

## **NEBI'IM**

### **Preliminary considerations**

#### 1. Prophets

(Former – Historical Books)

Joshua

Judges

Samuel

Kings

(Latter – Prophetic Books)

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Ezekiel

The Twelve

- Relationship of two sections?

#### 2. Deuteronomistic history

Martin Noth (1943) proposed the thesis of a “Deuteronomistic history” which included the book of Deut and extended as far as the end of 2 Kings. He did not consider Deut part of Pentateuch (Torah was only the first four books; he called it Tetrateuch instead of Pentateuch).

By contrast, Julius Wellhausen earlier (so also von Rad 1938) included Joshua with Torah, calling the resultant six books the Hexateuch.

Recent scholarship has argued for Torah as a unit no matter the history of the literature.

Indeed, the history of Joshua to Kings *is viewed* through the “eyes” of Deuteronomy. Thus the compilation of these books shapes the theology that is presented, especially certain parts. For example →

- Strange gods/images, Deut 5:6-10, see Josh 23:7f; Jdg 2:11+; 1 K 9:6, 9; 11:7ff; 14:8f; 16:30f; 2 K 21:3-7.
- Centralization, Deut 12, see 1 K 11:7; 12:31f; 14:23; 15:14; 22:44; 2 K 9:22; 17:17; 21:6; 23:29.
- Prohibition of pagan practices (e.g., dedication of children), Deut 12:31, 18:10-14, see 1 S 15:23; 28:3ff; 2 K 16:3; 17:17, 31; 21:6; 23:24.
- Cultic prostitution, see 1 K 14:24; 15:12; 22:47; 2 K 23:7.

## Overview

### A. Former Prophets

#### 1. Period from Moses to Samuel (Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel)

##### a. **Joshua:** God's faithfulness

- Joshua 1 (Deut 17:14-20; 31:9)

"I will be with you as I was with Moses"

Deut 28:1ff

= obedience/disobedience

- Theological importance of *herem* [see Fishbane 200-208]
  - Cf. Ex 23:20-33; Deut 7:1-2; 20:10-18; Josh 14-18; Judg 2:1-5 and 1:1-36
- Outline:

#### I. Conquest of the Land, 1-12

#### II. Division of the Land, 13-22 [cf. 15:18; Judg 1:14]

#### III. Joshua's Farewell, 23-24 [note legal references]

##### b. **Judges:** human unfaithfulness or disobedience of compromise

"Every person did that which was right in his own eyes."

- 12 leaders who are raised up to judge or deliver, although neither term occurs often; one real Judge, 11:27
- 17:6; 21:25
- Abimelek, ch. 9 is the only "king," a terrible excuse of a man.
- Outline:

#### I. Transition to Post-conquest, 1:1-3:6

## II. The Judges, 3:7-16:31

- 12 judges/leaders + Abimelech (ch. 9)

## III. Appendices, 17:1-21:25

- Acceleration of moral disorder!

### c. Samuel and Saul: God's kingship, earthly and heavenly, **1 Samuel 1-31**

- 1 Sam 1-7 → Samuel
- 1 Sam 8-15 → Samuel and Saul [issues: several anointings of Saul]
- 1 Sam 16-31 → Saul and David [issue: picture of David seems inconsistent]
  
- 1 Sam 8:4-9 →
- 1 Sam 12:12, 20-25  
Cf. Isa 6:5

## 2. Period from Samuel and David to Solomon, **2 Samuel 1-1 Kings 11**

1 Samuel 16:1 marks the change.

- 2 Sam 1-8 → David's triumph
- 2 Sam 9-20 → David's "Court History" [eyewitness knowledge?]
- 2 Sam 21-24 → 6 appendices

### a. David

- 2 Samuel 7 (seven-fold promise)
  - Cf. Ps. 2; 89:28-37; 110; Isa 43:15; 52:13ff; John 1:45-49
  - Brueggemann 1997, 604ff.

### b. Solomon

- 1 Kings 11

**Note:** sources occasionally mentioned – 1 Kings 11:41; Chronicles of the kings of Israel (17X), Chronicles of the kings of Judah (15X); plus others? E.g., 1 Kings 8:12-13 LXX, "book of the song."

### 3. Period of Divided Kingdoms and loss of Israel: weakness of human kingship, **1 Kings 12-2 Kings 18**

- Idolatry
- Self-righteousness
- Downward spiral: direct rule of God → indirect rule of God → suspended rule of God
- Note: 47 chapters in Kings, 11 on Solomon, 17 on Omride dynasty (875-835 BCE)
  - 1 Kings 18, Elijah and the prophets of Baal
  - 1 Kings 21, Naboth's vineyard
- Problem: chronological issues
- Solutions: copyists' errors? Coregencies and gaps between regimes? Different calendars? [ex.: Judah's New Year from Tishri (Sept/Oct), Israel's from Nisan (Mar/Apr)] Liturgical calendar? Accession vs. non-accession?

