

Pondering the Prophets

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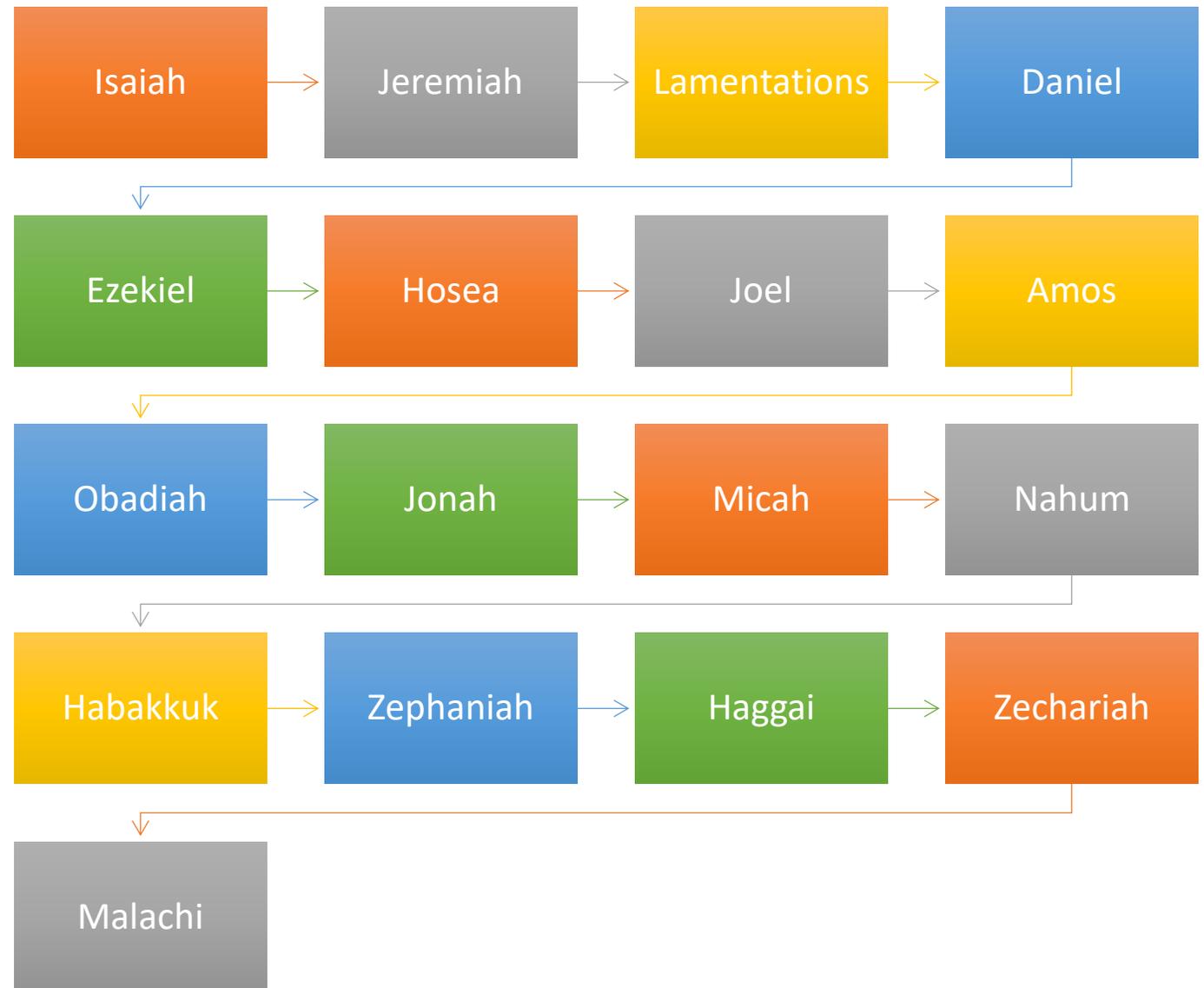
Outline

- Who are the Prophets?
- Content of Prophecy
- The Prophets and the Gospel
- Modern-day Prophets

The image shows a highly decorative arched doorway set within a wall of reddish-brown stone blocks. The archway is filled with intricate, golden metalwork featuring a repeating geometric pattern. The arch itself is carved from stone with a scalloped, scallop-like pattern. On either side of the arch, there are vertical panels of stone with intricate, interlocking geometric carvings. Two golden, pointed, decorative finials hang from the bottom of these side panels. The overall style is characteristic of Islamic architecture, possibly from a mosque or a palace. The text "Who are the Prophets?" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the center of the doorway.

