

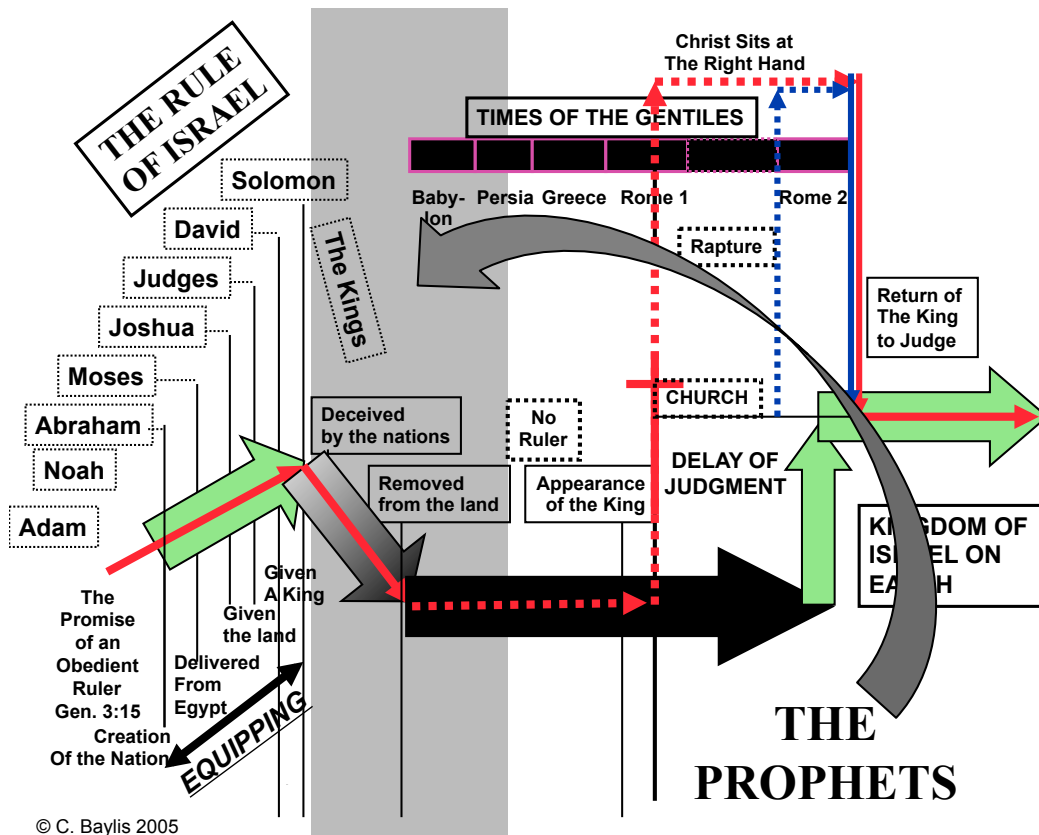
## THE PROPHETS

### **Pronouncing the Death of Israel**

### **The Prophets in the Biblical Plot**

Probably the most important thing to remember when studying the prophets is that they are a part of a larger narrative. The larger canonical story covers God's plot from Genesis to Revelation. However, the prophets themselves are not in the form of story (with the exception of Jonah) and are not the story plot itself. The prophets are in addition to the story proper, the sequence of which is found in the historical literature, Joshua to 2 Kings. They must fit into their respective place with the Biblical narrative. Without attaching them to the particular, specific place in the narrative, errors will likely ensue.

One of the greatest hermeneutical errors comes due to the fact that people approach the Scriptures and assume that reading a part is applicable for all time. However, just like in a play, each section or character of the plot enters the story, contributes a part, and then leaves.



As a group the prophets generally fit into the time of the kings in Israel. The Davidic King was supposed to be the leader in Israel, one who represented God to the people and exhorted them to follow God and the covenant. The priest's office, different than the king's, administered the sacerdotal functions. These regarded the peoples' approach to God, while the King administered the leadership of the nation regarding the covenant and its exercise. He was the speaker for God and His revelation. The prophet was introduced because the king had failed to act on the revelation of God, and the prophet would step in on behalf of God and call the king to repentance. This was almost the sole function of the prophet during the narrative literature that spans from 1 Samuel to 2 Kings. Samuel, as a prophet, rebuked Saul, Nathan rebuked David, the unnamed prophet rebuked Jeroboam, Elijah and Elisha confronted Ahab and his sons, Isaiah corrected Ahaz and Hezekiah, etc. Thus, in the narrative to which these prophets belong, they were typically approaching the king and the king was to repent and lead the people to follow him in repentance and restoration.

Now it is important to note that the Prophets are not written to obtain the repentance of the exact group of people to whom the prophet speaks within the book. Isaiah, for instance, records his own ministry to Ahaz and Hezekiah who both rejected God. Thus the Book of Isaiah is not written to Ahaz or Hezekiah or even the people of their day. The Book of Isaiah records his ministry, and the rejection of the kings, which was past when the book was written. Jeremiah is also a record of his ministry to Jerusalem. And as the book itself testifies, that ministry was over by the time the book was written. Thus the recipients of the book are not those to whom the prophet approached in the book, but to subsequent people who could read God's documented case against Israel and respond in repentance and the hope of a return to YHWH, His city and His nation.