### 4. Period of Judah to Babylonian Captivity, **2 Kings 19-25**

- North goes into exile, 2 Kgs 18:11-12, because they disobeyed.
- Josiah is one bright spot, 2 Kings 22-23.

### 5. Theological Reflections on Former Prophets

- Yhwh is sovereign.
- Sin worsens if left unchecked.
- Yhwh punishes as he promised, even as he blesses as promised.

### B. Latter Prophets

#### **Additional considerations**

#### 1. Latter Prophets

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Ezekiel

The Twelve

## 2. Prophetism's Background

The prophets called for radical application of God's truths. We have records of writing prophets and non-writing prophets. They all conveyed the revelation of God to their time. It required a look back to see how Yhwh had worked and what he asked in obedience, and a present and forward perspective in light of the people's response to God.

- "Prophetism" in the ANE – widespread, although unique in kind in Israel (Jer 18:18).
- Prophetic forms – mantic divination and revelatory divination
- Terms for a prophet
  1. *nabi'* = one who calls, spokesman נְבִיאַ
  2. *hozeh* = one who envisions or sees, cf. Isa 29:10; Mic 3:7 חוֹזֶה
  3. *ro'eh* = one who sees, Isa 30:9-10; 1 Sam 9:9 רואֶה
  4. *sheliah* = one sent with a message שְׁלִיחַ
  5. *'ish ha'elohim* = man of God אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים
- Stages of prophets
  1. Early Stage
    - a. Abraham, Gen 20:7
    - b. Moses, Deut 18:15-22; 34:10
    - c. Miriam, Ex 15:20
    - d. Unnamed, Num 11:24ff
  2. National Stage
    - a. Deborah, Judg 4:4
    - b. Unnamed, Judg 6:7-10
    - c. Samuel, 1 Sam 3:20; 9:9
    - d. Sons of the prophets, 1 Sam 19:18-25
  3. Pre-literary Stage
    - a. Elijah
    - b. Elisha
    - c. Unnamed prophets, 1 Kings 13
  4. Classical or Golden Stage, 8<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century
    - 8<sup>th</sup> century: Amos and Hosea (north) < Jonah
    - Isaiah and Micah (south)
    - 7<sup>th</sup> century: Nahum < Jonah
    - Zephaniah

- Habakkuk
- Jeremiah
- 6<sup>th</sup> century: Obadiah
- (Daniel)
- Ezekiel
- 5. Revival or Silver Stage, 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century
- 6<sup>th</sup> century: Haggai
- Zechariah
- 5<sup>th</sup> century: Malachi

Note: Joel is not placed because he can fit in anywhere, 8<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3. Definition of prophecy

- a. Predictive [foretelling], Deut 18:22; 13:1-3
- b. Preaching = forthtelling
  - i. Physical danger
  - ii. Moral crisis

### 4. Theology of writing prophets

Each prophet warrants careful theological scrutiny. Although themes in common emerge, such as the “Day of the Yhwh,” each looks at their prophetic task a little differently since each spoke to people and times that were slightly different.

- a. Common themes
  - Call of Yhwh to the prophet, cf. my blog entries
  - Repentance
  - Law of God
  - Judgment and promise
  - Day of Yhwh, 16 times in short and extended passages
- b. Particular specific aspects of individual prophets
  - Isaiah and holiness of Yhwh
  - Jeremiah and the word and actions of God
  - Ezekiel and the glory of God

See Rendtorff on minor prophets. He especially notes that someone needs to think through a theology of the whole Twelve, an interesting suggestion. His summary contributes in that direction.

## Overview

### A. Isaiah

#### 1. Personal life:

- a. Name: *yesha`yahu* or *yesha`yah*, son of *'amots* = Isaiah, son of Amoz (1:1)
- b. Family – married to “prophetess,” *nebi'ah* (8:3), sons Shear-yashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (7:3; 8:3), and maybe Immanuel (7:14).
- c. Citizen of Jerusalem; probably wealthy; possibly connected to royal family; learned.

#### 2. Authorship:

a. No mention of author other than a reference to prophet in 1:1, 13:1. We assume oracles and visions come from Isaiah son of Amoz. Historical chapters portray a real person who involves himself with the kings of Judah (e.g., Ahaz, ch. 7; Hezekiah, chs. 36-39). Prophets were preachers first, writers possibly.

b. Scholarship assumes a more complicated picture with Isaiah son of Amoz as prophet of chapters 1-39, an unknown prophet(s) who preaches in the spirit of the original Isaiah, possibly from his disciples (8:16) but coming a 150 years later (ibn Ezra, 12<sup>th</sup> century), recorded in chapters 40-55, and a post-exilic prophet (chapters 56-66) (B. Duhm 1902). Interspersed throughout the book are deuteronomistic additions (scattered verses) as well as apocalyptic chapters (chs. 24-27). We end up with Isaiah (I), Deutero-Isaiah (II), and Trito-Isaiah (III). As a part of the canon, the book displays a unity no matter the origin. Some historical references may have been added after historical events or persons (i.e., Cyrus, 44:28; 45:1).

c. Key phrase: “the Holy One of Israel” or “the Holy One,” occurs 27 times, 14 in Isaiah I and 13 times in Isaiah II and III. Someone was intentional to present a whole with unity markers spread out evenly. Thus I will simply refer to “the book of Isaiah” and grant we don’t possess definitive answers on questions of authorship.

