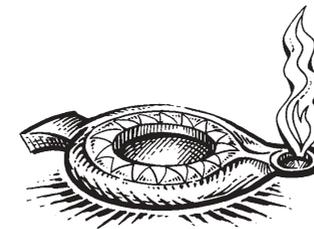


BBS#14 • The Prophetic Books

BOOK	KEY WORDS	THEME
Jonah (760) 2 Ki.13;14	Revival in Nineveh	The repentant response of the people of Nineveh to Jonah's one-line prophetic message saw God spare the city.
Micah (735) 2 Ki.15:8-ch20	Judgment and Restoration of Judah	In spite of divine retribution against the corruption of Israel and Judah, God's covenant with them will be fulfilled in Messiah's future kingdom.
Nahum (660) Jonah; Isa.10	Judgment of Nineveh	About 125 years after Nineveh repented under the preaching of Jonah, Micah predicted the destruction of the city because of its idolatry and brutality.
Habakkuk (607) 2 Ki.23:31-ch24	Live by Faith	Troubled with God's plan to use the Babylonians as His rod of judgment on Judah, Habakkuk praises the Lord after gaining a better perspective on His power and purposes.
Zephaniah (630) 2 Ki.22-23:34	Day of the Lord	The coming day of the Lord is a time of awesome judgment followed by great blessing, Judah stands condemned, but God will restore the fortunes of the remnant.
Haggai (520) Ezra 1-6	Reconstruction of the Temple	After the Babylonian exile, Haggai urges the Jews to put God first and finish the Temple they had begun so that they can enjoy God's blessing.
Zechariah (520) Ezra 1-6	Prepare for Messiah	Like Haggai, Zechariah exhorts the Jews to complete the construction of the Temple. He relates it to the coming of Messiah in a series of visions and messianic prophecies.
Malachi (432) Neh.8-13	Appeal to backsliders	The spiritual climate of the people had grown cold, and Malachi rebukes them for their religious and social compromise. If they return to God with sincere hearts, they will be blessed.

BASIC BIBLE STUDY
An Introductory Guide
To Understanding The Scriptures

PART FOURTEEN
The Prophetic Books



"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path"
PSALM 119:105

Prophecy gets a grip on us like nothing else. We are mesmerized and spellbound by it. What does the future hold? That question grabs us by the collar, throws us up against the wall, sinks its thumbs into our jugular, and holds us there for an answer.

Outside of the Bible, 'prophets' have had an uneven track record. Croesus lived in the 6th B.C. and was king of Lydia in Asia Minor. Deliberating whether to attack the Persian empire, he asked the oracle at Delphi if the undertaking would prosper. The oracle replied that if he went to war, he would destroy a great empire. Encouraged, Croesus invaded the Persian realms. He was decisively beaten, and the Persians then invaded Lydia, captured its capital, and threw Croesus himself into chains. Croesus again sent an embassy to Delphi, this time with the question, "Why did you deceive me?" The priestess of the oracle replied that she had not deceived him: Croesus had indeed destroyed a great empire ... his own!

BIBLICAL PROPHETS

Biblical prophets find themselves in a different league, however, from the run-of-the-mill prophets. If a man was a true prophet from God, no prediction of his would ever fail (cf. **1 Samuel 3:19**). If a prophet ever voiced a prophecy that failed, he was to be stoned to death. This discouraged the impostors and made the biblical prophets highly reliable. There were many true prophets in the Old Testament, but not all of them committed their messages to writings that were preserved. In the Bible, we have 16 men who wrote down their messages. These writings are called the Prophetic Books, and they comprise the final 17 books of the Old Testament.

THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS
(Isaiah - Malachi)



I. Review:

Our history is completed. From Genesis, the first Historical Book, to Nehemiah, the last Historical Book, we stretched out a time line that

THEMES OF THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

BOOK	KEY WORDS	THEME
Isaiah (740) 2 Ki.15-20; 2 Chr.26-32	Salvation is of the Lord	Twofold message of condemnation (1-39) and consolation (40-66). God's judgment on the sins of Judah, the surrounding nations, and the world, followed by future salvation and restoration.
Jeremiah (627) 2 Ki.22-25	Judah's last hour	Declaration of certain judgment of God against Judah. God promises to establish a new covenant with His people.
Lamentations (586)	Lamentations	This beautifully constructed series of five lament poems is a funeral dirge for the fallen city of Jerusalem.
Ezekiel (592) 2 Ki.24:17-25	Future Restoration	Ministry to the Jewish captives in Babylon before and after the fall of Jerusalem. The fate of Judah's foes and an apocalyptic vision of Judah's future.
Daniel (605) 2 Ki.23:35-25	God's Program for Israel	Outlines God's plan for the Gentile nations (2-7) and portrays Israel during the time of Gentile domination (8-12).
Hosea (755) 2 Ki.15:1-18:1	God's Love for Israel	The story of Hosea and his unfaithful wife illustrates the loyal love of God and the spiritual adultery of Israel.
Joel (835) 2 Ki.11;12	Day of the Lord	A recent locust plague illustrates the far more terrifying day of the Lord. God appeals to the people to repent in order to avert the coming disaster.
Amos (760) 2 Ki.14:23-15:7	Judgment of Israel	In eight pronouncements of judgment, Amos spirals around the surrounding countries before landing on Israel. He lists the sins of Israel and calls for repentance.
Obadiah (586) 2 Ki.25	Judgment of Edom	Condemns the nation of Edom (descended from Esau) for refusing to act as a brother toward Judah (descended from Jacob).

