
- *“Happy are those who seize and smash your little ones against the rock!”*

PSALM 138

- Hymn of a Grateful Heart
- *“I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with all my heart...”*

PSALM 139

- The All-knowing and Ever-present God
- *“O Lord, you have probed me and you know me; you know when I sit and when I stand; you understand my thoughts from afar.”*

PSALM 140

- Prayer for Deliverance from the Snares of the Wicked
- *“Deliver me, O Lord, from evil me; preserve me from violent men.”*

PSALM 141

- Prayer of the Just Man to be Saved from Wickedness

PSALM 142

- A Prayer in Time of Trouble (Prayer of a Prisoner in Dire Straights)

PSALM 143

- A Prayer of a Penitent in Distress
- *“Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord, for in you I hope.”*

PSALM 144

- A Prayer for Victory and Prosperity
- *“Blessed be the Lord, my rock... My refuge and my fortress, my stronghold, my deliverer.”*

PSALM 145

- The Greatness and Goodness of God
- *“The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. The Lord is good to all and compassionate to all his works.”*

PSALM 146

- Trust in God the Creator and Redeemer (Trust in God Alone)
- *“Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord, his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them.”*

PSALM 147

- God’s Word Restores Jerusalem (Zion’s Grateful Praise to the Lord)

PSALM 148

- All Creation Summoned to Praise (Hymn of all Creation to Almighty God)

PSALM 149

- Praise God with Song and Sword
- *“Sing to the Lord a new song of praise in the assembly of the faithful.”*

PSALM 150

- Final Doxology
- *“Praise the Lord in his sanctuary, praise him in the firmament of his strength.”*
- *“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Alleluia.”*

The Book of Proverbs

The purpose of the **Book of Proverbs** is to teach wisdom. The basic for the teachings in this book is that *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,”* (Proverbs 1:7) The writers of the **Book of Proverbs** include **Solomon** (Parts Two and Five), **Agur** (Part Six) and **Lemuel** (Part Eight). Most of the writings in this book are short pieces of advice for the people in terms of living their lives according to God’s plan.

However, Part One of the **Book of Proverbs** follows a different structure. In this, the Introduction, **“Wisdom”** is personified as a woman who speaks to the people, especially to her **“children.”** The remainder of the Book of Proverbs includes short sayings, usually only one verse in length, that provides God’s detailed instructions for His people to deal successfully with the practical affairs for everyday life. **Wisdom** is a gift from God meant to be the goal for all human searching, and *the ultimate guarantee of wisdom is the Lord.* But this divine communication comes not only as knowledge but also as **love.**

PART ONE: Introduction: The value of Wisdom (Chapters 1 to 9)

CHAPTER 1 – The Purpose of the Proverbs of Solomon

- “That men may appreciate wisdom and discipline.....” (verse 2)
- “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge....” (verse 7)
- In verse 20 **Wisdom** is personified as a woman who **“cries aloud in the street, in the open squares she raises her voice.”**

CHAPTER 2 – The Blessings of Wisdom

- “For the Lord gives wisdom.....” (verse 6)

CHAPTER 3 – Attitude Toward the Lord

- “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence rely not.”
- “Happy the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding.”

CHAPTER 4 – Wisdom: The Supreme Guide of Man

- “Get wisdom, get understanding!”

CHAPTER 5 – Warning against Adultery

- “Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well.”

CHAPTER 6 – Miscellaneous Proverbs

- “There are six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him.”
- This chapter also includes more warnings against Adultery.

CHAPTER 7

- Say to Wisdom, “You are my sister!” Call Understanding, “Friend!”
- This chapter also includes more warnings against Adultery.

CHAPTER 8 – The Discourse of Wisdom

- Does not Wisdom call, and Understanding raise her voice?
- The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

CHAPTER 9 – The Two Banquets: Wisdom and Folly

- Wisdom has built her house... yes, she has spread her table.
- The woman Folly is fickle, she is inane, and knows nothing.

PART TWO: The Proverbs of Solomon (Chapters 10 to 22)

CHAPTER 10

- A wise son makes his father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother.
- Hatred stirs up disputes, but love covers all offenses.

CHAPTER 11

- False scales are an abomination to the Lord, but a full weight is His delight.
- Wealth is useless on the day of wrath, but virtue saves from death.

CHAPTER 12

- The good man wins favor from the Lord, but the schemer is condemned.

CHAPTER 13

- He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him takes care to chastise him. (*Note the use of a rod to guide the sheep, not to beat them!*)

CHAPTER 14

- He who walks uprightly fears the Lord, but he who is devious in his ways spurns him.
- The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but not the tent of the upright.

CHAPTER 15

- A mild answer calms wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on evil and good.

CHAPTER 16

- Entrust your works to the Lord, and your plans will succeed.
- Better a little with virtue, than a large income with injustice.
- How much better to acquire wisdom than gold!

CHAPTER 17

- He who mocks the poor blasphemes his Maker.
- Even a fool, if he keeps silent, is considered to be wise.

CHAPTER 18

- The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the just man runs to it and is safe.
- Some friends bring ruin on us, but a true friend is more loyal than a brother.

CHAPTER 19

- Better a poor man who walks in his integrity than he who is crooked in his ways and rich.
- He who has compassion on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed.

CHAPTER 20

- When a man walks in integrity and justice, happy are his children after him!
- Say not, "I will repay evil!" Trust in the Lord and He will help you.

CHAPTER 21

- To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

PART THREE: The Sayings of the Wise (Chapters 22 to 24)

CHAPTER 22

- Injure not the poor because they are poor, not crush the needy at the gate.

CHAPTER 23

- Toil not to gain wealth, cease to be concerned about it.

PART FOUR: Other sayings of the Wise (Chapter 24)

CHAPTER 24

- In this chapter advice is given regarding the “sluggard” who is lazy.

PART FIVE: More of the Proverbs of Solomon (Chapter 25 to 29)

CHAPTER 25

- Claim no honor in the King’s presence, nor occupy the place of great men...

CHAPTER 26

- A proverb in the mouth of a fool hangs limp, like crippled legs.

CHAPTER 27

- Let another praise you – not your own mouth, not your own lips.

CHAPTER 28

- The trustworthy man will be richly blessed.

CHAPTER 29

- Man’s pride causes his humiliation.

PART SIX: The Words of Agur, son of Jakeh (Chapter 30)

PART SEVEN: Numerical Proverbs (Chapter 30)

CHAPTER 30

- Put falsehood and lying far from me, give me neither poverty nor riches.

PART EIGHT: The Words of Lemuel, king of Massa (Chapter 31)

PART NINE: The Ideal Wife (Chapter 31)

CHAPTER 31

- When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls.
- Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her a reward for her labors.

The Book of Ecclesiastes (The Greek word) In Hebrew: The Book of Qoheleth

Ecclesiastes is the **Greek** translation of the **Hebrew** name **Qoheleth**. The writer claims to be *“David’s son, Qoheleth, king in Jerusalem.”* Many readers assume that the writer is **King Solomon**, but many Biblical scholars believe that this book was written about **300 B.C.** (some 600 years after the death of Solomon).

This book is concerned with the purpose and meaning of human life, and at first it appears that **Qoheleth** believes that nothing makes sense. It is an honest confession of a man struggling with doubt, disillusionment, and despair. He begins by saying that, *“All things are vanity!”* meaning that everything is *emptiness*, void of any value. But as he continues, we realize his faith in God, and the book concludes with the words, *“Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all; because God will bring to judgment every work, with all its hidden qualities, whether good or bad.”*

CHAPTER 1

- Qoheleth begins with the words, *“Vanity of vanities!” All things are vanity!”*
- He continues by pointing out that, *“Nothing is new under the sun.”*
- He then makes the bold statement that. *“I have seen all things that are done under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and a chase after the wind.”*

CHAPTER 2

- As much as Qoheleth tries to understand the meaning of life through wisdom, he concludes that, *“the wise man dies as well as the fool!”*
- Qoheleth’s conclusion becomes, *“There is nothing better for man than to eat and drink and provide himself with good things by his labors. Even this is from the hand of God.”* (Today we have the “Prosperity Gospel.”)

CHAPTER 3

- This chapter begins with the famous poem, *“There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens.”*
- Qoheleth believes that no matter what one does here on earth, nothing matters in the long run. Qoheleth has no concept of heaven or hell as Jesus teaches in the Gospels. Rather, *“the lot of man and of beast is one lot; the one dies as well as the other. Both go to the same place; both were made from the dust, and to the dust they both return.”*

CHAPTER 4

- Qoheleth points out that companions in life are better than toil and work.

CHAPTER 5

- *“God is in heaven, and you are on earth; therefore let your words be few.”*
- *“When you make a vow to God, delay not its fulfillment.”*
- Qoheleth reminds us that *“the lover of wealth reaps no fruit from it.”*

CHAPTER 6

- Qoheleth reminds us that riches, property and honor are only temporary.
- He then asks the question, *“For who knows what is good for a man in life, the limited days of his vain life (which God has made like a shadow)?”*

CHAPTER 7

- Qoheleth tells us to, *“Consider the work of God.”*
- And we hear that, *“He who fears God will win through at all events.”*

CHAPTER 8

- *“He who keeps the commandment experiences no evil, and the wise man’s heart knows times and judgments.”* But we do not know the time of death.

CHAPTER 9

- Qoheleth believes that at death, *“things turn out the same for all.”*
- *“There will be no wisdom in the nether world where you are going.”*
- *Notice the contrast between this belief and what Jesus teaches His disciples.*

CHAPTER 10

- Qoheleth (pessimistically) says that, *“Man knows not what is to come, for who can tell him what is to come after him?”*

CHAPTER 11

- But he goes on to remind us that, *“God will bring you to judgment.”*

CHAPTER 12

- He then advises us to, *“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth.”*
- In the **“Epilogue”** a new writer seems to appear, and he concludes the book with the words, *“Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all, because God will bring to judgment every work.”*

The Song of Songs (or the Song of Solomon)

The **Song of Songs** means “*the greatest of songs*” (similar to the “King of Kings”). It is an inspired portrayal of ideal human love between a husband and a wife, and it often makes reference to physical love and its ecstatic emotions. The poem is a celebration of God’s gift of love and sexuality.

Some scholars have interpreted it to be a comparison of **the love of God for Israel, or the love of Jesus for His Church**. Though the poem is attributed to **Solomon** at the beginning, it was most likely written by an unknown poet some time after the end of the Babylonian Exile (in 538 B.C.) In some Bibles there are code letters for who is speaking:

B = Bride

G = Groom

D = Daughters of Jerusalem

CHAPTER 1

- The **Bride** speaks first: “*Let him kiss me with kisses of his mouth!*”
- The **Daughters of Jerusalem** join with her in celebrating her joy.
- The **Bride** calls out to the **Groom**, and he tells her to come to him.

CHAPTER 2

- The **Bride** compliments the Groom: “*My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag.*” And then the Bride quotes the Groom’s words that he speaks to her: “*My lover speaks, he says to me, ‘Arise my beloved, and come’*”

CHAPTER 3

- The **Bride** looks for the Groom, and seeks the help of the Daughters.
- The **Daughters** see him coming, and it is **King Solomon** with his men.

CHAPTER 4

- The **Groom** compliments the Bride: “*Ah, you are beautiful, my beloved, and there is no blemish in you.*”
- The Groom refers to her as “*my sister, my bride*” indicating a term of endearment, not a family/blood relationship.
- The **Bride** and **Groom** enter an enclosed garden, with a fountain sealed.
- The **Bride** then compares herself to a garden, and invites her lover with the words, “*Let my lover come to his garden and eat its choice fruits.*”

CHAPTER 5

- The **Bride** and **Groom** are intimate, but the Groom disappears.
- The **Bride** says, *“I sought him but I did not find him; I called to him, but he did not answer me.”*
- The **Daughters** ask how the Bride how the Groom differs from any other man, and the **Bride** describes his qualities in great detail (his head, his hair, his eyes, etc.)

CHAPTER 6

- The **Daughters** agree to assist the Bride in her search for the Groom.
- The **Groom** suddenly reappears (as if he were never gone) and speaks to the Bride by describing her charms, ranging from her eyes to her hair, etc.

CHAPTER 7

- The **Daughters** compliment the Bride, and again they provide vivid descriptions of her qualities.
- The **Groom** then speaks to his Bride in very complimentary terms.
- The Bride commits to him by stating, *“I belong to my lover, and for me he yearns.”*
- They proceed to the vineyards, and *“There will I give you my love.”*

CHAPTER 8

- The **Bride** seems to wish that the Groom were her “brother,” but again, it does not appear that she is looking at a loving relationship that is not by blood. She tells the Groom, *“I would lead you, bring you in to the home of my mother”* (implying that he would not be familiar with the home).
- The **Daughter** see the couple returning, and the Groom speaks of their first meeting.
- The **Bride** requests of the Groom, *“See me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm”* as a way of signifying their commitment to one another.
- The **Bride** affirms her chastity by referring to herself at the time when she was a young girl. But now she is a woman.
- Again the **Groom** is referred to as **Solomon**, and she offers a dowry of a thousand silver pieces.
- The **Bride** concludes the book with the words, *“Be swift, my lover, like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices.”*

The Book of Wisdom

The **Book of Wisdom** is one of the seven books that are included in Catholic Bibles, but not in Protestant Bibles, because the book was written in **Greek** and not Hebrew. These books are known as “**Deuterocanonical.**” *The Catholic Church considers all seven of these additional books to be inspired by the Holy Spirit.*

This book was written about one hundred years before the birth of Christ. The author is unknown to us, but he was most likely a member of the Jewish community in **Alexandria, Egypt.** The book reminds us that *learning should have an impact on a person’s moral life.*

The writer of the Book of Wisdom looks forward to a life after death in the presence of God, with *Sheol* (the netherworld) being the place of torment where the evil go when they pass away. This belief is contrary to many of the writers in the Old Testament, many of whom believed that just were rewarded here on earth, and the wicked were punished in this life. As we can see from the Book of Job and other writings, this was not the case for most people. **The Book of Wisdom** prepared many readers for the teachings of Jesus in the years to come.

CHAPTER 1

- The author begins by saying, “*Love justice, you who judge the earth; think of the Lord in goodness, and seek him in integrity of heart.*”
- NOTE: **Justice** is the application of wisdom to moral conduct.

CHAPTER 2

- Here the writer points out how the wicked reject immortality (life after death) and they reject the idea of justice. They only look out for themselves.

CHAPTER 3

- In contrast to chapter 2, the author states, “*But the souls of the just are in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them...And they are in peace.*” (This passage is often read during Funeral Masses.)
- The author points out that being childless is not as bad as one may think.

CHAPTER 4

- “*But the just man, though he die early, shall be at rest.*” (Note: Most Old Testament writers believed that an early death was punishment from God.)

CHAPTER 5

- In this chapter the writer contracts the lives of the just and the wicked, and points out, *“But the just live forever, and in the Lord is their recompense, and the thought of them is with the Most High.”*
- He goes on to say, *“For he shall shelter them with his right hand and protect them with his arm.”*

CHAPTER 6

- Here the writer challenges the kings and princes to *“learn wisdom that you may not sin.”*
- In verse 12 **Wisdom** is referred to as *“she”* (by the author) and *“she is readily perceived by those who love her and found by those who seek her.”*

CHAPTER 7

- Here the author writes as though **Solomon** is speaking, even though Solomon has been dead for 900 years. (*We recall from the First Book of Kings that Solomon asked God for wisdom, and God granted it to him.*)

CHAPTER 8

- Here the writer reminds us of how **Solomon** sought wisdom from God.

