

Hosea

Setting

Hosea prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (1:1). While there was certainly no shortage of sin in Judah during this time, these kings did what was right in the sight of the LORD. So Hosea's primary attention was drawn to Israel where Jeroboam II followed in the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Israel is referenced 84 times and Judah 14 times. The length of Hosea's ministry means that he probably saw the demise of the Northern Kingdom.

Signature:

Hosea (deliverance) ministered for more than thirty-five years. He was married to a prostitute by the dictate of God and he had three children with her. But it is entirely likely that she already had children (1:2-1:9).

Structure:

- I. Hosea's unfaithful wife (1:1-3:5)
- II. God's unfaithful people (4:1-14:9)

Summary:

Israel was like a prostitute. An unfaithful wife to God. He would leave them to their own devices and punish them for their actions. In their despair, God knew that his bride would come looking for him to redeem them (5:15).

Period:

Period of the Divided Kingdom

Audience:

Primarily Israel

People:

Hosea
Uzziah
Jothan
Ahaz
Hezekiah
Gomer

Places:

Israel
Judah
Assyria
Egypt
Gibeah
Ramah
Beth Aven
Mizpah
Mt Tabor
Gilead

Events:

Prophecy of the fall of Israel
Hosea & Gomer

Key Verses

For I desire **mercy**
and not sacrifice,
And the knowledge
of God more than
burnt offerings.
(6:6)

Malachi

Setting

The book of Malachi was written during a time of severe apostasy in the Hebrew culture. People were marrying pagan people (2:11), and rejecting the statutes of God (1:13-14 & 3:8). Many clues help to determine that Malachi was written some years after the return of the people from Babylon:

1. Malachi was written before the final destruction of Edom (1:3-1:6).
2. Malachi uses a word for governor (מַחֲבֵר, *pechah*) which is never used to describe a civil leader in Israel until the post-exilic era.
3. Various references tell us that the sacrificial system had been reinstated.

Signature

We know nothing about Malachi outside the writing of his prophecy. The Hebrew word transliterated Malachi actually means “messenger”. This has caused some to speculate that Malachi is actually an anonymous letter. Some early church fathers suggested that the book was written by an angel since this word is often translated this way.

Structure:

Malachi make use of a questioning and answering dialogue technique to get people to think about questions they would never ask out loud. His style has caused some to describe him as the Hebrew Socrates.

- I. God has shown his people perfect love (1:1-1:5)
- II. God’s people have in return shown God polluted loyalty (1:6-2:17)
 - A. God indites the priests (1:6-2:9)
 - B. God indites the people (2:10-2:17)
- III. God provides a solution to this divergence (3:1-3:15)
 - A. God will send his messenger. (3:1-3:5)
 - B. God’s people must serve without reservation. (3:6- 15)
- IV. God writes a book of remembrance and reveals His escalological plan (3:16-4:6)

Summary:

The priest and people who lived during the time of Malachi had stopped honor and respecting God (1:6). God has shown Himself to deal justly with His people (1:1-1:5). He has gave His people a wonderful opportunity to return to Him (3:7). God has determined to deal with all people in a final judgement where the just will be rewarded and the unjust punished (3:16-4:6)

Period:

Period of the Restoration

Audience:

Israel

People:

Malachi
Jacob
Levi
Moses
Esau
Elijah

Places:

Israel (Judah)
Edom

Daters:

500-480 BC

Events:

Coming of the Messiah and his prophet.

Verses

“For I *am* the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. (3:6)

“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. (3:8)

Chapters in Book:

4

Nahum

Setting

The book of Nahum is the final recorded prophecy to the nation of Assyria. After Jonah had prophesied to this pagan city, they had repented and turned to Jehovah. But at some point they returned to their wicked ways. At the time of Nahum's prophecy, the Assyrians dominated Mesopotamia and in just a few decades Babylon would conquer Nineveh and begin carrying the Jews into exile: Following are the observations to prove this

1. Assyria had already conquered Israel (722 BC).
2. Assyria had not yet fallen to Babylon (610 BC).
3. The sacrificial system was still being observed-and were observed until the early 5th century (1:15).
4. Thebes fell around the middle of the 6th BC (3:8-9)

Signature:

Nahum either lived or was born in Eskosh. Eskosh is often associated with the fishing village of Capernaum. Three proofs can be offered for this association:

1. Nahum's very vivid description of the sights and sounds of an Assyrian conquest and rule would likely only come from a first hand account. This would lead one to believe that Nahum lived somewhere in the conquered land of Israel.
2. The Greek "Capernaum" is likely a transliteration of "Kaphar Nahum" or Nahum's Town

Structure:

Nahum recorded his vision in using Hebrew poetry. The poetic stanzas follow a natural progression from a look at God to a detailed evaluation of Nineveh's end.

