

## THE PROPHETS

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### DEFINING “PROPHET/PROPHECY”

#### Minor Designations for Prophets

- *Ro’eh* & *khozeh*: 12x & 18x respectively – both terms are participles (e.g. “seeing is believing”) from verbs which are virtually synonymous – often translated “seer” – had periods of popularity, *ro’eh* in Samuel’s time, *khozeh* in David’s time – *khazon* means “vision” – term simply means that they were discerners of God’s will
- *Ish ’elohim*: ‘man of God’ (1 Kgs 13:1) – Deut 33:1 Moses – 1 Sam 9:6 Samuel – 2 Kgs 4:9 Elisha
- *Ebed Yahweh*: “servant of the Lord” – 1 Kgs 8:56 “his servant Moses’ – 2 Kgs 9:7 “my servants the prophets . . . the lord’s servants” – Dan 9:6 “your servants the prophets”

#### Chief Designation for Prophets: *nabi’*

- Etymology: 300x as noun throughout OT – verb *naba’* also used 300x – root idea is “to bubble up” – Akkadian, *nabu* means “to speak” or “one spoken to” – Arabic, *naba’a* means “to announce”
- OT usages: Exod 7:1 one who spoke for another – Deut 18:15-22 task of prophet is to speak God’s words – Amos 7:12-16 speak God’s message – *nabi’* is a “speaker for God”
- Relation to *ro’eh* and *khozeh*: basic difference has to do with receiving of revelation and proclamation – emphasis on ‘reception of message” and “proclamation of message” – no distinction of office
- “The pith of Hebrew prophecy is not prediction or social reform but the declaration of divine will” (Norman Gottwald, *A Light to the nations*, 277).

### THE PROPHETIC CALL

- Special Call: specially called person – office not by inheritance – each prophet is called by God – each one is called for a specific, divinely appointed task
- Prophetic call was often given in connection with an *outstanding experience*: Exod 3 Moses – Isa 6 Isaiah – Eze 3 Ezekiel
- Prophetic call frequently involved some *preparation* – Moses received miraculous credentials – Isaiah was purified by burning coal – Ezekiel had to eat a scroll

### FUNCTION OF PROPHETS

#### Method: Four principal methods employed

- *Preaching*: addressed emotion and will – stirred reaction and response – Hos 4:1; Jer 2:2 – main task was to urge people to live in harmony with God
- *Contact with Key Individuals*: urged leaders to follow God – Samuel to Saul; Nathan to David; Ahijah to Jeroboam; Elijah to Ahab; Isaiah to Ahaz and Hezekiah; Jeremiah to Jehoiakim and Zedekiah; Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar
- *Symbolic Actions*: performed certain symbolic acts or instructed others to do so – 2 Kgs 13:14ff. Elisha – Jehoash – arrows; Isa 20:2ff. Isaiah – clothes and sandals – fate of Egypt; Jer 19:1ff. Jeremiah – clay pot – fate of Judah; Eze 4:1ff. siege of Jerusalem; Hosea’s marriage to Gomer
- *Object lessons*: used real life analogy – object or item that illustrated a truth – Jeremiah → 1:11, 12 “a rod of an almond tree” – almond in Hebrew means “vigilant” – God’s vigilance

## Mission

- *Reformation*: reformers rather than innovators – did not invent an ethical monotheism – sent primarily to turn people back to God’s law – the law was the basis of their reformation work
- *Re-defining Implications of Law*: did not teach the law per se – never stated it in precept – urged conformity to the law both on social and religious levels – seldom to referred to the law by name – proclaimed the message contained in the law – the spirit of the law

“Everything in their outlook was grounded in the Israel’s relationship to Yahweh, in the persistent preaching of religious meaning into every facet of life” (Gottwald, 276).

- *As Testers, Watchmen, and Intercessors*: to test the conduct and activity of the people – were the nation’s spiritual barometer (Jer 6:27) – to serve as watchmen – to point out wrong conduct and warn of impending judgement (Eze 3:17) – to serve as intercessors (1 Kgs 13:6; 1 Kgs 17 Elijah for widow of Zarephath; 2 Kgs 4 Elisha for Shunammite woman; Dan 9:17ff. Daniel for Judah)

