

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

The Prophets

I. Major Prophets (760-460 BC)

a. Isaiah (prophetic activity from 740-687 B.C.)

- i. Divided into two major sections.
 1. Events during the life of Isaiah (1-33).
 2. Events after the exile (34-66).

- ii. The great heart of Isaiah and his calling to preach to the people to live according to God's covenant and prepare for messiah.
 1. It is his voice that resounds throughout the whole OT along with other faithful, "Here am I, send me."

- iii. In Isaiah we see again the pursuing hesed of God and the call for his people to be a light to the gentiles and the light of the coming messiah.

b. Jeremiah (prophetic activity from 627-585 B.C.)

- i. The will of God is the opposite of what is politically popular.

- ii. He preached that the Israelites punishment and exile was coming at the hands of the Babylonians because of their disobedience.

- iii. Jeremiah was considered as treasonous and false prophets around him proclaimed that God was with Israel and that all was well.

c. Lamentations

- i. Poetic dirge over the destruction of Jerusalem.

- ii. Acrostic poem—working through the entire alphabet to express the wholeness of the grief.

d. Ezekiel (prophetic activity from 593-571 B.C.)

- i. Glory of God—the glory of God's presence in the temple and with the Israelites (Ezekiel 10).

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1. One of the more significant developments of the OT. The temple was the one and only connection for the Israelites between heaven and earth.
 - ii. The second half of the book glory speaks of God returning to the temple.
- e. **Daniel (unknown, but some think around 520 B.C.)**
- i. Apocalyptic literature—introduces visions of future that are meant to give hope to those suffering that God will end the exile. Also demonstrates the clear sovereignty of God.
 - ii. Stories about faithfulness in the midst of trial and how to live as a Jew in exile among the pagans.

II. Minor Prophets

- a. **Hosea (ca. 758-722 B.C.)**
 - i. God's love and compassion for Israel and God's punishment
 - ii. Plea for God's people to return to him. The core desire of God for his people to return to **hesed** (6:6).
- b. **Joel (unknown, but possibly ca. 590 B.C.)**
 - i. Power of God's Spirit that will be poured out on His people.
 1. Quoted by Peter in Acts 2:17-21 as fulfillment of God's promise of new covenant.
 - ii. Calling God's people to reliance, trust, and repentance.
- c. **Amos (ca. 760 B.C.)**
 - i. As a shepherd called from the fields Amos' concern was for social justice.
 - ii. Preaching in Northern Israel to wealthy who were exploiting the poor. Massive division between rich and poor at that time.

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- d. **Obadiah (written after fall of Jerusalem, ca. 586 B.C.)**
 - i. About the evil the Edomites had done to Israelites and God's impending judgment.

- e. **Jonah (during reign of Jeroboam II, 2 Kings 14:25)**
 - i. Called to preach to the Assyrians, the most powerful nation and enemy of Israel.

 - ii. Jonah's racism prevents him from seeing God's love for all his children.

 - iii. God is always an evangelist. Demonstrates His love for all races and cultures and his desire for all to repent and be saved.

- f. **Micah (from 740-686 B.C.)**
 - i. Threat of divine judgment for breaking the covenant.

 - ii. Here we see God's justice and mercy in his pleading for the cause of the poor and commands his people to do the same.

- g. **Nahum**—describes the Assyrian empire, but proclaims that it will ultimately fall.

- h. **Habakkuk (between 612-599 B.C.)**
 - i. "Complaints" of Habakkuk - Why is this happening? Asks God why these events are taking place.

 - ii. "the righteous shall live by faith (2:4)."

- i. **Zephaniah (during reign of Josiah, 640-609 B.C.)**
 - i. Emphasis on purity for a people who had become corrupt under King Josiah.

- j. **Haggai & Zechariah (520 B.C.)**
 - i. End of the exile and some Israelites had returned to Jerusalem, but the temple still lied in ruins.

 - ii. Concern for the rebuilding of the temple.

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- k. **Malachi**
 - i. God is a covenant-keeping God and requires the same of his people.
 - ii. Calls them to account for not trusting God and for offering second-rate animals as their tithe.