

DISCIPLE



REMEMBER
WHO YOU
ARE

DVD Segment Summaries

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Host: Beverly Roberts Gaventa
Segment 1: God's People Weep

*Presenters: Elyse D. Frishman and
Cecil D. Jones, Jr.*

Through music and readings from Lamentations, the Jewish service of remembrance used on Tisha B'Av commemorates the destruction of the Temple. It recalls other destructions and counts other ruins—the tearing of covenants, sundering of faiths. The service renews the dream of harmony, seeks to mend the broken sphere of hope, and in remembrance redeem something of the sorrow and suffering.

Segment 2: God Sent Messengers

Presenter: William J. A. Power

In exile the Judeans had to answer difficult questions: Why have these things happened to us? Has God forgotten the promises made to our ancestors? One answer was that the people failed to remember the

Shema: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.” Hosea was the first writing prophet to stress covenant loyalty. While repentance is still possible, the apostasy of the people will bear its own kind of fruit. Yet, the One who had called them out of Egypt remained faithful to them and remains faithful to them today.

**Segment 3: Starved for the Words
of the Lord**

Presenter: P. Kyle McCarter, Jr.

In Israel the eighth century B.C. was the age of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, the first prophets whose prophecy was preserved in writing. Prophets like Amos and Isaiah mistrusted the wealthy and privileged of their time, warning of abuse of social and economic power. Amos, like Isaiah, saw the Assyrian army as the *agent* of destruction but not the *cause*. He understood the coming destruction as God's punishment of Israel.

Segment 4: God’s Faithfulness

Presenter: B. Davie Napier

Hosea experiences God’s anguish in his own. Hosea’s chosen one and God’s chosen people both deserve abandonment, but Hosea knows that unfaithfulness does not stop the flow of love or take away the anguish of injured affection. Hosea’s hopes and purposes for his life with Gomer, as God’s with Israel, cannot be permanently frustrated. Hosea sounds the theme of impending disaster as forthrightly as Amos, but his dominant message is God’s compassion for Israel.

Segment 5: God’s Requirement

Presenter: Kathleen A. Farmer

The books of Kings and Chronicles reflect on the history of Israel and Judah from the time of David to the destruction of Judah. After Solomon died, the northern tribes broke away from the south. Jeroboam established two new centers of worship in the north. The people of Judah considered this idolatry, and the name of Jeroboam son of Nebat became like a code word symbolizing evil done by all later northern kings. Israel fell in 721 B.C.E. to the Assyrians, but Judah survived by paying tribute to Assyria. Micah preached to Judah in this period. He

envisions disaster, but he also sees hope for a future time of peace and prosperity if the people are willing to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly in God’s way.

Segment 6: God Pleads

Presenter: Wolfgang M. W. Roth

Isaiah emphasizes God’s holiness and calls the people to return to “the Holy One” for help and support. Exploitation of less powerful members of society denies the Holy One. The people of Jerusalem and Judah are failing in their mission. Reliance on their own strength will bring disaster, but divine mercy is already at work. Isaiah 1–39 shows how “the Holy One of Israel” intervened on Zion’s behalf and provided reprieve from the destruction and exile that came more than a century later.

Segment 7: God Rules the World

Presenter: Elizabeth Achtemeier

Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk deal with God’s response to human pride. Nahum describes the defeat of proud Nineveh. Habakkuk sees God’s final victory and the establishment of God’s kingdom. Zechariah pronounces God’s judgment on an evil world. The Israelites’ concept of the day of the

Lord included the belief that the Lord was always on their side and would destroy their enemies. But the prophets of Israel turned the concept of the day of the Lord upside down. God would not only destroy foreign enemies but would bring judgment on Israel itself.

Segment 8: God’s Anguish

Presenter: B. Davie Napier

The prophets’ call to change direction and return to God’s justice is embraced in the Hebrew verb *shub*. A feeling of the irresistible power of “the word of the LORD” helps explain the intensity of the prophets’ call to change course before it’s too late. The word of destruction may be cancelled by turning about. This verb *shub* is all through the prophets, sometimes coupled with *rapha’*, to be healed. Turn from your destructive ways, and so be healed in God’s love and compassion.