CHAPTER 9

- The writer of Wisdom, speaking in the voice of Solomon prays to God, *“Give me wisdom, the attendant at your throne.”*
- In verse 17 we read of how God had *“sent your holy spirit from on high.”*

CHAPTER 10

- In this chapter the author recounts the Biblical history of those who had followed wisdom, beginning with **Adam** and continuing with Noah, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, referring to them as *“just men.”*

CHAPTER 11

- This chapter recounts the story of God’s providence through the **Exodus** from Egypt, especially through the plagues that we inflicted upon Pharaoh.

CHAPTER 12

- The writer continues with the story of the Exodus, and speaks directly to God reminding the reader of God’s mercy, *“For your might is the source of justice; your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all.”*

CHAPTER 13

- Here the writer condemns **nature worship**, especially worshipping the sun, the moon, and the stars, things that he refers to as *“the luminaries of heaven.”*
- But worse is the sin of **idolatry**, the worship of things made by human hands.

CHAPTER 14

- In this chapter there are references that Biblical scholars now apply to **Jesus**, such as in verse 7, *“For blest is the wood through which justice comes about.”*
- The author then continues with his condemnation of idolatry.

CHAPTER 15

- The condemnation of idolatry continues, especially as it relates to the Egyptians who held the Israelites in slavery for over 400 years.

CHAPTER 16

- Here the author continues to condemn the Egyptians for their idolatry, and reminds the reader of the plagues that God inflicted upon them.
- But the writer also reminds us of the manna that was given to the people in the desert, and how God *“nourished your people with the food of angels, and furnished them bread from heaven.”*

CHAPTER 17

- The author reminds us that darkness afflicted the Egyptians, while the Israelites had light.

CHAPTER 18

- Finally, after the death of the first-born of all of the Egyptians, they acknowledged that the Hebrew people were God’s chosen ones.

CHAPTER 19

- Once again the author chastises the wicked and the merciless, and points out that *“your people might experience a glorious journey.”*
- The writer then makes reference to the Israelites’ crossing of the Red Sea.
- The author concludes the book, by speaking to God with the words, *“For every way. O Lord! You magnified and glorified your people; unfailing, you stood by them in every time and circumstance,”*

The Book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)

Like the Book of Wisdom, the **Book of Sirach** is included only in Catholic Bibles (not in Protestant Bibles). “**Ecclesiasticus**” means the “ecclesiastical” or “church” book. It was written by a man named **Jesus, son of Eleazor, son of Sirach** (chapter 50, verse 27), who lived in Jerusalem **about 200 years before Jesus Christ was born**. (He is also known as “**Ben Sirach**” or “**Ben Sira**”)

He wrote this book for those “*who wish to acquire wisdom and are disposed to live their lives according to the standards of the law.*” He emphasizes that true wisdom was to be found among the Jewish way of life, not the Greek life of the Gentiles. Like the book of Proverbs, the Book of **Sirach** follows a pattern of giving advice to those who seek to follow the Lord.

FOREWARD

- The **FOREWARD** was written by the author’s grandson who translated the text from the original Hebrew into Greek.

CHAPTER 1

- “All wisdom comes from the Lord, and with him it remains forever.”
- “Before all things else, wisdom was created; and prudent understanding from eternity.”

CHAPTER 2

- “Trust God and he will help you; make straight your ways and hope in him.”

CHAPTER 3

- “He who honors his father atones for sins; he stores up riches who reveres his mother.”
- “Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God. For great is the power of God; by the humble he is glorified.

CHAPTER 4

- “Deliver the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor; let not justice be repugnant to you.”
- “Wisdom instructs her children, and admonishes those who seek her.”
- “Those who serve her serve the Holy One; those who love her, the Lord loves.”

CHAPTER 5

- Delay not your conversion to the Lord, put it not off from day to day.”

CHAPTER 6

- “Say nothing harmful, small or great; be not a foe instead of a friend.”
- “A kind mouth multiplies friends, and gracious lips prompt friendly greetings.”

CHAPTER 7

- “Do no evil, and evil will not overtake you; avoid wickedness, and it will turn aside from you.”
- “With all your strength, love your Creator; forsake not his ministers.”
- “Avoid not those who weep, but mourn with those who mourn.”
- “Neglect not to visit the sick; for these things you will be loved.”

CHAPTER 8

- “Contend not with an influential man, lest you fall into his power.”

CHAPTER 9

- “Be not jealous of the wife of your bosom, lest you teach her to do evil against you.”
- “Discard not an old friend, for the new one can not equal him.”

CHAPTER 10

- “A wise magistrate lends stability to his people, and the government of a prudent man is well ordered.”
- “No matter what the wrong, do no violence to your neighbor, and do not walk the path of arrogance.”

CHAPTER 11

- “The poor man’s wisdom lifts his head high and sets him among princes.”

CHAPTER 12

- “If you do good, know for whom you are doing it, and your kindness will have its effect. Do good to the just man, and reward will be yours; if not from him, then from the Lord.”
- *Notice how Jesus removes the limit of doing good just to those who are just. Jesus commands us to good to everyone, friend and enemy alike.*

CHAPTER 13

- “He who touches pitch blackens his hand; he who associates with an impious man learns his ways.”

CHAPTER 14

- “Happy the man whose mouth brings him no grief, who is not stung by remorse for sin.”
- “Happy the man who meditates on wisdom, and reflects on knowledge.”

CHAPTER 15

- “He who fears the Lord will do this; he who is practiced in the law will come to wisdom.”
- “When God in the beginning, created man, he made him subject to his own free choice.” (*The concept of “free will” that has been granted to all.*)
- “Immense is the wisdom of the Lord; he is mighty in power and all-seeing.”

CHAPTER 16

- “Through one wise man a city can be peopled; through a clan of rebels it becomes desolate.”

CHAPTER 17

- “The Lord from the earth created man, and in his own image he made him.”
- “An everlasting covenant he has made with them; his commandments he has revealed to them.” (*A reference to Moses and Mount Sinai.*)

CHAPTER 18

- “The Eternal is the judge of all things without exception; the Lord alone is just.”
- “Go not after your lusts, but keep your desires in check.”

CHAPTER 19

- “All wisdom is fear of the Lord; perfect wisdom is the fulfillment of the law.”

CHAPTER 20

- “A wise man is silent till the right time comes, but a boasting fool ignores the proper time.”
- “A wise man makes himself popular by a few words, but fools pour forth their blandishments in vain.”

CHAPTER 21

- “My son, if you have sinned, do so no more; and for your past sins, pray to be forgiven.”
- “Flee from sin as from a serpent that will bite you if you go near it. Its teeth are lion’s teeth, destroying the souls of men.”
- “He who keeps the law controls his impulses; he who is perfect in fear of the Lord has wisdom.”
- “Fools’ thoughts are in their mouths; wise men’s words are in their hearts.”

CHAPTER 22

- “The sluggard (*that is, a lazy person*) is like a stone in the mud; everyone hisses at his disgrace.”
- “Should you draw a sword against a friend, despair not, it can be undone.”
- “Should you speak sharply to a friend, fear not, you can be reconciled.”
(*Both of these passages emphasize reconciliation with one another.*)

CHAPTER 23

- “Lord, Father and Master of my life, permit me not to fall by them.”
- “give heed, my children, to the instructions that I pronounce, for he who keeps it will not be enslaved.” (*A reference to being enslaved by sin.*)
- “A man who has the habit of abusive language will never mature in character as long as he lives.”

CHAPTER 24

- “Wisdom sings her own praises, before her own people she proclaims her glory. In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth, in the presence of his hosts she declares her worth.”
- *In verse 3 through 21 the author is writing as if Wisdom was an actual person, and she was actually speaking directly to the reader of the text.*

CHAPTER 25

- “With three things I am delighted, for they are pleasing to the Lord an to men: #1) Harmony among brethren, #2) Friendship among neighbors, and #3) The mutual love of husband and wife.”

CHAPTER 26

- Happy the husband of a good wife, twice-lengthened are his days.”
- “Be he rich or poor, his heart is content, and a smile is ever on his face.”

The Book of Sirach (or “Ecclesiasticus”) – Part II

CHAPTER 27

- “For the sake of profit many sin, and the struggle for wealth blinds their eyes.” (*Consider what led our country into our current Recession!*)
- “If you strive after justice you will attain it, and put it on like a splendid robe.”

CHAPTER 28

- “Forgive your neighbor’s injustice; then, when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven.”
- “Cursed be gossips, and the double-tongued, for they destroy the peace of many.”

CHAPTER 29

- “Lend to your neighbor in his hour of need, and pay back your neighbor when a loan falls due.”
- “Many refuse to lend, not out of meanness, but from fear of being cheated.”
- “To a poor man however, be generous; keep him not waiting for your alms.”
- “Dispose of your treasure as the Most High commands, for that will profit you more than gold.”
- “Going surety (*that is, providing collateral for a neighbor*) has ruined many prosperous men and tossed them about like waves on the sea.”
- “Be it little or much, be content with what you have.”

CHAPTER 30

- “He who loves his son chastises him often, that he may be his joy when he grows up.”
- “A colt untamed turns out stubborn; a son left to himself grows up unruly.”
- “Better a poor man strong and robust, than a rich man with wasted frame.”
- “Envy and anger shorten one’s life, worry brings on premature old age.”

CHAPTER 31

- “Keeping watch over riches waste the flesh, and the care of wealth drives away the rest.”
- “The lover of gold will not be free from sin, for he who pursues wealth is led astray by it.”
- *As for the intake of food and wine*, “Remember that gluttony is evil.”

CHAPTER 32

- *The first part of this chapter deals with table manners, especially when one is the host.*
- *The second part of this chapter talks about the Providence of God.*
- *“He who would find God must accept discipline; he who seeks him obtains his request.”*

CHAPTER 33

- *“The prudent man trusts in the word of the Lord, and the law is dependable for him as a divine oracle.”*
- *“So too, all men are of clay, for from the earth man was formed.”*
- *The second part of this chapter gives advice for leaders of the people.*

CHAPTER 34

- *The first part of this chapter advises the reader to trust in the Lord.*
- *“Divination, omens, and dreams are all unreal.”*
- *The second part of this chapter deals with true worship of God.*

CHAPTER 35

- *“To keep the law is great oblation, and he who observes the commandments sacrifices a peace offering.”*
- *“In generous spirit pay homage to the Lord, be not sparing of freewill gifts.”*
- *“Give the Most High as he has given to you, generously according to your means. For the Lord is one who always repays, and he will give back to you sevenfold.”*

CHAPTER 36

- *The first part of this chapter is a Prayer for God’s People.*
- *“Come to our aid, O God of the universe, and put all the nations in dread of you! Raise your hand against the heathen that they may realize your power.”*
- *“Thus it will be known to the ends of the earth that you are the eternal God.”*
- *The second part of this chapter gives advice as to our choice of associates.*

CHAPTER 37

- *The first part of this chapter gives advice regarding our choice of friends.*
- *“Instead, associate with a religious man who you are sure keeps the commandments; who is like-minded with yourself...”*
- *The second part of this chapter deals with wisdom and temperance.*
- *“The root of all conduct is in the mind.”*

CHAPTER 38

- *The first part of this chapter deals with sickness and death.*
- “My son, when you are ill, delay not, but pray to God who will heal you.”
- *The second part of this chapter deals with various vocations.*
- “All these men are skilled with their hands, each one an expert at his task.”

CHAPTER 39

- *The first part of this chapter discusses those who seek the Lord in their lives,*
- “How different the man who devotes himself to the study of the law of the Most High. He explores the wisdom of the men of old...”
- “His care is to seek the Lord, his Maker, to petition the Most High.”
- *The second part of this chapter discusses Praise of God the Creator.*
- “The works of God, all of them are good; every need, when it comes, he fills”

CHAPTER 40

- *In this chapter we read of how there are joys and miseries in everyone’s life.*
- “But goodness will never be cut off, and justice endures forever.”
- “Wealth and vigor build up confidence, but better than either is fear of God.”

CHAPTER 41

- *The first part of this chapter deal with death which is from the Most High.*
- “Man’s body is temporary, but a virtuous name will never be annihilated.”
- *The second part of this chapter deals with shame before others in life.*
- “Before father and mother, be ashamed of immorality.”
- “Be ashamed of thief from the people where you settle.”

CHAPTER 42

- *The first part of this chapter deals with things we should **not** be ashamed of.*
- “Of the law of the Most High and his precepts...” (**not** to be ashamed of!)
- *The second part of this chapter discusses a father’s care for his daughter.*
- *The third part of this chapter deals with the Works of God in Nature.*

CHAPTER 43

- “The clear vault of the sky shines forth like heaven itself, a vision of glory.”
- *The writer then goes on to discuss the moon, rainbows, lightning, etc. and the things of nature that are made by God.*
- “It is the Lord who has made all things, and to those who fear him he gives wisdom.”

CHAPTER 44

- *The emphasis of this chapter is the praise of Israel's Great Ancestors.*
- "Now I will praise those godly men, our ancestors..."
- "Through God's covenant with them their family endures, their posterity for their sake."
- "Their bodies are peacefully laid away, but their name lives on and on."
- *In the second part of this chapter, we read of the Early Patriarchs.*
- "Enoch walked with the Lord, and was taken up." (*Like the prophet Elijah, Enoch did not die, but was taken alive to God's abode.*) (See Genesis 5:24)
- References to Enoch are then followed by Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

CHAPTER 45

- *Praises are then bestowed upon Moses, Aaron, and Phinehas.*

CHAPTER 46

- *The praises continue for Joshua, Caleb, and the Judges (especially Samuel).*

CHAPTER 47

- *The praises continue for Nathan, David, and Solomon.*

CHAPTER 48

- *The praises continue for the prophets Elijah and Elisha.*
- *The praises continue for the prophets Hezekiah and Isaiah.*

CHAPTER 49

- *The praises continue for Josiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah. References are then made to Enoch, Joseph, Shem, Seth, and Enos, and finally to Adam.*

CHAPTER 50

- *The praises continue for Simon, the priest, son of Jochanan.*
- *The book concludes with the author stating, "Wise instruction, appropriate proverbs, I have written in this book. I, Jesus, son of Eleazar, son of Sirach, as they gushed forth from my heart's understanding."*

CHAPTER 51

- "I give you thanks, O God of my father; I praise you, O God my savior!"
- "Work at your tasks in due season, and in his own time God will give you your reward."

The Prophets

Contrary to popular belief, the Prophets were *not* “fortune tellers” who were looking “into the future.” Rather, they were **Messengers of God** who witnessed the actions of the Hebrews and called **the people to radical obedience and dependence on God**. The communications they received from God came through visions, dreams, and ecstasies, and were transmitted to the people through sermons, writings, and symbolic actions. **The words of the Prophets intensified the expectations of the people in terms of the coming Messiah and His kingdom.**

The first two Prophets mentioned in the time of the divided kingdoms of **Israel** (in the north) and **Judah** (in the south) were **Elijah** and **Elisha**. They lived in **Israel** during the reign of the evil **King Ahab** (the husband of **Jezebel**, who worshipped the false god **Baal**) during the ninth century B.C. We first hear of **Elijah** and **Elisha** in the **First Book of Kings** (chapters 17 and 19, respectively) and the stories of their lives continue into the **Second Book of Kings** (with their deaths recorded in chapters 2 and 13, respectively). **Elijah** was taken up to heaven in a flaming chariot in the year **870 B.C.** (see **2 Kings 2:11**) and **Elisha** succeeded him shortly thereafter. *There are no books in the Bible attributed to these two Prophets, but their accomplishments are legendary.*

In the Catholic Bible there are eighteen books that are attributed to the Prophets, beginning with Isaiah and concluding with Malachi. However, the books in the Bible are *not* placed in the order in which the Prophets lived. *To see the chronological order of the Prophets, see the chart on the following page.* As you will see, the time of the Prophets ranged **from 870 B.C. to 424 B.C.** For ease of study, we will read the books in the order in which they appear in the Bible.

