

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 31, Prophets to the North Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 31, Prophets to the North, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Phillips' lecture focuses on key prophets of the Southern Kingdom: Isaiah, Micah, and Joel. The lecture provides historical context for each prophet, including the political climate and major threats facing Judah. A significant portion explores the book of Isaiah, addressing its authorship, historical context, and themes like idolatry and the "Servant of the Lord." The lecture highlights Isaiah's prophecies about the Messiah and their connection to the New Testament. Micah is presented with an emphasis on his prophecy about the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem. Finally, the lecture examines Joel, discussing the locust plague, the call to repentance, and the prophecy of the Holy Spirit's outpouring, as quoted in Acts.

**2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 31 – Double
click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → OT Introduction → OT Lit).**



**Phillips_OTLit_Sessi
on31.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 31, Prophets to the North

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided lecture excerpts.

Briefing Document: Prophets of the Southern Kingdom (Isaiah, Micah, Joel)

Source: Excerpts from Dr. Elaine Phillips' Old Testament Literature, Lecture 31.

Main Themes:

- **Overview of Southern Kingdom Prophets:** The lecture focuses on Isaiah, Micah, and Joel, prophets who ministered primarily to the Southern Kingdom of Judah. It emphasizes the historical context of their prophecies and their significance within the broader narrative of the Old Testament.
- **Importance of Historical Context:** Understanding the historical and political situations during the prophets' ministries is crucial for interpreting their messages. For Isaiah, it's essential to recognize the shift from the threat of Assyria to the later threat of Babylon and the subsequent prophecy concerning Cyrus.
- **Theological Unity of Isaiah:** The lecture addresses the scholarly debate regarding the authorship of Isaiah, specifically the challenge posed by prophecies about Cyrus by name long before his reign. Dr. Phillips argues for the book's unity, suggesting that the differences in style and content across the book can be attributed to the prophet writing over a 40-year period. A key argument for the unity of Isaiah is that the condemnation of idolatry is a major theme in chapters 40-45, which wouldn't have weight if idolatry wasn't an issue at the time.
- **Isaiah's Key Themes:** Several themes in Isaiah are highlighted, including God's holiness, particularly as the "Holy One of Israel," the universality of God's message extending to Gentiles, and the concept of the "Servant of the Lord."
- **The Servant of the Lord:** The lecture delves into the complex figure of the "Servant" in Isaiah, emphasizing the servant's tasks of bringing justice and light to the nations. The servant is initially designated as Israel, but due to Israel's failure, a new servant is designated to restore Israel and become a light to the Gentiles, ultimately fulfilled in the suffering servant who will bear the iniquities of all.

- **Messianic Prophecies in Isaiah:** Isaiah contains several Messianic prophecies, including the prophecy of Emmanuel (God with us) and the "suffering servant" passage in Isaiah 53.
- **Micah:** Micah is presented as a contemporary of Isaiah, prophesying from the Shephelah, and he is to be remembered as the prophet who prophesied the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.
- **Joel:** Joel's prophecy focuses on the Day of the Lord, using a literal locust plague as a symbol of God's judgment and an invading army. The lecture emphasizes Joel's prophecy about the outpouring of the Spirit on all people (Joel 2:28-32), which is cited by Peter in Acts 2.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Isaiah is the most frequently quoted prophet in the New Testament.**
- **Dead Sea Scrolls:** Isaiah is well-represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls, indicating its significance in ancient Jewish thought.
- **Isaiah's Prophetic Span:** Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, a considerable length of time.
- **Cyrus's Decree:** Isaiah prophesied that Cyrus, King of Persia, would decree the return of the Jews to Jerusalem (Isaiah 44:28-45:1).
- **Stephen Harris's Argument:** Scholar Stephen Harris (in *Understanding the Bible*) argues for multiple authors of Isaiah based on differences in style, content, and theological perspective. Phillips suggests this is not surprising as Isaiah prophesied for 40 years and wrote over that period of time, the Holy Spirit using the person and age of the prophet in given circumstances.
- **Idolatry as a Central Issue:** "The major problem, major problem, the thing that God invaded against them over and over and over again, was their spiritual adultery... In other words, idolatry."
- **Isaiah's Call:** Isaiah's vision in the temple (Isaiah 6), where he sees God on his throne and hears the seraphim proclaiming "Holy, holy, holy," profoundly shaped his understanding of God's holiness.
- **Universal Message:** Isaiah's prophecies extend beyond Israel to include Gentiles: "I'm going to make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

- **The Servant's Tasks:** The Servant of the Lord is to bring "justice to the nations" and be "a light for the Gentiles."
- **Micah and Bethlehem:** "Micah's the one who prophesies that the Messiah is going to be born in Bethlehem." (Micah 5:2)
- **Joel and the Day of the Lord:** Joel uses the locust plague as a metaphor for the Day of the Lord, a day of reckoning and judgment.
- **Joel's Prophecy in Acts 2:** "Afterward, I'm going to pour out my spirit on all people, your sons and your daughters will prophesy." Peter cites this passage in Acts 2 to explain the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Quotable Quotes:

- "Isaiah is quoted more frequently in the New Testament than any of the other prophets."
- "If Isaiah's going to spend all this time... stingingly rebuking people who worship idols... that doesn't have any weight at all if it's not a problem."
- "I'm going to make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."
- "Micah's the one who prophesies that the Messiah is going to be born in Bethlehem."
- "Afterward, I'm going to pour out my spirit on all people, your sons and your daughters will prophesy."

Implications:

- This lecture provides an overview of key prophetic figures in the Southern Kingdom.
- It highlights the importance of considering both the historical context and theological themes when interpreting prophetic literature.
- It offers a defense of the unity of Isaiah against scholarly challenges.
- It shows how the Old Testament prophets foreshadowed the coming of Jesus Christ and the expansion of God's kingdom to include Gentiles.

4. Study Guide: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 31, Prophets to the North

Prophets of the Southern Kingdom: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Which prophet condemned the surrounding nations before directly addressing Israel's sins?
2. What symbolic actions did Hosea take to represent God's relationship with Israel?
3. What is the overarching message conveyed by the Book of Jonah?
4. Name the four kings during whose reigns Isaiah prophesied.
5. According to some scholars, how is the book of Isaiah divided, and on what basis is this division made?
6. What is the major theological issue that Isaiah addresses repeatedly in chapters 40-45?
7. What are two key themes or expressions that recur throughout the entire book of Isaiah, suggesting a unified authorship?
8. According to Isaiah, what is one task of the "servant" figure?
9. What does Micah prophesy about the birthplace of the Messiah?
10. According to Joel, what will God pour out on all people?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Amos condemned the surrounding nations before addressing Israel. This was to show that God's justice was universal and not limited to Israel alone, highlighting Israel's guilt.
2. Hosea married a prostitute, Gomer, and gave his children symbolic names like Jezreel, Not Loved, and Not My People. These actions represented God's faithful love for Israel despite their unfaithfulness and idolatry.
3. The Book of Jonah conveys the message of God's sovereignty over all creation and His intention to save people beyond Israel. It emphasizes God's mercy and compassion, even towards those considered enemies.

4. Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.
5. Some scholars divide the book of Isaiah into three parts (Proto-Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah, and Trito-Isaiah). This division is based on perceived differences in style, historical context, and theological perspective, with the mention of Cyrus being a major point of contention for unified authorship.
6. The major theological issue that Isaiah addresses repeatedly in chapters 40-45 is idolatry. He contrasts the power and sovereignty of God with the foolishness of worshiping idols.
7. Two key themes that recur throughout the book of Isaiah are God being called the "Holy One of Israel" and references to the temple. These consistent themes suggest a unified theological vision across the different sections.
8. According to Isaiah, one task of the "servant" figure is to bring justice to the nations. The servant is also called to be a light to the Gentiles, bringing salvation to the ends of the earth.
9. Micah prophesies that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem. Micah 5:2 specifically mentions Bethlehem Ephrathah as the place from which the ruler of Israel will come.
10. According to Joel, God will pour out His Spirit on all people. This outpouring will result in sons and daughters prophesying, old men dreaming dreams, and young men seeing visions.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the arguments for and against the multiple authorship theory of the Book of Isaiah. What evidence is used to support each side, and how does the issue of predictive prophecy play a role in this debate?
2. Explain the significance of the "servant songs" in the Book of Isaiah. How does the identity and role of the servant evolve throughout these passages, and how do these songs relate to the New Testament understanding of Jesus Christ?
3. Compare and contrast the prophetic messages of Isaiah and Micah. What were the key social and religious issues they addressed, and how did their different social locations influence their perspectives?
4. Analyze the role of idolatry in the prophetic messages of the Old Testament, particularly as highlighted in the Book of Isaiah. Why was idolatry such a serious offense, and how did the prophets use vivid imagery and rhetoric to condemn it?
5. Discuss the use of prophecy in the New Testament, with specific reference to the books of Isaiah, Micah, and Joel. How do New Testament writers interpret and apply Old Testament prophecies to Jesus and the early church?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Assyria:** A major ancient empire that threatened and eventually conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- **Babylon:** A major ancient empire that conquered the Southern Kingdom of Judah and exiled its people.
- **Bethlehem:** The birthplace of the Messiah, as prophesied by Micah.
- **Cyrus:** The king of Persia who issued a decree allowing the exiled Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.
- **Day of the Lord:** A concept in prophetic literature referring to a time of divine judgment and reckoning.
- **Deutero-Isaiah:** The name given to the supposed author of Isaiah chapters 40-55 by those who believe in multiple authorship of the book.
- **Emmanuel:** A Hebrew name meaning "God with us," used by Isaiah in reference to a future king and later applied to Jesus in the New Testament.

- **Idolatry:** The worship of idols or false gods, a major sin condemned by the Old Testament prophets.
- **Isaiah:** A major Old Testament prophet who prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
- **Joel:** A minor Old Testament prophet who prophesied about a locust plague and the outpouring of God's Spirit.
- **Micah:** A minor Old Testament prophet who prophesied about the Messiah's birthplace and called for justice and humility.
- **Prophet:** A person believed to be a messenger of God, delivering messages of warning, judgment, and hope to the people.
- **Proto-Isaiah:** The name given to the supposed author of Isaiah chapters 1-39 by those who believe in multiple authorship of the book.
- **Servant Songs:** A series of passages in Isaiah that describe the role and suffering of the "servant of the Lord," often interpreted as referring to Jesus Christ.
- **Shephelah:** A geographical region in ancient Israel, a zone of low hills lying between the central mountains and the coastal plain.
- **Syncretism:** The combination of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought.
- **Temple:** The central place of worship for the Israelites in Jerusalem, symbolizing God's presence among them.
- **Trito-Isaiah:** The name given to the supposed author of Isaiah chapters 56-66 by those who believe in multiple authorship of the book.

5. FAQs on Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 31, Prophets to the North, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source, formatted in markdown:

1. What is unique about the prophet Isaiah compared to other prophetic books in the Old Testament?

Isaiah is quoted more frequently in the New Testament than any other prophet. Additionally, Isaiah is a prominent figure in the Dead Sea Scrolls, with multiple copies of the book and commentary materials found within the scrolls, suggesting its importance.

2. During what time period did Isaiah prophesy, and what major empires posed a threat to Judah during his ministry?

Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The major foreign threat during Isaiah's lifetime was the Assyrian Empire. However, the book of Isaiah also looks forward to a time when Babylon is the major threat and even mentions Cyrus, King of Persia, who decreed the return of the exiles.

3. What is the prevailing view of many biblical scholars regarding the authorship of the Book of Isaiah, and what is the primary reason for this view?

Many scholars believe that the Book of Isaiah was written by multiple authors over different time periods, typically dividing it into three sections (Isaiah, Second Isaiah, and Third Isaiah). The primary reason is the mention of Cyrus by name in Isaiah 44-45, which these scholars find difficult to reconcile with Isaiah of Jerusalem's time, as Cyrus lived much later. This predictive prophecy is seen as problematic for those who do not believe in such miraculous events.

4. How does the lecture refute the claim that the Book of Isaiah had multiple authors and was written during different time periods?

The lecture argues that Isaiah's prophetic ministry spanned approximately 40 years, and it's natural for writing style, vocabulary, and theological perspective to evolve over such a period. More importantly, the lecture highlights the book's consistent condemnation of idolatry, particularly in chapters 40-45, arguing that such a strong rebuke would only be relevant during a time when idolatry was a significant problem in Israel, which was *before* the exile. The lecture also notes the consistent use of theological themes such as the 'Holy One of Israel' throughout the entire text.

5. What is the significance of the "Servant Songs" in Isaiah, and what is the role of the "servant" according to these passages?

The "Servant Songs" in Isaiah depict the servant of the Lord, whose tasks include bringing justice to the nations, being a light to the Gentiles, opening blind eyes, and freeing captives. Initially, Israel is designated as the servant but fails in this role due to their disobedience. God then appoints another servant to restore Israel and to bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Ultimately, the "suffering servant" is presented as the one who would suffer and be pierced for the transgressions of the people, bringing healing through his wounds.

6. How does Isaiah contribute to the understanding of the Messiah?

Isaiah uses various terms to describe the Messianic figure, including "servant," "branch," "descendant of David," and "righteous king." Key passages include the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 about a virgin giving birth to a son named Emmanuel (God with us) and Isaiah 9:6 about a child to be born with divine titles and a reign of peace. Isaiah 53 describes the suffering servant, who is despised, rejected, and bears the sins of others. These prophecies were used by authors in the New Testament when writing about Jesus.

7. What is Micah best known for prophesying?

Micah is best known for prophesying that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). This prophecy was cited by the wise men and Torah scholars when they were seeking the location of the newborn king in Matthew 2. Micah also emphasized the need to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

8. What major event does the prophet Joel describe, and what is its significance?

Joel describes a devastating locust plague, which he uses as a metaphor for an invading army and the Day of the Lord, a time of judgment and reckoning. Joel calls the people to repent (Joel 2:13). He also prophesies the outpouring of the Spirit on all people (Joel 2:28-32), a prophecy that Peter quotes in Acts 2, emphasizing that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.