1. DESIGNATION: MAJOR AND MINOR PROPHETS



The Major Prophets are the first five Prophetic Books: **Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel**. The Minor Prophets are the remaining twelve. The major prophets are called "major" because they are longer books, while the others are called "minor" because they are shorter writings than the major prophets. Neither designation has any reflection on the importance of their writings.

2. TIME PERIOD: PRE-EXILE - EXILE - POST-EXILE

The Prophetic Books are divided into three chronological periods: pre-exile, exile, and post-exile. **Most of the prophetic ministries and books occur before the exile.** Three prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, prophesy during the return. Of those who prophesy before the exile, two prophesy primarily to Israel (the northern kingdom), seven primarily to Judah (the southern kingdom), and three to other countries (cf. table on p5).

THE COURSE OF THE HEBREW PROPHETS

It is important to know where the Hebrew prophets fit in to the Old Testament timeline. It has been said: "If we are to understand the prophets we must know something of the age in which they lived, and the problems which had to be solved. Much of the teaching of the prophets arose out of the needs of their times, as the teaching of the Apostles had its rise in the needs of the different churches to which they wrote."

- iii. the Slave sold for 30 pieces of silver, **11:12**
- iv. the smitten Shepherd, **13:7**
- v. the Branch, **3:8, 6:12**
- vi. the glorious Ruler, **14:1-4,9,16&17.**

MALACHI

Prophet No.16 ... Southern Kingdom. Post-exilic.



Malachi ministered to the restored nation around 400 years before Christ. He points out the terrible sins of the priests and the people - and they respond by arguing. The book is closed with some wonderful promises to the faithful (**3:16-4:6**). The jewels of Christ shall have the Sun of Righteousness to shine upon them!

The last word in our English OT is "curse." At the end of the NT we read, "there shall be no more curse." What is the difference? **The Sun of Righteousness ... Jesus Christ our Lord!**

📄 Outline 📄

1. RELIGIOUS DECLENSION: **1-2:9**

- i. Assurance of Jehovah's Love for Israel: **1:1-5**
- ii. Argument with Priests for their Offences: **1:6-14**
- iii. Abhorrence of the Priests for their Indifference: **2:1-9**

2. SOCIAL DEBASEMENT: **2-10-16**

Condemnation of the Priests and the People:

- i. For Forbidden Marriages
- ii. For Cruel Divorces

3. MORAL DEFLECTION: **2-17-4:6**

- i. The Coming of the Lord for Judgment: **2:17-3:6**
- ii. The Charge offered against the People: **3:7-12**
- iii. The Contrast between the Righteous and the Wicked: **3:13-4:6**

Zechariah 1:14-17 lies the key to the book: God is jealous for Jerusalem; He will punish the heathen for what they did to His city; He will one day restore the city in glory and peace. Significantly, Zechariah means "God remembers"!

 **Outline** 

1. INTRODUCTION: A CALL TO REPENTANCE: 1:1-6

2. EIGHT VISIONS OF ENCOURAGEMENT: 1:7-6:15

- i. The rider, **1:7-17**
- ii. The horns and craftsmen, **1:18-21**
- iii. The surveyor, **2:1-13**
- iv. Joshua the high priest, **3:1-10**
- v. The candlestick and trees, **4:1-14**
- vi. The flying roll, **5:1-4**
- vii. The woman and the ephah, **5:5-11**
- viii. The chariots of war, **6:1-8**

3. CROWNING THE PRIEST-KING: 6:9-15

The climax of God's plan will be crowning Jesus Christ as Priest/King.

4. INTERLUDE: 7&8

Questions about the fasts.

5. TWO ORACLES OF ENCOURAGEMENT: 9-14

- i. The First Oracle: **9-11**
 - Conquest of Alexander the Great, **9:1-8**
 - Victories of the Maccabees, **9:11-17**
 - Conquest of Rome, **11:1-9**

The Coming of the Messiah is referred to: **9:9, ch10, 11:10-14** ... and the coming of Anti-Christ, **11:15-17**.

- ii. The Second Oracle: **12-14**
 - Israel in distress, **12:1-9**
 - Final Conflict, **14:1-3**
 - Establishment of the Kingdom of Christ, **14:8-21**.

CHRIST IN THE BOOK

Zechariah shows us Jesus Christ in many aspects of His ministry:

- i. The King, **9:9**
- ii. the Stone, **3:9, 10:4**

STRUCTURE OF THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS

Prophets Before The Exile			
TO ISRAEL:	TO JUDAH:	TO ASSYRIA:	TO EDOM:
Amos (760) Hosea (755)	Joel (835) Isaiah (740) Micah (735) Zephaniah (630) Jeremiah (627) Habakkuk (607)	Jonah (760) Nahum (660)	Obadiah (586)
Exile Prophets		Prophets After the Exile	
TO JEWS IN BABYLON:		TO REMNANT IN JERUSALEM:	
Daniel (605) Ezekiel (592)		Haggai (520) Zechariah (520) Malachi (432)	

**3. FORETELLING:
PREDICTING THE FUTURE**

The most famous characteristic of a prophet is that he can occasionally predict the future. This is **not** an ability inherent within himself. Rather, this information is given to him by God. In Israel, the test of a true prophet is that he must be 100% accurate. If a prophet ever says anything that does not come true, he is not a prophet of God. The penalty for giving a prophecy that does not come true is death by stoning (cf. **Deut. 13**). This keeps the ranks of the prophets pure.

