

How We Got The Bible

Understanding the Process
& History of the
Canonization of the Bible

Part VI

The Prophets

Ezekiel

Ezekiel was taken into Exile with the other captives and prophesied from 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)

Jeremiah

Jeremiah, rivaled only by Isaiah, was also known as the weeping prophet

- ✓ Warned Judah about its apostasy and forthcoming judgment
- ✓ Witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile, but remained in Jerusalem
- ✓ Rejected by neighbors (11), family (12), priests, prophets and friends (20), people (26), king (36)
- ✓ Written and revised by Jeremiah and/or dictated to Baruch (Jer. 36:32)

Jeremiah

- ✓ References, quotes, uses many phrases, quotes, and images from Deuteronomy leading many to believe that he was the author/editor/redactor of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings

Lamentations

Also written by Jeremiah (II Chrn. 35:25). It is the sequel to his prophecy and is a series of acrostic poetic dirges portraying and reflecting on the capture and destruction of Jerusalem

Chapters 1,2,4&5 have 22 verses following the Hebrew Alphabet

Chapter 3 has a three verse acrostic structure

Obadiah

Nothing is known about Obadiah's background

- ✓ A condemnation of the Edomites for ravaging Jerusalem after its fall in 586
- ✓ The Edomites were the descendants of Esau who hated Israel because of Jacobs' trickery (Gen 25)
- ✓ The Edomites had refused Israel passage through their lands (Num. 20)
- ✓ The Edomites rejoiced over Israel's capture (Ps. 137)

Haggai

Born in Exile and return to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel, contemporary of Zechariah and Malachi

Chastises the returning exiles for being more concerned with their personal affairs than the rebuilding of the Temple

Encourages them when they are depressed about the inferiority of their work

Zechariah

A contemporary of Haggai and Malachi who joined in the efforts to rebuild the temple

- ✓ Records 8 prolific visions
- ✓ Prophecies more about the Messiah than Haggai and Malachi – chapters 9,12,13

Malachi

Probably a contemporary of Nehemiah

- ✓ Highlights the reforms needed to prepare the way for the Messiah
- ✓ Dialogical structure:
 - ✓ Chapters 1-3: “Ye Say” v. “Thus saith Jehovah”
 - ✓ Chapters 1,2 – Ungrateful people and unfaithful priests
 - ✓ Chapters 3,4 – God’s glorious promises
- ✓ Ends the prophetic period of the OT

Joel

Nothing is known about Joel

- ✓ Written and addressed to those after the Exile
- ✓ Interprets a plague of locusts as a warning of the coming invasion of Judah's enemies in response to unrepentant sin
- ✓ Prophecies about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh

Daniel

An exile who gained the favor of Nebuchadnezzar and was trained in Babylon yet maintained his spiritual life.

Traditionally the prophesy of Daniel is divided into two sections:

- I. The six moral conflicts of Daniel and his companions
- II. Apocalyptic visions

Six Moral Conflicts in Daniel 1-6

1. Self-Indulgence v. Abstinence (1)
2. Magic/Science v. Heavenly Wisdom (2)
3. Idolatry v. Loyalty to God (3)
4. Arrogance v. Sovereignty (4)
5. Sacrilege v. Reverence (5)
6. Malicious Plotting v. Providence (6)

Apocalyptic

Apocalyptic literature focuses on both the end time victory of God over all Satanic and worldly powers and uses deep imagery and metaphor to veil its contemporary rebellious undertones (Revelation of John)

- ✓ Sovereignty of God
- ✓ Battle and destruction of other powers
- ✓ Numerology and animal imagery
- ✓ Promises to the faithful

Jonah

- ✓ Dating is uncertain, believed to be a disciple of Elisha who lived around 850 BC
- ✓ Some scholars argue that Jonah is not a real story about a real person but rather a parable
- ✓ Raises the issue of *hermeneutics* = interpretation of the Bible

Hermeneutics

How the Bible is/can be interpreted:

- Literal: Things happened exactly as the Bible describes
 - Notable exceptions: parables, poetry, clear metaphors
- Figurative: The events and people are not always historical but the reflections of fallible writers promoting their religious beliefs

Hermeneutics

Four steps for proper interpretation

1. **Observation:** What are the facts of the passage, e.g. dates, definition of words, context, etc.?
2. **Interpretation:** What was the original intent and message of the author to those for whom the passage was written?
3. **Evaluation:** What does the passage mean/speak to our world today?
4. **Application:** What does the passage say to my personal life?