Segment 9: God Will Not Abandon

Presenters: Richard B. Wilke and James Fleming

Ancient battles were not just contests between armies. They were battles between the gods of the respective peoples. But for the prophets, the God of Israel used the

nations for God’s purposes. Israel could survive only with a steadfast loyalty to God alone. When Solomon violated the covenant with foreign gods and oppressive behavior, he set the stage for the division of Israel. In the 800’s foreign alliances and concessions weakened Israel. Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 721 B.C., and Judah survived alone. After the end came to Jerusalem, the Captivity cured the Israelites of idolatry. In exile they discerned a “reversal of fortune” spirituality that affirmed God could still bless and be present even during tragedy.

Segment 10: The Day of the Lord Has Come

Presenter: Katheryn Pfisterer Darr

Ezekiel says that God’s plan for Israel can never be aborted by human beings. He makes this point forcefully in Ezekiel 20, his radical revision of Israel’s salvation history. God swears to bring the Hebrews out of Egypt if they cast away their idols, but they refuse to do so. God gives the Israelites statutes, ordinances, and sabbaths, by whose observance they will live; but they reject them. Ezekiel’s version of history drives home the enormity of the people’s sinfulness to convince his audience that their conviction and the One who convicted them are just.

Segment 11: God Cleanses and Renews

Presenter: Katheryn Pfisterer Darr

The people of Judah came to believe that God would never allow anything to happen to Jerusalem and the Temple. But Ezekiel believed that Jerusalem's inhabitants had defiled their city and its Temple and that God would permit the Babylonians to destroy both city and shrine. Ezekiel 16, a lengthy allegory, presents Jerusalem as an abandoned baby. God saves her life and becomes her husband, but Jerusalem acts in ways that justify judgment. Ezekiel looks beyond Jerusalem's punishment to the future when she will be restored and God will forgive her.

Segment 12: God Will Save

Presenter: Hugh C. White

In the four servant songs of Isaiah 40–55, a radically new form of prophecy appears. The prophet speaks of one whose failures and suffering seem to indicate he had been rejected or abandoned by God. But quite to the contrary, his suffering is perceived as redemptive. The righteous person, bearing punishment for the sins of others rather than seeking revenge for injustice, lays the basis for reconciliation between the right-

eous and the unrighteous. The servant songs helped the early Christian community understand the crucifixion of Jesus.

Segment 13: God's Vision for a New World

Presenter: Jin Hee Han

In Isaiah 56–66, the prophet has sharp words to say about the religious community and the people's lack of repentance. This renewed vision of God's Zion looks forward to the inclusion of the excluded. The invitation to God's glory has been issued to the whole world. God's people must shape up. Injustice, oppression, empty ritual, idolatry, corrupt leaders have to go. Good news comes to the repentant, for repentance brings healing and wholeness. The new world is a world where the spirit of true worship is borne out by the community that seeks justice.

Segment 14: God's City of Peace

Presenter: David L. Petersen

The books of Haggai and Zechariah set their historical contexts by referring to a foreign king, Darius. Judah was now a small precinct in the Persian Empire, but it was important as a theological-geographical focal point for those who

worshiped God. Haggai focuses directly on the importance of rebuilding the Temple. Zechariah presents visions with bizarre imagery to show how God is about to act on behalf of Jerusalem and restore the political and religious order housed there.

Segment 15: God Will Restore Zion

Presenter: Thomas L. Hoyt, Jr.

The Old Testament “day of the Lord” helps shape the New Testament concept of the kingdom of God. Witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus contended that the day of the Lord had come. According to Malachi, the expected Messiah will bring justice to the poor and decide with equity for the meek. The coming one will bring salvation. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, he fulfilled the kingship prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. The apostles’ speaking other languages at Pentecost fulfilled the prophecy of Joel. The predicted outpouring of the Holy Spirit is being fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus and in the life of the church.

