

Global Association of Theological Studies

# Major Prophets

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## Notes to the Instructor

# How to Use This Manual

Welcome to the world of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, which in multiple ways parallels our world.

These lessons are interactive, encouraging the students to get into the Word.

*Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember. Involve me, I learn.*

Proverbs 15:2 in the Living Bible says, “A wise teacher makes learning a joy.” This applies to teachers of all ages. Teaching methods differ according to the age level, but every age should enjoy studying God’s Word. One common saying among good teachers is “it is a sin to make the gospel boring.” This applies to all the Word of God. Teach with passion. Teach with energy. Teach with anointing and teach with wisdom.

Each lesson will require one and a half to two hours. If you do not have that much time, divide the lessons, or choose the activities best suited to your students and environment. Some of the in-class exercises could be given as homework assignments. Be flexible. The lessons are.

At the end of each lesson is a list of discussion/review questions. These may be used in several ways: (1) class discussion starters, (2) class review, (3) individual checkup, and/or (4) a review quiz. Answers may be given orally or written.

“Variety is the spice of life.” Spice up (enliven) your lessons by using a variety of teaching methods.

## Lesson 1—The Keepers of the Light

**Overview.** To define role of the prophets

Lessons 1–3 set the stage for the ministries of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. To understand the prophecies of the major prophets, the students need to be acquainted with the political and religious conditions of Israel, as well as the geographical location.

**Word search.** Students use concordances to find references for the verses given on the table. They determine the prophet called and how he was called. If time is limited, assign specific verses to each team. When time is called, students share answers and complete the table.

Answers: (1) I Kings 19:16. Elisha anointed by Elijah; (2) Isaiah 49:5. Isaiah called by God from the womb; (3) Jeremiah 1:4–5. Jeremiah called by God from the womb; (4) Amos 7:15. Amos called by God from keeping the sheep; (5) Ezekiel 2:1–3. Ezekiel called by audible voice of God; (6) Jonah 1:1–2. Jonah called by audible voice of God.

**Think about it.** Brainstorm with the class on ways the responsibilities of the keeper of the light parallel a prophet's duties.

**Dig deeper.** Students are to list Old Testament prophets. Divide the class into teams of two or three. Allow four minutes for the teams to list as many prophets as they can. Ask the team with the longest list to read theirs. Other teams check off their list the duplicate names called. Other teams contribute names not mentioned. In Part II of this exercise, students designate which prophets were speaking, writing, or both. Allow a short time for comparison and discussion.

**Checkup.** After students have studied the Tanakh table for a few minutes, ask them to close their books. On a dry erase board make columns with headings: (1) Law, (2) Early Prophets, (3) Latter Prophets, and (4) Writings. Ask for two volunteers: a reader and a scribe. The reader uses the table of contents in his or her



Bible to read the names of the books. As each book is read, the class identifies the Tanakh category the book belongs in, and the scribe lists it on the board.

**Conclusion.** Lead the class in singing “Send the Light,” or read it together as a class.

**Commitment.** Allow a few minutes for students to write their commitment on the memo pad. Conclude with a prayer.

## Lesson 2—The Kings of Israel

**Overview.** To study a chronological listing of the kings of Israel and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses

**Review of Lesson 1.** Collect from the students their one-page testimonies. Grade these and return them to the students at the beginning of lesson 3. Ask two or three students to quote II Peter 1:19.

**Review the history of Israel.** This is basic history that your students should know before they can comprehend the times and messages of the major prophets. Answers: twelve; Abraham; Egypt; Moses; Canaan; idols; Samuel; king; Rehoboam; ten; Samaria; Judah; Jerusalem; altars; Temple

**Note it.** Students are asked to list two or three ways in which the geographical location of their nation affects the lifestyle of the people. This is for the students’ observation. You need not ask for comments unless you feel it would be beneficial to their understanding of their environment.

**Study of the kings.** This study of the kings could easily take an hour: (1) 5 minutes – self-check on Israel’s history; (2) 15–20 minutes – assigning and grading the kings; (3) 10 minutes – sharing grades; and (4) 15–20 minutes class discussion, which probably will include varied opinions.