## PROPHETIC LANGUAGE

### Symbolic Language:

- *Hyperbole*: when more is said than is literally meant – Isa 34:2-4
- *Gradual ascent*: an increase in sense in successive sentences – Isa 1:4
- *Change of noun*: replace a noun with a related noun – Isa 33:17 lit. “a people deeper of lip” (speech) – Isa 23:1 “ships of Tarshish” (people)
- *Transfer*: exchange of one idea for a related idea – Isa 40:5 lit. “flesh” (people) – Isa 43:22 “call upon” (worship)
- *Two-for-one*: two words used but one thing meant – Isa 1:13 lit. “iniquity and assembly” (evil assembly)
- *Allegory*: extended metaphor – Isa 5:1-7 “vineyard” – Eze 17 “two eagles and a vine” – Eze 23 “two sisters”
- *Parable*: continued simile – Eze 20:49
- *Irony*: thought expressed in a form that convey its opposite – Isa 2:10 – Isa 57:13
- *Anthropomorphism*: ascribing human attributes to God – Isa 30:27 “lips” (human body parts) – Isa 1:14 “hate” (human emotions)
- *Rhetorical questions*: answer is inbuilt in the question and not waited for – Isa 1:12; 5:4; 50:2
- *Types*: person, thing, event that depict the future – Isaiah→the Servant; Immanuel – Jeremiah→the Branch – Daniel→the little horn; the stone

### “The Word of the Lord”

- “this is what the Lord says” – “the mouth of the Lord has spoken” – “declares the Lord” – Jer 1:4; 2:1; Mal 1:1; etc.
- it is efficacious – Isa 55:11; Eze 12:25

### Prophetic Perfect

- describes future events as if already taken place – certainty of the event
- employs perfect state of verb – verb of completed action – Isa 9:6 lit. “a child has been born” translated as future or present

## CRITICAL ISSUES

### Recent Approaches: Who were the prophets?

- *Sociological perspective*: prophets derived their authority from society as the audience – concept of divine call not taken into account – prophets were defined by society’s recognition – their function affected the life and behaviour of society – authority as prophetic association with Moses – prophets’ authority altered over time but continued a particular social function
- *Historical context*: Israelite prophecy part of an international movement – other ancient Near East societies show prophetic phenomena, especially Semitic societies
  1. Old Babylonian texts from Mari report revelations received and provide insight into divine intermediaries
  2. Neo-Assyrian texts include collections of prophetic revelations
  3. Etymological cognates of *nabi* found at Mari and Emar (Syria)
  4. Aramaic Balaam document (Jordan) is an early Canaanite prophetic text
  5. Egyptian story of Wen-Amun describes the hero’s encounter with ecstatic activity among Phoenicians
  6. Evidence of “divine speaking” from Asia Minor (Turkey) found in a list of messages from the gods compiled by Hittite king Mursilis II
- *Cultural anthropology*: compare Israelite prophets with parallels in modern societies – African societies – North American Indian “prophets”
- *Linguistic studies*: Wilson studied the verb *nb’* – occurs in two verbal stems, Niphal (passive) & Hithpael (reflexive) – in Niphal it designates prophetic speech – in Hithpael it designates societal characteristic prophetic behaviour – e.g. Saul in 1 Sam 10:11-12
- *Archaeology*: Philip King and archaeology’s contributions to Amos, Hosea, Micah, Jeremiah – Assyrian urban archaeology and Isa 5:8-10 – Kuntillet ‘Arjud inscriptions and religious views in period of Hos 1:2 – the *mrzh* mentioned in Jer 16:5 & Amos 6:7 appears to be a funeral service – seals and bullae carry names from the book of Jeremiah
- *Composition issues*: most of the prophetic texts are poetic – as preachers, the messages were first delivered in oral form – any material actually written by prophet? – some deny that prophets wrote anything – others attribute the document completely to the prophet – Qss: what is original and what is secondary? Is anything supplemented or altered? What happens over a period of transmission? – tradition history
- *Redaction criticism*: the study of the process of compilation, editing, and composition from existing sources – the reuse of earlier texts
  1. For example, Isaiah – conservatives believe that the entire book was written by the 8<sup>th</sup> century prophet – most scholars see multiple authors from several centuries – Isaiah of Jerusalem, 8<sup>th</sup> century, chs 1-39 – Deutero (Second)-Isaiah, unknown author, exile period, chs 40-55 – Trito (Third)-Isaiah, unknown author, exilic/post-exilic period, chs 56-66
  2. Similar work done with Jeremiah and the “Twelve”
- *Application*:
  1. Following the lead of Walter Brueggemann prophetic texts are now applied to the full spectrum of theological disciplines such as evangelism, pastoral theology, preaching
  2. Liberation theologians apply the messages of the prophets to the socio-economic and political spheres – mainline evangelicals have also joined this endeavour
  3. Feminists have provided insights into the important role played by women and the disadvantages that they faced in everyday life

## THE PROPHETS AND THEIR BOOKS

### Joel

- *Date*: early date – 9<sup>th</sup> cent – time of King Joash of Judah – late date – 4<sup>th</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> cent – post-exilic
- *Arguments for early date*: enemies of Israel listed were Tyre, Sidon, Philistia, Egypt, Edom and not Assyria, Babylon, Persia – placement in canon among six early minor prophets – dependence of later prophets such as Amos & Isaiah – no king is mentioned because Joash was a boy – sin of idolatry not mentioned
- *Background history*: Athaliah usurp the throne – massacre of all royal princes but one – Joash saved by Jehosheba – tutelage of Jehoiada the high priest – Joash crowned king at age 7 – religious reforms drastic change after Jehoiada's death – stoning of prophet Zechariah – stormy period
- *Life and Ministry*: little known – father was Pethuel unusual gift of writing – good education – a lot of prediction – high spiritual status
- *Book*: clear and powerful style – full of figures of speech and dramatic expressions – a master piece of Hebrew poetry