- I. Nineveh has upset a mighty foe and is doomed (1:1-1:15).
- II. The destruction of Nineveh is described (2:1-2:13).
- III. The justification of the judgement is validated (3:1-3:19).

Summary:

Like the book of Obadiah, Nahum records a vision against a neighboring foreign nation (1:1). The prophet Nahum saw the coming destruction of the Assyrians (1:14) Unlike the prophecy that was brought to Nineveh by Jonah, this time there would be no way to escape judgment (3:18). Nahum is so occupied with the doom of Nineveh that he says nothing of Judah's sins and even offers encouragement to the Southern tribe (1:12, 15).

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Period:

The end of the
Period of the
Divided Kingdom

Audience:

Nineveh

People:

Nahum

Places:

Ninevah
Bashan
Carmel
Lebanon
Thebes

Events:

Prophecy
concerning the fall
of Nineveh

Key Verses

Your injury *has* no
healing, Your
wound is severe.
All who hear news
of you Will clap
their hands over
You, For upon
whom has not your
wickedness passed
continually? (3:18)

Chapters:

3

Micah

Setting

The prophecy of Micah was given during the reigns of Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah to the inhabitancy of Israel and Judah (1:1). This means that Micah would have delivered God's messages during great depravity (2 Kings 16:1-3) and during great revival (2 Kings 18:1-3) Micah would have observed as Israel allied with Assyria to defeat Judah (2 Kings 16:5) and then he witnessed as Assyria turns and decimates the Northern Kingdom. (2 Kings 15:29; 17:5).

Signature

Micah ("who is like Jehovah") was from a town in the western lowland hill country of Judah. Judging from the name of his hometown, Moresheth-Gath ("possession of Gath"), Micah probably lived in an area that was controlled by the nearby city of Gath-a principle city of the Philistines. Micah was acquainted with the oppression of a foreign oppressor. He prophesied during the mid eighth century and his ministry would have lasted at least 20 years (1:1) And, unlike many of God's messengers, Micah died in peace during the reign of King Hezekiah (Jeremiah 26:16-19).

Structure:

- I. God is sending judgment to Israel and Judah (1:1-2:13)
- II. Judgment is coming because of the leadership. (3:1-5:15)
 - A. Iniquity of the prophets, priests, and kings are seen (3:1-3:12)
 - B. Invasion of the Prophet, Priest, and King is sure (4:1-5:15)
- III. Judgment is coming because of the people. (6:1-7:20)

Summary:

Because of the sins and transgression of Judah and Israel, God is bringing judgment onto His people (1:6). Micah gives no hope of preventing God's wrath. God's heart breaks terribly because of the devastation revealed in this book (1:8). But with these declarations are some accompanying hope for the future (2:12-13; 4; 5).

Period:

The end of the Period of the Divided Kingdom and the beginning of the Period of the Single Kingdom under the reigns of Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah

Audience:

Judah and Israel

People:

Micah
Jothan
Ahaz
Hezekiah

Places:

Jerusalem
Samaria
Moresheth
Gath
Beth Aphrah
Shaphir
Zaanan
Beth Ezel
Maroth

Events:

Prophecy of the fall of Israel and Judah.
Prophecy of the coming of Christ.

Verses

"But you,
Bethlehem
Ephrathah,
Though you are
little among the
thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall
come forth to Me

AMOS

Setting

Amos prophesied during the mid eighth century less than half a century till the Assyrian invasion. While Godly King Uzziah reigned in Judea where Amos lived, his work was done in Israel where Jeroboam II would not “depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat” (1:1). Despite this evil, Israel experienced a period of great prosperity (2 Kings 14:25). And despite this prosperity, there was great oppression on the poor (4:1)

Signature

While Amos carried prophecies to Israel, this thundering prophet lived in Tekoa. Tekoa was a watch city situated south of Jerusalem on a high hill within sight of the capital. Before the Word of the Lord came to him, Amos was a sheep breeder and a sycamore farmer (7:14). The prophecies and events recorded in Amos probably took place within a two year span of time (1:1)

Structure:

Micah make tremendous use of idioms.

- I. Judgment is pronounced on eight nations (1:1-2:16)
- II. God elaborates on Israel’s judgment with 5 dialogues (3:1-6:14)
- III. God explains Israel’s judgment with 5 illustrations (7:1-9:15)

Summary:

The book of Amos opens with “thunders” and “roars” against every major power in the region including Israel and Judah (1:2). But among the promises of purgatory on Earth there is this promise “Seek the Lord and live.” (5:6).