Segment 16: God’s Mission for Israel

Presenter: David Noel Freedman

The Book of Jonah is designed to explain and to support the notion that human repentance will produce equal divine repentance. God instructs Jonah to go and make a proclamation to Nineveh, the greatest city in the world at that time. Jonah heads off in the opposite direction. When Jonah arrives at Nineveh and gives the message, all the Ninevites repent. God also repents, and the city is spared. The outcome confirms the legitimacy of the prophet and validates the prophecy.

Segment 17: Called Through God’s Grace

Presenter: Leander E. Keck

Paul’s letters are primary sources of information because he wrote them, whereas Acts is a secondary source because it was written about him by someone else, twenty years or so after his death. For information about what went on in Paul’s churches and his responses, and for knowledge of the man himself, we depend on his letters. They are real letters to real people facing real questions of faith and life. Paul was the first Christian theologian, but he did not produce a system of theology. He wrote as a pastoral theologian in a missionary situation.

Segment 18: The Letters of Paul

Presenter: David E. Aune

Paul's letters are a unique combination of Jewish and Greek styles of letter-writing. The common or private letter has numerous similarities to Paul's letters. First Thessalonians is distinctive in that it is sent by a group—Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy—to a group, the church at Thessalonica. Paul's letters also reflect the influence of Hellenistic "official" letters, which were directed to political groups, just as Paul directed his letters to church groups. They were a means of intervening in local affairs, just as Paul's letters were designed to change the beliefs and behaviors of those to whom he wrote.

Segment 19: The Lord Is Coming

Presenter: Victor Paul Furnish

First Thessalonians takes us back closer than any other writing to the beliefs of the first Christians. One of their beliefs was that Christ would come again. The prophets had spoken about a coming day of the Lord, and Paul's Jewish expectations undergird what he says about the resurrection of the dead. What is different is his faith in Jesus as the Christ. According to Paul, the future will be a new kind of reality,

the fulfillment of God's purposes for us. Our relationship to the Lord graces us with a hope that cannot be taken away and claims us to be agents of God's love in this present age.

Segment 20: Honest Labor

Presenter: Victor Paul Furnish

The first Christians believed Jesus was going to return almost any day. When that did not happen, they had to revise their expectations. In Second Thessalonians the church is asking, "What happens in the meantime?" One worry was about the hostility Christians often meet in non-Christian societies. Another worry was about how to distinguish misunderstandings of the gospel. The gospel involves a task as well as a promise—to serve God and others, beginning now. Faith means employing the present time, however long or short, to do the will of God.

Segment 21: Seeing the Good

Presenter: William Mallard

In Philippians 2:5-11 Paul outlines the story of Jesus. One who was equal to God descended down to us in love, then ascended upward for the renewal of all creation. Jesus' resurrected lordship, his heavenly divinity, gives the climax to the

story—Jesus divine, then human, then exalted as divine again. For Paul, Jesus Christ was divine on earth as well as human. Paul says that struggles like those of the Philippians can teach us how to hold one another up in unity, because even God has come down wounded in order to restore, heal, and unite all in Christ.

Segment 22: The Body of Christ

Presenter: Justo L. González

The Corinthians were confused about the resurrection and life after death. Many believed physical death was the end of everything. Others believed in life after death but not in the resurrection as Paul and the early church taught it. They believed the soul is immortal. But Paul says we base our faith on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, not on the immortality of the soul. The doctrine of resurrection takes death seriously. Jesus really died. In rising from the dead, Jesus defeated death and began the new era of life and resurrection.

Segment 23: Crisis in Confidence

Presenter: Susan R. Garrett

Paul believed suffering was caused by demonic forces at work in the world. Christians suffer when the powers attack them to keep them

from naming Christ as Lord, or from doing the work of God. Paul teaches that *all* Christians should expect to suffer for their confession of Christ as Lord and should remain steadfast in their hope of sharing the glory of God. Christ's Spirit abides with Christians in sorrow and pain. Like Paul, they must depend on the Lord for strength to endure.

