

An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets

- What's in a name?
 - Hebrew: *nabi, roeh, hozeh* ('prophet', 'seer', 'prophet/seer')
 - > Greek *prophétés* ('to speak before')
 - > "Prophet"
 - Also called "_____ of God" and "My _____"
- Famous 'non-writing' prophets: A_____, S_____, N_____, Elijah, Elisha
 - The "standard" by which all prophets are judged: _____ (Ex. 33:7-11; Deut. 18:15-19; 34:10-12)
- Characteristics of the Old Testament Prophets:
 - A _____ and personal _____ by God (Ex. 3:1-4:17; Is. 6; Jer. 1:4-19, Ezek. 1-3; Hosea 1:2; Amos 7:14-15; Jonah 1:1)
 - In contrast to *false prophets* (Jer. 14:14; 23:21; 27:14-15)
 - Illustration: 1 Kings 22:1-38—Micaiah and Ahab
 - A God-ordained awareness of _____.
 - "History became revelation because there was added to the historical situation a man prepared beforehand to say what it meant... one forewarned of events and of their significance by the verbal communications of God."
 - _____ and _____ concern
 - Proclamation and prediction: "_____-telling and _____-telling."
 - This interlocking of proclamation and prediction distinguishes the true prophet from the mere prognosticator. The prophets brought God's word to men, convinced that the proclamation of God's word radically changed the whole situation. The prophets spoke to their situation primarily by means of warnings and encouragements concerning the future. The Bible is perfectly comfortable with the prophets being men of remarkable psychic powers who possessed extraordinarily detailed telepathic and clairvoyant gifts (2 Kings 6:12; Ezekiel 8-11; 1 Kings 13:2; Isaiah 44:28)
- Inspiration. Like the rest of Scripture, the Prophets represent a "double awareness": on the one hand, these words are the words which _____ gave to the prophet. God took this man to be his mouthpiece; they are the words of God. This is _____ inspiration (Deut. 18:18; Isa. 51:15-16; Jer. 1:9). On the other hand, inspiration does not suppress individuality. To communicate his words to men, God uses men of different culture, character, and status in order that His words might be accessible to all mankind. These inspired words are the words of a certain man, spoken at a certain time, under certain circumstances, marked by his own personality and experience. So the oracles of Amos and Jeremiah are as unlike as are the personalities and circumstances of the two prophets.

- Their task: The prophets were preachers who communicated God's words in order to transform their audience's thinking and social behavior. God's messengers challenged audiences to transform their behavior so that they could enjoy the blessing of God's presence. They were real people attempting to communicate urgent messages to friends and even to some enemies. They were persuading people to look at life in a radically different way. They offered hope to the hopeless and a realistic assessment of the nation's weaknesses to the country's proud military and political leaders. They encouraged people to look at themselves from God's perspective and not conform to the prevailing political perspective of the day because of social pressures. They exhorted people to put off their old ways, to take an oath to change, and to transform their lives by breaking new ground.