

The Tombs of the Prophets

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Matt. 23:29-37

B. There are 133 named prophets and 626 unnamed prophets making a total of 759 prophets mentioned in the Bible. Of these, there were 40 writing prophets inspired to write scripture, including Moses, David, and Solomon; four major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel; and, 12 minor prophets

1. There were far more unnamed speaking prophets than named writing prophets - Judges 6:7-10

2. There were very few written copies of God's word; there were very few people who could read; most received the word from teaching prophets

3. Prophets would travel from village to village, teaching and preaching the word of God as guided by the Holy Spirit. Immediately before, during, and after the exile, some prophets were guided to write their prophecies and teachings to be read by men trained to read and preach in prophet schools. Elisha is credited with beginning the first such school.

4. 2Peter 1:20-21

C. Prophets of the Old Testament who spoke with, or on behalf of, God

1. Abraham - Gen 11:26 - 25:10

2. Isaac - Gen 21:1 - 35:29

3. Jacob - Gen 25:21 - 49:33

4. Moses - Ex. 2:1 - Deut. 34:5

5. Aaron - Ex. 4:14 - Num. 33:39

6. Joshua - Ex. 17:9-14, 24:13; Joshua 24:29

7. Phinehas - Ex. 6:25; Num. 25:7-25:11, 31:6

8. Eli - 1Sam. 1:9 - 4:18

9. Samuel - 1Sam. 1:1 - 25:1

10. Gad - 1Sam. 22:5; 2Sam. 24:11-19

11. Nathan - 2Sam. 7:2-17, 12:1-25

12. Daniel - The Book of Daniel

13. David - 1Sam. 16:1 - 1Kings 2:11

14. Solomon - 2Sam. 12:24; 1Kings 1:10 - 11:43

15. Iddo - 2Chron. 9:29, 12:15, 13:22

16. Michaiah son of Imlah - 1Kings 22:8-28; 2Chron. 18:7-27

17. Obadiah - The Book of Obadiah

18. Ahiyah the Shilonite - 1Kings 11:29-30, 12:15, 14:2-18, 15:29

19. Jehu son of Hanani - 1Kings 16:1-7; 2Chron. 19:2, 20:34

20. Azariah son of Oded - 2Chron. 15

21. Jahaziel the Levite - 2Chron. 20:14

22. Eliezer son of Dodavahu - 2Chron. 20:37

23. Hosea - The Book of Hosea

24. Amos - The Book of Amos

25. Micah the Moreshite - The Book of Micah

26. Elijah - 1Kings 17:1 - 21:29

27. Elisha - 1Kings 19:16-19; 2Kings 2:1 - 13:21
28. Jonah son of Amittai - The Book of Jonah
29. Isaiah - The Book of Isaiah
30. Joel - The Book of Joel
31. Nahum - The Book of Nahum
32. Habakkuk - The Book of Habakkuk
33. Zephaniah - The Book of Zephaniah
34. Uriah - Jer. 26:20-23
35. Jeremiah - The Book of Jeremiah
36. Ezekiel - The Book of Ezekiel
37. Shemaiah - 1Kings 12:22-24; 2Chron. 11:2-4, 12:5-15
38. Barukh - Jer. 32, 36, 43, 45
39. Seraiah - Jer. 51:61-64
40. Haggai - The Book of Haggai
41. Zechariah - The Book of Zechariah
42. Malachi - The Book of Malachi
43. Mordecai Bilshan - The Book of Esther
44. Oded father of Azariah - 2Chron. 15:8
45. Zacharias - Luke 1
46. Simeon - Luke 2:25-35
47. Female Prophets: Sarah - Gen 11:29 - 23:20
48. Miriam - Ex. 15:20-21; Num. 12:1 - 12:15, 20:1
49. Deborah - Judges 4:1 - 5:31
50. Hannah - 1Sam. 1:1 - 2:21
51. Abigail - 1Sam 25:1 - 25:42
52. Huldah - 2Kings 22:14-20
53. Esther - The Book of Esther
54. Anna - Luke 2:36-38

I. THE WORK OF THE PROPHETS

A. Isaiah was sent to Judah.

1. Theme text: "To whom will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One" (Isa. 40:25).
2. His book appears to be a summary of the whole Bible: God's holiness, warning of coming judgment, call to repentance, visions of future blessing, Messianic prophecies, servant songs, and poetry.
3. He is often called the Messianic prophet, but his work focused mainly on the kingdom. David was more prolific in Messianic prophecies

B. Jeremiah was sent to Judah.

1. Theme text: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as the potter does? declares the Lord. Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel" (Jer. 18:6).
2. Jeremiah covers the transition from last days of the kingdom into exile. Warnings to repent are dismissed, and Jerusalem falls. Jeremiah then prophecies future restoration after seventy years of exile, and warns the remaining Judeans not to go down to Egypt.