The Prophets **Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel** wrote the three longest books of prophetic writings, and they are the ones that we hear most often being read at Mass. But the other Prophets also appear in the Mass readings from time to time.

NOTE: Twelve of the Prophets lived before the Babylonian Exile in 587 B.C.

Three Prophets lived during the time of the Babylonian Exile:

Baruch - Daniel - Ezekiel

Three Prophets lived after the Hebrew people had returned to Jerusalem:

Haggai - Zechariah - Malachi

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah

The Prophet **Isaiah** was the son of **Amoz**, and he was called by God to prophesy in **Jerusalem** (in the southern kingdom of **Judah**). The **first 39 chapters** of this book were written during the reign of the kings **Uzziah (or Azariah), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah** (in the years **742 B.C. to 680 B.C.**) **Assyria** was still the world power at this time, and it would soon conquer the northern kingdom of **Israel**. This corresponds to the period recorded in the **Second Book of Kings, chapter 15 through 21** (especially chapters 19 and 20 when **Isaiah** is described in his discussions with **King Hezekiah**).

Chapters **40 through 55** were written during the Babylonian Exile, and chapters **56 through 66** were written after the Exile when the people returned to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 1

- **Isaiah** speaks for the Lord, chastising the people for *“They have forsaken the Lord, spurned the Holy One of Israel.”*
- **Isaiah**, again speaking for God, points out that the number of sacrifices of the people is not as important as the actions of the people. *“Trample my courts no more! Bring no more worthless offerings.”*
- Rather, the Lord demands of the people, *“Make justice your aim, redress the wronged, hear the orphan’s plea.”*
- And the Lord reminds the people that, *“Zion shall be redeemed by judgment, and her repentant ones by justice.”*

CHAPTER 2

- **Isaiah** then speaks about **Judah** and its capital city, **Jerusalem**, and how *“all nations shall stream toward it.”*
- **Isaiah** then tells us, speaking of **the Lord**, *“He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many people. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again.”*
- Then the **Lord** will judge against idols, *“and the idols will perish forever.”*

CHAPTER 3

- **Isaiah** tells the reader of the anarchy that will exist in **Jerusalem** and Judah.
- He reminds the people that, *“Happy the just, for it will be well with them, the fruit of their works they will eat. But woe to the wicked man.”*
- And *“The Lord enters into judgment with his people’s elders and princes.”*

CHAPTER 4

- In this chapter we have the first reference to the coming of the **Messiah**:
“the branch of the Lord will be luster and glory.”

CHAPTER 5

- **Isaiah** compares the Lord’s chosen people to a vineyard: *“The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel.”*
- He then condemns the unjust who have taken over the land of others.
- However, **Isaiah** reminds the people, *“but the Lord of hosts shall be exalted by his judgment, and God the Holy shall be shown holy by his justice.”*
- Next **Isaiah** speaks of the invasion of the army from **Assyria**.

CHAPTER 6

- **Isaiah** describes his calling from the Lord and his vision in the Temple.
- *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts!”* (**words that are used in the Mass**)
- **Isaiah** then describes himself as a man of unclean lips, but the Seraphim touches an ember to the lips of Isaiah, and he can now speak for the Lord.
- **Isaiah** responds, *“Here I am; send me!”* And the Lord sends him forth.

CHAPTER 7

- **Ahaz** is king of **Judah**, and Judah is attacked by Aram (Syria) and Israel.
- The Lord instructs **Isaiah** to advise **Ahaz** not to fear and to have confidence. But Ahaz is hesitant to ask the Lord for a sign, so **Isaiah** tells him,
“Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.” (**See Matthew 1:23**)

CHAPTER 8

- **Isaiah** and his wife (a prophetess) have a son named Maher-shalal-hash-baz.
- **Isaiah** speaks of the lands of **Zebulun** and **Nephtali**. (**See Matthew 4:15**)

CHAPTER 9

- **Isaiah** tells the Hebrews, *“The people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwell in the land of gloom a light has shown.”* (**See Matt 4:16**)
- *“For a child is born to us, a son is given us, upon his shoulders dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Prince of Peace.”*
- **Aram (the Syrian kingdom) and the Philistines** conquer **Israel** (the northern kingdom). But the Lord does not abandon His people. *“For all this, his wrath is not turned back, his hand is still outstretched!”*

CHAPTER 10

- **Isaiah** speaks on behalf of social justice. *“Woe to those who enact unjust statutes and who write oppressive decrees, depriving the needy of judgment and robbing my people’s poor of their rights, making the wisdom their plunder, and orphans their prey.”*
- **Isaiah** speaks against **Assyria** that has conquered **Israel**. *“Woe to Assyria! My rod in anger, my staff in wrath.”*
- And **Isaiah** promises that, *“The Light of Israel will become a fire, Israel’s Holy One a flame.”*

CHAPTER 11

- *“But a root shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord will rest upon him; a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord.”* (**NOTE: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**)
- And **Isaiah** tells the people, *“Then the wolf will be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion will browse together, with a little child to guide them.”*
- And, *“There shall be no harm or run on all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea.”*
- **Isaiah** prophesies that **Judah** and **Israel** shall one day come back together. *“The Lord shall again take it in hand to reclaim the remnant of his people that is left from Assyria and Egypt.”*

CHAPTER 12

- **Isaiah** predicts that, on that day, the people will give thanks to the Lord. *“I give you thanks, O Lord; though you have been angry with me, your anger has abated, and you have consoled me.”*

CHAPTER 13

- In chapters **13** through **23** the Prophet **Isaiah** has visions concerning the neighboring countries and kingdoms surrounding the Jewish people.
- *“Are Babylon, the jewel of the kingdoms, the glory and pride of the Chaldeans, shall be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah.”*

CHAPTER 14

- **Isaiah** prophesies that **Israel** will once again be returned to its own land, and the Israelites will speak out against the **king of Babylon**.
- The Lord then promises the destruction of the **Assyrians** and the **Philistines**.

CHAPTER 15

- **Isaiah** presents his **oracle (a divine prediction or revelation)** on **Moab**.

CHAPTER 16

- **Isaiah** continues his oracle on **Moab**.

CHAPTER 17

- **Isaiah** presents his oracle on **Damascus** (the capital of **Syria**).

CHAPTER 18

- **Isaiah** presents his oracle on **Ethiopia**.

CHAPTER 19

- **Isaiah** presents his oracle on **Egypt**.

CHAPTER 20

- The **Lord** instructs **Isaiah** to “*walk naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and portent against Egypt and Ethiopia.*”

CHAPTER 21

- **Isaiah** presents another oracle on **Babylon**, the “*wastelands by the sea.*”
- **Isaiah** presents oracles on **Edom** and **Arabia**.

CHAPTER 22

- **Isaiah** presents his oracle on **Jerusalem**, “*The Valley of Vision.*”

CHAPTER 23

- **Isaiah** presents his oracle on **Tyre** and **Sidon**.

CHAPTER 24

- **Isaiah** speaks of the devastation of the world, “*Lo, the Lord empties the land and lays it waste; he turns it upside down, scattering its inhabitants.*”
- But **Isaiah** concludes this chapter by pointing out that, “*Then the moon will blush and the sun will grow pale, for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, glorious in the sight of his elders.*”

CHAPTER 25

- **Isaiah**: “*O Lord, you are my God; I will extol you and praise your name.*”

CHAPTER 26

- **Isaiah** sings a song in the land of **Judah**, *“Trust in the Lord forever! For the Lord is an eternal Rock.”*

CHAPTER 27

- **Isaiah** speaks of the Day of the Lord, prefaced with, *“On that day.”*

CHAPTER 28

- **Isaiah** prophecies about **Samaria** and **Judah**.

CHAPTER 29

- **Isaiah** speaks of the fall of **Jerusalem**, *“the city where David encamped.”*
- The **Lord** is disappointed with the people and says, *“Since this people draws near with words only and honors me with their lips alone, though their hearts are far from me, and their reverence for me has become routine observance of the precepts of men. “(Jesus quotes this in **Matthew 15:8-9**)*
- But the **Lord** continues with His plan of redemption with, *“The lowly will ever find joy in the Lord, and the poor rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.”*

CHAPTER 30

- **Isaiah** chastises the people for their alliance with **Egypt**.
- However, he also points out there will be redemption for the people of **Israel**, *“Yet the Lord is waiting to show you favor, and he rises to pity you; for the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all who wait for him.”*
- As for **Assyria**, *“When the Lord speaks, Assyria will be shattered, as he strikes with the rod.”*

CHAPTER 31

- **Isaiah** advises the people not to form an alliance with Egypt. *“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help...”* rather than relying on the **Lord**.
- *“So the Lord of hosts shall shield Jerusalem...”* and *“Assyria shall fall...”*

CHAPTER 32

- **Isaiah** prophecies a kingdom of justice, *“See a king will reign justly and princes will rule rightly.”* And then extraordinary peace will come to **Israel**.
- *“Right will dwell in the desert... . . . and justice will bring about peace.”*

CHAPTER 33

- **Isaiah** prophecies about the overthrow of **Assyria**. The Lord will be exalted.

CHAPTER 34

- “The Lord is angry with all of the nations... “(especially **Edom**).

CHAPTER 35

- **Israel** will be delivered, and “*The desert and the parched land will exult...*”
- “*They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God.*”

CHAPTER 36

- **Hezekiah** is now king of **Judah** (the southern kingdom) and **Sennacherib**, king of **Assyria**, captures all of the fortified cities of Judah. The commander of the Assyria army challenges King Hezekiah to a wager.
- The king of **Assyria** challenges the people by saying, “*Do not let Hezekiah induce you to rely on the Lord.*” Then the king of **Assyria** advises the people to surrender to him, ignoring the **Lord** and **King Hezekiah**.
- (For more details about these events, see **2 Kings 18:13-20**.)

CHAPTER 37

- **King Hezekiah** sent **Eliakim** and **Shebna** to the prophet **Isaiah** and they ask **Isaiah** to “*Send up a prayer for the remnant that is here.*”
- **Isaiah** responds by saying, “*Thus says the Lord: Do not be frightened by the words you have heard.*”
- **King Hezekiah** goes to the **Temple** to pray to God, asking God to, “*Save us from his hand, that the kingdoms of the earth by know that you, O Lord, alone are God.*”
- **Isaiah** responds to **King Hezekiah** by saying, “*Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel...*” and **Isaiah** speaks of what will happen to **King Sennacherib** (that his soldiers would be killed, and **King Sennacherib** would return to **Nineveh**, and later be killed by his own sons).

CHAPTER 38

- **King Hezekiah** becomes mortally ill, and he prays to God for health. Through the prophet **Isaiah** the Lord gives **Hezekiah** fifteen additional years. **Hezekiah** then sings a hymn of thanksgiving. “*The Lord is our savior; we shall sing to the stringed instruments in the house of the Lord all the days of our life.*”

CHAPTER 39

- **Isaiah** prophecies of the **Exile to Babylon**, and **King Hezekiah** responds by giving thanks to God that, “*There will be peace and security in my lifetime.*”

The Second Part of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

In **chapter 40** we jump ahead one hundred and fifty years, **from 690 B.C. to the final year of the Babylon Exile in 539 B.C.** The writer of this second part of the book is unknown to us, but he is writing at a time when **King Cyrus** is in power. (He was the king of **Persia** from **559 B.C. to 529 B.C.** and he enabled the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple.) In this part of the book the people are preparing for “**the new exodus**” from the Exile in Babylon back to the Promised Land of Israel. *The emphasis of this second part of Isaiah is on the power of God’s divine word.*

CHAPTER 40

- The writer tells of God’s plan for the people to return to **Jerusalem**.
- *A voice cries out: “In the desert prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!”* (See **Matt 3:3** and **Luke 1:76**)
- *“Here comes with power the Lord God, who rules by his strong arm.”*
- *“They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles’ wings; they will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint.”*

CHAPTER 41

- In this chapter, **the Lord** prepares the people for **King Cyrus**, “*the champion of justice*” who leads the people back to **Israel**.
- *“Fear not, I am with you; e not dismayed, I am your God.”*
- **The Lord** then warns the people not to get involved with idols.

CHAPTER 42

- Here the writer speaks for the **first time** of the **Servant of the Lord**: *“Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased.”*
- *“A bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench, until he establishes justice on the earth.”*
- *“I, the Lord. Have called you for the victory of justice.”*
- *“Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth.”*
- The **people** recognize that they have sinned, and they ask, *“Was it not the Lord against whom we have sinned?”*

CHAPTER 43

- And **the Lord** responds, *“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, and you are mine.”*
- And **He** reminds the people, *“It is I, the Lord; there is no savior but me.”*

CHAPTER 44

- **God** reminds us, *“I am the first and I am the last; there is no God but me.”*
- And **God** tells the people, *“Idol makers all amount to nothing.”*
- *“I say to Jerusalem: Be inhabited; to the cities of Judah: be rebuilt. I will raise up their ruins.”* **The Lord** refers to **King Cyrus** as, *“My shepherd.”*

CHAPTER 45

- The **Lord** speaks to **King Cyrus**, even though King Cyrus does not know God. But the **Gentiles** (that is, the non-Jews) will come to know God.
- And **God** tells **Cyrus**, *“There is no safe and saving God but me. Turn to me and be safe, all you ends of the earth, for I am God, there is no other.”*

CHAPTER 46

- Here **the Lord** speaks of the helplessness of the false gods of **Babylon**.
- God says, *“I am God, there is no other; I am God, there is none like me.”*

CHAPTER 47

- The **Lord** speaks of **the fall of Babylon**; *“But upon you shall come evil you will not know how to predict. Disaster shall befall you which you can not allay. Suddenly there shall come upon you ruin which you will not expect.”*

CHAPTER 48

- **The Lord** then speaks to **the people of Israel**, *“From now on I announce new things to you, hidden events of which you knew not.”*
- **King Cyrus** proclaims, *“Now the Lord has sent me, and his spirit.”*
- And **God** says to the Hebrews, *“Go forth from Babylon, flee from Chaldea.”*

CHAPTER 49

- For the **second time** the writer speaks of the **Servant of the Lord**, *“Hear me O coastlands, listen O distant people. The Lord called me from birth, from my mother’s womb he gave me my name.”*
- *“You are my servant, he said to me, Israel, through whom I show my glory.”*
- *“I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”*
- Some of the people of Israel (**Zion**) believe that the Lord has forgotten them.
- But the **Lord** replies, *“Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you.”*
- The chapter concludes with **the Lord** saying, *“All mankind shall know that I, the Lord, am your savior, your redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.”*

CHAPTER 50

- For a **third time** the writer speaks of the **Servant of the Lord**, and he tells the people that. *“The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will arouse them.”*
- *“Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back.”*
- *“I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my bears; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.”* (See **John 19:24**)

CHAPTER 51

- **The Lord** says, *“Listen to me, you who pursue justice, who seek the Lord.”*
- *“Be attentive to me, my people... raise your eyes to the heavens.”*
- *“For I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the Lord of host by name.”*
- **The Lord** then challenges the people, *“Awake, awake! Arise, O Jerusalem.”*

CHAPTER 52

- Again the **Lord** says: *“Awake, awake! Put on your strength O Zion.”*
Then **the Lord** reminds the people of the **Exodus from Egypt** and compares it to the return from **Exile in Babylon**.
The **fourth (and last)** reference to the **Servant of the Lord**: *See my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted.”*

CHAPTER 53

- But **God** tells us that the **Servant** will suffer – and then **triumph over sin**.
- *“Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured. While we thought of him as stricken, and as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offense, crushed for our sins. Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we are healed.”*
- *“We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way. But the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.”*
- *“Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth.”*
- *“A grave was assigned to him among the wicked and a burial place with evildoers, though he had done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood.”*
- *“Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear.”*
- *And he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses.”*

CHAPTER 54

- The Lord tells **Jerusalem** (“you barren one”) to be ready to receive the exiled people returning from **Babylon**.
- *“Though the mountains leave their place and the hills be shaken, my love shall never leave you nor my covenant of peace be shaken, says the Lord, who has mercy on you.”*

CHAPTER 55

- **The Lord** invites the people to grace: *“All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat. Come without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk!”*
- *“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call him while he is near.”*

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The Third Part of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

In chapter 56 the writer begins speaking during the period in which the **Hebrew** people have returned to Jerusalem (**in 539 B.C.**) and have begun to rebuild the city.

CHAPTER 56

- Thus says **the Lord**: *“Observe what is right, do what is just, for my salvation is about to come, my justice about to be revealed.”*
- *“For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.”* (**NOTE: Jesus** quotes this text in the cleansing of the temple.) (**See Luke 19:46**)

CHAPTER 57

- **The Lord** makes a contrast between the just man (who, upon death, enters peace), and the faithless people (especially those who worship false gods).

CHAPTER 58

- The Lord speaks to those who worship him in word only, and not deeds.
- The people then ask **God** why He is not noticing their fasting, and **the Lord** questions their lack of actions that support their fasting. Then **God** tells the people: *“This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bounds unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.”*

CHAPTER 59

- The Lord points out that it is sin that separates us from God.
- Then the people recognize this fact that, *“That is why right is far from us.”*
- But **the Lord** promises, *“He shall come to Zion a redeemer to those of Jacob who turn from sin, says the Lord.”*

CHAPTER 60

- The Lord proclaims the glory of the new Jerusalem by saying, *“Rise up in splendor! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you.”*
- *“Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah. All from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the Lord.”* (NOTE: The **Magi** in **Matthew 2:10-11**)

CHAPTER 61

- *“The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the brokenhearted; To proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners; To announce a year of favor from the Lord and a day of vindication by our God, to comfort all who mourns.”*
- **NOTE: Jesus** reads this text in the synagogue in Nazareth. (See **Luke 4:18**)

CHAPTER 62

- *“For Zion’s sake I will not be silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet... ..for the Lord’s delights in you, and makes your land his spouse.”*
- *“See, the Lord proclaims to the ends of the earth: Say to daughter Zion, your savior comes!”*

CHAPTER 63

- **The Lord** points out that He alone can avenge injustice against His enemies.
- The people remember all that God did for them at the time of Moses, and they say to God, *“Thus you led your people, bringing glory to your name.*
- *“Look down from heaven and regard us from your holy and glorious palace!”*

CHAPTER 64

- The dialogue between **God** and the people continues, and they people admit that, though they have wandered from **the Lord**, God remains with them.
- The people say, *“Yet, O Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you are the potter: we are all the work of your hands.”*

CHAPTER 65

- **The Lord** reminds the people that He has never abandoned them, and He said: *“Here I am! Here I am! To a nation that did not call upon my name.”*
- **The Lord** promises to renew the world: *“Lo, I am about to create new heavens and a new earth.”* (See **Revelation 21:1-4**)
- *“For I create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight.”*
- *“The wolf and the lamb shall graze alike, and the lion shall eat hay like the ox (but the serpent’s food shall be dust).”*
- *“None shall hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.”*

CHAPTER 66

- The book of the prophet Isaiah closes with **the Lord** speaking to the people about true and false worship, and **the Lord** says, *“This is the one whom I approve: the lowly and afflicted man who trembles at my word.”*
- Only **the Lord** will repay the enemies of Israel.
- *“Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her, all you who love her.”*
- *“As a mother comforts her son, so will I comfort you; in Jerusalem you shall find your comfort.”*
- Finally **the Lord** promises to bring His message to all nations: *“I come to gather nations of every language; they shall come and see my glory.”*
- *“From one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind shall come to worship before me, says the Lord.”*

The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

Jeremiah was born in about **650 B.C.** to a priestly family of the village of Anathoth, near Jerusalem. While in his early twenties **Jeremiah** was called by God to prophesy in **Jerusalem**, the capital city of **Judah**, for forty years, **from 626 B.C. to 586 B.C.**

The godly **King Josiah**, who ruled from 640 B.C. to 609 B.C., was in his thirteenth year of his reign when the Lord called **Jeremiah**. After the death of **King Josiah in 609 B.C.**, the old ways of idolatry returned to the lives of the Hebrew people. It was during this time that **Babylon** overthrew **Nineveh** (which was the capital of **Assyria**) in **612 B.C.**, and this prepared the way for the new empire of **Babylon**, led by **King Nebuchadnezzar**.

Jeremiah continued to prophesy throughout the reign of **King Jehoahaz** (609 B.C.)... **King Jehoiakim** (from 609 B.C. to 598 B.C.).....**King Jehoiachin** (from 598 B.C. to 597 B.C.) and.....**King Zedekiah** (from 597 B.C. to 586 B.C.). *King Zedekiah was the last of the kings of Judah.* In 587 B.C. **Nebuchadnezzar** (king of **Babylon**) captured **Jerusalem** and carried the Hebrew people into **exile in Babylon** for the next forty years. This was Jeremiah's greatest fear and, unfortunately, it came true just as the Lord had promised. But, as we will see from reading the text, *God never abandons His people.* He once again establishes His **Covenant** with the people of **Israel**, and they eventually return to **Jerusalem**.

CHAPTER 1

- The **Lord** calls **Jeremiah**, son of **Hilkiah**, with the words, *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you."* But **Jeremiah** resists, replying, *"Ah, Lord God! I know not how to speak. I am too young."*
- And **the Lord** tells **Jeremiah**: *Say not, "I am too young. To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak."*
- **The Lord** then tells **Jeremiah** of the evil that will come from the north.

CHAPTER 2

- The Lord instructs **Jeremiah** to speak to the people of **Jerusalem**, reminding them of how they once loved the Lord, but then rebelled against God. *"Listen to the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob!"*
- *"As the thief is shamed when caught, so shall the house of Israel be shamed; they, their kings and their princes, their priests and their prophets."*

CHAPTER 3

- **The Lord** compares the evil ways of “**rebellious Israel**” (the north) and “**her traitor sister Judah**” (the south) as they have turned to false gods.
- The Lord instructs Jeremiah to proclaim to the north, “*Return, rebel Israel, says the Lord, I will not remain angry with you.*”
- And then **the Lord** proclaims that the houses of **Israel** and **Judah** will come together again in **Jerusalem**.

CHAPTER 4

- However, **the Lord** continues to call the people of **Israel** to repentance.
- Then **the Lord** predicts the **Babylonian Exile** (“*the evil from the north*”).
- Jeremiah laments the fall of Jerusalem: “*My breast! How I suffer!*”

CHAPTER 5

- **Jeremiah** points out that everyone in **Jerusalem** has rebelled against God.
- But there is hope: “*Yet even in those days, says the Lord, I will not wholly destroy you.*”

CHAPTER 6

- **Jeremiah** continues to warn the people of the impending doom.
- “*See, I bring evil upon this people, the fruit of their own schemes, because they heeded not my words, because they despised my laws.*”

CHAPTER 7

- Now **Judah** is ruled by **King Jehoiakim** (from 609 B.C. to 598 B.C.).
- **Jeremiah** speaks to the people from the “*gate of the house of the Lord.*”
- Thus says **the Lord**, “*Reform your ways and your deeds, so that I may remain with you in this place.*”

CHAPTER 8

- **Jeremiah** expresses his pain and sorrow: “*My grief is incurable, my heart within me is faint... ..Is there no balm in Gilead, no physician there?*”

CHAPTER 9

- “*They go from evil to evil, but they know me not, says the Lord.*”
- “*Violence upon violence, deceit upon deceit. They refuse to recognize me, says the Lord.*”
- *I will turn Jerusalem into a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals.*”
- “*I will give them wormwood to eat, and poison to drink.*”

CHAPTER 10

- Through the prophets **Jeremiah**, the Lord speaks against the false gods.
- Jeremiah petitions the Lord with prayer on behalf of the people.

CHAPTER 11

- The Lord instructs **Jeremiah** to speak to the people of Judah and to instruct them to. *“Listen to my voice and do all that I command you. Then you shall be my people and I will be your God.”*
- But **the Lord** still chastises the people for their worship of false gods.

CHAPTER 12

- **Jeremiah** asks the question: *“Why do the ways of the godless prosper?”*
- **Jeremiah** knows that, *“You, O Lord, know me, you see me, you have found that at heart I am with you.”*
- But **Jeremiah** begins to recognize that the people are plotting against him.

CHAPTER 13

- **The Lord** continues to speak out against Judah’s corruption, using the example of the **loincloth** that has rotted, just as their relationship has.
- **The Lord** uses a similar analogy using the example of a **wineflask**.
- **The Lord** gives a final warning to the people, and then predicts the Exile: *“All Judah is banished in universal exile.”*

CHAPTER 14

- **The Lord** speaks of the great drought that will befall the people of **Judah**.
- **The Lord** instructs **Jeremiah**. *“Do not intercede for this people.”*

CHAPTER 15

- **The Lord** speaks out against the people: *“Who will pity you, Jerusalem, who will console you? Who will stop to ask about your welfare?”*
- **Jeremiah** is greatly troubled: *“Woe to me, mother, that you gave me birth!”*

CHAPTER 16

- **The Lord** instructs **Jeremiah** not to marry, nor to have sons or daughters.
- **God** then explains to **Jeremiah** the specific sins of the people.

CHAPTER 17

- The people of **Judah** have sinned, and God has promised punishment.
- The Lord then provides true wisdom and guidance for the people.

CHAPTER 18

- **The Lord** compares Himself to a **potter**, and says, *“Indeed, like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, house of Israel.”*
- **The Lord** points out, *“But if a nation which I have threatened turns from its evil, I also repent of the evil which I threatened to do.”*
- The people contrive another plot against **Jeremiah**, and Jeremiah cries out to the Lord to rescue him – and to *“Forgive not their crime.”*

CHAPTER 19

- The Lord instructs **Jeremiah** to buy a potter’s flask, and to break the flask in front of the people as a sign of the way the Lord will deal with the people.

CHAPTER 20

- The priest **Pashhur** hears **Jeremiah** prophesying, and scourges **Jeremiah** and places him in the stocks as punishment for his prophecy.
- For thus says **the Lord**, *“All Judah I will deliver to the king of Babylon, who shall take them captive to Babylon, or slay them with the sword.”*
- **Jeremiah** now has an interior crisis: *“You duped me, O Lord, and I allowed myself to be duped; you were too strong for me, and you triumphed. All the day I am an object of laughter; everyone mocks me.”*
- But **Jeremiah** does not lose faith: *“but the Lord is with me, like a mighty champion; my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph.”*

CHAPTER 21

- Now **Judah** is ruled by **King Zedekiah** (from 597 to 586 B.C.), the last of the kings of Judah.
- **Nebuchadnezzar**, king of **Babylon**, begins his attack on the people of Judah. **King Zedekiah** asks **Jeremiah** to speak to **the Lord** for advice.
- **The Lord** advises **King Zedekiah** not to resist the king of Babylon, as this will result in death. As a result, **Jeremiah** is viewed as a traitor.

CHAPTER 22

- **Jeremiah** speaks out against **some of the kings of Judah** (those who have turned toward idolatry and have led the people away from the Lord).

CHAPTER 23

- Here we have a prediction of the **Messiah**: *“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up a righteous shoot to David; as king he shall reign and govern wisely, he shall do what is just and right in the land.”*

CHAPTER 24

- **The Lord** shows **Jeremiah** two baskets of **figs** – one with excellent figs, the other with very bad figs. The Lord then tells Jeremiah that the good people “shall return to me with their own heart.” As for the evil people, *“I will make them an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth.”*

CHAPTER 25

- **The Lord** Then tells **Jeremiah** that the people will spend *“seventy years in exile, enslaved to the king of Babylon.”*
- However, *“at the end of the seventy years, the Lord will punish the king of Babylon and the nation and the land of the Chaldeans for their guilt.”*
- **The Lord** will then pass judgment on all the evil nations of the world and says, *“None will mourn them, none will gather them for burial.”*

CHAPTER 26

- **The Lord** commands **Jeremiah** to speak His words, challenging the people.
- The priests and prophets respond by saying to **Jeremiah**, *“You must be put to death!”* **Jeremiah** informed them that he was speaking on behalf of the Lord, and the people believed him and withdrew their threat to kill him.

CHAPTER 27

- **The Lord** tells the people that they are to serve **King Nebuchadnezzar** until that time that the Lord turns **Babylon** into a nation of servants.
- **Jeremiah** reinforces the words of the Lord in his speaking with **King Zedekiah**. But he promises the king that **the Lord** will look for His people, and the Lord *“will bring them back and restore them to this place.”*

CHAPTER 28

- The false prophet **Hananiah** tells Jeremiah that **the Lord** *“will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.”* At first **Jeremiah** is pleased, but later
- a dispute between **Jeremiah** and **Hananiah** develops over Hananiah’s *“raising false confidence in the people.”* That same year **Hananiah** dies.

CHAPTER 29

- **Jeremiah** then writes to the people who are in exile in **Babylon**, speaking on behalf of the Lord, and he reiterates the promise of the Lord to bring the people back to **Jerusalem** after seventy years.
- The false prophet **Shemaiah** is punished by God because *“Shemaiah prophesies to you without a mission from me, and raises false confidence.”*

CHAPTER 30

- **The Lord** instructs **Jeremiah** to “*Write all the words I have given you in a book. For behold, the days will come, says the Lord, when I will change the lot of my people (of **Israel** and **Judah**), and bring the back to the land which I gave to their fathers; they shall have it as their possession.*”
- “*Strangers shall no longer enslave them; instead, they shall serve the Lord their God, and David, their king whom I will raise up for them.*”

CHAPTER 31

- **The Lord** predicts the return of the people to **Jerusalem**: “*At that time, says the Lord, I will be the God of all the tribes of Israel, and they shall be my people.*”
- Next **the Lord** makes reference to **Rachel**, the wife of **Jacob** and the grandmother of **Ephraim**, the chief of the northern tribes that fell to Assyria.
- “*In Ramah is heard the sound of moaning, a bitter weeping! Rachel mourns her children, she refuses to be consoled because her children are no more.*”
- (See **Matt 2:8** for the reference to Herod’s slaughter of the innocents.)
- Here **the Lord** reiterates His **Covenant** with the people of **Israel**: “*The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah... .. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God and they shall be my people.*”
- **The Lord** then proclaims that the city of **Jerusalem**, “*shall be rebuilt as the Lord’s Never again shall the city be rooted up or thrown down.*”

CHAPTER 32

- **The Lord** instructs **Jeremiah** to “Buy for yourself my field in Anathoth.”
- **Jeremiah** then gives the deed of purchase to **Baruch**, his scribe. **Baruch** puts the two copies of the deed into an earthen jar so that they can be kept there a long time. This represents the rebuilding of **Jerusalem**.
- Again **the Lord** spells out the terms of the new covenant with His people.