#### 3. Outline:

### Yhwh as the Holy One of Israel

<b>1-12</b> Messages and stories about Judah’s life [ref. to King Ahaz, 735-715], trouble for Assyria	<b>28-39</b> Challenge and hope for Judah, trouble for Assyria (time of Hezekiah)
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<b>13-23</b> Calamity for Babylon and others with some hope	<b>40-55</b> Calamity for Babylon, hope for Judah and other peoples
<b>24-27</b> Calamity and renewal for world	<b>56-66</b> Challenge and hope for Judah, and other peoples after exile; a new world
	(John Goldingay, <i>The Theology of the Book of Isaiah</i> , Downers Grove: IVP, 2014, 13)

#### 4. Summary:

Chapter 1 introduces Isaiah, son of Amoz, and through a variety of literary metaphors summarizes the message of the book attached to the prophet. It may form an “inclusio” with chapter 66 (or 65-66).

Its focus is not on Isaiah or Israel, but on what God thinks, observes, laments, and promises to do (Childs).

##### a. A Covenant Lawsuit (ch. 1)

###### 1:2-9 Witnesses

- 1:2-3
- 1:4-9

###### 1:10-20 Appeal to guilty

- 1:10-17
- 1:18-20

###### 1:21-31 Sentence

- 1:21-23
- 1:24-26
- 1:27-31

##### b. Comfort (ch. 40:1-8)

40:1-2 Yhwh says, Comfort . . .

40:3-5 A voice cries, Prepare the way . . .

40:6-8 A voice says, Cry . . .



## B. Jeremiah

### 1. Personal life:

- a. Name: *yirmeyahu* = Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah, from Anathoth (1:1)
- b. Family: celebrate (? 16:2; cf. 3:1); his “confessions” through out the book reveal more about Jeremiah the person than any other prophetic book (11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 18:18-23; 20:7-18).
- c. Home was Anathoth (Arabic, Anata), 3 miles NNE of old Jerusalem; son of Hilkiah; begins ca. 13<sup>th</sup> year of Josiah (627/26 BCE) and goes to Egypt after destruction of Jerusalem (586 BCE; 41:16-44:30). 40 years.

### 2. Authorship:

- a. Prophet along with his scribe (amanuensis), Baruch (36:1-4ff).
- b. Debated because of poetic oracles, prose biographical sections, and seeming additional deuteronomistic materials.
- c. Better to suggest Jeremiah communicated in two different ways, poetic and prose (cf. ch. 25 and content of scroll; ch. 36 and the conflict). The book recognizes two stages in Jeremiah’s ministry, perhaps corresponding to the styles.

### 3. Outline:

The book displays no clear chronological patterns. In fact, it has some remarkable duplications where oracles are separated from the description of events (chs. 7 and 26; 25 and 36). Perhaps the most peculiar issue comes from the length (1/8th shorter) and order of Greek text (LXX). It is as if someone translated the book into Greek, then cut it up and threw it in the air, assembling the mess as it was picked up.

Biographical material includes “confessions” (note above), stories about Jeremiah’s activities (chs. 26-45, excluding 30-33), abbreviated oracles (7:1-15 and 36:1ff), oracles of promise (especially chs. 30-33; 18:5ff; 24:6; 31:28; 42:10; 45:4 – all with full eschatological function and unconditional nature), oracles to the nations (chs. 46-51).

### **“Word” and “Life” speak from Jeremiah**

I. Prophecies against Jerusalem and Judah, chs. 1-25

II. Biographical narratives, chs. 26-45

III. Prophecies against Foreign Nations, chs. 46-51.

IV. Historical appendix, ch. 52

## C. Ezekiel

### 1. Personal Life

- a. Title: "I" of 1:1 = Ezekiel (v. 3)
- b. Who is he? *Yechezqe'l* = Ezekiel = "God strengthens" or "God hardens"?
- c. "Son of Buzi" – no known personage, but evidently Zadokite
- d. Zadokite priest – spells out future priesthood role in 44:15ff
- e. He is taken captive in 597 BCE and is taken to Babylon.
- f. 1:2 labels the "fifth year of K. Jehoiachin's reign" as the first date for prophetic ministry = 593 BCE.
- g. 29:17 provides the last dated prophecy = April 26, 571 BCE.
- h. Pastor to elders and people in exile, especially after the fall of Jerusalem (cf. 33:32).
- i. Married, 24:15-24
- j. Interesting combination of priest and prophet.
- k. Personality? Check his visions, strange behavior (3:25-27; 4:1ff), symbolic man ("son of man" = Ezekiel), questions over his sanity.
- l. 1:1 and 30<sup>th</sup> year? Interpretations (1) last year of dated prophecy (Albright; Howie), but vv. 2-3 against; (2) Targum says 30 years from Josiah's reform (2 Kings 22:8ff); (3) Jubilee age?; (4) prophet's age (Greenberg).