**4. FORTH-TELLING:
PROCLAIMING THE TEACHINGS OF GOD**

While the ministry of "foretelling" (telling the future) is more dramatic, the ministry of "forthtelling" is vastly more common in the life of a

prophet. Forth-telling means simply proclaiming the teachings of God to the people. Primarily it relates to righteous living. There are three characteristics of this part of a prophet's ministry.

1. **Exposing sin and calling people to a life of righteousness.**
2. **Warning of judgment if the people do not reform.**
3. **Proclaiming the coming Messiah.**

The prophets usually warned about judgments which would involve the nation of Israel or Judah being militarily conquered and taken out of their lands.

... THE PROPHETS AND THEIR MESSAGES ...

JOEL

Prophet No.1 ... Southern Kingdom. Pre-Exilic. Pre-Assyrian Period.

If we are right in supposing that Joel prophesied some time about the reign of Jehoshaphat, his was the first of the sixteen written prophecies. Nothing is known of the prophet himself further than what is stated in **Joel 1:1**, but his name, "Jehovah is God," summarises the teaching of his book. The sphere of his ministry is equally obscure, but it is generally agreed that it was Judah, and most probably Jerusalem.

The prophet makes a locust invasion, which had left the land desolate, an occasion to call the people to repentance for their sins.

He tells them that the invasion of locusts is just the forerunner of another – and more awful – visitation, "the Day of the Lord." On the other hand, Joel tells the people that if they repent, Jehovah will restore to them the wasted years, and fill their cup with blessings.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

Joel uses this phrase (common among the prophets) "the day of the Lord" on five occasions: **1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14**. It refers to that future time when God will pour out His wrath on the Gentile nations because of their sins against the Jews (**Joel 3:1-8**), and will culminate in the final battle of the ages around Jerusalem and in our Lord's return to earth to defeat His enemies and establish His kingdom (cf. **Revelation 6-19**).

HAGGAI

Prophet No.14 ... Southern Kingdom. Post-exilic.

In 536 BC, Ezra took about 50,000 Jews and returned to Judah. In 535 the foundation for a new temple was laid, but considerable opposition arose and the work came to a standstill. It was not until 520 that the people recommenced the work of reconstruction again - and in 515 the temple was eventually completed. It was the work of four men that oversaw this task: Zerubbabel, the governor; Joshua, the high priest; and Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets (cf. **Ezra 5:1 & 6:14**).

The purpose of Haggai's ministry was to awaken the people and encourage them to finish the temple. There are four (dated) sermons from Haggai in this prophecy. In each message, Haggai stresses a particular sin that was an obstacle to accomplishing God's will.

Outline

1. PUTTING SELF IN FRONT OF THE LORD: 1:1-15

16 years had passed - and the temple lay unfinished ... but the people had constructed their own houses.

2. LOOKING BACK INSTEAD OF LOOKING FORWARD: 2:1-9

The people were comparing Solomon's temple with the one under construction and lamented that the one they were building lacked the glory and splendour of Solomon's.

3. FAILING TO CONFESS OUR SINS: 2:10-19

4. UNBELIEF: 2:20-23

ZECHARIAH

Prophet No.15 ... Southern Kingdom. Post-exilic.

The book ranks next to Daniel as an OT revealing of God's plan for the Jews. The city of Jerusalem is mentioned 39 times in Zechariah. In

The prophet was taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 BC; he survived the long exile of Judah, and saw the return under Cyrus. His Book is both historical and prophetic in character, and is of vast compass and sweep. Daniel deals with the times of the Gentiles - that period that began with the captivity and will end when Christ returns to earth to judge the Gentile nations and establish His kingdom. "Daniel in his outlook is much more comprehensive than the earlier prophets. His view is of a succession of Empires. He shows how their sequence is determined before God, and declares that when the appointed limit is reached they are overthrown by God. He grasps the great idea of a worldstate ruled over by principles of justice and right under the Messianic King. He views past, present, and future as a comprehensive whole."

 **Outline** 

1. THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DANIEL: 1-6

- i. Maintaining a godly walk, **1**
- ii. Interpreting the dream of the image, **2**
- iii. Golden image in the plain of Dura (Daniel not present), **3**
- iv. Interpreting the 'tree dream,' **4**
- v. The handwriting on the wall, **5**
- vi. The lion's den, **6** (Daniel was an old man in his 80's then!)

2. THE PROPHETICAL MINISTRY OF DANIEL: 7-12

- i. His vision of the four beasts, **7**
- ii. His vision of the ram and the he-goat, **8**
- iii. His prayer and confession ... the 70 weeks, **9**
- iv. His final vision, **10-12**.

THE KINGDOMS IN DANIEL

It must be borne in mind that six different kingdoms are identified in the Book of Daniel.

