Fuller Theological Seminary

OT 502
THE PROPHETS

SYLLABUS and COURSE NOTES

John Goldingay

Summer 2009

Index

Also at http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay

Dr John's Guide to OT Study

Also under "Prophets"
- Hosea and Gomer Visit the Marriage Counsellor
- The Superpower in the Old Testament
- OT Prophecy Today
- Sermons on the Latter Prophets
- Commentary on Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai

Under "Isaiah"
- Isaiah: A Very Short Commentary

Under "OT Ethics"
- Marriage, Family, Community, Servanthood, City, State, War

Note that most free material on the Internet is worth what it costs you; but the library database iPreach has great resources. Do use Wikipedia but never trust it and never quote it as if it were an authority. Remember that the entry may have been written by someone no more informed than your roommate; always check out its statements.

Course Description

1. Course Description

The course studies the contents of the Former Prophets (Joshua to Kings) and the Latter Prophets (Isaiah to Malachi), their possible historical backgrounds, different approaches to their interpretation, and their significance for us today.

2. Learning Outcomes

Students successfully completing the course will have shown that they have

1. gained familiarity with the narrative in Joshua to Kings
2. come to understood how the prophets address Israel concerning its past, present, and future
3. reflected on issues concerning the historical nature of Joshua-Kings and the authorship of the prophetic books
4. considered ways in which the Prophets confront the church today and the issues they raise for it

3. Assignments and Evaluation

(a) Preparation homework (40 hours during the five weeks)

These are the pages in the course notes headed "Homework1," "Homework2," etc. There are two homeworks each with two pages for all but the first and last class. They are designed to take about five hours per evening of classes (an average of 2.5 hours per homework). Write 150-250 words per page of this folder (that is, 600-1000 words per evening of classes).

You post your Monday homework by midnight on the Saturday before class; you post your Wednesday homework by noon on the day of class (the first week you can post by 5.00). Everyone is assigned to an on-line group (e.g., "Group A," "Group B"). To post your homework, log in at Moodle and click on the course number. Look for the appropriate homework assignment and click on it (e.g., "Homework 1"). Put your own name as the Discussion Title. Post by copy-and-paste, not by posting an attachment. Keep a copy of your work on your own computer (Moodle has been known to lose homework!). Make one post for each homework assignment (e.g., include all of the questions in Homework 1 in the same post).

On Monday afternoon and Wednesday afternoon, I look at the homeworks and on that basis decide what topics to cover in part of the class time.

Sometimes people have commented that the homework took them longer I say. We have tested the homework on hundreds of students and adjusted it in light of that, so we know it can be done satisfactorily in the time allocated. Of course some people will find they take longer or shorter than others. If you find it is taking longer, I encourage you to decide whether you really want to spend that amount of time. It is up to you. Remember that you only have to pass it, not get an A. Don't take longer and then complain.

(b) Accessing library databases in connection with homework

- Go to the Fuller Library webpage: http://www.fuller.edu/library/. Click on "Online databases."
- For dictionaries and commentaries, under "Theology and Religion" click on iPreach.
- For articles, click on "ATLA Religion" and at the top of the following page click on "Basic Search."

- On that page type the article title (e.g., "Costly Loss of Praise") into the search field next to the tab that now shows "Find." Hit "Search."
- If you get a choice, look for the right item and click on the link that offers you full text.

(c) Participation in on-line discussion groups (9 hours)

After the deadline for posting, you look through the homeworks posted by the other people in your group and make comments on most of them (see the schedule in section (d) which follows). Put your comments underneath the other person's homework by clicking "reply" to their homework post. You spend an hour doing this and write at least 200 words altogether. Some comments can be short (along the lines of "this is a good point" or "I don't understand this" or "this is an interesting idea but what is the evidence?"). Some should be more substantial. It is fine to add to other people's comments or respond to people's comments on your homework, and all this would count towards your 200 words. You can be critical, but don't be disrespectful or nasty; remember that written comments can come across more harshly than spoken comments.

(d) So here is the weekly schedule after the first class:

Wednesday 12 noon: deadline for posting Wednesday homework (5.00 the first week)
Wednesday afternoon: I look at the homework
Wednesday 6.30: class
Thursday midnight: deadline for posting comments on your group's Wednesday homework
Saturday midnight: deadline for posting Monday homework
Monday noon: deadline for posting comments on your group's Monday homework
Monday afternoon: I look at the homework and comments
Monday 6.30: class

In the days after the class the TAs look more systematically at the homework and comments. They may then add their comments, but they will also e-mail you with their general comments on your work and with a grade for your homework and comments. They will not evaluate them as if they were a paper—notes with bullet points are fine. They look for indications that you have

- carefully read the material set
- analyzed its assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses
- thought about its significance
- shown you have an inquiring, inquisitive mind

They grade them on a pass-fail basis, but to give you feedback they will give them A, B, C, or F:

"A" notes are thorough and perceptive
"B" notes are thorough or perceptive
"C" notes are not very thorough or perceptive
"F" notes are seriously incomplete or thin.

The grading is purely for your feedback; I do not take it into account in generating your grade for the course. To satisfy this aspect of the requirements of the course, you simply have to pass the homeworks and comments. Note that I used to base part of the final grade on the homework, but I stopped doing that because it made people anxious about the homework and their grades for it, and it added to the pressure to spend too much time on the homework. So relax. You just have to pass, and it is really hard not to do that.

Note also that the TAs are only allocated a miniscule amount of time for their grading. Don't expect detailed feedback. (If they think a homework or comment is an F, they will refer it to me for me to decide.)

(e) What If You Have a Crisis or Miss Doing the Homework or Taking Part in the Group or Get a Fail?

There are no extensions for this schedule except in case of something unforeseeable and out of your control such as illness. In such a situation, e-mail me. If (for instance) you are out of town for the weekend, you must still post your work and then your comments in accordance with the schedule.

Unless I have accepted an excuse such as illness, if you are late in posting your homework, your final grade for the course is reduced by .05 each time (e.g., 4.0 becomes 3.95). If your homework is more than a week late, that counts as not turning it in at all. Likewise, if you are late in posting your comments, your final grade for the course is reduced by .05 each time. And if your comments are more than a week late, that counts as not turning them in at all.

If you do not post your homework, or do not fulfill the comment requirement, or get a fail for a particular week's homework/comments, your grade for the class is reduced by .1 (e.g., 4.0 becomes 3.9).

If you do not turn in homework more than once, or do not fulfill the comment requirement more than once, or fail the homework/comments more than once (or any combination of these), you fail the class.

If you fail a week's homework and/or comments, you may resubmit them directly to the TA within one week of receiving the fail grade; if they then pass, they are simply treated as if they had been late.

> (I am sorry that some of these rules are legalistic; most of you won't need to worry about them but I have to think out how we deal with marginal situations.)

(f) Two 4-5 page papers (2500-3000 words each)

1) By 11.59 p.m. on September 1 you turn in a paper on a topic of your choice concerning the Former Prophets. Here are some possible titles.

- Who is God, according to the Former Prophets, and how does this portrayal of God need to broaden our understanding?
- Who are the key people in the Former Prophets? What are the characteristics of the ways the narrative goes about portraying them and what are the lessons it implicitly suggests we learn from the way God deals with them?
- "Judges is a collection of stories about gendered violence." Is it? If it is, how does it help us?
- How do you understand the way God deals with Saul, David, and Solomon?
- How does the story of the people of God from Joshua to the exile illumine the history of the church from Acts to today?
- What understanding of prophecy and prophets emerges from the Former Prophets?
- What understanding of leadership emerges from the Former Prophets? What critique does it suggest of leadership in the church?
- Describe and comment on the place of women in the Former Prophets
- What insight on human beings and on God do the stories in the Former Prophets offer to a therapist?
- "Former Prophets," "Deuteronomistic History": how far are these illuminating descriptions of Joshua—Kings?
- What theology and ethic of violence emerges from Joshua—Kings?

- In the light of their stories, write the letter Saul wrote to God as he waited to die from his battle wound and/or the letter David wrote to God
- Discuss the origin, nature, and significance of any one of the biblical books we have studied.

On format, turn in, etc, see section 5 below

2) By 11.59 on September 15 you write a further paper on a topic of your choice concerning the Latter Prophets. Here are some possible titles.

- To judge from Isaiah to Malachi, what is prophecy?
- What do the prophets promise?
- How would you rewrite Amos for your own country in the present?
- What is the theology of the Book of Isaiah?
- How many Isaiahs were there?
- Compare and contrast the message of the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.
- Compare and contrast the message of Amos, Hosea, and Micah (or just two of these).
- What would you like to ask the prophets when you meet them, and what would you like to tell them?
- In what sense does the New Testament fulfill prophecy?
- What are the key elements in prophecy that the New Testament does not claim to fulfill?
- How do the prophets offer to broaden and correct the assumptions of cross-cultural missiology?
- In what way does the prophets relate to feminist studies or race and racism, and vice versa?
- Who is God, according to the prophets, and do you like him?

In each case, for this second paper the "prophets" means the Latter Prophets (Isaiah to Malachi).

For both papers, if you wish to do a title other than the ones suggested above, check it out with me. As this is a survey course, you cannot do a study of a particular passage; and the paper should not simply rework a topic that we covered in class.

You can write either paper in the form of praise or prayer or complaint or questioning to God. You can focus on writing (e.g.) from the perspective of a woman or a man, an African-American or a Latino/a or an Asian, or a Psych student. You can write it in the form of a letter to God or to your mother or to a college friend.

On format, turn in, etc, see section 5 on the next page

3) If you wish, you can do one long paper (5000-6000 words) instead of two shorter ones and turn it in by 11.59 on September 15. But note that it then needs to be a topic that includes something from both parts of the course—many of the above titles for the Former Prophets or the Latter Prophets could be stretched so as to apply to both. Here are some possibilities:

(1) "Analyze the use of the Former and Latter Prophets in Philip Wheaton and Duane Shank's book *Empire & the Word* (Washington, DC: EPICA, 1988) and in the light of that formulate your 'Theology of the USA'".
(2) "The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully" (Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* [New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006], 31). Discuss with regard to the Former and Latter Prophets.
(3) According to the Former and Latter Prophets, what is God like?

A Baylor suggested that according to their gender, race, and location, American Christians may worship a God who is
*Authoritarian (judgmental and engaged in the world), or
*Benevolent (not judgmental but very active in the world), or
*Critical (views some events with disfavor but doesn't interact with the world), or
*Distant (removed form human affairs)?
Which do you worship? Which does your church worship? Which do the Former and Latter Prophets worship?

4) You can do something "creative" for one of the papers (not both and not if you choose to do a long paper). Here are the rules for that.

1. Check out with me what you propose to do.
2. Remember that what I have to judge is how/what you have learned from the scriptures we studied. Your project should be a means of discovering something about the scriptures and expressing it that you could not have done by means of a regular paper.
3. You can turn in any form of art that enables me to see that.
4. Most forms of art need to be accompanied by 1000 words of interpretation. Poetry might be an exception.
5. An artistically profound piece has a head start because its artistic nature should reveal part of the answer to that question. A more amateur piece may need more reflection in the accompanying pages of interpretation.
6. If you can turn in the project electronically (or, e.g., post it on Youtube), do so.
7. If you have to turn it in physically, you must either bring it to class or turn it in to my faculty assistant. You must also call him to arrange when to collect it from him, anytime after September 22.
8. If you are turning it in physically, please also email the interpretation to me, providing some description at the head of the interpretation that will enable me to link them – e.g. "this goes with the painting of a girl with a blue face."

5) Turn in your papers electronically. Use single space. Use good English. If English is not your first language, get a native English speaker to edit it. Transliterate Hebrew or embed truetype fonts. Do not use endnotes; use footnotes or put references in brackets in the text, like this: (Fretheim, *Exodus*, 107), and put a bibliography at the end, or use APA style. Include your name in the file title (either Yourname Midterm, or Yourname Final). Put your name, the paper title, and the course number at the beginning of the paper.

6) The Fuller student body and faculty agreed some years ago that we would all use "gender-inclusive" language. That means we don't say "man" when we mean "humanity," or say "men" when we mean "people." And it means we ask you to use the NRSV or TNIV translations for your homework and papers, because they use language like that. The background is that the church has long behaved as if women were not really fully people, and we need to make clear in our thinking and way of speaking that women are just as much part of the image of God as men are. So we expect you to write that way in your homework and papers. If you need help with this, Google "gendered language."

7) If you have an emergency and need an extension to the turn in date for a paper, write me an e-mail. If I accept your plea, there will be no penalty for late submission. (There are no extensions for homework because it needs to be done before the class.)

8) I comment on the paper using the "Comment" facility in Word (Alt-I then M) (so don't turn it in as a PDF). Using MS Word you can see my comments if you go "Alt-View" then "Reading Layout." If you don't have MS Word, you can download software to enable you to read the comments from

http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=95E24C87-8732-48D5-8689-AB826E7B8FDF&displaylang=en or from http://www.winfield.demon.nl/.

I don't look at outlines or drafts; give it your best shot. But if you turn it in before the deadline day I will try to return it within three working days. Then if you do not like the grade and wish to revise it and turn it in again, you can do so. The deadline for resubmission is 11.59 p.m. on September 19 (for either paper).

In grading, I look for

- your interaction with the Bible
- your use of insights from elsewhere (e.g., classes, books)
- your understanding of the issues
- your own intellectual engagement and critical thinking
- your personal reflection in light of your experience
- a structure of the paper and the clarity and accuracy of your writing

(though not every one of these criteria will apply to every paper).

I have no prescription regarding numbers of secondary sources and references. Put the focus on you yourself studying the scriptures. That is the nature of the research you do. When you have done that work, then do read some commentaries or other books to see if you learn extra things or to catch mistakes in what you have drafted. But don't read the other books before doing your own work. And if you learn nothing from the other books, don't worry about not referring to them. By all means put at the end of your paper a list of the books you referred to. But many references do not turn a B paper into an A paper, and lack of references does not turn an A paper into a B paper

An "A" paper will be thorough and perceptive in its use of scripture and your own thinking and/or personal reflection. It will be good on all fronts or brilliant on some. There will be a "wow" factor about it. It will probably say something I have not thought before.
A "B" paper will be satisfactory in its use of scripture and in your own thinking and/or personal reflection, or it may have some very good aspects but some poorer ones. It will show hard work and understanding but not necessarily originality.
A "C" paper will be deficient in a number of fronts in a way not compensated by other strengths.
An "F" paper will be seriously deficient on a broad front.

If your paper is less than 2500 words, I reduce its grade unless it is remarkably good and I reckon that more words would have been unnecessary. If it is over 3000 words, I do not reduce its grade but I reserve the right just to skim-read it and not to make comments on it.

There is a file of A-graded papers available under OT 502 at
http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay

4. Policies

(These are the same for students registered for a grade and for pass-fail students)

(a) Attendance at classes

You must attend all classes. If you have to miss a class, listen to the recorded version which will be posted on Moodle the day after class. (The classes will also be in iTunes, but possibly not until after the end of the course, simply for practical reasons, but I would be glad to know if anyone would find it more helpful to

have them on iTunes now, and I will see if we can arrange that.) Whether it is a Monday or a Wednesday class, you must listen to the recording before the next Monday class. Then send me an email with five separate one-sentence comments about some things you thought were interesting and/or some things you want to ask a question about and/or some things you don't understand. If you do not manage to listen to the recording before the next Monday, send me an email with your excuse and I might give you an extension. You do not have to inform me if you expect to miss class.

(b) Your grade for the course

Your grade is determined by the one or two final papers, but missing class and not listening to the recording, or failing to post satisfactory homework notes, means your grade is lowered. Failing more than one homework means you fail the course. This works as follows.

(1) If you miss a class and do not listen to the recording, you forfeit .1 of your final grade. Likewise if you do not post the homework or comments for a class you lose .1 of your final grade. If you post the homework or comments within one week after the class, this penalty is reduced to .05. If you post your homework or comments late through some unexpected event such as illness, send me an email and I will excuse you from that reduction.
(2) Suppose you write two papers and one gets A-, one B+. In GPA numbers this is 3.7 and 3.3, averaging 3.5. Normally I would then round up your letter grade to A-. But if you have missed (say) one homework, the grade reduces to 3.4 and your letter grade for the course is B+.
(3) Or suppose you get A for both papers, which means 4.0. If you have missed one class, this reduces to 3.9. But rounded up, that is still A. If you missed two homeworks, it reduces to 3.8, and that is rounded down to A-.

(c) Incompletes

If you are unable to complete your paper(s) because of a serious problem that was unpredictable and unavoidable, email me and I can grant you an "Incomplete." Download the form from the Registry via the student tab on Portico and email my faculty assistant to get it signed on my behalf before the end of the quarter. I do not have the power to grant an Incomplete on the basis of (e.g.) your agreeing to take on extra work or pastoral or mission commitments that you could have refused, or other busyness that you could have foreseen (see Student Handbook on "Academic Policies"). If you turn in the Incomplete after the end of the quarter, you also have to turn in an Academic Petition for a Late Incomplete; you can also download this form. I do not grant Incompletes with regard to the homework, because it is preparation for the class.

(d) Academic Integrity Commitment

In doing your preparation and writing your papers, I expect you to:

Use your mind energetically in your study
Look to see what scripture and other reading have to say to you personally
Be faithful to God
Not to say anything that you do not think

See also the seminary statement at the end of this folder

(e) Students with Disabilities

The seminary makes reasonable accommodation for persons with documented disabilities. If you have a hidden or visible disability which may require classroom accommodation, contact the Access Services Office, which is responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students

with disabilities. Additionally, contact Dr Goldingay within the first two weeks of the quarter to plan any details of your approved accommodation.

5. Course Schedule and Activities

The course requires 120 hours of work. This comes from the regular formula that sees a four quarter-hour course as involving 40 hours in class (in this case, 30 hours physically in class and 9 hours on line) and 80 hours of private study (in this case, 40 hours of preparation homework and 40 hours writing two papers).

(a) Required Reading

Bring a copy of the Syllabus and Class Notes (hard copy or computer), and an NRSV or TNIV Bible, to each class.

B. T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books.* InterVarsity Press, 2005.

J. H. Eaton. *Mysterious Messengers.* Eerdmans, 1998. (This is out of print but it is posted on Moodle.)

(b) Recommended Reading (you are not *required* to read any of these books)

Bellis, Alice Ogden (ed.). *Many Voices: Multicultural Responses to the Minor Prophets*. University Press of America, 1995.

Borowski, O. *Daily Life in Biblical Times*. Atlanta: SBL, 2003.

Brenner, Athalya (ed.). *A Feminist Companion to Judges* and *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings* and *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*. Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, 1994 and 1995.

Brueggemann, Walter. *Hopeful Imagination*. Fortress, 1986.

Brueggemann, Walter. *Prophetic Imagination*. Fortress, 1978.

Coggins, Richard, and others (ed.). *Israel's Prophetic Tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Fritz, Volkmar. *The City in Ancient Israel*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995. Pp. 176-89, on everyday life in the city. http://books.google.com/books?id=OMw0IBhBovcC&pg=PA176&lpg=PA176&dq=%22with+the+exception+of+the+capital+cities%22&source=web&ots=DfWgisCN21&sig=WSUHBddrtSPpVzglHR6YeVSj3zk

Goldingay, John. *Old Testament Theology, Volumes One and Two*. InterVarsity Press, 2003 and 2006. Also Volume Three, posted at http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay by topic, under OT865/551 OT Ethics

Gordon, Robert P. (ed.). *"The Place Is Too Small for Us": The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship.* Eisenbrauns, 1995.

Knoppers, Gary N., and Gordon McConville (ed.). *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies in the Deuteronomistic History*. Eisenbrauns, 2000.

van der Toorn, Karel. "Nine Months among the Peasants." In W. G. Dever and S. Gitin (ed.), *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past*, pp. 393-410. Eisenbrauns, 2003. On everyday village life.

von Rad, Gerhard. *The Message of the Prophets*. SCM, 1968. = *OT Theology*, Vol. 2.

Wheaton, Philip, and Duane Shank. *Empire & the Word*. EPICA, 1988.

Also library on-line resources at iPreach

If you feel the need of an outline understanding of the OT story to fit things into, there's one at the very bottom of http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay

John's Vita

1942 – born in Birmingham, England. My father was a printing machine minder, my mother a dressmaker. They didn't go to church, but they had me baptized.

1953 – went on a scholarship to a prep school in Birmingham, learned Latin and Greek, discovered music (listening and singing), and got drawn to God.

1961 – felt called to the ministry, went to Oxford University to study Theology, discovered the Old Testament, and met Ann at a Christian students retreat, when she was a medical student.

1964 – went to Bristol to seminary. Took Ann to hear the Beatles. Ann had multiple sclerosis diagnosed.

1966 – met David Hubbard. Was ordained into the Church of England ministry. Served in a parish in London. Married Ann and we had Steven. Discovered Leonard Cohen.

1970 – joined the faculty at St John's Theological College (seminary) in Nottingham. We had Mark. Studied for a PhD while teaching. Ann trained as a psychiatrist. Served as associate pastor. Didn't go to any concerts because we were preoccupied with children.

1981 – Fuller asked me if I was interested in a job. Wrote some books.

1984 – took Ann to hear Eric Clapton (children are less of a problem). Ann's multiple sclerosis started being more of a difficulty. Took Ann to hear John Wimber.

1988 – made principal of the seminary. Ann retired from psychiatry because of her ill-health. Fuller asked me if I was interested in a job. Took Ann to hear Van Morrison.

1993 – read Paulo Freire and stopped doing straight lecturing

1996 – Fuller asked me if I was interested in a job. Discovered where Fuller was. Steven married Sue (they live in St Albans, near London, with Daniel and Emma; Steven works for GM, Sue for British Telecom). Took Ann to hear Bonnie Raitt.

1997 – Ann became wheelchair-bound. Mark married Sarah (they live in Devon; they are both now at college). Came to Fuller. Went hang gliding. Took Ann to hear Sheryl Crow.

1999 – Ann lost the ability to speak or swallow. Family came to celebrate the millennium. Took Ann to hear Alison Krauss. Didn't take her to hear Oasis.

2002 - became associate pastor at St Barnabas, Fair Oaks Avenue, Pasadena. Family came to celebrate my 60th birthday. Took Ann to hear Bob Dylan.

2006 – got into the habit of going to Malibu for lunch. Took Ann to hear the Rolling Stones.

Monday July 27: Introduction; Joshua

6.30 – 7.50: Introduction

Class Time

Lecture	Introduction to "The Prophets" (page 15) An outline of Joshua-Judges-Samuel-Kings and of the history from Joshua to Malachi; further reading (pages 16-17)
Private Study:	Read Joshua 1 and/or 23 and or 24 and fill in page 18
Plenary discussion	
Lecture:	An outline of Joshua (page 21)

Further reading

(These suggestions are always voluntary ideas for things you might want to follow up.)
J. Goldingay, *An Outline of Israel's History,* from *How To Read the Bible*.
http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay
In the *Dictionary*, read "Deuteronomistic History"

8.10 – 9.20: Joshua

Class Time

Lecture:	The ethics of Joshua (page 22)
Discussion:	Do you think the NT does disapprove of Joshua? Are there any other ways in which the NT is unhappy with the OT?
Lecture	The theme of Joshua; origin and further reading (pages 23-25)

Further reading

Look through Joshua in the light of the outline on page 21
Read page 25 on the origin of the book
In the *Dictionary*, read "Joshua, Book of"
W. Brueggemann, "Revelation and violence," in *A Social Reading of the Old Testament*, pp. 285-318.

The Prophets: Who/What They Are

The Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets

Joshua—Judges—Samuel—Kings
Isaiah—Jeremiah—Ezekiel—The Twelve

> Note that Daniel is in the Writings, and thus doesn't come in this course
> So not all prophets are in the Prophets (Abraham and Miriam are in the Torah)
> Also "prophet" in the OT means something different from what it means for Christians?

The Former "Prophets"

Traditionally reckoned to be written by the prophets Samuel, Gad, Nathan, and Jeremiah
Background to the prophets
Stories about prophets
A prophetic view on Israel's history as the sphere of God's acts
How God's word functions in history
Also powerful and speaking beyond its original context
True but not necessarily factual

Joshua to Kings as the Deuteronomistic History

Deut:	how to live in the land, and what will then follow
Josh 1:	the challenge to obedience
Josh 23-24:	the covenant
Judges:	the pattern of disobedience (1)
1 Sam 8-12:	the ambivalence about kings
2 Sam 7:	the promise and challenge to David
1 Kings 8:	the prayer of Solomon
1-2 Kings:	the pattern of disobedience (2)
2 Kings 17:	the reason for Ephraim's fall
2 Kings 22-23:	the reforms of Josiah (two [or three] editions of the D history?)

Joshua to Kings: The second half of Israel's story from Abraham to the deportation

Genesis to Deuteronomy: from Babylon to the edge of the promised land
Joshua to Kings: from the promised land back to Babylon

The story of human obedience and divine success and/or of human sin and divine failure

An Outline of Joshua—Judges—Samuel—Kings

Joshua 1-12	The people conquer the land All is conquered—yet much remains to be possessed
Joshua 13-22	The land is allocated to the clans
Joshua 23-24	The people make a covenant
Judges 1-2	The task that remains and the discouraging/encouraging pattern that will obtain
Judges 3-16	Examples—Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah, Samson….
Judges 17-21	The degeneracy of the time when everyone did what was right in their own eyes
1 Samuel 1-7	Samuel, the last judge
1 Samuel 8-31	Saul, the first king, the man unfitted for the job that God doesn't really want done
2 Samuel 1-10	David, the king who receives God's spectacular commitment
2 Samuel 11-24	David, the king who then spectacularly fails
1 Kings 1-11	Solomon, the king who triumphs but then makes it unravel
1 Kings 12— 2 Kings 17	The interwoven story of the northern and southern kingdoms The rise of prophecy to confront the monarchy
2 Kings 18-25	The last years of the southern kingdom Is there any hope?

The Traditional Critical Historical Outline

1220	Joshua	
1220-1050	Judges period	
1050-930	Israel as one nation under one king 1050-1010 Saul, 1010-970 David, 970-930 Solomon	
930-722	Israel as two nations (Ephraim in the north, Judah in the south)	
	Middle of that period:	Elijah and Elisha in the north
	End of that period:	Amos, Hosea in the north; fall of Samaria Isaiah and Micah in the south
722-587	Judah controlled by *Assyria*, then *Babylon*	
	Middle of that period:	Manasseh allows Assyrian practices in Jerusalem
	Later in that period:	Josiah's reform; Jeremiah
	End of that period:	Rebellion against Babylon leads to Jerusalem's fall
587-539	Many Judeans forced to live in Babylon for the last decades of Babylon's power	
	Early in that period:	Ezekiel
	Later in that period:	Isaiah 40—55 (Daniel)
539-333	Judah under *Persia*	
	Early in that period:	Haggai and Zechariah (520-516); Isaiah 56—66 (?)
	Middle of that period:	Malachi (Ezra, Nehemiah)

Further Reading on Joshua to Kings as a Whole

See also *Dictionary*, 228-30.

Ackroyd, P. R. *Exile and Restoration*. London: SCM, 1968.

Amit, Y. *History and Ideology: An Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Alter, R. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic, 1981.

Bach, A. (ed.). *Women in the Hebrew Bible*. New York/London: Routledge, 1999.

Bartholomew, Craig, and others (ed.). *"Behind" the Text*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. [on method in studying biblical history.]

Brenner, Athalya. *I Am… Biblical Women Tell Their Own Stories*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004.

Eslinger, L. *Into the Hands of the Living God.* Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989.

Coogan, Michael D. *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*. New York: OUP, 1998.

Davies, Philip R. (ed.). *First Person*. London/New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002. (Rahab, Delilah, Jezebel, Gomer)

Dever, W. G. *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. [brilliant summary of current debate by archaeologist]

Dever, W. G., and S. Gitin (ed.). *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003. (essays taking a moderate position about Israelite history; also good on family etc)

Exum, J. C. *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative*. Cambridge: CUP, 1992. [Judges, 1-2 Samuel]

Fretheim, T. E. *Deuteronomic History.* Nashville: Abingdon, 1983.

Gros Louis, K. R., and others (ed.). *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives*. 2 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1974 and 1982.

Moore, M. S. *Reconciliation: A Study of Biblical Families in Conflict*. Joplin, Miss: College Press, 1994. [Samson, Hannah, Saul, Abigail, David]

Long, V. P. *The Art of Biblical History.* Leicester, UK: IVP, 1994.

Knoppers, G. N., and J. G. McConville (ed.). *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies in the Deuteronomistic History.* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000.

McConville, J. G. *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1993.

Nelson, R. D. *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*. Sheffield, UK: University of Sheffield, 1981.

Niditch, S. *War in the Hebrew Bible.* New York/Oxford: OUP, 1993.

Noll, K. L. *Canaan and Israel in Antiquity*. London/New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001. (history of the area that avoids prioritizing the biblical version)

-- "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomic Debate?" *JSOT* 31 (2007): 311-45.

Noth, M. *The Deuteronomistic History*. Sheffield, UK: University of Sheffield, 1981.

Provan, I., and others. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Louisville: WJK, 2003.

Römer, T. (ed.). *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History*. Leuven: Leuven UP, 2000.

Sakenfeld, K. D. *Just Wives?* Louisville: WJK, 2003. (Michael, Abigail, and Bathsheba; Gomer)

Shearing, L. S., and S. L. McKenzie (ed.). *Those Elusive Deuteronomists*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Smith, Mark S. *The Memoirs of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004. (moderate view of Israelite history)

—*The Early History of God*. San Francisco: Harper, 1990. (how Israel's theology came to be different from that of the Canaanites.)

Sternberg, M. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985.

Vaughn, A. G., and A. E. Killebrew (ed.). *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology*. Atlanta: SBL, 2003. [on the relation between the biblical story and archeological investigation]

Wolff, H. W. "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic history". In W. Brueggemann and H. W. Wolff, *The Vitality of the Old Testament Traditions,* pp. 83-100. Richmond: Knox, 1975.

Questions on Joshua

1 Read Joshua 1 and/or 23 and/or 24

(a) What is the message of the chapter in itself?

(b) What would it say in the context of Josiah's reform?

(c) What would it say in the context of the fall of Jerusalem and the exile?

(d) Is there anything you would like to know about the chapters?

Turning: A Student's Reflection on the Prophets

[This accompanied a painting, to which the reflection refers]

Sometimes a course for me, will work like a funnel. I may take in a lot of different kinds of information and knowledge, but in the end I leave with a new understanding of God that takes it all into account. Hebrew prophets has been one of those courses.

I grew up in a church that focused its theology on the "Old Testament God." By that I mean a view of God that saw him as being an authoritarian, severe God waiting to punish anyone who crossed his path. In fact, most of the time I saw him as a God who was just waiting for me to mess up so that he could punish me and pour out his wrath upon me. This idea was confirmed not only by the sermons and in general, the way my earthly father chose to run the house hold but also by the pictures of God I received from the Old Testament when I was young. Reading the stories of how God would kill whole people groups within Joshua, and how he would punish his people all throughout the prophets made me really believe that God was out to get me if I didn't stay in line and do exactly what I was supposed to do. It scared me to think about how he promised to bring destruction to his people and other people. It frightened me to think about how not only does God become upset but that in his anger he could shake the earth. There are countless verses describing his might and power to bring calamity. It didn't matter that these verses were not talking about me per se, but what scared me was that if God could do this to someone, he could also do it to me. I really believed that this punisher God was out to get me. Growing up under this sort of God, I didn't dare to disobey or even disappoint him or for that matter, my parents who I saw as God's representatives in my life. Needless to say I was a pretty good child, never wanting to cross the line where God's wrath would meet me on the other side.

When I went into college, God came and found me. I met Jesus Christ and encountered the compassionate side of God. I dove into experiencing his love and grace. I realized that God loved me for who I was, his daughter, and not because of what I did or didn't do right. He was for me and not against me. However, even within this revelation, I still walked with a fear in the back of my mind that it was too good to be true. I believed deep down that my first impressions of God were actually true, that he was waiting for me to slip up so that he would come down and punish me. Because of that fear, I steered clear of those verses and passages within the Bible that might hint at Yahweh being a God of judgment. I chose to read the verses that would confirm his love for me and avoid those verses that would testify to the justice of God. Until this class, I chose to avoid the prophets entirely, except the warm ending chapters of Isaiah. However, in actually taking the time to read these books, I have discovered something more.

