

Session 3: The Early Prophets

Aims of the Session

This session looks at the background to Hosea, the history of prophets before and during his time.

It asks questions like:

- What was a prophet anyway?
- How did they fit into Israelite society?
- What did people expect of them?
- Why did anyone take any notice of their actions and words?

Activity 3.1

Read 1 Samuel 9:1 to 10:11

Make notes on what strikes you in particular about this passage, what puzzles you and the questions it raises for you.

The background history to the period we are studying in this session stretches from the time of Samuel, the last of the judges, in the eleventh century B.C. through Elijah and Elisha in the ninth century, Amos and Hosea in the eighth century, to Jeremiah and the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. This is a period of over 500 years - long enough for the role of the prophet in Israel to change and develop. For background information to this period, see the Timechart.