	Chpt 2	Chpt 7
1. Babylon (606-539 BC)	head of gold (36-38)	lion, eagle wings (4)
2. Medo-Persia (539-330 BC)	arms/chest of silver (39)	bear with 3 ribs (5)
3. Greece (330-approx 150 BC)	thigh of brass (39)	leopard, 4 heads (6)
4. Rome (150 BC-500 AD)	legs of iron (40)	dreadful beast (7)
5. Anti-Christ	10 toes, iron&clay (41-43)	little horn (8)
6. Christ	stone that smites (44&45)	Ancient of Days (9-14)

 **Outline** 

1. PROCLAMATION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD: 1:1-20

Joel addresses the old men (**1:1-4**), the drunkards (**1:5-7**), the worshippers (**1:8-10**), the farmers (**1:11&12**), and the priests (**1:13&14**) concerning the dreadfulness of their visitation.

2. PREPARATION FOR THE DAY OF THE LORD: 2:1-27

When Joel blows the trumpet for the second time (**2:12-17**), it is to call the people to fast and pray and confess their sins. He expresses faith that the Lord will answer and drive out the army of locusts, restoring blessing again (**2:18-27**).

3. PROPHECIES REGARDING THE DAY OF THE LORD: 2:28-3:21

This passage deals with time yet future.

(i) The Spirit of the Lord will be poured out before that day, 2:28-32 (a fact referred to by Peter on the day of Pentecost - **Acts 2:16-21** - but to be fulfilled in the last days).

(ii) Judgment will be poured out during that day, 3:1-17. The nations which assemble against Jerusalem will be threshed as Christ defends His land, people and holy city.

(iii) Blessing will be poured out after that day, 3:18-21.

The prophecy points forward to that day, yet future, when the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh, when all Israel's enemies shall be overthrown, and when Jerusalem shall be a praise in the earth.

JONAH

Prophet No. 2 ... Northern Kingdom. Pre-Exilic. Assyrian Period.

The time of this prophet is fixed by the reference to him in **2 Kings 14:25**. He was a prophet of the North, and prophesied to his people, who, largely through his instrumentality, reached the highest line of material prosperity in the reign of Jeroboam II (This book should be read in conjunction with **2 Kings 14** and associated with the book of **Nahum**).

NO ACTUAL PROPHECIES

There is no trace of Jonah's prophecies to Israel: we are left with but one

fragment of his ministry, which is rather the history of a prophecy (that God was going to judge Nineveh), than a prophecy. Jonah was sent to preach against the sins of Nineveh, and to call that nation to repentance. How he hesitated, finally went, what he said, and the effect it had, his response, and Jehovah's controversy with him, are all told in most vivid language in his book. That he did prophesy, check **2 Kings 14:25&26**

Outline

1. REBELLION - A LESSON ABOUT GOD'S PATIENCE: 1

Instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah fled in the opposite direction. The causes/course/consequences of his backsliding are all dealt with in this opening chapter.

2. REPENTANCE - A LESSON ABOUT GOD'S PARDON: 2

Jonah was first of all chastened under the loving hand of God, convicted of his sins, cleansed from them, and given another chance.

3. REVIVAL - A LESSON ABOUT GOD'S POWER: 3

The key word in this chapter is "great." Jonah came to a great city, with a great commission, and witnessed a great change. The Ninevites heard one sermon from one preacher (and that sermon emphasized the wrath, not the love, of God) - and yet they repented and were forgiven!

4. REMONSTRANCE - A LESSON ABOUT GOD'S PITY: 4

Instead of having a rejoicing preacher at the close of the book, we meet one remonstrating with God ... hoping that God's judgment would fall on the people! This is a matter of amazement: God sent revival under the preaching of a man who did not even love the souls of the people he preached to! Surely another instance of God's sovereignty?

AMOS

Prophet No.3 ... Northern Kingdom. Pre-Exilic. Assyrian Period.

Amos was contemporary with **Jonah**, and may have known **Joel**. The prosperity enjoyed in the time of Jeroboam II was not universal;

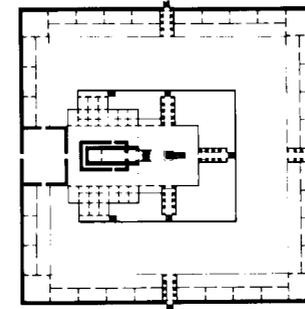
2. GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE SURROUNDING NATIONS: 25-32

3. GOD'S RESTORATION OF THE JEWS: 33-48.

- The New Nation, **36&37** ... revived and reunited.
- The New Victory, **38&39**
- The New Temple, **40-46**

It is obvious that this temple - greater than anything ever known by Israel - has never been built. It must refer to a future time. Many students believe that this will be the great millennial temple that will be filled with God's glory during Christ's 1000-year reign on the earth (**43:1-12**).

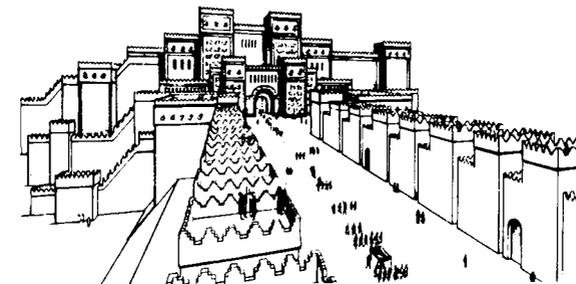
- The New Land, **47&48** ... refreshed and redivided. The name of the city shall be "Jehovah-Shammah: The Lord is there!"