CHAPTER 33

- **The Lord** speaks of **Jerusalem** when He says, “*Behold, I will treat and assuage the city’s wounds; I will heal them, and reveal to them an abundance of lasting peace.*”
- The future is proclaimed with, “*The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and Judah.*”

The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah – Part II

The second part of the **Book of the Prophet Jeremiah** picks up during the time of **King Zedekiah**, the last king of **Judah** (the southern kingdom), who reigned from 597 B.C. to 586 B.C. In **587 B.C.** the Jews were exiled to **Babylon** under **King Nebuchadnezzar**, and they stayed there for fifty years until **538 B.C.**

Throughout this second part of the book, **the Lord** continues to reach out to the people who have turned away from Him, but the people continue to rebuke the Lord and all of His ways. The majority of the people in **Jerusalem** are exiled to **Babylon** under **King Nebuchadnezzar**, and the remaining people of **Judah** flees to **Egypt**, which was against the will of God.

CHAPTER 34

- **The Lord** promises to hand over the Hebrew people to the king of **Babylon**.
- **King Zedekiah** issues *an edict of emancipation* so that all Hebrew slaves were to be set free. But then the owners took back their slaves (whom they had set free) and again forced them into service. This displeased the Lord.
- Then **the Lord** promises to hand over the people to **King Nebuchadnezzar**.

CHAPTER 35

- **The Lord**, speaking through **Jeremiah**, points out how the **Rechabites** had been faithful to their vows, in contrast to the people of **Jerusalem** who had disobeyed the Lord. So **the Lord** says, *“I will bring upon Judah and all the citizens of Jerusalem every evil that I threatened.”*

CHAPTER 36

- **The Lord** instructs **Jeremiah** to take a scroll and write all of the words that the Lord had spoken to him, beginning with the days of **King Josiah**.
- So **Jeremiah** called **Baruch**, his scribe, and he writes down all of the words.
- The scroll was read to **King Jehoiakim**, king of Judah (before **Zedekiah**), but he had the scroll burned in a fire; the word of the Lord had no effect on him.
- **The Lord** tells **Jeremiah** to take another scroll and dictate the words to **Baruch** again. *(These writings of Baruch are what we have in the Bible.)*

CHAPTER 37

- **King Zedekiah** asks **Jeremiah** *“to pray to the Lord, our God, for us.”*
- **Jeremiah** is accused of deserting to the **Chaldeans**, who were attacking **Jerusalem**, and he denies it. But he is then placed in a vaulted dungeon.

CHAPTER 38

- **Jeremiah** speaks the truth and is thrown into a cistern, full of mud.
- **Jeremiah** is released from the cistern, but remains incarcerated.
- **King Zedekiah** asks **Jeremiah** what **the Lord** has revealed to him, and **Jeremiah** tells the king that, *“If you surrender to the princes of Babylon’s king, you shall save your life and the city will not be destroyed by fire.”*
- But **King Zedekiah** is afraid that he will be handed over to the men of Judah who have deserted to the **Chaldeans**, so he refuses to surrender to Babylon, Jeremiah remains incarcerated until the day **Jerusalem** is taken captive.

CHAPTER 39

- **King Zedekiah** is captured by **King Nebuchadnezzar**, His sons are slain and then **Zedekiah** is blinded and bound in chains, and taken to **Babylon**.
- The **Chaldeans** set fire to the king’s palace and the houses of the people, and demolish the walls of **Jerusalem**.
- Jeremiah is allowed to go home and to remain among his people.

CHAPTER 40

- **Jeremiah** is released and is sent to **Gedaliah**, (the new ruler of the land of Judah). They settle in **Mizpah**, in the land of **Judah**.

CHAPTER 41

- **Gedaliah** is assassinated by **Ishmael**, as directed by **Baalis**, the **Ammonite**.
- **Ishmael** then kills another eighty men and threw all the corpses in a cistern.
- **Johanan** sets out to attack **Ishmael**, but **Ishmael** escapes.

CHAPTER 42

- **Johanan** and the rest of the army leaders approach **Jeremiah** and ask him to speak to **the Lord** on their behalf. He does so, and **the Lord** instructs them to remain quietly in the land of **Judah**, and, if they do so, they will survive.
- However, if the people flee to **Egypt**, they will die there by the sword.

CHAPTER 43

- **Johanan** and **Azariah** accuse **Jeremiah** of lying to them and trying to get them handed over to the **Chaldeans** to be killed or exiled to **Babylon**.
- Against the Lord’s command, they flee to **Egypt**. And so did **Jeremiah**.
- **The Lord** sends for **Nebuchadnezzar** to strike the land of Egypt with death.
- **Jeremiah** then says, *“He shall smash the obelisks of the temple of the sun in the land of Egypt and destroy with fire the temples of the Egyptian gods.”*

CHAPTER 44

- In Egypt, **Jeremiah** continues his prophecies on behalf of the Lord, reminding the people of how they have turned against God.
- The people refuse to listen to **Jeremiah**, and continue their worship of false gods, especially the “**queen of heaven.**”
- But **Jeremiah** is persistent, and tells the people that God has told him, that “in the whole land of Egypt no man of Judah shall pronounce my name,” saying, “As the Lord God lives.”

CHAPTER 45

- **Jeremiah** speaks to **Baruch**, and tells him that the Lord will spare his life.

CHAPTER 46

- The Lord speaks oracles against the nations, beginning with **Egypt.**

CHAPTER 47

- The Lord speaks against the **Philistines.**

CHAPTER 48

- The Lord speaks against **Moab.**

CHAPTER 49

- The Lord speaks against the **Ammonites, Edom, Damascus, Arabia, and Elam.**

CHAPTER 50

- The Lord speaks the first prophecy against **Babylon.**

CHAPTER 51

- The Lord speaks the second prophecy against **Babylon.**

CHAPTER 52

- This final chapter of **the Book of the prophet Jeremiah** is a summary of the events that had taken place during the prophecy of **Jeremiah.**
- **Zedekiah** was the last king of **Judah**, and he was taken into exile by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. His captain, **Nebuzaradan** burns the house of the Lord and the Chaldeans destroy the walls that surrounded Jerusalem.
- A total of **4,600** persons were exiled to **Babylon.**

The Book of Lamentations

The **Book of Lamentations** is a book for five poems in which the writer (who is possible **Jeremiah**, but his name does not appear in the book) “**laments**” or mourns **the exile to Babylon** and **the loss of the city of Jerusalem**. He writes as if he is describing the funeral of the city of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 1

- **Jerusalem** is abandoned and disgraced: *“How lowly she is now, the once crowded city!”* And, *“The Lord has punished her for her many sins.”*

CHAPTER 2

- The Lord has set His wrath on **Zion (Jerusalem)**: *“How the Lord in His wrath has detested daughter Zion!”*
- *“Cry out to the Lord; moan, O daughter Zion!”* And, *“Look O Lord, and consider: whom have you ever treated in this way?”*

CHAPTER 3

- The prophet suffers with his people: *“I am a man who knows afflictions from the rod of his anger.”* And, *“I tell myself my future is lost; all that I hoped for from the Lord.”*
- But there is hope: *“Good is the Lord to one who waits for Him, to the soul that seeks Him.”*
- *“I called your name, O Lord, from the bottom of the pit.”*

CHAPTER 4

- **Jerusalem** has been laid to siege, and the city is in misery. *“How tarnished is the gold, how changed the noble metal; how the sacred stones lie strewn at every street corner!”*
- *“The Lord himself has dispersed them, he regards them no more; He does not receive the priests with favor, nor show kindness to the elders.”*

CHAPTER 5

- The prophet prays for restoration of the city: *“Remember, O Lord, what has befallen us; look and see our disgrace.”*
- *“The joy of our hearts has ceased, our dance has turned into mourning.”*
- *“You, O Lord, are enthroned forever; your throne stands from age to age. Why then, should you forget us, abandon us for so long a time?”*
- *“Lead us back to you, O Lord, that we may be restored.”*

The Book of the Prophet Baruch

The **Book of Baruch** is one of the seven “**Deuterocanonical**” books of the Old Testament that is only found in Catholic Bibles (and not in protestant Bibles).

Baruch was the secretary to **Jeremiah** and he is writing to the people in **Babylon**.

CHAPTER 1

- **Baruch** makes an effort to retrieve the vessels of the house of the **Lord** that had been removed from the **Temple**, to restore them to the land of **Judah**.
- The people ask for prayers to the **Lord**, and they recognize their offenses.
- *“We have sinned in the Lord’s sight, and disobeyed him.”*

CHAPTER 2

- *“Hear O Lord our prayer of supplication and deliver us for your own sake.”*
- The people recall the Lord’s words: *“For I know that they will not heed me, because they are a stiff-necked people. But in the land of their captivity they will have a change of heart; they shall know that I, the Lord, am their God.”*
- *“And I will establish with them, as an eternal covenant, that I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and I will not again remove my people Israel from the land I gave them.”*

CHAPTER 3

- *“Lord Almighty, God of Israel, hear the prayer of Israel’s few, the sons of those who sinned against you.... Behold us today in our captivity.”*
- The people then praise **the Lord** and the wisdom of **His commandments**.

CHAPTER 4

- The people recognize that it was for their sins that God handed them over to their foes. But they do not despair: *“Fear not, Jerusalem!”*

CHAPTER 5

- *“Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery; put on the splendor of glory from God forever!”*

CHAPTER 6

- This final chapter includes a letter that was written by **Jeremiah** to the captives in **Babylon**. In it he chastises them for their worship of false gods.
- *“The better for the just man who has no idols; he will be far from disgrace!”*

The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

The prophecy of **Ezekiel** takes place during the years **590 B.C. to 571 B.C.** while the people of **Judah** (the southern kingdom) were in **Exile in Babylon**. **King Nebuchadnezzar** of Babylon had conquered **Judah** and its capital, **Jerusalem**, in **597 B.C.** and the people – including **Ezekiel** – were exiled to Babylon in **587 B.C.** (for fifty years, to **538 B.C.**). In 597 B.C. **King Jehoiachin** was taken to **Babylon** with the people of Judah, and his uncle, **King Zedekiah**, was left in Jerusalem with a small group of Hebrew people until he was finally taken to Babylon. **King Zedekiah**, the last king of Judah, rebelled against God and the rulers of Babylon, and this led to the destruction of all the cities of **Judah**.

Like **Jeremiah** (whose lifespan overlapped Ezekiel's), **Ezekiel** was a **priest** who believed that God punishes unfaithfulness to the covenant with political disaster. **Ezekiel** believed that God's will was not a war of independence build on human pride, but was an opportunity to show faithfulness to God under Babylonian rule. So **Ezekiel** saw the defeat by **Babylon** as God's correction of His people.

CHAPTER 1

- **Ezekiel** the **priest** begins by describing his call from God saying, "*There, the hand of the Lord came upon me.*" He then relates his vision of "**figures resembling four living creatures**" and he describes them in great detail.

CHAPTER 2

- The Lord calls out to **Ezekiel** with the words, "Son of man, stand up! I wish to speak with you." (The Lord often addresses **Ezekiel** as "son of man.")
- As **the Lord** speaks to **Ezekiel**, Ezekiel writes, "*spirit entered into me and set me on my feet and I heard the one who was speaking.*" (This **spirit** is the power of God which enables **Ezekiel** to hear the word of God.)
- **The Lord** sends **Ezekiel** to the Israelites, challenging their rebelliousness.

CHAPTER 3

- **The Lord** instructs **Ezekiel** to "*eat this scroll, and then go speak to the house of Israel.*" But the scroll taste "*as sweet as honey*" because it was
- the word of God, even though the word of God challenged the Israelites.
- **Ezekiel** has a powerful experience of God and "*went off spiritually stirred.*"
- **Ezekiel** is appointed "*watchman for the house of Israel.*"
- **Ezekiel** is rendered unable to speak, and he remains mute until the Lord opens his mouth and allows him to speak.

CHAPTER 4

- The Lord speaks to **Ezekiel** in symbolic language of how **Jerusalem** will be besieged and how the people of **Israel** and **Judah** will be taken into exile.

CHAPTER 5

- The Lord continues to tell Ezekiel how He will punish the people because *“you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable abominations.”*

CHAPTER 6

- **The Lord** continues His diatribe against the people who have turned against Him. He concludes with, *“Thus they shall know that I am the Lord.”*

CHAPTER 7

- Through the prophet **Ezekiel**, the **Lord** proclaims the end of **Jerusalem**.
- *“See, the day of the Lord! See, the end is coming!”*

CHAPTER 8

- **Ezekiel** has visions of *“the great abominations that the house of Israel is practicing”* in the **Temple of Jerusalem**: the worship of Egyptian idols.

CHAPTER 9

- In his vision, **Ezekiel** is told to *“mark an X on the foreheads of those who moan and groan over all the abominations that are practiced.”* These are to be spared the wrath of God because of their faith in God.

CHAPTER 10

- **Ezekiel** has a vision of the glory of the **God of Israel** leaving **Jerusalem** and going to a mountain which is to the east of the city.

CHAPTER 11

- The Lord promises to restore Israel through those who are currently in exile and to *“restore you to the land of Israel with new hearts and new spirits.”*

CHAPTER 12

- The Lord instructs Ezekiel to act as if he is going to leave Babylon as an example to the people, but the people ridicule Ezekiel’s prophecies.
- And **the Lord** says, *“There shall no longer be any false visions or deceitful divinations within the house of Israel because it is I, The Lord who speaks.”*

CHAPTER 13

- **The Lord** calls **Ezekiel** to prophesy against “*the prophets of Israel*” who “*prophesy their own thought*” (an idea of peace when there was no peace).
- **The Lord** then speaks against the false prophets in Chaldea, the false prophetesses, and the sorceresses.

CHAPTER 14

- Through the prophet Ezekiel, **the Lord** tells the people, “*Return and be converted from your idol; turn yourselves away from abominations.*”
- The Lord promises that, despite all of the suffering of the people in exile, “*some survivors shall be left in it who will bring out sons and daughters.*”

CHAPTER 15

- **The Lord** compares the people of Jerusalem to be like “*the wood of the vine*” that is burning as “*fuel for the fire.*”

CHAPTER 16

- **The Lord** compares the people of Israel to a beautiful wife who becomes a harlot, and the Lord “*will deal with her according to what she has done.*”
- But **the Lord** goes on to say, “*I will re-establish my covenant with you, that you may know that I am the Lord.*” And **the Lord** will pardon the people.

CHAPTER 17

- **The Lord** provides a riddle about **two eagles** and **a vine**, and he explains the parable by comparing it to the king who “*rebelled against the Lord by sending envoys to Egypt to obtain horses and a great army.*”

CHAPTER 18

- **The Lord** calls the people to personal responsibility, and says, “*Therefore I will judge you, house of Israel, each one according to his ways.*”
- Then **the Lord** calls the people to conversion from all of their crimes, and to “*make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.*”
- “*Why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,*” Says the Lord God. “*Return and live!*”

CHAPTER 19

- The Lord gives two allegories: one of **the lion**, the other of **the vine branch**, in order to show the people the results of rebelling against the Lord.
- (**NOTE:** The two young lions are the kings **Jehoahaz** and **Zedekiah**.)

CHAPTER 20

- **The Lord** recounts **Israel's history of infidelity**, and God promises to judge the people just as He judged their forefathers since their time in Egypt.

CHAPTER 21

- Once again **the Lord** threatens the people with **the sword** if they do not repent and return to **the Lord**.
- The Lord then decries the infidelities of the **Israelites** and the **Ammonites**.