I faced my fears in these books that I would find a God whose wrath I wouldn't be able to explain away. I still can't sometimes. I still can't make sense of why God acts the way he does during certain situations. For example, why didn't God spare Jephthah's daughter? I know he didn't tell Jephthah to make that vow, but couldn't he have spared her? I don't understand why babies had to be dashed upon the rocks or why the wives of David had to suffer for their husband's wrong doing. I don't understand why Saul was rejected and David was accepted. Yet for the most part, in reading these stories of God I have seen more mercy than judgment and even mercy in the form of judgment. Instead of settling for a one sided God, I have come to understand God as a God of judgment as well as compassion. Though the tension of the two has been confusing to me, I have come to understand it in a new way through this course and have tried to portray it in this painting.

The painting represents Yahweh and his interactions with humanity. God is represented by the warm colored oval in the center. The red stands for his compassion. As the colors swirl around in the center, so He is compassion, love and grace. Yet as he tries to reach out to his people he is met with those who are turned away from him. They do not approach him with right worship or right political views. They do not love those around them by looking out for the oppressed or defending the cause of the weak. These people are represented by the lines that hook downward. In the face of those, God must show judgment. This judgment

side of God is represented by the thick black line drawn at the bottom of the oval. As mentioned in Isaiah 28:21, this side of God is alien to God. Though God has the capacity to show this side of him, it is not the one that is closest to his heart. God is one who loves to show compassion and does not delight in the destruction of anyone. Even Jonah knew this. He claimed that the reason why he didn't want to go to Nineveh in the first place was not because he was afraid to go, but that he didn't want to proclaim judgment on the people, only to have God show mercy on them in the end anyway. In reading Amos I discovered that as I was taken in with the text, reading about all that the people were doing wrong, I was glad that Yahweh was not a God to be taken for granted. I was glad that he actually cared when his people were disobeying him. He saw the pain of the oppressed who suffered most when people refused to obey his commands, and he did not stand by and just let it continue. He sent his judgment upon them.

Yet another tension within this side of God is that he actually relents. Judgment is never the final word, as is the case in almost ever story, specifically concerning the people of Israel. David, for example, after his sin with Bathsheba, was restored to his thrown following God's judgment upon him. He however, turned. Instead of following on his rebellious course, he turned and repented for his sin. Again this was the case for those living within Nineveh as well as the Israelites in Exile. The truth of the matter is, that we all deserve judgment, but God is a God of mercy as well. When we turn in repentance, though we still may suffer judgment, it will not have the last word. God redeems and brings his people back. This turning can be seen in the two green streaks on either side of the oval. Though they were turned away from God, they turned back and were incorporated again into what God is doing in the world. If one looks closely, the colors of the turned streaks start to become warmer. They have turned towards God and are being transformed by him. As evidenced by the end of Isaiah, as God brings his people back from exile, though it seemed that judgment would have the last word, it did not. He redeems his people for no one is so far gone that God can't redeem them.

I used to see God as someone who was waiting for me to make a mistake so he could punish me. But Yahweh never acts like that. Rather when he does have to punish he has already given his people ample warning. They should know already that what they are doing is wrong. Also once the punishment is declared, there is always a chance he will change his mind. After reading through the prophets, I have really come to see that my fears growing up and that, at times, still persist today are not actually scripturally based. God is not waiting to bring destruction, but rather continually hopes that his people will chose what is right. He continually hopes that his people will again turn to him in repentance. He is a God of mercy, and only when he has to does he enforce his judgment. He is the Holy One of Israel, set apart for his mercy and compassion as well as his judgment. He doesn't always repay us for what wrong we have done to him like humans do to those who wrong them. However he also does not let the wicked go unpunished. The tension between God's compassion and judgment is still confusing to me at times, but throughout this course I have been able to see it much more clearly. Its not quite as scary, for even though I don't understand it completely, I know that he is the set apart one, the one whom Jonah proclaimed as a "gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing." Jonah 4:2

I will never understand him completely but through classes like this and other life experiences I look forward to understanding him more and more, to grasp the truth of who he is and let go of the lies of who he is not.

An Outline of Joshua

Chapters 1—12: The occupation of the land

1: Yahweh's sermon to Joshua and Joshua's challenge to the eastern clans

2: Joshua's surprising stratagem to prepare for entering the land: a comic interlude
3—4: Joshua's surprising way of entering the land: immigration as a religious procession
5: Joshua's religious acts on entering the land: circumcision, passover, submission

6: Joshua's surprising way of taking the first town: conquest as a religious procession
7: Joshua's first failure and how he handles it: defeat as God's punishment
8: Joshua's new experience of Yahweh's guidance
8:30-35: Joshua's celebration and act of dedication

9: Joshua's second failure and how he handles it: deception and its consequences
10: Joshua's victories over people who attack Israel's ally
10:40-43: Summary of Joshua's victory over the whole land

11:1-15: Joshua's victory when attacked by Hazor and its allies
11:16—12:24: Summary of Joshua's victory over the whole land

Chapter 13—24: The allocation of the land

13:1-7: Introduction to the allocation of the land, and the land that remains to be conquered
13:8-33: Reuben, Gad, half Manasseh (east of the Jordan), Levi

14:1-5: Introduction to the allocation of the land
14:6-15: Caleb, and the people that remain to be conquered
15: Judah, and the people that remain to be conquered
16—17: Ephraim and the other half of Manasseh, and the people that remain to be conquered

18:1-10: Setting up the tent of meeting at Shiloh; preparation for allocation of the rest of the land
18:11—19:51: Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan
20: Cities of refuge
21:1-42 Cities for Levi

21:43-45: Summary of Yahweh's gift of the whole land
22: Relationships between the western and eastern clans

23:1—24:28 Joshua's final challenge to the people and their response: another serious sermon
24:29-33 Joshua's death

The Theology and Ethics of Joshua

1 Joshua tells the story of God's telling Israel to kill all the inhabitants of Canaan; when Israel is obedient, it does so. Nowadays this troubles Western Christians, though it did not do so before the modern age.

2 Modern Christians feel it is not in keeping with the NT. In what sense is this so? There too God acts to punish trillions of people, e.g. by sending them to hell. There too human agents can be the executors of God's punishment (e.g., Romans 13). There is no trace of unease in the NT about Joshua, and there is enthusiasm about his work in Acts 7:45 and Heb 11:30-34. The NT apparently did not think it was incompatible with being called to be peacemakers. Note the tough side to Jesus: e.g., Matt 5:22, 29-30; 6:15.

3 Admittedly, slaughtering whole peoples was originally Israel's idea (Num 21:1-3), though God went along with it.

4 Genocide is at least as common today as ever, and it is often Christians (e.g. Rwanda) who undertake it. Christian settlers in America and South Africa justified their actions by Joshua. Extremist Israelis have also done so, allocating the role of Canaanites to Palestinians, though this has never been the stance of any Israeli party. But there is no basis for (e.g.) Britain or America or modern Israel making Joshua an excuse for what they do. It is an aspect of the "once-for-all" nature of much of the biblical story (e.g., Rom 6:10; Heb 9:27).

5 What exactly makes us uneasy about Joshua itself? The OT makes a point of the fact that the Canaanites' punishment was quite deserved, though it may be that other peoples who were just as degenerate got away with their wrongdoing. Canaan did not get away with its wrongdoing because it was in the way of God's plans, which were ultimately designed to benefit the whole world.

6 The OT itself draws attention to the fact that eliminating the Canaanites is designed to remove a bad influence on Israel. The fact that Israel did not slaughter the Canaanites and Israel did adopt Canaanite ways fits with this.

7 What is the message of the story? One aspect of it is that God gave Israel the land in a miraculous way in fulfillment of the promises to Israel's ancestors. That links with the "once-for-all" nature of this event. Canaanites as such do not exist by the time they are telling these stories; there is no danger of Israel going out to annihilate them now. But Israel did not assume that the events in Joshua's day were a pattern to be repeated, so that they could annihilate other peoples on the basis of the earlier pattern. They behaved as if there was something unique about what God did in Joshua's day in giving Israel the land.

8 The other is the way God could bring trouble to people who disobeyed God's word and/or trespassed on God's rights and/or made a personal profit out of war making.

The Theme of Joshua

(Based on L. D. Hawk, *Every Promise Fulfilled*)

1:1-18 Joshua opens with a promise of complete success and complete obedience.
This generates two central tensions for the book

(a) 11:12-15 (obedience—disobedience—obedience)

In one strand of material, Israel is wholly obedient to Yahweh
1:16-18
24:16-18, 21
chs 3—6

In another strand of material, Israel fails to obey Yahweh
ch 2
ch 7
ch 9
Rahab and Achan muddle the distinction between Canaanites and Israelites

(b) 11:16-23 (success—failure-success)

In one strand of material Israel conquers the whole land and kills everyone
10:40-42
ch 12
21:43-45
chs 13—21

In another strand of material Israel cannot take key towns and leaves the population of Canaan alive and in possession of them
ch 9
15:63
16:10
17:11-12

(c) Chs 22-24 as a closing exposition of the themes

These closing chapters systematically rework the themes, still leaving us with no closure
ch 22: obedience and disobedience
ch 23: repeating the promises of ch 1—evidently the situation has not moved on
ch 24: closing challenge

Further Reading on Joshua

Auld, A. G. *Joshua, Judges and Ruth.* Edinburgh: St Andrew/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984.

Bird, P. "The Harlot as Heroine". *Semeia* 46 (1989), pp. 119-39.

Brettler, Marc Zvi. "Biblical History and Jewish Biblical Theology. *Journal of Religion* 77 (1997): 563-84 (how a Jew handles the problem of the apparent non-historical nature of much of the OT)

Brueggemann, W. "Revelation and Violence," in *A Social Reading of the Old Testament*, pp. 285-318. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.

Butler, T. C. *Joshua.* Waco, TX: Word, 1983.

Creach, J. F. D. *Joshua*. Louisville: Knox, 2003.

McDermott, J. J. *What Are They Saying about the Formation of Israel?* Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1998.

Dever, W. G. *Who Were the Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

Finkelstein, Israel, and Amihai Mazar. *The Quest for the Historical Israel*. Atlanta: SBL, 2007.

Goldingay, J. *After Eating the Apricot*, pp. 159-69. [Joshua 1-2]
http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay

Gundry, S. (ed.). *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

Hawk, L. D. *Every Promise Fulfilled.* Louisville: WJK, 1991.

— *Joshua.* Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000.

Howard, D. M. *Joshua.* Broadman, 1998.

Merling, David. *The Book of Joshua.* Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1997. (Joshua is really about claiming the land rather than settling it.)

Mitchell, G. *Together in the Land.* Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.

Nelson, R. D. *Joshua.* Louisville: WJK, 1997.

Provan, I., and others. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Louisville: WJK, 2003.

Spina, Frank Anthony. *The Faith of the Outsider*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. (Rahab, Achan)

Thompson, L. "The Jordan Crossing". *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100 (1981), pp. 343-58.

See also *Dictionary*, 573-75

The Origin of Joshua

1 Traditionally Joshua was assumed to be the author of the book, but the story reads more as one *about* him (contrast e.g. Nehemiah, where Nehemiah says "I" and not just "he").

2 There are no concrete indicators of date in the book, like the ones that appear when Genesis and Judges refer to the time when Israel had kings (indicating that these notes at least come from that period). The book periodically refers to things that can be seen "until this day" (e.g. 4:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28, 29; 9:27). This points to a time some while after the events but it does not tell us when "this day" is.

3 In terms of theme, Joshua completes Genesis—Deuteronomy and tells of the last stage in the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. Thus Genesis—Joshua has been seen as a "Hexateuch" (a six-volume work). The natural implication would be that the origin of Joshua belongs with the origin of the Pentateuch. But when people have tried to find JEDP (the traditional Pentateuch sources) in Joshua, they have failed. (And anyway no one knows when the Pentateuch was written).

4 Since the work of Martin Noth, Joshua has been treated as part of a "Deuteronomistic History" extending on to Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Joshua to Kings is thus the story of how Israel did (or did not) live by the challenges and promises in Deuteronomy. Joshua as we know it therefore belongs after the last events narrated in Kings, after the fall of Jerusalem in 587.

5 The usual view about the origin of Joshua—Kings as a whole is that the first edition of this Deuteronomistic History was produced a bit earlier, in the time of King Josiah, about 620. The reason for this is that the work sometimes speaks as if there is a possibility that Josiah's reform might be successful in averting the fall of Judah—which was a possibility then, but not later when the final version of the work was completed.

6 Again, the usual view is that the Deuteronomistic committee would not be writing from scratch but would be utilizing written records and oral stories such as the following.

(a) Stories told at festival events at the shrine at Gilgal, the Israelite shrine nearest the events narrated in chapters 2—6, and a key shrine before the building at the temple at Jerusalem. This would be a natural place to celebrate the crossing of the Jordan and the entry into the land.

(b) Stories told among the Benjaminites in the hill country (see chapters 7—10).

(c) Lists of towns conquered by Israel (chapters 10—11).

(d) Lists of clan areas, kept for administrative purposes—e.g. taxation! (chapter 13—21). The lists for the northern clans are sketchier than for the south, which may suggest that they come from the time after the fall of Ephraim in 721—when the northern clans had been transported to Assyria and the data were not available.

7 It was then these stories and records that the Deuteronomistic committee reworked a century later and turned into a whole. They also wrote the chapters with the overt "lessons," esp. chapters 1 and 22—24.

See further *Dictionary*

Wednesday July 29: Judges, 1 Samuel

Homework Required

Study the introductory pages in the syllabus and make sure you understand them. Email me if you have questions.
Check out "Dr John's Guide to OT Study" (http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay) and see if there are parts you need to look at in more detail—maybe later
Look through Judges in the light of the outline on page 30 to get a picture of its contents as a whole, then study Judges 3:7-31; 11; 13-16, fill in pages 28-29 (Homework1), and post it by Wednesday 5.00 p.m.
On the origin of Judges, you can read the rest of page 30 and the article in the *Dictionary*. On the message of Judges, you can read page 31. On Jephthah and his daughter, you can read pages 32.

Read through 1 Samuel to get a picture of its contents as a whole in the light of the outline at the top of page 36, then study the story of Saul, fill in pages 37-38 (Homework2), and post it by Wednesday 5.00 p.m.
On the origin of 1 and 2 Samuel you can read the rest of page 36 if you wish.

First Class: Judges

Video and Lecture	How Did Israel Come To Be Israel in the Land? (pages 33-35)
Plenary questions and discussion	
Lecture	Why Judges?
With comments on postings	

For further reading

A. Brenner, *A Feminist Companion to the Book of Judges*, pp. 9-54.
On reading the Jephthah story as an example of how to read a Bible story, see "Come, Bring Your Story" by Don Hudson: http://www.leaderu.com/marshill/mhr01/story1.html

Second Class: 1 Samuel

Lecture:	Inspired history and inspired fiction; Narrative interpretation (pages 39-40)
	With comments on questions in Moodle postings
Discussion	Do you think it is okay for the Bible to include fiction?
Lecture	Attitudes to monarchy in 1 Samuel and elsewhere (page 41)

For further reading

Study W. L. Humphreys, *The Tragic Vision and the Hebrew Tradition,* pp. 23-66.

Further Reading on Judges and 1 Samuel

See also Further Reading on Joshua—Kings

Goldingay, J. *After Eating the Apricot*, pp. 170-96. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1996. [Deborah, Samson, Hannah] http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay

Petersen, J. *Reading Women's Stories*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004. [Deborah, Hannah – also good on interpreting narrative generally.]

On Judges

Interpretation 58/4 (2004) on "Violence in the Bible."

Semeia 32 (1984): *Tragedy and Comedy in the Bible* [Samson].

Bal, M. *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges*. University of Chicago, 1988.

Brenner, A. (ed). *A Feminist Companion to the Book of Judges.* Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.

— *Judges*. A Feminist Companion to the Bible (Second Series). Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Brueggemann, W. *A Social Reading of the Old Testament*, pp. 73-90. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.

Crenshaw, J. L. *Samson*. Atlanta: Knox, 1078.London: SPCK, 1979.

Hamlin, E. J. *At Risk in the Promised Land*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

Hercus, J. *God Is God: Samson and other Case Histories from the Book of Judges*. London: Hodder, 1971.

Klein, L. *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989.

Lapsley, Jacqueline E. *Whispering the Word* (Louisville: WJK, 2005) [Judg 19]

Mayes, A. D. H. *Israel in the Period of the Judges*. London: SCM, 1974.

Trible, P. *Texts of Terror*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

Webb, B. G. *The Book of Judges*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987.

Yee, G. A. (ed.). *Judges and Method*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.

Yoo, Yani. "Han-laden Women: Korean 'Comfort Women' and Women in Judges 19-21." In *Semeia* 78 (1997), pp. 37-46.

On 1 Samuel

Semeia 32 (1984): *Tragedy and Comedy in the Bible.* [Saul]

Alter, R. *The David Story*. New York/London: Norton, 1999.

Brenner, A. (ed.). *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings*. Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.

— *Samuel and Kings*. A Feminist Companion to the Bible (2nd Series). Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.

Brueggemann, W. *Power, Providence, and Personality*. Louisville: WJK, 1990.

— *First and Second Samuel*. Louisville: WJK, 1990.

Büchmann, C., and C. Spiegel (ed.). *Out of the Garden: Women Writers on the Bible*, pp. 88-122. New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1995. (on Hannah)

Eslinger, L. M. *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1-12*. Sheffield: JSOT, 1985.

Goldingay, J. *Men Behaving Badly*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2000.
http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay

Gordon, R. P. *I and II Samuel*. Exeter, UK: Paternoster, 1986.

Gunn, D. M. *The Fate of King Saul*. Sheffield, UK: JSOT, 1980.

Haller, J. *God Knows*. London: Cape, 1984. [novel about David]

Hertzberg, H. W. *I & II Samuel*. London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964.

Humphreys, W. L. *The Tragic Vision and the Hebrew Tradition*, pp. 23-66. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.

Klein, R. W. *1 Samuel*. Waco, TX: Word, 1983.

Miscall, P. D. *1 Samuel*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986.

Nicholson, S. *Three Faces of Saul*. London/New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Robinson, G. *Let Us Be Like the Nations*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

Homework1: Questions on Judges

1. Read Judges 3:7-31. What do you think might be the theological point about these stories?

2. Read Judges 11. What issues are raised by this story, and how would you deal with them?

3. Read Judges 13—16. What implications do the stories have and what issues do they raise for women and for men?

4. What emotions do the Judges stories arouse in you?

5. Are there aspects of Judges you would like me to talk about in class?

The Contents of Judges

1:1—2:5	First introduction:	The task still to be finished
2:6—3:6	Second introduction:	The recurrent plot of the story to follow
	3:7-31	Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar
	4—5	Deborah
	6—8	Gideon
	9	Abimelech
	10:1-5	Tola, Jair
	10:6—12:7	Jephthah
	12:8-15	Ibzan, Elon, Abdon
	13—16	Samson
17—18	First conclusion:	The Danites still seeking a home
19—21	Second conclusion:	The fate of a concubine and the women of Shiloh
21:25	Third conclusion:	The recurrent problem behind the story that precedes

The Origin of Judges

1 The only tradition about the origin of Judges is the statement in the Talmud that Samuel wrote the book.

2 Judges looks back to Joshua and looks forward to the story of the monarchy. It is thus part of the work that extends from Joshua to Kings and it presumably has an analogous origin to theirs. Once again, then, the Deuteronomistic Committee in the time of Josiah (about 620) perhaps produced the first edition of the book, though Joshua—Kings as we have it comes from after the fall of Jerusalem in 587.

3 The guts of the book is a series of stories about events involving individual Israelite leaders and clans or groups of clans in the period before Israel had central leadership. These stories were presumably originally told in the areas to which these individuals and clans belonged. They might have existed as a collection of stories before the Deuteronomists' time.

4 The Song of Deborah in chapter 5 has been regarded as a very old piece of Israelite poetry.

5 The opening of the book incorporates an account of the occupation of Canaan that has more the character of a list of places not conquered at the first stages of Israel's life in Canaan. The lists of judges in 10:1-5; 12:8-15 may also have come from official annals. The reference to Jebusites and Jerusalem in 1:21 suggests that these notes come from before David's capture of the city.

6 It was presumably the Deuteronomistic Committee that turned the separate stories in 2:6—16:31 into a whole that teaches a Deuteronomy-like lesson about Israel as a whole. It did this by the introduction in 2:6—3:6 and by providing an introduction and a conclusion to each story (parallel to the evaluative summaries of the reigns of kings in the Books of Kings).

See further *Dictionary*

Why Judges?

1. At the macro-level it's an episode from a longer story. Thus the preamble (1:1—2:5), while pretty surprising after the Book of Joshua (e.g., 11:23), tells you the necessary other side to that story. And the end (21:25) shows how the book provides a lead-in to 1 Samuel (remember, Ruth is a separate story). Cf. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1.

2. The second preamble (2:6—3:6) (don't your sermons sometimes have two preambles?) suggests Yahweh's religious purpose in letting Judges happen. The comments at the end (17:6; 21:1) also hint at the moral significance in what was going on—men doing what was right in their own eyes.

3. Of course, having no kings is in theory a good thing—Israel's only king is Yahweh (recognizing this is Gideon's best feature: 8.23). The achievers are not kings but "judges", the ancient equivalents to Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa, people who do not have *official* authority but who act decisively so as to do something that makes God's "just and gentle government" of the world into a reality in some way. That involves bringing people the gift of freedom. Thus judging people is not so different from bringing them salvation, so that these heroes can as easily be called "saviors" as "judges."

4. By definition the judges were people who had no place in an institutional or constitutional structure. Neither were they people who would have had such a place if there was such a structure. The stories of little brother Othniel, handicapped Ehud, and Canaanite Shamgar put question marks by eldest-ism, able-ism, and racism; there follows the story of arguably the greatest judge, who turns out to be—a woman. Deborah's story thus in turn undermines sexism.

5. If you read the books on Israelite history or most of the commentaries on Judges, the angle on the book they are interested in is what it tells us about the political development of Israel on the way towards being a monarchy. It is about how Israel tried and failed to exist as a "theocracy" or pure covenant community with no human kings. And because such books have a major interest in history (as history has been understood by modernity) these books especially focus on getting a handle on the chronological coherence of the period as whole.

6. Mieke Bal points out in *Death and Dissymmetry* that this focus avoids key features of the book itself. "The Book of Judges is about death... in all forms, each violent.... And murder, in this text, is related to gender." Men kill men (in war). Women kill men (heroes/generals). And men (mighty men) kill women (e.g., innocent daughters). If we want to understand what the Book of Judges is about, this running theme of gendered violence has to be at the center of our understanding. Judges is not about political history but about a social revolution. (See also the *Feminist Companion to Judges*, ed. A. Brenner).

7. Or Judges is about Israel's safeguarding its identity, fighting for its identity, and having its identity disintegrate. See U. Y. Kim on "Postcolonial Criticism" In *Judges and Method* [ed. Gale A. Yee]). See also Yani Yoo on "*Han*-Laden Women: Korean 'Comfort Women' and Judges 19-21," in *Semeia* 78.

Jephthah and His Daughter

From J. Cheryl Exum, *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative* (Cambridge UP, 1992).

Jephthah's story appalls us. He is unwittingly responsible for a situation that calls for him to take the life of his own child. A vow made in ambiguous circumstances and in ignorance of its outcome forces his hand. There is no apparent reason for the disaster that befalls Jephthah, nothing of the divine displeasure that drives Saul to despair and madness. Strangely, we are not told how the act affects him; nor for that matter do we learn of God's reaction. Wherein, then, does the tragedy of Jephthah lie? In events themselves, in a certain ambiguity that surrounds all that transpires, and finally in the divine silence, the refusal of the deity to take a position vis-a-vis these events.

The story opens in Judges 10 at a point of crisis and begins by following the familiar pattern of the book. Verses 11-14, however, introduce a new element, the divine refusal to intervene: "therefore I will not act to deliver you." The people implore divine assistance at any price. This is the only place in Judges where the people actually repent. And yet Yhwh does not react by providing a deliverer.

The introduction to Jephthah in Judges 11:1 alerts us from the beginning to an ambivalent quality about him. He combines the desirable with the unacceptable. If Jephthah's origins are questionable, so is his rise to power. Jephthah is first sought out by the elders, and only later affected by the spirit of Yhwh.

The pinnacle of his career, his moment of greatest glory, contains the seeds of his tragedy. Jephthah vows a sacrifice to Yhwh, and victory demands its scandalous performance. What provokes it? See 11:29. By implication he makes his vow under the influence of Yhwh. The problem is the last two words of it.

The irony, the tragic irony, rests in the exact correspondence between the ill-chosen terms of Jephthah's vow and the subsequent events. We do not know what provokes Jephthah to set these particular terms or what determines this particular outcome, what accounts for the chilling coincidence between the vow and the daughter's appearance. The fact is that their connection cannot be explained; it has no cause, at least not one we can name, and that is the source of its terror.

The description of Jephthah's daughter, "only she—alone—he did not have, except for her, son or daughter', inevitably reminds us of another sacrificial victim, "your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac". But there, in a wonderful resolution, a ram was sacrificed instead of the child. The words emphasis the daughter's singularity and Jephthah's isolation. Jephthah, the outcast, the marginal figure, who tends to act independently even when representing others, faces his tragic moment alone. His isolation is the more striking when we perceive the contrast with his daughter, who has companions with whom to share her grief.

In the entire narrative only 11:35 furnishes any insight into Jephthah's emotional state and portrays an inner conflict. Jephthah becomes a tragic figure insofar as he realizes he has no alternative, that he is caught in a situation both of his own making and paradoxically an accident of fate. Jephthah did not intend to sacrifice his daughter. The experience of being trapped in an intolerable situation for which one is unintentionally yet still somehow responsible gives rise to tragic awareness.

Saul knows he has lost the kingship yet multiplies his efforts to hold onto it. Jephthah does not grapple to find a way out of a situation for which there is no way out. There is no wrestling against his fate.

The source of the tragic in the story of Jephthah is not divine enmity, as in Saul's case, but divine silence. The account of Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac shows one possible direction our narrative could have taken. But in Judges 11, God neither requires nor rejects human sacrifice.

Jephthah, like his daughter, is a victim of forces beyond his control. Nor is the daughter innocent; she did not resist. She speaks on behalf of the sacrificial system and patriarchal authority, absolving it of responsibility. And the women of Israel cooperated in this elevation of the willing victim to honored status.

The father's name is remembered but the daughter's is not. But if we approach the story as resistant readers, mistrustful of the dominant (male) voice, we can give the victim a voice that protests her marginalization and victimization—one that claims for her a measure of that autonomy denied her by the narrative which sacrificed her to the father's word.

Starting From Jericho and Ai

1. The first two cities whose conquest Joshua narrates are Jericho and Ai. We are inclined to assume that we should read them in the way we read the newspaper, as accounts of things that happened as they say. But archaeological evidence suggests that these two cities about which Joshua says most were unoccupied in Joshua's day. How do we cope with that?
2. The conservative answer is to say that we should reinterpret the geography or the site or the time frame. Thus *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* approaches the problem as follows.
   (a) It accepts that Joshua must be dated about 1220 and grants that the impressive walls once thought to be the ones destroyed by him date from 2300. Jericho was destroyed by the Egyptians about 1600 and later again occupied between 1400 and 1325. There is virtually no evidence of occupation in Joshua's day.
   (b) It suggests that "it is possible that in Joshua's day … there was a small town on the east part of the mound, later wholly eroded away." The fact that the city was unoccupied for 400 years after Joshua's day would make such erosion entirely possible. "It seems highly likely" that these eroded remains are now buried under the road and fields. "It remains highly doubtful" whether excavation there would find much now.
3. This seems to involve accepting the findings of archeology when they suit us but rejecting them when they do not.
4. Note that on this theory the Jericho destroyed by Joshua would fit into the Garth.
5. Instead of assuming that our approach to interpreting the stories (as like newspaper reports) is right and that the standard interpretation of the archeological evidence is right, we try make the opposite assumption. We could infer that Joshua is partly historical parable rather than direct fact. This might fit with its links with humor (Josh 2) and liturgy (Josh 6).
6. So the question becomes not "Why would God tell Israel to kill the Canaanites?" but "Why would God inspire Israel to tell a story about killing the Canaanites when they had not done so?" The usual answer is that the stories reflect some centuries' experience of letting themselves be led astray by Canaanite religion. They now realize it is a shame they did not annihilate the Canaanites.
7. To say Jericho is a parable is not to say that Israel never conquered cities or killed people. The destruction of Hazor is archaeologically verified and seems best attributed to Israel (cf. Josh 11). It was actually a greater miracle than the fall of Jericho. But it was a defensive not an offensive act, which involved standing up to people with superior weaponry, and God's explicit command related only to the destruction of their weapons.
8. Further, if we want to know what a story about the straightforward conquest of a Canaanite city looks like, the story of the conquest of Hazor tells us. The story of that bigger miracle is told in a straightforward way. God enabled Israel to win a stupendous victory. Joshua 6 does not read like a matter-of-fact conquest story. It is an account of a religious procession.
9. It seems likely to me that the stories are parabolic, concrete expressions of the kind of facts we have noted in connection with the theology and ethics of Joshua. They declare that God gave Israel the land, in extraordinary fashion; Israel did not take it for itself. And they portray the danger of trespassing on what belongs to God or profiteering out of war.
10. Perhaps it was developed out of these ingredients:

- Israelites knew God had given them the land
- They celebrated that fact in a worship drama each year in the Jordan Valley, where Joshua had first entered the land
- The abandoned site of Jericho provided them with a way of giving concrete expression to the dramatic story

  (There is no direct evidence for that: it is just a way of seeking to imagine how God could have inspired the text we have actually got, against the background of the facts that we have got.)

Models for Understanding How Israel Came to be Israel in Palestine

1 Conquest/Occupation (mid-twentieth century USA/UK)

John Bright—*History of Israel*
John Bimson—*Redating Exodus and Conquest*
The impression you get from a face value reading of the general drift of Joshua—reading it the way you would read a newspaper report.
Three-stage conquest—center, south, north
Cf. the archeology esp. of Hazor (see *Dictionary*)

2 Migration/Infiltration (mid-twentieth century Germany)

Martin Noth—*Essays on Israelite History and Religion*
Manfred Weippert—*The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes*
The impression you might get from the notes between the lines in Joshua, and cf. Judges 1 and the ongoing situation; cf. also Genesis.
Joshua 1—6 is then more like the Hollywood version of How the West Was Won?
Cf. the archeology of Jericho and Ai

3 Liberation/Conversion (1970s USA)

George Mendenhall—"The Biblical Conquest of Palestine," *Biblical Archaeologist* 25/3 (1962), reprinted in *Biblical Archaeologist Reader* Vol. 3
Norman Gottwald—*The Tribes of Yahweh*
The impression you might get from Joshua 24—when different clans were converted?
Starts from early Israel's distinctiveness as a democratic rather than a monarchic society—egalitarian rather than hierarchical/stratified

4 Gradual Differentiation (1990s USA/UK/Denmark)

Robert Gnuse—"Israelite Settlement of Canaan," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 21 (1992) 56-66, 109-17
William Dever—*What Did the Biblical Writers Know?* 108-24
Compare Israel's being committed to Yahweh but using Canaanite forms of pottery etc.
Genesis 14—Melchizedek, king of Salem; Zadok the priest; Zion—e.g. Ps 48
Canaanite-style temple
Life and situation in the stories in Judges
Cf. the archeology of the settlements in the hill country. Similarity of "Israelite" and "Canaanite" culture and religion, though some differences—no pig bones in those settlements.
N. K. Gottwald. "Rethinking the Origins of Ancient Israel." In *"Imagining" Biblical Worlds* (ed. D. M. Gunn and P. M. McNutt) 190-201. London: New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

See *Dictionary* "History of Israel"; "Quest of the Historical Israel."

The Archeology of the Judges—1 Samuel Period

Based especially on William Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know?* 108-24; also Lawrence Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 260 (1985) 1-35; Amihai Mazar (ed.), *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan*.

According to Joshua, Judges, and 1 Samuel, the Israelites were not able to occupy the plains where the big Canaanite cities were and where the Philistines settled—and where the big modern Israeli cities such as Tel Aviv are. By implication, the Israelites settled more in the frontier area, the hill country, which is mostly within the modern West Bank. Since Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967, Israeli archeologists have undertaken much work in the area and confirmed and clarified the picture one gets from the OT.

