Chapter 11

THE EXILE
JUDAH'S DARK HIGH OF THE SOUL

A Bird’s Eye View of the Unit

Chapter 11 picks up the Story with Israel in the depths of despair following Babylon’s ravaging of Jerusalem.

After exploring the profound expression of grief over Judah (and especially over Jerusalem) in the Book of Lamentations, Tullock outlines the Jews’ situation, post-587, particularly those deported to Babylon. Nothing could be the same again—language, worship, way of life, theology.

Most of the attention in the unit is devoted to the two great prophets of the Exile, Ezekiel and "Second Isaiah."

Ezekiel the visionary’s work spans the pre/post 587 benchmark. A deportee himself, he warned that destruction and change were coming. The Glory had departed Jerusalem. After 587 his visions, still bizarre, looked to a time when people would return to Palestine and a grandiose temple would rise from the ruins.

The anonymous prophet from the latter part of the 7th century, "2nd Isaiah," proclaims the effective end to Exile. Tullock takes special care with the so-called "Servant Songs."

These two prophets (with Jeremiah) are credited with giving Israel a basis for surviving the tragedy and Exile theologically.

Outline

1. Aftermath of the destruction.
   a. Lament over Jerusalem (Lamentations).
      1) Literary description.
      2) The poems.
   b. People who fled, who stayed, who were deported.
   c. Life changes: name, way of life, theology, etc.

2. Ezekiel the visionary.
   a. About the prophet himself.
   c. The literary structure of Ezekiel
   d. Oracles against Jerusalem
      1) The prophet’s call (theophany).
      2) Messages written before 587 B.C.E.
         a) Pantomimes.
         b) Against the temple.
         c) Allegories.
         d) Expectation of destruction.
   e. Oracles against the nations.
   f. Messages written after 587 B.C.E.
      a) There is hope.
      b) Israel will be resurrected.
      c) A grand temple will replace the ruins.
   g. A summary of Ezekiel’s contribution.

   a. The rise of Persia to dominance.
   b. About the anonymous prophet her/himself.
   c. About the book.
1) The prophet’s call.
2) Yahweh, Creator of everything.
3) The “Servant Songs.”
   a) The servant’s mission.
      (1) The new Exodus.
      (2) Satire of idolaters.
      (3) Babylon is doomed.
   b) The servant’s responsibility.
   c) The servant’s submission.
   d) The servant’s suffering and death.
   e) Who was the servant?
4) Messages to those who had returned.
   d. A summary of “Second Isaiah’s” message.
4. The role the exilic prophets played.

Strategy Notes

Some of “Second Isaiah’s” messages are familiar, beautiful, and inspiring, but getting undergraduates to stick with Ezekiel may require some pedagogical pyrotechnics.

But first the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile—an elemental paradigm shift in the Story.

Students need to discover without a lot of input (and on the basis of what they already know about Israelite life and religion before the fall) the ways in which Jewish life was permanently and profoundly changed by the events of 588-587 B.C.E. The corporate trauma needs to be clear.

A "B.E.Task Force" and an "A.E.Task Force" can be appointed to ferret out "What We Have Lost," and "Changes We Face." [B/AE=Before/After Exile.] The task forces may circulate surveys, hear panels of experts, conduct phone interviews, evaluate information on the Net, present recommendations.

Six budding artists in the class may be commissioned to produce posters depicting the six changes Tullock lists. Six other students may collaborate to produce a "voice-over" for each poster via monologue, song, poem, or.... Can the ambiguity of the situation come through--the pathos and the excitement?

At the least, the board can be divided between "Before" and "After" sides, with students producing "We..." statements.

Then, there is Ezekiel. Rather than ask students to plow through the whole book, they, after studying Tullock’s synopsis, may be assigned representative passages.

A costumed monologue (with two or three people giving voice to different facets of Ezekiel’s persona) could drive home the dramatic and forward-looking message of the book.

If you wish to center attention on the off-the-wall sound of Ezekiel’s visions and messages, inviting someone who does research into para-normal experience to give some impressions of Ezekiel could get discussion going on selected visions and messages.