Ezekiel's vision of a reconstructed Temple

DANIEL

Prophet No.13 ... Southern Kingdom. Exilic. Babylonian and Medo-Persian Periods. Date 605-534 B.C.



2. GOD'S VICTORY FOR JACOB: **17-21**

The little word "but" in **verse 17** marks the turning point. God promises deliverance and cleansing to Mount Zion. They would "possess their possessions."

EZEKIEL

Prophet No. 12 ... Southern Kingdom. Exilic. Babylonian Period. Date 592-572 B.C.

THE SETTING

King Josiah went to battle against Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, and fell at Megiddo in the year 609. He was succeeded by Jehoahaz, and then by Jehoiakim, who reigned as Nebuchadnezzar's vassal, but who rebelled against him in 606 B.C., and as a result was defeated in that year by the Eastern king at Carchemish, who took many away captives to Babylon. **Daniel** was one of that number.

Jehoiachin succeeded Jehoiakim, but after reigning for three months was taken by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon in the year 597 B.C., along with a further 10,000 captives. **Ezekiel** was in this new contingent of captives - then a youth of 25 years of age. He was taken to Tel-abib, near the ship canal Chebar (**3:15**) - about 200 miles north of Babylon. The name means "hill of grassland," teaching us that even in exile there are green places for those whose hearts are right with God.

Ezekiel was silent in exile for five years, and then the call came to be a prophet of the Lord. His ministry began when he was 30 (592 BC) and lasted for over twenty years. This was 6 years before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Therefore: while Ezekiel was prophesying on the banks of the Chebar, Jeremiah was prophesying at Jerusalem and Daniel at Babylon.

The book of Ezekiel is divided into three clear sections. (**Chapters 1-24** were all given before the siege of Jerusalem; **chapters 25-32** during the siege; and **chapters 33-48** after the siege).

Outline

INTRODUCTION ... THE PROPHET'S CALL: **1-3**

1. GOD'S JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM: **4-24**

decline went side by side with material advance, and this unschooled herdman from Tekoa lifted up his voice against it. Amos is not a prophet in the professional sense, for his father was not a prophet nor did he attend one of the prophetic schools in Israel (**7:10-17**). But he is God's man with God's message, and in warning of coming judgment, mentions captivity (**5:5,27; 6:7; 7:9,17**) - a warning that was fulfilled within 25 years!



COMPREHENSIVE VISION

His vision is comprehensive, for he pronounces judgment first of all upon the nations surrounding Israel, and then, with terrible directness, upon Israel itself. He foretells the Assyrian captivity, and sets forth the only means of escape. And beyond the darkness of his own day he sees rising the Millennium Kingdom, and the oncoming of the day of universal blessings.

Outline

1. THE PROPHET LOOKS AROUND: **1&2**

Amos pronounces multiple judgments on the nations surrounding Israel ... Syria (**1:3-5**); Philistia (**1:6-8**); Phoenicia (**1:9&10**); Edom (**1:11&12**); Ammon (**1:13-15**); Judah (**2:4&5**).

2. THE PROPHET LOOKS WITHIN: **3-6**

Although Israel was enjoying a time of peace, prosperity and apparent religious revival, the man of God looks beyond the outward appearance and detects the state of the heart. In these chapters, Amos delivers three sermons, each one prefaced by the words, "Hear this word" (**3:1**: A message of Explanation; **4:1**: a message of Accusation; **5:1**: A message of Lamentation).

3. THE PROPHET LOOKS AHEAD: **7-9**

Five visions are recorded, giving Amos an insight into what God is going to do to the nation.

(i) Locusts, **7:1-3**.

(ii) Fire, **7:4-6**.

(iii) The plumbline, **7:7-9**

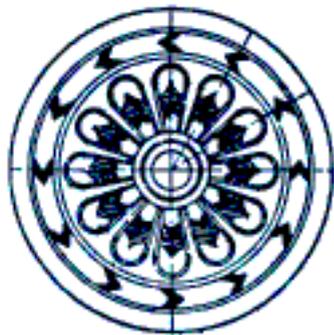
(iv) The summer fruit, **8:1-14**

(v) At the altar, **9:1-10**. Here Amos sees the Lord Himself, acting in judgment against the insincere worship He had been receiving.

The prophecy ends on a note of victory (**9:11-15**) ... a promise of future restoration (quoted in **Acts 15:14-18** at the first church council).

HOSEA

Prophet No.4 ... Northern Kingdom. Pre-Exilic. Assyrian Period.



Hosea 1:1 makes it clear that this prophet had a message for the Northern Kingdom: (it corresponded with the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in the South). **We can calculate from this that Hosea prophesied for about 75 years - probably a longer time than any other prophet.** He was contemporary with Jonah and Amos, and lived to see Israel taken captive by the Assyrians in 721 BC. **2 Kings 15-17** will provide historical back-

ground for the prophecies of this book.

The name "Hosea" means "salvation." Hosea's message was delivered at a time of national decline. When he commenced his ministry, Jeroboam II was king and while it was a time of great prosperity, the nation was rotting away internally and making alliances with foreign peoples instead of trusting in the Lord to lead and protect them. The prophet exposes the sins of the people and warns of coming judgment, then surveys a day of future hope. **The unique feature of Hosea's message is that he was forced to live it himself before he could preach it to the people.** The prophet had to endure deep agony in his own home because of the sins of his wife - but all of this was an object lesson to him and his people.

