

Unit 3 Reading Guide Answer Key

God Revealed through Kings and Prophets

Chapter 9: The Kings and Prophets of the Northern Kingdom

Article 37: Divided We Fall: The Kingdom Splits

1. After forty years as the king of Israel, Solomon dies, leaving a dark cloud over Israel. His son Rehoboam succeeds him as king.
2. Rehoboam's decision to go with the youthful response to the Israelites' complaints only affirms what Jeroboam has heard from the prophet: that Israel will split into two separate kingdoms.
3. The ten tribes of the north become Israel, led by Jeroboam. The remaining two tribes in the south stay with Rehoboam and become the kingdom of Judah.
4. If Jeroboam allows his people to go to Jerusalem, their allegiance to him could be easily turned. His response to this dilemma is to build golden calves for the Israelites to worship. Encouraging the Israelites to worship these false gods leads to Jeroboam's downfall.
5. Following Jeroboam is a succession of kings in the north who engage in a variety of wicked behaviors and idolatry. Israel fights not only against the southern kingdom of Judah but also against themselves in a civil war.
6. As the Israelites continue to sin, God sends his holy messengers, the prophets, to guide them back to the covenant.
7. The northern kingdom of Israel ultimately falls to the Assyrians in 721 BC. By detailing a list of Israel's sins, the Deuteronomist leaves no doubt for the causes of the northern kingdom's downfall: failure to follow God's Commandments, making golden calves as idols, worshipping false gods, and even offering their children as burnt sacrifices.

Article 38: Prophets: God's Messengers

1. God does send us holy people who remind us of our call to be loving and merciful. It's true! These people are called prophets.
2. Prophets are people chosen by God to speak his message of salvation.
3. Several prophets have books of the Bible named after them. They are sometimes called the writing prophets.
4. Sin thrives in the darkness. Metaphorically speaking, a prophet shines a light on the sin, so that everyone—including the sinner—can see it.
5. Dorothy Day was an American writer and social activist. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, Dorothy suffered for her fight for justice.



6. Another person who is considered a modern-day prophet is Saint Oscar Romero. In 1977 Romero became the Archbishop of San Salvador in El Salvador. Romero spoke up for workers' rights and condemned abuses such as government-sponsored terrorism, torture, and political assassinations.
7. Prophets are not limited to people in the Bible and famous religious people. At our Baptism, all Christians are anointed to share in Christ's ministry as priest, prophet, and king.

Article 39: Elijah and Elisha: Hard-Core Prophets

1. The First and Second Books of Kings are not just about the kings of Israel and Judah. These books also contain accounts of several prophets, especially Elijah and Elisha. The narratives about Elijah and his successor, Elisha, point backward in time to the prophet Moses, and also point forward in time, giving a hint of what is to come in the New Testament: the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecy, Jesus Christ.
2. Elijah chastises King Ahab about his worship of false gods. Then, to prove that Yahweh is the one true God, Elijah challenges all the prophets of Baal and Asherah in a head-to-head battle of the prophets!
3. After wiping out the prophets of Baal and Asherah, Elijah flees from Jezebel, who threatens to kill him. Elijah does not experience God in thunderous blasts or earthquakes, like Moses and Job did, but rather in "a light silent sound."
4. This connection between Elijah and John the Baptist is another example of an Old Testament person foreshadowing a New Testament person.
5. By emphasizing the similarities that Moses and Joshua shared with Elijah and Elisha, the human author highlights how they carried out similar roles. These commonalities emphasize the importance of Elijah and Elisha in Israelite history.
6. His (Elijah's) mysterious disappearance leads to the Jewish people's expectation that Elijah will return again to proclaim the coming of the Messiah.
7. Fast-forward to the New Testament, and we can find the connection between Elijah and John the Baptist. Elijah prefigures John the Baptist in several ways. For his part, Elisha prefigures Jesus in many ways. In the New Testament, Elijah is often portrayed as a representative of all prophets. At Jesus' Transfiguration, he appears with Moses, who represents the Law.