The archeological work has discovered about 300 small agricultural villages of 100-300 people that were founded in the late thirteenth and twelfth centuries—that is, the period now usually identified as the time of Joshua and the beginning of the Judges period. They are mostly in areas where there was a water supply and where crops could be grown and animals pastured, but areas that were some distance from the major Canaanite cities and areas that seem to have been little occupied. They are villages without fortifications rather than walled cities. The evidence suggests that the population of these hill areas grew from perhaps 12,000 in the thirteenth century (Joshua's time) to 55,000 in the twelfth (the Judges period), 75,000 in the eleventh (Saul's time), and 100,000 in the tenth (Solomon's time). This "population explosion" cannot be explained by natural growth. It implies people coming from elsewhere to this under-populated fringe area of Canaan, in large numbers by the standards of the area and time. In addition to the villages, many individual farms from the period have been discovered.

The villages characteristically comprise a number of "farmhouses" in clusters, a type of house previously little known in Canaan but well-suited to the lifestyle of their inhabitants. One house might have served a nuclear family ("the father's household" in the OT), a cluster an extended family (the *mishpahah*, "family" or "clan", in the OT). On the ground floor, these houses have living areas, a courtyard kitchen area, and space for sheltering the animals (cf. the house presupposed by the story of Jesus' birth). People would have slept on the upper floor.

The villages have no "posh" houses—everyone lives the same way. There are no indications of anyone exercising governmental authority. There are virtually no shrines or temples or religious artifacts. Any religious practice therefore does not involve images or institutionalized practice.

The pottery is similar to that of preceding centuries, but new or newly-developed technologies appear in connection with the settlements. These include

- "Terracing"—that is, shaping the sides of hills so as to grow vines, olives, etc.
- Storage cisterns for water or wine and storage silos for grain.

There are a few fragments of pottery with writing on—so there was some basic literacy.

Whereas pig bones are often found in earlier (Bronze Age) sites, virtually no pig bones have been found in these settlements.

Dever implies that many of these settlers might have come from the Canaanite urban lowlands but suggests that a number may have indeed come from Egypt. In Exodus—Joshua, their story became everybody's story—rather the way all Americans behave on Thanksgiving as if their forebears came with the Pilgrim Fathers, or on July 4 as if all their forebears were here by the War of Independence. But after that, Judges then also gives you the story of people that more reflects the life of people who had never been in Egypt.

Outline and Origin of 1 and 2 Samuel

1 The main outline of the books is as follows:

1 Sam 1—7	The story of Samuel
1 Sam 8—12	The request for a king
1 Sam 13—15	The reign and rejection of Saul
1 Sam 16—31	The designation of David and the unraveling of Saul's reign
2 Sam 1—10	David's early triumphs
2 Sam 11—12	David's great wrongdoing
2 Sam 13—20	The unraveling of David's reign and family
2 Sam 21—24	Ambiguous footnotes to David's story

2 1 and 2 Samuel form one book in Hebrew manuscripts. They were divided into two by the Septuagint. The division is artificial—1 Samuel ends with Saul's death, and 2 Samuel begins with the news reaching David. The division between 2 Samuel and 1 Kings is also artificial. The latter part of 2 Samuel is preoccupied by who will succeed David, but the result comes only in 1 Kings 1—2. For that matter, 1 Samuel also follows seamlessly on Judges—Eli and Samuel are the last of the "judges." Thus 1 and 2 Samuel form part of that continuous whole from Joshua to Kings known as the Deuteronomistic History.

3 The Talmud sees Samuel as the books' main author, but he dies in 1 Sam 25 and the books' completion is attributed to later prophets Gad and Nathan. The reference to the kings of Judah in 1 Sam 27:6 indicates that the book was not written until at least a century after the events it refers to. As part of the Deuteronomistic History it could not have been completed until the time of Josiah (about 620) or the deportation to Babylon during the next century.

4 The books lack one of the features of Judges and Kings that is often attributed to the Deuteronomists: they are not structured by means of formulae that divide the narrative into sections (each judge or each king). But they do contain a number of comments on sin/disobedience such as the Deuteronomists provide. The exchange between David and Yahweh in 2 Sam 7 also expresses their kind of convictions.

5 But the books' distinctive feature is that they string together a series of narratives that may be self-contained and may have existed earlier than the books' final production, and make them into a new whole. These are:

(a) The story of Samuel
(b) The story of the adventures of the covenant chest
(c) A story of the origins of the monarchy which supports it
(d) A story of the origins of the monarchy which attacks it
(e) The story of how David came to be king
(f) The story of how Solomon came to be king

6 Within some of these narratives are some "doublets"— i.e. there are several versions of the same event, such as the first meeting of Saul and David and the identity of Goliath's killer (1 Sam 17; 2 Sam 21:19). This suggests that these narratives were compiled from varied earlier materials.

7 The notes in the margin of the NRSV show how there are many problems involved in establishing what is the right text, especially in 1 Samuel. This is partly because the text is obscure and partly because the Septuagint presupposes a more distinctive Hebrew text than it usually does. The Septuagint's text as a whole is also shorter than the Hebrew, apparently an indication that it was translated from a different edition of the book.

Homework2: Questions on Saul

1 What do the different stories suggest is the character of Saul? Does it develop?

2 What are Saul's strengths? What are Saul's weaknesses?

3 How far is Saul someone who makes decisions and how far is he a victim?

4 Can you see why God prefers David to Saul? [Next time you will be looking at David's life and character in 2 Samuel. You might like to look at the questions for study then and make notes that will help you then]

5 What do you think of the way Samuel relates to Saul?

6 What do you think of the way God relates to Saul?

7 Does Saul die a good death? How or why?

8 What do you think God means us to gain from Saul's story?

9 Stories in the Bible are sometimes there for us to find ourselves in them. Are there any ways in which that happens for you in the Saul story?

10 Saul's story is part of the authoritative and inspired word of God. What does this suggest about the nature of authority and inspiration?

11 Are there aspects of Saul's story you would like to talk about in class?

Inspired Fact and Inspired Story

1 Joshua Judges, and 1 Samuel (and the other books we will be looking at are part of scripture and are thus part of the inspired and infallible word of God. As such they are designed to change our thinking, change our lives, and change the way we relate to God.

How do we know they are the Word of God? In general how do we know things in the OT are the Word of God?

(a) The believing community passed them on to us
(b) Jesus gave them to us
(c) They speak to us

Not, by the way, because of who wrote them (esp. as they are anonymous)

2 What kind of thing does God inspire?

We would expect God's revelation to be like Joseph Smith's tablets, or Moses' tablets, or prophecy? Most of scripture is not like that – it's things such as psalms and letters and proverbs. That is, they look like the ordinary human writings of the culture (not of our culture).

We would expect stories to be historical. And we would expect them to be nice, giving us examples of people living good lives with God

3 What is history like in a traditional society?

There are no Middle Eastern historical works to compare Joshua, Judges, and Samuel with, but there are Mediterranean ones such as the Greek historian Thucydides. He brings together

(a) Historical narratives
(b) Traditional stories
(c) Products of imagination – stories and speeches
(d) Evaluation

So we should expect that this is what God inspired
And this is what you find.
(We can't tell which bits are historical)

See *Dictionary* "Historiography"

4 To be the Word of God it does not have to be nice.
We would also expect history to give us examples of people living faithful lives and to make it very clear what was their message.

Joshua, Judges, and Samuel do not do that. So evidently we have to change our views on what God would want to give us and ask why what God gave us is what God wanted to give us. How do they change our thinking, our lives, and our relationship with God?

Narrative Interpretation

Historical approaches

1 History and story
E.g. Joshua: facts and structuring—the weight given to certain stories—Rahab, Jericho, Ai (and not others)
1—11 then 12—22 then 23-24

2 The author's intention(s)
E.g. Jonah: "Be open to other peoples" isn't the whole story

Interpreting narratives: What to look for

3 Scheme(s) and phrase(s)
E.g. Judges: the cycle; the summary comments

4 Plot(s)
E.g. Jonah: Introduction, complication, resolutions (?)

5 Theme(s)
E.g. 2 Kings: The interaction of human political will and God's political will (Jacques Ellul)

6 Characterization—showing and telling
E.g. David

7 Types of character—e.g. 2 Samuel
Simple (Ishbaal) and complex (Saul and David)
Roles (Jesse) and personalities (Eli)
Central (Samuel) and cameos (Hannah)

8 Israelite audience(s)
E.g. 1—2 Kings: three editions in the time of Josiah, the exile, and the hope of restoration?

9 Underlying tension(s) (deconstruction)
E.g. 1 Samuel: the two sides to monarchy

10 Underlying structures/roles (structuralism)
E.g. Jonathan—both rival and helper

11 Modern audiences
E.g. Joshua—read by native Americans or Palestinians
Judges—read by men and by women

Attitudes to Monarchy in 1 Samuel and Elsewhere

Exod 15:18
Yahweh will be king forever

Exod 19:6
Israel is a priestly kingdom

Deut 17:14-20
Yes to kingship, with safeguards

Judges 8:22
No; Yhwh is the people's ruler
[... for though it seems odd, I'm not the hero, the hero is God]

Judges 18:1; 19:1; 21:25
Look what happened when Israel had no kings

1 Sam 8
Kingship constitutes a rejection of Yahweh as king and will mean abuse

1 Sam 9-10
Yahweh takes the initiative in choosing someone to rule

1 Sam 12
Kingship means a rejection of Yahweh but it need not be the end

2 Sam 7
Yahweh makes a far-reaching commitment to the king

1—2 Kings
Most kings justify the warnings in 1 Sam 8
The paganization of Israel (G. E. Mendenhall)

Zeph 3:15
The real King is among you
Cf. Isa 6:1, 5; 33:22; 41:21; 43:15; 44:6

Jer 23:5
The promise of a future king

Isa 55:3-5
The restoration of the kingly people

Kingship is theologically inappropriate but practically necessary. It is an act of rebellion that God works with. Note how Christian history as usual repeats the trajectory of Israel's history. The gospel seeks to reintroduce the kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:9) and the early church has no place for churches being headed up by one person. But that ends in chaos so the church has to invent the "monarchical episcopate," churches headed up by a senior pastor. This has shown the capacity to control error and to encourage abuse.

Monday August 3: 2 Samuel, 1 Kings

Homework Required

Read through 2 Samuel in the light of the outline at the top of page 36 and fill in either pages 44-45 (on David) or pages 46-47 (on the women in 2 Samuel). These are two alternative forms of Homework 3a. You just do one of them (then go on to Homeworks 3b, 4a, 4b).
If you wish, read the rest of page 36 on the origin of 1 and 2 Samuel
Study L. G. Perdue, "'Is there anyone left of the house of Saul...?'" (*Journal for the Study of the OT* 30 [1984]: 67-84, via library on-line resources) and fill in page 48
(3 hours; Homework3)

Skim through 1—2 Kings and fill in pages 51-52. If you like, you can read page 60 as background.
Answer the first question on page 53. Then study K. I. Parker, "Solomon as Philosopher King" (*Journal for the Study of the OT* 53 [1992]: 75-91, via library on-line resources) and fill in the rest of page 53.
(3 hours; Homework4)

First Class: 2 Samuel

Lecture:	David the man (pages 49-50)
Discussion:	What do you make of David?
Lecture:	Comments on questions in postings

For further reading

D. J. A. Clines, "David the Man," in *Interested Parties*, pp. 212-243 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

Second Class: 1 Kings

Class Time

Lecture:	Prophecy in 1 and 2 Kings (page 54)
Discussion:	Would you want to be a prophet? Would you want to meet a prophet?
Lecture	The history covered by 1 and 2 Kings (pages 55)
	Assyrian and Babylon, the first great empires
	Comments on questions in Moodle postings

For further reading

W. Brueggemann. "The Prophet as a Destabilizing Presence," in *A Social Reading of the OT*.
W. Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 28-43 (on Solomon)
G. von Rad, *OT Theology*, Vol. 2, pp. 6-32.
On Assyria and Babylon, see *Dictionary*

Further Reading on 2 Samuel and 1—2 Kings

(See also further reading on Joshua—Kings)

Alter, R. *The David Story*. New York/London: Norton, 1999. [1 and 2 Samuel]

Bailey, R. C. *David in Love and War*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990.

Brenner, A. (ed.). *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.

— *Samuel and Kings*. A Feminist Companion to the Bible (Second Series). Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.

Brueggemann, W. *First and Second Samuel*. Louisville: WJK, 1990.

— *1 & 2 Kings*. Macon, GA: Smith and Helwys, 2000.

— *David's Truth in Israel's Imagination and Memory*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.

— *Power, Providence, and Personality*. Louisville: WJK, 1990.

— *1 Kings; 2 Kings*. Atlanta: Knox, 1982.

— "The social significance of Solomon as a patron of wisdom". In *A Social Reading of the Old Testament*, pp. 245-62. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.

— "The prophet as a destabilizing presence". In *A Social Reading of the Old Testament* (see above), pp. 221-44. [Elijah]

Clines, D. J. A. "David the Man". In *Interested Parties*, pp. 212-243. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.

Cohn, R. *2 Kings*. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000.

DeVries, S. J. *1 Kings*. Waco, TX: Word, 1985.

Ellul, J. *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.

Felder, C. H. *Troubling Biblical Waters*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989. (The Queen of Sheba)

Freedman, D. N. "The biblical idea of history". *Interpretation* 21 (1967), pp. 32-49.

Gelander, S. *David and His God*. Jerusalem: Simor, 1991.

Githuku, S. "Taboo on Counting." In *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa* 113-8.

Goldingay, J. *Men Behaving Badly*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2000.
http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay

Gordon, R. P. *I and II Samuel*. Exeter, UK: Paternoster, 1986.

Gunn, D. M. *The Story of King David*. Sheffield, UK: JSOT, 1978.

Hertzberg, H. W. *I & II Samuel*. London: SCM, 1964.

Hobbs, T. R. *2 Kings*. Waco, TX: Word, 1985.

Jensen, H. J. L. "Desire, rivalry and collective violence in the 'Succession Narrative'". *Journal for the Study of the OT* 55 (1992), pp. 39-59. Reprinted in Exum, *The Historical Books*, pp. 184-203.

Keys, G. *The Wages of Sin: A Reappraisal of the "Succession Narrative."* Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.

Lasine, S. "The king of desire". *Semeia* 71 (1995), pp. 85-118. [Solomon]

— "The ups and downs of monarchical justice". *Journal for the Study of the OT* 59 (1993), pp. 37-53. Reprinted in Exum, *The Historical Books*, pp. 216-32.

Moore, M. S. *Faith Under Pressure*. Siloam Springs, AR: Leafwood, 2003. [message of 1-2 Kings]

Nelson, R. *First and Second Kings*. Atlanta: Knox, 1987.

Pyper, H. S. "Judging the wisdom of Solomon." *Journal for the Study of the OT* 59 (1993), pp. 25-36. Reprinted in Exum, *The Historical Books*, pp. 204-15.

von Rad, G. *Studies in Deuteronomy*, ch. 7.

— *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 1, pp. 334-46; Vol. 2, pp. 6-32.

Rost, L.. *The Succession to the Throne of David*. Sheffield: Almond, 1982.

Simon, U. *Reading Prophetic Narratives*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997.

Spina, Frank Anthony. *The Faith of the Outsider*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. (Naaman, Gehazi)

Trible, P. *Texts of Terror*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

Homework3: Questions on David

It has been suggested that the key to understanding David is the tension between what he was in public and what he was in private: he was a great leader but was clueless as a human being. Take this as a grid for understanding his character and his life.

1 How was David a great leader, a person who knew how to be a public person?

2 Are there exceptions to that? Are there ways in which he blundered in his public life, in his leadership?

3 What were David's weaknesses as a human being, in his personal life?

4 What were David's strengths as a human being, in his personal life?

5 What are your reflections on the material you have collected under these four headings and their interrelationship?

6 Are there questions about all this you would like me to speak about in class?

Homework3: Questions on the Women in 2 Samuel

What do you think about the stories about women in 2 Samuel? What is the perception of women in the stories, their place in society, their role, their experience, their achievements...?

1 2:1-4; 3:1-16

2 11:1—12:31

3 13:1-39

4 14:1-24

5 21:1-14

6 Turn back to 1 Samuel 25 and ask the same questions about this chapter

7 Are there questions about all this that you would like me to handle in class?

Homework3 continued: "'Is There Anyone Left of the House of Saul?'"

Write five separate sentences of concrete comment on key issues raised by the reading (number them 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). These can include (for instance) observations on something you find illuminating, or comments on something you disagree with, or questions about something you find puzzling.

Who Was David?

The David of Psalms (e.g., V. L. Johnson – *David in Distress*)
The David of Second Kings
The David of Chronicles

David in Modern Israel: from the London *Guardian* in about 1994:

Israelis meet to defuse storm over King David's good name
From Christopher Walker in Jerusalem

Urgent talks will be held in Israel after the Sabbath ends tonight in an attempt to resolve a bizarre political crisis over King David.

The storm that erupted over allegations that Shimon Peres, the Foreign Minister, slandered the biblical King in a Knesset debate... has prompted three motions of no confidence against the Labour Government. Although the Government is expected to scrape home with support from five Arab and communist deputies, Labour Party officials are anxious that the affair could have serious effects on the next general election in 1996 if it succeeds in uniting the whole religious community against the party's candidate for prime minister.

Eli Dayan, chairman of the Labour coalition which has only 51 members in the 102-seat Knesset, said:

> I think he was wrong. I have called on Mr Peres to publicly apologise, but so far he has refused. This is a national issue of great importance to a great many religious Jews, not only those regarded by some as extremists.

Mr Dayan ... said that he had called on the three religious parties which have tabled the motions to be voted on Monday to withdraw them.

The religious community has poured scorn on a public statement by Mr Peres that he did not intend to denigrate King David by remarks about his relationship with Bathsheba. Religious deputies have been infuriated by the Foreign Minister's implied criticism of David's action in sending his lover's husband, Uriah, to the battlefront with orders that he be placed in a position where he was sure to be killed.

The actual words used by Mr Peres that have caused such a national uproar were: "Not everything that King David did, on the ground, on the rooftops, is acceptable to a Jew or is something I like."

The implication of his story:
Leaders tend not to be holy; God doesn't choose holy people to be leaders; leaders tend to become sinners.
If you are a leader you will quite likely make a mess of your family life and your relationships

For a study of David the Man, "The Construction of Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible," see David Clines—*Interested Parties*

So who/what was David?

The David of First and Second Samuel

1. Able guitarist 1 Sam 16:16-18 (men play guitar, women sing and dance)

2. Courageous warrior 1 Sam 16:18
Killer 1 Sam 17:31-54
Hi subsequent body count: 140,000
The importance of toughness to understandings of masculinity (aggressiveness, fighting, sports)

3. Committed to Yahweh 1 Sam 17:36-37
"A Man after God's Heart." For the phrase "a man after God's heart," cf. 1 Sam 13:14; 2 Sam 7:21; Ps 20:4. A man according to God's heart is a man God chose
Not a sign that God approves of him (compare Saul of Tarsus)
"Why did God love David so much when he was such a jerk?"
So why was David subsequently a standard of a good king? 1 Kings 15:3; 2 Kgs 14:3; 22:2
The thing David was good at: loyalty to Yhwh.

The sinfulness of the census: African attitudes to counting help to interpret this (S. Githuku, "Taboo on Counting")

4. Handsome 1 Sam 16:18 (notwithstanding 16:7)
Ruddy-cheeked, bright-eyed, handsome 1 Sam 16:12; 17:42

5. Anointed and gripped by Yahweh's spirit 1 Sam 16:13
The designated replacement for Saul
The Kid Brother 1 Sam 17

Yahweh is with him 1 Sam 16:18

6. Good speaker 1 Sam 16:18
17:34-37; 26:18-21
Wisdom 2 Sam 14:20

7. The lone male

His (non-)friendship with Jonathan
His buddy: one-on-one, exclusive, committed to a cause, valuing this friendship supremely,
No need to be emotional: but see 2 Sam 1)

His (non-)relationships with women
He has eight wives and ten secondary wives, so he has sex with 20 women
2 Sam 15:16; 2 Sam 16:21-23

His (non-)relationships with his family
2 Sam 12:15-23: he grieves, then gives up grieving (pulls himself together, acts as a proper man)
Tamar, Amnon, Absalom
The patheticness of his last days

But he was always committed to Yahweh

Homework4: Questions on Stories about Prophets in 1 Kings

Summarize the significance of the prophets and the issues raised by the stories.

1 Kgs 1

1 Kgs 11:26-40

1 Kgs 13-14

1 Kgs 16:1-14

1 Kgs 18

1 Kgs 19

1 Kgs 20

1 Kgs 22

Are there any aspects of these stories you would like me to talk about in class?

Homework4 continued: Questions on "Solomon as Philosopher King"

Write five separate sentences of concrete comment on key issues raised by the reading (number them 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). These can include (for instance) observations on something you find illuminating, or comments on something you disagree with, or questions about something you find puzzling.

Prophecy in 1 and 2 Kings

What are prophets like in 1 and 2 Kings? And what is their God like?

Prophets in the ancient near east

Three terms for a prophet in Kings

Man of God

A somewhat austere and frightening kind of figure with mysterious powers, one who utters words of fearful significance and is followed by signs which can be both destructive and constructive.

1 Kgs 13
1 Kgs 17:18
2 Kgs 1:9-16
2 Kgs 4—8 (4:9, 16, 21, 22; 5:8, 14, 15; 6:6, 9-10; 7:2; 8:2, 7-8, 11)
2 Kgs 13:14-19
Cf. the mysterious, unpredictable, and frightening, as well as consistent, reassuring, and encouraging nature of their God. Cf. 2 Sam 6 and 24 over against 2 Sam 7. Cf. Acts 5

Prophet (nabi')

No one knows the original meaning of the word but it can have various implications

Prophesying suggests behaving in an odd way: see 1 Sam 10:1-13; 19:18-24 (cf. speaking in tongues). This suggests a comparison with "man of God." Cf. the behavior of the Baal prophets in 1 Kgs 18.
Cf. the prophetic community in 2 Kgs 2; 4; 6; 9

But more than the other words, in Kings it suggests speaking words which (allegedly) come from God
Characteristically, words which are anything but straightforward (e.g. 1 Kgs 13; 22; cf. Num 22-24

The first prophet in Kings is someone who works for the king; cf. 1 Kgs 22 and national prophets among other peoples.
Amos does not want to be treated as a prophet (Amos 7:12-17)?
It later becomes THE word

Seer (hozeh and ro'eh)

2 Kgs 17: 13
Someone who sees things that other people can't see
The present but unseen world (cf. 1 Kgs 22:15-23; 2 Kgs 2:9-14; 6:15-23
The visible but still future world (cf. the man of God in 1 Kgs 13:1-3)

Often in the service of the institution
2 Sam 24:11
Micah 3:7
Amos 7:12

Prophets may bring good news or bad news, but if it's good news, they are probably not telling the truth.

The Prophets and the History of Ephraim and Judah

Note that the numbers are the total lengths of reigns in years—they are all approximate and they include the period when the king co-reigned with his father or son.

Foreign power	Ephraim	Prophets	Judah
970			
Egypt (Shishak)	Jeroboam (22)		Rehoboam (17)
			Abijam/Abijah (3)
	Nadab (2)		Asa (41)
Syria	Baasha (12)		
	Elah (2)		
	Zimri (one week)		
	Omri (12)		
	Ahab (22)	Elijah	Jehoshaphat (25)
	Ahaziah (2)		
	Jehoram/Joram (12)	Elisha	Jehoram/Joram (8)
			Ahaziah (1)
			Athaliah (7)
	Jehu (28)		Jehoash/Joash (16)
	Jehoahaz (17)	Jonah	
	Jehoash/Joash	Hosea	
	Jeroboam II (41)	Amos	Amaziah (29)
	Zechariah (6m)		Uzziah/Azariah (52)
	Shallum (1m)		
	Menahem (10)		
	Pekahiah (2)		
Assyria	Pekah (20)		Jotham (16)
	Hoshea (9)	Isaiah	Ahaz (16)
722		Micah	Hezekiah (29)
			Manasseh (55)
			Amon (2)
		Zephaniah	Josiah (31)
		Nahum	Jehoahaz/Shallum (3m)
		Jeremiah	Jehoiakim/Eliakim (11)
Babylon		Habakkuk	Jehoiachin/Coniah/
		Obadiah	Shallum (3m)
587		Ezekiel	Zedekiah/Mattaniah(11)
		Isaiah 40-55	
Persia		Haggai	
537		Zechariah	
		Isaiah 56-66	
		Malachi	

Wednesday August 5: 2 Kings, Isaiah 1-12

Homework Required

Study Matthew 1:18—3:3 and fill in page 57 and the first question on page 58
Study H. W. Wolff, "Prophets and Institutions in the Old Testament," in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 13 (1986), pp. 5-12 (available on library on-line resources), and fill in the rest of page 58.
(Homework5)

Read page 65 on Isaiah 1—12, study Isaiah 1—12 in the light of that, and fill out the chart on Isaiah 1-12 (pages 66-67) (Homework6)

First Class: 2 Kings

Lecture:	The Message of 2 Kings (pages 59-60)
Discussion:	What might be the message of 2 Kings (or the Former Prophets) to the church?
Lecture:	Introducing the Prophets (pages 61-64)
	Comments on questions in Moodle postings

For further reading

J. H. Eaton, *Mysterious Messengers*, pp. 1-28.
J. Goldingay, *Models for Scripture*, pp. 201-19.

Second Class: Isaiah 1 – 12

Lecture:	The book called Isaiah: A message from the Holy One of Israel (pages 68-70)
	With comments on questions in Moodle postings
Discussion:	What are your reflections now on Matthew's use of the OT?
Lecture:	The hope of a coming king in Isaiah 1—12 (pages 71-72)

For further reading

Read J. H. Eaton, *Mysterious Messengers*, chapter 8
Re-read Isaiah 1—12 with the help of Sawyer's commentary

Dessert after class

Homework5: Questions on NT Interpretation of Prophecy

Study Matthew 1:18—3:3. Six prophecies are referred to. Choose three, look each up, work out what it means in its context in the OT, and comment on what Matthew does with it.

1:23 (Isaiah 7:14); 2:6 (Micah 5:2); 2:15 (Hosea 11:1); 2:18 (Jeremiah 31:15); 3:3 (Isaiah 40:3);
2:23 (Judges 13:5 Nazarene/Nazirite? Isaiah 11:1—branch = *nezer*, so as a Nazarene he is the branch-man?)
What are your reflections on this study?

Are there any aspects of this you would like me to speak about in class?

Homework5 continued: "Prophets and Institutions in the OT"

1 Before reading the article, express in a sentence here what you think a prophet is. Do you think the understanding of people in your church would be different?

2 What overlaps are there between Wolff's descriptions of various kinds of prophets are your definition? What are the differences?

3 Of Wolff's ways of looking at a prophet, which seem more appropriate or illuminating as we look at the Old Testament prophets, and why?

4 If OT prophets are the kind of people Wolff describes, how might the OT prophets be significant for us?

5 What insight does Wolff's article suggest on what we should look for in prophecy in the church today?

6 Any aspects of this study you would like me to discuss in class?

The Message of 2 Kings

1 The book is the last part of the continuous story tracing Israel's origins back to creation and telling of its triumphs at the exodus-conquest and under David and Solomon, but then of its downfall. It covers the last 300 years of this period, leading down to the fall of Jerusalem in 587, so it must have been written after that. It thus provides an answer to the question, "What went wrong?" The kind of things that went wrong explain why eventually Christ had to come, because Israel's history led to a dead-end. They also illustrate lessons the people of God continue to need to learn if our story is not to go the same way (or they explain why our story has gone the same way?!).

2 The narrative deals with the history reign by reign, according to a fairly regular pattern. 21:19-26 illustrates the pattern. Usually it consists in opening and closing summaries forming a framework which incorporates detailed material about the reign (e.g., chs 18—20). In chs 1—17 the narrative has to interweave the story of Ephraim and Judah, dating their various kings by each other, but in chs 18—25, after Ephraim's disappearance, it only has to deal with Judah.

3 Chs 1-17 in fact concentrate on Ephraim, where the major issue seems to be whether it is really prepared to make Yahweh its God or whether it is going to continue to rely on other divinities (the "baals"). Behind this question is the further one, "Who really is God anyway?" Is Yahweh all-powerful? Many of the stories thus show how Yahweh proves to be all-powerful, but how the people are not inclined to take the point. Ch. 17 closes off Ephraim's story and paints very clearly the thread the narrative sees running through Ephraim's whole history.

4 Chs 1-17 give great prominence to Elijah and Elisha as the representatives of Yahweh. Indeed they are almost Yahweh's embodiments, exercising Yahweh's power, executing Yahweh's judgment, manifesting Yahweh's insight, and revealing Yahweh's plans. Thus people's attitude to them *is* their attitude to God.

5 Chs 18-25 cover the last 150 years of Judah's life up to the fall of Jerusalem. Failing to worship Yahweh was also sometimes an issue here, especially and fatally in the reign of Manasseh, ch 21. But worshiping Yahweh in the wrong way is more commonly the problem. The issue that emerges here is the need of a right relationship between king, temple, and torah (leadership, worship, and scripture?). The wrong relationship (king running temple in a way that ignores torah) brings disaster to the whole people of God.

6 Throughout the book a center of concern is God's involvement in the people's political affairs. This aspect of it is the focus of Jacques Ellul's illuminating treatment in *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man*. He suggests that it makes a twofold distinctive contribution to the canon of scripture. First, it pictures God's involvement in political life, and thus warns both against undervaluing the importance of politics, and against absolutizing this realm (since it shows how God brings judgment on politics). Second, it displays the interplay of the free determination of human beings (who in various political situations make their decisions and put their policies into effect) and the free decision of God (who nevertheless gets things done through or despite these deliberate human acts). Chs 6-10 and 18-19 provide particularly good examples, though King Jehu's story needs also to be seen in the context of Hosea's later condemnation of his bloodbath (Hos 1:4). 2 Kings thus shows God getting things done in history, and we may use the marks of God's footsteps here to see what God may be doing in our day. At the same time the book challenges us as to whether we are willing to live by the conviction that Yahweh is actually Lord.

7 Although 2 Kings is in many ways a gloomy book because of the story it has to tell, it offers glimmers of hope for the people of God under judgment. God made a commitment to the ancestors (13:23) and to David (8:19; 19:34), and surely judgment will not be God's last word to the people. But we can only pray along those lines if we acknowledge that judgment was appropriate, and commit ourselves to getting our attitudes to politics and worship right, in accordance with the lordship of Yahweh and the teaching of scripture.

2 Kings: Its origins and aim; Its vision of the community's resources

A Its origins and aim

1. If you start from where it ends, 2 Kings 25:27-30:
   the time is during the exile (just after 561)
   the book (and 1—2 Kings as a whole) offers a hint of hope for the future
   the hope is based on little evidences that Yahweh is not finished with us—and specifically is not finished with the line of David
   the book's challenge then is—will you hope?

2. If you start from 2 Kings 24-25 as a whole:
   the time is the point of exile (just after 587—cf. Lamentations)
   the book (and 1—2 Kings as a whole) is an act of praise at the justice of the judgment of God (von Rad)
   hope is based on God's love, on which the people casts itself in owning its wrongdoing and hopelessness
   the book's challenge then is—will you own this way of looking at your story and accept responsibility?

3. If you start from 2 Kings 22-23:
   the time is the reign of Josiah—about 621
   the book (and 1—2 Kings as a whole) is a reassurance that taking God's word seriously opens up a future
   the hope is based on the possibility that God's promises still stand: the promise of compassion for those who turn and obey (Deut 30)
   there is a promise of forgiveness for those who turn and pray (1 Kings 8.46-53)
   its challenge then is—will you turn and take seriously the word of the torah and the word of the prophet?

B Its vision of the community's resources

1. The words of the prophets. The fact that they have been fulfilled makes it possible to listen to them again. E.g., Isaiah, Nathan, Huldah—and prophets outside Kings such as Jeremiah. E.g., 2 Kings 20:16-17 is fulfilled in 24:13. 1—2 Kings portray "a course of history which was shaped and led to a fulfilment by a word of judgement and salvation continually injected into it"; prophets "change the gears of history with a word from God" (von Rad).

2. The torah. "The law is the fundamental test of Israel's obedience and the vehicle of the divine promise" (Ackroyd). It provides the principles for understanding success and failure. Cf. Manasseh, Josiah (or not).

3. The promise to David: 1 Kings 6:12; 11:12-13, 36; 2 Kings 8.19; 19:34. The well-being of the people has been tied up with the kings. But the monarchy is not an absolute: 1—2 Kings "sees the main problem of the history of Israel as lying in the question of the correct correlation of Moses and David" (von Rad).

