

PROPHETS & PROPHECY OVERVIEW

AN OVERVIEW OF PROPHECY

What is a prophet? What is prophecy?

Jonah as a sample prophet...

- 8th Century BC
- King Jeroboam
- Contemporary of Amos

2 Kings 14.25

Jonah prophesied, Jeroboam brought into effect

Only prophecy we have Jonah is Jonah 3.4 "40 days and Nineveh will be destroyed"

THE ROLE OF PROPHECY

Foretelling, forth-telling, telling them to act now.

You can change the future by acting now.

"Prophets show an alternative to the dominant culture in which we live."

Walter Breuggeman

Change how you use your power.

THE PROPHET

Initially, with Adam and Eve and their relationship with God, as with Moses, the interaction is face to face.

The prophet became the intermediary.

Prophets are not divine typewriters. They are people.

"The prophet is not a mouthpiece, but a person; not an instrument, but a partner; an associate of God."

Abraham Heschel

Exodus 20 - the people asked for an intermediary. The relationship is changing. Somebody speaking to God might be killed. You do it. We'll stay alive.

The people want to be one-step removed from the power of God.

THE PROPHETIC MOVEMENT

God > Prophet > People

Exodus 4 - "I can't speak"

Exodus 7.1-2 = I'll use you as a god to Pharaoh

Moses > Aaron > Pharaoh

Often, we forget who is at the top. It is God and His message that we pass on, not the message of a scholar, leader, or pastor.

THE PROPHET AS A PREACHER

The Goal of the Prophet

- Preacher
 - Psalms are poetry compositions
 - Prophets are delivering sermons
 - The goal is to persuade

WRITING AND PRE-LITERARY PROPHETS

Before Amos and Isaiah prophesied, there was a history of prophecy in the Old Testament.

Writing prophets - give names to biblical books (750BC - 500BC)

Pre-literary - As active, but we don't have books with their names on books on cover.

Abraham - The Intercessor Prophet

- Genesis 20.7 - "He is a prophet"
- No future prediction
- Just an intercessor - prays

Priests - represents people before God - Prophet - represents God before people

PRE-LITERARY PROPHETS IN EXODUS AND NUMBERS

Moses

- Deuteronomy 18 “like me”
- 18.18 - God to Moses “like you”
- 34.30 - Neer since a prophet like Isaiah
- Acts 3.22 & 7.37 - Moses as a prophet

Miriam

- Moses' sister
- Exodus 15.20-21 - prophet, music, dance.
- She was a prophet and different that
- Unclear what she means

70 Elders

- Numbers 11.24-25
- No known role. Prophesied once
- 2 other men

BALAAM AND A MESSAGE FROM GOD

Numbers 22-24

- 22.4-7 - Curse the Israelites
 - Comes from Iraq / Syria
 - He's not called a prophet, but he brings a message
- 22.8-13
 - Balaam - pagan
 - Does not worship Yahweh
 - Prays and hears from God

HENOTHEISM

Henotheism - worship gods without denying other gods, many gods, different regions, localized deities.

- Monotheism - 1 god
- Polytheism - many gods

Examples

- Jonah - fleeing - God bound to geographical Israel
- Naaman - 2 Kings 5.15; How do I keep this power
- Balaam - I'm mesopotamia (Num 22-24); I can't curse Israel. My gods don't have the power. I must ask their god.

SAMUEL: A TRANSITIONAL PROPHET

Samuel is very important as a transitory figure

Prophet - Acts 13.20 - Judge period ends with Samuel

- Acts 3.24 - from Samuel on...
- 1 Samuel 9.6 - "man of god" name for prophet

Priest - 1 Samuel 9.13 - Priest, offering sacrifice

Samuel and Kings - 1 Samuel 10.1

- Anoints kings
- Leader of prophets
- Counselor with kings

1 Samuel 15.22 - rejects

- Confronts king

DAVID AND THE PROPHETS

David establishes control as king, and unites north and south

- Capital is in Jerusalem
- "City of David" - David conquered it
- It is neither Judah's or Israel's city (like Washington DC)

Either conquered or has a treaty with surrounding nations

Establish control religiously

Centralizes worship in Jerusalem, under his control.

2 Samuel 6.17

- Nathan and David
- David works with Nathan
- 2 Samuel 7.2-3 - advice to king
- God comes to Nathan, not good advice.

ELIJAH

Royal Confronter

1 Kings 16.30 - sets up Ahab vs Elijah

Elijah - confronter

- 2 Samuel 17.18 - man of God
- 2 Samuel 18.22 - prophet
- 2 Samuel 18.36 - servant

Baal and Baal worship is central to Elijah v Ahab

BAAL AND THE PROPHETS

The Canaanite god as Hadad

- God of thunder, lightening, rain
- Huge in an agricultural society
- Rain brings fertility

Associated with Baal - olive oil, corn, wine

Physically represented by a bull - strength and vitality

Asherah is his consort - fertility goddess

He is depicted with clubs (drums for thunder), lightning, sometimes grain, often standing on water. Horns = divine

Judges 3.7 - Baal and Asherah. God is not known as we storm god - thunder, lightning, rain, could be appealing if crops are growing

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