### Hosea

- *Date*: dates himself to kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah of Judah and Jereboam II of Israel – Uzziah began reign in 767 BC – Jereboam II died in 753 BC – Hezekiah sole reign began 715 BC – 760-715 BC for Hosea
- *Alternative views*: composite authorship – later Judean redaction
- *Background history*: Jereboam II made Israel the most influential regional power – increased economic prosperity – flourishing building activity – national pride – rampant sin – degrading social and moral conditions – increased poverty – drastic decline after Jereboam's death – Syro-Ephraimite war against Judah – resurgence of Assyria – Israel became a vassal – Damascus fell in 732 BC – Samara fell in 722 BC – Israel's exile
- *Life and Ministry*: son of Beeri – wife Gomer – children were Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah, Lo-Ammi – really bad marriage – ministered to Israel (not Judah)
- *Hosea's marriage*:
  1. hypothetical view – did not happen – a vision – symbolism and allegory – but story is told as straightforward history
  2. literal marriage – married a prostitute – did God direct hosea to do something intrinsically wrong?
  3. spiritual infidelity – Gomer became unchaste in a spiritual sense – how could he then speak about religious infidelity?
  4. proleptic view – marriage was real – Gomer became adulterous later – fits facts of story better – does not harm his ministry – parallels Israel's relationship to God – what about 1:2?
- *Book*: one of the love books of the Bible – poignant and touching language – one of the most difficult texts among prophetic writings – high proportion of textual problems – employs mixed forms – many rare words – no clear cut units
- *Structure of the book*:

Chs 1-3 Hosea & Gomer  
(1) unfaithful – (2) consequences – (3) restoration  
Chs 4-14 God & Israel  
(4-8) unfaithful – (9-10) consequences – (11-14) restoration

### Amos

- *Date*: Jereboam II of Israel – Uzziah of Judah – 2 years before the earthquake (1:1 cf Zec 14:5-7) – contemporary of Hosea – short ministry

- *Background history*: both nations at their zenith – period of material prosperity and spiritual decline
- *Life and Ministry*: from Tekoa, southeast of Bethlehem – profession as herdsman and gatherer of figs (7:14) – owner of flocks of cattle and sheep – plantation owner – affluent man – a layman (7:14, 15) – well acquainted with Torah
- *Book*: unique style – 8 oracles, 3 sermons, 5 visions – form of covenant-lawsuit – a special 3+1 formula

## Isaiah

### *Authorship: Theories*

1. Multiple (Two/Three) authors – modern view – from 18<sup>th</sup> cent – held by critical/liberal scholars – reasons for:
  - Change of theological perspective after ch 40 – salvation not judgement – Servant of the Lord not Messianic King – remnant in exile not Jerusalem – missing themes such as Davidic kingship, prophetic rebukes, Assyria, judgement threats, oppression of poor
  - Change in literary style after ch 40 – mostly poetry – different poetry style – vocabulary
  - Reference to Cyrus – rejection of predictive prophecy
2. Single author – traditional Jewish and Christian view and held by conservative scholars – author is 8<sup>th</sup> cent prophet – arguments for:
  - Isa 1:1 assigns book to the prophet
  - NT witness – all parts quoted – only one author named
  - Long held tradition – Ben Sirach (2<sup>nd</sup> cent BC) – Septuagint (2<sup>nd</sup> cent BC) – DSS (time of Jesus) – no manuscript authority for break at ch 40
  - Literary similarities – Servant Songs complement Messianic concept – streaming of nations in chs 2, 55, 66 – Holy One of Israel throughout the book – word pairs occurring through the book

### *Explaining Differences*

- Change of subject matter
- Author's literary and theological development
- Isaiah's long and complex ministry
- Authorship intentionality

### *Historical Background*

- Uzziah – Isaiah began his ministry in the year of Uzziah's death (740 BC) – Judah's most successful king – Judah at the zenith during his reign
- Jotham – continued prosperous reign – 4<sup>th</sup> successive godly king – won major victory against Ammonites
- Ahaz – did not follow God – made images to Baal – practised infant sacrifice – built and worshipped in high places – intentionally damaged sacred vessels in temple – closed temple doors – followed pro-Assyrian policy – Syro-Ephraimite War – revolt by Edom with loss of southern trade routes – invasion by Philistines with loss of several cities
- Hezekiah – God-fearing man – anti-Assyrian policy – reform and revival – temple repaired – temple doors re-opened – joined anti-Assyrian coalition – invaded by Sennacherib – siege of Jerusalem – God promised help through Isaiah – Egypt came to Judah's help – Babylon debacle
- Manasseh – returned to Ahaz's evil ways killed all who opposed him – Jewish tradition maintains that he had Isaiah sawed in two

