- **Prophet**: A human being who speaks for God, usually as a result of a divine call and sometimes (not always) exhibiting extravagant behavior (Isaiah 20:1-6) or abnormal psychological states (ecstasy)
- How to know a message is from God? How to recognize the genuine Prophet?
  - 1. Deut. 18: 21-22 If the prophecy does <u>not</u> happen, the prophet is false...
  - 2. Deut. 13: 1-4 If the prophecy does <u>not</u> conform to the Bible's message, the prophet is false, even if the things prophesied <u>do</u> happen.
- **Prophet**: 1. has an immediate experience of God
  - 2. has had the holiness and will of God revealed to him or her
  - 3. contemplates the present and the future through the eyes of God
  - 4. sent (by God) to remind men of their duty to God and to bring them back to obedience and love
    - => a providential instrument of God for guidance of His people
    - => Moses, the Father of Prophets; spoke to God face-to-face and delivered the Law (Deut 34:10-12)
  - 5. Prophets intervene in times of crisis preceding or accompanying major turning points of the nation's history—message not for the king but for the <u>people</u> and since the message is of general interest, it was written down and disseminated; it survives.
- Major messages of Prophets:
  - 1. **Monotheism** => Besides Jehovah, Lord of the Universe, there is no room for other Gods
    - => God is transcendent...Holy...wrapped in mystery...and yet near
  - 2. **Morality** => God is pure holiness; human beings are unclean
    - => Sin is what divides humanity from God
    - => As sin is national and collective, so too must be punishment
    - => One who is to escape punishment for sins must seek God, which means observing God's Law, pursuing what is right, practicing humility...religion must be of the heart
  - 3. **Future Salvation** => punishment is not the end
    - => in the future, God's people (the remnant) will enjoy happiness unlike any they have ever known
    - => the future will be characterized by the kingship of God—virtue & holiness; new mode of life & forgiveness; true knowledge of God; peace & joy

- => God's "Anointed One" (the Messiah) will establish the kingdom and govern—God's earthly representative; his adopted son and loyal servant; the ideal earthly ruler = "God With Us" = Emmanuel (Is 7:14)... "The Lord Is Our Saving Justice" (Jer 23:6)
- => but God's Messiah will <u>also</u> be humble and pacific (peaceable)—God's instrument for liberating His people; servant of God; teacher of people; light of the nations; preaching in humility; despised and rejected by his own, <u>but</u> winning their salvation at the price of his own life

## •Prophetic Books:

- 1. => Prophetic sayings—God's word or the Prophet's word in God's name
  - => Narratives—first person: Prophet's experience told in the Prophet's words
  - => Narratives—third person: The Prophet's experience told by others
- 2. => Major Prophets (longer books, 5 total: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel)
  - => Minor Prophets (shorter books, 12 total: Hosea to Malachi)

**Isaiah** • Bible in miniature: Bible = 66 books OT = 39 books NT = 27 books Isaiah = 66 chapters 39 chapters / OT-like 27 chapters / NT-like

• Record of a Prophet's call: Isaiah 5:1 to 6:8

• Two great messages: Isaiah 40-46: **Do not be afraid**I am Jehovah and there is no other

• The Servant Songs: 1. Isaiah 42:1ff

2. Isaiah 49:1ff

3. Isaiah 50:4ff

4. Isaiah 52:13ff

and the clearest picture of Jesus in Scripture: Isaiah 53 (connection to Ethiopian Eunuch)

• Theme: Fear and life beyond fear

Jeremiah • Weeping Prophet—watched the destruction of Judah, helpless to change it

Key passages: 2:5, 11-13, 19 Exchange Glory of God for nothing 9:22-25 Circumcise your hearts

18:6-12 Clay in the potter's hands

30:12-13, 15, 17-19 God says: "You cannot be healed, but I will heal you" 31: 31-34 The new covenant (connect to other covenants of OT)

• How bad was it: 15:1 compare Ezek 14:14, 16, 18, 20

• Watch for connection between Jeremiah and Josiah, king of Judah

#### Lamentations

• 3:22-24 "When you come to the place that He's all you have, you'll find that He's all you need"

# • Set during the Exile; Ezekiel was a priest ministering to the exiles in Babylon; focus on **God's Glory**

• Visions: 1-3 chariots and scrolls

8-11: sin & punishment (God's Glory departs from the Temple)

37 dry bones (can they live again?)