In other words, the prophets tell the story of the call to repentance of a king or group within the Biblical story. It is written, not to the people who were addressed by the prophet in the story within the book, but to a subsequent people who would read the history of the prophet, the call to repentance, the rejection, and the subsequent prophecy of hope in the last days.

### **Torah (Genesis to Deuteronomy) as the Basis for the Prophet's Cry**

Having recognized that "The Prophets" record activities during the narrative that sequences between Kings and Nehemiah, it is very important to recognize in what part of the plot these prophets occur. God had placed His Davidic Kings on the throne to represent Him and one by one Satan had deceived them to reject God. Due to the disobedience of Solomon the kingdom was divided to the north (Israel) and to the south (Judah). The prophets entered the scene to call the kings of Judah, the Davidic (and Israel non-Davidic) kings to reject the deceit of Satan and follow God. The basis on



Thus when the prophet speaks he does not simply tell Israel to behave. He goes back to the covenant and recites their violations and implements the exact curses that were promised by God. The prophet introduced very little that was new. He simply took the philosophy of God's character revealed in Covenant found in the Pentateuch and applied it to the king and the nation.

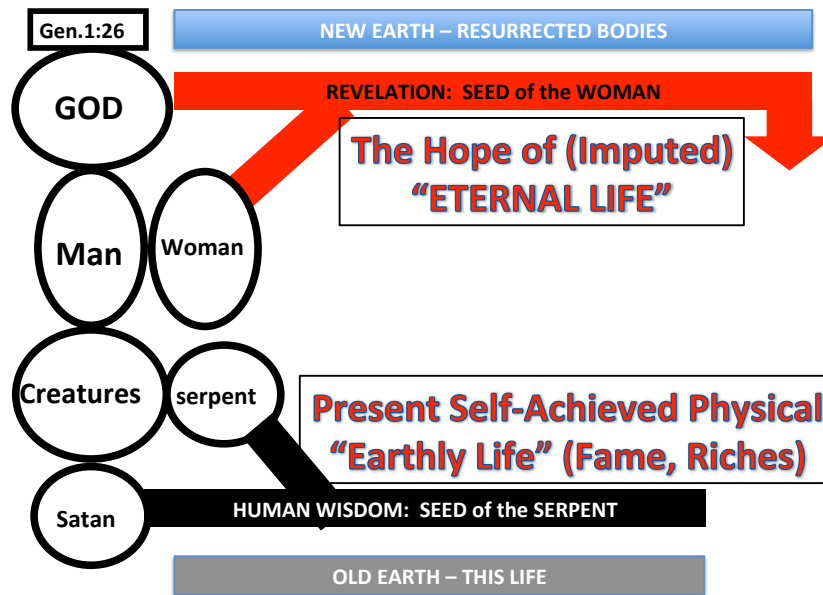
Thus, one cannot analyze the prophets without knowing *Torah*, particularly Deuteronomy, and its foundation for the words of the prophet. The prophetic office began basically with Moses and continued through (and after) the appearance of the Christ. The appearance of the prophets is not over when Malachi speaks his last word. Another will appear. A man named John the Baptist who will also cry out for the nation to repent. He will also reference the covenant as the last prophet before Messiah appears. And Messiah, the Greatest Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15), will also call on the covenant as He cries for the nation to repent. Yet He will do more than that. He will fulfill the character required by the covenant, as the nation never could.

The Covenant, the Pentateuch, while requiring the character of God, prophesied that ultimately that character would appear in Messiah. Thus it is important to know the covenant to understand the Prophets, but even more than that it is important to know so one can recognize Messiah when He appears.

The covenant was made to identify one Person, the Christ. He alone would keep it fully, and this would identify Him clearly as the One. Everyone else would come short of the requirements and would have to turn to the mercy of God in the coming Christ, pictured in their participation by faith in the sacrifices.

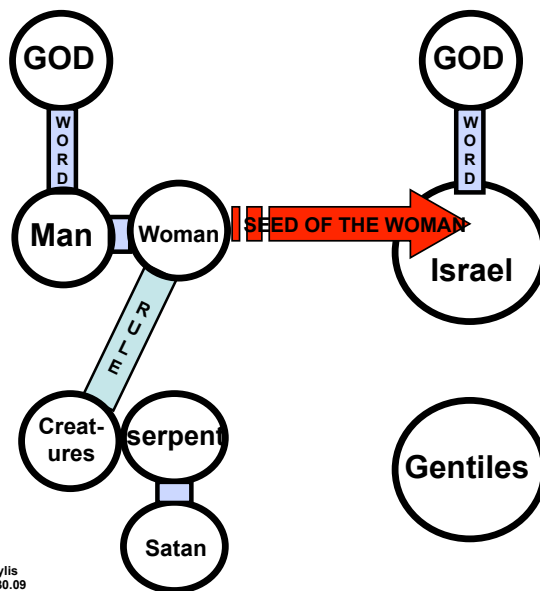
### **Genesis 3:15 as the Promise**

While it cannot be studied in depth here, the sole hope of the nation was the "Seed of the Woman" of Genesis 3:15. Man's character had been condemned in the garden and the hope of a Deliverer had been given, a hope that would give man a new character. It was the only hope of the nation to obey God and represent Him.



