

# SESSION 4: GOSPEL IN THE DIVISION TO EXILE

## PREPARATION FOR THE SESSION

Read Jeremiah 2; Isaiah 52:10-53:12; Jeremiah 31; Ezekiel 36; Hosea 1-3.

## Summary of the Video: Module 3, Episode 4

In this episode, we continue with Biblical Theology as we investigate the topic of the Gospel as it is presented through the writings of the division to exile. More specifically, we'll look at the problem humanity faces and the solution God offers.

Looking at Jeremiah 2, we attempt to describe “what is wrong with the human race.” (Often we have a slim idea of the problem, focusing exclusively on the legal aspect of having broken God's law.) According to Jeremiah 2, sin is fundamentally “idolatry”; you love the wrong thing; you have a “disordered affection”. Righteousness means being satisfied in God, having your loves ordered in the right place.

Then we turn to Isaiah 40-55 because it offers a weighty depiction of redemption. It takes the exodus as its foundational picture and then imagines God's people having that same experience but to a greater degree than before. We see God's redemption begin in the natural under the pagan king Cyrus and then it is envisioned in the supernatural with “the Servant” (aka the Messiah).

*Q: After God's glory had left the temple (Ezekiel 11), how would God's people have worshipped God?*

*A: In exile, the people studied the law (in a synagogue type meeting) and practised it. Studying and obedience replaced sacrifice.*

Now we focus on three major pictures of the Gospel in the prophets.

1) It's necessary to devote a lot of attention to Isaiah 52-53 because it is central to Isaiah and to Christianity as a whole. In Isaiah, this chapter brings the resolution of all the built-up tension the people have been feeling as they long for God to redeem them. As one of the “Servant Songs”, it goes back and forth between talking about an individual (the Messiah) and all faithful believers; these come together in Christ who is an individual who bears the destiny of all his people. Jesus was a “substitute who took a penalty that belonged to us.” We're encouraged to see Christ's sacrifice as the collaborative work of the Father, Son and Spirit (rather than making a sharp distinction between the Father and Son).

2) A probably more prominent Gospel image in this section of Scripture is the New Covenant and new heart. Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 powerfully draw out this theme. When God changes our hearts, we will live because we'll be forgiven and know God. In both passages, it is the drawing out of captivity and into God's presence that is envisioned.

*Q: New Testament scholar N.T. Wright claims that though the Bible talks about penal substitution, it's not the main point. The main point is forgiving Israel (God's people) and establishing the kingdom which leads to the new creation. What do you think about that?*

A: He's probably right in terms of what the Bible emphasizes but he probably pushes too much against overemphasizing penal substitution. Penal substitution is quite important. It's more helpful to compare our salvation to the exodus: there's a Passover lamb, a victory over the enemy, a baptism and sacrificial meal story, and entry into God's presence.

*Q: How would you describe the role of the Holy Spirit in penal substitution?*

A: Perhaps he's not as obviously central when we look at the cross just through its penal substitutionary effect, but he's more prominent in resurrection (the culmination of atonement) and applying the atonement to our lives.

3) We move then into "redemption/ransom" as seen in Hosea 1-3. To redeem is to buy someone or something back. One person buys someone out of slavery so that the person might enter your service or your family.

In the final slide, Andrew Wilson gives us a snapshot of the Gospel in nine minor prophets. Each one has an emphasis or angle through which you see how God saves his people, providing the solution to precisely the problem they faced.

## Terms You'll Need to Know:

Tim Keller—(former) pastor in New York City; author of many books, on the topic of idolatry see especially *Counterfeit Gods*.

John Piper—(former) pastor in Minneapolis, Minnesota (USA); author of many books; every one of them has as its major theme that "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him".

Westminster Confession and Catechism—a statement of faith and a teaching handbook of the Church of England and Scotland; the catechism contains a series of questions and answers (the teacher asks the question and the student memorizes the response); the first question is famous: "What is the chief end of man?"

Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Intervarsity Press, 1993).

Diaspora—a dispersion or spreading out of people; people from one area are displaced and must live elsewhere.

Penal Substitution—because of the breaking of God's law, the death penalty is deserved by each person, but God will accept a substitute to receive our penalty in our place.

*Nunc dimittis*—Latin for the first lines of Simeon's prayer in Luke 2:29-32, i.e. "Now you dismiss"; people use this term to refer to the entirety of Simeon's prayer.

Servant Songs—in Isaiah chapters 42, 49, 50, 52-53 we find four prominent prophecies about a "servant"; they refer to the people of Israel and to the Messiah.