### *Life and ministry*

- Ministry from 740 BC (see ch 6) to at least 680 BC – about 60 years – longest continuous prophetic ministry

- Father was Amoz – wife is called “prophetess” (8:3) – had two sons, Shearjashub & Mahershalalhashbaz
- Royal connections – Jewish traditions say Amoz was brother of King Amaziah – Isaiah was cousin of King Uzziah – ease at royal courts
- Prince of prophets – unusual abilities as a writer – high number of messianic prophecies – gospel prophet – broad knowledge of the world – literary ability unsurpassed in OT – most developed vocabulary in OT – excelled in figures of speech – best possible education – outstanding courage – unpopular messages

#### *The Book*

- A mini Bible – 66 chapters sectioned off into 39 & 27 – exceptionally rich vocabulary – mostly poetic in form – quoted 21 times in NT
- Structure – many suggestions – envelope structure – bifid structure – pendulum structure – symphonic structure:
  1. chs 1-35 – first movement – complex structure – several interweaving themes and sub-collections – climax in hymn of the redeemed (35) – oscillate between judgement and salvation – few closure formulas
  2. chs 36-39 – historical interlude – narrative prose – bridge to the rest of the book – both judgement and salvation – no closure formulas
  3. chs 40-55 – second movement – a crescendo – longest coherent block of prophecies – sustained poetry – climax with another hymn of the redeemed (55) – only salvation – more closure formulas
  4. chs 56-66 – final movement – finale – miscellaneous topics climax with vision of new heavens and new earth – oscillate between and juxtapose judgement and salvation – highest incidence of closure formulas

#### *Isaiah's Theology*

God is creator and every act of his is creation – God's threefold creative act: cosmological (first), historical (present), and eschatological (future) – creator God is holy, the saviour of his people, and judge – he is incomparable – he controls history – his will is inscrutable – his authority is supreme

#### **Micah**

- *Date*: contemporary of Isaiah – younger – dates himself to kings Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah – does not mention king Uzziah or invasion of Sennacherib – about 735-710 BC
- *Background history*: same as Isaiah – like Isaiah he witnessed the fall of Samaria
- *Life and Ministry*: few clues about himself – not mentioned in OT historical books – from town of Moresheth/Moresheth Gath (1:1, 14), a rural town – about 40 kms southwest of Jerusalem – Tekoa, Amos' home, about 35 kms east – well known and is mentioned by Jeremiah (Jer 26:18) – country man or peasant or landowner
- *Book*: powerful – difficult Hebrew – jerky style – similar passages as Isaiah, e.g. Mic 4:1-3 // Isa 2:2-4 – has 3 cycles of oracles → chs 1-2, chs 3-5, chs 6-7 – each cycle begins with ‘hear’ or “listen” – each cycle moves from doom to hope

#### **Jonah**

- *Date*: much debate – mention of Assyria puts Jonah in the 8<sup>th</sup> century at the latest
- *Background history*: see Hosea and Isaiah etc. – days of Jereboam II
- *Life and Ministry*: son of Amittai – ministry outside of Israel – one-task ministry
- *Book*: used in synagogues during Yom Kippur – 2 panel structure
  - Panel 1 – Hebrew sinner saved – Jonah's disobedience – Jonah's punishment – Jonah's rescue by Yhwh
  - Panel 2 – Non-Hebrews saved – Jonah's obedience – Nineveh's repentance – Jonah's rebuke of Yhwh

- *Interpreting Jonah*: historical problems → the “large fish” – 3 day survival without oxygen – composing psalm inside fish – 3:3 says Nineveh about 90 kms in diameter but excavations show it was not that large – language of Jonah’s preaching – no extra-biblical evidence of Nineveh’s conversion – nameless kings of Nineveh
  1. Myth: story created to present truth about human experience or origins – no historical veracity – view fallen out of favour
  2. Allegory: an extended metaphor – all details in the story contribute to the whole – the story is metaphor – was in favour in the past
  3. Parable: a lifelike story which embodies a truth – an extended simile – the parts do not have meaning – there is one principal meaning – the favoured view among scholars
  4. Historical story: the story is real and really happened – Jesus treated the story as historical