If you have not yet delved into prophetic "signs," Ezekiel offers an opportunity par excellence. Nowhere is it more obvious that these actions are not merely clever interest getters or graphic illustrations.

Alternatively the discussion might be on:
¥ The various ways religious ideas can be communicated.
¥ Ways in which prophecy a la Ezekiel is like / unlike prophecy in the 8th century.
¥ What Ezekiel did / said that "enabled (Israel) to survive the exile" (Tullock).
¥ The notion that the medium is the message, the entire communication event in Ezekiel: the person, the situation, the media = God’s "word" to the exiles.
The conversation about "Second Isaiah" can further the understanding both of the composition of the books of prophecy and of how closely prophecy was linked to a particular situation in history.

Students may benefit from reminders of Isaiah’s 8th century *sitz im leben* (situation in life), i.e., the geopolitical and religious situation of Isaiah’s time. Then, reading Is. 40:1-2; 44:24, 26-28; 47:1, 5-6, while asking "What is Israel’s current situation and what is being predicted?" can get the one-book-or-two-books discussion going.

The literary and theological distinctives of "Second Isaiah," matters of interest to instructors, may not impress undergraduates very much.

As with so much Hebrew prophecy, nothing can take the place of oracles read aloud and read well. Such readings re-create in English what was likely the way the original message was delivered. (The Contemporary English Version is translated for the ear.) More memorable, groups of students can be led to rehearse and present selections as a voice choir. Deciding how to do the reading can be a fruitful interpretive exercise. Students may learn to recover this art form.

In both prophets’ cases the breathtaking theological leaps forward are not to be missed: Yahweh lives everywhere; the venue of Yahweh’s activity is the universe; Yahweh is Creator of everything, including Babylonians and their history; Yahweh is the only God there is!

*Multiple Choice Questions:*

1. The final destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon came in
   a. 721 B.C.E.
   b. 605 B.C.E.
   c. 587 B.C.E.
   d. 450 B.C.E.

2. Approximately how many years lapsed between the Exodus and the Exile?
   a. about 700 years
   b. about 1,000 years
   c. 1,280 years
   d. none of the above.

3. Who was the superpower which conquered and exiled Judah early in the 6th century?
   a. Assyria
   b. Babylon
   c. Persia
   d. None of the above.

4. In the Book of Lamentations the poet compared Jerusalem to
   a. an abandoned widow.
   b. a starving child
   c. an adulterous lover
   d. all of the above.

5. Which of these changes occurred in Jewish life during and following the exile?
   a. They stopped everyday use of Hebrew.
   b. They began forming synagogues.
c. They came to believe there was only God.
d. All of the above

6. What did prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel do and say which enabled Jews who lived through the awful years of the 6th century not lose their faith in the LORD?

a. They taught that Satan is strong, but God is always there for you.
b. They never gave up and urged others to see the silver lining in every dark cloud.
c. They insisted that the LORD himself was leading in Judah’s defeat and exile.
d. None of the above.

7. What word best describes Ezekiel’s experience of God’s call?

a. restrained
b. everyday
c. bizarre
d. occult

8. In what way(s) was the process of composition of the Book of Ezekiel unlike, say, the Book of Jeremiah?

a. The editors tell us their names.
b. The oracles were all written in one or two weeks.
c. The prophet himself wrote and dated the messages.
d. All of the above.

9. The primary reason for thinking that Isaiah 40-54 is a separate book is

a. a different author is mentioned twice.
b. the entire book is much longer than most prophetic books.
c. the messages speak to people during the Babylonian exile.
d. all of the above.

10. The mood or atmosphere conveyed by most of the messages of "Second Isaiah" is different from the messages of Isaiah of Jerusalem. What is the difference?

a. He proclaims hope, not judgment.
b. He has many more predictions of a messiah bringing victory.
c. He urges strict obedience to the law.
d. He stresses the importance of the temple.

