

Prophetic Books (Isaiah – Malachi)

Books in section: Isaiah – Daniel (Major) Hosea – Malachi (Minor)

Timeline of writing: Major: 700BC – 535BC | Minor: 835BC - 430BC

Timeline of events: Pre-Assyrian invasion to Post-Babylonian captivity return. 740BC - 430BC

Pre/Assyrian Captivity	Pre/Babylonian Captivity	Post Exile
Isaiah	Jeremiah and Lamentations	Haggai
Hosea	Ezekiel	Zechariah
Joel	Daniel	Malachi
Amos	Nahum	
Obadiah	Zephaniah	
Jonah	Habakkuk	
Micah		

Written to Israel	Written to Judah	Written to exiled
Hosea	Isaiah	Ezekiel
Amos	Joel	Jeremiah and Lamentations
Jonah	Obadiah	Daniel
	Micah	Haggai
	Nahum	Zechariah
	Habakkuk	Malachi
	Zephaniah	

Theological significance:

The prophetic books cover the time period before and during the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions/captivity of Israel and Judah. These books are authored by prophets, God’s chosen spokesmen for Him during this time. While the priests were responsible for representing man to God, the prophets presented God to the people. These books were intended to comfort, calm, convert, cleanse, compel, and clarify.

God’s salvific plan in Christ revealed through the Prophetic Books:

- God is sovereign
  - He alone sets up and takes down kings (Dan 4:17)
  - Nations are a drop in a bucket (Isa 40:15)
- God holds ALL nations accountable for their actions
  - Israel, Judah, Assyria, Babylon, etc.
- He is gracious and patient with ALL nations
  - Israel/Judah
  - Nineveh/Assyria 150 yrs (Jonah and Nahum)
- He provides hope when all seems lost (Jer 29:10-11)
  - A remnant will survive (Micah 7:18)
- He requires, and gives good reason to have, genuine faith (Hab 3:16-19)

- He promises a King to rescue (Zechariah) and administer righteous judgment (Malachi)

#### How to Interpret:

- These books are a combination of narrative and poetry, interpret by combining methods
- Utilize basic interpretive principles (OICA)
  - Observation, Interpretation, Correlation, Application
- Use these books to accurately observe how God interacts with man.
  - Allow the text and historical context to answer “why would God...” type questions
  - Note the time period, authorial intent, and immediate audience of the book
    - Why was it written, who is it written to?
  - Pay attention to the context:
    - Is Israel being faithful to God?
    - Is Israel being faithful to herself?
    - Conduct of those outside Israel
    - How is God interacting with Israel?
    - How is God interacting with those outside of Israel?
- Recognize the existence of POETRY within these books
  - Figurative language is IMPLICIT when the literal meaning would be absurd, impossible, immoral, etc.
  - Parallelism is used heavily in Hebrew Poetry, not so much in English
- Figurative language expresses literal reality in a memorable, thought provoking, or attention-grabbing way.
  - Understand what literal reality the figurative language is expressing.
- Allow the text to answer questions for itself, do not invent interpretations
  - Daniel 2
  - Use parallel passages
  - Allow the New Testament to aid in interpreting the Old Testament
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#### Analyze and apply a passage:

- Daniel 7
  - What happened?
  - What figurative language needs further clarification?
  - Does the passage provide this clarification? If not, are there parallel passages to help?
  - Have the events already happened or are they yet to occur?
  - What is known 100% from Scripture, what is speculative?
  - How is the interpretation pointing to Christ?
  - What comfort or clarity is received?