### Nahum

- *Date*: does not date his ministry – 2 clues – refers to destruction of city of No in Egypt (3:8) – this is Thebes destroyed in 663 BC by Ashurbanipal – refers to fall of Nineveh – this occurred in 612 BC – between 663 and 612 – time of King Josiah
- *Background history*: during the reign of good king Josiah – preceded by the evil reigns of Mannaseh and Amon – these two made Judah more evil than its neighbours – Josiah became king at 8 and ushered in 3 decades of Judah’s happiest times – peace, prosperity, and religious reforms – Assyria fell to Babylon in 612 BC – with Israel, Syria, and Assyria gone Judah enjoyed its most peaceful years with no external threats
- *Life and Ministry*: prophesied the destruction of Nineveh – calls himself an Elkoshite (1:1) – town of Elkosh →
  1. a town in Mesopotamia north of Mosul (Iraq) – today town of Elqush with a “tomb of Nahum”
  2. Elkesi or El Kauze in Galilee
  3. Capernaum in Galilee – the name means “village of Nahum”
  4. Bir el-Kaus near Beit-jibrim in Judah – most likely home of Nahum
- *Book*: begins with a psalm of triumph – uses vivid language

### Zephaniah

- *Date*: time of King Josiah – contemporary of Nahum
- *Background history*: part of last hour flurry of prophetic activity – nation of Judah approaching its end – witnessed the brief respite under Josiah – cloud of doom on the horizon
- *Life and Ministry*: traces lineage over four generation to King Hezekiah – only prophet to do this – descendant of royal line – began ministry about 630 BC
- *Book*: has the following structure
  - I Day of the Lord: Judgement (1:1-3:8)
    - A Against Judah
    - B Awesome day
    - A’ Against Judah’s neighbours
    - B’ Great corruption
  - II Day of the Lord: Joy (3:9-20)
    - Return
    - Restoration
    - Rejoicing

## Habakkuk

- *Date*: no information given – no kings mentioned – predicts Babylonian invasion – no mention of Assyria – tells of severe sin in Judah – most likely time is King Jehoiakim (609-598 BC)
- *Background history*: Josiah was killed in Battle against Pharaoh Neco in 609 – son Jehoahaz became king but was taken prisoner by the Pharaoh and replaced with Jehoiakim – he was an evil king, an inept ruler, squandered state funds, and burned Jeremiah's book – Babylon defeated Egypt at Carchemish and became the world's only superpower – invaded Judah for the first time in 605 (Daniel taken as exile)
- *Life and Ministry*: no biographical information – 3:19 suggests he was a Temple singer, a Levite
- *Legends*: was son of Shunammite's son whom Elisha raised from the dead (2 Kgs 4) – was the watchman placed by Isaiah (Isa 21:6) – *Bel and the Dragon* says he carried pottage and bread to Daniel in the lion's den
- *Book*: unique form – chs 1 & 2 are in dialogue form – ch 3 is a psalm – structure →
  - A Habakkuk complains (1:1-4)
  - B God answers (1:5-11)
  - A' Habakkuk complains again (1:12-2:1)
  - B' God answers again (2:2-20)
  - C Habakkuk praises God (3:1-19)

## Jeremiah

- *Personal story*: son of Hilkiah a priest – tribe of Levi – native of Anathoth – groomed to become a priest and was about 20 when God called him – in 11, his hometown plotted to kill him – in 20, was beaten and put in stockade at the order of Passhur, chief temple officer – in 26, was the target of a lynch mob – in 32, was confined to house arrest – in 36, his first manuscript was burned by King Jehoiakim – in 37, was accused of collaborating with the Babylonians was arrested, beaten, and placed in lengthy solitary confinement – in 38, was accused of treason and thrown into a mud-filled cistern – in 43, was forcefully abducted by his own people and forced into exile in Egypt
- *Date of ministry*: Jer 1:2-3 & 25:3 give 13<sup>th</sup> year of Josiah and 11<sup>th</sup> year of Zedekiah (627-586 BC) – Jer 40-44 served after exile under Gedaliah (about 580 BC) – about 47 years of ministry
- *Background history*: 605 BC, 1<sup>st</sup> attack by Nebuchadnezzar – Daniel taken captive – 597 BC, 2<sup>nd</sup> Babylonian attack – King Jehoiachin and Ezekiel taken captive – Zedekiah put as king but rebelled – 586 BC Judah invaded, temple destroyed, Judah became Babylonian province, most people taken into exile
- *Book*: problems → LXX (Septuagint) is 2700 words shorter than MT (Hebrew) – cave 4 Qumran MSS agrees with LXX – MT and LXX have different arrangements – Dan 9:12 refers to the "books" (lit. "scrolls") of Jeremiah – conclusion is that there were 2 rescensions (collections) of the book – writer of ch 52 – structure → 2 possibilities – 1 Jeremiah's call; 2-45 prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem; 46-51 prophecies against nations; 52 historical appendix – 1-31 is prose & poetry; 32-45 is prose; 46-51 is poetry; 52 is prose

