

## ***Introduction to the Prophets – Session Two***



***I & II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings (1 – 14) Amos, Isaiah (1 – 39)  
The David Story***

### ***The Prophets***

#### **The Former Prophets**

Joshua  
Judges  
I Samuel  
II Samuel  
I Kings  
II Kings

#### **The Latter Prophets**

##### **Major Prophets**

Isaiah  
Ezekiel  
Jeremiah

##### **Minor Prophets**

Hosea  
Joel  
Amos  
Obadiah  
Jonah  
Micah  
Nahum  
Habakkuk  
Zephaniah  
Haggai  
Zechariah  
Malachi

## Readings from Session Two:

I Samuel 8: 10 – 18	“Give us a king!”
13:7 -14	Saul does the sacrifice at Gilgal
16:10 – 12	The Sons of Jesse
17: 8 – 11, 37, 48-51	David and Goliath
31: 1 -6	Death of Saul
II Samuel 7: 6 – 11	Establishment of David’s dynasty
11: 2 – 5	David and Bathsheba
12: 5 – 9	Nathan pronounces judgment
I Kings 2:1 – 4	David’s last words to Solomon
6:1 – 10	Solomon builds the temple
12:1 – 11	Rehoboam loses the combined kingdom
17:1 – 7	Elijah
19:10 – 19	The still small voice of the LORD God
II Kings 11:21	King Jehoash (Judah)
12: 1 – 2	King Jehoash (Judah)
13: 1 – 3	King Jehoahaz (Samaria/Israel)
13: 10 – 11	Jehoash (Samaria/Israel)
14: 1 – 3	Amaziah (Judah)
Amos 4:1 – 6	The cows of Bashan
Isaiah 6:1 – 13	The seraph and the coal that touched Isaiah’s lips

### ***The Duel with Goliath – A Commentary***

Why, asked Kimhi, does it take Goliath so long to get near David? Why does he need to invite David to approach him? The answer, once the question is asked is clear – the Philistine is weighed down under a ton of metal, and any mobility lies on David’s side.

This observation is crucial. Is David trusting in God as he claims, or avenging an insult to him? In antiquity, arms fell into three divisions: heavy infantry – in our case Goliath; cavalry, which in our case is absent; and light infantry. Light infantry were projectile warriors, archers, slingers, javelin hurlers. Think of these arms in terms of the game of “paper, scissors, rock.” In formation, heavy infantry could withstand cavalry by the use of pikes. The cavalry protected the heavy infantry against flanking sorties, operating best against light infantry. Light infantry, if protected by heavy infantry, could also help withstand enemy cavalry. But, by their nature, light infantry were at a premium in hilly terrain, such as the Israelite highlands, where cavalry did not operate.

This is all the background one needs in order to understand the profoundest commentary ever written on the duel with Goliath. The following excerpt comes from Samuel Clemens’s novel, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*.

The Yankee was in “the simplest and comfortablest of gymnastic costumes,” his opponent in full armor. Sir Sagramour set out to chase him down.

Says the Yankee, “Why, he hadn’t any show in the world at that; it was a game of tag, with all the advantages on my side; I whirled out of his path with ease whenever I chose, and once I slapped him on the back as I went to the rear.” The hunt went on.

When the combatants retired to the ends of the lists, the Yankee “slipped my lasso from the horn of the saddle .... This time you should have seen him come! It was a business trip, sure ... when the space between us had narrowed .... I sent the snaky spirals of the rope a-cleaving through the air, then darted aside and faced about and brought my trained animal to a halt with his feet braced under him for a surge. The next moment the rope sprang taut and yanked Sir Sagramour out of the saddle.

No tactic could more eloquently express the relationship of the light-armored to the heavy-armored infantryman. Here a light cavalryman surprises the Arthurian knight, just as the uncatchable David catches Goliath unawares. His rope-a-dope tactics bring the Yankee successive victories in the joust. But his rival, Merlin, steals his lariat. This leads to the last stage in the duel. Sir Sagramour is back, and refuses the Yankee leave to borrow Launcelot’s weapons. Each takes his place. Twain’s narrative takes up:

“It seemed as if the king could not take heart to give the signal. But at last he lifted his hand, the clear note of the bugle followed, Sir Sagramour’s long blade described a flashing curve in the air, and it was superb to see him come. I sat still. On he came. I did not move. People got so excited that they shouted to me, ‘Fly, fly! Save thyself! This is murder!’”

“I never budged so much as an inch, till that thundering apparition had got within fifteen paces of me; then I snatched a dragoon revolver out of my holster, there was a flash and a roar, and the revolver was back in the holster before anybody could tell what had happened.

“Here was a riderless horse plunging by, and yonder lay Sir Sagramour, stone dead.”

Twain’s point is simple. Goliath and all the other participants in the battle expected a close-quarter contest between two champions. The “rules of the game” dictated that the combatants should close. David declines to abide by the rules, and fights from outside the ring.