CHAPTER 22

- **The Lord** again speaks of the sins of **Jerusalem**, *"Woe to the city which sheds blood within herself so that her time has come, and which has made idols for her own defilement."*
- **The Lord** says, *"What is holy to me you have spurned, and my Sabbaths you have desecrated."*
- **The Lord** also says, *"You exact interest and usury; you despoil your neighbors violently; and me you have forgotten, says the Lord."*

CHAPTER 23

- **The Lord** gives **Ezekiel** a parable about two sisters, **Oholah** and **Oholibah**.
- **Oholah**, the elder sister, becomes a harlot, faithless to the Lord.
- **Oholibah**, the younger sister, becomes a worse harlot, than her sister.
- **The Lord** then asks **Ezekiel** to judge the two sisters, and it is clear that **the Lord** is comparing their behavior to that of the people of **Israel**.

CHAPTER 24

- **The Lord** gives **Ezekiel** another parable, comparing **the people of Jerusalem** to meat boiled in a pot (symbolizing their punishment).
- **The Lord** instructs **Ezekiel's wife dies**, but Ezekiel continues to follow the will of the Lord (he does not mourn).
- At the end of this chapter **Ezekiel's mouth is opened by the Lord**; he is no longer dumb, and **the Lord** reminds him that he shall be a sign for the people. **And they shall know that the Lord is their God.**

The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel – Part II

In the second half of **the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel**, the Hebrew people - including **Ezekiel** – are still in exile in **Babylon**, and **Ezekiel** continues to proclaim the message that God is not pleased with the way the people have turned away from Him. But **Ezekiel** is a sign of **hope** for the people, and he continues to speak to the people on behalf of the Lord, reminding them that **God** never abandons His people; He is always there for us! In the final two chapters of this book, **Ezekiel** describes how **the Lord** wants the land of Israel divided when the people return. The land of the Hebrew people becomes known as “**The New Israel.**”

CHAPTER 25

- Through the prophet **Ezekiel**, the **Lord** prophesies against the foreign nations. In this chapter the Lord speaks against the **Ammonites**, the people of **Moab**, the people of **Edom**, and **the Philistines**.

CHAPTER 26

- The **Lord** speaks against the **city of Tyre** because of the way the people of Tyre treated the people of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 27

- The **Lord** compares the **city of Tyre** to a **ship** that sinks into the heart of the sea. “*Now you are wrecked in the sea, in the watery depths.*”

CHAPTER 28

- The **Lord** then speaks against the **prince of Tyre**, “*Because you are haughty of heart, and you say, ‘A god am I!’*” And then **the Lord** predicts his downfall through the “*fire from your midst which will devour you.*”
- The **Lord** then prophesies against **Sidon**.

CHAPTER 29

- Next the **Lord** prophesies against **Pharaoh of Egypt**, comparing him to a **crocodile** that will be caught “*with hooks in your jaws.*”
- Then the Lord says that Egypt will be “*the lowliest of kingdoms, never more to set itself above the nations.*”

CHAPTER 30

- In this chapter the **Lord** continues to speak against **Egypt**, and the **Lord** states that **Egypt** will be conquered by **Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon**.
- The **Lord** says that both of the arms of **Pharaoh, the king of Egypt**, will be broken, so that he can not hold a sword against **Nebuchadnezzar**.

CHAPTER 31

- The **Lord** describes a **beautiful cypress (cedar) tree in Lebanon**, but the foreigners cut it down, and the people abandoned it. The **Lord** then compares this fallen tree to *“Pharaoh and all his hordes.”*

CHAPTER 32

- The **Lord** continues to speak against **Pharaoh** and the people of Egypt, and promises that *“the sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you.”*

CHAPTER 33

- In this chapter the **Lord** begins to speak of the Salvation for Israel.
- Ezekiel is appointed *“watchman for the house of Israel.”*
- The **Lord** speaks the famous words, *“I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, but rather in the wicked man’s conversion, that he may live.”*
- *“Turn, turn for your evil ways! Why should you die, O house of Israel?”*
- The **Lord** then reminds **Ezekiel** that he is “a prophet among them.”

CHAPTER 34

- The **Lord** tells the parable of the **shepherds** who do not care for their sheep.
- The **Lord** then promises to take care of the sheep. *“There they shall lie down on good grazing ground, and in rich pastures shall they be pastured on the mountains of Israel.”*
- And the **Lord** says, *“The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal, shepherding them rightly.”*
- The **Lord** then judges the sheep, between the fat and lean sheep, chastising the strong sheep which have pushed the weak sheep aside.
- Then the **Lord** makes reference to the coming **Messiah**, saying, *“I will appoint one shepherd over them to pasture them, my servant David; he shall pasture them and be their shepherd. I the Lord will be their God.”*

CHAPTER 35

- The **Lord** speaks against the people of **Edom (Mount Seir)** because they tried to possess the two lands (of Israel and Judah).

CHAPTER 36

- The **Lord** promises to rebuild the whole house of Israel; *“cities shall be re-peopled, and ruins rebuild.”*
- *“I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts.”*
- *“You shall live in the land I gave your fathers; you shall be my people, and I will be your God.”*
- And the people will say, *“This desolate land has become a garden of Eden.”*

CHAPTER 37

- The **Lord** takes **Ezekiel** to the plain filled with **dry bones**, and the Lord says, *“See, I will bring spirit into you so that you may come to life.”*
- And **Ezekiel** hears a noise: *“It was a rattling as the bones came together, bone joining bone.”* And *“they came alive and stood upright.”*
- And the **Lord** says to **Ezekiel**, *“these bones are the whole house of Israel.”*
- **God** says, *“O my people! I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus you shall know that I am the Lord.”*
- **The Lord** tells **Ezekiel** to join **two sticks** together, the first representing **Judah** (the south) and the second representing **Israel** (the north) Then **the Lord** says, *“Thus the nations shall know that it is I, the Lord, who make Israel holy, when my sanctuary shall be set up among them forever.”*

CHAPTER 38

- **The Lord** speaks two prophecies against **Gog** (a place that is unknown to us today, but obviously was an enemy of Israel).

CHAPTER 39

- **The Lord** speaks a third prophecy against **Gog**.
- **The Lord** then speaks – again – of how the people of **Israel** shall return to their land, and **the Lord** says, *“No longer will I hide my face from them, for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel.”*

CHAPTER 40

- **The Lord** brings **Ezekiel** to the land of **Israel** (through divine visions).
- Then **Ezekiel** describes all that he sees, beginning with the wall that surrounds the Temple, and the four gates that allow entry to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 41

- **Ezekiel** continues his description of his vision of the **Temple**.

CHAPTER 42

- **Ezekiel** continues his description of other structures that he sees.

CHAPTER 43

- **Ezekiel** then sees, *“the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east.”*
- **Ezekiel** describes the statutes and laws of the **Temple**, as well as the altar.

CHAPTER 44

- The **outer gate of the sanctuary** is to remain closed, since **the Lord**, the God of Israel, has entered by it.
- **Entrance to the Temple** is to be limited to only the people of the house of Israel. The **Levites** will be set in service to the Temple and all its work.
- The **priests** (the **Zadokites** who cared for the sanctuary when the Israelites strayed from the Lord) shall be the ministers of the Temple.

CHAPTER 45

- **The land of Israel** is to be apportioned to the people, and a **sacred tract of land** shall be set aside for the Lord. It will belong to the **priests** who minister to the Lord.
- **The Lord** says, *“Enough, you princes of Israel! Put away violence and oppression, and do what is right and just! Stop evicting my people!”*
- **The Lord** then stipulates the provisions of **Offerings** and **the Passover**.

CHAPTER 46

- The Lord reminds the people of the importance of the Sabbath day.

CHAPTER 47

- **Ezekiel** describes a river, flowing from the **Temple**, which will make sea water turn to fresh water for the people.
- **The Lord** then gives the boundaries of the land: **The New Israel**.

CHAPTER 48

- The **Twelve Tribes of Israel** have their land apportioned to them, beginning with the **seven Tribes of the north** (Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, and Judah). And the sacred tract is mentioned again.
- The **five Tribes of the south** (Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad) receive their allocation of land in the same way.
- The **gates of the city** are established for the north, the east, the south, and the west. And the name of the City shall henceforth be **“The Lord is here.”**

The Book of the Prophet Daniel

Daniel lived in Babylon during the period of the **Babylonian Exile** (from 587 B.C. to 538 B.C.) during the reign of **King Nebuchadnezzar**. **Daniel** had an ability to interpret dreams and mysterious signs because of the revelations he received from God, often through the vision of an angel (especially **Gabriel**).

The book was written to encourage the Jewish people to remain faithful to God in spite of the temptations to worship false god that had been presented to them. **The first six chapters** are stories about Daniel and his friends. **Chapters 7 through 12** tell about the mysterious visions of Daniel. **The final two chapters** are only in Catholic Bibles, and they tell the story of **Susanna's virtue (chapter 13)** and the story of **Bel and the Dragon (chapter 14)**.

CHAPTER 1

- Daniel and his three friends, **Shadrach** (Hananiah), **Meshach** (Mishael), and **Abednego** (Azariah), were among the Jews exiled to Babylon. They were highly esteemed by King Nebuchadnezzar and were placed in his service.
- While serving the king, the four young men refuse to defile themselves with the king's food nor his wine, and they were given alternative foods.
- *"To these four young men, God gave knowledge and proficiency in all literature and science, and, to Daniel, the understanding of all visions and dreams."*

CHAPTER 2

- **King Nebuchadnezzar** has a dream that only Daniel can interpret. In the dream, the king sees a large statue which is then broken apart by a stone.
- Daniel sees this dream as God's plan for the kingdom to be replaced by four other kingdoms, and the stone that breaks them up becomes a mountain.
- *(Some Biblical scholars see these as the kingdoms of **Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece**. And the stone that breaks the statue apart and becomes the great mountain is the **Kingdom of God** "that shall never be destroyed.")*

CHAPTER 3

- **King Nebuchadnezzar** makes a golden statue, and commands that everyone worship it. **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego** refuse, and they are cast into the fiery furnace. But **the angel of the Lord** joins them in the furnace, and none of them are harmed. The three men pray to God, and, when **King Nebuchadnezzar** sees four men in the fire, all praying to God, he turns his life to the Lord.

CHAPTER 4

- **King Nebuchadnezzar** has another dream, and in this one a large tree is cut down. **Daniel** (also known as **Belteshazzar**) is called to interpret the dream, and he tells the king the he – the king – is the tree in the dream. And, just like the tree in the dream, he, **King Nebuchadnezzar**, will be cut down.
- **Daniel** then advises the king to *“atone for your sins by good deeds, and for your misdeed by kindness to the poor; then your prosperity will be long.”*
- The king then turns to the **Most High**, once again, in praise and exultation.

CHAPTER 5

- King Nebuchadnezzar’s son, **King Belshazzar**, holds a banquet to worship his false gods, and he uses the sacred vessels from the temple in Jerusalem.
- Suddenly, the fingers of a human hand appear, writing on the plaster walls of the palace. Three Aramaic words appear: **MENE**, **TEKEL**, and **PERES**.
- Daniel is called in to interpret the three words, and he does so as follows:
MENE = God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it.
TEKEL = You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.
PERES = Your kingdom has been divided among Medes and Persians.
- **Daniel** is honored by the king, but **King Belshazzar** is slain that same night.

CHAPTER 6

- New **King Darius** takes over, and he issues a decree that no one is to pray to any god or man for thirty days. **Daniel** is discovered praying in his room.
- **King Darius** casts **Daniel** into a den of lions, and then the king goes to bed.
- The next morning the king looks into the lions’ den and sees that **Daniel** has survived. **Daniel** says, *“My God has sent his angel and closed the lions’ mouths so that they have not hurt me.”* And the king is greatly relieved.
- **King Darius** then turns his life to the Lord God, to *“the God of Daniel.”*

CHAPTER 7

- This time **Daniel** has a dream, and it involves four immense beasts.
- Then **Daniel** sees, *“One, like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven... he received dominion, power, and glory, and kingship; nations and peoples of every language serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away; his kingship shall not be destroyed.”*
- The four great beasts stand for four kingdoms that shall arrive on earth.
- *“But the holy ones of the Most High shall receive the kingship, to possess it forever and ever.”* **Daniel** is terrified by this, and he keeps it to himself.

CHAPTER 8

- **Daniel** has another vision, this time involving a ram with two great horns, and a he-goat with a prominent horn that is replaced by a little horn.
- A man-like figure stands before Daniel, and a voice says, “**Gabriel, explain the vision to the man.**” (*This is the first mention of **Gabriel** in the Bible.*)
- The two-horned ram represents the kings of the Medes and the Persians.
- The he-goat is the king of the Greeks, and the great horn is the first king.
- **Daniel** still does not understand the vision.

CHAPTER 9

- **Daniel** seeks to understand the seventy years referred to by **Jeremiah** in terms of the length of the **Exile**. **Daniel** prays to the Lord about this issue.
- **Gabriel** comes to **Daniel** again in order to give him understanding.
- **Gabriel** informs **Daniel** that “**a Most Holy will be anointed.**” (*Biblical scholars understand this to be a reference to Jesus Christ, our Savior.*)

CHAPTER 10

- **Daniel** has another revelation and he is visited, once again, by the angel **Gabriel** who says, “**stand up, for my mission now is to you.**”
- **Gabriel** is joined by the archangel **Michael**.

CHAPTER 11

- Daniel continues describing his vision, and he sees that, “**Armed forces shall move at his command and defile the sanctuary stronghold, abolishing the daily sacrifice and setting up the horrible abomination.**”
(*Notice what Jesus says about these events in Matthew 24:15*)

CHAPTER 12

- **Gabriel** continues to speak to **Daniel**, and he refers to a life after death by saying, “**Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.**” (*This is the first passage in the Old Testament that speaks clearly of a personal afterlife, something more than the “netherworld” of the ancients.*)
- **Daniel** is instructed to keep these words secret. And he is told, “**Go, take your rest, you shall rise for you reward at the end of the days.**”

CHAPTER 13

- This chapter takes place when Daniel is still a young boy, and it involves a false accusation against a woman named Susanna, the wife of Joakim.
- Two elders of the community falsely accuse Susanna of lying with a man other than her husband. They lied because of their own lustful desires.
- When **Susanna** is convicted - based on their false testimony, *“God stirs up the holy spirit of a young man named Daniel.”* And **Daniel** speaks up.
- **Daniel** proceeds to question each of the false witnesses individually, asking about the trees in the garden where they saw the alleged act. And, of course, their stories do not match each others.
- When they are caught in their lies, they are executed, for that is the punishment that would have been inflicted upon **Susanna** had she been falsely convicted of this crime.
- All of the people praised God, and the story concludes with the words, *“And from that day onward Daniel was greatly esteemed by the people.”*

CHAPTER 14

- The Babylonians had an idol called **Bel** that was made of clay and bronze.
- The king adored **Bel**, and each night provided large amounts of food for **Bel**.
- The king was distressed that **Daniel** would not worship the false god, **Bel**, and **Daniel** set out to prove that it was not **Bel** who was eating the food that was set out each night. Rather, it was the priests of **Bel** and their families.
- Without the king’s knowledge, the priests had made a secret door under the statue of the false god, and it was through this door that they entered each night. And, along with their families, they ate the food that was left for **Bel**.
- **Daniel** set a trap by placing ashes on the floor of the temple, and the next morning the king saw the footprints of the priests and their families.
- The king handed **Bel** over to **Daniel**, and **Daniel** destroyed the idol and its temple.
- There was also a **great dragon** that the Babylonians worshiped, and again, **Daniel** proves that the dragon was a false god.
- Because **Daniel** had destroyed their false gods, the Babylonians have **Daniel** thrown into another lions’ den, and this time he is left there for six days.
- Through God’s plan, the prophet **Habakkuk** brings food to **Daniel**. On the seventh day the king returns to the lions’ den, and, there is **Daniel**, sitting alone.
- The king then cries out, *“You are great, O Lord, the God of Daniel, and there is no other besides you!”*

The Book of the Prophet Hosea

Hosea lived and prophesied during the last years of Israel's existence, before Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. **Hosea** was called to be God's prophet some time during the reign of **King Jeroboam II** (793 B.C. to 753 B.C.) and prophesied throughout the reigns of the last six kings of Israel, the last being **Hosheaa**, who was deposed to Assyria in 722 B.C.