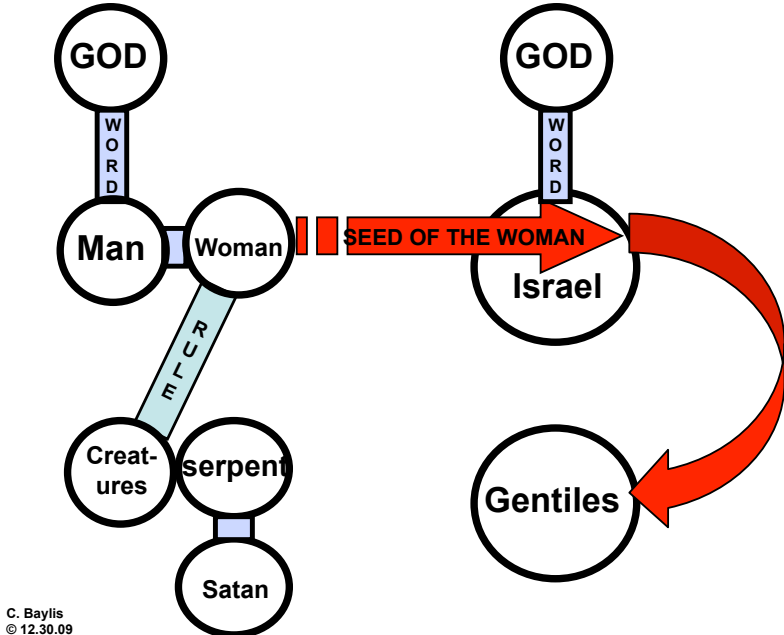
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The Abrahamic Covenant which began in Genesis 12:1-3 required Israel to bring forth the Messiah (and the message). They were to embrace that message themselves (believe as Abraham in Genesis 15:6).

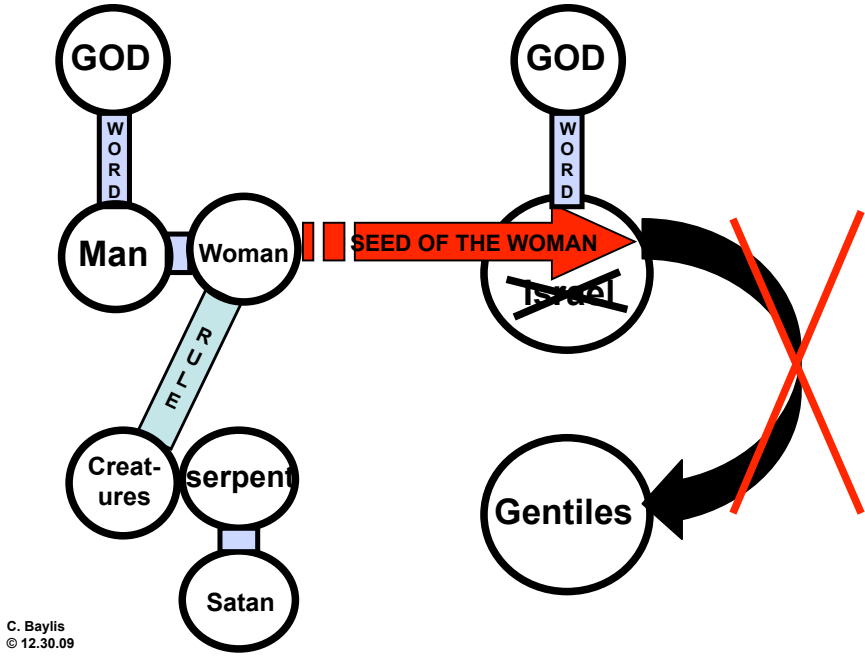


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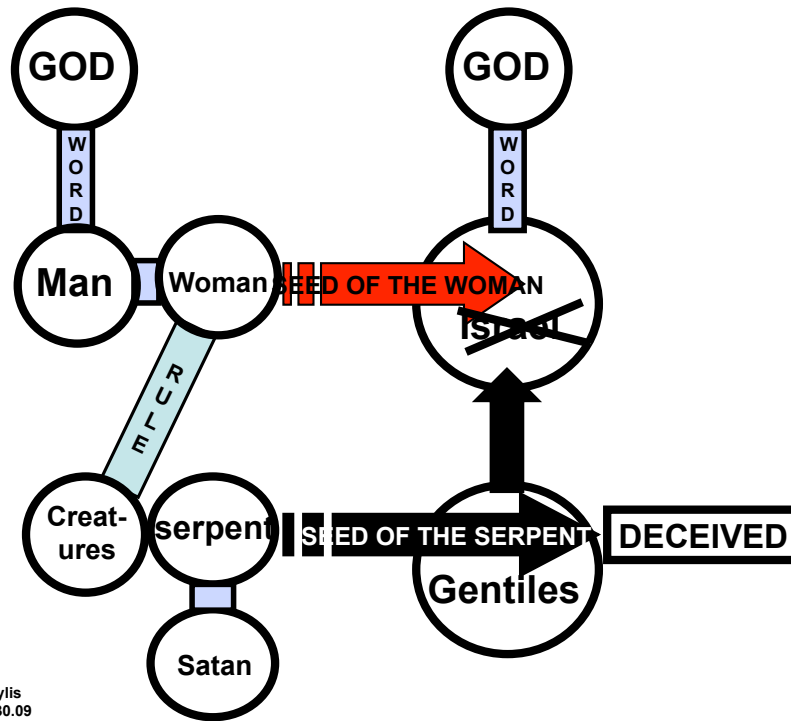
Israel was then to take the message of the Messiah to the Gentiles.