3. Jeremiah is distinguished by his understanding and acceptance of God's will and his willingness to persist with the very unappreciated ministry to which God had called him. He persevered through a life of constant grief, rejection, and torment; he is the author of Lamentations.
- C. Ezekiel was sent to the Judean Exiles in Babylon.
1. Theme text: "I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory" (Ez. 43:2).
 2. Ezekiel 1-32 was written before the exile and prophesies again Judah and Gentile nations; chapters 33-48 were written in exile about restoration and blessings after the exile.
 3. The book is filled with complex and occasionally frightening visions, and by symbolic demonstrations by the author. The overall theme is the glory of God.
- D. Daniel was sent to the Exiles.
1. Theme text: "The rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:35).
 2. Daniel begins with several chapters of history about Daniel and his contemporaries' exemplary faith in extremely hostile circumstances. The remainder of the book is a series of prophecies concerning the rise and fall of empires, and the eventual end of Judah. Throughout, the emphasis is on the sovereignty of God.
- E. Hosea was sent to Israel.
1. Theme text: "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? ... My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused" (Hosea 11:8).
 2. Hosea's message is of the eternal nature of God's love in the face of constant unfaithfulness on the part of His people. He communicates God's anger at the sins of His people, and also speaks of His sadness and weariness. Hosea's life was a parable for his message; he married a harlot who was unfaithful to him but took her back.
- F. Joel was sent to Judah.
1. Theme text: "Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning" (Joel 2:12).
 2. Joel used a recent plague of locusts as an analogy for the coming Day of the Lord, warning that devastation is waiting, and that repentance is required. The Day of the Lord is one of division: to those who love God, it brings blessing; to those who hate or ignore him, destruction. Jesus used this same theme in His sheep vs. goats analogy. Part of his prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost in Acts 2.
- G. Amos was sent to Israel in the north.
1. Theme text: "Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria" (Amos 6:1).
 2. The earliest prophet sent to Israel, Amos introduced the themes that recurred throughout the prophets: condemnation of immorality and idolatry, warning of coming judgment, and an appeal to turn back to

God and obtain mercy. God is both holy and loving. Amos was not a priest or a trained prophet, and so he brings a working man's objectivity and directness to his message.

H. Obadiah was sent to Edom.

1. Theme text: "Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the Lord" (Obadiah 4).
2. A message of woe to Edom, a neighboring country which took advantage of Judah's disarray after the Babylonian triumph to raid weakened villages. Edom was descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob (Israel), and had always been a thorn in the Hebrews' sides. Obadiah denounces their pride and security in their mountain strongholds, prophesying total annihilation of the Edomite nation.

I. Jonah was sent to Nineveh, the Assyrian capital.

1. Theme text: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown! ... Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it" (Jonah 3:4, 10).
2. The message of the book is that God is unlimited by geography, can use circumstances to achieve his own ends, and loves everyone; not just the Jews.

J. Micah was sent to Judah.

1. Theme text: "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).
2. Prophecies judgment on Judah, not just because the people have turned away from God, but also because of the temporal moral consequences of that apostasy. Emphasizes the need for ethical behavior in secular life as well as religious purity. Only prophet who succeeded in moving the people to repentance, even if only temporarily.

K. Nahum was sent to Nineveh about 100 years after Jonah.

1. Theme text: "The Lord has given a command concerning you, Nineveh. You will have no descendants to bear your name" (Nahum 1:14).
2. A condemnation of Nineveh with both prophecy of, and rejoicing in, its destruction. Unlike Jonah's message, which was a warning intended to bring about repentance, Nahum's message is final, a statement of what will surely occur rather than a warning of a fate that can still be avoided.