## Ezekiel

- *Date*: taken into exile in 597 BC – began ministry in 5<sup>th</sup> year of exile about 592 BC (1:1) – continued until 571 BC (29:17) the 27<sup>th</sup> year of exile – about 22 years of ministry
- *Background history*: see Jeremiah – invasion of Judah and destruction of Jerusalem – reign of Nebuchadnezzar
- *Life and Ministry*: son of Buzi, a priest – arrived in Babylon about 25 years of age – was married but wife died 9 years into exile – lived near city of Tel Abib by River Kebar – 2 years



older than Daniel – was 30 years old when called to be prophet – primary prophet to the Jewish exiles

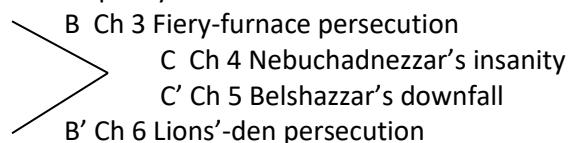
- *Ezekiel and Daniel*: E served Jewish exiles, D served in palace court – E was more of a shepherd, D was more of an administrator – E ministered to God’s people, D ministered to non-believers – E had a preaching ministry, D did not – E was prophet during time of Nubuchadnezzar, D was prophet until Persian period
- *Book*: recognised as genuine even by critical scholars – has many unusual elements (vision of God) – has numerous allegories – records large numbers of strange acts (10) by the prophet – mostly in prose, little poetry (mostly between chs 15-32) – Hebrew is obscure and difficult – uses more symbols than other prophets – tells more about the manner of inspiration than other prophets – has clear chronological sequence – written autobiographically throughout
  1. Structure: 1-24 prophecies about fall of Jerusalem; 25-32 prophecies against foreign nations; 33-48 prophecies about Israel’s restoration
  2. Problem: interpretation of chs 40-48 – figurative for the Church – partly literal for the millennial kingdom – conditional prophecy

## Daniel

- *Date*: began ministry about 604 BC – still ministering as late as 536 BC – some 69 years of ministry but not continuous
- *Background history*: lived through all three exiles – saw the glory of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar – witnessed its decline under Belshazzar – saw the fall of Babylon to Cyrus and 1<sup>st</sup> return from exile
- *Life and Ministry*: parents not named – from Judah’s aristocracy (1:3) – brought to Babylon in 605 BC – about 17 years old – had 3 years of education in Babylon – served as advisor to Nebuchadnezzar – seems to have gone into retirement during the reign of Belshazzar – was reinstated to high office by Persians
- *Book*: one of the most contested books of the OT – 2 languages, Hebrew (1, 8-12) & Aramaic (2-7) – issues to consider . . .
  1. Canonicity → MT assigns it to the Writings, LXX to major prophets, Josephus (1<sup>st</sup> century AD) to prophets
  2. Special problems → alleged historical inaccuracies – date for Nebucahdnezzar’s invasion (1:1 cf Jer 46:2) – reference to Belshazzar
  3. Composite authorship → 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC date – Greek and Persian loan words suggests a late date
  4. Linguistics → LXX mistranslates words – Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran Cave 1 shows Daniel’s Aramaic is centuries old – Daniel’s Hebrew is also old
  5. NT usage → 5 direct quotations – allusions in Gospels, Epistles, and Revelation
  6. Structure: double chiasm (concentric)

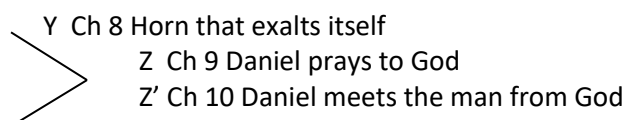
## Ch 1 Daniel in Babylon

A Ch 2 Prophecy of nations



A’ Ch 7a Prophecy of nations

X Ch 7b One like the son of man



Y' Ch 11 King that exalts himself  
X' Ch 12 Michael, the great Prince

### Haggai

- *Date*: dates his prophecies precisely – 1;1 says he started in 6<sup>th</sup> month of 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius (520 BC) – all messages in space of 4 months
- *Background history*: 3 returns from exile – 538/537 BC (Ezra 1:1) led by Sheshbazzar – 458/457 BC, time of Artaxerxes, led by Ezra (Ezra 7:7) – 445 BC, also time of Artaxerxes, led by Nehemiah (Neh 2:1) – construction of temple began soon after first arrival – opposition from Samaritans (Ezra 4:1-5) – distraction of building their own homes (Hag 1:3-11) – Haggai and Zechariah called to restart building activity
- *Life and Ministry*: no personal information – considered older than Zechariah – 2:3 suggests he had seen Solomon's Temple before its destruction – a very effective preacher
- *Book*: 4 revelations all in 520 BC – second only to Obadiah in brevity – 2 chapters, 38 verses