### 2. Historical setting

- a. Josianic reform, 621 BCE, led to worship in Jerusalem under Zadokite leadership. However, the reform proved shortlived. When Josiah died in 609, the country reverted back to its old ways.
- b. In 605 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar made Israel a vassal state, briefly supported by Jehoikim. They rebelled and in 597 they were defeated by the Babylonians and sent into captivity. Ezekiel was among the deportees. Zedekiah served as a puppet administrator for Babylon. Eventually Israel rebelled again and Jerusalem was wiped out. Large parts of the population were killed after the destruction (587-86).

- c. Ezekiel stood on the pro-Babylonian side with Jeremiah against the pro-Egyptian voices in Israel. Of course, it was the Lord who told them to side with Babylon because they were God's instrument of judgment.
- d. "River Chebar" was a canal off the Euphrates. In Akkadian, *nar kabari/u* = the Kabaru canal (Greenberg 1983). It remains an obscure canal.

### 3. Ezekiel's prophetic delivery

- a. "Visions" (1:1) –
  - *Merkabah* vision of ch. 1
  - Temple visions, chs. 8-11 and restored vision chs. 40-48
  - Dry bones of ch. 37
- b. "Word of Yhwh" (1:3) –
  - We are not certain about the psychology of Ezekiel's reception of the Word of Yhwh. But we know that he used symbolic actions, visions, and allegories. His message was couched in terms of analogy (Childs 1979, 363). W. Zimmerli has shown that Ezekiel used casuistic legal terminology to portray his message (Leviticus), i.e., the language of the cult to speak to the current situation. You might expect a priest to do so. In addition, the "hand of Yhwh" (1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 37:1; 40:1) and the "Spirit" come upon him often.
  - Allegorical examples: eagle allegory (ch. 17); ungrateful foundling (ch. 16); typological understanding of exodus, wilderness, and conquest (ch. 20:1ff of the past; 20:33ff of the future).
  - Action examples: chs. 4-5; 12; 17-20; 21; 24; 37; 3:22-27; 24:25-27; 33:21-33.
  - Part of the difficulty in interpreting Ezekiel lies in its unique approach to its presentation that is so different from other prophetic forms (e.g., invective, threat, disputation). G. Fohrer *et al* have argued for an original written form for many of the messages (compared to oral first, then written).

### 4. Outline

- I. Prophecies against Jerusalem and Judah, chs. 1-24 [before fall of Jerusalem]
- II. Prophecies against the nations, chs. 25-32
- III. Prophecies of hope and restoration, chs. 33-48 [after fall of Jerusalem]

C. G. Howie (1950) arranges the whole book in 50 exact units. His work offers some intriguing connections – 24:27 with 33:21f; 2:5 and 33:33; 3:26-27, 11:23, 43:1ff; 43:3 with ch. 1; ch. 20 with 36:16ff.

The book exhibits several unique aspects. It reflects the most extensive use of non-Israelite traditions, many from mythological origin. Canaanite and Phoenician material is used in chs. 16, 23, 28, 29:1ff. Mesopotamian subject matter, images, cultic practices, and so forth are found (1-3, 9:1ff, 14:21, 16:23-24, 17:3-4, 21:26-27 [21:21-22], 28, 29, 31, 32, 34, 44:1-3, 47). In addition, he uses ancient popular material for concepts, narratives, songs, and poems (14:12ff, 16, 17, 19, 21:13ff [21:8ff], 23, 26:19-21, 28, 31, 32:17-32).

Ezekiel reinterprets many biblical images and concepts such as the vine (ch. 15) and the marriage of Israel and Yhwh (16). He reinterprets the sweep of Israelite history in 20:1-32. He refers often to Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. His knowledge of Jeremiah the prophet is clear (perhaps not his writings).