L. Habakkuk was sent to Judah.

1. "Though it linger, wait for it. It will certainly come, and will not delay" (Hab. 2:3).
2. The book takes the form of a dialogue with God; He asks God why He allows injustice to continue in Judah. When God replies that He will end it by means of the Babylonians, he asks God how He can use those even more unrighteous as agents of judgment. God replies that all wickedness will surely be judged at the proper time. Habakkuk concludes that he can rejoice in God whatever the circumstances.

M. Zephaniah was sent to Judah.

1. Theme text: "The great day of the Lord is near, near and coming quickly" (Zeph. 1:14).
2. The first prophet in Judah after a gap of more than fifty years, he warns of the coming Day of the Lord, emphasizing that Judah will not be exempt from the judgment due to the surrounding nations merely because of its history: God's people must seek him for themselves, not rely on their ancestors' relationship with him. Predicts the survival of a faithful remnant when God's judgement falls on Jerusalem.

N. Haggai was sent to the Remnant that returned from exile.

1. Theme text: "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while God's house remains in ruins?" (Haggai 1:4).
2. One of the most intense of the prophets, his book is a combination of history and prophecy, recounting how Haggai pressed the returned Judeans to rebuild the temple.

O. Zechariah was sent to the Remnant with Haggai.

1. Theme text: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty" (Zech. 4:6).
2. Zechariah's message is filled with apocalyptic imagery. The early part of the book is concerned with rebuilding the temple; the later part is a glimpse into the New Covenant.

P. Malachi was sent to the Remnant.

1. Theme: "Return to me and I will return to you, says the Lord" (Mal. 3:7).
2. He was born after the return of the people, and because of his beauty and his mission, he was surnamed Malakh or Angel.
3. He addressed religious apathy; temple worship is being observed, but only half-heartedly. Malachi emphasizes that God wants the best we have to offer, not just the least we can get away with.

II. THE TOMBS OF THE PROPHETS

- A. Isaiah was killed by Manasseh the son of Hezekiah with a wooden saw; he was buried before the outfall of the waters which Hezekiah concealed by Siloam.
- B. Jeremiah was stoned by the Jews as an exile in Egypt, because he rebuked them for worshiping idols; and the Egyptians buried him by the side of Pharaoh's palace. He was loved and respected by the Egyptians more than the Jews.
- C. Ezekiel was killed by the chief of the Jews in the land of the Chaldeans, because he rebuked him for worshiping idols. He was buried in the grave of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah.
- D. Daniel died of old age in Elam in Babylon and was buried in Shushan fortress.
- E. Hosea died in peace, and was buried in his own land.
- F. Joel the son of Bethuel was struck by Ahaziah the son of Amaziah with a staff on his head; and while his life was yet in him, they brought him to his own land, and after two days he died.
- G. Amos was tortured by the priest of Bethel who afterwards killed him.
- H. Obadiah became a disciple of Elijah and was persecuted by Ahab, because he forsook the king's service and went with Elijah. He later died alone of old age.

- I. Jonah the son of Amittai was from Gath. He died two years after Judah returned from Babylon, and was buried in the cave of Kainân.
- J. Micah the Moreshite was killed by Joram the son of Ahab.
- K. Nahum died in peace, and was buried in his own country.
- L. Habakkuk was killed by Jews who stoned him in the streets of Jerusalem.
- M. Zephaniah died in peace in his own land.
- N. Haggai died in peace in Judah.
- O. Zechariah died as a very old man and was buried by Haggai.
- P. Malachi died in peace in his own land.
- Q. Elijah, son of Shôbâkh of Tishbae, was taken up in a chariot to heaven.
- R. Elisha died in peace but was buried in in obscurity in Samaria.
- S. Nathan died in peace.
- T. Ahijah was killed by a lion, and he was buried under an oak at Shilo in Samaria.
- U. Ezra died in peace in his own land.
- V. Zechariah the son of Berachiah the priest was killed by Joash the king between the top of steps to the altar and the altar itself, and Joash sprinkled his blood on the horns of the altar, and the priests buried him. From that day God forsook the temple, and angels were never again seen in it.

Conclusion:

A. 1Peter 1:10-12; 2Chron. 20:14-22