**Dig deeper.** This exercise is designed to make students think. To conserve time, divide the list of kings between individuals or teams to study and grade. Students look up the scriptural passages and determine a grade to assign each king, using the GATS grading scale. Then they share their grade recommendations, and the class completes the table. Conclude by engaging the class in a discussion, using the questions given and any that arise from this exercise.

**Discussion and review questions.** At the end of each lesson is a list of discussion/review questions. These may be used in several ways: (1) class discussion starters, (2) class review, (3) individual checkup, and/or (4) a review quiz. Answers may be given orally or written. Use a variety of methods to engage the class.

### **Lesson 3—The Enemies of Israel**

**Overview.** To define Israel's enemies and how they infiltrated and conquered God's people

**Review of lesson 2.** Return to the students their graded testimonies from lesson 1. Ask two or three students to share the summary of lesson 2 that they wrote.

**List them.** Answers: Judah, verse 19; Benjamin, verse 21; Manasseh, verses 27-28; Ephraim, verse 29; Zebulun, verse 30; Asher, verses 31-32; Naphtali, verse 33; Dan, verse 34.

**Talk about it.** Use the discussion questions given to engage the class in analyzing how the Canaanites' sins contaminated God's people.

**Do it.** Bring a transparent jar or glass of clean water and some dirt. Add a small amount of dirt to the water and stir. Did the clean water purify the dirt, or did the dirt pollute the clean water? What does this say about sin?

**Look closer.** If you have an overhead projector and copier, make transparencies of the maps. Project the ancient map on the wall. Overlay it with

the contemporary map to give students an overview of the magnitude of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires.

**Dig deeper.** Students are asked to list what God foretold that Israel's enemies would do to them.

**Look closer.** Lead the class in a discussion of their findings.

**Talk about it.** Divide the students into three teams and assign each team one point to discuss. If time allows, call for one member from each team to share their team's conclusions.

**Plan ahead.** In appendix 4 is a skit "Answering the Call." Choose two dramatic students to present this at the beginning of lesson 4. Give each actor a copy of the script to study (not memorize). Gather the needed props and run through the skit at least once before class.

## Lesson 4—Isaiah Commissioned

**Overview.** To evaluate Isaiah's call and how it influenced his ministry

**Review of lesson 3.** Call for the students to turn in the warning to the church against compromise that they wrote. If there is time, share a few of these with the class.

**Introduction.** Introduce the lesson with the skit, "Answering the Call." (See appendix 4, page 192.) Ask students to summarize in one sentence what the skit said to them.

**Note it.** If time allows, ask two or three of your students to share who they were (professionally, e.g., student, pastor, or baker) when God called them and where they were geographically.

**Note it.** Ask for a volunteer or two to share a time when the presence of God pressed them to their knees in repentance or awe.

**Write it.** Students write a prayer for their nation. Lead the class in a corporate prayer of repentance for their nation.

**Do it.** To illustrate the purpose of prophecies, ask students to get out their phones. Instruct them to use the camera feature and focus in on something or someone. Talk about how with the zoom feature they can bring distant objects closer and enlarge them, making the details clearer. How is this like prophecy? Stress that prophecies should be studied in the light of (1) current events by examining them closely, and (2) future events by carefully comparing them with other prophecies in God's Word.

## **Lesson 5—The Book of Isaiah**

**Overview.** To present an overview of the Book of Isaiah and analyze how God's goodness and severity is demonstrated in His dealings with His people.

**Review of lesson 4.** Allow a brief time for volunteers to share the mission statements they wrote for Isaiah and for themselves.

**Talk about it.** In several places, discussion questions are given. Use these to lead your students into introspection.

**Dig deeper.** Students may work individually, in teams, or as a class to list the eight woes pronounced by God upon Judah.

**Read aloud.** Ask for volunteers to read aloud these passages as they are necessary for understanding the flow of the lesson. Never call on a student to read aloud unless you know that student is qualified to do so.

**Plan ahead.** "The Case of Jehovah vs. Judah," (appendix 6) is a synopsis of this lesson. Present it at the beginning of lesson 6 for review. A practice session

would be helpful, but not necessary. Simply give copies of the script to the actors and let them present it as a reader's theater. (Actors read and act out their parts spontaneously.) No props required.

**Optional:** Announce to the class that you will give extra credit to those who write a modern version of the Parable of the Vineyard.