📖 Outline 📖

1. ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS PICTURED: 1-3

There can be little doubt the first three chapters are a narrative of personal experience, and these form the foundation on which the

(ii) "The earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord", **2:14**.

There are five "woes" in this chapter, delineating the things that God hates and judges ... greedy and violent covetousness, **5-11**; murder, **12**; drunkenness, **15&16**; idolatry, **19**. In spite of these, God will put sin down and establish His righteous kingdom.

(iii) "The Lord is in His holy temple", **2:20**. He is still on the throne!

3. THE PROPHET WORSHIPPING: 3

The prophet Prays, **3:2**; Ponders, **3:3-16**; and finally Praises, **3:17-19**. The way to deal with life's problems has been amply demonstrated here!

OBADIAH

Prophet No.11 ... Southern Kingdom. Exilic. Babylonian Period.

This is the shortest of the prophetic books, but it is not on that account of least significance. We know nothing of the prophet himself. His name means he was "the servant of God." The first verse of the prophecy tells us that it is "concerning Edom" ... the people that descended from Esau, Jacob's brother.

It would seem that the event which occasioned this prophecy was the overthrow of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. As the angry soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar wreck the walls, slay the inhabitants and burn the city, they are cheered on by a group of neighbouring citizens - the Edomites. For this action, God will judge the Edomites also - and will resettle Israel in their land, including former Edomite territory (After AD70 the Edomites entirely disappeared from history).

📖 Outline 📖

1. GOD'S VENGEANCE ON ESAU: 1-16

Jeremiah had already announced the doom of Edom, **Jeremiah 49:7-22**. Obadiah lists her sins as pride (**3&4**), confederacy (**7**), violence (**10**), rejoicing over calamity (**12**), looting (**13**), hindering men from escaping (**14**), and drunken celebration (**16**).

Their judgment would be in kind ... they would be betrayed and slaughtered by their own confederates (**5,6,9-11**)!

graphic of the prophecies. The prophet ministered probably in the reign of Jehoiakim (the third from the last of the kings of Judah). The occasion of his message was the almost immediate fall of the Assyrian Empire foretold by Nahum - and the rise and work of the Chaldean Power (Babylonian), which was to extend to the end of Judah's captivity.

Nahum, therefore, was concerned with the close of one Empire, and Habakkuk with the commencement of the other. The Assyrian Empire had been a rod in Jehovah's hand for the chastisement of His people, but they had not repented and turned to Him. He therefore destroys that instrument, and lays hold of another. **Iniquity, violence, strife, contention, and injustice were widespread in Judah: the prophet comes out against it all - and wonders what God is going to do about it all.** He quickly gets an answer!



Outline

1. THE PROPHET WONDERING: 1

Habakkuk is perplexed by two leading questions.

(i) Why is God silent and inactive?, **1:1-4**. God gave His answer in **1:5-11**: He was going to raise up the Chaldeans as an instrument to chasten the people. That act gave rise to another perplexing query.

(ii) How can God use such a sinful nation for a holy cause?, **Hab.1:12-17**. Habakkuk could not understand how the Lord could use such a wicked nation as the Chaldeans to punish His own people.

2. THE PROPHET WATCHING AND WAITING: 2

Faced with the terrible situation in his land - and the impending judgment - Habakkuk did not become an atheist or agnostic: **he went to his watchtower to pray, meditate and wait on the Lord**. In answer to his prayer, God gave Habakkuk three wonderful assurances to encourage and strengthen him in those dangerous days.

(i) "The just shall live by his faith", **2:4** (cf. **Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38**). One of the most important verses in the Scriptures.

whole message rests. The three notes struck here go through the whole book: Transgression, Visitation, Restoration.

Hosea wanted to marry a girl called Gomer - and God allowed him to do so - but warned him that she would break his heart. She did. Gomer bore Hosea three children, then left him to live with other men. When Hosea rediscovered his wayward wife, she was being sold in the slave market (**Hosea 3:1&2**). He had to buy her back, bring her home, and assure her of his forgiveness and love. There is every reason to believe that Gomer repented of her sins and became a faithful wife. All of this was a picture of Israel's unfaithfulness to God ... and of the consequences of her sins (notably captivity).

2. ISRAEL'S SINS PROCLAIMED: 4-7

Hosea's message to Israel revealed the sins that were rampant in the nation (esp. **Hosea 4:1&2**). To make matters worse, the nation tried to cover her sins with a shallow 'religious revival' (**6:1-6**). Hosea - a master-preacher - employs various figures to picture the shallow spiritual condition of the people: (i) a morning cloud (**6:4**); (ii) a half-baked cake (**7:8**); (iii) grey hairs (**8:9**); (iv) a silly dove (**7:11**); (v) a deceitful bow (**7:16**).

3. ISRAEL'S JUDGMENT PRONOUNCED: 8-10

The backslider is always punished. Hosea could see Assyria coming to 'chastise' the nation of Israel and carry it away into slavery. He pictures this judgment as the coming of a swift eagle (**8:1**); the wrath of a whirlwind (**8:7**); the burning of a fire (**8:14**). The nation will be scattered (**8:8, 9:17**) and will reap more than they have sown (**10:12-15**).



