

# **The Hebrew Prophets**

**Blaine Robison, M.A.**



# Terms for Prophets

- **Seer**
  - Received revelatory visions
  - Heb. *ro'eh*: only Samuel (1 Sam 9:9)
  - Heb. *chozeh*: Gad, Iddo, Hanani, Asaph, Heman, Jehu & Jeduthun
- **“Prophet,” Heb. *nabi***
  - One who spoke for God
  - Most frequent term in the Tanakh (314 times)
  - Abraham the first *nabi*, Gen 20:7
- **“Man of God” Heb. *ish Elohim***
  - One wholly devoted to God and could be trusted to transmit God’s Word.
  - Moses; an angel; Samuel; David; Elijah; Elisha; Shemaiah, Igdaliah & four unnamed prophets



# Historical Outline

- **Conquest/Confederation**
  - Joshua 1400 BC --- Judges until 1043 BC
- **United Monarchy**
  - Saul 1043 BC
  - David 1011 BC
  - Solomon 971 BC
- **Divided Monarchy and Fall**
  - ca. 931–722 BC, Kingdom of Israel
  - ca. 722–586 BC, Kingdom of Judah
- **Exile**
  - Babylonian invasions, 606 BC, 597 BC, 586 BC
  - Persian release of Jews, 539 BC
  - Rebuilt Temple dedicated, 516 BC



# Timeline of the Prophets

- **14<sup>th</sup> Century**
  - Joshua (wrote book of Joshua)
- **10<sup>th</sup> Century**
  - Samuel (wrote Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel)
  - Gad & Nathan (1 & 2 Samuel; per 1 Chr 29:29)
- **9<sup>th</sup> Century**
  - Israel: Elijah, Elisha
  - Judah: Obadiah, Joel
- **8<sup>th</sup> Century**
  - Nineveh: Jonah
  - Israel: Amos, Hosea
  - Judah: Isaiah, Micah



# Timeline of the Prophets

- 7<sup>th</sup> Century
  - Judah: Jeremiah (wrote Kings), Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Nahum
- 6<sup>th</sup> Century
  - Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah
- 5<sup>th</sup> Century
  - Malachi



# Character of the Histories

- **Types of Prose (Tools for Revelation)**
  - Dialogue between those in the story
  - Narration of action
    - Narrator employs action verbs to advance the story
  - Narration of character
    - Narrator comments about characters
  - Narration of divine intent
    - Narrator tells something of God's purposes
- **Basic Theology**
  - God is a warrior king
  - When Israel obeys, God gives victory
  - When Israel disobeys, God punishes
  - When Israel repents, God pardons
  - Torah is the plumb line for evaluating behavior



## Prophets of Renown - Elijah

- Scripture: 1Kgs 17:1 – 2Kgs 2:12
- Prophesied during reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah
- Unorthodox dress and lifestyle
- Performed seven miracles
- Defeated 850 pagan prophets on Mt. Carmel
- Taken to heaven in a whirlwind



## Prophets of Renown - Elisha

- Scripture: 1Kgs 19:6 – 2Kgs 13:20
- Prophesied during reigns of Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Joash (about 50 years)
- Assistant and successor to Elijah
- Received a double portion of God's Spirit
- Performed twice as many miracles as Elijah
- Led a school of prophets
- Died of an unspecified illness



# Forms of the Prophetic Message

- **Messenger speech**
  - “Thus says the Lord”
- **Vision accounts**
  - They saw the message
- **Symbolic actions**
  - Divinely directed
  - Isaiah went naked, Isa 20:2-5
  - Jeremiah buried a piece of cloth, Jer 13:1-9
  - Ezekiel lay on his side, Ezek 4:4-6
  - Zechariah made a crown, Zech 6:9-14
- **Woe oracles**
  - “The Babylonians are coming”



# Types of Prophetic Messages

- **Allegation**
  - Naming sins
- **Judgment**
  - Announcing consequences
- **Instruction**
  - Teaching how to avoid wrath
- **Future Hope**
  - Promises of restoration