The difficulty was that Israel never received it themselves. Time after time, Israel rejected the promise of the Messiah represented in the sacrifices and purification rituals of the temple. Time after time they committed presumptuous sins, apostasy, the worship of other gods, and abandoned God's provision.

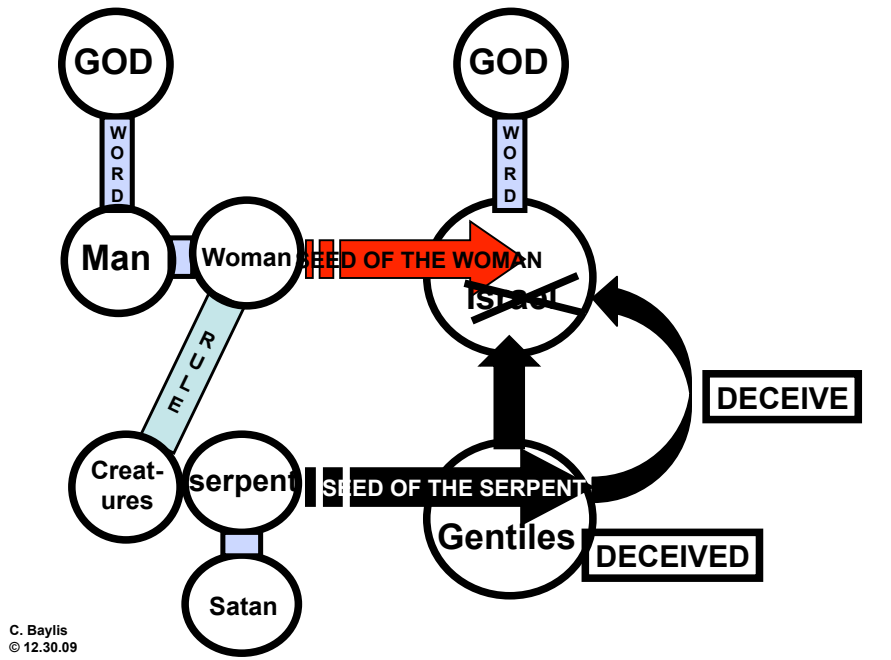


Instead of the Gentiles receiving the message of the “Seed of the Woman,” the Gentiles were deceived by Satan and would in turn influence Israel.



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Because Israel did not receive the “Seed of the woman” to give to the Gentiles, the reverse would happen. Israel would be deceived by the Satanically ruled Gentiles and would embrace their gods, their women, and their evil practices. They would pursue their own works and deeds rather than the hope of Messiah.



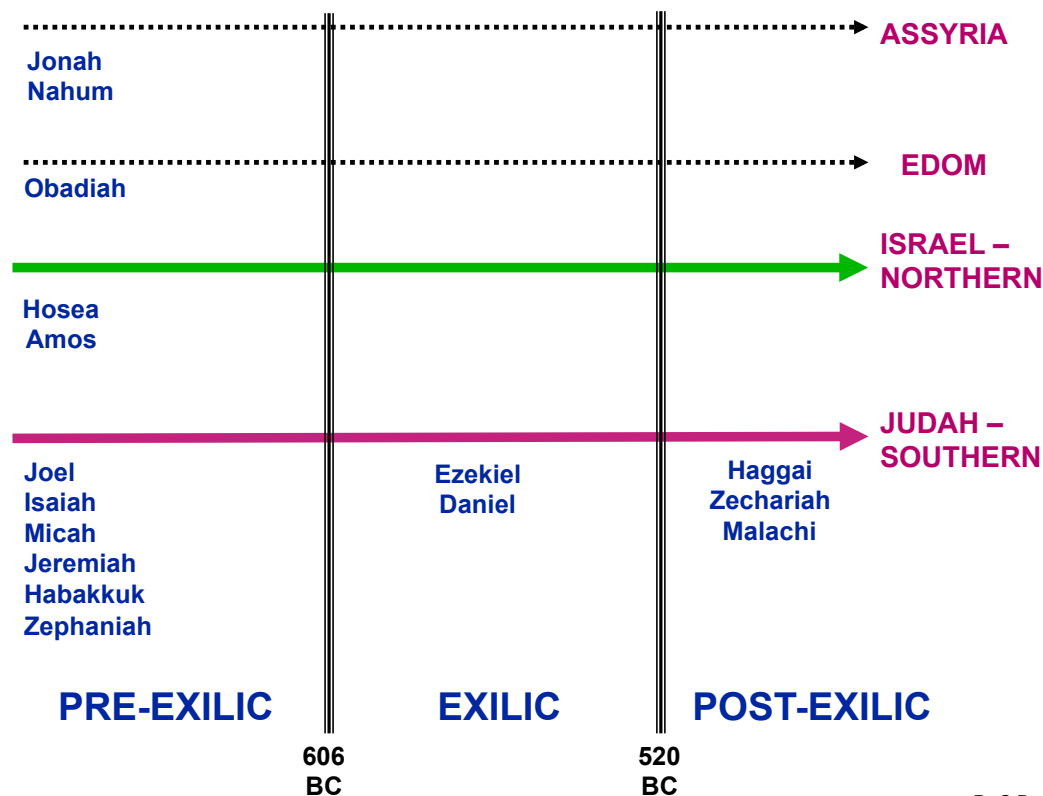
Thus having embraced the Gentiles and their practices, God brought them the judgment of death. He warned Israel to embrace the Seed or they would be sent into exile (pre-exilic prophets). Then having sent them into exile, He would present them with the hope of Messiah's appearance to free them from the dominion of the Gentile rule (Exilic prophets). God would then provide them with a partial return under Cyrus, when they would repeat the sins of Solomon, that is, again embrace the Gentile women, and thus the exile will be continued. Yet they would still have the hope of Messiah's appearance to forgive their sins and return them to the kingdom, destroying the Gentile armies. Yet again, when Messiah finally appeared they rejected Him and continued in exile under Rome. Finally, in the last days Israel will take the message of Messiah to the Gentiles.



