

“The Scriptures of the Prophets”
Matthew 26:56

“The Old Testament concludes with seventeen books of prophecy, beginning with Isaiah. These represent the ministries of sixteen men of God who warned, exhorted, and encouraged a divided Israel and Judah in the troubled four hundred year period of their decline, downfall, exile, and restoration.” (Harold L. Willmington)

Event or Person(s)	Date(s)	Historical Record
Israel and Judah Divide	931 BC	1 Kings 12
Elijah and Elisha (Major Non-writing Prophets)	875-800 BC	1 Kings 17—2 Kings 13
The Sixteen Writing Prophets (Isaiah—Malachi)	850-450 BC	2 Kings 8—Nehemiah

The Chronology of the Scriptures of the Prophets – Before the Captivities

1. Obadiah (850-840 BC)
 - a. Obadiah preached about the coming judgment of the Edomites, who were the descendants of Esau who was related to Israel.
 - b. Obadiah was the earliest writing prophet of the Old Testament.
2. Joel (835-796 BC)
 - a. Joel preached to the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
 - b. Joel prophesied of a devastation, a tribulation, and a future restoration.
3. Jonah (790-760 BC)
 - a. Jonah was from the Northern Kingdom.
 - b. God sent him to Nineveh, which was the capital of Assyria, to preach repentance to the nation that would in thirty years conquer his homeland.
4. Amos (760-750 BC)
 - a. Toward the end of Jeroboam’s reign, God called Amos, from the Southern Kingdom, to head north with a message of exhortation and judgment for Israel.
 - b. Amos was the only prophet called from one part of the divided kingdom to prophecy in the other part.
5. Hosea (760-720 BC)
 - a. Hosea warned the Northern Kingdom of the coming judgment.
 - b. His ministry ended two years after the fall of the Northern Kingdom.
6. Isaiah (740-690 BC)
 - a. Isaiah warned the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of the coming judgment.
 - b. Isaiah preached mainly from Jerusalem.
7. Micah (740-690 BC)

- a. Micah would preach to the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.
- b. Micah was from the Southern Kingdom.

The Fall of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) to Assyria – 722 BC

2 Kings 15:29, 17:3-6, 18-23, 18:9-12

- 8. Nahum (630-612 BC)
 - a. Nahum would proclaim God’s final judgment against Nineveh by the Babylonians.
 - b. Nahum and Obadiah were the only prophets who pronounced doom on a pagan nation without also mentioning the sins of Israel.
- 9. Zephaniah (632-621 BC)
 - a. Zephaniah’s ministry occurred during the reign of Josiah.
 - b. Zephaniah preached about the invasion of Babylon into the Southern Kingdom and the coming “day of the LORD”.
- 10. Habakkuk (612-605 BC)
 - a. Habakkuk preaches about the coming judgment for Judah and Babylon.
 - b. Habakkuk is the only Old Testament book that consists entirely of a dialogue between God and a human individual.
 - c. Habakkuk and Jeremiah were the last prophets to the Southern Kingdom before the Babylonian captivity.
- 11. Jeremiah (627-580 BC)
 - a. Jeremiah would warn the Southern Kingdom of the coming judgment.
 - b. Jeremiah preached mainly from Jerusalem.

The Fall of the Southern Kingdom (Judah) to Babylon – Exile in 586 BC

II Kings 23:27, 24:1-4, 7, 10-16, 25:1-30, II Chronicles 36:14-23

- 12. Lamentations (586 BC)
 - a. Jeremiah laments the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.
 - b. This was recorded soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.
- 13. Ezekiel (592-570 BC)
 - a. Ezekiel would preach to the exiles from the Southern Kingdom in Babylon.
 - b. Ezekiel’s ministry in Babylon overlapped the last part of Jeremiah’s in Jerusalem.
- 14. Daniel (580-536 BC)
 - a. When Nebuchadnezzar raided Jerusalem in 605 BC, he took Daniel and many other captives back to Babylon.
 - b. The book of Daniel records Daniel’s ministry during the reigns of the Babylonian kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, and the first years of the Persian rulers Darius and Cyrus.

First Return of Exiles from Babylon – 538 BC

- 15. Haggai (520 BC)
 - a. God raised up Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the Jews in the rebuilding of Jerusalem shortly after the first group of Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity.
 - b. Haggai and Zechariah are named by Ezra. (Ezra 5:1, 6:14)

16. Zechariah (520-480 BC)

- a. Zechariah was a priest as well as a prophet that encouraged the Jews in the rebuilding of Jerusalem.
- b. Zechariah would be a martyr for the Lord. (Matthew 23:35)

Second and Third Returns from Babylon – 457 and 445 BC

17. Malachi (430 BC)

- a. After the second and third return of Jews to Jerusalem, and the great revival under the ministry of Nehemiah, Jerusalem's spiritual condition began to decay. Malachi rebukes the lukewarm Jews to not profane that which is holy.
- b. Malachi records more questions than any other book in the Bible.
- c. Example: "*Will a man rob God?*"

Notes Taken From:

Willmington, Harold L. *Willmington's Bible Handbook*. Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1997.