– Baruch Halpern (from *David’s Secret Demons*)



# The Kings of Israel

## The United Kingdom of Israel

Saul	1030 BCE – 1010 BCE
David	1010 – 970
Solomon	970 – 931

## Approximate Dates

## The Two Israelite Kingdoms

### Judah

Rehoboam	931 – 913
Abijah	913 – 911
Asa	911 – 870

Jehoshaphat	870 – 848
Jehoram	848 – 841
Ahazaah	841
Queen Athaliah	841 – 835
Uzziah	835 – 796
Amaziah	796 – 781

Uzziah	781 – 740
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Jotham	740 – 736
Ahaz	736 – 716
Hezekiah	716 – 687

Manasseh	687 - 642
Amon	642 – 640
Josiah	640 – 609
Johaz	3 months in 609
Jehoikim	609 – 598
Jehoichin	3 months in 598
Zedekiah	598- 587

**Fall of Jerusalem July 587 or 586**

### Israel

Jeroboam	931 – 910
Nadab	910 – 909
Baasha	909 – 886
Elah	886 – 885
Zimiri	7 days in 885
Omri	885 – 874
Ahab	874 – 853
Ahaziah	853 – 852
Joram	852 - 841
Jehu	841 - 814
Jehohaz	814 – 798
Jehoash	796 – 783
Jeroboam II	783 – 743
Zechariah	6 months in 743
Shallum	1 month in 743
Menahem	743 – 738
Pekah	737 – 732
Hoshea	732 – 723

**Fall of Samaria 722**

## Amos

The book of Amos is at a key transition point in the development of the Old Testament. Amos is the first of the “writing prophets,” that is, prophets whose words are preserved in separate books ascribed to them. The Bible tells of the activity of prophets earlier in the Old Testament – Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Elijah, and Elisha are all dated prior to Amos, and are identified as prophets by the historians in Samuel and Kings. We have stories about them, but they did not leave us writings that are ascribed to them. The book of Amos reveals patterns that are evident in other preexilic prophets, such as Micah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, whether or not any of them actually knew of Amos or his ministry.

Amos raises important questions about how the God of Israel relates both to the people who have a special relationship with God and to the other nations of the world. Amos makes it clear that God is the God of all the nations and that Israel is subject to the same judgment as (or even more severe than) any other nation that defies God’s demands for justice. What does it mean to be God’s “chosen” people when God seems to turn against the very ones that God has chosen? Does God love (and punish) all nations equally? Is there no special deal for Israel?

It is important to think about who are the hearers (and readers) of the words of Amos. Obviously, some were present and heard him stand up in Bethel (and perhaps elsewhere) and speak these words to a “live audience.” One needs to think about the historical situation at that time. What was Amos’s intention, what did he hope to accomplish by speaking out in such a forthright way that he knew would meet resistance? Did he hope to persuade people to change their ways in order to avert disaster? Or did he realize that it was too late for the forces of destruction to be altered, but his proclamations of doom would at least help make sense out of the impending calamity? Later his words were written down and passed on from one generation to another up to our present time, either as words of warning or explanations for disasters. They must have had particular significance to the people of Judah when they, like their northern neighbor Israel, also were forced into exile.

Who is Amos and what is his claim to be a prophet? At one point, in 7:14, Amos says he is not a prophet, but then goes on to assert that God had called him to prophesy. He seems to say that he performs the function of a prophet though he does not hold the office. The compilers of the Old Testament classify Amos as one of the twelve “minor” prophets, and as already said, he is regarded as the first of the classical “writing prophets.”

– Daniel J. Simundson (from *Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries*)

## The Prophets of Israel and Judah

		<u>Prophets by order in Bible</u>
1000 BCE	Samuel	
	Nathan	<i>Isaiah</i>
950		<i>Jeremiah</i>
		<i>Ezekiel</i>
	931 Death of Solomon	
900		<i>Hosea</i>
		<i>Joel</i>
		<i>Amos</i>
850	Elijah	<i>Obadiah</i>
		<i>Jonah</i>
	Elisha	<i>Micah</i>
800		<i>Nahum</i>
		<i>Habakkuk</i>
		<i>Zephaniah</i>
750	Amos	<i>Haggai</i>
	Micah	<i>Zechariah</i>
	Hosea	<i>Malachi</i>
700	Isaiah (1 – 39)	
650	Zephaniah	
	Nahum	
	Habakkuk	
600	Jeremiah	
	Ezekiel	586 Fall of Jerusalem
	Isaiah (40 – 55)	Exile in Babylon
550		
		538 Return to Jerusalem
500	Haggai	
	Zechariah	
	Joel	
450	Obadiah	
	Malachi	
	Isaiah (56 – 66)*	
400	Jonah*	

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*Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah – Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries* by Daniel J. Simundson, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2005

*David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King*, by Baruch Halpern, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Cambridge, 2001

**Session Three:** *II Kings (Chapters 15 – 25), Hosea, Micah, Jeremiah*