40-48 Temple & Temple worship (God's Glory returns)

• Watchmen: 3:16-21 / 33:1-9

• The wonderful plan: 36:22-27 That they may know that I am God

## Daniel • Faithfulness in the face of oppression and threats of death

• Major events / visions:

Boys' faithfulness in a strange land
Faithfulness in the shadow of the fiery furnace
Faithfulness through the lions' den
chap 3
chap 6

=> Faithfulness rewarded—Daniel sees the future chap 9; Prediction of Messiah;

70 weeks

#### Hosea

- Hosea is a young preacher (prophet)
- => his bride, whom he loves, deserts him and becomes a prostitute (maybe a temple prostitute)
- => his love for her remains
- => he will punish her—but with the purpose to win her back to the joy of their first love
- In his grief, the young preacher sees something he had never seen before—his love for his wife and his grief over her unfaithfulness is a metaphor for God's love for His people and His grief over their unfaithfulness
- Sin is breaking God's Law, yes, but much more, sin means breaking God's heart
- Two major metaphors:
  - 1. Our relationship to God is like that of wife to husband, and sin is to our relationship to God what adultery/unfaithfulness is to a marriage relationship (introduced in chap 1)
  - 2. Our relationship to God is like that of child to parent, and sin is to our relationship to God what disobedience/rebellion is to a family relationship (introduced in chap 11)

• A plague of locusts occurs and in it the Prophet sees a metaphor of the Day of the Lord, a day of vengeance and judgment (1:15-16; 2:1-6)

- but he also sees a call to repentance and recommitment (2:11b-13)
- but above all, he sees a new day of salvation for those who love the Lord, especially 3:1-5, quoted in Acts 2:17-21; Pentecost fulfilled this.
- Amos Prophet to Israel (northern kingdom) in its golden age—but Amos saw what God saw: => social injustice; corruption; empty religion and he came with two messages: => seek God or perish; seek good or perish
  - Introduction—condemnation of nations---closing in on Israel (chap 1-2) Book of Words—three sermons: chap 3; chap 4; chaps 5-6 Book of Visions: chaps 7ff
  - Theme: God is the Lord of History

**Obadiah** • Abraham---Isaac---Esau & Jacob: Esau is Edom

• Condemnation of Edom for taking advantage of Jerusalem/Judah in her time of woe

**Jonah** • The Reluctant Prophet

• God cares for all people 4:10-11

• Ninevah (Assyria) is judged, but they repent and God relents

**Micah •** God's standard: Micah 6:6-8

• see also: 1 Sam 15:22 Amos 5:21-24 Deut. 10-12-13, 16-17 Hosea 6:6 Psalm 40:6-11 James 4:5-10 => Isaiah 57:15 Isaiah 1:11-18 Isaiah 30:15 => Jer. 17:5-8 => Psalm 1

15a1a11 1.11-10 15a1a11 50.15 => JC1. 17.

Psalm 51:1-4, 10-13, 16-17

and: Isaiah  $58 \Rightarrow$  Worship pleasing to God (58:6-8):

- 1. Worship must give a <u>unifying center</u> to our life => harmony between life at work & life at worship; not independent, not in conflict
- 2. Worship must be accompanied by a consistent life style => <u>informed</u> by God and God's priorities
- 3. Worship must make us <u>sensitive</u> to and <u>aware</u> of human need and <u>then</u> result in acts of compassion responding to that need.

and with <u>this</u> kind of worship (58:8), we will become effective in our <u>influence</u>, <u>testimony</u>, <u>sense of direction</u>, <u>confidence</u>, and <u>prayer life</u>

**Nahum** • Witness to fall of Israel (northern kingdom) to Assyria <u>and</u> of God's delivery of Judah

- Companion book to Jonah; destruction of Ninevah
- God's character has two sides: Father and Judge. Choose Father or face Judge

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### Habakkuk

- Prophet sees coming destruction of Judah by Babylon, and is outraged: How can bad people be punished by worse people?
- Watch & See (chap 1); Stand & See (chap 2); Kneel & See (chap 3)

What does he see?—God's principle for human beings: The Just shall live by Faith (2:4)

## **Zephaniah** • Theme: **The Day of the Lord is Coming**

• The Day of the Lord is terrible for all...except for those who seek him

1:2-18 2:4-3:11 2:1-3 3:12-20

• Seek the Lord and perhaps you will escape: 2:1-3, especially 2:3

see also: Isaiah 55:6-7 2 Chr 15:2 Isaiah 57:15 Amos 5:4,14 Matt 6:23 Deut 30:1-3, 6 Jer 29:13-14 Deut 4:29 Matt 7:7-8

## Haggai & Zechariah

- Focus on **Rebuilding the Temple**
- Haggai => making your priorities right; holiness is not contagious, but uncleanness is—you cannot save someone else (only God can do that), but you <u>can</u> corrupt someone else.
- Zechariah=> visions of the future, and especially of God's Messiah, our Redeemer
- **Malachi** series of units: God speaks, the people reply (often flippantly), and through the Prophet, God teaches a lesson.
  - Lessons: God's love for Israel (1:2-5);

How to honor God (1:6-2:12); Respecting marriage (2:13-16);

Being excited about what God is doing (2:17-3:5);

Investing in what God is doing (3:5-12); God remembers faithful people (3:13-21)