

An Introduction to the Prophets

Grace Community Church

Brian Borgman

I. Introduction

A. Why study and teach the Prophets?

1. The Prophets are inspired and part of the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:28; 2 Tim. 3:16)
2. The Prophets played a special role in the revelation of redemptive history
 - a) Prophets (Lk. 11:49-51)
 - b) Revelatory mediators (Amos 3:7; Hos. 12:10; Heb. 1:1) “My servant the Prophets”
 - c) Unique function in redemptive history (Bridge between Old Covenant and New Covenant/Moses and the Prophets/Prophets and Apostles)
3. The Prophets’ message was
 - a) Christo-centrally rich (1 Pet. 1:10-12; Jn. 12:37-41)
 - b) Theologically profound (God, man, sin and salvation)
 - c) Eschatologically encouraging (see NT use of the OT)

B. What do we mean by “Prophets”?

Primarily the canonical or writing Prophets (Major/Minor)

*Elijah/Elisha constitutes the primary non-writing prophets.

1. The Prophets are an organic part of the Tanak (TNK)
2. The Prophets are organically connected to both Old and New Covenants (see NT use of the OT).
3. Human instruments of divine revelation: the Word of the LORD comes to them, they deliver it as it was given.
4. The Prophets were first and foremost preachers of God’s Word

C. What is prophecy?

1. Prophecy is speaking forth the Word of God. It is divine revelation.
2. Prediction is an incidental but distinctive character of prophecy.
3. The divine revelation given to the prophet was supernatural, the predictive element was the miraculous action of the revelation.
4. Predictive prophecy originates with God, who made all things and has a purpose in this world.
Isa. 14:24-27
5. Predictive prophecy is God bringing His servants, the prophets, into His council.

D. How was it fulfilled?

Short-term predictions – Jer. 28:9, 15-17

Long-term predictions that deepen and fill out through R-H (e.g. Messianic predictions; Gentile inclusion in the promised redemption and restoration of Israel -- Pre-exilic, exilic and post-exilic perspectives)

II. **Moses and the Prophets: The Function of the Prophets in the Old Testament**

A. Moses is the fountainhead of prophetic ministry, the beginning of the stream

1. Moses set the standard, both as a model and by the Pentateuch
2. Moses was unique as a revelatory spokesman (Num. 12:1-8; Ex. 33:11; Deut. 34:10; 18:15-18)
3. Moses established the standards for all prophets of Israel
Deut. 13:1-5; 18:18-22
4. The OT is frequently depicted by the common phrase “Moses and the Prophets”
Not just “Law and Prophets” but “Moses and the Prophets” in that Moses is the fountainhead.
**“The prophets” in that they formed a unity of revelation.
Mal. 4:4-6

B. The calling and commission of the Prophets

The Prophet was chosen and commissioned directly by God

1. Contrast to the priesthood
The priests were to be the intercessors, representing the people before God and teaching the people God’s Law.
The priesthood was instituted by God through Moses.
They were the intercessors, they prayed, they offered sacrifice, they taught Torah.
Because the priesthood was hereditary, it was open to abuse (Eli’s sons, Samuel’s sons). But the true priests were to be men of integrity, who took their responsibilities seriously. They were to shepherd the people of God.
Mal. 3:4-7
Prophets, were those who were called, given the Spirit for their commission, were under authority as God’s spokesman, received revelation from God, who faithfully proclaimed that Word and shepherded the people.
2. O.T. example: Isa. 6:1-8; Jer. 1:1-19; Ezek. 3:1-27)
3. The prophet had God’s word in his mouth and he spoke authoritatively for God (Jer. 1:9; Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1)
4. Constant danger of false prophets (1 Kgs 22:24; Jer. 14:14-15; 23:25-40)