In one of the strangest requests that God has ever made of anyone, the Lord instructs the prophet **Hosea** to marry the prostitute, **Gomer**. Hosea's marriage and family serve as a daily reminder to the people about the sins of the nation, and the consequences that the Jewish people will suffer if they do not repent and return to God. Just as **Hosea** could not give up his wife when she returned to prostitution, so God could not denounce Israel when they turned to false gods, especially **Baal**.

CHAPTER 1

- The Lord instructs **Hosea** to marry the harlot, **Gomer**, and they have three children: a son named **Jezeel** (named for a valley in northern of Israel), a daughter named **Lo-ruhama** (which means "she is not pitied") and a son named **Lo-ammi** (which means "not my people.")

CHAPTER 2

- The Lord speaks of the people of Israel as if they were the harlot, making reference to their worship of the false god, **Baal**.
- But then the Lord promises to restore Israel, if the people turn back to God. *"I will espouse you to me forever; I will espouse you in right and in justice, in love and in mercy. I will espouse you in fidelity, and you shall know the Lord."*

CHAPTER 3

- The Lord instructs **Hosea** to buy back his wayward wife with silver.
- Just as **Hosea** buys back **Gomer**, *"Then the people of Israel shall turn back and seek the Lord, their God, and David, their king."*

CHAPTER 4

- The Lord lists the crimes of Israel, and points out that, *"One and all, they sin against me, exchanging their glory for shame."*

CHAPTER 5

- The Lord then chastises the leaders for leading the people astray. ***“For the spirit of harlotry is in them, and they do not recognize the Lord.”***

CHAPTER 6

- The people claim that they wish to return to the Lord, but their conversion is insincere. The Lord tells them, ***“Your piety is like a morning cloud, like the dew that early passes away.”***
- The Lord continues by saying, ***“For it is love that I desire, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than holocausts.”***

CHAPTER 7

- The Lord points out how even the kings have led the people to wickedness.
- ***“Woe to them, for they have strayed from me! Ruin to them, for they have sinned against me!”***

CHAPTER 8

- The Lord continues by saying, ***“they have violated my covenant, and sinned against my law, while to me they cry out, ‘O God of Israel, we know you!’”***

CHAPTER 9

- The Lord points out how there will be no celebration of the Lord’s feasts.
- The people of Israel ridicule the prophet, referring to him as “a fool.”
- The Lord then makes reference to the consecration of the people to Baal.
- ***Hosea says, “My God will disown them because they have not listened to him; they shall be wanderers among the nations.”***

CHAPTER 10

- ***Hosea chastises the people for their idolatry. “Their heart is false, now they pay for their guilt; God shall break down their altars, and destroy their sacred pillars.”***
- ***“Then they shall cry out to the mountains, ‘Cover us!’ and to the hills, ‘Fall upon us.’”*** (See **Luke 23:30** where Jesus is carrying His cross and He speaks to the women of Jerusalem.)

CHAPTER 11

- The Lord reminisces about the days, ***“When Israel was a child I loved him, out of Egypt I called my son.”*** (See Matthew 2:15 for the reference to Jesus and Mary and Joseph living in Egypt until the death of King Herod.)
- However, ***“The more I called them, the farther they went from me, sacrificing to the Baals and burning incense to idols.”***
- But the Lord will not abandon His people. ***“I will not give vent to my blazing anger, I will not destroy Ephraim again; For I am God and not man, the Holy One present among you; I will not let the flames consume you.”***

CHAPTER 12

- The Lord re-tells the story of the infidelity of Israel, beginning with the sin of **Jacob** (for taking his twin brother Esau’s position at birth) and continuing with **Moses** (referred to as “the prophet”) leading Israel out of Egypt.

CHAPTER 13

- The people continue to sin by worshiping molten images. (***“Men kiss calves!”***)
- But the Lord reminds the people, ***“I am the Lord your God, since the land of Egypt; You know no God besides me, and there is no savior but me.”***
- Then the Lord asks, ***“Shall I deliver them from the power of the nether world? Shall I redeem them from death? Where are your plagues, O death! Where is your sting, O nether world!”*** (See Saint Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 15, verse 54, for his reference to this passage.)

CHAPTER 14

- In the final chapter of this book, the Lord challenges the people of Israel to a sincere conversion. ***“Return O Israel to the Lord, your God; you have collapsed through your guilt.”***
- The Lord then says, ***“I will heal their defection, I will love them freely; for my wrath is turned away from them.”***
- The book concludes with the words, ***“Let him who is wise understand these things; let him who is prudent know them. Straight are the paths of the Lord, in them the just walk, but sinners stumble in them.”***

The Book of the Prophet Joel

Joel prophesied in the southern kingdom of **Judah**, some time around 840 B.C. This was prior to the invasion of Israel by Assyria in 722 B.C., and prior to the invasion of Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 586 B.C. (Some Biblical scholars believe that the book was not actually *written* until about 400 B.C.) The first part of the book deals with a locust plague, and the second part of the book has an **eschatological** emphasis to it. (“**Eschatology**” is the doctrine of the “*last things*” or the end times.) The message of the book is one of **hope in God**, based on the experience of the people with God. **Joel** calls the people to **repentance** and he gives the people **hope in the coming day of salvation**. The prevailing theme of the book of Joel is **the day of the Lord**.

CHAPTER 1

- In this chapter we read of the invasion of **locusts** and the fields are ravaged.
- **Joel** calls the people to repentance, for “*the day of the Lord is near.*”

CHAPTER 2

- “*Great is the day of the Lord, and exceedingly terrible; who can bear it?*”
- “*Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord your God.*”
- **Joel** reminds the people, “*For gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment.*”

CHAPTER 3

- The Lord says, through Joel, “*I will pour out my spirit upon all mankind.*”
NOTE: In the *Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2, verse 4*, at the time of the Pentecost, **Saint Peter** quotes these words of the prophet **Joel** and then interprets these words to be a prophecy of the coming of the **Holy Spirit**.
- **Joel** then tells the people, “*Then everyone shall be rescued who calls upon the name of the Lord.*”

CHAPTER 4

- In this final chapter **the Lord** tells the people, through **Joel**, that “*I will assemble all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehosaphat*” (a symbolic name of the place of the final judgment, which many Biblical scholars assume to be the **Kidron Valley** in **Jerusalem**).
- The book closes with the words, “*But Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem for all generations... The Lord dwells in Zion.*”

The Book of the Prophet Amos

Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa, a small town in the hill country of **Judah** (the southern kingdom). He prophesied in (approximately) the years 760 to 753 B.C. He was sent by God to the **northern kingdom of Israel**, to the town of **Bethel**, to bring God's message to the people. This was a time of great wealth for the Jewish people, but it was also a time of social and religious corruption. **Amos** challenges the people for their hypocrisy, for they were worshiping the Lord while they were oppressing the poor. As we will see, Amos has a great concern for the concept of **social justice**. Unfortunately, the people ignored his words. Soon thereafter, the northern kingdom of **Israel** falls to the **Assyrians** in 722 B.C.

CHAPTER 1

- The prophecy of **Amos** begins with, *“The words of Amos, a shepherd from Tekoa, which he received in a vision concerning Israel, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, king of Israel.”*
- **Amos** begins with his sweeping judgments of Damascus (Aram), Philistia, Tyre, Edom, and Ammon for the sins they have committed against the Lord.

CHAPTER 2

- The judgments continue against Moab, and, finally, **Judah** and **Israel**.
- The charges against **Judah** and **Israel** are profound because they are the people who the Lord brought up from the land of Egypt, and they have turned against the Lord.

CHAPTER 3

- Through the prophet **Amos**, the Lord gives three sermons (or “words”) in which God chastises His chosen people and promises punishment on them.
- *“Hear this word, O men of Israel, that the Lord pronounces over you, over the whole family that I brought up from the land of Egypt.”*
- Through the prophet Amos, the Lord warns the people: *“Indeed the Lord does nothing without revealing His plan to his servants, the prophets.”*

CHAPTER 4

- Amos insults the women of Samaria by referring to them as, *“you cows of Bashan”* for they have oppressed the weak and abused the needy.
- The Lord continues to point out the sins of the people, and each time he proclaims, *“Yet you returned not to me”* says the Lord.
- Finally the Lord says, *“Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.”*

CHAPTER 5

- The Lord then challenges the people to turn back to Him.
- There are three “woes” that the Lord promises:
 - a) *“Woe to those who turn judgment to wormwood and cast justice to the ground.”*
 - b) *“Woe to those who yearn for the day of the Lord (the day of punishment of sinners). What will this day of the Lord mean for you? Darkness, and not light!”*
- The Lord says, *“But if you would offer me holocausts, then let justice surge like water, and goodness like an unfailing stream.”*

CHAPTER 6

- The third “woe” is this:
 - c) *“Woe to the complacent in Zion, to the overconfident on the Mount of Samaria.”*
- *“Beware, I am raising up against you, O house of Israel, say I, the Lord God of hosts, a nation (Assyria) that shall oppress you.”*

CHAPTER 7

- Amos receives five visions from the Lord, and the first is a swarm of locusts.
- The second vision is a judgment by fire.
- The third vision is a vision of God, holding a plummet (a measuring device) and that the land is to be measured for destruction.
- **Amaziah**, the priest of Bethel, tries to expel **Amos** from Bethel, but **Amos** refuses to leave, and he challenges **Amaziah** with God’s own words.

CHAPTER 8

- **Amos** has a vision of a basket of ripe fruit, signifying that the time is ripe for the destruction of Israel. The Lord says, *“I will forgive them no longer.”*
- The Lord speaks (through Amos) against their greed. *“Hear this, you who trample upon the needy and destroy the poor of the land!”*

CHAPTER 9

- Amos has a vision of the Lord standing beside the altar, and He speaks to Amos saying, *“The eyes of the Lord are on this sinful kingdom; I will destroy it from the face of the earth.”*
- *“But I will not destroy the house of Jacob completely, says the Lord.”*
- The Lord then promises, *“I will bring about the restoration of my people Israel, they shall rebuild and inhabit their ruined cities.”*

The Book of the Prophet Obadiah

This book is the shortest book in the Old Testament, consisting of only one chapter of twenty-one verses. **Obadiah** has a vision from God, and it is a prophecy against the people of **Edom**, a long-standing enemy of Israel. **Edom** was an area that was south of the Dead Sea, and the Edomites were descendents of **Esau**, the twin brother of **Jacob**. The exact date of the writing of this book is difficult to determine, but it was probably written some time after 586 B.C. (when Babylon conquered the southern kingdom of Judah, with support from Edom).

The second part of this book (verses 19 through 21) promises that the Jews will one day return to their land, and that they will even capture the land of their enemies, including Edom.

CHAPTER 1

- **Obadiah** has a vision from the Lord, and it is a warning to the people of Edom who have invaded the land of Judah.

- The **first part** of this book is the prophecy against the people of Edom.
- *“From there I will bring you down, says the Lord.”*
- *“Shall I not, says the Lord, on that day make the wise men disappear from Edom, and understanding from the mount of Esau?”*
- *“Because of violence to your brother Jacob, disgrace shall cover you and you shall be destroyed forever.”*

- In the **second part** of this book we read of the restoration of **Judah** by the Lord.
- *“But on Mount Zion there shall be a portion saved; and the house of Jacob shall take possession of those that dispossessed them.”*
- *“The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame. The house of Esau shall be stubble, and they shall set them ablaze and devour them. Then none shall survive of the house of Esau, for the Lord has spoken.”*
- *“And saviors shall ascend Mount Zion to rule the mount of Esau, and the kingship shall be the Lord’s.”*

The Book of the Prophet Jonah

In all of the Bible, **Jonah** is the only prophet of God whose ministry was not directed to the Jewish people. God sent **Jonah** to Nineveh, a city in the evil country of Assyria (which is now northern Iraq), with the simple message: *“Forty days from now, Nineveh will be destroyed.”* **Jonah** apparently feared the Assyrians more than he feared God, so he boarded a ship heading in the opposite direction, possibly to Spain. When a storm came up, **Jonah** was thrown overboard. And, after three days in the belly of a fish, he walked to Nineveh and proclaimed his message.

Jonah was one of the few prophets who the people actually listened to. And though the Assyrians were not Jewish, the message of this book is that the mercy of God is for everyone. Anyone who repents will be received into the Lord.

CHAPTER 1

- **Jonah**, son of **Amittai**, is called by God to *“Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and preach against it; their wickedness has come before me.”*
- But **Jonah** headed the other direction, boarding a ship for Tarshish, moving away from the Lord, against His command.
- When a storm arose, **Jonah** admitted to the mariners that his unfaithfulness was the cause of the storm, and he was thrown overboard.

CHAPTER 2

- A large fish swallowed **Jonah**, and he remained in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.
- From the belly of the fish **Jonah** prayed to the Lord.
- *“Out of my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me.”*
- Then the Lord commanded the fish to spew Jonah upon the shore.

CHAPTER 3

- The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: *“Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you.”*
- So **Jonah** made ready and went to Nineveh.
- The message was this: *“Forty days more and Nineveh will be destroyed.”*
- When the people of Nineveh believed God, they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.
- The **king** proclaimed a time of fast and repentance, and the Lord *“repented of the evil that he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.”*

CHAPTER 4

- But **Jonah** was not happy with the Lord's mercy on the people of Nineveh, and he tells God that he (Jonah) knew that God would have mercy on the people. And **Jonah** did not want God to have mercy on the Ninevites; his belief was that the mercy of God was only for the people of Israel.
- Then **Jonah** asks the Lord to take his life from him, "*for it is better for me to die than to live.*"
- So **Jonah** leaves the city for a place to the east of it, and waits to see what happens to the city of Nineveh. God provided a plant for **Jonah**, but then a worm attacks the plant, and the plant withers.
- **Jonah** states that, "*I would be better off dead than alive.*"
- But the Lord questions **Jonah** about his anger, and the Lord points out that He (the Lord) was concerned about the city of Nineveh, "*the great city in which there are more than one hundred twenty thousand persons.*"

The Book of the Prophet Micah

The Prophet **Micah** lived at about the same time as the Prophets Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos. This was during the **8th century B.C.**, just before the fall of **Israel** (the northern kingdom) to **Assyria** in 722 B.C. **Micah** witnesses the injustices that are taking place, and he does not hesitate to speak up about what is happening. He even challenges political leaders and the spiritual leaders, especially the priests and prophets. Three times **Micah** warns the Jews that because of their nation's long-standing sinfulness, the nation will die. But, because God is loving and forgiving of His people, the nation of Israel will be restored.

CHAPTER 1

- **Micah** has a vision from God, and he challenges the people of Israel to listen to him and to repent for their sins.