### Knowing the Times of the Prophets: Pre-exilic, exilic and post-exilic

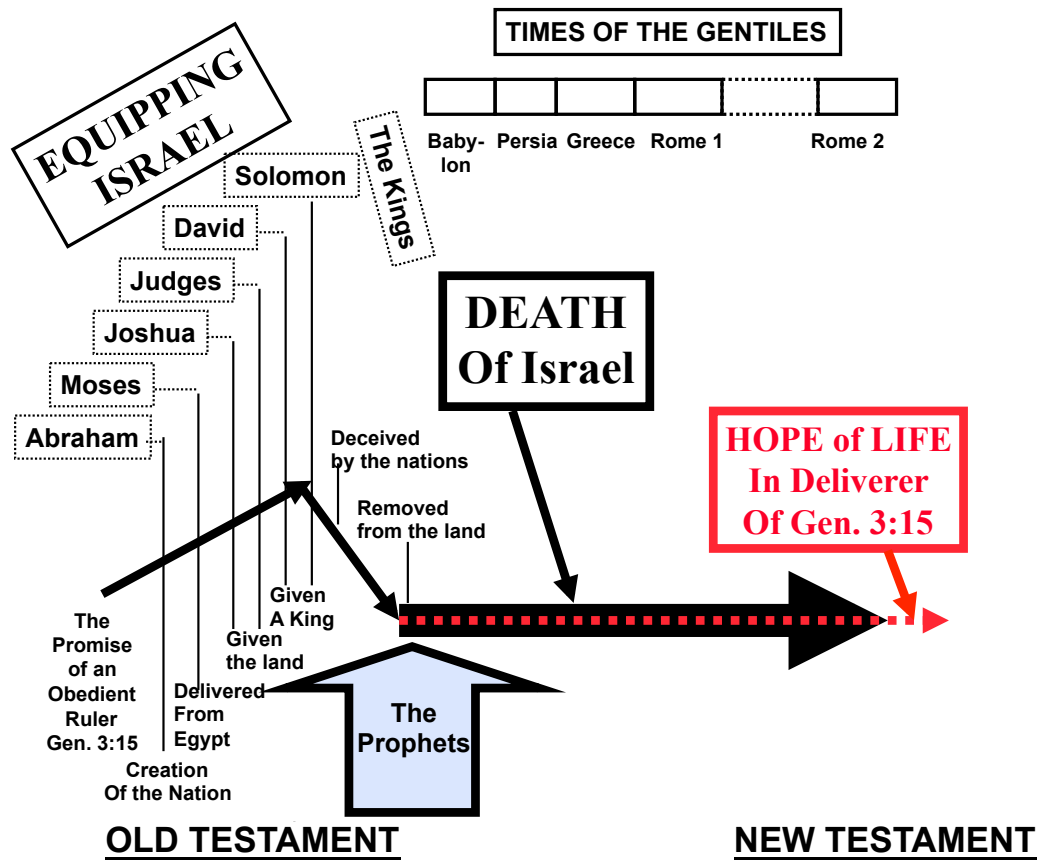
In surveying the prophets, it is necessary to place them into the chronology of the narrative literature of the history of Israel. There are three periods in which the Prophets fall.

- **The pre-exilic (or prior to the exile) prophets:** Prophets who warned Israel and Judah of their soon demise and their need to repent to delay the exile. The prophet also prophesied Israel's rejection and the sure judgment of the exile.
- **The exilic prophets:** Ezekiel and Daniel both prophesied from Babylon. They both prophesied to the exiles in Babylon demonstrating God's justification for the exile and the hope of a future return to the kingdom.
- **The post-exilic prophets** prophesied after Israel had returned to the land (still under Gentile Persian rule) and, in the face of the people's lack of reformation, called them to repent, and then looked for a future repentance of the people under a future King and Kingdom.



