

THE PROPHETS

obadiah jonah hamos hosea isaiah micah nahum zephaniah habakkuk jeremiah joelezekiel daniel malachi

OBADIAH

Situation : Trouble from enemies
Message : God is sovereign over the world and all the nations. No country should be too proud.
No nation is invincible (v3-4)
Enemies of God's people will eventually be destroyed
What you sow you reap (v15)

JONAH

Situation: Cruelty and sin in Ninevah, Assyria's captial city
Message: Repent. God cares about the nations. God still wants his people to be a light to those around.
Some people run from God's calling
Evil people aren't beyond hope in God's eyes
Some have a prophetic role
God calls his servants to do some difficult things
God disciplines his disobedient servants (2)
God has a heart as big as the world (4)

AMOS

Situation: Great prosperity and great corruption in the northern kingdom
Message: God's judgement on injustice will be taken seriously
God has an international agenda(1-2)
God's people can't keep sinning and get away with it
Materialistic complacency grieves God (5:11-17; 6:1-8)
God uses various techniques to get our attention (7-8)

HOSEA

Situation: Israel continues to turn away from God
They fail to acknowledge God
Message: Israel is adulterous with other God, but God's love and compassion still reaches out.
God expects his people to be faithful (1f)
Marriage is disrupted by infidelity
Infidelity causes massive damage (2)
God's love is incredibly forgiving
Repentance brings restoration and blessing

MICAH

Situation: Israel in a bad situation, far away from God.
Message: Israel will fall, and Judah will fall later. God hates idolatry injustice and emty ritualism. But the Messiah will bring greater glory than ever before.
God's people must take inventory (1-2)
False spiritual leaders must be reprimanded (2-3)
God is pro-peace (4)
God expects a morality of justice (6)

ISAIAH 1-39

Situation: The country was prosperous, profiting from problems in surrounding countries and enemies being occupied elsewhere. A big gap had opened up between rich and poor, and the judicial system benefited the rich.
Message: God is great and will judge injustice and oppression.

ISAIAH 40-55

Situation: The Exile is assumed to have happened, judgement has fallen and Israel now looks ahead to a new future.
Message: God is great and will save. This section contains great proclamations about God's nature and looks forward to the coming of the Messiah.

ISAIAH 56-66

Situation: This looks further ahead to the situation after the return from exile.
Message: God is great even when life does not appear to be so great.

some themes

God expects ethical behavior from his people (1:10-31)
God is pro-peace (2)
God announces Immanuel (7, 9)
Nations who sin reap the consequences (13-24)
Placing ultimate trust in military will bring disappointment (31)
God supplies comfort (40)
God is high and holy in majesty (40-45)
God's Suffering Servant (42, 53, etc)
God summons to a freely offered salvation (55)
Judgment and salvation will culminate in a brand new world (65:17; 66:22)

NAHUM

Situation: Cruelty and sin in Ninevah
Message: God's judgement on Ninevah for her oppression, cruelty, and idolatry.

ZEPHANIAH

Situation: Sin and irreligion in Judah
Message: Repent while there's still time.
Wicked people and nations eventually get punished
Gathering with God's people fosters encouragement (3)
God has international concerns (2)

HABAKKUK

Situation: Corruption in Judah
Message: Voice of the godly in Judah, struggling to comprehend the ways of God. Admist confusion and doubt, the reality of God remains.
God's ways sometimes don't seem fair (1)
Sometimes violence seems overwhelming (1-2)
God's people must exercise hope-filled faith (2:1-4; 3:17-19)
God's majesty sometimes breaks through (3)
We can trust God's justice is perfect

JOEL

Situation: Life & Sin continues
Message: God will act.
Apocalyptic writing about God's judgement.
Natural catastrophes may contain divine significance (1f)
Dreams can be God's vehicles of communication (2:28-32)
War brings havoc
God will judge the nations (3)

JEREMIAH

Situation: Babylon was attacking and Judah was about to be conquered.
Message: Be realistic about the situation. This is a well-deserved judgement from God, who will not intervene to save his people. Transform your lifestyle, accet the punishment and wait in hope for God to bring salvation.
God has pre-birth plans for his servants (1)
Trusting superstitiously in religiosity is a crutch (7)
God's servants may have an axe to grind with God (20:7-12)
Judgment falls on the disobedient (25, 27)
Restoration is a biblical idea (32-33)
God's word is indestructible (36)

EZEKIEL

Situation: In Babylon during the exile
Message: Accept your punishment, love God and hope for the future.
God's people use various means of communication (3-5)
God warns those entrenched in disobedience of judgment (11, 14, 20)
God withdraws from those who refuse his overtures (10)
Each person is individually responsible for personal guilt (18)

DANIEL

Situation: In Babylon
Message: Stories of honour and resistance. Visions and dreams of the future.
Believers interact with their culture (1)
God has the big international picture in mind (2, 7)
God gives some people visionary dreams
No nation is immune from God's judgment (5)
Believers may undergo persecution (3)
God will protect those who won't compromise their convictions (3 and 6)
The kingdom of God will transcend godless kingdoms (2, 7)

MALACHI

Situation: The ongoing struggle in Judah. The people believed but were uncommitted.
Message: Get your act together! If you do you will be overwhelmed by blessings; if you don't, you will be overwhelmed by judgement.

LAMENTATIONS

Ancient Jewish and Christian tradition attributes Lamentations to Jeremiah.
It is a series of laments over the destruction of Jerusalem. In the middle of the book, the theology of Lamentations reaches its climax focusing on the goodness of God. He is the Lord of hope, love, faithfulness, salvation.