Who are the Prophets?

Biblical Books named after Prophets (or written by Prophets)



Other Prophets in the Bible

Many Prophets mentioned in scripture but without books

- e.g., Deborah, Nathan, Micaiah, Simeon & Anna and many unnamed prophets

School of prophets

- e.g., 1 Samuel 19: 18-24, 2 Kings 2, 2 Kings 4:38-44, 1 Kings 2:15, Amos 7:14

Female prophets
(*Nebi'ah/Prophētis*)

- OT: Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Noadiah, Isaiah's wife
- NT: Anna

Women Prophets in the Bible

- Miriam (Exodus 15:20, Numbers 12:2)
- Deborah (Judges 4:4)
- Huldah (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles 34:22)
- Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14)
- “the prophetess” (Isaiah 8:3)
- Anna (Luke 2:36)

Hebrew - “woman prophet” (*nəbī’āh*)

Greek - “woman prophet” (*prophētis*)

What do Prophets do?

1. Hear and proclaim God's word

Deuteronomy 18:18

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their people, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him."

Nabi' (male) or Nebi'ah (female)

What do Prophets do?

1. Hear and proclaim God's word

2 Samuel 7:1-2, 4-5

"After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2 he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent."... 4 But that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying:

5 "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?'"

What do Prophets do?

1. Hear and proclaim God's word

Jeremiah 1:4, 7, 9

"The word of the LORD came to me, saying ... But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you... Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth."

What do Prophets do?

2. Primary calling is to their present context

Hosea 1:1

“The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri, in the days of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and in the days of King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel.”

What do Prophets do?

2. Primary calling to present context

Ezekiel 2:3–5

“He said: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day. The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says.’ And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.”

What do Prophets do?

3. God speaks in different ways

- Word – Jeremiah 2:1–12. Isaiah 13:1
 - Visions – Isaiah 1:1, Ezekiel 1:1
 - Enacted narrative – Isaiah 20:3–4; Ezekiel 4:1–7
 - Parable – 2 Samuel 12:1–7
 - Miracle – 1 Kings 18:16–39
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What do Prophets do?

4. Message is often challenging

2 Kings 22:14–20

¹⁴ Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam, Akbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to speak to the prophet Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the New Quarter.

¹⁵ She said to them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me, ¹⁶ ‘This is what the LORD says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people, according to everything written in the book the king of Judah has read. ¹⁷ Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and aroused my anger by all the idols their hands have made, my anger will burn against this place and will not be quenched.’ ”

What do Prophets do?

4. Message is often challenging

2 Kings 22:14–20

“¹⁸ Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: ¹⁹ Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people—that they would become a curse^[b] and be laid waste—and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I also have heard you, declares the LORD. ²⁰ Therefore I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.’”

What do Prophets do?

5. Likely to encounter opposition

Jeremiah 38:2-6

²“This is what the LORD says: ‘Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague, but whoever goes over to the Babylonians^[a] will live. They will escape with their lives; they will live.’ ³ And this is what the LORD says: ‘This city will certainly be given into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon, who will capture it.’”

⁶ So they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkijah, the king’s son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud.

Discussion Question

How might the message of the prophets in Israel speak to the Christian Church today?