11. Which of the following is NOT an important theme in Second Isaiah?

a. the servant of the LORD
b. the destruction of Jerusalem
c. the new exodus
d. the LORD is creator

12. What new, post-exilic interpretation of Israel’s role as God’s chosen people did "Second Isaiah" preach?

a. Israel was Yahweh’s servant.
b. Israel was to be humble.
c. Israel was to suffer for others.
d. All of the above.
13. Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian empire, is remembered in the Old Testament (especially in "Second Isaiah")

a. for his rebuilding of the second temple.
b. as a worshipper of Yahweh, God of the Jews.
c. because he helped exiled Jews return to Palestine.
d. none of the above.

14. Sometimes in "Second Isaiah" the "servant of the LORD" is clearly identified (by the prophet) as

a. Jesus of Nazareth.
b. Israel.
c. the prophet himself.
d. none of the above.

15. Which comes closer to the way the suffering servant is identified in "Second Isaiah’s" fourth Servant Song?

a. Israel is plainly said to be the servant.
b. The servant is the long expected messiah.
c. The servant is the prophet himself.
d. None of the above.

**Short Answer / Multiple Choice Questions:**

1. What was the Babylonian army’s basic strategy for defeating Jerusalem in 588-587 B.C.E.? ___________________________

a. huge battering rams to smash in the city gates.
b. starve them out.
c. sling fire balls into the city.
d. build ramparts up the west wall.

2. Assyrian and Babylonian policy differed sharply with regard to where conquered peoples might live. What was the difference? ___________________________

a. The Assyrians left them in their homelands; the Babylonians took them as slaves.
b. The Assyrians mixed up ethnic groups; the Babylonians moved them to live in colonies of their own.
c. The Assyrians deported only the elite; the Babylonians deported everyone.

3. What were the authors of Lamentations lamenting? __________________________

a. The destruction of Jerusalem (Judah).
b. The idolatry of God’s people.
c. How long the Exile was lasting.
d. The poverty of ordinary people.

4. At what point in the Old Testament Story did the Jews compose, collect, and preserve most of the literature (books) which eventually became the Old Testament? __________

a. During Solomon’s reign.
b. When the North fell.
c. During the Exile.
d. When the Maccabees ruled.
5. When was the Deuteronomic History completed? __________________
   a. Just before Josiah’s reforms.
   b. During the reign of Solomon.
   c. Sometime after 560 B.C.E.
   d. Cannot be determined.

6. In what literary sense were Ezekiel’s messages different from those of the classical Hebrew prophets before him? ____________________________
   a. They were written compositions.
   b. They were mostly in prose.
   c. They were usually dated.
   d. All of the above.

7. Who seems to have been the first prophet to write out most of his prophecies and send them to be read by his audience? ____________________________________________
   a. Isaiah
   b. Jeremiah
   c. Ezekiel
   d. "Second Isaiah"

8. In what way(s) was Ezekiel’s attitude to the message he was given to proclaim different from Jeremiah’s feeling about his message? ____________________________
   a. He enjoyed speaking the message.
   b. He was unsure sometimes.
   c. He felt free to add his own responses.
   d. All of the above.

9. What about Ezekiel’s family and training probably led to both his deportation in 598 B.C.E. and to his special interest in the temple? ____________________________
   a. He was from Bethel.
   b. He was a priest.
   c. He was a rabbi.
   d. He was of royal descent.

10. What historical event was the turning point in Ezekiel’s career as a prophet, after which the theme of his message changed radically? ____________________________
    a. Cyrus’ liberation of Babylon.
    b. The destruction of Jerusalem.
    c. The death of his son.
    d. None of the above.

11. What were both the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel saying to Jews in Palestine about the Babylonian threat in the years leading up to 587 B.C.E.? ____________________________
    a. If they repent and worship God every sabbath, they will not be invaded.
    b. The temple is the abiding place of Yahweh, therefore, it will not be harmed this time.
    c. There is no need to resist the Babylonians; God himself has sent them.
    d. None of the above.
12. When Ezekiel’s wife died, how did God tell him to behave? ____________________

a. To act as though nothing had happened.
b. To wail at the western gate of the temple for 10 days.
c. To preach about Jerusalem’s death at her funeral.
d. To have her burial back home.