Period:

Period of the Divided Kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II

Audience:

Judah and the nations of the world

People:

Ben Hadad
Amaziah the priest
Azariah
Jeroboam II

Places:

Damascus
Gaza
Tyre
Edom
Amon
Moab
Judah
Israel

Events:

Prophecy of the fall of the eight nations

Key Verse

“Behold, ¹I am setting a plumb line In the midst of My people Israel; ²I will not pass by them anymore.

Jonah

Setting

Jonah prophesied in Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Nineveh was a large city with more than 120,000 inhabitants (3:3; 4:11). His ministry would have occurred before or early during the reign of Jeroboam II over Israel (2 Kings 14:25). Jonah would have been close enough to this brutal people to see them as a threat (2 Kings 14:25).

Signature

Jonah was a prophet from Gath-Hepher, a small village on the western bank of the Jordan River just north of the Galilee. He lived during the reign of Jeroboam II or briefly before (2 Kings 14:25).

Structure:

Jonah records his flight (1)
Jonah records his fish (2)
Jonah records his feat (3)
Jonah records his frustration (4)

Summary:

In Jonah's story, both the godly (Jonah) and the ungodly (Ninevites) find themselves in need of God's mercy.

Period:

Period of the Divided Kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II over Israel

Audience:

Nineveh

People:

Jonah

Places:

Nineveh
Tarshish
Joppa

Events:

Jonah in the belly of the fish
Repentance of Nineveh

Key Verse

Therefore I ^afled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You *are* a ^bgracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. (4:2)

Habakkuk

Setting

Habakkuk prophesied after the fall of the Northern Kingdom and before the invasion of Babylon. Considering his complaint against the wicked and the imminence of the judgment described (chapter 3), his ministry likely took place during the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah who was a vassal of the Egyptians. In just a few decades the Babylonians would invade and conquer Judah.

Signature

Habakkuk would have lived in the Southern Kingdom. Because of his use of poetry and specifically a psalm in chapter 3, some suggest that he may have been a Levite who ministered with music (see 3:19).

Structure:

- I. Habakkuk contends with God. (1:1-2:20)
- II. Habakkuk concedes to God. (3:1-19)

Summary:

God cannot tolerate the wrong done by His people (1:3). So God will raise us a nation to use an instrument of judgment against His people (1:6). But justice will come and the nation which oppresses will themselves be put down (chapter 2). Habakkuk finally submits to God's divine wisdom in a wonderful psalm of praise (chapter 3).

Period:

Period of the Single Kingdom during the reign of Jehoiakim

Audience:

Judah

People:

Habakkuk

Places:

Judah
Babylon

Events:

Prophecy of the fall of Judah, the rise of Babylon, and the fall of Babylon

Verses

. . . The just shall live by faith (2:4)
. . . In wrath remember mercy. (3:2)

Haggai

Setting

Haggai gives precise clues as to the date of his prophecies (1:1, 15; 2:1, 10, 18, 20). He prophesied during the post exile period when a small remnant of 50,000 men had returned to Jerusalem. His ministry spanned a 4 month period during the second year of King Darius' reign (1:1, 2:10). With Ezra and Zerubbabel and Jeshua he contended for the completion of the Temple restoration (compare 1:2 & Ezra 5:3).

Signature

Little is known about the prophet Haggai outside of this short period of time during the reign of Darius. If, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Haggai spoke with personal experience of the glory of the first Temple; then he would have been a very old man (2:3). This would certainly explain the brevity of his ministry.

Structure:

- I. Haggai deals with the present Temple (1:1-1:15)
- II. Haggai deals with the promised Temple (2:1-2:23)

Summary:

“Give careful thought to your ways“ was Haggai’s warning. The people had committed to rebuild the Temple but now had forgotten their promise. The people had been punished for their actions but were not affected by (1:6-11; 2:15-17) . But, when correction was made,(1:14-15) God blessed them in their efforts and provided protection for them (2:20-23).

Period:

Period of the Restoration during the reign of Darius

Audience:

Judah

People:

Zerubbabel
Jeshua
Haggai
Darius

Places:

Jerusalem
Babylon

Events:

The return of a remnant to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple.

Verses

“*Is it ^stime for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this ^ltemple to lie in ruins?*” (1:4)

Joel

Setting

Little is known about the period Joel prophesied. Unlike other prophets, Joel gives no historical clue as to the exact time of his ministry. His ministry would have occurred before the fall of the Southern Kingdom. His reference to delivery from the northern army may refer to Assyria which would place the prophecy after 722 BC (2:20). This was a time of great sin and great despair (1:2, 16-20). But there is also an element of hope (2:12-14)

Signature

Joel (the LORD is God) His familiarity with the duties of the priest may indicate that he was a Temple prophet (1:9, 13-14, 16).