Content of Prophecy



Content of Prophecy

1. Covenant Commitment

- Love of God
 - Idolatry: Hosea 4:12
 - False worship: Micah 6:6–8
 - Lack of trust: Isaiah 30:1–2
 - Failure of leaders: Micah 3:11
- Love of neighbour
 - Injustice: Amos 5: 21–24
 - Greed: Isaiah 5:8–9

Content of Prophecy

2. Justice and Judgement

- Pride condemned: Isaiah 2:17
- God's protection removed: Jeremiah 12:7
- Threat of exile: Jeremiah 25:4-9

3. Hints of Hope

- Day of salvation: Isaiah 49:8-9, 13
- Restored relationship: Jeremiah 31:33-34
- Future king: Isaiah 9:1-2, 6-7

Content of Prophecy

4. The question of fulfilment

Hebrews 1:1-2

“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son”

Prophetic context and themes

Pre 8th Century B.C. Prophets

- Context: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah 1-39, Micah
- Prophetic Themes:
 - Warning of Judgement
 - Threat of Exile

“Therefore my people will go into Exile for lack of understanding”
(Isaiah 5:13)

Prophetic context and themes

Exilic Prophets

- Context: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah 40–55
- Prophetic Themes:
 - Comfort, Salvation & Hope
 - “Comfort, comfort my people says your God” – Isaiah 40:1
 - God is in control – Isaiah 47:6
 - Exile is not the end – Isaiah 45:13, Jeremiah 29:4–7
 - Return to land – Jeremiah 32:15
 - Restored people – Ezekiel 36:24–28
 - Renewed blessing – Isaiah 44:3
 - Forgiveness of Sin – Jeremiah 31:33–34
 - Work of the Spirit – Ezekiel 36–37
 - Blessing to the nations – Isaiah 49:22–23

Discussion Question

In what way do you think you are called to live a prophetic life?

Prophecy in the early church and today



The prophets and the Gospel

Romans 1:1–2

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.”

Spiritual implication of Elijah's Ministry

Pointing to John the Baptist

Malachi 4:5-6

⁵ "See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. ⁶ He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction."

Luke 1:16

¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷ and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

Both Elijah and John the Baptist "embody disengagement, resistance, and alternative as a mark of faith that yields transformative power." Walter Brueggemann, 1 & 2 Kings, Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary, p.215

Spiritual implication of Elijah's Ministry

Pointing to Jesus Christ

Matthew 17:11

He answered, "Elijah does come, and he will restore all things."

Luke 3:16

¹⁶ John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Acts 1:8

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you

Acts 2:3-4

³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Spiritual Gifts – 1 Corinthians 12-14

- In 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 14:1a
- Love is the key
- The gift of tongues and the gift of prophecy were subject to controversy and needed good understanding
- Prophecy is accessible to all
- Prophecy should be regulated

Gifts of God

- *Romans 12:3–8*
- The most fundamental Christian obligation is complete dedication of body and mind to God (Rom 12:1–2)
- Believers must exercise their unique spiritual gifts:

Gifts of God

- Prophecy
- Service
- Teaching
- Stimulating
- Giving
- Leadership
- Sympathy

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- *aka Manifestations of the Spirit*
- Supernatural gifts (1 Cor 12:8–10)

Gifts of Holy Spirit

- Tongues
- Interpretation
- Prophecy
- Word of knowledge
- Word of Wisdom
- Discerning of Spirits
- Faith
- Gifts of Healings
- Working of Miracles

Gifts of Christ

- *Ephesians 4: 11, 1 Cor 12:28*
- *Gifts of leadership*

Gifts of Christ

- Apostle
- Prophet
- Evangelist
- Pastor
- Teacher

The Gifts to the Body

Gifts of God	Gifts of Holy Spirit	Gifts of Christ
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prophecy• Service• Teaching• Stimulating• Giving• Leadership• Sympathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tongues• Interpretation• Prophecy• Word of knowledge• Word of Wisdom• Discerning of Spirits• Faith• Gifts of Healings• Working of Miracles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apostle• Prophet• Evangelist• Pastor• Teacher
We have	We seek	We become

1 Peter 4: 10-11 "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers let him do it as with the ability with which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ..."

Prophetic calling today?

“the task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, & evoke a consciousness & perception alternative to the consciousness & perception of the dominant reality”

Walter Bruggemann, “The Prophetic Imagination”