

Habakkuk: “Embrace” – A prophet of Judah, received a Word from the LORD about Judah as well as the heathen nations, written around 605 BC.

Neo-Babylonian exile of Judah, 586 BC

Obadiah: “Servant of the LORD” – Likely a prophet of Judah, as he is addressing Edom, to the Southeast. The authorship date is debated, though it could likely have been a work written just after the exile of Judah (see verses 10-14 of Obadiah).

Exilic Prophets

Ezekiel: “God will strengthen” – A prophet of Judah carried into exile. Much of his prophecy was done in Babylonia, 597-about 560 BC.

Daniel: “God is my judge” – A prophet taken into exile before Ezekiel, though his ministry was very long-lasting, 604-536 BC.

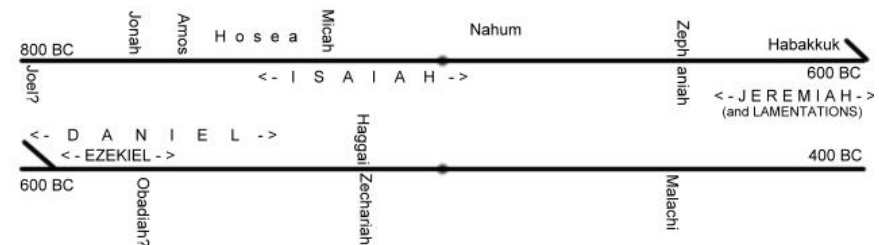
Contemporaries: Haggai and Zechariah

Haggai: “Holiday” (he was likely born on a Holy Day) – Prophet to Judah, Second year, sixth month of Darius’ reign, late Winter, 516 BC.

Zechariah: “The LORD is my righteousness” – Prophet to Judah, Second year, eighth month of Darius’ reign, 516 BC.

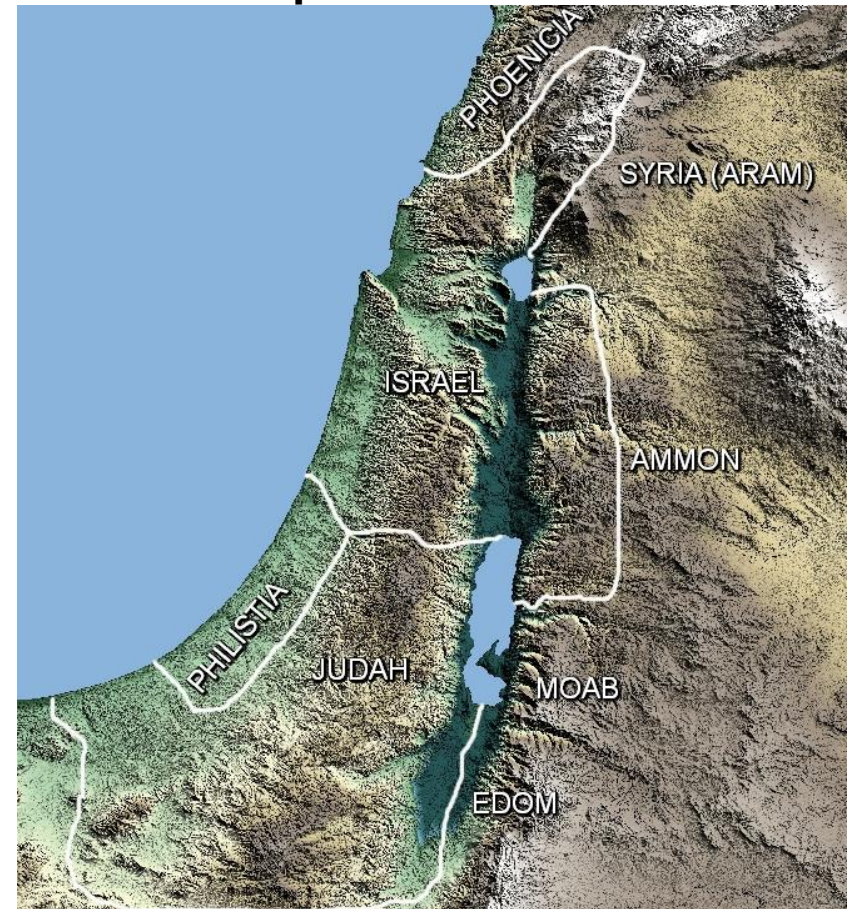
Malachi: “My messenger” – Likely the latest prophet in restored Judah before the Intertestamental period, around 444 BC. Likely was a contemporary with Nehemiah.

