

# SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT



Welcome  
to  
Studio Scriptura

SOT.8  
Prophetic Literature



# Logistics & Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will gain a high level understanding of:
  - a. The prophets
  - b. How to interpret prophetic literature
  - c. The lifestyle/character of the prophets



New King James Version,  
1988. Nashville: Holman  
Bible Publishers.

“So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me.

Ezekiel 33:7

“Watchman, what of the night?  
Watchman, what of the night?”

Isaiah 21:11

**Major** prophets are so designated by their length and **Minor** prophets by their relative brevity.

**Pre-exilic** prophets are so designated by their ministry *prior* to the exile to Babylon; likewise the **Post-exilic** prophets conducted their ministry after the Babylonian captivity.

“The Hebrew term nabi’ designates the prophet as a spokesman for God. The twofold aspect of the prophet’s ministry included **declaring** God’s message and **foretelling** God’s actions in the future.”

The word of the Lord was communicated to the prophet by the Holy Spirit and mediated to the people with **powerful** conviction and **precise** accuracy

The prophets speak both to their own generation and to future generations as **preachers** and **predictors**


Whereas the **priests** represented the *people to God*, the **prophets** presented *God to the people*

One of the most unique features of the Old Testament prophets was their ability to predict future events with **perfect accuracy**

## *Prophetic Perfect*

The prophets used this form of speech to bring the listener or reader into a direct experience of the full impact of their view of life both current and future





The messages of the Major Prophets remind us that God holds all nations accountable for their behavior and policies.

He alone is the One who sets up and takes down kings (Dan 4:17)

He is the sovereign Lord of the universe before Whom the nations are but "a drop in a bucket" (Isa 40:15)

He is also the God who gives hope, even in the most difficult times of life (Jer 29:11)



Through the prophets, the invisible God becomes *audible*. Their luminous words bring the kingdom of God to earth by penetrating the human heart

Their prophecies are so comprehensive, and yet specific, that they put pagan prophets to shame (Isa. 41:21–29). Their remarkable specificity and fulfillment, and when taken as a series, their magnificent, comprehensive grasp of history, is gloriously incomparable to any other literature.

When establishing the monarchy, God retains His rule by subordinating the king to obey the voice of His prophets!



Their language is imaginative, concrete, and direct.

The beliefs of apostates, though cherished as certainties, and their institutions, though endowed with supreme sanctity, are exposed (by the prophets) as scandalous pretensions.

None of the prophets seem enamored with being a prophet nor proud of their attainment. The prophets reject Israel's carnal marks of identity and prefer to be identified with the majesty, justice, and the love of God.





## WHAT MANNER of MEN?

- ❑ Terrifying encounters with God
- ❑ Experienced God's holiness and therefore maintained a unique sensitivity to evil
- ❑ Use of luminous, harsh, and compassionate language
- ❑ Abhorred pride

- ❑ Exposed and pulled down scandalous pretensions
- ❑ Austere lifestyle and compassion for the disenfranchised
- ❑ Lives of loneliness
- ❑ Prayerful

*The sword of the warrior was replaced by the cutting words of the prophet. Warfare gave way to the words of the Prophet!*

# Interpreting Prophetic Literature



1. **Indictment** - Statement of the Offense
2. **Judgement** - Prescribed Punishment
3. **Instruction** - Repentant Response
4. **Aftermath** - Future Hope



*The Essence of the Old Testament: A Survey*  
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# Interpreting Prophetic Literature