4. The temple: you can pray in/towards it (1 Kings 8). It is the dwelling place of God's name—"the spiritualization of the theophany" (Eichrodt). "The judgment of 587 did not mean the end of the people of God; nothing but refusal to turn would be the end" (von Rad).

Lenses for Looking at the Prophets

There are two sorts of angles from which we can read the prophets (or other parts of scripture). We may want simply to discover what they were saying in their context—in other words we are doing exegesis. Or we may want to discover what they might say beyond their context, and what they might say to us—which involves hermeneutics. (Admittedly, in some ways this is an artificial distinction. We do exegesis because we are interested in the text, and the nature of our interest influences what we see there. And when we come to the text to discover what it says to questions that concern us, this can lead to exegetical discoveries.)

In coming to see what the text says to us, consciously or unconsciously we put on lenses. These bring aspects of the text into focus for us. Probably no lens brings the whole text into focus (and some lenses may put the whole text out of focus). We need to try several lenses if we are to see the implications of different parts of a book. The NT offers us a number of lenses through which to read the prophets.

The "Jesus" lens

This is modern Christians' default lens, the lens the first Christians used when they wanted to use the Prophets to help them to understand who Jesus was and to understand the significance of his ministry, death, and resurrection—particularly when these were difficult to understand. See e.g., Matt 1:17—2:23. But this lens seems to illumine only two per cent of the Prophets. So the fact that Christians often assume that telling us about Jesus is *the* point about the prophets means we then have a problem. What do we do with the rest, which seems irrelevant? Fortunately it was not the NT's only lens.

The "church" lens

From Isaiah the first Christians discovered what the church is and what it is called to be. The vision of a suffering servant in Isaiah 53, which Christians see as quintessentially about Jesus, also offers the New Testament writers insight about the church (see e.g., Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Peter 2:21-24).

The "ministry and mission" lens

It was the servant testimony in Isaiah 49:1-6 that helped Paul understand the nature of his own mission and ministry (see Acts 13:47; Gal. 1:15). Paul's implicit question is "How may we understand our ministry and mission," and Isaiah 49:1-6 provides him with an answer.

The "spiritual life" lens

When Jesus composed his Blessings (Matt. 5:3-11), most were based on the Psalms and Isaiah.

The "Israel" lens

The NT also applied the "Israel" lens. Jesus did so in applying Isaiah 6:9-10 to the community of his day (Mark 4:12), and also did so with Isaiah 5:1-7 (Mark 12:1-12). He applies Isaiah 29:13 to its leadership in particular (Mark 7:6-7), and does the same in bringing Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11 together (Mark 11:17). Paul discovers from Isaiah how to understand the significance of Israel (e.g., Rom 9:27-33)

The "world" lens

As John looks at the nations and their destiny in Revelation, there is hardly a verse that would survive if we removed the allusions to books such as Isaiah and Ezekiel.

The "End" lens

Jesus also applies the "End" lens to Isaiah. In describing the End that he anticipates in Mark 13:24-25, he takes up the language of Isaiah 13.

For any passage, try asking which of these lenses "works"—brings the text into focus.

A Prophetic Grid

	Ephraim	*Judah*	*Babylon*
David		Gad Nathan	
900			
	Elijah Micaiah Elisha		
800			
	?Joel Jonah		
Assyrian Empire	Amos Hosea	First Isaiah Micah	
722 Fall of Samaria			
700			
		Nahum Zephaniah Habakkuk	
622 Josiah's reform		Jeremiah	
612 Fall of Nineveh			
Babylonian Empire			
600			Ezekiel
587 Fall of Jerusalem			
		?Obadiah (not the Obadiah in Kgs)	
The Deuteronomists?			
			Second Isaiah
539 Fall of Babylon			
Persian Empire			
520-516 Building of Temple		Haggai, Zechariah	
500			
		?Third Isaiah	
		Malachi ?Joel [Jonah]	
400			

Interpreting Prophecy: Pre-modern, Modern, Post-modern

Pre-modern

Before, during, and for a millennium and a half after NT times, people interpreted scripture in an intuitive fashion. There was no difference between (e.g.) NT and Qumran interpretation of scripture. The Qumran monks reckoned that they were fulfilling Isaiah 40 by preparing the way of the Lord in the wilderness. Matthew reckoned that John was fulfilling Isaiah 40 by preparing the way of the Lord in the wilderness. Both might have been right—scripture can have lots of fulfillments (lots of fillings or fillings out or meeting its goal (*plero-o*, *teleuta-o*). They started from their faith conviction (e.g., Jesus is the "Messiah," or the Qumran community leader is the "Righteous Teacher") and looked at scripture in light of that. This did not mean that they pre-determined what they saw in scripture. It did mean that their angle of vision determined the *kind* of thing they would see. And it meant that their interpretation would be unlikely to convince someone who did not agree with their faith starting point. Over subsequent centuries, Jewish and Christian interpretation continued this process. The presupposition of their use of scripture was that as an inspired word it could have a number of meanings—it had that kind of depth to it. My experience with Judg 18:6.

Modern

The Reformation was, among other things, an argument about the interpretation of scripture. It was not the case that the mediaeval church ignored scripture—it was rather the case that the Reformers thought that the medieval church (including contemporaries such as Erasmus) misinterpreted it. As Luther saw it, people treated scripture as if it had a wax nose—it could be twisted to any shape you wanted. But (he affirmed) it must be read in accordance with its intrinsic meaning. The Reformation's stress on scripture thus has priorities in common with the development of historical-critical exegesis within modernity, with its stress on the literal meaning, the importance of history, and the need to be critical of what tradition said that scripture meant. But in order to work out the implications of these emphases, modernity neglected or opposed the idea that scripture can speak to people direct, without consideration for its literal meaning. Second, it neglected the text as we have it, in favor of its earlier versions and/or the events it refers to. And third, it was critical of scripture itself, and not just of traditional interpretation of scripture.

Post-modern

Post-modern interpretation is not a mere reversion to the pre-modern. It is an attempt to take seriously the positive aspects to both, in such a way as to safeguard against their negative aspects. So it will allow for the fact that the Holy Spirit sometimes inspires imaginative leaps in the use of scripture, which give the words a meaning that has nothing much to do with their meaning in their context. But it will not make that a default assumption about the nature of interpretation, for reasons that emerged in the context of the Reformation and the Enlightenment. That is, such use of scripture could be a means of declaring things that are unscriptural, and we need means of being able to argue about whether this is a word from the Lord. Or it can be a means of simply confirming us in what we already believe, and not allowing God to break through. If it does not correspond to the text's original meaning, we need to treat it as we would a purported prophecy—be open to its coming from the Spirit, but also aware that most prophecy is either false or trivial.

Student comment: "This is a course in how to read the Prophets like Goldingay. How would someone else read them (e.g., a professor at Biola or Claremont or Dallas [or Trinity or Westminster])? What is Goldingay's hermeneutic?"
They are reliable (but not necessarily inerrant), addressed to their day (not just predicting Christ), wholly God's word (not just human), wholly applicable today (not confined to other dispensations), governing our theological framework (not subject to it).

Further Reading on Prophecy

Barton, J. *Oracles of God*. London: DLT, 1986.
Blenkinsopp, J. *A History of Prophecy in Israel*. London: SPCK, 1984.
Brenner, A. (ed.). *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
Brueggemann, W.. *The Prophetic Imagination*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.
—*Hopeful Imagination*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.
Buber, M. *The Prophetic Faith*. New York: Macmillan, 1949.
Coggins, R., and others (ed.). *Israel's Prophetic Tradition*. Cambridge/New York: CUP, 1982.
Crenshaw. J. L. *Prophetic Conflict*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971.
Davies, P. R. (ed.). *The Prophets*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
Dempsey, Carol. *A Liberation-Critical Reading of the Old Testament*. Fortress, 2000.
Eaton, J. H. *Mysterious Messengers*. London: SCM, 1997/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
Gitay, Y. (ed.). *Prophecy and Prophets*. Atlanta: Scholars, 1997.
Gordon, R. P. "From Mari to Moses: Prophecy at Mari and in Ancient Israel". In *Of Prophets' Visions and the Wisdom of Sages* (ed. H. A. McKay and D. J. A. Clines), pp. 63-79. Sheffield: JSOT, 1993.
Gordon, R. P. (ed.). *"The Place Is Too Small for Us": The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995. [collection of essays]
Grabbe, L. L. "Prophets, priests, diviners and sages in Ancient Israel". In *Of Prophets' Visions* [see above], pp. 43-62.
Green, J. B. *How To Read Prophecy*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1984. [application to the Middle East etc]
Grimsrud, T. and L. L. Johns (ed.). *Peace and Justice Shall Embrace*. Telford, PA: Pandora, 1999. [Power, Yhwh's rule, prophetic conflict, Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekiel]
Heaton, E. W. *The Old Testament Prophets*. Rev. ed., London: DLT, 1977.
Heschel, A. *The Prophets*. New York: Harper, 1962.
Kaltner, J., and L. Stulman (ed.). *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*. London/New York: Colloquium, 2004.
Koch, K. *The Prophets*. 2 vols. London: SCM, 1982, 1983.
LeClerc, Thomas L. *Yahweh is Exalted in Justice*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001.
Mays, J. L., and others (ed.). *Old Testament Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1995.
Mays, J. L. and P. J. Achtemeier (ed.). *Interpreting the Prophets*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1987.
Miranda, J. P. *Marx and the Bible*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1974/London: SCM, 1977.
Newsome, J. D. *The Hebrew Prophets*. Louisville: WJK, 1986.
Ndiokwere, N. I. *Prophecy and Revolution*. London: SPCK, 1981. [African prophets and OT prophets]
Nissinen, M. *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*. Atlanta: SBL, 2003.
Petersen, D. L. (ed.). *Prophecy in Israel*. Philadelphia: Fortress/London: SPCK, 1987.
—*The Prophetic Literature*. Louisville: WJK, 2002. [solid survey of critical views]
Premnath, D. N. *Eighth Century Prophets: A Social Analysis*. St Louis: Chalice, 2003.
von Rad, G. *The Message of the Prophets*. New York: Harper, 1968. = *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 2, esp. pp. 33-125. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965.
Westermann, C. *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*. London: Lutterworth/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967.
—*Prophetic Oracles of Salvation in the Old Testament*. Louisville: WJK, 1991.
Towner, W. S. "On calling people 'prophets' in 1970". *Interpretation* 24 (1970), pp. 492-509.
Wilson, R. R. *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.
Wright, C. J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004.
Zimmerli, W. *The Law and the Prophets*. New York: Harper, 1965.

Isaiah 1-12

Isaiah's vision of the Holy One of Israel (chapter 6) makes a good starting-point for understanding Isaiah 1—12 as a whole. It is the beginning of a portrayal of Isaiah's ministry in the time of Ahaz, describing its origin (chapter 6), how it works out (7:1—8:10), and the consequences for prophet and people (8:11—9:7). The Holy One of Israel must act to punish Israel's turning away, but must also keep the undertaking to stand by Israel and never abandon it. Isaiah challenges Ahaz to make Yahweh his security, but he will not do so. Isaiah himself is called to wait till his word is fulfilled, even if convinced that it must mean punishment, because he is also convinced that the other side of calamity there will be restoration.

This portrayal of Isaiah's ministry is set in the context of "woes" and warnings of Yahweh's anger.

5:8-24 Isaiah's woes upon Jerusalem
  5:25-30 And God's anger is still not satisfied
    6:1-13 Isaiah's commission
    7:1-8:10 How it works out
    8:11-9:7 the consequences for Isaiah and for Israel
  9:8-21 And God's anger is still not satisfied
10:1-4 Isaiah's woe upon Jerusalem

The tension between judgment and comfort appears again in the opening and closing chapters of the section (1:1—5:7 and 10:5—12:6).

In the opening part (1:1—5:7), Isaiah paints long descriptions of Israel, Judah, and especially Jerusalem, and of the disaster that must come; but he alternates these with lyrical pictures of how things will be when Jerusalem is restored.

If the more somber picture dominates the opening, the closing part (10:5—12:6) becomes increasingly encouraging. After the last "woe" on Jerusalem, Isaiah declares "woe" on the one who was to be the means of Jerusalem's punishment, and more pictures of Yahweh's restoration of Israel follow this "woe." It closes with a song to sing in the day Yahweh fulfils these promises.

So chapters 1-12 as a whole unfold as follows

1:2-31 Jerusalem as she is, and her punishment
    2:1-5 Jerusalem as she will be
2:6-4:1 Jerusalem as she is, and her punishment
  4:2-7 Jerusalem as she will be
5:1-7 Jerusalem as she is, and her punishment
      5:8-24 Isaiah's "woes" against Jerusalem
        5:25-30 And God's anger is still not satisfied
          6:1-13 Isaiah's commission
          7:1-8:10 How it works out
          8:11-9:7 The consequences for Isaiah and for Israel
        9:8-21 And God's anger is still not satisfied
      10:1-4 Isaiah's "woe" against Jerusalem
10:5-19 Isaiah's "woe" against Assyria
10:20-11:16 Israel as it will be
12:1-6 A song to sing in that day

Homework6: Questions on Isaiah 1-12

1. What is Yahweh's vision for Jerusalem, Judah, and Israel, and for their kings?
2. What are supposed to be the characteristics of their life?
3. What is the present reality of their life?
4. What does Yahweh intend to do about it, and how?

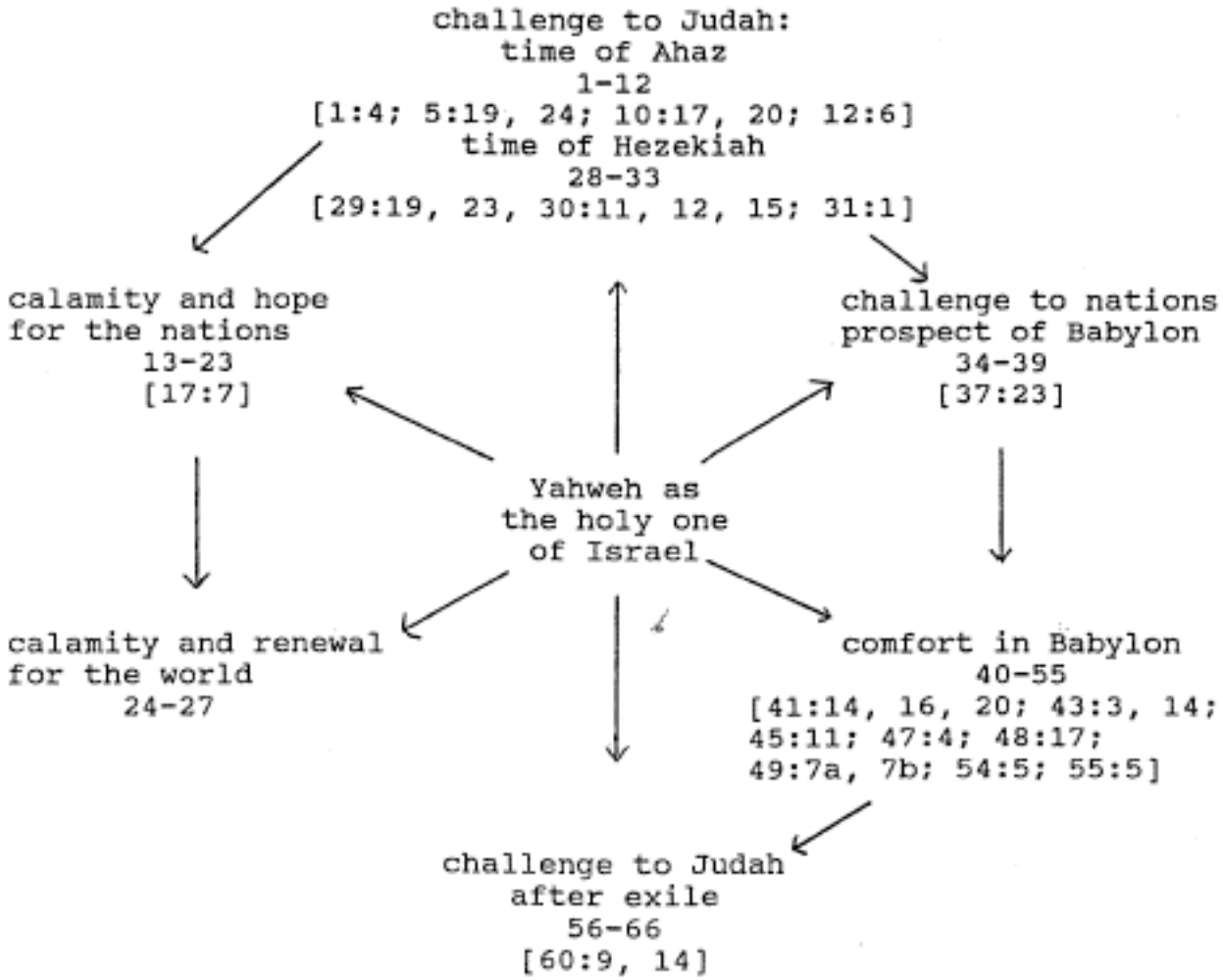
    (a) negatively

    (b) positively

4. What kind of person is Yahweh?
5. What is involved in being a prophet?
6. What other elements are there in the chapters' message, not covered by the above questions?
7. What do you think is the most important thing you have read in these chapters, and why?
8. Are there any puzzling things you have read in these chapters

The Book Called Isaiah: *A Message from the Holy One of Israel*

The Book of Isaiah speaks to many different periods and takes up many different themes, but a feature that runs through it, however, is the frequency with which the whole book describes Israel's God, Yahweh, as "the Holy One of Israel." That title for God comes only thirty times in the Bible, twenty-five of them in Isaiah, spread through the whole book. Isaiah is the book of the Holy One of Israel. That was the title for God that naturally came to the prophet Isaiah's lips. The title comes in some psalms (Ps 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; also Jer 50:29; 51:5), and probably has its origin in the worship of the temple, but Isaiah made it his own. The reason seems to go back to the vision which gave him his commission: "Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh Almighty", the seraphs proclaimed: and Isaiah's vision of the Holy One lies behind the book as a whole.



Isaiah 6: So what does holiness mean?

Holiness means awesome, royal splendor (vv. 1-4). Never mind what is happening to the human monarchy, it is this monarch that counts.. God's holiness is the central mystery of God's transcendent deity, the supernatural essence of God's God-ness, which makes human beings both draw near and draw back.

Holiness also means purity (v. 5). Holiness expresses the essence of God in God's deity, and the essence of the God of Israel is moral. It involves justice and righteousness (5:16). Isaiah speaks especially of the sinfulness of his lips, perhaps identifying with Israel's sin, such as perjury, asking for help from other nations when they should be turning to God, and offering God prayers that were not accompanied by lives committed to justice.

Then he finds that *holiness can mean forgiveness* (vv. 6-7). As the holy one, God dwells in a high and holy place, but also with people who are crushed and humbled (57:15). Loving grace is as much part of the essence of the holy God as are justice and purity.

The center of the chapter indicates that *holiness also means punishment* (vv. 8-10). Isaiah has his lips cleansed so that he can use them in God's service. When he volunteers to do so, it is a somber commission he is given.

What does it mean to say that he was sent to tell people that
God was giving them closed minds and hearts?

- Perhaps God revealed what he was being called to, so that when it turned out that way he would not be overwhelmed by failure.
- Or perhaps Isaiah's account of his call is written in the light of how things turned out.
- Or perhaps Isaiah speaks of what God can foresee will be the result of Isaiah's preaching—but since God is willing to send Isaiah just the same, in effect this is God's purpose.
- More likely it presupposes that the people have reached the point when God's punishment must fall, and this blinding is the form God's punishment will take.
- Even then it may be ironic, a warning to people of where they might find themselves—he says "Listen but don't understand," but he doesn't mean it. His declaring of calamity is then like Jonah's declaring of calamity for Nineveh, which is designed to bring people to their senses, to repentance, and to forgiveness, even though it does not explicitly urge them to repentance.

If judgment is inevitable, that is not the end of the story. *Holiness also means faithfulness* (vv. 11-13). "How long?" is the phrase that often appears in the Psalms, not as a request for information, but as a plea for mercy. At first Isaiah receives only a somber reiteration of how devastating the punishment must be, but that is not all he receives. The people will find as the prophet has found, that God's holiness includes grace and mercy, which they will experience after the most horrifying devastation if not before it. Even a felled tree can grow again.

Wholeness

The English word "wholeness" is historically related to the English word "holiness" (compare German "heil" = "whole/intact/healed"; "heilig" = "holy/sacred"). So is there a link between holiness and wholeness? The trouble is that the etymology or the history of the development of words is not in itself a guide to their meaning. (The English word "nice" is related to a Middle English word meaning "Stupid/wanton" and a Middle French word meaning "silly/simple," and all go back to Latin *nescius*, which means "ignorant"). The question is, do people use words in awareness of their historical links?

The answer with regard to holy/whole is surely "No, except for theological types who become aware of this piece of history and suggest it points to something significant." What is that? That you need to be a moral person (holy) if you are to be a whole (healthy, integrated) person? That you need to be a whole person if you are to be a holy person? Both might be true (or might not), but the history of words would illustrate the point rather than be evidence for it.

In Hebrew "holy" suggests heavenly, divine, different, separate, transcendent. A deity is holy by definition; people, things, or places are then holy by association with a deity. Being holy has nothing intrinsically to do with being moral or whole; the Canaanite gods were holy, but don't look either moral or whole.

The Hebrew word for "whole" is *tamem* or *tam*. "Wholeness/integrity" is *tom*. "Be whole/complete" is *tamam*. The adjective most often refers to animals for sacrifice, which have to be whole and without defect. It is often applied to human beings, who are also called to be whole in a moral sense: e.g. Noah, Gen 6:9; Abraham, 17:1; especially Job, e.g. Job 1:1; puzzlingly Jacob, 25:27 (perhaps because the word occasionally suggests "simple"—he lived a simple life at home?). Lovers think their beloveds are *tamem* (Song of Songs 5:2; 6:9). Occasionally one or other of the words applies to God, but mostly indirectly. Unfortunately the Greek Bible translated *tamem* with a word meaning "flawless/blameless," as if it were a negative rather than a positive word, and this persists in English translations.

Psalm 18:23-32 is noteworthy:

V. 23: 1 was *tamem* (NRSV "blameless", KJV "upright"; // "I kept myself from wrongdoing").
V. 25: With the person who is *tamem* you show yourself *tamem* (the verb) (// "faithful").
V. 30: This God—his way is *tamem* (NRSV, KJV "perfect"; // "smelted/proved true")
V. 32: The God who makes my way *tamim* (NRSV "safe", KJV "perfect"; // "strengthens me").

For the noun, see Ps 7:8 (// righteousness); 25:21 (// uprightness); 26:1, 11; 41:12; Prov 19:1; 20:7 (NRSV "integrity"). The "whole" person is an "integrated" person? Here integrity is something you do/live. Elsewhere it characterizes your inner being: see esp. the gentile Abimelech in Gen 20:5-6, who is much more integrated than Abraham.

The Promise of an Ideal King (Isaiah 7; 9; 11)

Isaiah 1-12 includes three familiar "messianic prophecies." They speak of a virgin conceiving a son to be called God-is-with-us (7:14), of a son being born to people who have long sat in darkness (9:2-7), and of a branch growing from the stump of Jesse (11:1-11). What is the place and the meaning of these hopes in Isaiah?

When the first Christians found themselves grasped by Jesus, they naturally looked to the scriptures for the ways to understand him. But they were not trying to discover the meaning of the passages they looked at in their own right, and sometimes the meanings they found in OT passages were not ones that their human authors would have recognized.

Isaiah 7

Isaiah 7 illustrates this. In 735 northern Israel and Aram (Syria) joined forces to try to force Judah to join them in resistance to the mighty Assyrians, but they failed (v. 1). The theological reason lay in God's promises to protect Jerusalem and to support the line of David. But as Israel and Syria put Judah under pressure, the question is whether Ahaz will live by those promises. In Isaiah's view, the promise means that Ahaz has no reason to panic. Isaiah can see what Syria and northern Israel will look like when Yahweh has finished with them. More solemnly, it means that Ahaz *must* not panic. The security of his city does not depend on the security of its water supply (which Ahaz is out investigating). It depends on the security of his trust in the God of Israel.

Much of the message Isaiah brings Ahaz is embodied in the son he brings with him, Shear-Yashuv, A-Remnant-Will-Return, though it is an ambiguous message. Only a remnant of the Assyrians will return to their own land if Ahaz trusts in Yahweh; only a remnant of Judah will survive if he does not. (Later, when disaster has come on Judah, the name will hint at the hope that at least a remnant will return to the promised land; it will also express a challenge, that at least a remnant should return to Yahweh.) It is expressed in a play on words in v. 9: the same Hebrew word denotes being firm in faith, reliable, committed, and trustworthy, and also (and in consequence) being established and secure. Trust in God as the one who guarantees the security of God's people is a key emphasis in Isaiah's message.

Isaiah offers Ahaz a sign to prove that God is trustworthy, but the offer functions to expose Ahaz as a man who did not want to trust in God even if he had the evidence. He is given the evidence anyway, but told it will do him no good. Here we come to the passage taken up in the NT. If the NIV is right, the offer envisages a baby being be born to a girl who is at the moment still a virgin. There is no implication that this will happen without her marrying and conceiving in the ordinary way (even though this talk of a virgin will eventually turn out to be much more appropriate in another connection than Isaiah dreamt). Indeed, it is not clear that the word necessarily refers to a virgin: see NRSV; if it is right, the reference may rather be to Isaiah's own wife having another baby (the other children mentioned in these chapters are Isaiah's). Either way, when the baby is born, it will be a time of deliverance, and his mother will call him "God-is-with-us" out of her gratitude to God for his amazing faithfulness to his people (see vv 14-16). (Though it will not do Ahaz any good: see v 17.)

Isaiah 9

In Isaiah 9:2-7, the background of the promise about light dawning in darkness is the warning about darkness, anguish, gloom, and distress in 8:21-22. These are part of the OT's regular way of describing the Day of Yahweh, the day when God's punishment is effected in historical events (see the comments on chapter 13 to follow). That Day has come for northern Israel, the despised Galilee of the Gentiles. But darkness is not God's last word, and the vision of chapter 9 is of gloom dispelled and distress comforted for northern Israel (and for Judah, when she goes Israel's way).

It includes a vision of a king who will fulfill all that the king was supposed to be. In appointing David, Yahweh made an irrevocable commitment to his line and promised to bring Israel blessing and justice through it (see e.g., 2 Samuel 7; Psalm 72). As kings failed to be what Judah hoped for, Israel looked to God's promises being fulfilled through a future king. That is the beginning of hope for the "messiah." The actual word "messiah" in the OT simply means "anointed" and refers to the present king, not to a future figure. The OT itself uses other images to describe the coming king—images such as the branch from Jesse's tree. As often happens, an ordinary word (anointed) in due course became a technical term. We then need to wary of reading the technical meaning back into where it does not apply.

In Isaiah 9 it is unlikely that Isaiah is aware of speaking about a person to come in 700 years time (though also unlikely that he thinks of himself as referring to an actual king, such as Hezekiah). Yet Jesus was sent to be the fulfillment of this vision (as Hezekiah had a responsibility for blessing, peace, and justice, too). Looking at Jesus in the light of Isaiah 9 shows us what Jesus still has to do. He does not yet rule in peace and justice, but Isaiah's promise is that he will. What he did achieve at his first coming is the guarantee of what he will achieve at his second coming.

Isaiah 11

Isaiah 11 envisages the tree of David felled. And that would be the end. It actually happened with the fall of the state in 587. Davidic kings no longer sat on the throne of Jerusalem. Isaiah introduces this stump, however, in order to deny that it means the end. Even if there is no potential left in the line of David, there is still potential in those promises of God to David. Indeed, God promises that the new growth that comes from this stump will be more impressive than the fruit the tree bore before it was felled, impressive enough to draw the world to shelter beneath its branches.

On the eve of Jesus' birth, one might have thought that the promise to David was finished, but the birth of Jesus shows that a tree could grow from a stump that had been dead for five hundred years. The promises of God never run out of life; the steadfast, ongoing, committed love of God never ceases. The potential of the felled tree is not the potential of root or stump but the potential of the promise of God.

Monday August 10: Isaiah 13-39; Jonah

Homework Required

Read the sheets on Isaiah 13—27 and 28—39 (pages 76-77), study Isaiah 13—27 in the light of these, and fill in pages 78-79 on the message of the chapters. (Homework7)

Read the two accounts of how the book called Isaiah might have come into existence (pages 83-85) and fill in page 86
Study Jonah and fill in page 87
(Homework8)

First Class: Jonah; Isaiah 13—39

Lecture:	Systematic Theology according to Jonah (pages 88-89) With comments on questions in Moodle postings
Discussion:	Jonah's theology; Jonah as history
Lecture:	The Time Line (pages 55, 62); Oracles about the Nations Isaiah 13—39 (pages 74-76); With comments on questions in Moodle postings

For further reading

Read through Isaiah 28—39 to get the flavor of it, with page 77
Re-read Isaiah 13—39 with the aid of Sawyer's commentary

Second Class: Isaiah, Isaiah Jr, and Isaiah III

Lecture:	The Authorship of Isaiah
Discussion	
Lecture:	Prophecy as poetry (page 148) The Day of Yahweh; The Fall of Lucifer (page 80-82); Isaiah 1 – 39 today (page 96)

For further reading

Mysterious Messengers, chapters 12 and 14

Further Reading on Isaiah and Jonah

Relevant chapters of
Childs, B. S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*.
Coggins, R., and others (ed.). *Israel's Prophetic Tradition*.
Eaton, J. H. *Mysterious Messengers*
Koch, K. *The Prophets*
Miranda, J. P. *Marx and the Bible*.
Mays, J. L., and P. J. Achtemeier (ed.). *Interpreting the Prophets*.
von Rad, G. *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 2 = *The Message of the Prophets*

On Jonah

Allen, L. C. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.
Baker, D. W., and others. *Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*. Leicester, UK: IVP, 1988.
Eagleton, T. "J. L. Austin and the Book of Jonah." In R. M. Schwartz (ed.), *The Book and the Text*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.
Elata-Alster, G., and R. Salmon. "The deconstruction of genre in the Book of Jonah". *Journal of Literature and Theology* 3 (1989), pp. 40-58.
Ellul, J. *The Judgment of Jonah*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.
Fretheim, T. E. "Jonah and Theodicy". *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 90 (1978), pp. 227-37.
Gaines, J. H. *Forgiveness in a Wounded World: Jonah's Dilemma*. Atlanta: SBL, 2003.
Goodhart, S. "Prophecy, sacrifice and repentance in the story of Jonah". *Semeia* 33 (1985), pp. 43-63.
LaCocque, A. and P.-E. *The Jonah Complex*. Atlanta: Knox, 1981.
Landes, G. M. "The Kerygma of the Book of Jonah". *Interpretation* 21 (1967), pp. 3-31.
Limburg, J. *Jonah*. London: SCM, 1993.
Magonet, J. *Form and Meaning in the Book of Jonah*. Sheffield, UK: Almond, 1983.
Peterson, E. H. *Under the Unpredictable Plant*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.
Spina, F. A. *The Faith of the Outsider*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
Watts, J. D. W. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*. Cambridge/New York: CUP, 1975.
Wolff, H. W. *Obadiah and Jonah*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986.

On Isaiah

These are books on the whole of Isaiah and on Isaiah 1 – 39. See page 119 for books on Isaiah 40 – 66.

Ackroyd, P. R. Studies *in the Religious Tradition of the Old Testament*. London: SCM, 1987.
Barton, J. *Isaiah 1-39*. OT Guides. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
Berrigan, Daniel. *Isaiah: Spirit of Courage, Gift of Tears*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
Broyles, C. C., and C. A. Evans. *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah*. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
Brueggemann, W. *Isaiah*. 2 vols. Louisville: WJK, 1997.
—*Using God's Resources Wisely: Isaiah and Urban Possibility*. Louisville: WJK, 1993.
Calvin, J. *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*. 1551. 4 vols, Edinburgh: Clark, 1850-54.
Clements, R. E. *Isaiah 1-39*. New Century Bible. London: Marshall/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
—*Old Testament Prophecy*. Louisville: WJK, 1996.
Conrad, E. W. *Reading Isaiah.* Minneapolis: *Fortress, 1991.*
Darr, K. P. *Isaiah's Vision and the Family of God*. Louisville: WJK, 1994.
Ellul, J. *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972. (Ahaz and Hezekiah)
Goldingay, J. *Isaiah*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001.

