

Christ the King Lutheran Church
Book of Faith
Jeremiah/Lamentations
2022 – Glossary

PROPHET

From the Greek *prophetes*, literally “forthteller”. Biblical prophets, like Jeremiah were given a message by God to tell the people. The prophet is God’s spokesperson. There were “professional” prophets who were consulted to determine God’s will (1 Kings 22) and there were roaming bands of ecstatic prophets (1 Samuel 10:10-12).

PREDESTINATION

Lutherans understand predestination to be a doctrine of comfort. God has chosen us from the beginning of time to be God’s own children. (1 Timothy 2:3-4) Lutherans do not accept “double predestination”...the belief that God chooses some to be saved and some to be damned.

CONSECRATE

Hebrew word that signals something as set apart or devoted for God’s use. Could be the temple (2 Chronicles 2:3-4), a city (Joshua 20:7), offerings (Leviticus 22:2), or a person, i.e. Jeremiah. Lutherans think of rostered leaders as consecrated for Word and Sacrament (pastors) or Word and Service (deacons).

ORACLE

A divine utterance delivered to the prophet. Frequently appears in the introduction of a prophecy (Habakkuk 1:1) The Hebrew word has a dual meaning – “oracle” and “burden” (compare different translations of Jeremiah 23:33-34, 38). In secondary literature, commentaries and dictionaries, the word has become synonymous with “prophecy”.

ROYAL ZION TRADITION

A shorthand reference to promises and claims about the Davidic royal household and the Jerusalem Temple. There are two claims in the Royal Zion Tradition: 1. A descendant of David would rule perpetually; 2. God’s promised perpetual presence in the Temple guarantees the safety of Jerusalem from all harm. Some aspects of the tradition continue into the New Testament, i.e. the ultimate messianic ruler, Jesus the Christ is a descendant of David and the eschatological city is the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21-22).

SYNCRETISTIC PRACTICES

Refers to the combination of different religious beliefs or practices.

The construction of golden calves by Jeroboam is one example. The cult animal for the Canaanite deity, Ba’al was a bull, the symbol of power and fertility. When Jeroboam constructed golden calves, he may have had in mind no more than the introduction of a physical marker of God’s invisible presence. Consider that the ark of the covenant was thought to be the “footstool of the invisible God”. It was the later biblical writers who judged Jeroboam to have introduced foreign, idolatrous elements into the worship practices of the Israelites. (Virgin de Guadalupe; Las Posadas; Quinceanera . . .).

MESSENGER FORMULA

In antiquity, oral messages were delivered by messengers who introduced their communication with the phrase: “Tush says (the name of the speaker)...”. (see Numbers 22:15-16; Judges 11:14-15; 1 Kings 2:30; 2 Chronicles 36:23; Ezra 1:2) Jeremiah was one of the prophets who heard messages from YHWH (God) and repeated it word for word beginning with this phrase: “Thus says the Lord”. The words that follow this phrase are always the voice of God, in the first person.

VERSIFICATION

The practice of numbering Scripture verses. Comes from medieval times. (Ancient manuscripts did not designate verses). Scholars sometimes refer to different portions of verses by parts – 19a, 19b, 19c and so forth. In Hebrew texts, these divisions are signaled by *cantillation marks* – marks that would help a cantor chant the passage. Look at the Psalms in the ELW.

THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

This is not a systematic organization of theological propositions or positions. It is a lens through which all Christian life and faith is viewed. The following claims are at the heart of what is known as “theology of the cross”:

1. A commitment to being honest about describing life’s experiences
2. In the cross of Christ, God suffers for the world
3. God remains radically committed to love the world.
4. In the life a believer does not escape life’s pains, sickness fears or death.
5. Paradoxically, because God is in all those unlit corners, theologians of the cross live in hope and thanksgiving.

NEBUCHADREZZAR

(Nebuchadnezzar)

The king of Babylon who ended Egyptian control over Judah and replaced it with his own control. Three months after King Jehoiakim’s death (598 B.C.E) Nebuchadnezzar removed Jehoiakim’s successor, Jehoiachin, exiled him to Babylon and put the boy’s uncle, Zedekiah on the throne. In 586 B.C.E. Zedekiah rebelled against the Babylonian overlord which brought Nebuchadnezzar’s army to Jerusalem to raze the city; destroy the Temple and deport those who had not been removed a decade earlier. Nebuchadnezzar was the Babylonian king responsible for the Israelite exile (2 Kings 24-25).

TORAH

Translated as “law” in Jeremiah 31:33. More than a legal code, the *torah* is also understood as “direction” or “instruction”. It basically describes how a righteous person attempt to live life (see Psalm 1:2) The *torah* is the way in which people “walk” (Jeremiah 26:4; Psalm 119:1). This is confusing for Lutherans. We work to find the law/gospel in our readings. God promises that proper instruction, direction, even fidelity to the commandments will be established within God’s people. It may help to consider God’s promise in Jeremiah 31:33 in the light of Paul’s description of the law’s fulfillment by means of the indwelling and prompting of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-14).

MEDES

The name for the people of a small kingdom in the area that is today NW Iran. The Medes joined with the Babylonians and others to defeat the Assyrians and pillage and destroy the capital of Nineveh (612 B.C.E.) The alliance with Babylon ended with the death of Nebuchadnezzar (562 B.C.E.). The Medes were then defeated by Cyrus of Persia who became king of the Medes (546 B.C.C.). The Median empire was indistinguishable from Persia. In spite of this, ancient Greek historians persisted in call the region “the Medes”. Much later, the kingdom became known as Persia. The “company of great nations from the land of the north” (Jeremiah 50:9) most likely refers to the Median/Persian Empire under Cyrus. Note the explicit mention of the Medes in Jeremiah 51:11, 28. These oracles were probably redacted during the exile or later.

HENOTHEISM

Any religion that acknowledges the existence of many gods, but chooses to revere and worship only on god. Some Christians are henotheists as well as monotheists.

GENOCIDE

From the Greek root *genos* (race, tribe, clan) and from the Latin root *cide* (killing). The word tries to capture the essence of an idea, that with 20th century technology became a reality: the annihilation of an entire people. The United Nations defined genocide (1948)

- a) “any of a number of acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group;
- b) killing members of the group;
- c) causing serious bodily or mental harm to member of the group;
- d) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- e) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, and
- f) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group”

(<http://www.un.org/millennium/law/iv-1.htm>)

ACROSTIC

A poetic device in which each line begins with a successive letter of the alphabet.

Lamentations is heavily structured by this device. Each chapter’s lines are a multiple of 22, the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

Chapters 1 and 2 both have 22 stanzas of three lines each, with successive Hebrew consonants appearing as the first letter of the first line of each stanza.

Chapter 3, each line in the three-line stanzas begins with the same Hebrew letter.

Chapter 4 is similar to 1 and 2, except each stanza has two lines instead of four.

Chapter 5 is not an acrostic, but seems to have been influenced by the form...there are 22 lines.

The purpose of this literary device is not clear in Lamentations. We might imagine it to represent grief from A-Z or as a means to provide structure in the chaos of grief. This theory may help to explain the non-ending of the book...a book where grief is not assuaged.