

The Prophets: A Hermeneutics case study

A. Interpretive key to understanding the OT
Luke 24:25-27,44 1 Peter 1:11

B. Redemptive Historical Context

<u>Adam</u>	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Moses</u>	Prophet (Dt.18) true/false	Christ	Believers
Prophet (clear minded)			Priest (Ex.28) good/ evil		
Priest (pure heart)			King (Dt.17:14-15) righteous/wicked		
King (right will)					

C. God raises up prophets

1. God chooses Moses, the paradigm prophet
2. All Israelites to witness to the nations “*would that all are prophets*” Num11:29
3. The essence of prophecy is the endowment of the Spirit (Num.11:29)
4. Continuity after Moses (Dt.18:18) “*I will put my words in His mouth*”
5. One or many? (Jn.1:21-22; 6:14; 7:40-41; Acts 13:17)
6. People will be judged by the prophetic word (v.19)
7. The false prophet doesn’t speak God’s word (v.20)
8. How do you tell (v.21)? Does it come to pass; false prophets can perform miracles Dt.13:1f
9. Discontinuity with Moses and the prophets (Numbers 12)
Moses: not so, face to face, clearly, sees the form of the Lord
Prophets: visions, dreams, riddles
“Literal where possible, figurative if absurd”
Therefore: don’t read prophets the same way you read the law; expect things to be symbolic, hidden, mystery, allegory, spiritualized truths

D. Prophet as messenger

The authority of the message is not greater than the authority of the sender; the prophet speaks for God: “Thus saith the Lord”

Most prophets books are like a preachers file cabinet in which are stored his past sermons. Each chapter deals with different subject, reflects the conditions of the time, and was written for oral presentation.

E. Themes in the Prophets

1. The Lord is the ruler of history (the nations are tools in his hands)
2. The need to be right with God; prophets as prosecuting attorneys of the covenant. The heavens are called as witnesses; the standard is the law, especially Deuteronomy.
3. God restoring his people:
Judgment and hope
The remnant
4. Religion must have reality (form without feeling is condemned)
-giving: Malachi
-sacrifice
-doing justice
-worship without heart engaged

- futility of idols (eyes but cannot see; you become like what you worship)
5. Is God your trust or your alliances with other nations?
 6. The Messianic Kingdom (something new, the Divine Warrior, Is.59))
 7. Present (forth-telling) and Future (foretelling)

The prophets were not trying to talk about history in advance, so that people could simply learn what was going to happen in the future. They were activating the people to seek the mercy of God so that they could avoid judgment and find the blessings of God. (Pratt)

The major historical “movement” of the prophetic messages

Judgment---Exile---Restoration

The day of the Lord stood for the destruction of Israel’s enemies by God, the judgment of God on Israel’s sin, and the day he would restore His people from exile.

The prophets speak of events which have near term, intermediate term, and long term fulfillments.

Prophetic foreshortening, multiple fulfillments, already-not yet.

Joel as example: