

# Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 32, Prophets to the South (Jeremiah) 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 32, Prophets to the South (Jeremiah), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture transcript details a college course on Old Testament literature, specifically focusing on the prophets active around the Babylonian Captivity. The instructor, Dr. Phillips, provides announcements about exams and review sessions while also beginning to analyze the prophetic books of Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Obadiah, and Zephaniah. **The lecture emphasizes Jeremiah's role as a covenant enforcement mediator, the political context of his prophecies, and the symbolic actions he performed.** It discusses false prophets during this time and the emotional impact of the impending destruction on Jeremiah. **Brief overviews of Habakkuk, Obadiah, and Zephaniah are also provided, noting their themes of divine justice, Edom's downfall, and the Day of the Lord, respectively.** The lecture concludes by highlighting God's promise of restoration and his rejoicing over his people.

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 32 – 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  
on32.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 32, Prophets to the South (Jeremiah)

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture transcript by Dr. Elaine Phillips:

#### Briefing Document: Prophets Around the Babylonian Captivity - Dr. Elaine Phillips

**Source:** Excerpts from "ElainePhillips\_OTL\_EN\_Lecture32.pdf"

#### Main Themes:

- **The Importance of Understanding the Historical Context of the Prophets:** The lecture emphasizes the need to understand the historical, political, and social context in which the prophets, particularly Jeremiah, ministered. The Babylonian threat, the waves of exile, and the internal political divisions within Judah are crucial for interpreting their messages. As Dr. Phillips states, *"Don't lose sight of the history because that's what covenant enforcement mediators are doing."*
- **Jeremiah: A Monumental Prophet of a Horrible Time:** Jeremiah is presented as a pivotal figure during the period leading up to and including the fall of Jerusalem. His message is characterized as often sad and delivered in an extremely hostile environment. Phillips notes, *"as we move into Jeremiah, it's going to be one of the saddest prophets that we read."*
- **Covenant Enforcement and Broken Covenants:** A central theme is the concept of covenant enforcement. All prophets act as covenant enforcement mediators, but Jeremiah has an especially strong concern for the covenant. The consequences of breaking the covenant – exile and judgment – are a recurring focus. Phillips states, *"Jeremiah has a remarkable, deep, profound concern for covenant. You see it over and over and over again, and it's not an accident."*
- **False Prophets and Their Deceptive Messages:** The lecture highlights the presence of false prophets who prophesied peace and security, contradicting the warnings of impending judgment from God. This is exemplified by the story of Hananiah in Jeremiah 28, who broke Jeremiah's yoke of wood. These false prophets were a major challenge for Jeremiah. As Phillips states, *"These people aren't false prophets and saying, well, let's just go worship these most gross, horrible, heinous things. They're speaking falsely in the Lord's name."*

- **God's Promises of Restoration and a New Covenant:** Despite the dire warnings of judgment, the lecture points to the promises of restoration after 70 years of exile and the promise of a new covenant, written on the hearts of the people, as expressed in Jeremiah 31. As Phillips shares, *"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel. I will put my law in their minds and I'm going to write it on their hearts."*
- **The Day of the Lord:** In addition to the concept of covenant, the Day of the Lord appears as a significant concept from prophets like Zephaniah. As Phillips quotes from Zephaniah, *"The great day of the Lord is coming. It's a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, a day of trumpet and battle cry."*

### Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Exam Information:** The lecture begins with administrative announcements related to exams, makeup exams, and review sessions. Students are encouraged to review old exams, as the final exam will draw questions from them. *"Save those old tests and go over them. There are no changes."*
- **Jeremiah's Timeline:** Jeremiah prophesied from the 13th year of Josiah's reign through the reign of Jehoiakim and down to the 11th year of Zedekiah, when Jerusalem fell.
- **Waves of Exile:** Nebuchadnezzar did not exile the Judahites in a single event, but in waves: 605 BC, 597 BC, and 587 BC. Ezekiel and Daniel were taken in the early waves.
- **Jeremiah 23:** This chapter focuses on false prophets and the importance of speaking God's word faithfully. Phillips quotes, *"Let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. Is not my word like a fire, like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"*
- **Jeremiah 36:** This chapter recounts the story of King Jehoiakim burning the scroll containing Jeremiah's prophecies, highlighting the king's defiance of God's word. *"Whenever three or four columns of the scroll were read, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and pitched them into the fire pot until the entire scroll was burned in the fire."*
- **Symbolic Actions of Jeremiah:** The lecture lists several symbolic actions performed by Jeremiah, including:

- Burying a linen belt to symbolize the corruption of the people.
- Visiting the potter's house to illustrate God's power to reshape his people.
- Breaking a clay jar in the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) to symbolize the destruction of Jerusalem.
- Wearing a yoke to symbolize the coming Babylonian captivity.
- **The Cup of God's Wrath:** The image of the cup filled with the wine of God's wrath is used to illustrate the coming judgment. This image is also relevant for understanding Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane.
- **Habakkuk's Questions and God's Response:** Habakkuk questions God's justice in allowing evil to prosper. God responds by telling him to be patient and live faithfully.
- **Obadiah's Prophecy Against Edom:** Obadiah prophesies doom on Edom for their pride and security, and prophesies a day of restoration for Israel.
- **Zephaniah's Message of Judgment and Hope:** Zephaniah proclaims the coming Day of the Lord, a day of wrath, but also offers a message of hope, emphasizing that "The Lord, your God, is with you. He is mighty to save. He takes great delight in you; he will quiet you with his love; he will rejoice over you with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17).
- **Lamentations:** Possibly written by Baruch, is a collection of acrostic poems lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem. Chapter 3 contains the famous passage about God's compassions being new every morning and his faithfulness.

### Quotes:

- "Don't lose sight of the history because that's what covenant enforcement mediators are doing."
- "as we move into Jeremiah, it's going to be one of the saddest prophets that we read."
- "Jeremiah has a remarkable, deep, profound concern for covenant. You see it over and over and over again, and it's not an accident."
- "These people aren't false prophets and saying, well, let's just go worship these most gross, horrible, heinous things. They're speaking falsely in the Lord's name."
- "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel. I will put my law in their minds and I'm going to write it on their hearts."
- "The great day of the Lord is coming. It's a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, a day of trumpet and battle cry."
- "Save those old tests and go over them. There are no changes."
- "Let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. Is not my word like a fire, like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"
- "Whenever three or four columns of the scroll were read, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and pitched them into the fire pot until the entire scroll was burned in the fire."

This briefing document should provide a comprehensive overview of the lecture's key points and themes.

## 4. Study Guide: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 32, Prophets to the South (Jeremiah)

### Prophets Around the Babylonian Captivity: A Study Guide

#### Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What superpower posed the major threat during the prophetic ministries of Isaiah and Micah?
2. Which good king did Isaiah serve as an advisor?
3. Which king initiated a reform during which the Torah was found?
4. Approximately how many years passed between the reformation under Josiah and the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians?
5. What was the role of Hilkiah in relation to Jeremiah, and why was it significant?
6. What is the significance of Nebuchadnezzar's waves of exiles, and how did it affect Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel?
7. According to Jeremiah, what was the problem with the false prophets prophesying peace?
8. What symbolic action did Jeremiah perform with a yoke, and what did it represent?
9. What is the significance of the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) in Jeremiah's imagery and in the New Testament?
10. What is Habakkuk's primary concern, and what is God's initial response?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The superpower that posed the major threat during the prophetic ministries of Isaiah and Micah was Assyria. This empire exerted significant influence and military pressure on the region, leading to various political and social upheavals.
2. Isaiah served as an advisor to King Hezekiah, a good king of Judah. Isaiah provided guidance and counsel to Hezekiah during times of crisis, particularly when dealing with the threat of Assyrian invasion.

3. King Josiah initiated a significant religious reform during which the Torah was found in the temple. This discovery led to a renewed emphasis on covenant faithfulness and a purging of idolatrous practices.
4. Approximately 40 years passed between the reformation under Josiah and the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. Josiah became king in 627, and the reformation slowly unfolded.
5. Hilkiah was Jeremiah's father, and he was the priest responsible for finding the Torah during Josiah's reign. This connection is significant because it suggests that Jeremiah was highly aware of the covenant stipulations and the consequences of Israel's disobedience.
6. Nebuchadnezzar's waves of exiles were important because they resulted in a Jewish community already living in Babylon while Jeremiah prophesied in Jerusalem. Ezekiel and Daniel were taken in the early waves, and they prophesied from Babylon as exiles.
7. The problem with the false prophets prophesying peace was that it contradicted the covenant stipulations. The covenant said that disobedience to the Lord would result in agricultural distress, attacks from enemies, and a lack of peace.
8. Jeremiah wore a yoke as a symbolic action to represent the impending yoke of the king of Babylon. This action symbolized that the king of Babylon would put the yoke on the people.
9. The Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) was a place of smoldering and stench and all sorts of distressing things where they offered sacrifices to Moloch. Jesus used the term Gehenna to describe hell or eternal punishment, drawing on the imagery of this desolate valley.
10. Habakkuk's primary concern was the apparent prosperity of evil and the injustice he saw within Judah. God's initial response was that the Babylonians would take care of it, though that troubles Habakkuk even more.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the challenges Jeremiah faced as a prophet, illustrating your points with specific examples from the text. How did these challenges affect his personal feelings and his prophetic ministry?
2. Analyze Jeremiah's symbolic actions and explain how they were intended to communicate God's message to the people. What made these actions effective or ineffective in conveying his message?
3. Compare and contrast the messages of Jeremiah and Habakkuk, focusing on their responses to the impending Babylonian invasion and their views on God's justice.
4. Explore the theme of covenant in the book of Jeremiah. How does Jeremiah emphasize the broken covenant, and what hope does he offer for a new covenant in the future?
5. Examine the role of false prophets in Jeremiah's time. What messages were they preaching, and why were they so appealing to the people? How did Jeremiah confront their false prophecies?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Assyria:** A major ancient Mesopotamian empire that exerted significant influence over the region during the time of Isaiah and Micah.
- **Babylon:** A major ancient Mesopotamian empire that conquered Judah and took the people into exile.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement or treaty, especially between God and his people in the Old Testament.
- **Day of the Lord:** A prophetic concept referring to a time of God's judgment and intervention in history.
- **Edom:** A nation descended from Esau and often in conflict with Israel.
- **False Prophets:** Individuals who claimed to speak for God but delivered messages that were not from God.
- **Gehenna:** A Greek term derived from the Hebrew "Ge Hinnom," referring to the Valley of Hinnom, a place associated with idolatry, child sacrifice, and later, a garbage dump, used by Jesus as an image of hell.

- **Hilkiah:** The priest who found the Torah during the reign of King Josiah and the father of Jeremiah.
- **Josiah:** A king of Judah who initiated significant religious reforms based on the rediscovered Torah.
- **Lamentations:** A book of Hebrew poetry expressing grief and sorrow over the destruction of Jerusalem.
- **Nebuchadnezzar:** The king of Babylon who conquered Jerusalem and took the people of Judah into exile.
- **New Covenant:** A promise in Jeremiah of a future covenant where God's law will be written on people's hearts.
- **Prophet:** An individual called by God to speak his word and deliver messages of warning, judgment, and hope.
- **Symbolic Action:** A visual or physical act performed by a prophet to communicate a message from God.
- **Torah:** The first five books of the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Pentateuch or the Law.

## 5. FAQs on Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 32, Prophets to the South (Jeremiah), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source:

### FAQ on Prophets Around the Babylonian Captivity (Based on Dr. Elaine Phillips' Lecture)

- **What significant announcement did Dr. Phillips make in class that wasn't going to be emailed?**
- Dr. Phillips announced the details for makeup exams and the option to retake a previous exam in essay format if a student was dissatisfied with their original grade. The retake exams, consisting of a selection of essay questions from posted study guides, were scheduled for May 7th. She stressed the importance of thorough preparation and discouraged students from retaking the exam without dedicated study.
- **What should students do to prepare for the final exam in this class?**
- Students should review their old exams thoroughly because the final exam questions will be taken directly from them. They should also review the list of prophet information provided on Blackboard. Keys to old exams have been posted.
- **What was the political situation during Jeremiah's prophetic ministry, and why was it difficult?**
- Jeremiah prophesied during the decline of Judah, leading up to the Babylonian exile. Judah was under increasing pressure from the Babylonian empire, and many Judahites advocated for an alliance with Egypt as an alternative to Babylonian domination. Jeremiah, however, preached that Babylon's rule was inevitable and divinely ordained, making him unpopular and putting him at odds with political leaders and false prophets. This parallels the idea of being a prophet in a place like Kabul, Afghanistan, where societal collapse is evident, and speaking a difficult message.

- **Why is Jeremiah considered a monumental prophet during this period?**
- Jeremiah is considered a monumental prophet because he lived through and prophesied during the complete dissolution of the Southern Kingdom. His message focused on covenant faithfulness and warned of impending doom due to Judah's disobedience. His book captures the tragic circumstances of this era and is highly relevant to uncertain and troubled times. His profound concern with the broken covenant emphasizes how important the covenant is to Jeremiah's message.
- **How did Jeremiah confront the kings, false prophets, and the people of Judah, and what were the consequences?**
- Jeremiah directly confronted kings by delivering God's messages, such as in Jeremiah 36, where King Jehoiakim burned Jeremiah's scroll. He also opposed false prophets who prophesied peace despite Judah's covenant unfaithfulness, as seen in Jeremiah 23 and 28, even resulting in physical punishment like being put in stocks. He faced assassination plots from his own hometown of Anathoth for his unpopular prophecies.
- **What are some of Jeremiah's symbolic actions, and what do they represent?**
- Jeremiah performed several symbolic actions, including:
  - **The Linen Belt:** Represented the binding of the people to the Lord, and the subsequent wasting away of the people due to disobedience.
  - **The Potter's House:** Showed God's ability to reshape or destroy his people like a potter reshaping flawed clay.
  - **Breaking the Clay Jar in the Hinnom Valley:** Signified the irreversible destruction of Jerusalem and its people. The valley itself was associated with pagan worship (Topheth) and then became associated with burning garbage, tying it to the concept of *Gehenna* as described in the Gospels.
  - **Baskets of Figs:** Symbolized that those who would submit to exile in Babylon were good, but those who remained under King Zedekiah would face hardship and despair.
  - **Wearing a Yoke:** Showed that Nebuchadnezzar would come and place the people under oppression.

- **What is the significance of the "cup of God's wrath" in Jeremiah's prophecies?**
- The "cup of God's wrath" is a powerful image symbolizing God's judgment and punishment poured out against sin. It signifies the devastating consequences of disobedience and covenant unfaithfulness, akin to the effects of alcoholism on individuals and families. This image resonates with Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, where he asks to have the cup removed from him.
- **What is Habakkuk's main concern, and how does God respond to his complaint?**
- Habakkuk's main concern is the prosperity of evil within Judah and the seeming injustice of God using the even more wicked Babylonians as instruments of judgment. God responds by telling Habakkuk to write down the revelation and wait patiently, emphasizing that the righteous will live by faithfulness in the meantime. Though evil is prospering, God promises that it will self-destruct, while the faithful must live obediently. The prophet concludes with an expression of faith and rejoicing in the Lord even in the face of utter destitution.