

Week 9

Questions to keep in mind while reading (and note that the focus question for your group will appear on your discussion board page)

Read Chapter 9 of TIOT, pages 283-318

1. The biblical authors evaluate the kings and their reigns on the basis of their religious integrity. What criteria would you use to evaluate a nation's success today?
2. (TIOT 287) "Josiah's fate, apparently unjust on personal terms, might be understood in a wider theological context." Explain what is meant by this statement.
3. (TIOT 289) "One might even go so far as to say that the kings, not the prophets active at this time, were the reformers. Such a claim recognizes that reforms require power, usually political power, which prophets did not routinely possess." Whom do you trust more to institute reforms, kings or prophets?
4. (TIOT 294) "Times of radical social change seemed to elicit prophetic responses." We seem to be in a time of such change today. What are the prophetic voices speaking today? What are they saying? (*Large Group 1*)
5. (TIOT 296) "A test by time was consistent with the test of true prophecy provided in the book of Deuteronomy (Deut 18.22)." If prophetic truthfulness is only determined in retrospect, how do you discern what is truthful prophecy now?
6. What first comes to mind when you think of "righteousness"? When you think of "justice"? Have some rough definitions in mind? Now look at question 9 below.
7. (TIOT 308) "Hosea presents us with a deity torn by indecision--in love, but capable of violence toward the beloved." This does not sound too good to me. Can this be the basis of a viable theology?
8. (TIOT 311) Micah "demonstrates that one's location--geographic and social--affects profoundly what one says theologically." What is your 'location,' and how does it affect you theologically?
9. Question 6. *continued*: (TIOT 302) "If *righteousness* represents the principle of benevolence, the will to act beneficently toward another person, then *justice* involves the norm of distributing such good intentions toward many in the society, not just a few." How did your definitions of righteousness and justice match up with Amos'?

This week read Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Isaiah 40-55.

(Note that I am omitting Nahum, Habakkuk, and EZEKIEL! You should put these on your list to read some day.)

Most of the questions below are from or adapted from Bandstra's ["Reading the OT"](#)

Questions for Review

- **Jeremiah**

1. What were the main phases of Jeremiah's career in relation to the history of Judah? What was the basic thrust of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry before the destruction of Jerusalem, and what was its thrust after the destruction? In what way did his message change? See [Introduction](#) and [Jeremiah as a Whole](#).
2. What vocabulary and themes suggest that Jeremiah had a connection with the theological perspective of the Deuteronomistic school? See [Commission](#).
3. Jeremiah prophesied in Jerusalem but had family roots in Israel, in particular, Anathoth. How does his message reflect the regional tension that existed between north (Israel) and south (Judah and Jerusalem)? See [Commission](#) and [Temple Sermon](#).
4. How did Jeremiah both affirm the importance of the Mosaic formulation of God's covenant with his people and give it a new twist? See [New Covenant](#).
5. What are "Jeremiah's complaints," and what insight do they give you into the personal relationship of the prophet with God? See [Jeremiah's Complaints](#).

- **Isaiah 40-55**

1. What are the main themes of Second Isaiah, and how do they relate to the Babylonian exile? Does Second Isaiah draw more upon themes of the Exodus and the Mosaic covenant or of the Davidic covenant?
2. Describe the "servant of Yahweh" figure of Second Isaiah, and explain his relevance to the experience of God's people in the sixth century B.C.E.

Questions for Reflection

1. Considering the call of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1, in what ways do you perceive your call to ministry to be like or unlike his? (*Large Group 2*)
2. In propounding his "new covenant," Jeremiah stresses that God would forgive the Israelites their sins and renew his relationship with them. What do you think Jeremiah means by forgiveness? Would God forget what the people had done or would he simply disregard it? What would the people have to do to get this forgiveness?
3. Jeremiah's autobiographical complaints contain frank indictments of God and the way he treated Jeremiah. Study these complaints. Do you think Jeremiah had the right to call God into question? Did God actually mislead Jeremiah at any point? Was God at fault in any way, as Jeremiah claimed? Can God be at fault? Should Jeremiah have been so frank and forthright with God?
4. Read and study the four servant of Yahweh poems in Isaiah. (42.1-6; 49.1-6; 50.4-9; 52.13-53.12) The Christian tradition has identified the figure with Jesus of Nazareth. On what basis do you think Christians make this identification? Try to discover what Jewish interpreters do with the servant. To whom do you think the servant poems refer? Could the figure be messianic?