Structure:

- I. Forth-telling (1:1-2:27)
- II. Foretelling (2:28-3:18)

Summary:

Joel reveals the purpose of why hard times have fallen on the people of Judah. War and drought are brought about from God and there is more to come. Joel does however offer some hope to the people of Israel in the form of forgiveness offered (2:12-14). And he offers a great deal of hope for the whole world in the form of an “outpouring of the Spirit” (2:28:32; Acts 2:16-21).

Period:

Period of the Single Kingdom

Audience:

Judah

People:

Joel

Places:

Israel
Judah
Tyre
Siddon
Philistine
Valley of
Jehoshaphet

Events:

Prophecy of the coming of an enemy from the north and the “great and terrible day of the lord”.

Verses

So ^vrend your heart,
and not ^wyour
garments; Return
to the LORD your
God, . . (2:13)

Zechariah

Setting

Zechariah's prophecy began in the eighth month of the second year of King Darius (1:1) This was only two months after Haggai began his prophecy to Israel's leadership (Haggai 1:1). He prophesied to Zerubbabel and Jeshua (2:8; 4:6). The Temple had not yet been built (6:13). The Word of the Lord had come to Haggai The first High Priest in the land was "crowned" by Zechariah (6:7-14).

Signature

Zechariah (the LORD remembers) prophesied in Jerusalem to the leadership of Israel. All else that is known about him comes from brief references in Nehemiah and Ezra (Nehemiah 12:4, 16; Ezra 5:1; 6:14).

Structure:

Like Haggai, Zechariah makes consistent use of exact dates concerning when a prophecy was given.

- I. Visions to Zechariah (1:1-6:8)
- II. Coronations of Joshua (6:9-15)
- III. Prophecy to the people (7:1-8:23)
- IV. Burdens to nations (9:1-14:21)

Summary:

This is the end of the exile. God was angry but now calls the people to turn back to Him (1:2-6). Where his contemporary Haggai encouraged the completion of the Temple and right actions by threats of judgment, Zechariah encourages people with truths of the Glory of God and His great works. Haggai was primarily the stick and Zechariah the carrot (Ezra 5:1). The phrase "the LORD of hosts" is used more than 50 times by Zechariah

Period:

Period of the Restoration

Audience:

Post exile Judah

People:

Zechariah
Zerubbabel
Joshua

Places:

Jerusalem
Syria

Events:

Return of Israel from exile and the rebuilding of the temple

Key Verses

Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, Says the LORD of hosts. (4:6)

Zephaniah

Setting

Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of Godly King Josiah (1:1). This was a time of great change. Idols and high places were tore down, the Temple was refurbished and the Law was rediscovered (2 Kings 22:1-23:30). Because of his kinship to the young king, little doubt exist concerning the importance of Zephaniah's influence concerning this revival

Signature

Zephaniah was the great, great, grandson of King Amaziah of Judah (1:1).

Structure:

The Day of the Lord will punish evil doers (1:1-18)
The Day of the Lord will persecute nations (2:1-2:15)
The Day of the Lord will purify God's people (3:1-3:20)

Summary:

"The Day of the LORD" is coming! Zephaniah tells Judah (specifically) and the world (generally) what to expect and how to prepare for this consummating event.

Period:

During the Period of the Single Kingdom under the reign of King Josiah

Audience:

Judah

People:

Zephaniah

Places:

Judah
Amon
Moab
Philisti
Assyria

Events:

Prophecy of the fall of Judah and the "Day of the LORD"

Obadiah

Setting

Dating and establishing the setting for Obadian is difficult. Little historical data is given in this short one chapter book. It is likely that Obadiah prophesied shortly after the fall of the Northern Kingdom during the reign of Jehoram's reign. These are some evidences to suggest this“

1. Edom's major destruction by the Babylonians had not yet taken place (Ezekiel 35; Malachi 1:4)
2. This point in Israel's history was marked by invasions and plundering from local nations and Israel and Edom were bitter enemies at this point (2 Chronicles 21:8-20)
3. Amos, who prophesied in the time of Uzziah, tells of Edom's deeds when the Philistines plundered the land (Amos 1:6)

Signature

Obadiah's name mean “servant”.

Structure:

- I. The indictment of Edom (1-9)
- II. The evidence against Edom (10-14)
- III. The judgment on Edom (15-21)
 - A. Punishment (15-18)
 - B. Retribution (19-21)

Summary:

Because of Edom's actions against God's people, they will suffer the same oppression they gave.

Period:

Late in the Period of the Divided Kingdom or early in the Period of the Single Kingdom. But probably during the reign of Jehoram.

Audience:

Edom

People:

Jacob
Esau

Places:

Judah
Edom

Events:

Prophecy of the fall of Edom

Keys Verses

You should not have entered the gate of My people In the day of their calamity. . . . (1:16)