Carl Trueman, “My Protestant Oscar Predictions,” *First Things* (Online 27 Feb 2018).

Cruciform ethic—in this context, the cross shapes what we think is beautiful, admirable, applause-worthy, worth-imitating.

*Taken*—movie starring Liam Neeson in which his daughter is kidnapped and he destroys Paris in order to find his daughter (and kill her kidnappers).

## Watch Video

Watch Module 3, Episode 4 (1hr 17 minutes).

### Division to Exile

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- I. The Story So Far
- II. The History of Israel and Judah from the Division to the Exile
- III. God
- IV. Gospel**
- V. People
- VI. Mission

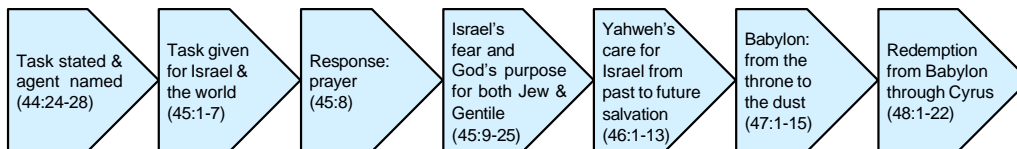
## Humanity's Problem: Jeremiah 2

- "Therefore I still contend with you, declares the LORD, and with your children's children I will contend. For cross to the coasts of Cyprus and see, or send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has been such a thing. Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water." (Jer 2:9-13)
  - All sin, fundamentally, is idolatry
  - All sin involves (1) forsaking the fountain (the real God), and (2) hewing out broken cisterns (false gods)
  - Righteousness, on the other hand, is being satisfied in God. Piper: glorify God *by* enjoying him forever ("Ham *and* eggs? Sometimes you glorify God *and* sometimes you get joy?")
  - How do you glorify a mountain spring? How do I honour my wife?
- This has massive implications for the way we understand, preach, and train people to live in the gospel
  - Calling someone to respond to the gospel is calling them to prioritise their own highest joy. It's about desire – preaching the gospel is not just about showing it's true, but making people want it to be true
  - The treasure hidden in a field
  - C S Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*
  - Thomas Chalmers, *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*
  - The writer to the Hebrews contrasts Jesus ("who *for* the joy endured the cross") and Esau ("who *for* a single meal sold his birthright"). The difference is one of prizing your deepest, highest joy
  - We need to call unbelievers and believers alike to forsake their cisterns and drink from the fountain!

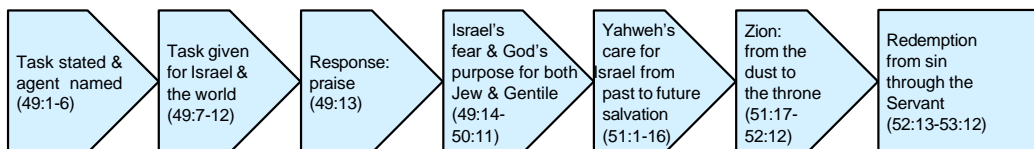
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## Redemption / Exodus: Isaiah 40-55

### Redemption Through Yahweh's Anointed: Cyrus (Isaiah 44-48)



### Redemption Through Yahweh's Anointed: the Servant (Isaiah 49-53)



Source: Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*

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## Penal Substitution: Isaiah 52-53

<b>Exalted</b>	<b>Led to the slaughter</b>	Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.
<b>Crushed</b>	<b>Acquainted with grief</b>	Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
<b>Stricken</b>	<b>Silenced</b>	
<b>Chastised</b>	<b>Buried</b>	Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
<b>Pierced</b>	<b>Cut off</b>	
<b>Not esteemed</b>	<b>Revealed</b>	He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.
<b>Iniquity laid upon him</b>	<b>Smitten</b>	
<b>Oppressed</b>	<b>Despised</b>	Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.
<b>Rejected</b>	<b>Numbered</b>	
<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Afflicted</b>	
<b>Bore the sin of many</b>	<b>Prospered</b>	
<b>Makes intercession</b>	<b>Accounted righteous</b>	

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## New Covenant, New Hearts: Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36

- Moses had prophesied a day, in Deuteronomy 30, when Israel's hearts would be circumcised and they would love Yahweh with all their hearts, and live
- Around the time of the exile, both Jeremiah and Ezekiel look forward to a day when this will actually happen
  - "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer 31:31-34)
  - "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." (Ezek 36:22-27)
- This, Jesus says the night he is betrayed, is happening now, through my death. The new covenant is beginning. The forgiveness of Israel's sins is here. The law will be fulfilled as you walk by the Spirit