### Pronouncing the Death of Israel

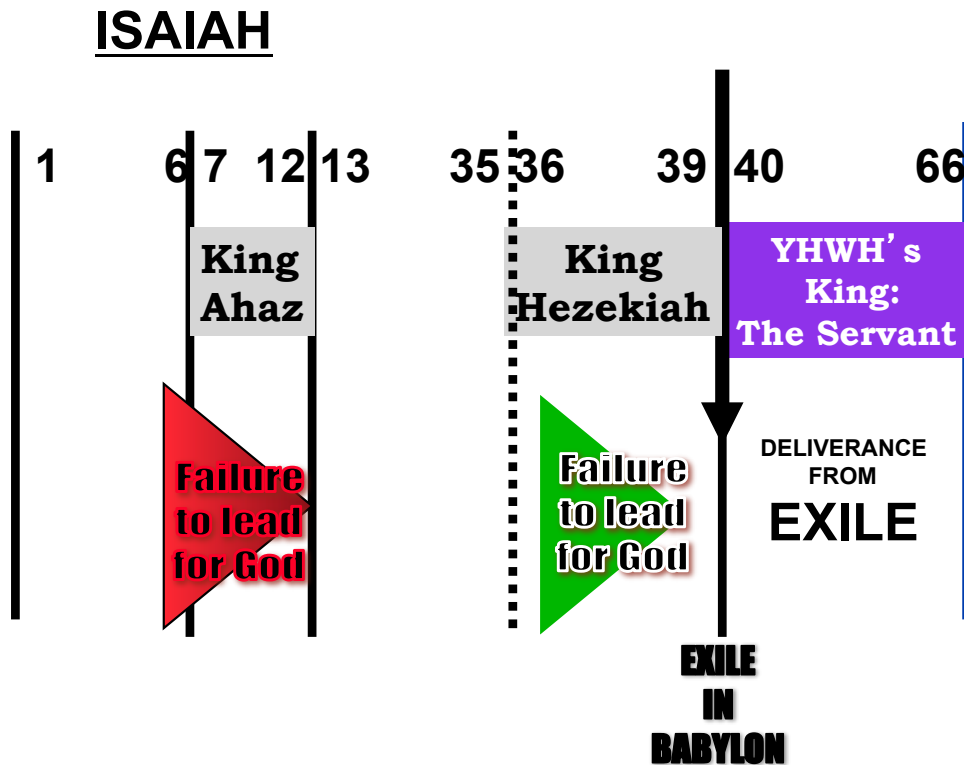
Israel was the national means of representing God according to the Abrahamic Covenant. They were to dominate the Gentiles, ministering to them the hope they had found in Messiah. Yet Israel rejected their covenant and, like Adam was condemned to death and expelled from the garden from which he was to rule, was condemned to death to be expelled from the land from which they were to rule. They would be placed under Gentile rule, which was covenant death. Israel, as the unfaithful wife of YHWH, would fall under the Law, which required the death of an unfaithful wife.



## The Pre-Exilic Prophets

### The Death of Israel Prophesied

#### Isaiah: Looking for an Obedient Davidic Servant King



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The Book is primarily about three Davidic Kings. The first is Ahaz (7—12), the second, Hezekiah (36—39), and the last is ultimate Davidic King, the Servant (40-66). The first section of the book includes the first two kings and is Isaiah's covenant case against Israel led by these two kings and the prophecy of exile for their disobedience. The final section is about the ultimate obedient Servant King. He will serve YHWH even to death and consequently return Israel to their kingdom.

- I. Introduction: Isaiah is called to blind the nation (1—6)
- II. **Ahaz** – rejects God's protection against Israel and Syria, preferring Assyria's

help. (7—27)

- God rejects Ahaz as the Davidic King of promise by removing his seed from the eternal Davidic throne through a virgin birth. (7—8)
- This child to be born will rule over the nations on behalf of God, unlike Ahaz (9).
- The ultimate King will establish God's justice, equity and peace in the kingdom of God (11)
  - The ultimate King will be born of the Seed of David, but will not be the seed of Ahaz (11:1)

III. **Hezekiah** – seeks God during the siege of Assyria, but becomes proud and boasts of his accomplishments to Babylon thus bringing on the judgment of exile (death) in Babylon. (28--39).

IV. **The Servant** – The Servant, as the conqueror, will deliver Israel from the Gentile oppressors in a new Exodus, dying as the Passover Lamb for the sake of the nation but is resurrected to rule (40—66).

- YHWH's Servant will redeem Israel (the blind servant) and conquer Babylon and restore her through the pouring out of the Spirit. (40:1- 48:22)
- The Suffering Servant of YHWH, rejected by the servant Israel, will bless Zion through His own sacrifice (49:1-57:21)

The Suffering Servant (52:13—53:12)

- The Glory of God established in the Kingdom for the redeemed as the remnant will spread out throughout all the nations bringing their deliverance through Israel (58:1-66:24).

## **Jeremiah: The Restoration of Judah and Jerusalem**

The restoration of Judah is outlined in the following chapters: 30:1-33:26

- **The Eternal Davidic King:** The removal of Jeconiah's seed from the Davidic promise of seed on the Davidic Throne (22:30). Yet the promise continues of a Davidic King sitting on the throne forever (33:17)

Similar to the curse on Ahaz, is the curse on Jeconiah, who is cursed with no children of his to sit on the throne. This, of course, provides the difficulty of how the Davidic Promise of David's heirs will sit on the throne.(cf. earlier footnote).