## 5. Theology of Ezekiel

- *kabod* of Yhwh – the “glory” of Yhwh

## D. The Twelve

- Sirach 49:10 gives first reference to “the Twelve Prophets.”
- It also follows in the Babylonian Talmud (Baba Bathra 14b/15a), the LXX, and, even though the Latin Vulgate designates them *Prophetiae Minores* (Minor Prophets), it counts them as one book.
- Talmud says arrangement is chronological – first six in 8<sup>th</sup> century, next three in 7<sup>th</sup> century, and last three to the post-exilic period. LXX differs in order in first six books (Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah).
- On dates see pages 28-29 above.
- Studied according to:
  - ✓ Recipients
    - To Israel: Hosea, Amos, Jonah
    - To Judah: Joel, Micah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
    - To Nineveh: [Jonah], Nahum
    - To Edom: Obadiah
  - ✓ Chronological periods
    - Preexilic: Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk

- Post-exilic: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

## 1) Hosea

### a) Personal life:

- *Hoshea* = Hosea > “saves” / “delivers” < (Yhwh) delivers
- Son of Beerī
- 1:1 gives general date – “in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel” = 750-725 BCE? Jeroboam II overlaps only with Uzziah, but most scholars suppose Hosea ministered longer.
- Married? Gomer. With at least 3 children? Or is it all a metaphor for Hosea’s message? Definitely a springboard for his messages.

### b) Purpose:

- To reveal the love (*hesed*) of God for a sinful and rebellious nation.
- To speak to the apostate northern tribes, Israel (1:4, cf. 2 Kings 9; 7:1, 8:5f, 10:5-6, 14:1 – references to Samaria; 10:5, 12:5 – ref. to Bethel; 4:15, 9:15, 12:11 – ref. to Gilgal).

### c) Message:

- A picture of love and marriage describes the relationship between Yhwh and Israel.
- Keywords include “legal-dispute” (*rib*, 2:4; 4:1; 12:2) and “return,” “repent,” or “lead back” (*shub*, 3:5; 11:11; 14:2, 3, 8).

### d) Outline:

- I. Message from Hosea’s marriage and family, chs. 1-3
- II. Message of condemnation from Hosea’s preaching, chs. 4-11
  - A. Cycle 1 – 4:1-5:7
  - B. Cycle 2 – 5:8-8:10
  - C. Cycle 3 – 8:11-9:9
  - D. Cycle 4 – 9:10-11:11
- III. Message of hope from Hosea’s preaching, chs. 12-14

## 2) Joel

### a) Personal life:

- *Yo'el* = Joel > "Yhwh is god"
- Son of Pethuel
- Cult prophet (Rudolph)? Eschatological prophet (Wolff)? We don't know although both elements of a priest and eschatological perspective are artfully combined.
- Note allusions to laments, temple, sackcloth and ashes, and fasting.

### b) Message:

- A natural calamity of a locust plague or the invasion of an army provides the occasion for a message of repentance.
- The "Day of Yhwh" underlies the call to repentance. It will be a day of wrath and judgment upon the wicked and a day of salvation to the righteous. Heavenly phenomena attend the day (2:30-31).
- God will preserve and deliver a remnant (2:32).
- Joel 3:16 → cf. Amos 1:2 < Joel and Amos may sit next to other because of these verses as catch phrases, linking the two.

### c) Outline:

- I. Invasion calls for repentance, 1:1-2:17
  - A. Locust plague – the immediate disaster, 1:2-20
  - B. Day of Yhwh – the impending disaster, 2:1-17
- II. Invasion leads to Yhwh's answer, 2:18-3:21 [MT 4:21]
  - A. Yhwh's compassion, 2:18-27
  - B. Yhwh's big picture, 2:28-3:21 [MT 3:1-4:21]

## 3) Amos

### a) Personal life:

- *`amos* = Amos (1:1).
- "among the shepherds of Tekoa" > hill country south of Jerusalem. He labels himself as a "pincher of sycamore figs" and a "shepherd" or,

better, a “sheep-breeder” or “sheep marketer” (7:14), when Yhwh called him to prophesy (7:15).

- Amaziah, the priest of Bethel (7:10), opposed him to King Jeroboam.
- Although he came from Judah, most of his ministry targeted the northern tribes of Israel (cf. wealthy upper classes, 3:9; 4:1; 6:1; 8:14; Bethel and Gilgal, 4:5; 5:5f).

b) Message:

- To announce judgment upon Israel for her social injustices, moral degeneracy, and apostasy.
- To announce judgment on surrounding nations.
- To clarify the part justice and ethical conduct play in relationship with others and God.

c) Outline:

I. Words against the nations, 1:1-2:16

II. Words against Israel, 3:1-6:14

III. Visions against Israel and beyond, 7:1-9:15

#### 4) Obadiah

a) Personal life:

- *`obadyah* = Obadiah > “servant of Yh(wh)”
- Vision of Obadiah

b) Message:

- Judgment against Edom for her unbrotherly conduct toward her brother, Israel (cf. Ezek 32:29; 35:1-15).
- Edom descended from Esau (Gen 25:30; 36:1ff). They lived in a rocky fortress in Jordan near Petra today (perhaps Sela) and felt secure (Oba 1-9). Their conflict with Israel went all the way back to the time of the exodus when they refused passage of the Israelites. King Saul fought them (1 Sam 14:47); King David subjected them (2 Sam 8:13-14). They

rebelled several times, finally achieving independence in 845 BCE (2 Kings 8:20-22). They encouraged the downfall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE (Ps 137:7) so several prophets predicted the Lord's vengeance on her (Amos 1:11-12; Isa 34:5ff; Jer 49:7ff; Ezek 25:12-14). In 312 BCE the Nabataeans supplanted them from their stronghold and they moved west to southern Judea (Idumaea in NT). Finally they were destroyed totally by the Romans (70 CE; Oba 10, 15).