-- *Isaiah: A Very Short Commentary*. http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay
Hayes, J. H., and S. A. Irvine. *Isaiah, the Eighth-Century Prophet*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1987.
Holladay, W. L. *Isaiah*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
-- *Unbounded by Time: Isaiah Still Speaks*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 2002.
Irvine, S. A. *Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis*. Atlanta: Scholars, 1990.
Kaiser, O. *Isaiah 1-12*. London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972; 2nd ed., 1983.
—*Isaiah 13-39*. London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974.
Koonthanam, George. "Yahweh the Defender of the Dalits." In R. S. Sugirtharajah (ed.), *Voices from the Margin* (new ed., Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995), pp. 105-16 (Isa 3:12-15 in an Indian context)
Melugin, R. F. *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1976.
—and M. A. Sweeney (ed.). *New Visions of Isaiah*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
Mettinger, T. D. *A Farewell to the Servant Songs*. Lund: Gleerup, 1983.
Miscall, P. D. *Isaiah*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.
Motyer, J. A. *The Prophecy of Isaiah*. Leicester/Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993.
Oswalt, J. N. *The Book of Isaiah*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986 and 1998.
Rendtorff, R. *Canon and Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
Roth, W. *Isaiah*. Atlanta: Knox, 1988.
Sawyer, J. *Isaiah*. 2 vols. Edinburgh: St Andrew's/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984.
Seitz, C. R. *Zion's Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.
—(ed.). *Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.
Sommer, B. D. "The scroll of Isaiah as Jewish Scripture, Or, Why Jews Don't Read Books". In *Society of Biblical Literature 1996 Seminar Papers*, pp. 225-42. Atlanta: Scholars, 1996.
Sweeney, M. A. "The Book of Isaiah in Recent Research". *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 1 (1993), pp. 141-62.
—*Isaiah 1-39*. Grand Rapids/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1996.
Tomasino, A. J. "Isaiah 1.1-2.4 and 63 – 66, and the Composition of the Isaianic Corpus". *JSOT* 57 (1993), pp. 81-98. = *The Prophets* (ed. P. R. Davies), pp. 147-63. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
Vermeylen, J. (ed.). *The Book of Isaiah*. Leuven: Leuven UP, 1989.
Watts, J. D. *Isaiah*. 2 vols. Waco, TX: Word, 1985 and 1987.
Whedbee, J. W. *Isaiah and Wisdom*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1971.
Wildberger, H. *Isaiah 1 – 12*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.
—*Isaiah 13 – 27*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.
Williamson, H. G. M. *The Book Called Isaiah*. Oxford/New York: CUP, 1994.
—*Variations on a Theme: King, Messiah and Servant in the Book of Isaiah*. Carlisle: Paternoster/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Isaiah 13—27

Isaiah 13—23

Isaiah 13 marks a new start in the Book of Isaiah. The fate of Assyria has been referred to in 10:5-19, but the destiny of the nations around now comes into focus. Those discussed are

Babylon	13:1—14:23; 21:1-10
Assyria	14:24-27; 19:23-25
Philistia	14:28-32
Moab	15:1—16:14
Damascus	17:1-14
Cush	18:1-7; 20:1-6
Egypt	19:1-25; 20:1-6
Edom	21:11-12
Arabia	21:13-17
Jerusalem	22:1-25
Tyre	23:1-17

Isaiah looks forward to a time when Egypt, Assyria, and Israel can worship together as the people of God (19:23-25). But for the most part, these are prophecies of calamity for the nations, not of their blessing.

This likely links with the fact that although Isaiah prophesies concerning the nations, as other prophets do, the prophecies are not delivered to these nations but delivered in Judah, like the rest of Isaiah's prophecies. They are part of his ministry to the people of God (though they would also be effective in implementing God's judgment on these nations, as they were the word of Yahweh by which Yahweh's purpose was put into effect). They are about nations that might be allies or threats or both at different times.

Why is Jerusalem included in these chapters? Perhaps this hints that really Judah itself is no better than any of these foreign nations, so that any talk of their being punished also implies that Judah will be. There is no room for Judah being proud of being the people of God and thinking it will escape.

Isaiah 24—27

With chapters 24—27 the canvas broadens still further. One way of seeing it is as a series of visions of the whole world's judgment and renewal, which alternate with a sequence of songs of praise to sing "in that day."

world devastation		24:1-13
	response	24:14-16
cosmic devastation		24:17-23
	response	25:1-5
world renewal and judgment		25:6-12
	response	26:1-18
world renewal and judgment		26:19-27:13

Isaiah 28—39

We return to the kind of material that occupied chapters 1—12, prophecies and stories directly concerning Judah and Jerusalem. The difference is that these chapters relate to a later period, the reign of Hezekiah (725-697). The fundamental issues in Judah's life remain as they were a few years earlier. Centrally:

- will the people live by trust in the promise of God regarding king and city, treating this promise as the key to their security and freedom
- or will they will insist on seeking freedom and security in alliances with stronger nations?

Only the external politics have changed. Assyria is now oppressive overlord, not savior—as Isaiah had warned would become the case. The references to Egypt as potential savior tell us that the period is now that of Hezekiah. The king himself is not mentioned until we come to the stories in chapters 36—39. Most of these prophecies come from 711-700.

Chapters 28—33

Chapters 28, 29, 20, 31, and 33 all begin with the exclamation "Oh" (NRSV has "Oh", "Ah", or "Alas"): they introduce a series of "Ohs" for the people of God (all of very similar length) and ultimately for their would-be destroyer:

for a drunken leadership	(28:1-29)
for the city of David	(29:1-24)
for the obstinate nation	(30:1-33)
for a people who rely on Egypt	(31:1—32:20)
for a would-be destroyer	(33:1-24)

It is a feature of these "Ohs" that the element of threat dominates at the beginning but that the element of reassurance becomes more and more prominent:

28:1-22	threat	28:23-29	reassurance
29:1-16	threat	29:17-24	reassurance
30:1-17	threat	30:18-38	reassurance
31:1-6	threat	31:7—32:20	reassurance
33:1-24	reassurance from the beginning		

Ch 33 thus also closes off chs 1—33 as a whole

Chapters 34—39

The "Ohs" are followed by two promises of reversal:

34:1-17	punishment for the nations
35:1-10	joy for the redeemed

Then by two stories about Hezekiah:

36—37	Hezekiah and Assyria: his scornful challenge from Sennacherib, his prayer, Isaiah's prophecy, and Sennacherib's downfall
38—39	Hezekiah and Babylon: his illness and healing, and his reception of envoys from Babylon

The Assyrian King Sennacherib (c. 701) (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts* 287-88):
"As for the king of Judah, Hezekiah, who had not submitted to my authority, I besieged and captured forty-six of his fortified cities, along with many smaller towns, taken in battle with my battering rams…. I took as plunder 200,150 people, both small and great, male and female, along with a great number of animals including horses, mules, donkeys, camels, oxen, and sheep. As for Hezekiah, I shut him up like a caged bird in his royal city of Jerusalem. I then constructed a series of fortresses around him, and I did not allow anyone to come out of the city gates. His towns which I captured I gave to the kings of Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza."

Homework7 on Isaiah 13—27

1. What do chapters 13-23 tell us about Yahweh's relationship with superpowers such as Assyria and Babylon?

   (a) What is the reason for Yahweh's interest in them?

   (b) What is the bad news for them, and why?

   (c) What is the good news for them, and why?

2. What do chapters 13-23 tell us about Yahweh's relationship with Smaller powers such as Judah's neighbors and potential allies

   (a) What is the reason for Yahweh's interest in them?

   (b) What is the bad news for them, and why?

   (c) What is the good news for them, and why?

3. What do chapters 24-27 tell us about Yahweh's relationship with the world as a whole?

   (a) What is the reason for Yahweh's interest in it?

   (b) What is the bad news for it, and why?

   (c) What is the good news for it, and why?

4. What is the significance of these chapters for Christian faith today? How might they apply to your nation and to other nations you know? What is the church supposed to learn from them?

5. Is anything puzzling and requiring some more explanation?

Oracles about the Nations

"Oracles" – Hebrew *massa*'
Can be (among other things) an imaginative picture, a lament, or a poem —in other words, any kind of prophetic composition. It is the same as a word for "burden" (see Jer. 23:33-38).

Why does a Judean prophet speak of the fate of other peoples?

Cf. Balaam (Num 22-24):

1 Declaring Yahweh's words of blessing puts Yahweh's will into effect.

2 The destiny of other peoples is relevant to us.

3 It gives us chance to align our will with Yahweh's.

4 It expresses God's positive purpose for other peoples.

Contrasts with the Balaam story:

1 Isaiah gives reasons: mainly the nations' power and majesty.

2 Isaiah's prophecies look beyond the immediate context more than Balaam's do.

3 Isaiah's prophecies do not relate so much to Judah's enemies.

4 Isaiah's prophecies are subtle rather than straightforward.

5 Isaiah's poems are subordinate to his agenda.

The Day of Yahweh; The Fall of Lucifer

The Day of Yahweh (13:2-13)

Since before Isaiah's time, Israel had looked forward to a Day when its enemies would be punished and Israel itself would enter into God's fullest blessing. Amos warns about such hopes (Amos 5:18-20). Isaiah views the downfall of Babylon as this Day of Yahweh actually happening before people's eyes. This Day is not the final judgment, then, but the moment when God's ultimate purpose receives one of its periodic partial fulfillments in history, as pride is put down and the oppressed are delivered.

A pattern characteristic of biblical prophecy appears here. It speaks as if the end of the world is imminent; what fulfils such prophecies is not the actual end, but a particular historical experience of God's ultimate purpose receiving a fulfillment in time.

There may be a further significance in the prominence given to *Babylon's* downfall here. Babylon was to become *the* symbol of a nation set over against God (see Revelation). Perhaps it is already becoming that, and the Babylon whose fall is described here is not merely the historical Babylon, Israel's conqueror, but also the symbolic Babylon. Its fall signifies the dethroning of every power opposed to God.

The Day is a day of military victory of Yahweh and heavenly forces. This way of thinking about God lies behind the title "the LORD Almighty" (*Yhwh tseba'ot*) which comes twice here and often elsewhere in Isaiah. The word *tseba'ot* is an ordinary Hebrew word for armies. This title for God suggests that Yahweh is the One who embodies and controls all battle forces of heaven and earth. It is an appropriate way to speak of God in connection with this Day when the forces of heaven and earth are in battle.

The fall of Lucifer (14:12-17)

Isaiah 13—14 also taunts the king of Babylon in a funeral dirge sung for a king who is at present very much alive (compare Amos's funeral dirge on Israel, Amos 5:2). Isaiah imagines Israel relieved of oppression and in a position to exult over God's judgment on wickedness, picturing the event as the fall of one who had tried to make himself into God.

Isaiah utilizes motifs that his audience would recognize came from foreign myths. "Morning star, son of the dawn" takes up titles of Canaanite gods. Babylonian and Canaanite myths told of gods who tried to take over the power of the highest god; Isaiah uses such stories as parables of the Babylonian king's presuming to take God-like authority over the whole world. He will collapse as readily as Venus, the morning star, does each day.

"Morning star" is the expression translated "Lucifer" in the Authorized/King James Bible, and this passage came to be understood as an account of the fall of Satan. In the myths that Isaiah is using, it does have a significance of such a kind, but the Bible only uses the story as a parable about something happening on earth. Ezekiel 28:12-19 reapplies the same myth to the King of Tyre.

The Whole Earth Laid Waste (Isaiah 24:1-16)

The vision of a land's devastation and a city's destruction in 24:1-12 could reflect calamities that came to a specific land and city, but if it does, they have become pictures of the destruction of national and city life in general when Yahweh acts to bring worldwide calamity.

Chapters 24—27 as a whole have been termed an "apocalypse," another word for a vision or revelation. Apocalypses flourished in Israel much later than Isaiah's day (the Greek word *apocalypsis* is the one John uses to describe the Book of Revelation). Thus it may be that chapters 24—27 come from a later period than that of the actual arrangement of chapters 13—23; this is the usual critical view. But precisely because the chapters refer hardly at all to specific nations or events, there is little hard evidence to go on regarding this.

A vision of this kind appeals to our imagination. It invites us to bring to mind the kind of amalgam of impressions of disaster and its aftermath that tends in any case to form in our minds through television, films, and newspapers: a city reduced to rubble, futile hands scrabbling at debris in a desperate search to reach the source of a moan before the person dies, wailing mothers carrying the children killed in somebody else's war.

Isaiah 24 takes up the desolation of such experiences in Israel's life, but does that to point people toward even worse devastation. The Bible takes this life's blessings as foretastes of and pointers to the great blessings of the End. It also takes the disasters that come upon the world that we know as foretastes of and pointers to the last great calamity that will overcome the earth. As we watch the combatants in successive outbreaks of war bombarding each other, or read chilling scenarios of life after a nuclear war, Isaiah 24 invites us to remember among other things that these are grim pointers to the last terrible day of calamity.

It then suggests two reactions to that. The prophet first hears voices all-over the earth declaring their response to this scene of ultimate devastation (verses 14-16a). We are not told who the voices belong to. It is the content of their response that counts. It consists in songs of joyful praise. The choirs who sing them know that the day of calamity is when wickedness is at last put down, evil eliminated, and God at last shown to be God.

Yet one cannot but be awed by it. The prophet actually feels a quite different reaction, and is unable to join in with these songs of joy (verse 16b). Overcome by the horrendous devastation of God's world and the horrendous sin that led to it, the prophet can only feel a personal sense of desolation at the sight.

That reaction was part of what was involved in being a prophet. A prophet's task was not to foretell inevitabilities but to tell people about calamities threatening them and blessings promised them, so that they could turn back to God's ways and forestall this punishment, and trust God and open themselves to God's blessings.

The Case for Reckoning that Isaiah Wrote the Entire Book Called Isaiah

Summarized from *Expositor's Bible Commentary* Vol. 6 (pp. 9-11), the best statement of the case that I know.

1 Well before the time of Christ, the Jewish community accepted that Isaiah wrote the whole book: see Ecclesiasticus 48:24. The pre-Christian Qumran Scroll "a" has the complete text of the book. The historian Josephus (c. 90 AD) says Cyrus read the prophecies about himself in Isaiah and wanted to fulfill them (*Antiquities* XI, 3-6 [i.1-2]).

2 The NT quotes from all parts as Isaiah's: e.g., John 12:38-41; Romans 10:16, 20, 21 (note the verbs of speech—the writers are not just identifying the source of their quotations in books).

3 Every OT prophetic book has a title with the prophet's name, so why is the author of chapters 40—66 unnamed? It is natural to take 1:1 to refer to the whole book, like the headings in other books. Why are there no headings at chapters 40 and 56?

4 Scholars used to argue that the theological differences between the parts of the book suggest different authorship, but scholars such as Clements now grant that the theological differences are accompanied by theological unity, such as emphasis on God's sovereignty, holiness, and hatred of pride.

5 A high poetic style runs through the whole book, with use of devices such as assonance and chiasm. Analogies recur in different parts of the book, such as the branch or shoot (4:2; 6:13; 11:1; 53:1).

6 There is very little Babylonian background. We would expect more in the author lived there.

7 Conversely, some parts of chs 40—55 imply a Palestinian background. The trees in 41:19; 44:14 are Palestinian ones. In 43:14 Yahweh speaks of sending to Babylon (cf. 45:22; 46:11; and esp. 52:11).

8 The book emphasizes supernatural prediction (e.g., 25:1-28; 41:21-29; 44:7-8; 46:10-11; 48:3-7) and emphasizes that only Yahweh can so predict the future.

9 Ch 39 shows the relevance of chs 40—66 to the people of Isaiah's day, assuring people that God's long-term purpose for them would not be thwarted by the trouble that comes through the king's sin.

10 The revelation of Cyrus's name parallels the revelation about Josiah and the mention of his name in 1 Kgs 13:2). The way it is introduced indicates that this revelation comes at a climax of the book.

11 Rejection of Isaiah's authorship of chs 40—66 has usually reflected rejection of the idea of supernatural prediction.

12 It seems likely that Isaiah lived on into the reign of Manasseh, when he was unable to prophesy openly. He therefore put into writing the revelations in chs 40—66. These would then encourage people in exile in Babylon in the next century and build up their faith and hope, so that they would respond to the call to "Depart" in 52:11.

The Four Voices in Isaiah

Among my basic principles for understanding the origin of the book are these two. First, when a prophet says "I," the prophet means "I" (except when speaking in God's name). On the other hand, when the book says "he," referring to the prophet, this is not the prophet speaking, but someone else talking about him. Second, God speaks to people where they are. God often speaks about the future, but it is about the future as it brings encouragement or challenge to people in the present (as when Paul talks about the second coming to people who will not themselves see it).

In Isaiah that makes me think that God's revelation comes through four human voices (or pens).

The first voice: the ambassador

We must of course begin with the voice of the ambassador of Yahweh who was actually called Isaiah. In chapter 6 he tells us of the vision that led him to volunteer to serve Yahweh. His voice speaks again in chapter 8 where he tells of naming a son in such a way that he will embody his father's message, of being warned by Yahweh to distance himself from his people's paralyzing fear, which is causing them to walk the wrong way, and of his duly turning his back on them. But the voice of Isaiah is much more pervasive than reference to one or two autobiographical stories would imply. Because he volunteers to be the person Yahweh "sends" and consequently often speaks as one "sent", like the ambassador of a human sovereign, it is through Isaiah's voice that we hear Yahweh's voice. It is Isaiah the ambassador's words that introduce Yahweh's words when they tell us "this is what Yahweh says".

The second voice: the disciple

Isaiah's is not the only human voice that speaks in this book. The book actually begins with someone speaking about Isaiah in the third person in order to introduce him (1:1). This person also speaks about "Isaiah the prophet" in passages such as 37:2 and 38:1. Evidently it is someone other than the ambassador himself.

Now Isaiah commissions the preserving of his teaching among his "disciples" (8:16), so we will infer that it is such a disciple or disciples who tell us stories about Isaiah such as those in chapters 7; 26; and 36—39. The second voice in the book is that of such a disciple or disciples. It is they who structure the book with other introductions such as the one in 13:1. They presumably put the book together. By doing that, recognizing in the words of Isaiah the words of Yahweh, they sought to make them available to future generations so that these words of Yahweh addressed them too.

It would be natural for them to seek to show how these words addressed later generations. A currently popular scholarly theory is that some parts of chapters 1—39 represent the way Isaiah's own words were expounded to this end, a century after his day in the time of King Josiah, and we may think of this exposition as the work of one of Isaiah's later disciples. Within chapters 1—39, as a very rough guide the passages in poetry may be thought of as Isaiah's actual oracles, while the prose may be thought of as the disciples' sermons on texts from Isaiah.

The third voice: the poet

"Isaiah the prophet" appears for the last time in 39:3. In chapter 40 we hear a third voice. It has heard a command to "cry out". This voice will in due course also be identified as belonging to a disciple (50:4: NRSV emends the text—see the margin; the word is the same as that in 8.16). But this voice is distinctive for the fact that it speaks more poetically or more lyrically than any of the other voices do. The time to which it speaks is 150 years after Isaiah's own day. The leaders and many of the members of the Judean community have been deported to Babylon; indeed they and their descendants have been there for half a century. This poet wonders what to cry out in the circumstances, but becomes the one who now acts as Yahweh's representative like Isaiah and now declares "this is what Yahweh says" like Isaiah. This poet is

now the one sent by the sovereign Yahweh with the spirit of Yahweh (48:16). Like Isaiah, the poet meets with little success and is tempted to conclude "I have labored to no purpose", but stays convinced of Yahweh's support and vindication (49:4; 50:7).

The fourth voice: the preacher

In the last part of the book (chs 56—66) we hear yet another voice, that of one anointed to be a preacher, a bringer of good news, a binder up of the broken-hearted (61:1). That had already been the task of the poet, but this further preacher's ministry takes place back in Palestine and addresses a different community with different needs and different temptations from the one a few decades previously in Babylon. So a new preacher takes up the task of being Yahweh's ambassador.

The four voices working together

Ambassador, Poet, and Preacher have been known for a century as First, Second, and Third Isaiah. Their voices appear within chapters 1—39, 40—55, and 56—66, arranged and orchestrated by the Disciple(s).

Indeed, it may be that the Poet was in part a Disciple of the Ambassador: that is, Second Isaiah sometimes preached on texts from First Isaiah and perhaps produced the first edition of the material which now appears in chapters 1-55. And/or it may be that the Preacher was in effect a Disciple of the Poet: that is, Third Isaiah sometimes preached on texts from Second Isaiah and perhaps produced a new edition of Second Isaiah's words.

Further, as there will have been more than one Disciple who contributed to the book, so there may have been more than one Poet and more than one Preacher: the words of more than one prophet may appear in chapters 40—55 and 56—66.

Theories of this kind regarding the origin of the material in the book are popular in the scholarly world, but they change with fashion. The evidence within the book is insufficient for anything like certainty to be possible regarding the process whereby the actual book called Isaiah came into being. The theories involve trying to work out the history that lies behind the book as we have it, and there is no way of checking them. But at least these four voices speak from the book as we have it, and we can see the book as mediated by them. The book called Isaiah is a many-voiced one, throughout which the voice of Yahweh comes to us.

God did not speak out of context to people through one Isaiah living centuries before most of his audience. Yahweh spoke pastorally and directly to people where they were through at least these four servants.

Homework8: Questions on Isaiah, Isaiah Jr, and Isaiah III

1 What do you think of arguments here for believing that Isaiah wrote the whole book called Isaiah?

2 What do you think of the arguments for believing that the book includes the prophecies of several prophets?

3 So what conclusion do you come to, and why?

Homework8 continued: Questions on Jonah

1 Here are some suggestions about the aim of the Book of Jonah. Study the book and make some notes on which are more or less plausible

* to show people how not to be a prophet?
* to bring out the problem of running away from responsibility and challenges, pain and loneliness?
* to encourage Israel to a more open attitude to other nations?
* to encourage us to care about the animal world?
* to encourage Israel to repentance ("if Nineveh can, you can")?
* to provide a figure who is a type of Christ?
* to assure us that God can have a change of mind?
* to show us how to recognize God's rescue (e.g. a large fish swallowing you) and respond to it?
* something else?

2 Some people think Jonah is a historical story, others that it is a parable. How would you try to decide that? Do you think it matters?

3 Are there aspects of all this you would like me to talk about in class?

Systematic Theology According to Jonah

"I knew..." (4:2). How did he know? See Exod 34:6-7; Num 14:18; also Joel 2:13; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8.

Yahweh is:

Gracious (grace = hen)
Compassionate (compassion = rahamim = the womb)
See Gen 43:30; Job 31:13-15
Slow of anger
Big in commitment (commitment = hesed; NRSV "steadfast love")
(Exod 34 adds that Yahweh keeps commitment for 25,000 years; it also adds "faithfulness"
Inclined to repent about sending trouble
(repent = be sorry = niham;
the other word for repent = turn round = shub came in 3:9)
This replaces "forgiving wrongdoing, rebellion, and failure" in Exod 34:7. It corresponds to Exod 32:12, 14 but picks up Jonah 3:10. Yahweh is treating Nineveh the same as Israel was once treated.
Jonah does not include the fact that Yahweh does not clear the (unrepentant) guilty but visits the wrongdoing of parents on descendants (assuming that they fail to repent) for a century. But so do most of the references to this description (Joel 2:13; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8).

Jonah applies the theology of God's love to the nations, not just to Israel.
Also contrast Nahum 1:2-3, which looks like a kind of parody of this theology.

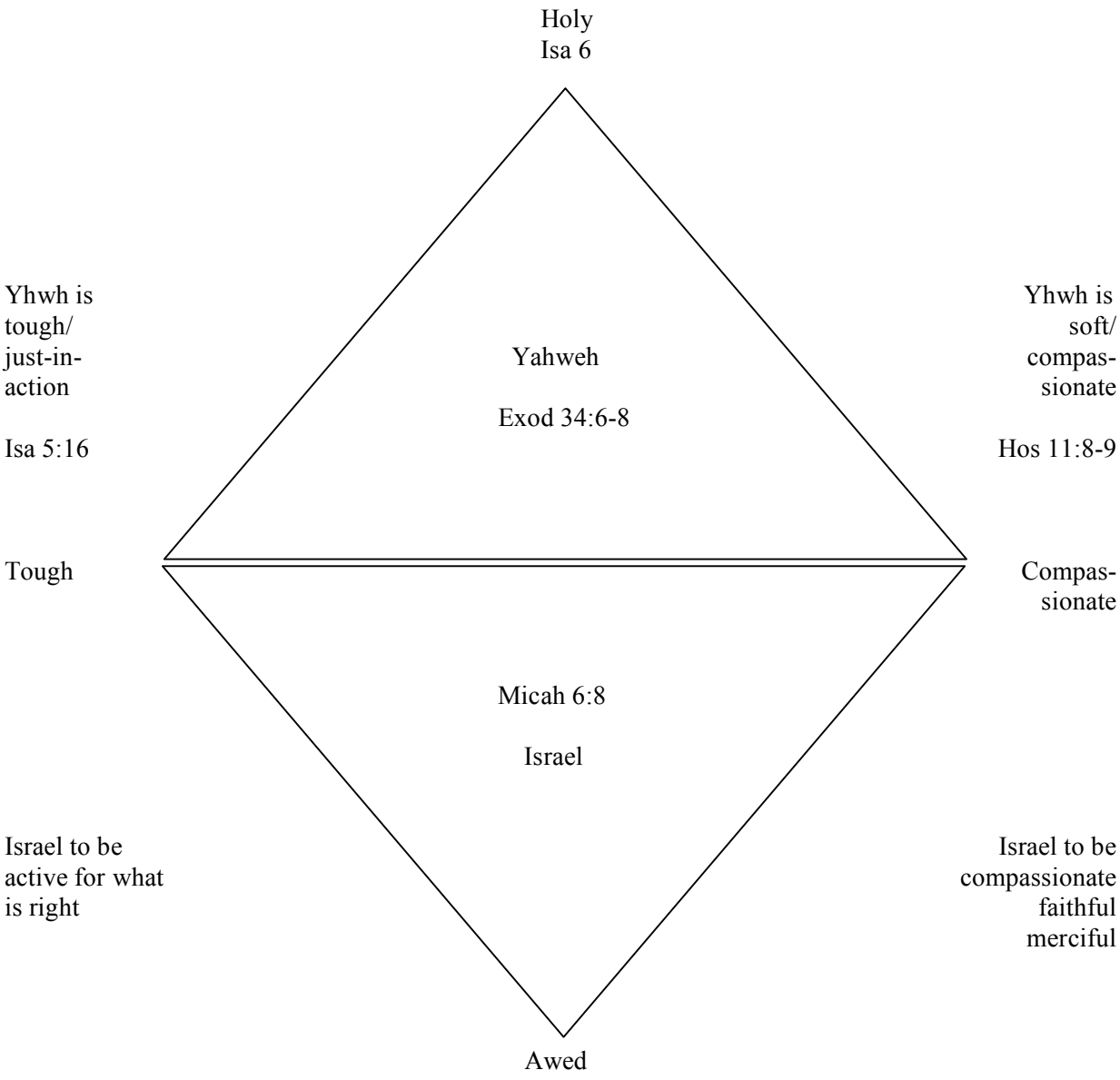
Cf. also Isaiah's idea that being angry and expressing anger is alien to God's central nature (Isa 28:21). God's central nature is grace, compassion, and commitment. But God can summon up the capacity for anger when this is needed. Cf. Lam 3:33; Exod 34:7

Why Would God Inspire Fiction in the Bible?

1 By its nature, history only records things that once happened. Fiction tells of the kind of things that happen to people, in such a way as to invite us into the stories and wonder about ourselves.
2 By its nature, history only records things that happened. Fiction expresses a vision of how things could be or should be. It invites us to imagine the world different.
3 History traditionally focuses on national events and "important" people. Fiction characteristically deals with ordinary people living ordinary lives, or with issues as they affect ordinary people.
4 Fiction portrays human beings with human hopes, fears, needs, and desires, realized in specific social situations. Readers learn both from the similarities and the differences in the context.
5 The factual nature of history invites us to relate to it objectively. Fiction invites us to involve ourselves in it emotionally and in our inner world. It invites response. It is disturbing.
6 In particular, it invites us to engage with real individual people and communities that exist and matter in their own right and not as just part of a larger historical process or purpose.
7 Outside the Bible (in the ancient world and the modern world) fiction has always been a major serious way of engaging with fundamental theological, philosophical, and moral issues.

Mostly based on Martha Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice*.

The Shape of Prophetic Theology and Ethics



Wednesday August 12: Amos, Joel, Micah, Hosea

Homework Required

Read Amos and fill in pages 92-93
Study Bruce Malchow, "The Rural Prophet: Micah," in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 7 (1980): 48-52 and Hans Walter Wolff, "Swords into Plowshares," in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 12 (1985): 133-46 (both available via library on-line resources) and fill in page 94.
Read Joel (you could bear in mind the questions [1] What was the situation? [2] What was Joel's warning? [3] What was his exhortation? [4] What were his promises?)
(3 hours) (Homework9)

Read Hosea and fill in pages 98-99 (Homework10)

First Class: Amos, Joel, Micah

Lecture:	What were prophets such as Amos, Micah, and Joel trying to do? (pages 95, 150) With comments on questions in Moodle postings
Discussion:	What do you think Amos, Micah, and Joel were trying to do? Are they models for us?
Lecture:	Isaiah 1—39, Amos, Micah, and Joel today (pages 96-97)

For further reading

Mysterious Messengers chapters 5, 7, 14

Second Class: Hosea

Lecture:	Hosea and Gomer visit the marriage counselor
Discussion:	Hosea and Gomer
Lecture:	Comments on questions in Moodle postings Judah in the eighth and seventh centuries (page 100) Assyria's fall and Babylon's rise

For further reading

Mysterious Messengers, chapter 6
A. Brenner (ed.), *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, pp. 161-68, 194-218
"Hosea and Gomer Visit the Marriage Counsellor" is at http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay
On Babylon, see *Dictionary*

Further Reading on Amos, Hosea, Joel, and Micah

Relevant chapters of
Childs, B. S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*.
Coggins, R., and others (ed.). *Israel's Prophetic Tradition*.
Eaton, J. H. *Mysterious Messengers*
Koch, K. *The Prophets*
Miranda, J. P. *Marx and the Bible*.
Mays, J. L., and P. J. Achtemeier (ed.). *Interpreting the Prophets*.
Sweeney, M. *The Twelve Prophets*. 2 vols. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000.
von Rad, G. *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 2 = *The Message of the Prophets*

Allen, L. C. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*. London: 1976/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, .
Andersen, F. I., and D. N. Freedman. *Hosea* and *Amos.* New York: Doubleday, 1980 and 1989.
Asen, B. A. "No, yes and perhaps in Amos and the Yahwist." *Vetus Testamentum* 43 (1993), pp. 433-41.
Baker, D. W., and others. *Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*. Leicester, UK: IVP, 1988.
Brenner, A. (ed.). *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, pp. 40-241. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995. [on Hosea]
Brueggemann, W. "'Vine and fig tree'". In *A Social Reading of the Old Testament*, pp. 91-110. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.
Carroll R., M. Daniel. *Amos: The Prophet and His Oracles*. Louisville: WJK, 2002. (fine introduction to current study)
Clines, D. J. A. "Metacommentating Amos". In *Of Prophets' Visions and the Wisdom of Sages* (ed. H. A. McKay and D. J. A. Clines), pp. 142-60. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993. = Clines, *Interested Parties*, pp. 76-93. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
Gottwald, N. K., and R. A. Horsley (ed.). *The Bible and Liberation*. Rev. ed., Maryknoll, NY: Orbis/London: SPCK, 1993.
Hubbard, D. A. *Joel and Amos*. Leicester, UK: IVP, 1989.
—*Hosea*. Leicester, UK: IVP, 1990.
Kidner, D. *Love to the Loveless*. Leicester, UK: IVP, 1981. [Hosea]
Martin-Achard, R., and S. P. Re'emi. *God's People in Crisis*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984. [Amos]
Mays, J. L. *Hosea*. London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969.
—*Amos*. London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969.
—*Micah.* London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976.
Ogden, G. S., and R. R. Deutsch. *Joel and Malachi*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
Watts, J. D. W. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*. Cambridge/New York: CUP, 1975.
Wolff, H. W. *Amos the Prophet*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973.
—*Micah the Prophet*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981.
—*Joel and Amos*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977. [detailed commentary]
—*Hosea.* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974. [detailed commentary]
—*Micah*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990. [detailed commentary]
—*Confrontations with Prophets.* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983. [Amos, Hosea, Micah]

Homework9: Questions on Amos

Who was Amos? See 1:1; 7:14-15

Where did he come from, and where did he work? See 1:1; 7:12

What was the situation to be addressed, as the book called Amos reflects it?
(a) See 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1

(b) See 2:4, 12; 7:10-17

(c) See 2:6-8; 3:10; 5:10-12; 8:4-6

(d) See 4:4-5; 5:18-25

(e) See 5:26; 8:14

(f) See 6:1-6; 9:10

(g) See 4:6-11

What is the news Amos brings?