Article 40: Sex and Money: Hosea and Amos

1. The prophets Hosea and Amos cleverly use these intense and complex topics. Both live in the northern kingdom of Israel in the years before Assyria's defeat of Israel in 721 BC.
2. Hosea uses his marriage to Gomer, a prostitute, as a metaphor to describe God's relationship with Israel. As Gomer is unfaithful to Hosea, the Israelites are unfaithful to God.
3. The word baal means "lord or master." This is what women called their husbands in biblical times. It is also the name of the main Canaanite god. The name Hosea means "salvation," and this is what God offers to Israel over and over again.
4. The Hebrew word yada means "knowledge" or "to know," but it has layers of meaning that go beyond what we usually associate with those words. For example, yada is used to refer to a sexual relationship.



5. This is why Hosea uses these words to call the Israelites to renew their intimate relationship with God: using these words: “Let us know, let us strive to know the LORD” (Hosea 6:3).
6. Amos does not hold anything back in his poetic rant condemning the Israelites for their numerous sins. The wealthy people’s abuse of the poor is at the top of his list.
7. Through Amos, God reveals to us that true faith is not something that is practiced for one hour on Sunday mornings. God is most pleased when our sincere worship reflects our faithfulness to his Law, including care for the most vulnerable in our society.

Article 41: Jonah: Laughter Is the Best Medicine

1. The book (of Jonah) most likely was written after the people of Judah returned from their captivity in Babylon. Taken too far, this distrust resulted in an unfortunate and ungodly prejudice: that non-Jews were beyond God’s saving power.
2. Jonah spends three days and three nights inside the fish. In the New Testament, this will be seen to prefigure Jesus’ Resurrection, occurring three days after being in the “belly” of the Earth.
3. The Ninevites are Israel’s sworn enemies. Jonah seems ready for a great confrontation.
4. Jonah is ready for an all-out battle in which the wrath of God will strike down these heathens! Instead, God accepts the Ninevites’ repentance.
5. The story of Jonah is a humorous reminder to abandon the prejudices that divide us and to see one another as God does.

Chapter 10: The Kings and Prophets of the Southern Kingdom

Article 42: Good Kings: Shining Stars on a Dark Horizon

1. When the united kingdom of Israel splits after Solomon’s death, the kingdom of Judah is on its own in the south. Like Israel, the northern kingdom, the kingdom of Judah has a string of bad kings. But they do have a couple of good ones.
2. The kingdom of Judah has a couple of redeeming qualities. First, as God promises David, the royal leadership of Judah remains within a single family line—the descendants of King David. Second, two good kings make important religious reforms.
3. Through Isaiah’s prophecies, God assures Hezekiah that Sennacherib will not conquer Jerusalem.
4. After Hezekiah’s death, Judah endures two more rounds of bad kings separated by one more shining star, King Josiah.
5. Only by chance does Josiah discover a book of the Law during a Temple renovation. He then reads it to the people and begins a great reform. Then he leads the people in celebrating a special Passover.



6. As Isaiah prophesied to King Hezekiah, God will ultimately punish Judah for its sins, and the punishment will come through the hands of the Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, directs his army to take the city of Jerusalem, and by 587 BC, Judah has been captured and its citizens taken into captivity in Babylon.
7. There is hardly a darker time in their history than the era of the divided kingdom. Unfortunately, it sometimes takes these dark times for us to truly recognize our need for God.

Article 43: Isaiah Part 1: Hope for the Hopeless

1. Almost two centuries after First Isaiah wrote his prophecies, the authors of Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah wrote theirs.
2. Though Second and Third Isaiah offer a hopeful future for Judah after the return from the Babylonian Exile, First Isaiah paints a gloomy outlook before the Exile.
3. Despite this apparently dark future, Isaiah encourages the king to have faith, reassuring him that the Lord will give a sign: “The young woman, pregnant and about to bear a son, shall name him Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14).
4. *Emmanuel* is a Hebrew word meaning “God is with us.”
5. The ideal king, as described by Isaiah, is exactly the kind of leader Judah needs at this time. In looking toward the future, it is easy to see how Jesus Christ fulfills that description.