### Zechariah

- *Date*: contemporary of Haggai – dates precisely 3 occasions of revelation – 1<sup>st</sup> in Darius' 2<sup>nd</sup> year (1:1) – 2<sup>nd</sup> about 3 months later (1:7) – 3<sup>rd</sup> about 2 years later (7:1) – about 520-518 BC – 4<sup>th</sup> is undated but perhaps after 480 BC
- *Background history*: same as Haggai's – temple completed in 6<sup>th</sup> year of Darius – Darius ruled till 496 BC – then Xerxes until 465 BC (Esther's story) – Judah was part of Persian satrapy called Abanahara – Judah was a province with a governor, Tirshatha
- *Life and Ministry*: father was Bereshith – grandfather was Iddo – was a priest – in 2:4 referred to a "young man" – same task as Haggai
- *Book*: 2 divisions, chs 1-8 & 9-14 – Part I contains a double chiasm (1:7-6:15 & 7:1-8:19) enveloped by an 'introduction' (1:1-6) and a 'conclusion' (8:20-23) – Part II comprises a complex structure of parallels

### Malachi

- *Date*: does not date himself – tells us a Persian governor was in authority – Persian period – religious services at temple – date after 515 BC – sins mentioned differ from Haggai and Zechariah but similar to Ezra and Nehemiah – mid 5<sup>th</sup> century BC – about 420 BC
- *Background history*: return from exiles – intermarriages with foreigners – temple rebuilt – Jerusalem rebuilt – saw the leaderships of Ezra and Nehemiah
- *Life and Ministry*: no reference to personal life – not mentioned elsewhere in OT – name means "my angel" or "my messenger"
- *Book*: last OT book but not last in Hebrew Bible – short book

## THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

### "Day of Yahweh" in Hebrew Prophets

- Regarded as the very heart of prophetic eschatology
- Phrase appears in 16 passages but its concepts cover many more passages
- Denotes the time when God intervenes in human affairs – to execute judgement upon evildoers – to deliver his people from the hands of their oppressors – also a day of judgement upon God's people for their sin
- Refers to the great and final day when God would subdue the nations and establish his people in their rightful dominion – eschatological day
- Day when Yahweh comes in person to battle – day of battle – day of war – concept of the holy war of Yahweh – prophets expect the day of Yahweh to bring war
- Day of Yahweh's furious wrath – his war against his foes will be bloody

- Elements of the day: summons to war, dismay, earthquakes, darkness, voice of Yahweh – a day of distress, of darkness and gloom – a day of trumpet blasts – a day of fear
- Sample texts:
  1. Jer 46; Eze 30                      Egypt
  2. Isa 13                                      Babylon
  3. Isa 34                                      Edom
  4. Joel 2; Zeph 1                      Israel/Judah
  5. Isa 14                                      restoration
  6. Isa 2; Zec 14                      eschatological day
- Rationale for this “day of Yahweh”
  1. Exod 15 Yahweh is a warrior
  2. Josh 5:13ff commander of the army of Yahweh
  3. 2 Chron 20 battle belongs to Yahweh
  4. Israel is Yahweh’s army/host (1 Sam 17:45)
  5. Yahweh Tsebaoth (Lord of hosts/armies) is a military title – occurs 285 times in OT – about 230 times in prophets

### **Covenant**

- Concept based on 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium suzerainty treaties (King & vassal), especially Hittite
- Components:
  1. Preamble (identified the parties involved)
  2. Historical prologue (spells out relationship of parties and beneficence of the suzerain)
  3. Stipulations (laws for the conduct of the vassal)
  4. Curses and blessings (rewards and punishments)
- Book of Deuteronomy
- Major salvific covenants: Abraham, David, Israel

#### *Covenant in Hosea 11:1-11*

- 11:1-4 spells out the parties involved and the nature of the relationship
- 11:5-11 lists the curses and blessings

#### *Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-36 (New Covenant)*

- vs 31 identifies the parties
- vs 32 spells out the relationship
- vs 33 talks of the law
- vss 34-36 relates the blessings

#### *Covenant concepts*

- God is the suzerain, Israel is vassal
- God initiates the covenant and spells out the relationship
- God makes the promises and sets out the law
- God pronounces blessings and curses
- God never breaks his covenant

### **The *Rîb* (Covenant Lawsuit) Motif**

- A unique literary type of prophetic works
- Employed by several prophets
- Utilises a courtroom setting
- God is always the plaintiff while Israel is always the defendant
- God also doubles up as judge
- The prophet serves multiple roles – narrator, prosecuting attorney, defence attorney
- Witnesses usually comprise things of nature

- Most of the cases are “libel” suits – God takes Israel to court for something they have said or done against him
- Some passages involve full courtroom exchanges, others do not

#### *Micah 6:1-8*

- Vs 1-2 – the court is called to attention – the witnesses are invoked
- Vs 3-5 – the plaintiff’s case is introduced – evidence is supplied by the prosecution
- Vs 6-7 – the defence argues its case – counter-accusation
- Vs 8 – the divine verdict

