

Prophets

Recap...

The situation up to the exile:

	People	Place	Rule/Blessing
Creation	Adam and Eve	Garden of Eden in perfect creation	Wonderful blessing as they obey one rule
Fall	None	Banished from Garden, prevented from return	Under curse because they broke the rule
Promise to Abraham	Great Nation, countless descendants	In a land God will give	Blessing for the world
Deal with Moses	Israel to be a great nation	In a land of abundance and peace	If they obey the law
Promise to David	David's line	Temple at Jerusalem, rest	David's son, God's son will rule for ever
Reality by 2 Kings 25	Scattered and defeated	In exile	Constant rebellion against God so under curse

Introduction

There are 16 books of the prophets: 4 so called Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah with Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel); 12 so called Minor Prophets (the last 12 books of our OT)! These prophets speak before, during and after the Israel and Judean exiles, covering a period of over 300 years

Finding our bearings

- Look to place the prophet into the OT story line (Hosea 1:1)
- Look to see who the prophet is addressing (Hosea 4:1)
- Remember that prophets speak in: (a) Poetry much of the time, (b) Repetitive, cyclical styles

A Summary of the 16 Prophets

Four Major Prophets:

Prophet	When	To Whom	About
Isaiah	740 BC	Judah	Exile and future return
Jeremiah	627-582 BC	Judah	The exile to come and future return
Ezekiel	593-571 BC	Judah and then exiles	Fall of Jerusalem and exile. A new shepherd, new life and a new temple
Daniel	587-525 BC	Exiles	God in control even in exile, gospel for nations, God's eternal kingdom will come

Twelve Minor Prophets:

Prophet	When	To Whom	About
Hosea	747-724 BC	Israel under Jeroboam	Unfaithful Israel, faithful God. Exile, a new exodus
Joel	?	?	The Day of the Lord, salvation open to all
Amos	750 BC	Israel under Jeroboam	Israel's lack of true worship will be judged. However there is hope.
Obadiah	?587 BC	Judah (especially Jerusalem)	Edom will be destroyed, God's people rescued.
Jonah	780 BC	Nineveh when Jeroboam is king of Israel	The nation must repent
Micah	725-700 BC	Judah under kings Jotham to Hezekiah	Judgement on sin, salvation for God's people
Nahum	?640 BC	Assyria and Judah	Judgement on nations. God is in control.
Habakkuk	Between 626-587 BC	Judah	God is just to use pagan nations to judge Israel
Zephaniah	Before 621 BC	Judah, before Josiah's reforms	God's judgement on Judah and her enemies, but there is glorious hope for Jerusalem

Haggai	520 BC	Israel after exile	Rebuild the temple
Zechariah	520-518 BC	Israel after exile	Rebuild Jerusalem. God is coming as king. Jerusalem will be centre of God's plan for world
Malachi	After 520 BC	Israel after exile	Give God your all. The Lord is coming

What the 'before & during exile' Prophets said:

- The prophets re-affirmed the previous promises to Abraham and David (Hosea 1:10, Isaiah 9:6-7 & 100's more)
- The prophets expand the promises and explain how they will be kept (Ezekiel 36, Jeremiah 24:7, 31:8-14)
- The prophets speak of the return from exile as if it is a new exodus (Isaiah 40-42)
- The prophets speak of the people being ruled by the promised king & shepherd (Isaiah 9:5-7, 11:1-2, Ezekiel 34)
- The prophets speak of a new covenant that God makes with Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 31:31-34)
- The prophets speak of the people living in a new creation, like Eden (Isaiah 11:6-9, 35:1-10, 65:17-25)
- The prophets speak of international blessing from God (Joel 2:28-32, Isaiah 49:6, 60:1-3)
- The prophets speak of this being achieved by the servant of God on whom the spirit comes (Isaiah 42:1), who takes the judgement of God (Isaiah 53)

What the 'after exile' Prophets said: Haggai/Zechariah/Malachi

- They call Israel to live under the law of Moses
- They rebuke Israel for her sinfulness
- They speak as if the exile judgement has not yet ended
- They call people to look forward to promises to come
- They speak of the future in the same terms as the before exile prophets. So the end of the OT leaves us waiting for the true return from exile still to happen, and the great promises to Abraham, David & through the prophets still to be fulfilled.