13. To what historical event does Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of the dry bones look forward? ________________________________________________________________

a. New life for exiled Israel.
b. Believers’ resurrection from the dead.
c. The final defeat of Babylon.
d. None of the above.

14. To whom exactly was Ezekiel speaking when he addressed the "shepherds" of Israel? ____________________________________________________________

a. The king and other leaders.
b. The pastors of the people.
c. The prophets.
d. None of the above.

15. The centerpiece of Ezekiel's prophecy of hope (chs. 33–48) was an institution. What was that institution? ________________________________

a. the synagogue
b. the monarchy
c. the priesthood
d. the temple

16. How did the messages of Ezekiel and "Second Isaiah" differ from earlier prophets in the way they were composed and delivered? ________________________________

a. They are in Aramaic.
b. They were written out and sent.
c. They are all in prose.
d. None of the above.

17. Why would anyone think that the messages in Isaiah 40-54 are by a "Second Isaiah"?

a. The messages address a situation in the late 6th century.
b. The audience were living in the conditions of the Babylonian exile.
c. Cyrus was on his way to defeating the Babylonians.
d. All of the above.

18. What historical situation seems to be presumed in Chapter 40 and following of the Book of Isaiah?

a. Jerusalem is under siege by the Assyrians.
b. Judah, Jerusalem, and the temple are in ruins.
c. Judah has not yet experienced the reforms of Josiah.
d. All of the above.
19. Specifically, what was the main event "Second Isaiah" was predicting? 
   a. The Exile was about to end, and a great new Exodus was about to happen.
   b. The reforms of Josiah have failed and soon Judah will be destroyed.
   c. The Assyrian victory over Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem.
   d. None of the above.

20. What is the "good news" which runs right through the messages in "Second Isaiah"?
   _________________________________________________________________
   a. The temple will soon be rebuilt.
   b. The Assyrians will not be able to defeat Jerusalem.
   c. Your exile will soon be over.
   d. A holy remnant will survive and flourish.

21. The great event to which "Second Isaiah" looks forward is spoken of in terms reminiscent of a great event in the past. What was that past event? 
   _____________________________
   a. The Sinai covenant.
   b. David’s rise to the throne.
   c. The Exodus.
   d. Abraham’s migration from Ur.

22. What do the "Servant Songs" say was God’s mission for his servant (Israel) in the world?
   _________________________________________________________________
   a. To be a light to the nations.
   b. To come out and be separate.
   c. To keep God’s laws in every respect.
   d. b and c

23. How can an interpreter of the fourth Servant Song in "Second Isaiah" understand the servant as a group, when an individual is clearly described?
   _____________________________
   a. The meaning has been changed.
   b. Interpreters are free to see "what it means to them" in the song.
   c. Ancient Jews often spoke about a group as though it were an individual.
   d. Most English translations of the song are inaccurate.

Short Answer Questions:

1. Approximately, how many years lapsed between the Exodus and the Exile?
2. Which of the two Israelite kingdoms survived its destruction by a superpower--though not as a political entity?
3. Name the superpower which conquered and exiled Judah early in the 6th century.
4. How was what the Assyrian conquerors did to Ephraim different from what the Babylonians did to Judah?
5. At the end of the seventh century Assyria was swept aside by another superpower. What is that superpower called?
6. In 587 B.C.E., those Israelites who might create trouble were taken off to Babylon. What happened to the rest of the people who survived the Babylonian conquest?
7. Sometime during or after the Exile Jews invented an institution which became the center of their religious life. What institution was that?
8. During the Exile, what big change did the Jews experience in their worship? ...in their language?...in their government?
9. Most of the literature (books) which makes up the Old Testament was collected and edited during which period
in Old Testament history?
10. What were the people who had once been called Hebrews, then Israelites, called after the Exile?
11. Name two great prophets who helped Judah understand events during Babylon’s conquest and exile of the Jews.
12. Characterize the theophany in which Ezekiel felt himself commissioned to be a prophet.
13. How does Ezekiel’s view differ from the view common in Israel concerning corporate and individual responsibility before God?
14. Make a list of at least six of Ezekiel’s prophetic signs.
15. Choose one of Ezekiel’s prophetic signs and tell what message it communicated.
16. There is a debate about the composition of the book of Isaiah. What is that debate about?
17. The opening words of “Second Isaiah” proclaim that Jerusalem "has served her term," paid "her penalty." To what historical event does the prophet seem to be referring?
18. Who is named in "Second Isaiah" as the LORD’S Anointed One (Messiah), poised to free God’s people?
19. In "Second Isaiah," when the identity of "the Servant of the LORD" is stated, who is the Servant said to be?
20. In the last of the Servant Songs (Is 52-53), what is the servant called on to do?
21. What historical crisis does each of the following prophets seek to interpret for Israel?