CHAPTER 2

- **Micah** warns the people that God is going to punish them for their evil actions.
- *“Woe to those who plan iniquity, can work out evil on their couches; in the morning light they accomplish it when it lies within their power.”*
- *“They covet fields, and seize them; houses, and they take them.”*
- *“They cheat an owner of his house, a man of his inheritance.”*

CHAPTER 3

- **Micah** then speaks to the leaders and rulers of the house of Israel, for they have led the people astray. *“Her leaders render judgment for a bribe, her priests give decisions for a salary, her prophets divine for money.”*
- As a result, *“Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem reduced to rubble. And the mount of the temple to a forest ridge.”*

CHAPTER 4

- However, God shows mercy to His people when they repent, and many nations shall come and say, *“Come, let us climb to the mount of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may instruct us in His ways, that we may walk in his paths.”*
- Then the Lord will judge between many peoples and impose terms on strong and distant nations: *“They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again.”*

CHAPTER 5

- The Lord then speaks (through **Micah**) about the small town of Bethlehem. *“But you, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from old, from ancient times.”*
- *“He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord, in the majestic name of the Lord his God. And they shall remain, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; he shall be peace.”*
- *NOTE: See the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 2, verses 1-6, when the magi ask King Herod where the Messiah was to be born. The chief priests and the scribes respond by quoting these verses from the Prophet Micah.*
- The Lord then promises to deliver the people from Assyria *“if it invades our land and treads upon our borders.”*

CHAPTER 6

- Again **Micah** challenges the people to hear what the Lord says.
- Through the prophet **Micah**, God tells the people, *“You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do what is right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.”*

CHAPTER 7

- **Micah** then utters these famous words, *“But, as for me, I will look to the Lord, I will put my trust in God my savior; my God will hear me!”*
- The book closes with the words, *“You will show faithfulness to Jacob, and grace to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from days of old.”*

The Book of the Prophet Nahum

The prophet **Nahum** prophesied against the evil city of **Nineveh**, which was the capital of **Assyria**, just before **Nineveh** fell to the **Babylonians** and the **Medes** in **612 B.C.** This book was written to assure the Jewish people that the city's reign of terror was almost over. **Nineveh** would be destroyed. (**Assyria** was located in what is now modern-day **Iraq**.)

Jonah, who first went to **Nineveh** and challenged the people to repent of their evil ways, lived over 100 years *before Nahum*. Unfortunately, the repentance and conversion of the people of Nineveh which took place during the time of **Jonah** was very short-lived.

CHAPTER 1

- This book is about the vision of **Nahum** of Elkosh (an unknown city).
- *“A jealous and avenging God is the Lord, an avenger is the Lord, and angry.”*
- **Nahum** tells us that, *“The Lord is good, a refuge on the day of distress; He takes care of those who have recourse to him, when the flood rages.”*
- However, *“He makes an end of His opponents, and His enemies He pursues in darkness.”*

CHAPTER 2

- **Nineveh** is destroyed and *“Emptiness, desolation, waste, melting hearts and trembling knees, writhing in every frame, every face is blanched.”*
- *“I come against you says the Lord of hosts; I will consume in smoke your chariots, and the sword shall devour your young lions.”*

CHAPTER 3

- *“Woe to the bloody city, all lies, full of plunder, whose looting never stops!”*
- *“Nineveh is destroyed, who can pity her? Where can one find any to console her?”*
- The book concludes with the words, *“Alas, how your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria, your nobles have gone to rest..... For who has not been overwhelmed, steadily, by your malice?”*

The Book of the Prophet Habakkuk

In this book the Prophet **Habakkuk** asks why God does not intervene when innocent people suffer at the hands of the wicked. **Habakkuk** lived in the southern kingdom of **Judah**, just before it fell to the Babylonians in **586 B.C.** **Judah** was bogged down in idolatry and other sins, and the people refused to change their sinful ways. Now **King Nebuchadnezzar** is about to begin the invasion that leads to the **Babylonian Exile**.

NOTE: In the **Book of Daniel**, the prophet **Habakkuk** takes a bowl of stew to Daniel in the lions' den. He is able to do this through the help of an angel who transports **Habakkuk** to Daniel's location in Babylon, and then home again.

CHAPTER 1

- **Habakkuk** begins by crying out, *"How long, O Lord? I cry for help but you do not listen."*
- **Habakkuk** continues by saying, *"Why, then, do you gaze on the faithless in silence, while the wicked man devours one more just than himself?"*

CHAPTER 2

- The Lord answers **Habakkuk** by saying, *"Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets, so that one can read it readily."*
- The Lord says, *"The rash man has no integrity, but the just man, because of his faith, shall live."*
- Five times the Lord begins with the phrase, *"Woe to him who....."*
- The Lord tells the people of Judah, *"Because you despoiled many peoples all the rest of the nations shall despoil you."* **NOTE:** The nation that will despoil Judah is the nation of Babylon.

CHAPTER 3

- This chapter includes the **Prayer of Habakkuk** which begins, *"O Lord, I have heard your renown, and feared, O Lord, your work."*
- **Habakkuk** recognizes God's mercy, and he confidently proclaims, *"You have come forth to save your people, to save your anointed one. You crush the heads of the wicked, you lay bare their bases at the neck."*
- **Habakkuk** concludes the book by saying, *"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, and exult in my saving God. God, my Lord, is my strength; He makes my feet swift as those of hinds and enables me to go upon the heights."*

The Book of the Prophet Zephaniah

Zephaniah lived in the southern kingdom of **Judah** during the reign of **King Josiah** (640 B.C. to 609 B.C.) **Judah** had turned away from the Lord, and the people had fallen into idolatry and other sins. The theme of this book is “**The Day of the Lord**” and the Day of the Lord is prophesied first as a **Day of Doom**, and then as a **Day of Judgment**.

CHAPTER 1

- The word of the Lord came to **Zephaniah**, and begins with the Lord saying, *“I will completely sweep away all things from the face of the earth.”*
- This is the **Day of Doom**, and it is a result of the sin of the people.

CHAPTER 2

- The next **Day of the Lord** is the **Day of Judgment**.
- **Zephaniah** tells the people to, *“Seek the Lord, all you humble of the earth, who have observed His law. Seek justice, seek humility; perhaps you may be sheltered on the day of the Lord’s anger.”*
- **Zephaniah** reminds the people that, *“The coast shall belong to the remnant of the house of Judah; by the sea they shall pasture.”*
- *“For the Lord their God shall visit them, and bring about their restoration.”*

CHAPTER 3

- This chapter concludes the book with **God’s promise for Jerusalem**.
- The Lord says, *“Surely now you will fear me, you will accept correction.”*
- *“But I will leave as a remnant in your midst a people humble and lowly, who shall take refuge in the name of the Lord: the remnant of Israel.”*
- *“Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! Sing joyfully, O Israel! Be glad and exult with all you heart, O daughter Jerusalem!”*
- *“The Lord has removed the judgment against you, he has turned away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst. You have no further misfortune to fear.”*
- The book concludes with the words, *“At that time I will bring you home, and at that time I will gather you. For I will give you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth. When I bring about your restoration before your very eyes, says the Lord.”*

The Book of the Prophet Haggai

The prophet **Haggai** was one of the exiles from **Judah** (the southern kingdom) who was allowed to return to **Jerusalem** after the Babylonian Exile in **538 B.C.** However, when he returned to **Jerusalem**, he found that the people were more concerned with the beauty of their own homes rather than rebuilding the Temple. And this went on for eighteen years, to **520 B.C.** The new Temple was finally dedicated in the year **516 B.C.** (seventy years after the original Temple was destroyed in 586 B.C.). **Zerubbabel**, the governor of **Judah**, was instrumental in the rebuilding of the Temple. (See the **Book of Ezra**, especially chapters **5** and **6**, for more information about **Zerubbabel** and the rebuilding of the Temple. Both the prophets **Haggai** and **Zechariah** were prominent in advising **Zerubbabel**.)

CHAPTER 1

- **Haggai** is called by the Lord as a prophet to the people. This takes place during the second year of the reign of **King Darius of Persia** in **520 B.C.**
- **Haggai** tells **Zerubbabel**, the governor of **Judah**, that the Lord wants to know, *“Is it time for you to dwell in your own paneled houses, while this house (the Temple) lies in ruins?”*
- Twice the Lord says, *“Consider your ways!”* and challenges the people to gather timber and build the Temple.
- **Zerubbabel** hears the words of **Haggai**, as does the high priest **Joshua**, and the people begin their work of rebuilding the Temple.

CHAPTER 2

- The Lord encourages the people to work on the new Temple, assuring the people that, *“Greater will be the future glory of this house than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, says the Lord of hosts.”*
- **Haggai** instructs the people to refrain from presenting offerings when they are ritually unclean.
- The Lord promises the people immediate blessings. *“From this day, I will bless!”*
- The Lord then promises **Zerubbabel**, *“I will shake the heavens and the earth... I will take you Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, my servant, says the Lord. And I will set you as a signet ring, for I have chosen you, says the Lord of hosts.”*

The Book of the Prophet Zechariah

The prophet **Zechariah** lived at approximately the same time as the prophet **Haggai**, and he also lived in **Jerusalem** after the Babylonian Exile. Like **Haggai**, his goal was to encourage the people to rebuild the Lord's house, the Temple. **Zechariah** began his prophecy in the year 520 B.C., during the time that **Darius** was **king of Persia**. **Zechariah** has eight symbolic visions from the Lord (or from the angel of the Lord) and they are all meant to promote the work of rebuilding the Temple and to encourage the people who had returned from Babylon, especially their leaders, **Joshua** (the high priest) and **Zerubbabel** (the governor of Judah).

CHAPTER 1

- The word of the Lord came to the prophet **Zechariah**, and the Lord said, *“Return to me, and I will return to you... Turn from your evil ways and from your wicked deeds.”*
- The people repented and admitted, *“The Lord of hosts has treated us according to our ways and deeds, just as he had determined he would.”*
- **Zechariah** has visions of four horsemen who have patrolled the earth.
- The Lord then says, *“I will turn to Jerusalem in mercy; my house shall be built in it.”*

CHAPTER 2

- **Zechariah** has visions of four horns and four blacksmiths that scattered **Judah** and **Israel** and **Jerusalem**, and the man with the “measuring line.”
- The Lord then promises a **new Jerusalem**: *“The Lord will possess Judah as his portion in the holy land, and he will again choose Jerusalem.”*

CHAPTER 3

- Then the Lord showed **Joshua**, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, while **Satan** stood at his right hand to accuse him.
- And the angel of the Lord said to Satan, *“May the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!”*
- The angel of the Lord then gives assurance to **Joshua** that He is with him.

CHAPTER 4

- The Lord then speaks of **Zerubbabel**, the governor of **Judah**, and how he has begun the process of rebuilding the Temple and how he will complete it.
- **Zechariah** then has a vision of a lampstand made entirely of gold, with seven lamps, and two olive trees, representing **Zerubbabel** and **Joshua**.

CHAPTER 5

- **Zechariah** has a vision of a flying scroll, and this symbolizes the curse which is to go forth over the whole earth.
- **Zechariah** then has a vision of a flying bushel. *“This is Wickedness.”*

CHAPTER 6

- **Zechariah** has a vision of four chariots, representing the four winds, *“which are coming forth after being reviewed by the Lord of all the earth.”*
- **Zechariah** then has a vision of a crown that is to be placed on the heads of **Joshua** and **Zerubbabel**.

CHAPTER 7

- Two years later the word of the Lord comes to **Zechariah** again, and the message has to do with true fasting. *“Render true judgment, and show kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the alien or the poor; do not plot evil against one another in your hearts.”*
- But the people refuse to listen to the Lord, and the Lord becomes angry.

CHAPTER 8

- Through the prophet **Zechariah**, the Lord promises, *“I will return to Zion, and I will dwell within Jerusalem; Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain.”*
- The Lord goes on to say, *“They shall be my people, and I will be their God, with faithfulness and justice.”*
- The Lord advises the people, *“Speak the truth to one another; let there be honesty and peace in the judgments at your gates.”*
- The Lord says that they should have, *“only love, faithfulness and peace.”*
- Finally the Lord promises that, *“Many peoples and nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to implore the favor of the Lord.”*
- People will take hold of every Jew by the edge of his garment and say, *“Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”*

CHAPTER 9

- The judgment of the Lord is about to fall on the surrounding people who are hostile to the Jews, but the Lord promises to send the **Messiah**.
- *“See, your king shall come to you; a just savior is He, meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass.”* **NOTE:** *The Gospels of Matthew and John tell us of Jesus’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.*

CHAPTER 10

- The Lord promises a new order of things. *“I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk in his name, says the Lord.”*

CHAPTER 11

- The Lord then compares the **Messiah** to the **Shepherd** of the flock. *“So I became the shepherd of the flock to be slaughtered for the sheep merchants.”* But the staff of the Lord, named “Favor,” will prevail.
- His wages were assigned as **thirty pieces of silver**. But the Lord said, *“Throw it in the treasury, the handsome price at which they valued me.”*
- He replied, *“So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the treasury in the house of the Lord.”* **NOTE:** *This is the same price that Judas was paid for betraying Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 26, verses 14-16. In chapter 27 of Matthew’s Gospel, Judas repents and tries to return the money to the chief priests and elders. But they would not take the money, so Judas throws the coins on to the Temple steps, and the money was gathered and used to buy a field as a burial place for foreigners.*

CHAPTER 12

- The Lord speaks again through **Zechariah** and says, *“The inhabitants of Jerusalem have their strength in the Lord of hosts, their God.”*
- The Lord speaks of the coming **Messiah** and says, *“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and petition,; and they shall look on him who they have thrust through, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son, and they shall grieve over him as one grieves over a firstborn.”* **NOTE:** *See the Gospel of John, chapter 19, verses 31-37 for the description of the soldiers piercing the side of Jesus as He was dying on the cross.*

CHAPTER 13

- *“Strike the shepherd that the sheep may be dispersed.”* **NOTE:** *See the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 26, verse 31, where Jesus quotes this passage as He predicts Peter’s denial of Him at the Last Supper. This takes place just before they go to the Garden of Gethsemane (where Jesus is arrested).*

CHAPTER 14

- Finally, the Lord promises that there will be a fight for Jerusalem, but the day will come when, *“The Lord shall become king over the whole earth; on that day the Lord shall be the only one, and his name the only one.”*

The Book of the Prophet Malachi

This book, **the last book of the Old Testament**, was written by the prophet **Malachi** about one hundred years after the Jewish people had returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian Exile. **Malachi** lived at the same time as **Nehemiah**, the one who led the fourth return of the Jewish people home to Jerusalem from Babylon and rebuilt the city walls around Jerusalem. Since the **Temple** had been rebuilt and was completed in **516 B.C.**, the book of **Malachi** can be dated around **450 B.C. to 425 B.C.**

Once the **Temple** was rebuilt, the people became lax in their worship, and became less sincere in their sacrifices and offerings to God. Through the prophet **Malachi** the Lord challenges the people to return to justice and righteousness. At the end of this book, the Lord promises to send **Elijah**, the one who is to prepare the way of the Messiah. We now know that the “**Elijah**” that the Lord spoke of was, in fact, **John the Baptist**.

CHAPTER 1

- **Malachi** challenges the people to look at how they are worshiping the Lord.
- How have they offended the Lord? *“By offering polluted food on my altar!...When you offer a blind animal for sacrifice, is this not evil?”*
- The Lord even says to the people, *“Present it to your governor; see if he will accept it, or welcome you, says the Lord of hosts.”*
- In frustration, the Lord says, *“Oh, that one among you would shut the temple gates to keep you from kindling fire in my altar in vain!”*

CHAPTER 2

- The Lord then reprimands the priests for their role in the people’s lack of faith. *“And now, O priests, this commandment is for you.”*
- The Lord challenges the people in the ways that they are treating one another. *“For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel.”*

CHAPTER 3

- This book ends with the promise of the Lord to send the Messiah.
- *“Lo, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me.”*
- The book ends with the words, *“Lo, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and terrible day.”*

NOTE: *Jesus refers to this passage in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 11, verses 7-15, in which He tells the people of the role of John the Baptist.*