# Future Hope Proclamation

- **Restoration Eschatology**
  - After exile return of Israel to the Land
  - Rule of the Davidic *Mashiach*
  - Justice, righteousness, peace
  - Fruitfulness of the Land
  - Covenant promises fulfilled
  - Focus on the present age
- **Apocalyptic Eschatology**
  - Cosmic catastrophe
  - Universal judgment
  - Annihilation of the wicked
  - Persecuted righteous rewarded
  - New heavens and new earth
  - Focus on the age to come



# Messianic Prophecies

- **Elements**
  - Conditions preceding arrival of the Messiah
  - Identifying characteristics of the Messiah
  - Result of the Messiah's coming
  - The resurrection and the age to come
- **Figures of Messiah**
  - *Mashiach ben David* (son of David, Isa 9:7)
  - *Mashiach ben Yosef* (son of Joseph, Isa 53)
  - *Mashiach ben Adam* (son of Man, Dan 7:13)
  - *Mashiach ben Ananim* (son of the clouds, Dan 7:13)
- **Jesus fulfills all the figures of *Mashiach***
  - Matt 1:1, 16; 16:21; 24:30; Luke 2:48-49
  - See my article "[The Messiah in the Prophets](http://www.blainerobison.com/hebroots/messiah-02.htm)"  
<http://www.blainerobison.com/hebroots/messiah-02.htm>



# Day of the Lord

- **Elijah will appear before that day (Mal 4:5).**
- **The sun will be darkened and the moon will look like blood immediately preceding that day (Joel 2:31-32).**
- **All the tribes of Israel will mourn and repent just before that day so that the remnant may be saved (Zech 12:10-14).**
- **The Day of the LORD is a day of judgment and wrath on God's enemies (Isa 13:6; Ezek 30:3)**
- **There will be multitudes in the valley of decision (judgment) on that day (Joel 3:14)**
- **That day will be a day of darkness (Amos 5:18, 20).**
- **That day will be a day of clouds (Ezekiel 30:3).**
- **That day is a day of destruction and battle (Zeph 1:15-16)**



# Message of the Minor Prophets

- **Obadiah**
  - God takes his covenant promises to Israel seriously.
  - Edom will be destroyed but Mt. Zion will be delivered.
- **Joel**
  - Restoration and blessing will only come after judgment and repentance.
- **Jonah**
  - God desires to show mercy to all peoples.
  - God intended Israel to be light to the nations.
- **Amos**
  - Authentic worship results in changed behavior.
  - Social justice is indispensable to true piety.



# Message of the Minor Prophets

- **Hosea**
  - God loved His covenant people and would take them back however often they wandered.
- **Micah**
  - God hates idolatry, injustice, rebellion and empty ritualism.
  - God will be faithful to His covenant with Abraham.
- **Habakkuk**
  - The righteous shall live by God's faithfulness.
  - Even in distress, God is to be praised.
- **Zephaniah**
  - The Day of the Lord will come to punish the wicked.
  - God will give purified lips to His people and they will again observe His appointed feasts.



# Message of the Minor Prophets

- **Nahum**
  - God loved His covenant people and would take them back however often they wandered.
- **Haggai**
  - When people give priority to God and His house, they are blessed.
  - Obedience brings encouragement of the Spirit.
- **Zechariah**
  - Spiritual renewal is necessary for building a lasting temple.
  - Messiah is coming and will deliver His people at the end.
- **Malachi**
  - God desires a holy priesthood, holy sacrifices and obedience to Torah.
  - The Messiah, Elijah and Day of the Lord are coming.