*(continued)*

**ORACLE** - Speaking for God

**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE** - Imagery with punch

**DREAMS & VISIONS** - Symbolic

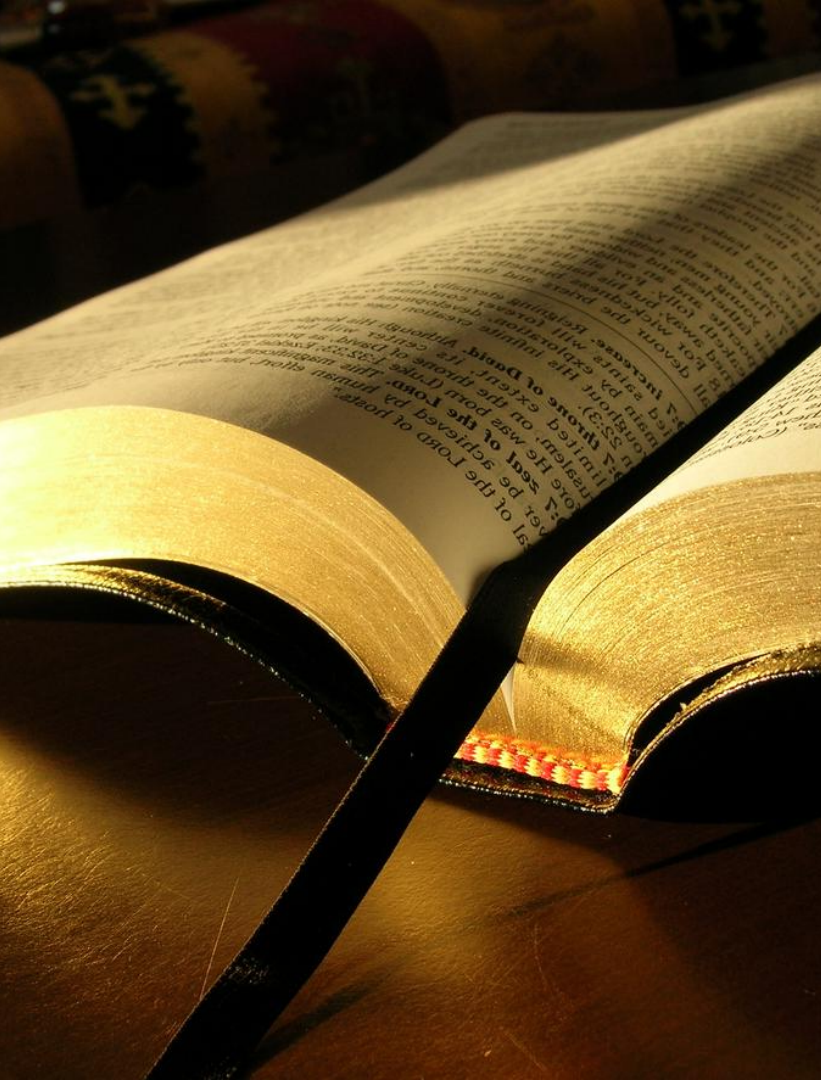
**CONTINGENT ON HISTORICAL SETTING** - Takes on the color of its history, sociology, and culture

**HYPERBOLE** - Diversity of language with a consistent message

**TIMELINES** - Important to realize the potential gaps (or lack thereof) in in prophetic timelines

**CLARITY OF MESSAGE** - No mitigated speech

*An Old Testament Theology, Copyright © 2007  
Watke and Yu*



# The Major Prophets



1. **Isaiah** - God is with us
2. **Jeremiah** - The Babylonians are Coming
3. **Lamentations** - Jerusalem is Burning
4. **Ezekiel** - The Glory Will Return
5. **Daniel** - The Messiah Will Come

# The Minor Prophets

The Minor Prophets cover the books of **Hosea** to **Malachi** and form the final section of the Old Testament canon.

The books of the Minor Prophets cover the period from about the eighth to the fifth centuries B.C. This time began with an era of great prosperity for both Israel (northern kingdom) and Judah (southern kingdom).

But ended in disaster for both.



## The Minor Prophets *(continued)*

Three of the Minor Prophets are focused on the northern kingdom of Israel (Samaria):

**Hosea:** God's Unquenchable Love

**Amos:** God's Ultimate Justice

**Jonah:** God's Universal Concern

# The Minor Prophets *(continued)*

Six of the Minor Prophets are focused on the southern kingdom (Jerusalem):

**Joel:** Day of the Lord

**Obadiah:** Doom of Edom

**Micah:** Divine Lawsuit

**Nahum:** Destruction of Nineveh

**Habakkuk:** Destruction of Babylon

**Zephaniah:** Disaster Is Imminent



## The Minor Prophets *(continued)*

The last three Minor Prophets are focused on the Jewish exiles who have returned from Babylon and they form the final link to the Messianic prophecies, which are fulfilled in Jesus:

**Haggai:** Rebuild the Temple

**Zechariah:** Restoration for the King

**Malachi:** Repent of Sin





# The Minor Prophets *(continued)*

The messages of the Minor Prophets remind us that God holds all people responsible for their behavior, especially those who claim to belong to Him.

God's warnings were meant to turn believers away from impending disaster and urge them to be faithful to the One who really loved them.

Thus, the call of the prophets echoes down the canyons of time, calling us to repent, return, and experience God's grace and forgiveness - resulting in revival, restoration, and hope for the future.



# What what it like being a prophet?

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented...

... of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

Hebrews 11:32-38

# So What & Now What?



- ❑ Written Short Answer & Discuss:
  - ❑ What are some of the characteristics of the prophetic ministry? (100 words)
  - ❑ What *manner of men* were the prophets? (50 words)
  - ❑ Discuss some of the key aspects of interpreting prophetic literature. (100 words)
  - ❑ How would you differentiate between the major and minor prophets as well as the pre-exilic and post-exilic prophets? (100 words)