- The "Day of Yhwh" merges with judgment of Edom in v. 15.
- Numbers 24:17-18 may also find fulfillment (Oba 17-18).

c) Outline:

- I. Judgment on Edom, 1-15
  - 1-4, 5-7, 8-11, 12-15
- II. Judgment on the Day of Yhwh, 15-21 [v. 15 is the overlap]
  - 15a, 16, 17-18, 19-21

## 5) Jonah

a) Person:

- *Yonah ben-'amittai* = Jonah, son of Amittai > "dove" or "violent".
- 2 Kings 14:25; if the same prophet is in mind, he would be a contemporary of Amos.

b) Message:

- The book takes a unique position as a prophetic narrative with only a brief prophetic saying (3:4b). Its genre has been labeled a midrash [sermon], a novella [short fiction], a parable, and a prophetic narrative. It is narrative with a brief thanksgiving hymn (ch. 2) that makes a central point like a parable. It is replete with word-play and irony.
- Its message raises the question of the validity of Yhwh's announcement of judgment. Jonah believes Yhwh is soft with grace (4:3). If his prophetic word would not come to pass, he would be a false prophet (Deut 18). This topic also comes up in Jeremiah 18 and Ezekiel 18.
- Yhwh's perspective emerges clearly in 4:10-11. Yhwh does not will the death of a sinner but that he should repent and live (Ezek 18:23, 32). The possibility of repentance is always open. Yhwh values people and even animals.



- Jonah is a rebellious, disobedient prophet who remains Yhwh's prophet even against his will.
- Issues: (1) miraculous element; (2) historical element [3:3; 3:6].

**c) Outline:**

- 2 acts, each opened with Jonah's call (1:1-2; 3:1-2).
- First act, with two scenes, one at sea on boat (ch. 1) and the other in the belly of the fish (ch. 2).
- Second act, in Nineveh where Jonah preaches and the Ninevites repent (scene 1, ch. 3) and scene 2, where Jonah sits to the east and ponders Yhwh's judgment and salvation (ch. 4).

**I. Focus on the Sailors, 1:1-16**

- Crisis, 1:4
- Response: prayer, 1:14
- Yhwh's reaction, deliverance from storm, 1:15b
- Concluding response: worship, 1:16

**II. Focus on Jonah, 2:1-11**

- Crisis, 2:1, 3
- Response: prayer, 2:2
- Yhwh's reaction: deliverance from death, 2:1, 7b
- Jonah's concluding response: worship, 2:10

**III. Focus on the Ninevites, 3:1-10**

- Crisis, 3:4
- Response, 3:5-8
- Response of Yhwh, 3:10

**IV. Focus on Jonah, 4:1-11**

- Crisis, 4:1 implied
- Response: anger, 4:1-3
- Response of Yhwh, 4:4, 6-11
- Note openendedness of conclusion!

## 6) Micah

### a) Person of prophet:

- *Micah* = Micah > short for Micaiah = “who is like Yh(wh)”
- Moresheth = village 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem on the edge of the rolling hills of the Shephelah.
- He is mentioned in Jeremiah 26:17-19 to spare Jeremiah from death under King Jehoiakim.
- 1:1 places the book generally but we cannot determine the length of his ministry, perhaps starting at the end of Jotham’s reign (ca. 732 BCE) and going to early days of Hezekiah’s reign (started in 715 BCE). He overlapped with Isaiah (cf. Isa 2:2-4 and Mic 4:1-3). 1:6 speaks against Samaria (fell in 722). 1:8-16 coincides with Sennacherib’s invasion against Hezekiah in 701 BCE.

### b) Message

- Micah alternates judgment and salvation into three messages, similar to other prophets. Israel and Judah have sinned and are called to account in a courtroom setting before Yhwh (1:2).
- Sins focus on economic exploitation of others (2:2, 8). Leaders are held accountable (ch. 3). Clear instruction for the right path is given (6:8).
- Each oracle ends with salvation notes, including one of the strongest predictions of Messiah (chs. 4-5, esp. 5:2ff). A saving future comes to Zion (7:7-13; cf. 4:9-5:5) with a concluding great prayer for Yhwh to demonstrate his faithfulness (7:14-20).