## The Book of Isaiah

“Various scholars have proposed that some unknown author wrote the second half of Isaiah and a few scholars have actually suggested a Third Isaiah. However, all the quotations in the Besekh from parts of Isaiah labeled as “Second” and “Third” Isaiah attribute those passages to Isaiah the prophet. We’re supposed to believe that some of the greatest literature in the Bible, not to mention the world, was written by someone completely anonymous and unremembered in Judaism. Modern scholars go to incredible lengths to avoid believing in the truth of biblical material, just because they can’t accept that the Lord revealed the name of Cyrus almost two hundred years before he was born or that Isaiah was given words for a people who would live long after him.” Blaine Robison



## Future Hope in Isaiah

- Israel's redemption
  - Judges will be restored, 1:26
  - Zion will be redeemed with justice, 1:27
- Israel's ministry to the nations
  - In the last days the mountain of the Lord will be raised up, 2:2
  - Gentiles will worship the God of Israel and desire to learn Torah, 2:3
- Messianic passages
  - Immanuel oracle, 7:14
  - The Suffering Servant's ministry, Chaps 49–57
  - The glory of Zion restored, Chaps 60-62
  - New heavens and new earth, 65:17; 66:22



## Future Hope in Jeremiah

- “Days are coming” occurs 15 times; 11 of which are future hope.
- **Messianic Passages**
  - Promise of Davidic Messiah, 23:5-6; 30:8-9, 21-24; 33:14-26 (the branch of David)
  - New covenant, 31:31-34; 32:38-40
- **Restoration (“plans I have for you” 29:11)**
  - Return of exiles, 23:8; 29:10; 30:3; 32:36f
  - Renewal of the Land, 31:1-28; 32:42-44
  - Personal accountability, 31:29-30
  - Rebuilding of Jerusalem, 31:38-40
  - Levitical priests continue ministry, 33:18
- Judgment on enemies, 48:12-13; 49:2; 51:47-52



## Future Hope in Ezekiel

- A remnant will be restored to the Land, 11:13-21
- Israel will be resurrected and gathered back to the Land from every nation on earth, 36:24–37:14
- Judah and Israel will be reunited, 37:15-23
- God will give new hearts to his people and place his Spirit in them, 11:19-20; 36:24-27
- The Davidic Messiah will be king in the Land, 37:24-28
- Israel will be rescued from an invasion by seven nations, Chaps 38–39
- The Temple will be rebuilt even grander, 40–42
- Sacrifices will be offered in the Temple, 43
- Levites will serve the Temple again, 44
- Torah festivals will be observed, 45–46
- A river of life will flow from the Temple, 47:1-12
- The Land will be divided among the tribes and aliens, 47:13–48:29



# Future Hope in Daniel

- **Contrast of kingdoms, Chap 2**
  - Babylon, Persia, Greece, & Rome
  - Kingdom of heaven shall endure
- **Victorious Messiah, Chap 7**
  - Coming of the Heavenly Son of Man
  - He will be given an everlasting kingdom
  - He will reign over all peoples and languages
- **Suffering Messiah, Chap 9**
  - 69 weeks of 7 years until Messiah comes
  - Messiah will be “cut off”
- **Final Victory, Chap 12**
  - Saints to endure a severe time of trial, 7:25-27; 8:9-14; 12:1
  - Dead to be raised at the end of the age, 12:2-3, 13



# Future Hope in Zechariah

- **Suffering Messiah**
  - He will be sold for 30 pieces of silver, 11:12
  - He will be killed by piercing hands and feet, 12:10
  - He will be forsaken by his *talmidim*, 13:7
- **King Messiah**
  - He will remove iniquity in one day, 3:8-9
  - He will build the temple, 6:12-15
  - He will be priest as well as king, 6:13
  - He will enter Jerusalem on a donkey, 9:9
  - He will fight against the nations, 14:3
  - He will stand on Mount of Olives, 14:4
- **Messianic age**
  - Messiah will reign as king over the earth, 14:9
  - Sukkot will be observed annually, 14:16
  - Every pot will be “holy to the LORD,” 14:21



# Future Hope in Malachi

- **Messiah**
  - Lord will come to His temple, 3:1
  - Sun of righteousness will rise with healing, 4:2
- **Revival for Israel, 3:2-4**
  - He will purify the sons of Levi
  - Sacrificial offerings will again be pleasing to God
  - God will return to His people as they return to Him
- **Blessedness Promised, 3:8-18**
  - Judgment on crops will be reversed.
  - Nations will call Israel blessed.
  - Those who fear the Lord will be remembered.
- **Messenger**
  - Elijah will return before the Day of the Lord, 4:5