

1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah

The Time Of The Prophets

The Prophets

- In 1 and 2 Chronicles and the rest of the Old Testament the great men are not the kings or the priests, but the prophets because they were always calling the people to repentance and revealing God's will to man.
- When you compare all history and its writings there is nothing that compares to the writings of the prophets of Israel
- These were not perfect men and sometimes far from it, but were chosen by God for a specific purpose by His grace

The Law, The Prophets and The Psalms Categorize the Old Testament

- The Psalms is the general term used for the portion of scripture known as "the writings", i.e. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon
- "Then He (Jesus) said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 **And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.**"--- Luke 24:44-45

The Inspiration of the Prophets

"....we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 **knowing this first**, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."--- 2 Peter 1:19-21

The Role Of The Prophets

- The prophet's job was to call the people back to God and to the truth of God. It involved warning them of the consequences of their actions and a call to repentance. At times it was a message of God's plan for the future of His Kingdom. They were men through whom God spoke His message of love for sinners, and warned them of the consequences of their sins. The heart of their message was God's promise of eternal redemption through the coming of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

The Uniqueness of the Prophets

- They were sent from God. These men claimed to be speaking from God and for God. "Thus says the Lord" (occurs more than 3800 times in the Old Testament) was a clear emphasis of their preaching
- Their message was related to history. It grew out of some historical situation in which they lived. The prophets were messengers of their times. The message can only be understood by seeing it in its original setting. You have to become a student of biblical history to understand Old Testament prophecy.

- Prophecy is not always predictive. There were times when the prophet spoke only to his own generation without any special reference to the future. They warned the nation and its leaders of wrongs that needed to be corrected.
- Prophets did predict the future. These predictions reveal God's purposes of grace to men and ultimate fulfillment in Christ and His kingdom.
- There were conditional predictions, which directly bear upon men's responsibility to action. A good example is Jonah's prediction that Nineveh would be destroyed in forty days.

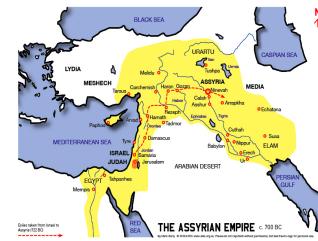
- All prophecy is centered in Christ. It is a testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev. 19:10). He is at the center of prophecy because He is the central theme of all the Scriptures.
- When reading prophecy in scripture also keep in mind the restoration of the Jewish people and the promises made directly to them.
- The interpretation of prophecy needs to seek the literal and natural meaning of the words. Seek the plain teaching of the passage in light of its context and historical setting.

Classification Of The Prophets

- The Major Writing Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.
- The Minor Writing Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
- The Oral Prophets: Over 38 Including, Enoch, Balaam, Ahijah, Shemaiah, Azariah, Elijah, Elisha, etc.

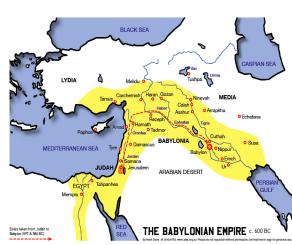
The Northern Kingdom of Israel's Downfall was 734-722 BC

- The Prophets during this period and who they addressed their message to were:
- Joel: Judah
- Jonah: Nineveh
- Amos: Israel
- Hosea: Israel
- Isaiah: Judah
- Micah: Judah



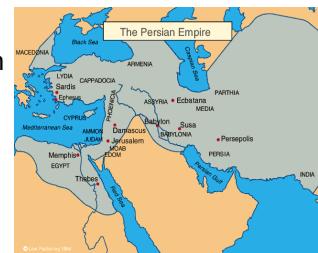
The Southern Kingdom of Judah's Downfall was 606-586 BC

- The Prophets during this period and who they addressed their message to were:
- Jeremiah: Judah
- Ezekiel: Babylon
- Daniel: Babylon
- Obadiah: Edom
- Nahum: Nineveh
- Habakkuk: Judah
- Zephaniah: Judah



The Restoration Period

- The Prophets during this period and who they addressed their message to were:
- Haggai: Judah
- Zechariah: Judah
- Malachi: Judah



The False Gods of Israel

- Baal-worship:
Worshiped in the high places, name means lord, involved self-mutilation, child sacrifice, sexual ritual



- Worship of Molech included people burning their own children to death in fire, often by placing them in the arms of a hollow metal idol of Molech that had been heated very hot with a fire burning inside.



- Ashtoreth was the goddess of war and fertility, called Ishtar by Assyrians and Babylonians. Molech or Baal represented the male principle of life and reproduction. In ancient Phoenicia, Canaan, Mesopotamia and Babylon, these gods were worshiped by ritual temple prostitution involving sodomy and burning infant children in the fire.

The Discovery Of The Word Of God

"Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, "**I have found the Book of the Law** in the house of the LORD."...Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes..... "Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, **because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book.**" 2 Chron. 34:15,19,21

"Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and **they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses**, which the LORD had commanded Israel...the ears of **all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law**...And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, **for the Joy of the LORD is your strength.**" So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved." And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, **because they understood the words that were declared to them.**" (Nehemiah 8)

The Word of God is Essential To Knowing The Difference between Truth and Tradition

He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God" then he need not honor his father or mother.' **Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.**---Matt 15:3-6

Ezra The Scribe

After Judah is carried away captive to remain enslaved for 70 years, a remnant is allowed to return. Ezra is a scribe used of the Lord to record the history of the returning remnant of Judah to Jerusalem to rebuild the land and the temple. The captives return and amidst much opposition they succeed in rebuilding the temple and dedicating it to the Lord.

Cyrus the Great



Cyrus' tomb in Iran

The Cyrus Cylinder

The text of the cylinder denounces the deposed Babylonian king Nabonidus as impious and portrays Cyrus as pleasing to the chief god Marduk. It goes on to describe how Cyrus had improved the lives of the citizens of Babylon, returned displaced peoples and restored temples and cult sanctuaries. Although not mentioned in the text, the returning of the Jews from their "Babylonian Captivity" was part of this policy.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great

Cyrus Cylinder

"...I am Cyrus. King of the world. When I entered Babylon...I did not allow anyone to terrorize the land...I kept in view the needs of the people and all its sanctuaries to promote their well-being...I put an end to their misfortune. The Great God has delivered all the lands into my hand; the lands that I have made to dwell in a peaceful habitation..."

According to the cuneiform on the Cyrus Cylinder, he was favored by Marduk and the other gods who wanted Nabonidus and Belshazzar dethroned and who assisted him in his quest. He reestablished their religious practices and was a very benevolent and liberal ruler. He was responsible for the return of the Jews to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of their temple.

Nehemiah The Governor

- At the time of the return of the captives back to Judah and Jerusalem, Nehemiah leads the efforts to rebuild the broken walls and fortifications of the city. As the rebuilding begins so does the opposition. However, the remnant persists and finishes the walls. For the first time in years the Feast of Tabernacles is observed as the Law of God is read and the people confess their wickedness.