**Essay/Discussion Questions:**

1. Compare the treatment of the Israelites/Jews by each of the empires which conquered them or held power over them.
2. Why was the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile such a crisis of faith among the Jews? What did prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel do and say which enabled some Jews to live through those awful years without losing their faith in the LORD?
3. Compare the way Jeremiah and Ezekiel came to sense God’s call to be a prophet.
4. In what ways is Isaiah’s portrayal of idolatry and those who use idols a parody of the use of images?

**Student Projects**

1. Prepare a crossword puzzle on the Jewish Exile. Don’t just include trivia as your words and clues.
2. Prepare for the *Economic Commission of the Babylonian Empire* a report from an on-site survey of Judah by health, agricultural, environmental, sociological, educational, demographic, anthropological, and other experts. The survey was done in the fall of 580 B.C.E.
3. Prepare a graph which compares various facets of life in Judah in 620 B.C.E. with the situation in the same area 40 years later, 580 B.C.E. Wine, olive oil, and barley production, the average wage, peasant debt, the average life span, infant mortality, per capital taxes, the cost of living, productivity, etc.
4. Try your hand at depicting the living creatures Ezekiel describes from his vision (ch.1). Use a model, a mobile, a collage, a drawing, whatever works.
5. Assemble a montage which attempts to depict one of Ezekiel’s more bizarre visions. State which and where found.
6. Draw a picture of the fantastic new temple as envisioned by Ezekiel, or build a scale model.
7. Work up a psychological profile of Ezekiel for his chart at his physician’s office.
8. Prepare the transcript of an interview with Cyrus of Persia by a young Jewish reporter on the eve of Cyrus’ triumphal march on Babylon. Remember: we have no reason to suspect that Cyrus saw things the way "Second Isaiah" did. The focus of the interview will be on Cyrus’ policies toward small "nations" (ethnic groups) across the empire.
9. Find all the references to Cyrus the Great of Persia in "Second Isaiah." Transform what "Second Isaiah" is saying about Cyrus into a secret bulletin to be sent out to an underground network of Jews eager to return to Palestine.
10. Identify at least five of the great “symphonic” themes to which "Second Isaiah" returns again and again. Transform each of these verbal themes into music expressive of that theme, themes which could in turn become a larger musical piece, capturing the message of "Second Isaiah."
11. With several colleagues, work up, rehearse, and present a dramatic reading of the fourth Servant Song (Is 52-53) for voice choir. Do the best exegesis of the song you can. Read up on how such readings are done. Consider a sound track of music to enhance the reading. Don’t let the presentation become hokey!

---

91
Some Key/New Terms

allegory
apocalyptic
Aramaic
cherubim
dirge
exile
exodus, new
glory, the
henotheist/ism
Jew
lament
monotheist/ism
parallelism
qinah
Servant of Yahweh
Servant Songs
Sheol
Sign, prophetic
Synagogue
Theophany
Vision
Yoke

Names

Cyrus
Deutero-Isaiah
Ezekiel
2nd Isaiah

Places

Babylon
Chebar, "River"
Persia
Zion