Article 44: Jeremiah: Outrageous Heart

1. Like the prophets before him, Jeremiah resisted God’s call. In response he says, “I am too young” (Jeremiah 1:6).
2. He warns the Israelites that they will only be able to remain in the land God has given them if they stop oppressing those in need and worshipping false gods.
3. The shock tactics Jeremiah uses to get the people’s attention include holding up a dirty loincloth in front of the Temple, describing the gruesome deaths of their children, smashing a potter’s flask, and wearing a yoke around his neck.
4. Jeremiah expresses his emotions, both his highs and lows to God, with complete abandon. These passages can be reassuring to us—even great prophets and holy people like Jeremiah had their moments of doubt.
5. The comparison of Jesus and Jeremiah is not surprising because there are a number of interesting similarities between the two.
6. In 587 BC, the Babylonians finally conquer Jerusalem, destroy the city and the Temple, and take most of its inhabitants to Babylon. Jeremiah stays behind in Judah with those who remain in the ruined city, but eventually they flee to Egypt. Jeremiah continues to prophesy there, but he soon disappears.
7. No one knows what happened to him, but his legacy as a passionate and devoted messenger of God continues to deeply inspire to this day.



Article 45: Ezekiel: Actions Speak Louder Than Words

1. Like his fellow prophet Jeremiah, Ezekiel prophesies in the last years before the Babylonians conquered Judah.
2. God instructs him to do the following: 1. Build a model of Jerusalem. 2. Put all the instruments used for a siege upon a city around the model. 3. Place an iron pan between the model city and himself and watch it for fourteen months. Ezekiel's model represents God doing nothing as Jerusalem is conquered, and the iron pan stands for the separation between God and his people.
3. When Ezekiel's wife dies, God tells him not to mourn her.
4. God calls the prophet Ezekiel "Son of Man" over ninety times in the Book of Ezekiel. Not only is "Son of Man" the title Jesus most often chose for himself; it is the only messianic title he used.
5. His [Ezekiel's] prophetic vision includes three beautiful images. In the first image, he expresses God's willingness to forgive and his desire to make things new. The second image is Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones coming to life. The third image is most important: the reestablishment of the Temple.
6. Ezekiel's second and third images also point to a significant event and a glorious vision found in the New Testament. First, the image of the bones coming to life prefigures Jesus' Resurrection from the dead. Second, the author of the Book of Revelation borrows some of Ezekiel's imagery of the New Jerusalem to describe Heaven itself.

Article 46: The Babylonian Exile: Far Away from Home

1. The Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, and his army have conquered Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, killed thousands of people, and taken most of the survivors back to Babylon as captives. This period of captivity, called the Babylonian Exile, lasts from about 587 to 539 BC.
2. A few years later, Zedekiah rebels against the Babylonians. His rebellion leads to the Babylonians attacking Jerusalem once again, laying siege to the city. The Babylonians eventually capture the city.
3. They [the exiles in Babylon] are not slaves or held in prison camps; rather, they are free to make a living and settle down in their own homes. On the other hand, they are not free to return home and cannot perform any of their religious practices in public.
4. They (the exiles) focus on their oral tradition and the need to record it. It is at this point that the majority of the Old Testament is written.
5. Notice that the only important quality by which their leaders are judged is their faithfulness to God.
6. God's people mourn their losses in Babylon and wonder what it all means. Jesus' disciples experience similar feelings after his Crucifixion. They are like sheep without a shepherd, unaware that Jesus will rise again in three days. Yet, even with these losses, God's saving plan continues.