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## Redemption / Ransom: Hosea 1-3

- Hosea is married to a prostitute named Gomer. She, from what we can tell, has become enslaved through her prostitution, and Hosea is instructed to redeem her: to buy her back
- 'Redemption' in the OT involves the patriarch of a clan – the strong male – putting his resources on the line to ransom a family member
  - Someone driven to the margins of society (Boaz redeeming Ruth from poverty)
  - Someone seized by enemies against whom he has no defence (Abraham redeeming Lot from captivity)
  - Someone entangled in sin and unable to escape (Hosea redeeming Gomer from prostitution)
  - Someone enslaved by a powerful enemy who will not let them go (Yahweh redeeming Israel from Egypt)
  - Yahweh, the patriarch, the strong male of our tribe, has put his resources on the line to buy us back from the poverty, captivity, prostitution, idolatry and slavery we were trapped in and unable to escape
  - And he has sent the most cherished member of his household to accomplish this: his firstborn son. Wow
- That's redemption. God buys us back, out of our self-imposed slavery and captivity, because he loves us. Just like Hosea buys back Gomer. Imagine a young girl who has been captured and sold as a sex slave
  - **TAKEN:** "If you don't let my daughter go, I will find you, and I will kill you" ... "You came for me. I can't believe you came for me!"
  - That's like what God says to Pharaoh: "if you don't let my people go, I will find you, and I will kill you." And when they are liberated, ransomed, redeemed by their Father, they cry, "I can't believe you came for me!"
  - But more beautifully, and richly, than that, it speaks of the cross. It's like God says to sin, death and Satan: "I know exactly who you are. And if you don't let my children go, I will find you, and I will kill you"
  - And as those who have been redeemed by Jesus putting his life on the line to set us free, we are able to worship him for the cross: "I can't believe you came for me"

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## The Gospel in the Minor Prophets

- Hosea: Redemption. "So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley" (3:2)
- Joel: Shame Removed. "My people shall never again be put to shame" (2:26)
- Amos: Restoration. "The mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it" (9:13)
- Jonah: Forgiveness. "When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented" (3:10)
- Habakkuk: Justification by faith. "The righteous shall live by his faith" (2:4)
- Zephaniah: Victory. "The LORD has cleared away your enemies" (3:15)
- Haggai: Presence. "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former" (2:9)
- Zechariah: Clothing in Righteousness. "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments" (3:4)
- Malachi: Purification. "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver" (3:3)

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## GROUP MEETING:

### Discussion Questions

Before getting into these specific questions, spend a few minutes discussing what struck you or stuck with you from the video. What were some of the main points? Did any of Andrew's comments or questions open up the Bible in a profound way to you? Also, ask if anything was confusing or needs clarification.

1. Andrew Wilson challenges us to consider "idolatry" as a better description of sin than "breaking God's law." What differences do you see between the two approaches? What advantages do you see in emphasizing idolatry (without dismissing law-breaking, of course)?

2. Thomas Chalmers famously talks about the "expulsive power of a new affection"; that is, to get rid of one thing you love, you need to have something new to love instead. How does this relate to your own experience of the Christian life?

3. How would "exile" and "return" communicate the Gospel in your culture? In what sense do people live "in exile" and how might you communicate the benefit of returning to God?

4. Modern people sometimes feel offended by the notion of "penal substitution" because it feels like "cosmic child abuse." How does Andrew Wilson's admonition to see it in a Trinitarian way help us respond to such fears?

5. [For the group session] Have each person in the group identify one new thing they discovered or enjoyed about the Gospel in Jeremiah 31 and Hosea 1-3. (One for each prophet.)

6. Which of the three major pictures of atonement (penal substitution, New Covenant/heart, redemption/ransom) speaks most powerfully to you?

7. “We need the full range of biblical imagery to describe the fullness of what Jesus has done.” How well have you done this so far? How might you expand your range of biblical imagery to be able to more fully describe what Jesus has done?

## Meditation on Scripture

Jeremiah 2:12-13

Isaiah 53:4-5, 10-11

Jeremiah 31:31-34

## Putting This Session into Practice

How can we put into words all that Christ has done for us? One image gives us an idea, but it takes a multitude and range of images for us to see it in its fullness. Perhaps you’ve focused on one aspect more than another. This week, let’s commit to celebrating another aspect, one that perhaps hasn’t been as prominent in our worship before. If you’ve loved his redemption, then meditate on penal substitution; if you’ve cherished forgiveness of sin, then consider reconciliation.