## Lesson 6—Prophecies of Judgment

**Overview.** To demonstrate that the law of the harvest is universal and timeless

**Review of lesson 5.** Ask students to submit the revision of the Parable of the Vineyard that they wrote. (Optional: give extra credit for completing this project.) Present the skit "The Case of Jehovah vs. Judah."

**Talk about it.** After the skit, lead the class in a discussion of the significant points.

**Read it.** Students find and read together Hosea 8:7. Allow a few minutes for them to write a paraphrase of this verse, either individually or as a class.

**Dig deeper.** Assign each team one nation to research. Each team chooses a scribe to record findings. Allow 15–20 minutes for research. Teams should use concordances and/or other resources. If numerous biblical references are given, students read the first verse/passage, the last, and any significant events. Teams organize their notes chronologically. Call for scribes to report their team's findings. Set a time limit for reports.

**Plan ahead.** On a sheet of paper print Sennacherib's message to Hezekiah (in italics in the script). Roll it and tie with a ribbon. Give a copy of the script to five good readers to study. Assign each a part. This will be presented as a readers' theater in lesson 7.

## Lesson 7—Isaiah’s Prophecies Fulfilled

**Overview.** To examine Isaiah’s fulfilled prophecies in the light of history and be aware of coming events

**Review of lesson 6.** Collect the written testimonies demonstrating the law of the harvest. Return to the students the graded parables of a contemporary vineyard.

**Readers’ Theater.** If “theater” is offensive to some, “radio program” could be used here. Students assigned parts sit or stand facing the class as they dramatically read the script. Afterward, lead the class in a discussion of the significant points.

**Talk about it.** Divide the class into two groups and assign each a chapter to discuss Hezekiah’s miracle and his mistake. (The assignment at the end of lesson 6 was for students to read chapters 38–39, so they should be prepared to engage in a discussion.) Appoint one student in each group as the leader and another student to be the scribe and take notes. Set a time limit. Call for each group’s findings.

**Dig deeper.** To save time, assign references on the table to individuals or teams. Students share their answers and their teammates complete the tables.

**Answers to Fill in the Blanks (Table 1):** (1) Rezin/Syria, Pekah/Israel; (2) Damascus; (3) Palestina; (4) Assyria; (5) Moab; (6) Egypt and Ethiopia; (7) Kedar; (8) Tyre; (9) David; (10) Fifteen.

**Answers to Fill in the Blanks (Table 2):** (1) Hezekiah, Babylon; (2) east; (3) Medes; (4) Babylon, Sodom, Gomorrah; (5) Cyrus, Jerusalem, Temple; (6) children, Israel, Jerusalem; (7) altar, Egypt; (8) world; (9) seventy; (10) Edom (Idumea), generation, generation.

## Lesson 8—The Messianic Prophet

**Overview.** To interpret Isaiah’s messianic prophecies in light of Christ’s first and second advents

**Review of lesson 7.** Ask the class to quote in unison Isaiah 53:3–5.

**Talk about it.** These discussion questions can lead into a lengthy analysis. To prevent this, allow a brief time for each question. When the timer sounds, stop the discussion immediately, even in the middle of a student’s argument.

**Dig deeper.** Divide the class into three teams and assign each team a chapter: Isaiah 43, 44, or 45. Each student takes a segment to study. Students highlight verses that refer to the oneness of God. When time is called, have a reading marathon. In scriptural sequences the students read aloud the verses they highlighted. Keep the reading moving. No discussion. Just the Word of God speaking for itself. As verses are quickly read one after another, the almighty God will be exalted. Students who are not reading follow along, highlighting in their Bibles the verses read. This makes a convenient reference for future study of (or teaching on) the oneness of God.

**Talk about it.** (optional) This discussion is designed to reinforce the students’ understanding that Jesus Christ is the one true God revealed in flesh. If your students are well grounded in this truth and time is limited, you might skip these questions.

**Word search.** Assign each student (or team) a prophecy and challenge them to find a New Testament verse that proves Jesus Christ fulfilled that prophecy. (Concordances are needed.) When time is called, students share their answers and complete the table.

**Think about it.** Allow time for students to write a few sermon notes focusing on a promise given in Isaiah’s prophecies.

**Make a note.** Students describe how one verse from the list has ministered to them in the past.

## **Lesson 9—Jeremiah, the Weeping Prophet (Part 1)**