Article 47: Isaiah Parts 2 and 3: A Light in the Darkness

1. The Book of Isaiah was most likely written over a period of two centuries. Chapters 1–39 were written in the eighth century by First Isaiah. Chapters 40–55 were written over a century later, when the anonymous author, Second Isaiah, along with most of the people of Judah, were held in captivity in Babylon.
2. God commanded Second Isaiah, “Comfort, give comfort to my people” (Isaiah 40:1).
3. Second Isaiah gives hope to the people of Judah by identifying two kinds of servants who will carry out God’s will: the Suffering Servant and the King of Persia.
4. The Suffering Servant. This was the description of their ideal leader who, instead of being served like a king, was a servant to his people.
5. Second Isaiah identifies Cyrus as an agent of God, even though Cyrus does not acknowledge the Lord as God.
6. John the Baptist points toward our Savior, Jesus Christ, for those held in the captivity of sin. Because of our faith in Jesus Christ, we have a reason to hope, and therefore a reason to rejoice.

Chapter 11: The Messianic Prophecies

Article 48: Old Testament, New Testament: Woven Together

1. Christians read the Old Testament in light of Christ’s death and Resurrection.
2. The study of how God’s work in the Old Testament points to what he later accomplished through Jesus Christ in the New Testament is called typology.
3. For example, because Moses helped free the Israelites from slavery, he is an Old Testament person who points toward Jesus’ saving acts that free us from sin.
4. For this reason, Christians understand that “the Old Testament prepares for the New, and the New Testament fulfills the Old; the two shed light on each other; both are the true Word of God” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, number 140).

Article 49: Messianic Prophecies: Pointing toward the Light

1. Messiah is a Hebrew word meaning “anointed one.” The Greek equivalent of this Hebrew word is christos, from which we get Jesus’ title, “Christ.”
2. Messianic prophecies are the visionary descriptions spoken by some of the prophets in the Old Testament, which point to the coming of the ideal Messiah, Jesus Christ.
3. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke outline Jesus’ family tree and have stories about his birth, showing the connections to the messianic prophecies.
4. In four passages called “The Servant Songs,” the prophet (Second Isaiah) offers ideal descriptions of someone who models servant leadership.
5. The early Christians see the obvious connections between Jesus and the “Suffering Servant.”



Article 50: Psalms: Guided by Poetry

1. The Psalms are songs used for group and personal prayer. Many were originally sung during Israelite worship. Christians and Jews still sing them today.
2. The Book of Psalms is quoted in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament book.
3. The prophetic wisdom of the Psalms reassures us that our suffering can be a path to holiness.
4. A cornerstone refers to the first stone laid in the construction of a building or house. It is the most important one because all of the other stones are set in relation to that one.
5. Jesus quotes this psalm when he tells a story symbolizing how he will be put to death. Psalm 118 prophesies that the most important foundation of our faith, Jesus, our cornerstone and Messiah, will first be rejected.
6. Rather than a sign of doubt, Jesus' quotation of the first line of Psalms 22 actually points to his ultimate trust in God despite his present suffering.
7. The Psalms reflect the hope for a savior that is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Article 51: Previews: Moses, Joshua, David

1. Numerous people in the Old Testament give us a preview of what is to come in the New Testament. Notable Old Testament figures who accomplished this are Moses, Joshua, and King David.
2. Matthew's audience is primarily Jewish Christians who want to understand better how Jesus fits into their history and faith.
3. Throughout the Gospel, the author of Matthew offers his Jewish audience a portrayal of Jesus as the New Moses.
4. Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Yeshua or, as we say it, Joshua. The name means "God saves." It should be no surprise then that Joshua—the successor to Moses—also prefigures Jesus Christ.
5. King David's rule of Israel offers a hint as to Jesus' own leadership as the Messiah. Though he certainly was not perfect, David was faithful to God. His leadership of Israel gives a taste of what the Kingdom of God will be like with Jesus as king.

(Scripture quotations on this answer key are taken from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright owners.

The quotation on this answer key marked *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is from the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for use in the United States of America, second edition. Copyright © 1994 by the United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana [LEV]. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* copyright © 1997 by the United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—LEV.)