(a) What does God plan to do about the situation? See 1:3—2:8; 2:13-16; 3:12; 6:7; 8:11-12; 9:1-4

(b) Is that all? What about Israel's special relationship with Yahweh? See 2:9-12; 3:1-2; 9:7-8

(c) Who says? See 4:12-13; 5:8-9; 9:5-6

(d) Is the end really the end? See 9:11-15

(e) Is there no way out? See 5:14-15; 7:1—8:3

(f) Why is God sending a prophet to Israel? See 3:3-8

Is there anything you would like me to clarify about Amos?

Homework9 continued: Questions on the Papers on Micah

Write five separate sentences of concrete comment on key issues raised by the reading (number them 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). These can include (for instance) observations on something you find illuminating, or comments on something you disagree with, or questions about something you find puzzling.

What were prophets such as Amos, Micah, and Joel trying to do, and how, and so what?

1. They were speaking in the name of the God of Israel to the people of Israel; they were not addressing the secular state or the secular government. (What difference does it make to our application of their message that for us nation and people of God are separate?)

2. They were not starting from the fact of injustice in the community but from the fact of disaster (cf. Joel) or a hunch about the prospect of disaster (cf. Amos 1:2), and

   - trying to explain it
   - urging people to turn to Yahweh (cf. Joel 2:12-14)
   - urging Yahweh to turn from it (cf. Joel 2:12-14)
   - promising that it wouldn't be the end

   A prophet's job is to perceive what God is doing and talk to the people of God and to God about it

3. They were not social reformers making practical proposals about how to change economic and social policies; they did nothing but preach and pray

4. They were both foretellers and forth tellers. But they were not exactly predicting the future—more telling people what God intended to do.

5. Their words could hardly be used to prove that Jesus is the Messiah or that God exists or that the Bible is inspired.

6. It is not clear that they would have voted with any particular party

7. When they talked about the Day of Yahweh or the End, this was an event in present experience not one you have to wait for *the* 'End' for

8. They often talked about the Day of Yahweh or the End, but less often about the Messiah (e.g., Amos 5:18-25; 8:2)

9. In their preaching they were often rather impolite and confrontational; they did not identify with their congregations but of course they weren't on the pay-roll

10. They knew how to communicate, but they were failures (see Buber, *On the Bible*, 142-44, 147-48, 166-71)

11. They invite us to be critical of ourselves, not of anyone not present, and in way which leads us to take action in our own lives and with respect to our own relationship with God.

12. Looking at them in light of two-thirds world and colonial contexts may help us understand aspects of them (see Daniel Carroll, *Amos*; Miranda, *Marx and the Bible*).

Isaiah 1—39, Amos, Micah, and Joel Today

The Old Testament is designed to teach, correct, and train us (2 Timothy 3:16). I assume it does that by showing us how God is involved with Israel and with the world, because this will show us how God is involved with us. (I am radically un-dispensationalist.)

Isaiah 1—39: How to think about the nations.

1. The great power is Assyria. Modern equivalents are presumably Spain, Britain, and the USA. The great power is destined to be put down, to make clear that it is not of ultimate significance. Of course, if it managed to stay in submission to God, it might be able to stay in power. So there is a vision here for the church to share with the nation, and a basis for prayer.

2. There is also good news for the victims of the great nation, who can be sure that it will not stay in power forever. The small nations today might be Cuba, Iraq, Nicaragua, and Uganda.

3. The smaller powers are people such as Babylon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia, who would like to get independent of Assyria and topple it. The trouble is that they are inclined to think that they will be able to achieve that for themselves by working together. In effect they want to make the same mistake as Assyria.

4. Faced with all this, Judah is challenged not to fall into the other smaller nations' way of thinking. They must not think that their own destiny lies in planning for their safety. The church has to see itself as Judah and ask what it trusts in for its destiny in the world.

See further "The Superpower in the OT" http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay
Also Steven J. Keillor, *God's Judgments*, e.g. 7-10 (and *This Rebellious House: American History and the Truth of Christianity*).

Amos 7:10-17: How to respond when people tell you to go home

1. Amos comes as a man from the south preaching in the capital in the north, a country bumpkin from East Tennessee preaching on the steps of the White House. He knows that you can't keep religion out of politics. Cf. Stephen Carter urging the nation to heed religious voices.

2. There he is confronted by the White House chaplain, Amaziah, who tells him his preaching is not in his own interests or anyone else's; he would be wise to catch the first plane back to Chattanooga. Amaziah doesn't realize that it is always wise to listen to your enemies and to voices from strange quarters.

3. Amos has two things to say in reply. One is that Amaziah does not understand what is going on. Amos is not there by choice, but because the Lord called him. He knows that you can't keep politics out of religion. He couldn't be faithful to God without raising the kind of questions he is raising. Cf. Bernice King—combining spirituality and political action.

4. The other is that Amaziah (and the whole country) is in danger of paying a terrible price for thinking that you can send a prophet back home. It is dangerous to ignore gloomy prophets. What happens to people who seek to get Europe to own the state of the church there, or to get the US church to see how it is headed in the same direction? Cf. the Canadian archbishop asking what it will be like to be a church without assets, as his church's assets disappear.

Micah 7: How to hold the city before God

Much of the LA metropolitan area is characterized by poverty, deprivation, decay, family breakdown, neglect, violence, and other sin. If there is a city in the world that is under the control of territorial spirits, it is LA. How are we to respond to that? Micah suggests five reactions and awarenesses before God.

1. *Lament* (vv. 1-6). Micah speaks as if he were a poor person allowed to collect the gleanings after harvest. Ho looks, but there is nothing to collect. He looks for signs of hope in his society, but all he can see is gloom—in the nation, in the local community, in the family.
2. Despite that, his reaction is *expectancy* (vv. 7-10). There are no grounds for expectancy, yet he faces the facts rather than hiding from them. His realism includes a facing of sin: in these verses he speaks for Israel, acknowledging the sin of the people of God that has brought them into humiliation. Micah can face all manner of facts because the basis of his hope is that God is a savior and will vindicate God's own honor.
3. In response to expectancy, there is *God's promise* (vv. 11-13). Micah speaks of a future that will be a blessing never before experienced.
4. In return, the response to God's promise is *prayer* (vv. 14-17), for prayer lays hold on the promises of God. It is a prayer for the blessing of the people (Bashan and Gilead were places of rich pasturage) and for the honoring of their God.
5. The whole book closes with the response of *worship* (vv. 18-20). "Who is a God like you?" —powerful to deal with the church's sin, compassionate with its failures, faithful to its promises that stand forever.

Joel 2:28-32: What God promises to do for us

From the beginning of their experience, God's spirit had been alive in Israel's midst (see e.g., Isaiah 63:10, 11, 14; Haggai 2:5). A person's "spirit" is their personal dynamic, expressing itself in powerful actions that fulfill their will. So God's spirit is God's personal dynamic, expressing itself in powerful actions that fulfill God's will. Although Israel knew that God's spirit had come to dwell in their midst, at the same time they knew it was possible to grieve God's spirit and for God's spirit to be withdrawn (see Isaiah 63:10; Psalm 51:11). The failure that had led to the locust plague would be bound also to involve the withdrawing of that spirit.

Merely renewing nature (vv. 23-27) would therefore not resolve the problems that the locust plague exposed. Something else was needed. Vv. 28-29 promise that further gift. In the past, women and men had prophesied, had revelatory dreams, and seen visions. In Joel's day, that perhaps seemed to belong to the distant past. God promises that it will again become present reality. Indeed, it may promise that God will do something more spectacular than the people have previously known. Prophecy, dreams, and visions will be more prevalent than they have been before. Whether this is something new or not, age, sex, or class will not constrain the pouring out of God's spirit.

Acts 2 sees this promise in vv. 28-29 fulfilled at the first Pentecost, but we know that nevertheless it is not now fulfilled in the life of the church. The promise therefore provides a basis for praying, expecting, and acting so that it may be so. Acts 2 also sees vv. 30-32a as fulfilled at Pentecost. To us it probably looks more like a description of cataclysmic events at the End, of the kind that are also described in a passage such as Luke 21. That reflects the fact that Pentecost is itself indeed a partial realization of the End. Joel promises that when cataclysms like the flood threaten the world, it is an invitation to us to turn to God for protection.

For sermons on the Prophets, see also http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay

Homework10: Questions on Hosea

Hosea works out his theology in the light of his relationship with Gomer. Read the book in the light of this, being aware of how your reading of the book is affected by whether you are a man or a woman. Remember that the prophet himself was a man, so we get a man's angle on all this.

1. In what way do Hosea and Yahweh think and behave and feel and speak like men?

2. What is the image of masculinity in the book?

3. Are there any positive or negative insights that emerge from the male perspective in the book?

4. How do you as a woman or a man relate or react to all that?

5. In what way do Gomer and Yahweh think and behave and feel and speak like women?

6. What is the image of womanhood in the book?

7. Are there any positive or negative insights that emerge from the female perspective in the book?

8. How do you as a woman or a man relate to or react to that?

9. Are there aspects of this study you would like me to talk about in class?

Zimbabwean personal names: Godknows, Lovemore, Tellmore, Trymore, Oblivious, Funeral, Anywhere, Enough (he was number 13), Hatred (because there was trouble in the family), Question (because the mother was not married), Nevertrustawoman (because the father didn't think the child was his).
New York Times, October 1, 2007, p. A4.

Judah in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries

Judah		**Assyria**	
Uzziah (Azariah)	787-736	Tiglath-Pileser III	744-727
Jotham	756-741	Shalmanezer V	726-722
Ahaz	741-725/715	Sargon II	721-705
Hezekiah	725/715-697/687	Sennacherib	704-681
Manasseh	697/687-642	Esarhaddon	680-669
Amon	642-640	Ashurbanipal	668-627
Josiah	640-609		

736-733 Ahaz's policy is to accept Assyrian authority and resist pressure from Ephraim and Syria to join in rebellion (cf. Isa 7). The Assyrians invade Ephraim and Syria in 733 and 732.

722 After Ephraim rebels again, Assyria again invades and now ends the formally independent status of Ephraim.

713 The Philistine city of Ashdod rebels against Assyrian authority and is invaded (cf. Isa 20), but Judah fortunately did not join in.

705 In alliance with Egypt, Judah rebels against Assyrian authority. In 701 Assyrian invades and all-but destroys Judah (cf. Isa 36-37, and Sennacherib's quote on page 77).

During Manasseh's reign Judah keeps subservient to Assyria, but this involves acceptance of aspects of Assyrian religion as well as political policy (cf. 2 Kings 21).

626 Jeremiah's call. Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk also prophesying about now.

625 Chaldeans drive Assyrians out of Babylon.

621 Josiah's reformation (cf. 2 Kings 22-23).

R. E. Clements (following H. Barth):
There were people preaching on texts from Isaiah in Josiah's reign, declaring that his prophecies about Assyria's fall were about to be fulfilled. Their preaching comes in passages such as 10:24-27; 29:5-8; 30:27-33; 31:5, 8-9.
Passages such as 29:17-24; 30:18-26; 31:6-7 comes from even later – the exile or after. So there are at least four periods of the Spirit's work here: Isaiah's time; Josiah's time; the exile; after the exile

612 Babylonians and Medes destroy the Assyrian capital, Nineveh.

Monday August 17: Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk

Homework Required

Read page 103 for background on Jeremiah; then study chapters 1; 11-20; 23; 26-29; 36-39 and fill in pages 104-5. (Homework11)

Read the introduction to Zephaniah and Habakkuk on page 107; read the two books and fill in page 108 (1hour) (Homework12)

First Class: Jeremiah

Lecture:	The time line (pages 55, 62, 100; 103) "Just judgment" and other prophetic priorities (page 106); "Social Justice" (page 149)
Discussion:	How biblical is a concern for "social justice"?
Lecture:	Comments on questions in Moodle postings Preaching on Jeremiah http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay

For further reading

Mysterious Messengers, chapter 10
W. Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, pp. 10-47. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.

Second Class: Jeremiah (ii); Zephaniah, Habakkuk

Lecture:	True and false prophecy (page 110) With comments on questions in Moodle postings
Discussion:	True and false prophecy
Lecture:	Sin and hope in Jeremiah (see page 109) Preaching on Zephaniah http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay

For further reading

Mysterious Messengers, chapter 9

Dessert after class

Further Reading on Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk

Relevant chapters of
Childs, B. S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*.
Coggins, R., and others (ed.). *Israel's Prophetic Tradition*.
Eaton, J. H. *Mysterious Messengers*
Koch, K. *The Prophets*
Miranda, J. P. *Marx and the Bible*.
Mays, J. L., and P. J. Achtemeier (ed.). *Interpreting the Prophets*.
Sweeney, M. *The Twelve Prophets*. 2 vols. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000.
von Rad, G. *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 2 = *The Message of the Prophets*

Achtemeier, E. *Jeremiah*. Atlanta: Knox, 1987.
Berrigan, Daniel. *Jeremiah: The World, the Wound of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999.
Brueggemann, W. *Jeremiah*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
Clements, R. E. *Jeremiah*. Atlanta: Knox, 1988.
Carroll, R. P. *From Chaos to Covenant*. London: SCM, 1981.
—*Jeremiah*. London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.
Craigie, P. C., and others. *Jeremiah 1-25*. Dallas: Word, 1991.
Davidson, R. *Jeremiah and Lamentations*. 2 vols. Edinburgh: St Andrew/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983 and 1985.
Goldingay, J. *God's Prophet, God's Servant*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1984.
Holladay, W. *Jeremiah: Spokesman Out of Time*. Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974.
—*Jeremiah*. 2 vols. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986 and 1989.
Jones, D. R. *Jeremiah*. London: HarperCollins/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.
Keown, G. J., and others. *Jeremiah 26-52*. Dallas: Word, 1995.
Kidner, D. *The Message of Jeremiah*. Leicester, UK/Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1987.
Mottu, H. "Jeremiah vs. Hananiah". In N. K. Gottwald and R. A. Horsley (ed.), *The Bible and Liberation*, pp. 313-28. Rev. ed., Maryknoll, NY: Orbis/London: SPCK, 1993.
Nicholson, E. W. *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah*. Oxford: Blackwell/New York: Schocken, 1970.
Smith, D. L. "Jeremiah as prophet of non-violent resistance". *Journal for the Study of the OT* 43 (1989), pp. 95-107 = P. R. Davies (ed.), *The Prophets*, pp. 207-18. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
Thompson, J. A. *The Book of Jeremiah*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.

Baker, David W. *Nahum, Zephaniah and Habakkuk*. Leicester, UK: IVP, 1988
Eaton, J. H. *Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*. London: SCM, 1961.
Goldingay, John. *Nahum; Zephaniah*. http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay
Janzen, J. G. "Eschatological symbol and existence in Habakkuk". *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44 (1982), pp. 394-414.
Roberts, J. J. M. *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*. Louisville: WJK, 1991.
Watts, J. D. W. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*. Cambridge/New York: CUP, 1975.

Introduction to Jeremiah

The Times

Jeremiah's ministry spans up to fifty years and the Book of Jeremiah is the longest in the Bible apart from Psalms (everyone assumes the longest is Isaiah, of course, but I think that is wrong). Jeremiah was called to prophesy in 626 (see 1:1-2) and he was still prophesying after the fall of Jerusalem (587) when he was in due course taken off to Egypt. Thus his ministry covered the monumental series of events that took place over the last decades of Judah's independent existence:

621 Discovering a torah scroll in the temple gives new impetus to reform in Judah designed to throw off Assyrian-style theology and worship (2 Kgs 22—23)
612 Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, falls to the Babylonians
609 King Josiah is killed in a military action designed to support the Assyrians
609 Jehoahaz made king; the Babylonians replace him by Jehoiakim
601 Jehoiakim rebels; the Babylonians invade Judah
597 Jehoiakim again rebels and the Babylonians again invade
Jehoiakim dies; Jehoiachin succeeds
The Babylonians take Jerusalem, deport Jehoiachin, and replace him by Zedekiah
587 Zedekiah rebels, the Babylonians again invade, capture Jerusalem, and destroy the temple
Judeans again rebel, kill the Babylonian governor, and flee to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them

The Material

Westermann distinguished between three forms of speech in the prophets
- address from prophet or God to people
- address from prophet to God
- stories about the prophet.

What we would expect to find in a prophetic book is especially the first, but a feature of the Book of Jeremiah is the amount of space given to Jeremiah's address to God (his prayers and protests) and to narratives about Jeremiah. Both reflect the way in which the prophet is part of the prophecy. Another feature of the book is that it divides almost equally into prose and poetry—whereas Isaiah is mostly poetry and Ezekiel is mostly prose. That is partly just another way of saying that there is a lot of narrative—but there are also a lot of prose sermons. So the material divides as follows.

	Poetry	Prose
Words from God/prophet to people	Yes	Yes
Words from prophet to God	Yes	Yes
Narratives	No	Yes

There are several views about the origin and the nature of the material.
(a) All comes from Jeremiah and all the narratives are factual (e.g., Harrison)
(b) The poetry comes from Jeremiah; the prose is based on material from Jeremiah (e.g., Holladay)
(c) The poetry comes from Jeremiah; the prose comes from the Deuteronomists in the sixth century (e.g., Nicholson)
(d) None of the material relates to a historical "Jeremiah" (e.g., Carroll)

Homework11: Questions on Jeremiah as a Prophet

Read the following chapters from Jeremiah and make notes on

- what a prophet does
- what life is like for Jeremiah
- how as a prophet Jeremiah relates to God
- how God relates to him as a prophet
- how he prays as a prophet
- how he relates to different kinds of people
- how they relate to him
- what he has to handle in life
- how as a prophet he handles it
- how you can tell whether or when someone is a genuine/faithful prophet or a deceived/deceiving one

1:1-13

11:1—20:18

23:9-40

26:1—29:32

36:1—39:18

Are there aspects of this study that you would like me to talk about?

Just Judgment (Mishpat and Tsedaqah) in Jeremiah

"Do *mishpat* and *tsedaqah*" is a frequent prophetic exhortation or expectation: e.g. Jer 22:3, 15; 23:5.
But what do these words mean?

KJV has "judgment and justice/righteousness."
NRSV has "justice and righteousness": this would suggest social equity over against individual holiness.
NIV has "what is just and right"

Tsedaqah

51.10 God has brought forth our *tsedaqah* (this word alone)
"righteousness" (KJV)
"vindication" (NRSV, cf. NIV)
"innocence" (NEB)
Cf. the frequent use in Isa 40—55: e.g. 45:24; 46:12, 13; 51:6, 8

Cf. *tsedeq*
11:20 (link with Jeremiah's needs)
22:13 (link with neighborliness)
23:6; 33:16 (link with salvation)
(also 31:23; 50:7)
Cf. the frequent use in Isa 40—55: e.g. 41:2; 42:6, 21; 45:13

Tsedeq/*tsedaqah* does not mean justice. It means doing the right thing by people with whom you are in relationship.

Mishpat

The noun comes from the verb *shapat*, conventionally translated "judge"
But Jer 5:28: scoundrels "do not *shapat* the *mishpat* of the poor":
"do not judge the right of the needy" (KJV)
Cf. the idea of "judging the poor/judging the nations"—taking action *for* them

"Judges" in the Book of Judges fulfill two roles:
(a) sometimes they administer justice
(b) sometimes they act to deliver the people (they can then also be called "saviors")

What holds all this together is the notion of exercising authority in a decisive way. Thus *mishpat* is not necessarily "just"—it is quite possible to exercise *mishpat* unjustly.

So *mishpat* and *tsedaqah* suggest taking the decisive action that is appropriate to people given your relationship with them.

See also 4:2: *mishpat* and *tsedaqah* linked with *'emet* (truthfulness/faithfulness)
9:24: linked with *hesed* (commitment)

M. Weinfeld suggests they are equivalent to "social justice." But see page 150

Zephaniah

King Josiah (1:1) came to the throne of Judah in 640. Zephaniah apparently prophesied early in his reign before his religious and social reforms and just before Jeremiah. These were years when Assyria was the great middle-eastern power, though it was actually soon to be displaced by Babylon. Zephaniah's great emphasis is on "Yahweh's Day."

1:2-3 Yahweh's intention regarding the world as a whole
1:4-2:3 the application of this to the people of God; what to do if they want God to change
2:4-15 what Yahweh's day will mean for Judah's neighbors and for Assyria
3:1-8 what it will mean for Jerusalem given its failure to respond
3:9-20 Yahweh's day of restoration —what it is like to have God in the midst

Habakkuk

Habakkuk was a contemporary of Jeremiah, at the time when Assyria was being succeeded by Babylon (Chaldea) as the great middle-eastern power, and thus in the last decades before the fall of Jerusalem (587). It takes the form of an argument between the prophet and God, which leads into proclamation and worship.

Habakkuk to God (1:2-4)	What Habakkuk sees in Judah
God to Habakkuk (1:5-11)	What God intends to do
Habakkuk to God (1:12—2:1)	Habakkuk's objection to God's plan
God to Habakkuk (2:2-5)	How God intends to answer Habakkuk's objection
Habakkuk to Babylon (2:6-20)	What he proclaims in the light of God's answer
Habakkuk to God (3:1-19)	How he prays and worships in the light of God's answer

Nahum

Nahum prophesied at about the same time as Zephaniah, focusing on the coming fall of Assyria (3:18) and specifically of its capital, Nineveh (2:8; 3:7). This took place in 612.

1:2-15	Some principles. What Yahweh is like
2:1—3:19	The principles applied to Nineveh, under attack by the Medes and Babylonians. Nahum portrays and explains its fall

A very different attitude to Nineveh from Jonah.
We are helped in appreciating Nahum if we can look at it from a postcolonial perspective.

Obadiah

Obadiah focuses on Yahweh's Day coming for Edom. The fact that the book is placed between Amos and Jonah suggests he prophesied in the ninth or eighth century, but he is more commonly located after the fall of Jerusalem, in 597, or 587, or later. Since Judah and Edom were always enemies, any date is possible. It shows what Yahweh's Day will be like for Edom, and why.

Homework12: Questions on Zephaniah and Habakkuk

Read through Zephaniah and summarize his warnings and promises.

1:2-3: Yahweh's intention regarding the whole world

1:4-2:3: Does this apply to the people of God? What will Yahweh's Day mean for the people of God? Why? What then must they do?

2:4-15: What will Yahweh's Day mean for Judah's neighbors and for the great Assyrian power?

3:1-8: What Yahweh's Day will mean for Jerusalem given its failure to respond?

3:9-20: What will Yahweh's Day of restoration look like?

Trace the nature of the discussion in Habakkuk

Habakkuk to God (1:2-4): what Habakkuk sees in Judah

God to Habakkuk (1:5-11): what God intends to do

Habakkuk to God (1:12-2:1): Habakkuk's objection to God's plan

God to Habakkuk (2:2-5): How God intends to answer Habakkuk's objection

Habakkuk to the Babylonians (2:6-20): what he proclaims in the light of God's answer

Habakkuk to God (3:1-19): how he prays and worships in the light of God's answer

Are there aspects of the books that you find especially puzzling?

Jeremiah's Understanding of Sin

A Images for Sin

1 It's like rebellion against a superior authority (*pesha*': cf. 2 Kgs 1:1; NRSV "transgression")
2:8, 29; 3:13; 5:6; 33:8
It leads to a visit (the verb *paqad*)
5:9, 29; 6:15; 30:20 +

2 It's like infidelity to a wife or husband (the verb *shub*)
3:6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 22

3 It's like betrayal of a friendship (the verb *bagad*; cf. 12:1, 6; Job 6:15)
5:11; 9:2

4 It's like getting dirty (the verb *tame'*)
2:23

5 It's like wandering off the road ('*awon*; NRSV "iniquity")
3:21; 5:25; 9:5; 11:10 +

6 It's like transgressing the law (the verb '*abar*; cf. 5:22)
34:18

7 It's like failing to achieve something (*chatta't*, NRSV "sin")
3:25; 8:14; 14:7, 20 +

8 It's like trespassing on someone's rights or property or honor (*ma'al*; cf. Num 5:27)
[not in Jer: see e.g. Ezek 14:13; 20:27]

B The Solution to Sin

Forgiveness is no problem, if only people will repent
The trouble is... 14:10
And renewal is another matter: 31:31-34

Cf. Romans, Hebrews

What Makes a False Prophet?

James L. Crenshaw's study of false prophecy in the OT is actually called *Prophetic Conflict: Its Effect upon Israelite Religion*, which reminds us that the line between true and false is usually difficult to draw when you are in the situation, and a true prophet may become a false one, while a false prophet may speak an authentic word. Perhaps we all have the capacity for either. So what factors influence a prophet to speak false rather than true?

(1) *The desire for success*. A prophet wants to be right, wants to be listened to, and wants both of these for God's sake. But both may not be possible. The truth may not be acceptable to people, and falsehood may be preferred. One of the greatest of the prophets, Jeremiah, came near to downfall through being unable to cope with the rejection of his word (see Jer 15). Surely God's own purpose demands that God's servant gain a hearing? God has an interest in the prophet's success. But no. God's servant may contribute by accepting failure and affliction, as Isaiah 40—55 makes clear. The desire to succeed, to succeed for God's sake, is the desire of the false prophet.

(2) *The institution*. In Israel this usually meant the king. Amaziah's attempt to silence Amos provides a good example (Amos 7). There is a paradox here. The monarchy was the main reason why prophecy existed. The institution always threatens to become God, so it needs a voice of God that stands up to it. But the institution also makes prophecy almost impossible, except at the risk of one's life, or at least of one's ministry. So whether today we see the state or the church as the institution, we need to note that prophecy's job is in part to rescue the institution from thinking it is god. And we must remember that our "in-groups" can function as institutions and inhibit the word of God, even when they officially reject anything institutional.

(3) *Popular religion*. Sometimes popular religion too easily assumes that God is with us. God is committed to us. We are all right. That was the message of Hananiah, not Jeremiah (see Jer 28). If that is our message, we may be only a hair's-breadth, if that, from false prophecy. At other times, however, popular religion may be convinced that God has abandoned us, as it was in the exile (see Isa 40). Expending energy on the church is like rearranging the seating on the Titanic. The church's demise is inevitable. The prophets who join in this chorus may also be false. We must beware of both the optimism and the pessimism of popular religion. The prophet is characteristically called to confront the attitudes that are widely held among the people of God, not to confirm them.

(4) *The power of tradition*. Hananiah's assumption that God is with us had its basis in tradition, in the Psalms, in the prophecies of Isaiah, in Deuteronomy. It was sound and biblical. The trouble was, his word was out of due time. He was preaching a biblical message, his theology was orthodox, but it belonged to the previous century. It was not what God was saying now, in what was a different situation.

A gifted person turns into a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal through longing to succeed, through conforming to the pressure of the institution instead of confronting it, through assimilating to popular belief as to what God's attitude to us is bound to be, through just repeating truths as they applied yesterday.

But finally two words of comfort about when gifts go wrong. One is that this can be part of God's plan. It can have a place in God's purpose. It can be God's means of bringing out into the open judgments that people are bringing on themselves by their inner attitudes. One can see this both in the story of Jehoshaphat and the four hundred prophets (1 Kings 22) and in Paul's assertion that there has to be untruth so that those who are untrue have a flag to rally to (1 Cor 11:18-19).

The other word of comfort is that as a true prophet can fall away, so a false prophet can return and be restored. A prophet is not necessarily lost, even though making radical mistakes. Elijah and Jonah show that, as does Jeremiah:

> *If you return, I will restore you, and you shall stand before me.*
> *If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall be as my mouth.* (Jer 15:19)

Wednesday August 19: Ezekiel, Nahum, Obadiah

Homework Required

Read Ezekiel 1—5; 8—11; 18; 33—37 and fill in pages 113-4 (Homework13).

Read the introduction to Nahum and Obadiah on page 107; read Nahum and Obadiah and fill in page 116 (Homework14).

First Class: Ezekiel (i)

Lecture:	Ezekiel: like the other prophets only more so (page 115) With comments on questions in Moodle postings

For further reading

Study R. Coggins, "An alternative prophetic tradition?" and R. E. Clements, "The Ezekiel tradition", in R. Coggins and others (ed.), *Israel's Prophetic Tradition.* Cambridge/New York: CUP, 1982.
W. Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, pp. 50-87.
Mysterious Messengers, chapter 11
On Persia, see the *Dictionary*

Second Class: Ezekiel (ii), Nahum Obadiah

Lecture:	How does biblical prophecy apply to modern Israel? (page 117)
Discussion	How do you see the significance of prophecy in this connection?
Lecture	Comments on Moodle postings Babylon's fall and Persia's rise

For further reading

R. Coggins, "An alternative prophetic tradition?" in R. Coggins and others (ed.), *Israel's Prophetic Tradition.*
Mysterious Messengers, chapters 9, 14

Further Reading on Nahum, Obadiah, and Ezekiel

Relevant chapters of
Childs, B. S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*.
Coggins, R., and others (ed.). *Israel's Prophetic Tradition*.
Eaton, J. H. *Mysterious Messengers*
Koch, K. *The Prophets*
Miranda, J. P. *Marx and the Bible*.
Mays, J. L., and P. J. Achtemeier (ed.). *Interpreting the Prophets*.
Sweeney, M. *The Twelve Prophets*. 2 vols. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000.
von Rad, G. *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 2 = *The Message of the Prophets*

Nahum, Obadiah

Allen, L. C.. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*. London: 1976.
Coggins, R., and S. P. Re'emi. *Nahum, Obadiah, Esther*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
Eaton, J. H. *Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*. London: SCM, 1961.
Goldingay, John. *Nahum*. http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay
O'Brien, Julia Myers. *Nahum*. London/New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.
Robinson, R. B. "Levels of naturalization in Obadiah". In *Journal for the Study of the OT* 40 (1988), pp. 83-97.
Roberts, J. J. M. *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*. Louisville: WJK, 1991.
Watts, J. D. W. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*. Cambridge/New York: CUP, 1975.
Wolff, H. W. *Obadiah and Jonah*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986.

Ezekiel

Ackroyd, P. R. *Exile and Restoration*. London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968.
Allen, L. C. *Ezekiel 1-19*. Dallas: Word, 1994.
—*Ezekiel 20-48*. Dallas: Word, 1990.
Blenkinsopp, J. *Ezekiel*. Louisville: Knox, 1990.
Brueggemann, W. *Hopeful Imagination*, pp. 50-87. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.
Carley, K. W. *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*. Cambridge/New York: CUP, 1974.
— *Ezekiel among the Prophets*. London: SCM, 1975.
Eichrodt, W. *Ezekiel*. London: SCM, 1970.
Fishbane, M. "Sin and judgment in the prophecies of Ezekiel." *Interpretation* 38 (1984), pp. 131-50.
Greenberg, M. *Ezekiel 1-20* and *Ezekiel 21-37*. New York: Doubleday, 1983 and 1997.
Joyce, P. *Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989.
Klein, R. W. *Israel in Exile*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.
Lindars, B. "Ezekiel and individual responsibility." *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965), pp. 452-67.
Lust, J. (ed.). *Ezekiel and His Book*. Leuven: Leuven UP, 1986.
Raitt, T. M. *A Theology of Exile*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977.
Ruiz, J.-P. "An Exile's Baggage." In Jon L. Berquist, ed., *Approaching Yehud* (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), pp. 117-35.
Taylor, J. B. *Ezekiel*. London: Tyndale, 1969.
Zimmerli, W. *Ezekiel*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979 and 1983.

Homework13: Questions on Ezekiel

(1) Read 1:1—3:27. What are the features of Ezekiel's account of his call, especially as you compare it with other prophets' account of their call? Why do you think we are told about it?

(2) Read 4:1—5:17. What is Ezekiel called to communicate and how he is called to communicate it?

(3) Read 8:1—11:23. What is the problem with Jerusalem, and what does Yahweh intend to do about it?