### c) Outline

- 3 addresses are given, each opening with “Hear” (1:2; 3:1; and 6:1).
- I. Hear the Word of Judgment and Salvation, Israel and Judah, 1:2-2:13
  - A. Judgment generally, 1:2-16
  - B. Judgment specifically, 2:1-11
  - C. Remnant saved, 2:12-13
- II. Hear the Word of Judgment and Rescue, Leaders, 3:1-5:14
  - A. Judgment on rulers and prophets, 3:1-12
  - B. Salvation in the Latter Days, 4:1-5:15

**III. Hear the Word of Judgment and Pray for Yhwh's Faithfulness, 6:1-7:20**

**A. Indictment of Yhwh, 6:1-16**

**B. Salvation comes, 7:1-20**

**7) Nahum**

a) Person of prophet:

- *Nahum* = Nahum > "comfort."
- From Elkosh, but we don't know where it was (even though four proposals have been offered, including Capernaum).
- 1:1 superscription notes it is a "burden" or "oracle" about Nineveh, common to prophetic discourse, and a "book" of the vision of Nahum, not so common. Several forms occur, including a dirge (3:18-19), a taunt (3:8ff), a judgment oracle (2:14), and a vision (2:3ff).
- The mention of the destruction of Thebes (3:8) indicates the book is after 667 (or 662) BCE. The downfall of Nineveh is still future (612 BCE).

b) Message:

- The opening psalm (1:2-8) offers an interpretation key of the book as a whole: Yhwh is penal and gracious (1:2-3), creator and Lord of the world; he is both a refuge to those who seek him (1:7) and a judge of adversaries (1:8).
- Any enemy of Yhwh cannot stand, especially Nineveh who will be judged harshly.
- The particular prophecy against Nineveh moves beyond Assyria to all enemies of Yhwh and his people, an eschatological perspective that pertains to even our day (i.e., a word of hope) [cf. Rev 18].

c) Outline:

**I. Judah's Divine Warrior, 1:2-2:2**

**A. Hymn to the Divine Warrior, 1:2-8**

**B. Oracle of Divine Warrior who judges and saves, 1:9-2:2**

**II. Vision of Nineveh's Destruction, 2:3-3:19**

## 8) Habakkuk

### a) Person of the prophet:

- *Habakkuk* = Habakkuk (in Akkadian, name of a plant?) > 1:1; 3:1.
- We know nothing about the prophet except the book. He probably lived in the last third of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE (1:6).

### b) Message:

- To view human history from the divine perspective.
- The closing psalm (ch. 3) takes the book beyond the immediate context of Babylonian destruction.
- Some interpreters want to emend *kasdim* (1:6) to *kittim*, Chaldeans = Babylonians to Greeks, pushing the date of the book and its interpretation into the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. But the Qumran pesher (commentary) on Habakkuk (1QpHab) uses *kittim* as a code word for the Romans. The message starts with the historical context of ca. 625 and then enlarges it to the divine perspective.
- The Talmud (*Makkot* 23b) records the remark of one rabbi that “Moses gave Israel 613 commandments, David reduced them to 10, Isaiah to 2, but Habakkuk to one: ‘the righteous shall live by his faith’ (2:4).”

### c) Outline:

- I. Initial exchange, 1:1-11
  - A. Prophet’s complaint, 1:2-4
  - B. Yhwh’s response, 1:5-11
- II. Second exchange, 1:12-2:5
  - A. Prophet’s complaint, 1:12-17
  - B. Yhwh’s response, 2:1-5
- III. Woe oracles against the oppressor, 2:6-20 [5 woes]
- IV. Psalm of submission, 3:1-19
  - A. Prayer, 3:2
  - B. Divine Warrior, 3:3-15
  - C. Prophet living by faith, 3:16-19

## 9) Zephaniah

### a) Person of the prophet:

- *Tsephanyah* = Zephaniah > Yh(wh) hides
- Four generations of his lineage are given which is unusual. He descends from the royal line.
- He is contemporary with Jeremiah and Habakkuk in the reign of Josiah.

### b) Message:

- The message of the “Day of Yhwh” includes a word of judgment and promise of salvation directed to Israel and the nations.
- Key terms focused on “the Day” pile up with startling repetition: Day of Yhwh (1:7, 14); day of the LORD’s sacrifice (1:8); that day (1:9, 10; 3:11); at that time (1:12; 3:19, 20); near (1:14), as well as terms of “remnant” (3:12) and restoration.
- Its message aimed at pre-exilic and post-exilic Israel, but every generation has found it accessible for their situation.

### c) Outline:

- I. Oracles against Judah and Jerusalem, 1:1-2:3
- II. Oracles against the nations, 2:4-3:8
- III. Oracles of salvation, 3:9-20

## 10) Haggai

### a) Person of the prophet:

- *Haggay* = Haggai > “feast, festival” < perhaps born on a feast?
- Prophet to leaders of those who returned from exile.
- 520 BCE or shortly thereafter.
- Contemporary with Zechariah.

