

SESSION FOUR: THE PROPHETS

Please read “Latter Prophets, pages 218-223 in **RTOT**.”

1. What is the basic nature of Biblical prophecy?
2. Why might some call prophecy “forthtelling” rather than “foretelling”?
3. What are the basic forms of prophetic speech?

Please read “Isaiah”, pages 316-332 in **RTOT**.

1. What are the three main sections of the Book of Isaiah, when was each written, and who was the audience for each section?
2. What happened to Isaiah during his call to be a prophet? How was this significant?
3. What are the main themes of Second Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55) and how do they relate to the Babylonian exile?
4. Read and study the four Servant of Yahweh poems (Isaiah 42:1-6; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). The Christian tradition has identified the figure of the Servant with Jesus of Nazareth. On what basis do you think Christians make this identification? Is the Servant messianic in the Old Testament? What is unique about the redemption work of the Servant of Yahweh?
5. During what period was Third Isaiah written? What are the major themes of this section?

Please read “Jeremiah”, pages 335-349 in **RTOT**.

1. What were the main phases of Jeremiah's career in relation to the history of Judah?
2. What was the basic thrust of Jeremiah's ministry before the destruction of Jerusalem? What was its thrust after the destruction? In what way did his message change?
3. What did Yahweh give Jeremiah as a sign to confirm his calling as prophet?
4. Where did Jeremiah preach his sermon warning the people not to count on the Lord's continued presence to save them? Why was this place for the sermon significant?
5. How did Jeremiah give hope to a renewed relationship between Yahweh and his people (Jeremiah 31:31-34)?

Please read "Ezekiel", pages 351-363 in **RTOT**.

1. When was Ezekiel taken to Babylon and how long did he stay there?
2. What visions did Ezekiel have that related to the Temple in Jerusalem?
3. What does the vision of the valley of dry bones say to those in exile?
4. What are the two main sections of the Book of Ezekiel and what is the basic message of each section?

Please read the "Book of the Twelve", pages 366-395.

1. Write a theme sentence for each of the twelve minor prophets.

2. Is there a theological or literary reason for creating this collection and ordering it in this particular way? What might be some themes?
3. How can the Book of Jonah be used as a mission resource for our day and time?

A CLOSER LOOK

1. Choose one of these call narratives (Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1:1-10; Ezekiel 1-2). Use “Interpreting Old Testament Texts: A Checklist” and sections from Banstra’s “Reading the Old Testament to interpret one of these call narratives. Apply to your own sense of call.
2. Please be ready to make a 5 minute presentation to the class.