#### *Isa 1:2-20*

- No give and take between plaintiff and defendant
- Only the case of the plaintiff is presented but the defendant’s arguments are implied – more of an evidentiary hearing
- Vs 2a – witnesses are invoked
- Vs 2b-4: 1<sup>st</sup> piece of evidence against the defendants – ingrate children
- Vs 5-10: 2<sup>nd</sup> piece of evidence – the defendants’ track record
- Vs 11-15: 3<sup>rd</sup> piece of evidence – the defendants’ abuse of religion
- Vs 16-18: the divine verdict and invitation

#### *Malachi*

- The entire book is courtroom transcript
- Involves full-blown exchanges without invoking witnesses or calling the court to attention
- God challenges Israel – Israel challenges God
- 1:2-5 – 1<sup>st</sup> exchange – issue of love
- 1:6 – 2<sup>nd</sup> exchange – issue of filial loyalty
- 1:7-9 – 3<sup>rd</sup> exchange – issue of defiled sacrifices
- 1:10-2:16 – God provides a litany of evidence: invalid offerings; blemished sacrifices; profane priests; broken covenant; insincere remorse; marital failure and violence
- 2:17 – 4<sup>th</sup> exchange – issue of justice
- 3:1-5 – preliminary verdict – day of Yahweh
- 3:6-12 – 5<sup>th</sup> exchange – issue of loyalty
- 3:13-14 – 6<sup>th</sup> exchange – issue of service
- 3:16 – jury at work?
- 3:17-4:5 – the divine verdict – day of Yahweh

### **Creation in Isaiah**

#### *Creation words*

- bara’: 48 times in OT – 21 times in Isa – God is subject – translated as “create” – includes material objects, heavenly bodies, the earth, mankind, and Israel – also includes abstract ideas such as light, darkness, peace – includes 3 dimensions of creation → cosmological (primordial), historical, eschatological
- yatsar: 70 times in OT – 27 times in Isa – means “form” – mostly about the forming of Israel – emphasis on historical creation
- ’asah: 90 times in Isa – most flexible word – means “make,” “do” – 3 dimensions → cosmological, historical, eschatological
- these are the 3 principal verbs – there are 6 other verbs used

#### *Creation metaphors*

- “breath/spirit”: resonates with Gen creation story – cosmological creation
- “work of his/my/your hand”: appears often with creation words – includes historical and eschatological creation

- “heaven-earth” merismus: primary meaning of cosmic creation but includes the other dimensions of creation – resonates with Gen creation story

*Creation passage: Isa 44:24-45:25*

- Employs the 3 principal creation verbs – other verbs are used – creation metaphors are also used
- Focuses upon primordial creation which undergirds everything God does historically, eschatologically, and salvifically – all of God’s work is under the rubric of creation
- Reveals that creation is Isaiah’s consummate conceptualisation of God
- God is creator – “I am the Lord and there is no other” (45:5, 6, 18, 22 cf 45:7, 8, 14, 21) – creation accentuates the sovereignty of God – his will is inviolable
- Relational reciprocation – those whom God chooses are his servants (their relational position) [45:4] – humans cannot question the creator (45:9-10) – humanity must turn to the creator for sustenance and salvation (45:22-25) – God is able to take care of Israel because he is the creator
- Creation language and thought become the basis of relational abstraction

*Creator God*

- The One and Only God – incomparable – without analogy – a divine self-predication – special titles – able to perform wondrous acts
- He is the saviour/redeemer – historical framework of God’s activity
- He is holy – “Holy One of Israel” – Isaiah’s unique name for God – Isa 6:3

“Every work says something to us of the artist who is the author. The final paintings of Van Gogh inform us of the agony of his heart and his obsessions. In the compositions of Mozart appear the coolness of a soul and the reserved melancholy of a great musician. The entire universe is the work of a sovereign artist. If we contemplate his divine work long and attentively, we can hear God speak to us . . . making known to us his infinite grandeur, his wisdom, his beauty, his goodness, . . . in a word, his glory and his majesty.” -- Andre Boulet, *Création et rédemption*, 215

**The Messiah**

- Hebrew term *mashiach* meaning “anointed one” – LXX translates it with *christos* (Christ in the NT)
- Term is applied to:
  1. kings of Israel (1 Sam 24:6)
  2. Cyrus (Isa 45:1)
  3. high priest (Lev 4:3, 5, etc.)
  4. expected deliverer of Israel (Dan 9:25-26)

*Images of Messiah*

- Daniel (9:25-27): Messiah – deliverer – ruler – confirms covenant – terminates sacrifice and sin
- Isaiah (42:1-9; 52:13-53:12): Servant – chosen one – Spirit-filled – will establish justice – suffering servant – vicarious suffering – atoning suffering – suffering is God’s will
- Jeremiah (23:1-8; 33:15 cf Zec 3:8; 6:12): Branch – from the stock of David – a king – usher in justice and security – named The Lord our Righteousness – also called servant