- **The Holiness of the Land:** The restoration of everything to holiness (30--31). The New Covenant (31:31-40)
- **Law within their heart:** (Jeremiah 31:33, Romans 2:15). The Old Law was on the tablets of stone, while their character was evil. Thus the Israelite was constantly trying to keep the Law from his heart when his heart (character) was rebellious. This promise is that God will change their character to the heart of God, which will reflect the character of God.
- **Know the Lord** (Jeremiah 31:34, cf. John 17:3; 1 John 2:27) Under the Old Covenant the righteousness and the degree to which one could understand God was limited by what the observer could see in the signs, symbols and partials of the Old Testament. However, under the New Covenant, the observer could now know full righteousness, and fully know God through the ministry and sacrificial obedience of His Son Jesus. Thus, to know the Son is to know the Father. For instance, one never observed the full love of the Father until He saw it in the sacrifice of His Son for His enemies (Romans 5).
- **Forgiveness of sins** (Jeremiah 31:33, Mark 2:7, Luke 7:49, 24:47).
- **The buried deed** (32:6-15, with Rev. 5:1). Jeremiah is told to purchase a piece of land in Israel with the promise that the land will be repurchased by God in the future. This prophecy comes true in Revelation 5 with the scroll in the One Who sits on the throne's hand. Restoration of the Land of Israel (31:38-40) The promised restoration of the land (deed buried), (32)

**Joel: Repentance prior to the Day of the Lord**

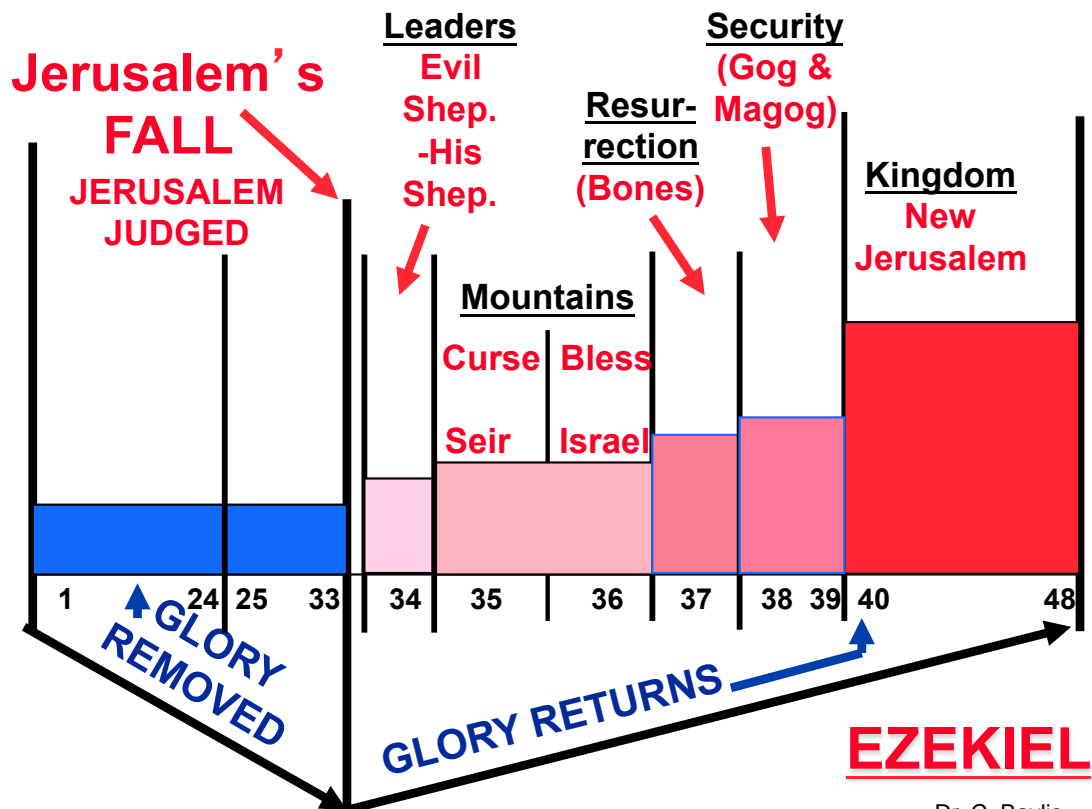
The call for the Nation Israel to repent before the Day of the Lord is the theme of Joel. During the future Day of the Lord when God is bringing judgment prior to the Kingdom, a remnant will be given the Holy Spirit to endure faithfully prior to the Kingdom through the times of apostasy. These are those who call upon the Name of YHWH (2:20-22, cf. Acts 2) and these will be preserved into the Kingdom.

The Exilic Prophets

Israel Enters “The Times of the Gentiles”

Ezekiel: Death in Jerusalem as the Glory Departs; Hope of Life as Glory Returns

The book contains God’s case against Israel as they are in exile. God describes the judgments that He will take against the Gentiles who oppressed Israel and the judgments on Jerusalem. The book pivots at its worst point in chapter 33 when Ezekiel hears that the City of Jerusalem is taken. From then on the prophecies contain the hope of Israel as they receive:



Dr. C. Baylis  
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- **A new Shepherd** unlike the old shepherds who took advantage of them
- **Restored mountains** to fruitfulness
- **A New Spirit** within them (a change of character to the direction of God’s character as the Word is placed within them).
- **A New resurrected nation**