(4) Read 18:1-32. What exactly is Ezekiel's point here? What is he denying and what is he affirming?

(5) Read 33:1—37:28. What are Yahweh's promises for Israel's renewal? What exactly is new here?

Ezekiel: Like the Other Prophets, Only More So

Younger contemporary of Jeremiah, but a priest deported to Babylon in 597.

The book: 1-3 Introduction 4-24 Calamity for Judah
25-32 Calamity for other peoples 33-48 Restoration for Judah

1 Visionary experiences

2 Seized by Yahweh's hand

3 Propelled by Yahweh's spirit

4 Speaking as Yahweh's messenger

5 Using pictures and parables

6 Acting via mimes and acted parables (cf. Ruiz, "An Exile's Baggage").

7 Concerned for the whole people

8 Looking for Yahweh to be recognized

9 Aware of the community's resistance to Yahweh

10 Ignored by people

11 Declaring judgment on the people

12 Promising a glorious future the other side of disaster

13 Affirming Yahweh's lordship

14 Chronologically specific

15 Aware of Yahweh's holiness

16 Appalled at religious wrongdoing

Homework14: Questions on Nahum and Obadiah

Nahum prophesied at about the same time as Zephaniah, focusing on the coming fall of Assyria (3:18) and specifically of its capital, Nineveh (2:8; 3:7). This took place in 612.

Obadiah focuses on Yahweh's Day coming for Edom. The fact that the book is placed between Amos and Jonah suggests he prophesied in the ninth or eighth century but he is more commonly located after the fall of Jerusalem in 597 or 587 or later. Since Judah and Edom were always enemies, any date is possible.

Nahum 1:2-15: The book begins with principles. What does it say Yahweh is like?

Nahum 2:1-3:19: The principles are applied to Nineveh, which is under attack by the Medes and Babylonians. What is to be the nature of its experiences, what pictures are used to describe it, and what are the reasons for it?

Obadiah: What will Yahweh's day be like for Edom, and why?

Are there any questions you want to raise about the books?

Can you see situations in our own history that we can look at in the light of their insights?

Prophecy and Christ, Prophecy and Modern Israel

1 God's overarching promises:
Genesis 12—Being a blessing, land, nation
2 Samuel/1 Kings—David, temple
It is these that underlie Ezekiel 33--48

2 What do we mean by prophecy being "fulfilled"?

- Like a football schedule being fulfilled?
  Cf. people who draw up a schedule of events that must happen
- Like a weather forecast being fulfilled?
  Cf. trying to prove Christ's messiahship through prophecy
- Like a promise or a warning being fulfilled?
  Cf. offering to take the children to the beach or saying that you will punish them for something
- Like a commitment being fulfilled?
  Cf. a promise to share all your worldly goods with someone

3 What does fulfillment look like?

Isa 6:9-10 in relation to Mark 4:12 then Acts 28:26-27
Isa 59:20: a passage that might have been applied to Jesus? But Rom 11:26
Isa 1:9: a passage that relates to Isaiah's day? But Rom 9:29
Cf. Isa 7:14; 9:1-2
Jer 31:31-34: how many fulfillments?
Fulfillment may have nothing to do with the original meaning. Cf. John 11:49-52.
Fulfill (*pleroō*) = fill
All those ideas of fulfillment may be present in scripture? But the last two make sense of the way in which prophecies can be fulfilled more than once. Prophecies represent God making undertakings (positive or negative).

4 The prophets' account of their call suggests that their calling was to minister God's word to the people among whom they lived. Ezek 12:21-29.

5 When this involved talking about future events,

- these might be events that were imminent and therefore directly relevant to their hearers
- or they might be events that turned out to be far distant (e.g. the final "Day of the Lord").

But when these are far off events, they speak of them because of the way they relate to their hearers (cf. Paul talking about Jesus' future coming to people of his day). And they use language applying to the people of their day (cf. "the trumpet shall sound").

6 When the prophets talk about a coming deliverer, they do so in terms of what that will look like if it happens tomorrow. They are reaffirming a promise, not predicting a far-off event. When Jesus comes as deliverer, or will do so at the End, he fulfils the underlying promise, not the literal prediction. And/or he fulfills, but in a reinterpreted sense.

7 In the same way, when God fulfils promises for the Jewish people today, that is a matter of fulfilling an underlying commitment, not fulfilling a mere literal prediction. The promise is of blessing, relationship with God, increase, land (not state?), being a model for the world.

8 Of course God's promises are not fulfilled in a way that ignores moral questions (see Gen 15:16)

Monday August 24: Isaiah 40-66

Homework Required

Read the handouts on Isaiah 40—55 and on the servant of Yahweh (pages 120-21). In the light of these, work through Isaiah 40—55 and fill in page 122-23 (Homework15).

Read the introduction to Isaiah 56—66 (page 134), study those chapters, and fill in pages 135-36 (Homework16)

First Class: Isaiah 40 – 55

Lecture:	The time line (pages 55, 62); Introduction to Second Isaiah (pages 124-27)
Discussion:	The servant
Lecture:	Jewish and Christian interpretation of Isiah 53
	With comments on questions in Moodle postings

For further reading

Isaiah—The Story Scrolls On (pages 129-33)
W. Brueggemann, *Hopeful Imagination*, pp. 90-133.
Read Blenkinsopp, "Second Isaiah: Prophet of universalism" (*Journal for the Study of the OT* 41 [1988]: 83-103, via library on-line resources)

Second Class: Isaiah 56—66; The Unity of Isaiah

Lecture:	Approaches to the unity of Isaiah (pages 137-38)
Discussion:	What approach to unity makes best sense/is most helpful?
Lecture	Isaiah 56—66 (pages 139-40)
	With comments on questions in Moodle postings

For further reading

Mysterious Messengers, chapter 13

Further Reading on Isaiah 40—66

See also the books on Isaiah as a whole on pp. 74-75

Bellinger, W. H., and W. R. Farmer (ed.). *Jesus and the Suffering Servant.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 1998.
Broyles, C. A., and C. A. Evans (ed.). *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah*. 2 vols. Vetus Testamentum Supplement 70, 1997.
Beuken, W. "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah." In *Reading from Right to Left* (D. J. A. Clines Festschrift, ed. J. C. Exum and H. G. M. Williamson), pp. 50-62. New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003.
Brueggemann, W. *Isaiah*. 2 vols. Louisville: WJK, 1998.
—"At the mercy of Babylon". *A Social Reading of the Old Testament*, pp. 111-33. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.
— "Unity and Dynamic in the Isaiah Tradition." In *Journal for the Study of the OT* 29 (1984), pp. 89-107. = Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), pp. 252-69.
Clements, R. E. "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah". *Interpretation* 36 (1982), pp. 117-29 = Clements, *Old Testament Prophecy,* pp. 93-104. Louisville: WJK, 1996.
Clifford, R. J. *Fair Spoken and Persuading: An Interpretation of Second Isaiah*. Ramsey, NJ: Paulist, 1984.
Croatto, J. S. "Exegesis of Second Isaiah from the perspective of the oppressed". In *Reading from This Place* (ed. F. F. Segovia and M. A. Tolbert), Vol. 2, pp. 219-36. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.
Dumbrell, W. J. "The Purpose of the Book of Isaiah". *Tyndale Bulletin* 36 (1985), pp. 111-28.
Emmerson, G. I. *Isaiah 56-66.* Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.
Fung, R. *The Isaiah Vision: An Ecumenical Strategy for Congregational Evangelism*. Geneva: WCC, 1992.
Goldingay, J. *God's Prophet, God's Servant*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1984.
—*The Message of Isaiah 40 – 55*. London/New York: Clark, 2005.
Gruber, M. I. "The Motherhood of God in Second Isaiah". *Revue Biblique* 90 (1983), pp. 351-59 = Gruber, *The Motherhood of God and Other Studies*, pp. 3-15. Atlanta: Scholars, 1992.
Hanson, P. D. *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.
Holmgren, F. *With Wings as Eagles*. Chappaqua, NY, 1973.
Jobling, D., and T. Pippin (ed.). *Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts*, pp. 43-78. Semeia 59, 1992.
Johnson, D. G. *From Chaos to Restoration: An Integrative Reading of Isaiah 24-27*. JSOT Supplement 61. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988.
Jones, D. R. "Isaiah —II and III". In *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (ed. M. Black and H. H. Rowley), pp. 516-36. London/New York: Nelson, 1962.
Levison, John R., and Priscilla Pope-Levison (ed.). *Return to Babel*. Louisville: WJK, 1999. (Latin American, African, and Asian Perspectives on Isa 52:13 – 53:12)
Melugin, R. F., and M. A Sweeney (ed). *New Visions of Isaiah*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
Mettinger, T. D. *A Farewell to the Servant Songs*. Lund: Gleerup, 1983.
Mouw, R. J. *When the Kings Come Marching In: Isaiah and the New Jerusalem*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.
Muilenburg, J. "The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40-66: Introduction and Exegesis". In *The Interpreter's Bible* (ed. G. A. Buttrick and others), Vol. 5, pp. 381-773. Nashville: Abingdon, 1956.
Schramm, B. *The Opponents of Third Isaiah*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
Smith, P. A. Rhetoric *and Redaction in Trito-Isaiah: The Structure, Growth and Authorship of Isaiah 56-66.* Vetus Testamentum Supplement 62. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
Stone, B. W. "Second Isaiah: Prophet to Patriarchy". *JSOT* 56 (1992), pp. 85-99. = P. R. Davies (ed.), *The Prophets*, pp. 219-32. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
Westermann, C. *Isaiah 40-66*. London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969.
Whybray, R. N. *Isaiah 40-66*. London: Marshall, 1975/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.
—*The Second Isaiah*. OT Guides. Sheffield: JSOT, 1983.

Introduction to Isaiah 40—55

As we noted in looking at Isaiah 39, Isaiah 40—55 does not look forward to the deportation of the Jewish leadership to Babylon (as First Isaiah would have done). It refers to this deportation as something that has already happened, and it speaks from the context of life in Babylon itself. The author of these chapters, then, is one who lives during this deportation. This is a different person from First Isaiah, but walks in his footsteps, taking up his calling, sharing emphases of his ministry, and bringing the message that First Isaiah might bring if he were alive in this very different situation.

The deportation itself happened decades ago, and people in Babylon in the middle of the sixth century BC cannot imagine ever returning to Palestine. God seems to have abandoned them there for ever. This is the situation which Second Isaiah has to address. One might gain insight on it by reading from the perspective of people under the domination of an empire today (see Croatto, "Exegesis of Second Isaiah from the Perspective of the Oppressed").

Second Isaiah's gospel

The foundation of this prophet's message is a strong and many-sided faith in Yahweh the God of Israel. Yahweh is the God of gods, the God of creation, the God of Israel's history (e.g., the story of Abraham and the exodus), the God of present history (the power behind Cyrus the Persian), the God of salvation (Zion's husband and Israel's *go'el* (next-of-kin and restorer—NRSV "redeemer"), the one who is committed to looking after her), the God whose word will be fulfilled, and—of course—the Holy One of Israel. It is because all this is true about God that God can and will act now, bringing the downfall of the people's enemies and oppressors, the physical restoration of deported Judeans to Palestine, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, through the up-and-coming Persian king Cyrus.

But the Judeans in Babylon have a deeper need, of the restoration of their inner self and their relationship with God, and through special servant(s) whom God will send to them God will also achieve that. And when that is achieved, Israel itself will be able to function again as Yahweh's witness and Yahweh's servant, so that Yahweh may be acknowledged, vindicated, and praised through the world.

The arrangement of Isaiah 40-55

Individual prophecies have been arranged in Isaiah 40—55 into longer sequences, so that the prophecies on different topics come together, or so that pairs of themes are interwoven. One way of understanding this arrangement is as follows.

40:1-31	The prophet's call and challenge
41:1—44:23	Israel as God's servant: status, calling, indictment, and promise
44:24—48:22	Cyrus as God's anointed: the fall of Babylon
49:1—52:12	The servant's certainties and Zion's uncertainties
52:13—55:13	The servant's suffering and the people's joy

The Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 40—55

Who is this servant?

The first passage that refers to the servant explicitly identifies him as the people of God, Israel (see 41.8-10). But other possibilities are raised in the NT by a story involving Philip the Evangelist and an Ethiopian state minister (Acts 8.26-40). When he met Philip, the minister was reading Isaiah 53 (vv. 7-8 are quoted in Acts 8). He asked Philip whether the servant mentioned in the passage was the prophet himself or whether it was someone else. Philip uses the passage as the basis for telling him about Jesus.

These two passages suggest for us a range of possibilities as we read the chapters about the servant.

(a) The servant is the people of Israel. This is actually stated in 41:8-10; 44:1, and other passages. It is the usual Jewish view of the servant. The fact that the servant is often described as an individual, often very vividly, does not argue against this, since the people as a whole is often elsewhere describe as one man (see 1:5-6 in its context). A variant on this view is that the servant stands for faithful Jews (50:10 calls them to follow the servant).

(b) The servant is the prophet. Isaiah describes himself as the servant of Yahweh in 20:3, and where the servant speaks as "I" (49:1-6; 50:4-9) the natural view is that the prophet is speaking.

(c) The servant is some contemporary of the prophet.
   (1) one possibility is Jehoiachin, the rightful king of Judah, suffering imprisonment in Babylon: see 2 Kings 25:27-30. Kings are regularly described as Yahweh's servants.
   (2) Another is Cyrus, the Persian king, who is about to defeat Babylon and allow the Judeans to go home; see the description of him in 44:28; 45:1, where he is called Yahweh's shepherd and Yahweh's anointed.

(d) The servant is the messiah to come. It is certainly true that the NT often sees Jesus as the fulfillment of the passages about Yahweh's servant. As well as Acts 8:26-40, see especially Matthew 8:17; 12:18-21; 1 Peter 2:22-25.

   But does this necessarily fix what the passages about the servant themselves meant? Might the NT be reapplying them? (When Matthew 2:15 says Jesus fulfils Hosea 11:1, evidently Matthew is finding a new significance in the passage from Hosea. It might be the same with the servant passages.)

Homework15: Questions on Isaiah 40—55

1 Can you see a "plot" in the chapters? Are they going somewhere? What themes appear earlier but not later, and vice versa? What is the message of the whole?

2 Creation is one of the recurrent themes. How does the prophet talk about creation? What is its theological significance?

3 How does the prophet speak of Yahweh's sovereignty in history?

4 A previous page has outlined some possibilities for the identity of Yahweh's servant. The passages that refer to Yahweh's servant are 41:8-10; 42:1-4; 42:18-25; 43:8-13; 44:1-5; 44:21-22; 44:24—45:7; 48:20-22; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13—53:12. What is the servant's role or nature in each? And which of the possible identities of the servant makes sense?

5 What do you think is the message of chs 40-55 for the church?

6 Are there are any aspects of the chapters you would like me to talk about in class?

The Vision of Second Isaiah (Isaiah 40)

A (doubting) prophet's call (vv. 1-11)

Not surprisingly, Second Isaiah's prophecies begin with an account of a call (vv. 1-11). The prophet hears God commissioning comforters, encouragers (vv. 1-2). The situation of being under God's punishment is now to be reversed. Not long after Jerusalem's fall, Lamentations 1.1-5 spoke of Jerusalem as without comfort and experiencing harsh labor because of her sins. Jerusalem is still at the center of the exiles' thoughts (compare Psalm 137). Isaiah 40 takes up these same words to declare that the moment of Jerusalem's comfort has come, the harsh labor is over, the sins have been duly punished. Further, the words "comfort my people, says your God" take up Hosea's declaration of judgment on Israel (Hosea 1.8-9), and promise that it is now reversed.

God's commission receives three responses. Whereas First Isaiah received his call in the context of a vision, Second Isaiah does not see but hears. The voices are anonymous, but they apparently belong to angelic servants who are to see to the fulfillment of Yahweh's will. The first requires the preparing of a road through the desert. Every obstacle that blocks the way to Jerusalem is to be removed. It will be a road for the exiles' own return, but it is first a road for Yahweh's own return in glory to the city abandoned to destruction in 587.

Another voice declares, "Preach." But what is Second Isaiah to preach, when people are scorched and withered by the hot wind of God's wrath and cannot believe God is speaking to them? Verses 6b-7 thus seem to continue the prophet's own words of response to the commissioning voice. The angel's answer then comes in verse 8. It acknowledges that the people are like that, but it points the prophet to another factor in the situation that also needs taking into account.

The third voice (vv. 9-11) may be the prophet's own, now obedient to the commission and joining in the angelic work, but it may be that of a third angel. What matters is the words that are spoken, good news to be given to Jerusalem itself, that the sovereign Yahweh is indeed returning to it, in divine power (v. 10) and divine gentleness (v. 11).

A (doubting) people's reassurances (vv. 12-31)

Second Isaiah's problem will be that the Judeans in Babylon find this message incredible. Verses 12-31 comprise a first attempt at breaking through their incredulity.

The point to start in understanding this long sermon is verse 27, which sums up their feelings before God. The prophet's task is to convince people that their God has the power and the will to care about them and act as their Lord, and to counter the impressiveness of apparent rivals to Yahweh.

(a) One was the power of Babylon itself. The Babylonians had defeated Israel: were they more powerful than Israel's God? If Yahweh had not been able to defend Jerusalem against them, could he defeat them on their own territory? The prophet reminds the Judeans of their own faith that Yahweh is the world's creator: no nation keeps its impressiveness when compared with this God (vv. 12-17).

(b) Then how easy it would be to be impressed by Babylon's idols, splendid figures carried in glorious processions through the city. How pathetic, in comparison, is Israel's sacred temple—destroyed by the people who worshipped those idols, and who brought its sacred vessels from that temple to their idols' shrines. Yet how silly to compare the world's creator with an idol made by human beings (vv 18-20).

(c) How easy to be impressed by the kings and princes of Babylon. They had deported the last two kings of Judah, who had languished in prison in Babylon. How could Israelite leadership reassert itself against that? But how foolish to compare the power of foreign leaders with the power of Israel's creator God, of whose praise Israel's psalms still reminded the exiles (vv. 21-24).

(d) And how easy to be impressed by the actual gods of Babylon, the powers of the heavens which (as the Babylonians believed) determined how events worked out on earth. Yet who created the sun, the moon, and the stars, and parades them obediently each day (vv. 25-26)?

It is that vision of God as creator that is Second Isaiah's answer to the question whether God has the will or the ability to be involved with Israel any more (vv. 27-31). Those who believe in Yahweh as this kind of God believe that this Yahweh will act to redeem, and that conviction begins to bring them renewed strength even when they are still living in hope.

Isaiah 40—55: How the Prophecies Got Home to People

Communication happens not just through the content of the words but through the way we say them. We communicate against the background of things that speaker and audience take for granted, and much of the communication happens through the relationship of what is said and what is taken for granted. Form criticism looks at the way things are said (the genres or forms) against the background of the social context speaker and audience share (the Sitz im Leben). What follows is based on Westermann's commentary.

1(a) The way people speak in sorting out legal disputes in a gathering at the city gate

Cf. Jer 26 for the literal usage

41:1-7, 21-29 Yahweh challenges the nations
(challenge, silence, inference, claim, inference)
43:8-15; 44:6-8 Yahweh versus the gods, with appeal to witness
42:18-25; 43:22-28 Yahweh's countercharge (e.g. 43:27) when Israel has made an accusation (43:28)

"Do you see? You're trying to put Yahweh on trial, but you are bound to lose."

1(b) The street-corner accusation which might lead to a legal case.

Cf. Ruth 4 for the literal usage

40:27 leads to 40:12-31
45:9-13 (v. 9 "go to law"; cf. vv. 12-13, the kind of claims Yahweh makes in court)

2 The way a prophet or priest speaks at the coronation of a king.

Cf. 2 Samuel 7 for the literal usage

41:8-9 You are my servant (GNB): but God is addressing Israel
42:1-4, 5-9
44:24-28; 45:1-7: a strange person for God to be installing
52:13-53:12: a strange kind of coronation

"Do you see? Yahweh is speaking to you as if you were a king being crowned
Yahweh is speaking to Cyrus as if he were a Davidic king"
The servant is being crowned, but he has a strange experience on the way to that

3(a) The way a prophet or priest speaks in exercising a counseling ministry, e.g. in the temple

Cf. Psa 12; 6; 28; 56 for the literal usage
Babylonian equivalents in Ancient Near Eastern Texts, p. 450

41:10-16
43:1-7
44:1-5
"Do you see? Yahweh is speaking to you with words of comfort like someone ministering to one in need"

3(b) The way the community prayed and lamented their fate

Cf. Lamentations; 1 Kings 8:46-53; Zech 7 for the literal usage

41:17-20 Yahweh's response to the community's prayer, picking up their lament
42:14-17
"Do you see? Yahweh is responding to your prayer."

The Woman's Voice in Isaiah 40-55

Mostly based on "Second Isaiah: Prophet to Patriarchy" by Bebb Wheeler Stone in *Journal for the Study of the OT* 56 (1992) 85-99. Reprinted in *The Prophets* (ed. P. R. Davies; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996)

Many prophecies in Isaiah 40 – 55 sound as if they reflect women's experiences

42:14	childbirth
47:8	losing your husband.
49:15	breast-feeding
49:18	being a bride.
49:21	not being able to have children (compare 54:1).
50:1	being divorced.
51:22-52:2	rape (compare Lam 5:11).
54:6	having your husband leave you.

Note also

40:9	Ms Zion as herald, or a woman herald bringing news to Zion
40:11	nurturing imagery (compare 41:13; 42:6; 43:4; 49:25).
43:6	only Second Isaiah speaks of God's daughters (except for the quote in 2 Cor 6:18)
45:10	a question about giving birth.
44:24	Yahweh as the one who formed in the womb (compare 49:5, 15).
51:2	only Second Isaiah remembers Sarah.
54:11-12	the delight in makeup and jewelry

51:17-20	(among many passages in chapters 49—55): the encouragement to the victim, Ms Zion. Zion as a woman is not blamed (e.g. for unfaithfulness/promiscuity) in Isaiah 40—55: contrast other prophets. There are no negative images of woman in Isaiah 40—55 (unless in chapter 47).
47:1-15	conversely Ms Babylon is critiqued for a womanly failure, a lack of compassion (*rahamim*, the word for womb).
52:13—53:12	"This male servant, unattractive, unloved, nonviolent, and perhaps silenced (53:7), becomes a paradigm of power that surely subverts the patriarchal paradigm of power" [compare the subversion of male power in the Gospels].

One could not prove that Second Isaiah was a woman prophet (though a number of women prophets appear in the OT) but at least a woman's voice appears deeply and prominently here, and the chapters need to be approached with some knowledge of women's experience if we are to understand them.

Isaiah 53 over the Centuries

Isaiah 52.13-53.12 has had a more colorful afterlife than most of the OT. The Targum glosses 'my servant' in 52.13 with the expression 'the anointed. The Targum then separates the description of the servant's exaltation (e.g., 52.13, 15; 53.12) from the description of suffering and humiliation. The latter is assumed at the moment to apply to Israel (e.g., 52.14) but to be the destiny of the nations (e.g., 52.15; 53.3). The servant is 'an exalted, proud, and aggressive personality, a champion who takes up the cudgels for the despised and downtrodden and suffering Israel, who wields destructive power over their enemies and subjugates mighty kings in their behalf. He also restores Israel to national dignity, rebuilds its sanctuary, is a champion of Torah, metes out judgment to the wicked, and consigns them to Gehenna' (Levey). But the anointed servant's task is to pray for his people in their sin and affliction, to work and to risk his life for them (e.g., 53.11-12).

The significance of the passage for Jesus and the early church is a much-controverted question. While later Christian interpretation came to treat the whole passage as a prediction of Jesus, the nearest to a concerted exposition within the NT appears in 1 Peter 2.22-25. It is a matter of dispute whether this is the first concerted exposition or whether the passage had been of crucial importance for Paul or whether Jesus had already seen himself as the suffering servant. Jesus's healing ministry made people recall the servant's taking people's illnesses (v. 4; Matt 8.17). In Luke 22.37 he himself speaks of the need that scriptures which were written 'about' him, such as talk of the servant's being 'counted with rebels', should find fulfilment (cf. v. 12). A Christian evangelist can be portrayed as making this passage a basis for talking about Jesus (Acts 8.32-33).

It is in Justin's First Apology 50 and his Dialogue with Trypho 13 that the passage as a whole is first systematically treated as referring to Jesus. In his argument Against Celsus (e.g., 1.54-55; 6.75) Origen similarly takes 52.13-53.12 as a /prophecy which must apply to Jesus and cannot (for instance) refer to the Jewish people. Eusebius 3.2 [97c-100a] later sees a detailed correspondence between the vision and the virgin birth, sinless suffering, atoning death, and resurrection of Jesus, a vision which is (as it were) given from the perspective of Holy Saturday when Jesus has died but has not yet risen.

When the African politician in Acts 8 asked his question, Philip the evangelist did not simply say 'the passage is about Jesus' but 'starting with this scripture, proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus'. The statement lends itself to the modern reader's finding some hermeneutical sophistication in this formulation, as if Philip knew he was providing a readerly response to the text rather than a piece of historical-critical exegesis. The developed Christian conviction that Jesus 'fulfilled' the prophecy in 52.13-53.12 risks robbing the passage of much of its power; the passage is simply a prediction of Jesus which has been fulfilled and has therefore fulfilled its function. This is not the nature of the exposition in 1 Peter 2. It indeed parallels with Isa 52.13-53.12 the fact that Jesus did no wrong in deed or word, so that his death constituted a taking of people's sins; whereas they were like wandering sheep, they have been healed through his being wounded (vv. 5-6, 9). Yet the point about this exposition is to urge the Christian community to be like Jesus in its handling of attack (cf. the argument of Phil 2.4-11 with its connections with Isa 52.13-53.12). The fact that the vision had come true in Jesus meant that it now needed to come true in the church. 1 Clement 16 (and Origen himself, e.g., Against Celsus 8.55) reads the passage in this way as well as seeing it as a prophecy. Similarly, while Jesus met a response which made people recall v. 1 (John 12.38), so did Paul and other Christian Jews (Rom 10.16) as they operate like the servant in a mission to people who have not yet heard (Rom 15.21; cf. v. 15). The servant illumines the experience of the community as well as that of Jesus.

The NT's stance is thus comparable to the perspective inherent in the passage itself, that if it constitutes God's promise to the prophet, it is not only that. From a Christian viewpoint some irony attaches to the fact that the one entity which is outside the purview of 52.13-53.12 is an individual future redeemer, a 'messiah'; but the openness of the text enables a Christian like Philip to look at Jesus through the prism

provided by this passage to see if it is illuminating, and to look at the passage through the prism provided by the story of Jesus to see if that is illuminating, see if he might have made it come true.

The patristic/rabbinic period saw flourishing interest in Isaiah 53 on the part of Christian theologians for similar reasons to those which drew first century writers: it helped them handle a question they needed to handle, the significance of Jesus. Conversely, Jewish sources show no particular interest in the passage, partly because they have no such strong reason to be drawn to it, partly because the focus of their own interest lay more in halakah and haggadah, partly in reaction to Christian preoccupation. As is the case in the NT, rabbinic sources could use the figure of the servant to illumine the vocation of the people of God, though they more characteristically assume that the chapter refers to the Messiah.

This configuration changed in the medieval period, when Christian polemic which asserted that Jewish suffering issued from God's casting off the people for their sins, and the increased intensity of Jewish suffering at Christian hands, drew Jewish writers to the passage for an equivalent reason to that which had drawn Christians to it a millennium earlier. It helped them handle the question they needed to handle, the need to understand Jewish suffering. Beginning from the identification of the servant and Israel made elsewhere in these chapters, Rashi and subsequent interpreters could see their people's exile as enabling the spreading of their witness to Torah in the world and (in the aftermath of the First Crusade) see their people's suffering as imposed for the sake of making atonement for the nations' sin as well as for its own.

Much later Eliezer Berkovits describes Isaiah 53 as 'the description of Israel's martyrology through the centuries. The Christian attempt to rob Israel of the dignity of Isaiah's suffering servant of God has been one of the saddest spiritual embezzlements in human history. At the same time, the way Christianity treated Israel through the ages only made Isaiah's description fit Israel all the more tragically and truly. Generation after generation of Christians poured out their iniquities and inhumanity over the head of Israel, yet they "esteemed him, stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"'.

The tenth-century Jewish exegete Saadia referred the whole passage to Jeremiah and showed how this works exegetically in some detail, in a manner parallel to Christian application to Jesus's story. In contrast, one contemporary Karaite scholar, Salmon ben Yeruham, referred the humiliation to Israel in the past and the glory to the Messiah. Another, Yephet ben 'Ali, opposed both of these. Saying that he follows the interpretation of the earlier Karaite master Benjamin Al-Nahawandi, he refers the whole to the Messiah, who is humiliated on Israel's behalf and later exalted. Ibn Ezra then argued from the context (52.12 and 54.1) that neither Saadia nor Yephet can be right. He personally thinks that the servant is always the prophet, but he shows how the whole can apply to Israel. Implicitly he is doubtless responding to Christian application of the prophecy to Jesus, but it is Abrabanel who offers the most systematic such critique, emphasizing (for instance) that he was not buried with the wicked, had no seed, did not lengthen days, and did not divide spoil (see Neubauer). If it be argued that this language is figurative, then in his notes to Ibn Ezra's commentary M. Friedlander comments that 'the whole argument is destroyed which is based on the supposition of a minute coincidence of the facts here predicted with the incidents in the life of Jesus'. Abrabanel applies the passage to Israel but also to Josiah. Rashi refers it to the righteous remnant within Israel.

Isaiah – The Story Scrolls On…

A final paper by Charlotte Gale and Vince Jupp (St John's Theological College, Nottingham, UK)
(included by permission)

We join our hero Ezekiel, a giant amongst prophets, at the book launch of Deutero-Isaiah commonly known as "Isaiah – The Story Scrolls On". The launch is taking place at Babylon's premiere conference centre, the Hanging Gardens. There is great excitement that this is the first new prophecy to be published since the completion of Ezekiel's own work, some forty years before. Ezekiel is therefore guest of honour, and has been asked to offer a critical insight into the theology of this new prophetic work. It has been rumoured that the author – who has chosen to remain anonymous – is somewhere in the building ...

Ezekiel (*Ezekiel shuffles towards his seat clutching his preview copy of "The story scrolls on", takes out his ear trumpet, and addresses anyone who'll listen to him!*) I can't say I think much of this second Isaiah, a bit of a sissy I think, looking at the writing. I mean, all this wishy washy poetry about hope and redemption and some glorious new future. There's hardly any mention of judgement or punishment – it's practically subversive! It's as if he's lost all grip on reality. If I didn't know better I'd think a woman wrote it. (*Laughs!*)

Woman (*Overhears and butts in*) Excuse me, we've been in exile for the best part of fifty years now. Don't you think that it is important to lay a foundation of hope for the faithful remnant of God's people? Surely they need to be consoled, not continually punished?

Ezekiel (*Cuttingly*) Gosh there's a novelty! A woman with a voice – do go on!

Woman Well my view is that God doesn't want to continue condemning the current generation for the sins of their forebears. I mean, God did promise that we'd return to Jerusalem one day. Isn't it about time we had a bit of hope? We need to sustain what faith the people have, not destroy it completely.

Ezekiel (*In a patronising tone*) I agree entirely my dear, and of course if you'd read my works you'd know that the last 15 chapters of my nationally acclaimed scroll focus entirely on hope for the future, the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem and the redemption of the people.

Woman Yes, wasn't it in your scroll where God said "I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land"? That's chapter 37 verse 14, if I'm not mistaken!

Ezekiel (*Surprised but puffed up!*) Oh, you've read my works then!

Woman I certainly have, and I had been hoping to have the opportunity to discuss some of the illustrations you use and in particular the way in which women are portrayed. Now don't get me wrong, I understand that God gave you a very tough message to deliver and that can't have been easy, but even so, some of the illustrations you use to describe Israel's sins are, well, not exactly pleasant.

Ezekiel (*Defensively*) I really don't know what you mean by that young lady.

Woman Well, as a mild example, what about the bit when you compare Israel's sins to a woman's monthly uncleanness. (*Ez 33:17*) Now I realise that the idea is to explain that Israel has

behaved so badly that she is impure and defiled in God's sight, and that according to our laws, menstruating women are also impure – hence the comparison. But there are so many other illustrations of impurity you could have used – why choose one so personal to women, and so beyond a woman's control. We don't 'choose' to be unclean, its simply part of our nature.