4. ISRAEL'S RESTORATION PROMISED: 11-14

This chastisement would be administered by the Lord in love, with the desire to draw back Israel after Himself: after it a vision of future glory unfolds. The prophecy is remarkable for its revelation of Jehovah's compassion for His people. The conditions of restoration are clearly

laid down, namely, confession and conversion. Sin obscures and veils the light of the Father's face, and only as it is put away can we again enter into fellowship with Him.

ISAIAH

Prophet No.5 ... Southern Kingdom. Pre-Exilic. Assyrian Period.

Isaiah, who received his prophetic call in the last year of King Uzziah (**Isaiah 6**), is considered to be the greatest prophet of the Old Testament. He uttered his stirring words of condemnation and consolation in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

The prophecy, from beginning to end, is a marvellous unity, the work of one Divine Mind through one prepared agent. The Israelitish and Messianic divisions are locked together in the centre by a historical section, which is the product of what goes before, and the preparation for what comes after.

Isaiah lifts up his voice against the backslidings of the people, calls them to repentance, warns them of coming judgment, utters denunciations against the surrounding nations, shows that God is Sovereign, the Moral Governor of the world, and that all His will shall be fulfilled in His Messianic King, the Suffering Servant, and that then, the whole wide world shall be blessed.

Outline

1. CONDEMNATION ... THE DEFEAT OF ASSYRIA: 1-39

- Sermons against Judah and Israel, **1-12**
- Burdens of judgment on the other nations, **13-23**
- Songs of future glory for the nation, **24-27**
- Woes against the sins of the people, **28-35**
- Historical interlude concerning king Hezekiah, **36-39**
 - i. Hezekiah's victory over Assyria, **36&37**
 - ii. Hezekiah's sin with Babylon, **38&39**.

2. CONSOLATION ... REMNANT DELIVERED FROM BABYLON: 40-66

- The Greatness of God, **40-66**
- The true God is set against the false idols of the heathen.
- The Grace of God, **49-57**

Outline

INTRODUCTION ... THE PROPHET'S CALL: **1**

1. NATIONAL ... MESSAGES TO JUDAH: 2-33

- i. Condemnation, **2-24**
 - The nation generally, **2-20**
 - The leaders specifically, **21-24**
- ii. Captivity, **25-29**
- iii. Cleansing/Restoration, **30-33**

2. PERSONAL ... JEREMIAH'S SUFFERINGS: 34-45

- i. Before the siege of Jerusalem, **34-39**
- ii. After the siege, with the remnant, **40-45**

3. INTERNATIONAL ... MESSAGES TO THE NATIONS: 46-51

- i. Egypt, **46**
- ii. Philistia, **47**
- iii. Moab, **48**
- iv. Ammon, **49:1-6**
- v. Edom, **49:7-22**
- vi. Syria, Kedar, Elam, **49:23-39**
- vii. Babylon, **50&51**.
(Babylon is mentioned 168 times in Jeremiah).

CONCLUSION: The prophet's CAPTIVITY and release: **51**

BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

Written by Jeremiah. It is a series of 'funeral poems' marking the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. **It is written in acrostic form:** each of the 22 verses in **chapters 1,2,4 and 5** starts with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet; in **chapter 3**, there are three verses given to each letter. No book in the Bible reveals the suffering heart of God over human sin as this one does!

HABAKKUK

Prophet No.10 ... Southern Kingdom. Pre-Exilic. Babylonian Period.

This Book contains much profound teaching, and is among the most

2. JUDGMENT FOR THE NATIONS: 2:4-3:7

Philistia (2:4-7), Moab and Ammon (2:8-11), Egypt (2:12), and Assyria (2:13-15) are all set for judgment. The argument is that, if the Lord judges the sins of the heathen, how much more will He judge the sins of Judah?!

3. RESTORATION PROMISED: 3:8-20

There is an emphasis on "the remnant" (2:7,9; 3:13). They were to wait, endure and sing, for when God's wrath had been poured out, He would restore and rejoice over the nation.

JEREMIAH

Prophet No. 9 ... Southern Kingdom. Pre-Exilic and Exilic. Assyrian & Babylonian Periods.

Dr. Scroggie has commented: "This is a Book far too little read, and the author is a man much misunderstood. He received the Divine call in the reign of the godly Josiah, and five years after the Law was found in the temple. The reformation under that king had not proved permanent, and the nation was rushing headlong to its doom.



Jeremiah saw this clearly, and spoke of it faithfully. His was an exceedingly difficult task, for it was not so much to call the people to repentance in order that they might escape the fate of Israel, as to urge upon them to submit to the coming Babylonian power which most certainly would come upon them, and overcome them. **For this advice he was sorely persecuted, and spurned as a traitor to his nation.** But right

through his message rang, strong and clear, a message of denunciation, visitation, invitation, and consolation.

Perhaps none of the prophets comes so near to the Saviour in His aspect of Suffering Servant as does Jeremiah, and perhaps none shares with him so deep a grief for the sins of the people. He appeared to fail in his mission, but in reality he did not. His words were fulfilled, are being fulfilled, and are yet to be."

The Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ, dies for men. There are 17 references in Isaiah to "Jehovah's Servant." In 13 of these, the nation is in view; in 4 of these, Jesus Christ is evidently pictured, 42:1,19; 52:13&53:11. The entire section from 52:13 to 53:12 is a vivid description of the sufferings, death and resurrection of Christ.

• The Glory of God, 58-66

The splendour and glory of the future kingdom.

THE BIBLE IN MINIATURE

It has been suggested that the prophecy of **Isaiah** is a 'Bible in miniature.' Its 66 chapters are divided into 2 parts; 39 chapters in the first (OT) and 27 chapters in the second (NT). Like the OT, the first 39 chapters emphasize judgment; the last 27 bring a message of mercy and comfort.

MICAH

Prophet No.6 ... North and South. Pre-Exilic. Assyrian Period.

This prophet was contemporary with **Isaiah** and **Hosea**, and prophesied during the reign of Hoshea in Israel, and of Hezekiah and Manasseh in Judah. This book is composed of three 'sermons' ... each message beginning with the word "hear!" He foretold the captivity of Samaria, and of Jerusalem, because of their sins, and in common with most of the prophets, he sees far up the path of history the coming of the King, the repentance and restoration of the people, the establishment of the kingdom, the felicity of the Jews, and the subjection and prosperity of the nations. Micah's prophecy is distinctly Messianic and Millennial.

Outline

1. JUDGMENT IS COMING! 1&2

Micah names the capital cities in Judah (Jerusalem) and Israel (Samaria): in fact, in this first message, he identifies 12 cities in whom sin was rife.

2. THE DELIVERER IS COMING! 3-5

This is a message of hope. The wicked leaders of the land were condemned for devouring the people instead of delivering them (3:1-7). Then Micah switches to a new theme: one day there will be

peace and righteousness in the earth: Mt. Zion will become the capital of the world, all armies will be dissolved and weapons destroyed. This can only happen because of the Deliverer who is to come. Having mentioned 12 cities, Micah mentions one more ... Bethlehem - the birthplace of the Deliverer (**Micah 5:2&3**, cf. **Matthew 2:6**). It is this prophecy that led the wise men to Jesus!

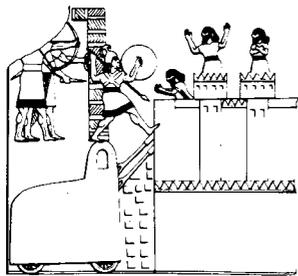
3. TRUST THE LORD TODAY! 6-7

The scene in these closing chapters is that of a courtroom: God calls His people to be judged ... and promises to restore them in the future days.

The closing words (**7:18-20**) form a tremendous statement of faith. This is the whole purpose of Micah's message: he wants to draw the people to faith in Jehovah.

NAHUM

Prophet No.7 ... Southern Kingdom. Pre-Exilic. Assyrian Period.



The message of this book is directed against Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, and is a pronouncement and defence of its doom. Approximately 180 years before, Jonah had been sent with a warning to this city, they listened and repented - but their sorrow was as the morning cloud. God is raised against them again; His fury against the persistently wicked must be poured out. The overthrow of Nineveh is first of all declared, then described, and finally defended. **This book was written when Nineveh was at the peak of her power - no-one would have thought it likely that mighty Nineveh would ever fall.** The book is a masterpiece of vivid writing, and a marvel of condensation.

📄 Outline 📄

1. GOD IS JEALOUS ... NINEVEH WILL FALL: 1

God burns with hatred against sin, even though He loves the sinner. Nahum describes the fall of Nineveh using two pictures: i. a great

flood of water, ii. a fire of dry thorns. Oases for God's people; **1:7&15**.

2. GOD IS JUDGE ... NINEVEH'S FALL IS GREAT: 2

Chapter 1:15 is actually the beginning of the second chapter in the Hebrew Bible. It is the joyful announcement that Nineveh has fallen. The repeated reference to lions (**2:11-13**) should be noted. The lion was the great symbol of the Assyrian power. They built huge statues of lions with men's heads. God can defeat them.

3. GOD IS JUST ... NINEVEH DESERVES TO FALL: 3

Nahum considers the justice of God's act in destroying Nineveh.

ZEPHANIAH

Prophet No.8 ... Southern Kingdom. Pre-Exilic. Assyrian Period.

Zephaniah was contemporary with **Nahum** and **Jeremiah**. He exercised his ministry in the earlier portion of Josiah's reign (cf. **2 Kings 22&23**), and was instrumental in bringing about the reformation which was wrought by that king in his eighteenth year. He was the great-great-grandson of king Hezekiah.

His prophecy is short, but full. **Zephaniah and Joel are both characterised for their repeated and vivid descriptions of "the Day of the Lord ...** "a day of wrath, of trouble, of distress, of ruin, of desolation, of darkness, of gloom, of gross darkness, of the trumpet and alarm." The Day of the Lord is a day of judgment, which will bring in blessings; a day of righteousness, which will issue in peace. This day will come, not alone for Israel, but for all the earth, and so Zephaniah directs his message alike to North, South, East, and West, concentrating finally upon Jerusalem. But, in concert with the other prophets, he sings of glory beyond the gloom, of blessings beyond the curses, of 'Gerizim' towering over 'Ebal.'

📄 Outline 📄

1. JUDGMENT FOR JUDAH: 1:1-2:3

Because of the sins of Judah (particularly that of idolatry), God promises judgment.