Segment 24: God's Saving Righteousness

Presenter: Richard B. Hays

Jesus' death and resurrection must be understood as the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. Romans contains more than fifty quotations from the Old Testament and countless more allusions and echoes of scriptural language. Paul's apostolic work requires him to interpret the meaning of those Scriptures to his new churches. He reads Scripture through the lens of his conviction that God has acted through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to redeem the world and to create a new community of Jewish and Gentile believers praising God together.

Segment 25: Salvation for All

Presenter: Leander E. Keck

The first eleven chapters of Romans are a sustained theological argument

designed to persuade the Gentile Christians in Rome that Christianity is not a new religion about Jesus that replaces God's promise to Abraham. The God whose faithfulness and righteousness now redeem the Gentile Christians in Rome and their Jewish brothers and sisters in Christ is faithful to Israel even in the face of human disobedience. Despite the special status of the Jews, there is finally no distinction between Jew and Gentile. There is one gospel for all.

Segment 26: New Life in Christ

Presenter: Thomas E. Boomershine

Romans 12–16 uses the language of sacrifice, calling for the transformation of worship. Instead of offering animals for sacrifice, Christians offer their lives as “reasonable” and “spiritual” sacrifices. Paul recommends that we renew the mind of the church by discerning, by searching together for what is the will of God. He focuses on two specific issues—eating meat and observing sabbath. We are not justified by our righteous actions. We must see all things in relation to God's grace.

Segment 27: Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Presenter: Beverly Roberts Gaventa

Was Paul an enemy of women? Or an early champion of women? Paul says that women should keep their heads covered and later insists they should keep silent in the church. But other references seem to make clear that women had leadership roles in the churches Paul founded. Paul saw the gospel as a radical challenge to all social distinctions. He speaks of himself as the mother of believers. A man who images himself as a mother to others knows that the gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to standards of evaluation not determined by what the rest of the world thinks is masculine or feminine.

Segment 28: Christ Above All

Presenter: Will Coleman

A central theme in Colossians is the Christian's union with Christ. Christ is cocreator and sustainer with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. By his resurrection from death, he has given us a sign of the promise of a new order. God's redemption in Jesus Christ is not only for the church but for all creation. By including all creation, the author offers us a proper perspective from which to understand the nature and

work of Christ as lord of the universe, as redeemer, and as unique mediator between the Creator and creation.

Segment 29: Whole Armor of God

Presenter: Dan P. Cole

Ephesus was a cultural crossroads between east and west, a receptive environment from which Paul could preach his world-embracing gospel. From there he wrote several of his letters. Paul knew the church at Ephesus could grow to large numbers and take a leadership role in Christian evangelism. We may be indebted to the church at Ephesus for gathering and circulating Paul's letters after his death, thereby preserving them for us.

Segment 30: Leadership in the Church

Presenter: Maxie D. Dunnam

First Timothy has to do with many facets of Christian living, especially our life in Christian community. The gospel is a way of thinking and believing, but equally it is a way of living. One of the primary tasks of the pastor is to make the gospel clear, and the task of every Christian is to proclaim the gospel in word and deed. The letter is addressed to Timothy, but the focus is on the church, a community shaped by Jesus Christ.

Segment 31: From Generation to Generation

Presenter: Zan W. Holmes, Jr.

The writer of these letters addresses Timothy and Titus, reflects on their shared ministry, and then speaks to Christians today: Don't be ashamed to witness for our Lord. God in grace saved us and called us and will empower us. You have been given sound teaching. Take care of that treasure and pass it on so others may teach it. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. Times don't always favor the gospel message, but nevertheless, proclaim it patiently and convincingly. Stand firm, and carry out your ministry.

Segment 32: Remember Who You Are

Presenter: Richard B. Wilke

From the prophets we learned that God is just and expects a just society. Abandoning God to serve idols led to immorality and destruction. The apostle Paul believed he was called by God to speak the word of truth. God is faithful. Christ died for us to bring us into the covenant people. The Holy Spirit lives in the embodied believers, the church. Now we remember who we are and what we are to do: As the people of God, we are to bring exiles, sinners and outcasts, into a new community of faith.

Video Segment Summaries

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