Note that the majority of prophets were present in Judah, as Israel was exiled much sooner than Judah. Jonah, Amos, Hosea, and possibly Nahum were present in Israel, and various other prophets did minister concerning the exiled nation of Israel, though in much lesser focus.



Approximate Timeline (MAJOR and Minor prophets)

The Minor Prophets



Map + Approximate boundaries, Divided Kingdom

Prophets were literally God’s mouthpieces and vessels to a split nation that continued to stray from Him. Prophet, literally meaning, “To speak for,” was often an unpopular office, as a prophet would speak against the cherished sin of a wicked land.

Prophets often spoke in **Oracles** – sayings often beginning with the formula, “Thus says YHVH (the LORD).” There were two types of oracles:

- (1) Oracles of judgment
- (2) Oracles of salvation/restoration

Prophetic literature has ties with Poetic literature (e.g. Psalms, Song of Solomon). In both Poetic and Prophetic literature, vivid

imagery is often used to illustrate what the LORD would do in the land. There is also a heavy use of parallelism in both Poetic and Prophetic literature, used for comparing and contrasting concepts or events to bring home a point.

As is common in Prophetic literature, one major goal was to bring the people of God back to God. Rarely were the people in good standing with the LORD, though He shows His mercy in not totally devastating the nation, but promising a future restoration in many instances. Another obvious goal was to point to God's Salvation, and His coming Salvation through the Messiah (Jesus Christ).

Some Common Themes in the Prophets¹:

1. **Ironic prophetic worldview:** The prophets view the world much differently from the norm. For example, at times of prosperity, often prophets would see times of doom lurking around the corner and would warn the overly content people.
2. **The Sovereignty of God:** God is ultimately in control over all – trials, blessings, Creation, miraculous provisions, etc.
3. **A Call to Repentance and Transformation:** The prophets had a severe hatred for sin and evil in the land, so the cry of many (e.g. Jeremiah) was for the people to repent and change. Very few saw encouraging results, though they were indeed faithful in ministry.
4. **A Call for Justice:** The prophets looked out for those in need – the destitute: the poor, the widow, the broken. The cry of the prophets was often for the people to take care of these people (cf. Micah 6).
5. **The Universality of the LORD:** The LORD desires for all nations to call on Him.
6. **The Day of the LORD:** There will be a coming day of Judgment, and a future day of Rest.
7. **Expectation of a Messiah** ("Chosen one of God") **and the Restoration of Israel:** A Messiah was promised to restore His People to prominence, but would He first come as a suffering servant, or a militaristic and priestly conqueror?

The Prophets, both Minor & Major

- (1) What do their names mean?
- (2) Where did they minister, and/or to where did they minister?
- (3) When did they prophesy?²

¹ Dempster, S. *Prophetic Books*. New Dictionary of Biblical Theology. T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, D.A. Carson, and Graeme Goldsworthy, eds. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 122-6.

Joel: "The LORD is God" – Either an early or late prophet. Date of authorship is commonly said to be around either 800 BC or 450 BC, with not much in between.

Jonah: "Dove" – From Israel, sent to Nineveh, a heathen nation (so he was a prophet to the nations), written between 793 and 753 BC, or possibly earlier.

Likely Contemporaries: Amos and Hosea

Amos: "Bearer of a burden" (perfect for a prophet, though he was also a farmer by trade) – From Israel, between 767 and 750 BC.

Hosea: "The LORD is [my] helper" – From Israel, his ministry took place around 754-724 BC.

Assyrian exile of Israel, 722 BC

Likely Contemporaries: Micah and Isaiah

Micah: "Who is like the LORD?" – From Judah, a prophet to Judah and Jerusalem (the Southern Kingdom), mid-to-late-700s BC

Isaiah: "The LORD has saved" – A prophet to Judah and Jerusalem, written from 740-686 BC. Isaiah was blessed with a very long ministry, and it possibly lasted slightly longer than 686 BC, as well.

Likely Contemporaries: Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk

Nahum: "Comforter" – A prophet from Elkosh, which could be near Galilee in Israel, though his ministry location is unknown. He prophesied concerning Nineveh (so he was a prophet to the nations), though he may have been exiled in Assyria or resident in Jerusalem (in Judah). Likely written around 700 BC, but at latest, 625 BC at the fall of Nineveh.

Zephaniah: "The LORD has treasured" – A prophet to Judah, around 635 BC.

Jeremiah (*who also wrote Lamentations*): A prophet to Judah, Israel, and the nations, but centered in Judah, beginning in 626 BC and lasting until around 585 BC.

² Consulted: Bullock, C. Hassell. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books*. Revised and expanded ed. Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.