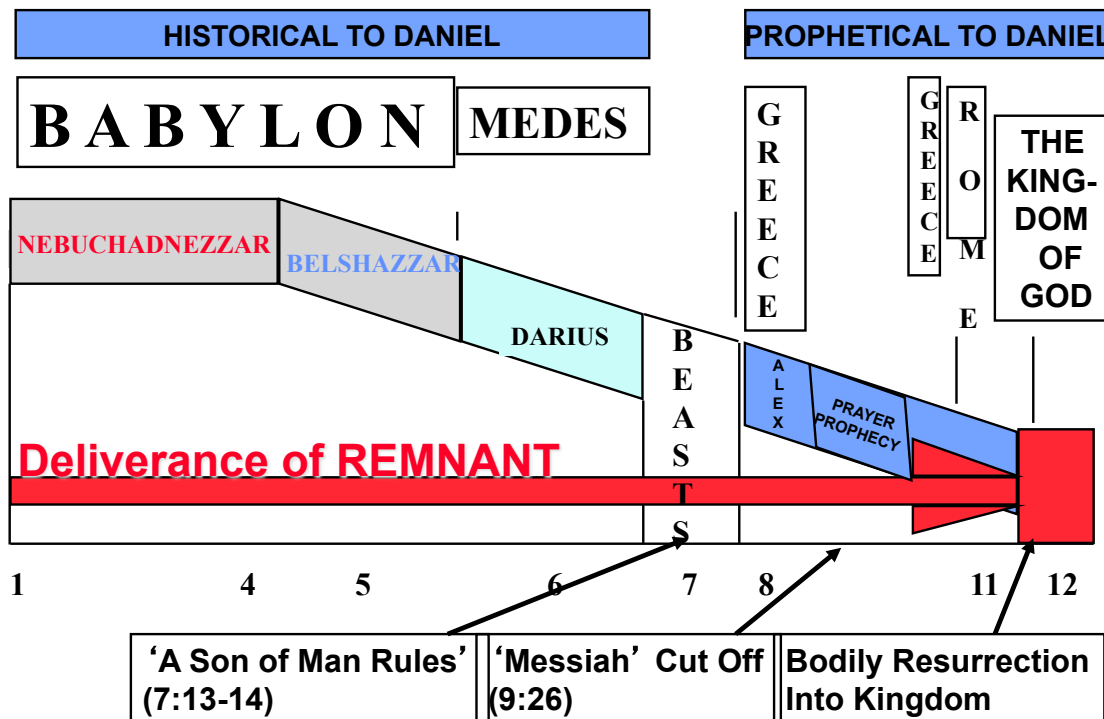
- **A new literal physical earthly kingdom** where the Glory once again dwells.

Ezekiel details the future enablement of the people of Israel through the indwelling Spirit (36) and the national resurrection (37). The details of the Kingdom reestablishment are in 40—48. All of this is the hope of the return of the Glory to Israel that new life might come.



**Daniel: The Times of the Gentiles and Conquering by a Son of Man**

Daniel is in Babylon with the exiles. He offers comfort that one day they will be returned to the kingdom in Israel. However, they will have to endure through four Gentile rulers before a Son of Man conquers them and resurrects their dead bodies into the kingdom (believers) or into destruction (unbelievers).



**THE BOOK OF DANIEL**  
**THE 'TIMES OF THE GENTILES'**

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- **(1—6) Preservation of the Israelite Remnant through Babylon and the Medes (2<sup>nd</sup> Kingdom).**

The preservation of the remnant is recorded through the Babylonian kings (the first Gentile Kingdom over Israel) through the first king of the Medes, Darius (the second Gentile Kingdom over Israel).

- **(7—12): The Remnant of Israel preserved through the Second to the Fourth Gentile Kingdom and Resurrection into the Final Kingdom of God.**

In chapter 7 a Son of Man receives a kingdom from the Father and destroys the previous four kingdoms establishing His kingdom for the saints.

In 9:24-27, Daniel outlines the seventy “7s” giving the precise date of Messiah’s presentation to Israel, followed by His removal by Rome and then after a delay, the final seven years of Rome’s kingdom and their destruction by the return of a Son of Man.

In chapter 12 the kingdom of God comes to pass when a Son of Man resurrects all the bodies, some to the kingdom and some to destruction.

## The Post-Exilic Prophets

### **The Death of Israel: Failure in a Partial Return**

#### Zechariah: The Restoration from the Gentile Nations

##### I. (1—6) The Night Visions of Zechariah

The Gentiles continue rule over Israel in the partial return yet there will be judgment as God returns Israel to the rule over the Gentiles..

##### II. (7—8): Exhortations to the people of the exile to repent

##### III. (9—14): Oracles of Zechariah

These oracles focus on the return of Israel to God and the final conquering of the Gentile powers. The appearance of the Good Shepherd is a major theme here, which Israel recognizes when the Spirit is poured out on them so that they recognize their Messiah, the Humble Servant who died for them.

- Israel's Deliverer will be a humble Servant:

9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

- Israel will reject their Deliverer yet will recognize Him only when God enables their repentance.

12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.

- Finally the book closes with the return of rule to Israel as YHWH physically comes to the Mount of Olives to destroy the Gentile armies that have come to extinguish His people. The nations are ruined and submit to Israel and their king as the Kingdom is inaugurated.

14:2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will

be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. **3 Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. 4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,** which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

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**Malachi: Failure of the Returned Remnant to Keep the Law**

The Lord will suddenly come to the Temple to purify it and judge the people, preceded by God's messenger. It is in this that God will change the heart of the people so that they obey God.

3:1: "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.

Elijah will come to call the people to repentance.

4:5-6: "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. 6 "And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."