Ezekiel (*Triumphantly*) Well that's precisely my point! Israel cannot cleanse herself from impurity. She has to rely on God's graciousness to restore righteousness in his sight.

Woman I uphold the message entirely – it's the manner of delivery that upsets me. However hard I try to be objective about it, I simply end up feeling unclean and unworthy, just because I'm a woman.

Ezekiel But we're all unclean and unworthy in God's sights. We are mere specks of dust compared to the immeasurable holiness and glory of God.

Woman (*Frustrated*) I know I know – but it just makes me feel bad. Surely God loves and cares for *me*, even though I'm so small in his eyes?

Ezekiel Well, that's just about what I'd expect from a woman. All this touchy, feely stuff, and wittering on about love. God is God. He is holy and without sin. In his immense generosity he gave us the privilege of worshipping him and being his chosen people, but we threw it away, by choosing to act like some adulterous wife, laughing in the face of all that her husband has given her.

Woman (*Angry*) There you go again, using women as examples of how appallingly Israel has behaved. I don't know if I can even bear to talk about it – but the stuff in chapters 16 and 23 of your book are – well, frankly they're practically pornographic and I'm amazed the censors allowed you to publish it! I mean, comments such as: "There she lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys, and whose emission was like that of horses." (*Ez 23:20*) Do you not think that that was just slightly exaggerating the point, presumably for the excitement of your male readers!

Ezekiel I really can't see what your problem is? Those chapters are designed to shock, and from your somewhat emotional reaction, it seems to have worked.

Woman I know they're supposed to shock, and once again, I entirely uphold the message. Dependence on international treaties rather than trusting in God was completely wrongs. But why use images of harlotry to portray that? Was there no other manner in which you could both explain the message, and shock the readers without resorting to the further undermining and degradation of women?

Ezekiel Look! I wanted to get the message across using the most vivid and shocking language I could – to ensure that men listened to the message God had for them. Surely there can be nothing more shocking than comparing a man to a woman – let alone a harlot!

Woman But how do you think that makes women feel?

Ezekiel What do I care what women feel – my scroll contains a message from God to the men of Israel in exile. I understand that women are very important to the future of the nation – where would us men be without you lovely women to have our babies and bring them up in the

ways of the Lord? And anyway, you're going on as if I'm the only prophet ever to have used such illustrations. Hosea certainly did, and so does this Deutero-Isaiah chap in chapter 47 of his scroll!

Woman I'm sorry, but the image that Deutero-Isaiah uses in chapter 47 cannot be compared to the illustrations you use. You portray women as immoral harlots who seduce and corrupt men – Isaiah is comparing Babylon to a virgin, and the future victim of Cyrus. That's quite different from seeing God as the self-righteous husband and Israel as the immoral wife! Besides, if you read the whole of this new scroll …

Ezekiel (*Indignant*) Well, of course I've read it!

Woman … you would see that it provides a very balanced and generally positive view of woman. For example, in chapter 49:15, God says "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?" So as you can see, despite what you say God does care about his people, and thinks that the love a mother has for a new borne child is a pretty good way to express that. I don't know about you, but I think that's incredibly good news, whether you're a woman or a man. God cares for us and wants us to grow and develop. That's a wonderful message of hope for the future.

Ezekiel (*Exasperated*) But its not "hope" that's really the issue here. It "holiness". I'm sorry if you young people find my language offensive, but we simply cannot escape the fact that ours is a holy God and his laws must be obeyed. If we don't obey, then we must be punished. If we fail to focus on the holiness of God we are consigned to a life as a profaned flat human enterprise that can only end in despair! (*At this point, Ezekiel is inadvertently foretelling the words of the 20th century commentator, Walter Brueggemann*[1]).

Woman (*Equally exasperated*) As I've said before, I accept the fact that we've been punished, but that punishment is not eternal. Come on, its clear in your scroll, that God has spoken through you about homecoming and restoration for the exiles.

Ezekiel (*Excited*) Oh yes indeed – I can see it now. A vision of purity and spiritual vitality. The temple will be rebuilt, and the people cleansed by the glory of God. Yes, you are right, restoration will come - through the rebuilding of the temple and correct submission to God in worship. The Lord will be there, and it will all be for the sake of his holy name. (*Ez 48:35*)

Woman Yes that all very well, but surely restoration is more than that. Isn't it also the renewal of the relationship between the people and God? He wants us to enjoy worshipping him. As this new scroll states "They will enter Zion with singing, everlasting joy will crown their heads". (*Is 51:11*)

Ezekiel (*Sarcastically*) Oh very poetic I'm sure!

Woman Well you portray God as though his only interest is in protecting his own good name, and that he has no compassion for Israel.

Ezekiel But it's true! The only reason God hasn't wiped Israel out altogether is because it wouldn't look terribly good to the other nations. He's invested all this time and energy in us – to be driven to destroying us completely wouldn't do his reputation a lot of good now, would it?

[1] Brueggemann (1987) p.73

Woman All right, all right, we're going round in circles now. Why don't we start by thinking about the things that you and Deutero-Isaiah do agree on, rather than arguing?

Ezekiel Such as?

Woman Well, you both agree that Israel has sinned in the past and that the exile is the punishment for those sins.

Ezekiel Yes – and we also agree that God will bring restoration to his people and they will return to Jerusalem.

Woman That's the idea. So where we – sorry - where you and Deutero-Isaiah disagree, is merely in the language and perspective. For example (*with empathy*), your perspective is that of someone who personally experienced the horror of being forced to leave Jerusalem, your expectations for the future – of being a priest in the temple – were totally destroyed.

Ezekiel Yes, yes. I sometimes think you young people forget how awful it was for us in those days. At least now, we're not constantly in fear of our lives. I do worry that when the time comes, the exiles will be reluctant to give up the relative security of Babylon and return to Jerusalem.

Woman But don't you see? That's exactly what this new scroll is saying! Its encouraging the exiles to have faith in God, to turn away from all ideas of apostasy. The people are dazed, discouraged and destitute. This lyrical scroll is designed to put the fire back into the hearts of the people. As it says in chapter 40, verse 9:

"Oh Zion! You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain; Oh Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!'" and also, "He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them into his bosom, and gently lead those who are with young."

Ezekiel (*Grumpily*) Hmmf! In my day, you just gave your prophecy and let the people decide whether they wanted to take notice of it or not. It wasn't my responsibility to make them act on God's words - just so long as they heard the message.

Woman Yes I know, but we need a different kind of prophecy now. The kind that will give the exiles the courage to return to Jerusalem – so that they can build the temple and fulfil the vision you had of the future. And in that, *we* are one.

Ezekiel Indeed! Now thank you for bringing me the coffee. Make sure you close the door on your way out, the show's about to start.

Introduction to Isaiah 56—66

The message of Second Isaiah is characterized by glorious proclamation and visionary promise. The atmosphere of Isaiah 56—66 is different again. It reflects yet another' historical context. When Isaiah 1—39 refers to historical events, they belong to the eighth century. When Isaiah 40—55 refers to historical events, they belong to the sixth century. The historical context presupposed by Isaiah 56—66 is Palestine after the exile. Some of the less specific prophecies may come from earlier, even from the time of First Isaiah—some have the same atmosphere as the prophets before the exile. But it is the time after the exile they now apply to, the period whose story is told in Ezra and Nehemiah. They thus belong to the same period as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, and bring a similar message.

The wondrous vision of Second Isaiah has seen a partial fulfillment, but it fell far short of the glory promised, as Ezra and Nehemiah and those other prophetic books show. So these are prophecies for people who expected much, and are disappointed, puzzled, and hurt by the gap between hope and experience. They bring such people warnings about where sin leads, prayers that embody how the people of God may feel about their experience, responses to such prayers that reveal how God looks at those who pray and at their needs, and promises about how God's word will still be fulfilled.

The prophecies may be seen to unfold in the following way.

56:1-8 Preface
56:9-59:8 Challenges about Israel's life
59:9-15a Prayer for forgiveness and restoration
59:15b-21 Vision of Yahweh in judgment
60:1-62:12 Visions of Jerusalem restored
63:1-6 Vision of -Yahweh in Judgment
63:7-64:12 Prayer for forgiveness and restoration
65:1-66:16 Challenges about Israel's life
66:17-24 Postscript

These prophecies presuppose life back in Palestine. Second Isaiah could still have been alive, and, it has been suggested, would surely have returned to Palestine if it had been necessary to crawl all the way on broken glass. So are these more prophecies of Second Isaiah's? But they are less vivid and lyrical than Isaiah 40—55, and more likely come from a later prophet or prophets who were called by God to take up in yet another context the ministry that First and Second Isaiah had earlier exercised.

Homework16: Questions on Isaiah 56—66

1. What is Yahweh's vision for or promise to Jerusalem, according to chapters 60-62? What would count as fulfillment of these promises?

2. What do you think of the vision of warrior Yahweh acting to punish in 59:15b-20 and 63:1-6?

3. What do you think of the prayers in 59:9-15a and 63:7-64:12? Are they theologically sound? What do they teach us about God and about prayer?

4. The opening and closing sections (56:1—59:8 and 65:1—66:24) seem more miscellaneous. What are the main points they make? How do they link to the material in between?

5. Is there anything you would like me to comment on in class?

Approaches to the Unity of Isaiah

Isaiah 40—55 and 56—66 directly address a much later period than that of Isaiah ben Amoz. If they do come from later prophets, why are they part of the book called Isaiah? Wherein lies the book's unity?

Bernhard Duhm—they were of quite separate origin and were artificially joined. That can't be right….

1 Unity of theme

Holiness

Zion

God and the nations

Right(ness)

2 Developing themes

"Fear not" (Conrad): chs 7; 10; chs 37; 41

Images (Miscall): trees; water

3 Mutual conversation

56:1 (Rendtorff)

Brueggemann

4 A continuing ministry or inspiration

Ch.6

Ch. 40

Ch. 61

5 Developing insight (plot)

David—servant

39:8 raises a question that 55:3-5 answers (W. Beuken)

Development of servant theme

6 Prophecy and fulfillment

Ch. 13—ch. 41

First events—new events

7 Word of God declared and later preached

2:2-4—42:1-4

ch. 6—42:18-25

29:16—45:9-13

ch. 35—chs 40—66

H. Williamson

8 A structured work

1—27/28—66 concentric circles

1—39/35—66 hooked complexes

1—33/34—66 two halves

(cf. e.g., 40:1—49:13/49:1—55:13)

9 A binary theology

Punishment—deliverance

Ethics—promise

Jerusalem—exodus

David—servant

10 A cumulative theology

See http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay "The Theology of Isaiah"

11 How did the redaction happen?

Williamson:
(a) Isaiah's messages were remembered and passed on and amplified (8^{th} and 7^{th} centuries)
(b) Isaiah of the exile collected them and organized them as a lead in to 40-55 (540s)
(c) Third Isaiah then added later material (late 6^{th} – 5^{th} centuries

Isaiah 60: The Transformation of Culture

From R. J. Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching In: Isaiah and the New Jerusalem* (Eerdmans, 1983) By culture Mouw means "the broad patterns of social life, including political, economic, technological, artistic/ familial, and educational patterns." "Transforming culture" is one of H. R. Niebuhr's five ways of understanding the relationship between *Christ and Culture.*

Isa 60 is a joyful address to the city, a Jerusalem very different from the one prophet and audience knew. It reworks a theme which has been important since the opening chapters of the book. It is a promise from God, but presupposes the hopes and fears of a particular prophet and a particular community, hopes and fears which were shaped by particular cultural experiences. But the way the theme is taken up (e.g.) in Hebrew 11 and 13 and Revelation 21-22 shows how it also transcends the specifics of its origin. "The biblical visions of the future are given to us so that we may have the kind of hope that issues forth into lives of active disobedience in the context of contemporary culture." Isa 60 envisions a community into which technological artifacts, political rulers, and people from many nations are gathered, in keeping with God's original creation intention.

When we ourselves picture heaven, we do so in "spiritual," demythologized terms. The Bible's picture is of a bodily life in a city. There is commerce there (and animals), both transformed to bring God glory. As dedicated to human-centered ends, the things human beings value are destroyed (see e.g. Isa 2; 10*),* but as things created by God and capable of glorifying God they are harnessed. God's people are thus not to covet or trust them but to wait for their transformation. Some things (such as ships) will remain as they are but will be transformed in their purpose. Others (such as weapons: see 2:4) will be changed in their very nature to this end.

There will be politics in the new city: kings will still be kings, though their significance or role will also be transformed, their oppression exposed and ended (vv. 3, 10-11, 16). "The political disillusionment and suffering which God's people experience in history does not lead them to yearn for the elimination of politics; rather they hope for a new kind of politics" (cf. 1:24-26*). Shalom* will be your overseer, Righteousness your taskmaster (v. 17)! There are different nations in the new city, but no nationalism, and no superiority of one nation over another (cf. 2:1-4; 14.1; 19.19-25). The city is the meeting place for the nations of the earth (cf. Rev 5). There is a reversing of what happened at Babel, a transformed fulfillment of what the peoples wanted there, bringing together all the richness of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and national diversities.

Isa 60 does not tell us what we to do in response to its vision (except, by implication, rejoice). This is partly because it is not the nature of a prophet's vision to do that: it is there to fire hope and imagination. Chs. 59 and 61 do offer hints. Our calling is not to make the transformation happen (we are not responsible for bringing in the kingdom) but to wait for it and seek it.

Isaiah 65: The Isaiah Agenda

(From R. Fung, *The Isaiah Vision: An Ecumenical Strategy for Congregational Evangelism (WCC, 1992).*

The Isaiah agenda is that children do not die, old people live in dignity, people who build houses live in them, and people who plant vineyards eat their fruit (vv. 20-23). It is not a description of paradise—people do die here. It is a vision of God's intention for the human community here and now. It is a realistic not idealistic one. It is modest—it makes no reference to education, leisure, democracy, or culture. It represents a minimum that God might be satisfied with. If this is God's agenda, we will wish to act accordingly and towards it. It is not difficult to do so.

Isaiah 61

Isaiah 61 is a testimony. It is "fulfilled" in Jesus' ministry (see Luke 4:16-21) and people often see it as a warrant for ministry to the poor and oppressed. But NT "fulfillment" frequently refers to a *reapplication* of OT passages (cf. Matt 2:13-18). So the application of the passage by Jesus to himself may not tell us what God originally meant. We discover that by looking at it in its own right.

Considered thus, it is not in the narrow sense a prophecy, a message relating what is going to happen "in the latter days" (contrast, for instance, Isa 11). It is the prophet's own testimony, telling us what the prophetic calling was. Nearly all the words and phrases in the chapter are picked up from passages in Isaiah 40—55, particularly the servant passages there. The person anointed by God to proclaim God's message is thus either the same person as the one who gives the testimony in 40:6; 49:1-6; and 50:4-9, or (more likely) is someone aware of being called to a similar role in later decades.

The speaker's task, then, is to declare that the moment when Yahweh restores Israel is certainly coming. It is so certain that it can be said to be here. Verses 1-3 encourage the hearers by describing in various lyrically poetic ways the transformation this will bring.

(a) The hearers are like the "afflicted" in the psalms; God promises to take their side and act on their behalf. "Afflicted" is a relational term, denoting people who are powerless and underprivileged in relation to others who are in a position to dominate them. In describing themselves as the "afflicted" or "downtrodden" they express their conviction that they have a special claim on God's aid.

(b) They are like slaves; God promises to "proclaim a release" as was supposed to happen in the jubilee year (see Leviticus 25; Jeremiah 34).

(c) They are like people exiled by their enemies; God promises to defeat these enemies. (The "year of favor" and the "day of vengeance" are the same thing; cf. GNB).

(d) They are like people depressed and mourning; God replaces their grief by joy like that of a wedding, and their depression by the enthusiastic praise of the righteous glorifying God.

Verses 4-7 continue to describe a total transformation, but in more prosaic terms. The devastated city will be rebuilt (v. 4 is best taken impersonally, "ancient cities will be rebuilt"[NEB]). The once-victorious foreigners will now serve the Judeans. The Judeans will all comprise a privileged class. Their needs will be met by the nations, and their shame will be replaced by honor (vv. 5-7 may imply that the nations benefit from Israel's priestly ministry, but their emphasis is on the glory and privilege Israel itself enjoys through its special position).

Verses 8-9 offer the reason for this transformation. Yahweh disapproves of the oppression of Israel's enemies. He reiterates the promise to Abraham for Israel described in Genesis 12:1-3.

Verses 10-11 are a response to the proclamation of vv. 1-9 (compare especially v. 3). Verse 10 praises God for that proclamation (even though the transformation itself is not yet experienced, except as a promise from God), while verse 11 expresses faith that it will come true. The "I" may therefore now be the believing community to which the proclamation is given—or perhaps the prophet now speaks as the community's representative and offers its response to God.

What about the modern applications of the passage?

(a) The speaker is called only to speak, to declare what God is going to do. Neither prophet nor audience are told to do anything themselves. Even verse 3 refers to the consequences of this preaching.

(b) Like many prophecies, this passage implies God is about to bring about the ultimate act of restoration and renewal. Such prophecies characteristically find only incomplete fulfillment in their own day. The prophets then challenge their hearers to a life of trust (that the ultimate act of restoration and renewal will come) and obedience (which establishes them as the sort of people for whom it comes). But because the prophecies point to the ultimate event, they can find other partial fulfillments in other events in which that ultimate event is anticipated—supremely, in Christ's ministry, but also in ministry in the Spirit in general.

(c) Like other such promises and challenges, they are addressed to the people of God. Any wider application to the afflicted in general has to be argued for on grounds wider than this passage offers.

Wednesday August 26: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi; Review

Homework required

Read Haggai, Zechariah 1—8, and Malachi and fill in pages 143-44 (Homework17)
Complete the review and evaluation, page 145 (Homework 18)

First Class: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Lecture:	Looking back: What Is a Prophet (Then and Now)? (page 147)
Discussion:	What is a prophet?
Lecture:	The time line (pages 55, 62);
	Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: comments on questions in Moodle postings

For further reading

Read Zechariah 9—14 and page 146 on Zechariah if you wish
Read *Mysterious Messengers*, chapters 13 and 14

Second Class: Review

Plenary discussion: The answers
Sharing insights and verses

For further reading

W. Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, pp. 28-79. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.

Further Reading on Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

Relevant chapters of
Childs, B. S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*.
Coggins, R., and others (ed.). *Israel's Prophetic Tradition*.
Eaton, J. H. *Mysterious Messengers*
Koch, K. *The Prophets*
Miranda, J. P. *Marx and the Bible*.
Mays, J. L., and P. J. Achtemeier (ed.). *Interpreting the Prophets*.
Sweeney, M. *The Twelve Prophets*. 2 vols. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000.
von Rad, G. *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 2 = *The Message of the Prophets*

Ackroyd, P. R. *Exile and Restoration*. London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968.
—*Israel under Babylon and Persia*. Oxford/New York: OUP, 1970.
Baldwin, J. G. *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*. London/Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1972.
Carroll, R. P. *When Prophecy Failed*. London: SCM, 1979.
Craigie, P. C. *The Twelve Prophets*. Vol. 2. Edinburgh: St Andrew's Press/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985.
Clines, D. J. A. "Haggai's Temple: Constructed, Deconstructed, and Reconstructed". In *Interested Parties*, pp. 46-75. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
Freedman, D. N. "Divine commitment and human obligation." *Interpretation* 18 (1964), pp. 419-31.
Goldingay, John. *Haggai*. http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay
Hanson, P. D. *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.
Hill, A. *Malachi*. New York: Doubleday, 1998.
Jones, D. R. *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*. London: SCM, 1962.
Klein, R. W. "A Valentine for those who fear Yahweh: The Book of Malachi". *Currents in Theology and Mission* 18 (1986), pp. 143-52.
Mason, R. *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*. Cambridge/New York: CUP, 1977.
—"The relation of Zech 9-14 to Proto-Zechariah." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 88 (1976), pp. 227-38.
Meyers, C. L., and E. M. Meyers. *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987.
—*Zechariah 9-14*. New York: Doubleday, 1993.
Ogden, G. S., and R. R. Deutsch. *Joel and Malachi*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
Petersen, D. L. *Late Israelite Prophecy*. Missoula: Scholars, 1977.
—"Zechariah's visions: A theological perspective". *Vetus Testamentum* 34 (1984), pp. 195-206.
—*Haggai and Zechariah 1-8*. London: SCM/Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985.
Stuhlmueller, C. *Haggai and Zechariah*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
van Ruler, A. A. *Zechariah Speaks Today*. London: Lutterworth, 1962.
Wolff, H. W. *Haggai*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988.

Homework17: Questions on Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, Malachi

The background for these prophets lies in the period of the restoration of the temple at the beginning of the Persian period, the beginning of the "Second Temple" period.

- Haggai and Zechariah were involved in the temple's restoration, about 520-516; see Ezra 1–6.
- Malachi belongs to a few decades later; his book presupposes the problems Nehemiah came to solve.

The prophecies seem to relate to the same period as the prophecies in Isaiah 56—66. .

Read Haggai, Zechariah 1—8, and Malachi and analyze what are the problems in their community and what are their responses.

1. What are the issues regarding the people's religious life? And what do they therefore have to do?

2. What are the theological issues—the facts about God that they need to take account of?

3. What are issues in their community life? What does God promise to do, and what do they have to do?

4. What other issues do these three prophets raise?
5. How do they compare and contrast with Isaiah 56-66?
6. How do they compare and contrast with earlier prophets?
7. Do they raise any issues you would like me to talk about?

Homework18: Review and Evaluation

1. Look back over your study during the course as a whole. Identify one or two verses that have come home, and/or new ways of thinking you can taken on, and/or new ways of living you are now committed to. Come to class prepared to share these.
2. Are there issues you would like to see covered in the last class? List these on Moodle.
3. Log onto the course evaluation page via Portico, fill in the evaluation, and then signify on the Moodle page that you have done so.

Zechariah 9-14

Whereas Zech 1—8 contains references to the circumstances of the period of the restoration of the Judean community and its temple (see Ezra 1—6), Zech 9—14 does not make concrete reference to a context. The new headings at 9:1 and 12:1 suggest that these chapters are separate from what precedes, and they have different emphases from these. No-one knows when they were written, but we can see the sort of situation from the two distinctive features of their prophecies:

(1) They look for a future decisive act of God to sort out the people's destiny—which implies that the author(s) are pessimistic about the present and any immediately or humanly envisageable future.
(2) They are also disillusioned with the leadership of the community, which they often attack.

So they promise that one day God will sort out this situation and fulfill the destiny of the community and of the world.

The relationship between Zech 1-8 and Zech 9-14 looks similar to that between "First Isaiah" and "Second Isaiah." In both cases one can see links with various parts of earlier scripture but especially to this one earlier prophet. Rex Mason suggests five common themes.

1 Yahweh is committed to Zion

Yahweh promises to attack Zion's enemies and defend Zion itself (9:1-10). Zion will become a source of living water (14:8). Zion will be elevated as a place of worship for all peoples and a place of holiness (14:10-21). Similar promises came in 1:7-2:13, where they were promises relating to the particular situation of the people in the period of the temple restoration; cf. also 8:3-5, 20-23. similar promises also came in Isa 2:2-4; Ezek 48:1-12.

2 Yahweh will cleanse and renew the community

See 12:10-13:6.
For the "spirit of compassion" (more literally "grace") see 4:6 (spirit), 4:7 (grace).
For the stress on cleansing and repentance cf. Ezek 36.

3 Yahweh is concerned to be known by all peoples

See 9:6-7; 14:16-19
Cf. 8:20-23.
Also Isa 19:18-25

4 The community needs to heed earlier prophecy

God does not speak through prophets now (10:1-2; 13:2-6). Cf. the overt stress on earlier prophecy in 1:2-6; 7:7-14.

5 God will provide the community with its royal and priestly leaders

See 9:9-10, along with the attacks on false leadership (10:1-3; 11:4-17; 13:7-9). See the promises in e.g. 3:1-10.

What is a Prophet – Then and Now?

(Full version "OT Prophecy Today" at http://documents.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/goldingay)

A prophet is someone who

1 shares God's nightmares and dreams

2 speaks like a poet and behaves like an actor

3 confronts the confident with rebuke and the downcast with hope

4 mostly brings these to the people of God

5 is independent of the institutional pressures of church and state

6 is a scary person who mediates the activity of a scary God

7 intercedes with boldness and praises with freedom

8 ministers in a way that reflects his or her personality and time

9 is almost certain to fail, one way or another

Prophecy as Poetry: Isaiah 31

R. Lowth—*Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753)
-- *Isaiah: A New Translation, with A Preliminary Dissertation and Notes* (1779)

J. L. Kugel—*The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (1981)
W. G. E. Watson—*Classical Hebrew Poetry* (1984)
R. Alter—*The Art of Biblical Poetry* (1985)
D. L. Petersen/K. H. Richards—*Interpreting Biblical Poetry* (1992)

The Form of Hebrew Poetry:

1. One line is generally the unit of thought (though English verse-divisions may obscure this: v. 1!). There aren't fixed "strophes" (paragraphs) though there can be development through a sequence of verses.

2. Verses generally divide into two parts that complement each other in some way: complete/repeat/intensify/contrast/ clarify... ("parallelism"). So a half-line is a "colon" and a regular line is a bicolon (but there can be tricola). Suggesting composition? Or giving you thinking time?

3. The order of words may vary from that in prose (e.g., abcc'b'a).

4. Some words in one colon may also apply in the other.

5. Verses tend to have a fixed number of (important) words—most often 3:3—though this is not a strict system. It is the rhythm that counts (cf. rap).

6. The second most common regular rhythm is 3:2—for lament rather than praise (more "limping"). It keeps bringing you up short.

The Nature and Effect of Poetry:

1. It is dense – there are fewer words. The little words get omitted. You therefore have to do more work and get involved

2. It uses imagery. Images

    * tell you what ideas feel like

    * extends your knowledge — makes it possible to see and say new things

3. It uses ambiguity. It teases you. V. 4.

Social Justice and the Prophets

Some Definitions of Social Justice

From http://www.reachandteach.com/content/article.php?story=20040812190148765

1. Social justice means moving towards a society where all hungry are fed, all sick are cared for, the environment is treasured, and we treat each other with love and compassion. Not an easy goal, for sure, but certainly one worth giving our lives for! - *Medea Benjamin.*
2. By social justice I mean the creation of a society which treats human beings as embodiments of the sacred, supports them to realize their fullest human potential, and promotes and rewards people to the extent that they are loving and caring, kind and generous, open-hearted and playful, ethically and ecologically sensitive, and tend to respond to the universe with awe, wonder and radical amazement at the grandeur of creation. - *Rabbi Michael Lerner.*
3. A long and mysterious historical process in which those who are excluded and exploited by social forces of privilege and power attempt to consociate into movements that struggle for: a more equitable distribution of social and economic goods; for greater personal and political dignity; and for a deeper moral vision of their society. Social justice is a goal toward which we move, always imperfectly, and persons and groups are motivated to realize it by their deepest spiritual and political traditions. Justice is only meaningful when it is historically specific and embodied (as opposed to theoretical or abstract).
4. The degree to which social justice is achieved in a given time and place should be measured by two (seemingly contradictory) notions: 1) the greatest good for the greatest number, and 2) how the least powerful and the smallest minorities in a society are faring. The vision of social justice is best articulated through stories that have the marginalized as their subject and that present hard questions to those at the center of power — stories like the ones Jesus of Nazareth told. - *Ched Myers.*
5. "Social Justice Work"' is work that we do in the interest of securing human rights, an equitable distribution of resources, a healthy planet, democracy, and a space for the human spirit to thrive (read: arts/culture/entertainment). We do the work to achieve these goals on both a local and a global scale. - *Innosanto Nagara*.
6. Social Justice isn't something I expect we'll attain in my lifetime. Fortunately, nothing could be more fulfilling than working to make it happen. - *Rick Ufford-Chase.*

What That Looks Like in Light of the Prophets (and Jesus)

1. Few of the concerns expressed in those definitions come from Jesus or the prophets. This does not make them wrong. It does mean we would be unwise simply to buy into them without asking what the prophets' own perspective is. Otherwise we are just using scripture to support convictions we have reached on other grounds, and at best we will end up with half-truths. (In other words, do we believe in the authority and inspiration of scripture?)
2. Scripture gives no basis for the hopes expressed in the statements, and history fits that.
3. The Bible has no ideal of equality. It recognizes and rejoices in the fact that some people have more than others. The challenge then is for them to use what they have for the benefit of others. E.g., Ps 112.) (This fits with the fact that God does not give everyone the same amount of brain or physical strength. The question is how they use it for others.)
4. The Bible does not advocate or point towards democracy, at least in the form that we know it.
5. The Bible says nothing about conservation (though it includes material that can be used to support conservation).

How Amos Reckons Things Should Be (Should Have Been)

War

1. War should be fought in a way that avoids what we might call war crimes (1:3, 13)
2. It should not involve transporting a whole people (1:6)
3. It should not ignore treaty obligations (?) (1:9)
4. It should be tempered by brotherhood (1:11; cf. 1:9?)
5. It should be tempered by compassion (1:11)
6. It should respect people who lose their lives (2:1)

Community Life: The Vision

1. Community life shaped by *mishpat* and *tsedaqah*, "righteousness and justice," or rather the making of decisions in accordance with faithfulness. (5:6-7; 6:12)
2. Part of the basis for that is this is the way Yhwh has treated Israel (2:9-11).
3. This should shape the way the community makes decisions about land and debt and thus its attitude to the poor (2:6-8; 4:1; 5:10-15)

   (Note that understanding the prophets' concerns means understanding OT assumptions about family, land, and community that they assume. The local community and the extended family is key to the way work works (there is very little employment, selling one's labor). People who might be without resources – servants ["slaves"] and immigrants ["sojourners/aliens"] – have a place within an extended family. People whose farm goes well are expected to make loans to people whose farm folds and to exercise charity to people who escape these networks. But the development of the state and urbanization undermines this system, as Samuel warned. People who do well can take over the land of those whose farm folds, using lending as a means of making money rather than of helping other people recover from a reversal, so people end up in poverty)
4. Community shaped by moderation rather than indulgence or consumerism (4:1; 6:1-6; 8:4-6)
5. People in power not be able to use their power to make themselves considerably more comfortable than others (3:15)
6. Worship simple; no need for big sound systems and powerpoint (4:4-5; 5:21-27)

Can the Vision Be Realized?

1. Amos's starting point: things are not like that. He gives no exhortations or plans for change.
2. Amos does believe that Yhwh will bring the vision to fulfillment (9:11-15)
3. Books such as Leviticus and Deuteronomy do seek to propose concrete moves to this end, though mostly to offset the grim results of the kind of ills Amos critiques.
4. 2000 years after Jesus' coming, the vision is no nearer realization in the world.
5. Perhaps Jesus would like there to be a community realizing Amos's vision. Maybe
   (a) Little communities fulfilling something of the function of the extended family and village
   (b) Lending without interest in these communities to give chance to recover from reversals
   (c) People spending less on education, transport, clothes, computers, etc.
   (d) De-professionalization of legal processes
   (e) Communities meeting in houses rather than (costly) churches
6. Let's not get interested in social justice because we have lost confidence in the idea that we can relate to God, which is what evangelicals have traditionally emphasized. If that happens, we are going the same way as the social gospel movement. A Scottish friend of mine used to say the social gospel was only any use if it was an overflow from the real gospel.

Academic Integrity Commitment

I am required to include the following seminary statement.

At the beginning of this course we, as faculty and students, reaffirm our commitment to be beyond reproach in our academic work as a reflection of Christian character. We commit to honesty in all aspects of our work. We seek to establish a community which values serious intellectual engagement and personal faithfulness more highly than grades, degrees, or publications.

Students are expected to review and understand the commitments to academic integrity as printed in the Student Handbook and the Seminary catalog. Some infractions can be addressed by personal confrontation and corrective counsel. The following violations of these commitments will be firmly addressed formally:

Submitting the same work in whole or in part in more than one course without the permission of the professor(s);
Submitting as one's own work paper(s) obtained from another source;
Plagiarism: unattributed quotations or paraphrases of ideas from published, unpublished or electronic sources;
Unpermitted collaboration in preparing assignments;
Cheating on exams by any means;
Aiding another student on papers and tests in violation of these commitments.

Any of these violations will result in a failing grade on the assignment and possibly in the course, and will be reported to the Academic Integrity Group which may impose further sanctions in accordance with the Academic Integrity Policy. Evidence of repeated violations will result in a formal disciplinary process.