

How We Got The Bible

Understanding the Process
& History of the
Canonization of the Bible

Part V

The Prophets

Dating Debate

Most of the Bible's prophetic literature centers around the event of the Exile. The dating of the prophecies is determined by the Babylonian monarchies. The challenge is that the Babylonian Kings adopted the names of their predecessors without dynastic numbering, i.e. Henry the IV, VIII, etc. which makes dating difficult

Dating Debate

There is a debate on the dating of prophetic work between scholars and traditionalists/fundamentalists.

MAJOR EVENT

Scholars: Dating must be post-event

Traditionalists: Dating can be pre-event

Amos

There is relatively very little that we know about Amos:

- ✓ Prophesied during the reign of Uzziah (745-737 BC)
- ✓ Born in Judah but prophesied in Israel
- ✓ Mostly poems written to warn the North of the need to reform before their impending doom

Hosea

- ✓ Prophesied during the reign of king Menahem (745-737 BC)
- ✓ Hosea is taken through a personal experience to inform his prophetic words of warning to Israel about their unfaithfulness and God's undying love for them

Isaiah

Isaiah is the most complex and difficult prophecy to deal with.

- ✓ Isaiah's prophecy spans an incredible amount of time from pre-exile (740BC), into Exile, to the advent of the Cyrus who would overthrow Babylon (500BC)

Isaiah

- ✓ Given the span of writing and the different themes, tones, and theologies of the book, scholars believe that Isaiah was written by two possibly three authors
 - ✓ Beginning: Jerusalem is the holy city that God will protect
 - ✓ End: The cities of Judah are desolate and the Temple lies in ruins
 - ✓ Transitions from: Confrontation about sin with the assurance of salvation to Messianic promises of deliverance

Isaiah

First Isaiah (chapters 1-39): written to Judah while Assyria is threatening Israel (~700BC)

- ✓ Chapters 33-39 are taken/similar to II Kings 18-20

Second Isaiah (chapters 40-66/ Third: 56-66): written during the time and to those in Exiles

- ✓ Promise of deliverance and God's salvation
- ✓ Rich in Messianic prophecies

Micah

Very little is known about Micah.

- ✓ Born in Judah – Prophesied to Judah and Israel
- ✓ Contemporary of Isaiah
- ✓ Threats of judgment and promises of deliverance
- ✓ Announces the birth place of the Christ

Zephaniah

Little is known about Zephaniah

- ✓ Descendant of Hezekiah
- ✓ Prophesied during the reign of Josiah before Josiah's religious reforms in Judah
- ✓ Threats of judgment, call to repentance, woe to the unrepentant, only a remnant would escape, promise of future glory
- ✓ Disturbed mainly by the corruption in worship

Nahum

Nahum was a disciple of the prophet Joel and a mentor to Habakkuk

- ✓ Prophecies about the destruction of Ninevah
- ✓ Regarded by some as a sequel to Jonah

Habakkuk

Dating for Habakkuk is uncertain.

- ✓ Prophesied during the rise of Nebuchadnezzar
- ✓ Ends with a psalm and promise to rejoice
- ✓ Deep *theodicy* issues raised:
 - ✓ The perplexity of unpunished evil
 - ✓ Why do bad things happen to good people?
 - ✓ How can God use the wicked to punish the righteous?
 - ✓ Will evil and violence continue forever?

Ezekiel

Ezekiel was taken into Exile with the other captives and prophesied there

- ✓ Eyewitness to the fall and destruction of Jerusalem
- ✓ Divided into three sections: Ezekiel's call and preparation (1-3); warnings against Judah's unfaithfulness (4-32); promises about the restoration of Judah's glory (33-48)

The Importance of Context

- Awareness of historical context not only aides in interpretation but also prevents scripture twisting (II Peter 3:14-17)
- Allows us to see the world behind the scriptures and the events that inspired their writings
- Shapes our apologetics or defense of our understanding of the authority of the Bible

Saul *v.* David