### b) Message:

- Dominant theme is the rebuilding of the temple so that it becomes central to relationship with Yhwh.
- Four messages are given clear and specific dates, probably all in one year (6<sup>th</sup> month, 1<sup>st</sup> day [1:1] and 24<sup>th</sup> day [1:15]; 7<sup>th</sup> month, 21<sup>st</sup> day [2:1]; 9<sup>th</sup> month, 24<sup>th</sup> day [2:10]; same day, a second message [2:20]).
- The book ends with an eschatological perspective of hope in Messiah (Zerubbabel?).

c) Outline:

- I. Oracle #1 and follow up, 1:1-15 [August 29, 520 BCE]
  - A. Oracle, 1:1-11
  - B. Follow up, 1:12-15
- II. Oracle #2, 2:1-9 [October 17, 520 BCE]
- III. Oracle #3, 2:10-19 [December 18, 520 BCE]
- IV. Oracle #4, 2:20-23 [same day]

## 11) Zechariah

a) Person of the prophet:

- *Zechariah* = Zechariah > “Yh(wh) remembers.” Common name with 25 persons bearing the name.
- Son of Berechiah, son of Iddo > Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Neh 12:16 – if same person, then Zechariah was a member of one of the priestly families who returned from captivity. This explains his familiarity with the temple (1:16; chs. 3-4; 6:9-15; 8:9, 20-23; 14:16-21).

b) Message:

- The book divides into two parts (some say three). The first (chs. 1-8) are dated similarly to Haggai and are contemporary with him. Chapters 9-14 have no dates. Consequently, the first part focuses on the temple like Haggai. The second forecasts short term and long term hope.

- God's words for judgment and for deliverance will come true. Captivity led to repentance; now restoration and the end are coming.
- The first part begins and ends in similar subjects (1:1-6 and 8:14-15), tying the composition together. The second part contains a variety of passages, although each major section is called a "burden" or "oracle" (9:1; 12:1). In chapters 9-11 we find threat, promise, herald's cry, invective, and allegory. Chapters 12-14 pronounce judgment on the nations that war against Jerusalem and goes far in describing the end of time.
- It is safe to say it is the longest of the minor prophets and the most difficult to interpret (Jerome called it "the most obscure book"). The book as a whole must be read as a voice for the end times. It is the most quoted FT book in the Passion narratives in the Gospels, and after Ezekiel, it is the most quoted in Revelation.

c) Outline:

- I. Prophet's Visions, 1:1-8:23
  - A. Prophet's authority, 1:1-6
  - B. Night visions, 1:7-6:8
  - C. Word of Yhwh, 6:9-8:23
- II. Prophet's Oracles, 9:1-14:21
  - A. Oracles of judgment on Israel's enemies and restoration, 9:1-11:17
  - B. Oracles of judgment and hope for the end, 12:1-14:21

## 12) Malachi

a) Person of the prophet:

- *Mal'aki* = Malachi > "my messenger" < LXX reads it as a noun, not a personal name (cf. 3:1, but it is interpreted as Elijah in 3:23).
- Otherwise, no personal information.
- The mention of a governor (1:8) suggests it is still in the Persian period. We can suppose he falls after Haggai and Zechariah in light of its placement in the canon. The reference to the Torah of Moses may place him with the time of Ezra (4:4 [3:23 MT]).

b) Message:

- The book reflects a distinct literary structure. It consists of six units in a “disputation saying.” Each begins with a saying of Yhwh or the prophet that is then disputed by conversation partners (priests or laity).
- Every day problems in the life of Israel provide the focus. Yhwh loves her. But her faithlessness can be seen in faulty sacrifices, adultery, and doubt. God will judge the righteous and the unrighteous.
- A promised “messenger,” Elijah the prophet, will come before the Day of Yhwh.

**c) Outline:**

Superscription: 1:1

- I.** Dispute 1 – I have loved you, 1:2-5 [“I . . . but you . . . ]
  
  - II.** Dispute 2 – where is your respect of God the Father, 1:6-2:9 [“saying . . . Yhwh, but you . . . “]
  
  - III.** Dispute 3 – one Father and creator, 2:10-16 [Prophet – “We . . . 1<sup>st</sup> . . . 2<sup>nd</sup> . . . but you . . .” ]
  
  - IV.** Dispute 4 – you have wearied Yhwh over justice, 2:17-3:5 [Prophet – “You . . . but . . .”]
  
  - V.** Dispute 5 – unchangeable God and repentance, 3:6-12 [“Yhwh . . .”]
  
  - VI.** Dispute 6 – harsh words against Yhwh, 3:13-4:3 [MT 3:21] [“Yhwh . . .”]
- Appendices: 4:4-6 [3:22-24]