

Who is A Prophet — Teaching Notes

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Office of the Prophet

✚ Jer 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

- Prophets are chosen before their conception and are set apart for the ministry of the Lord before their birth.

Prophets, Seers and Men of God

✚ 1Sa 9:9 "(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: Come, let us go to the seer; for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.)"

✚ 2Sa 24:11 "Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer."

✚ 1Ki 12:22 "But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God."

- Prophets, seers and men of God are all a scriptural references to the same prophetic office.

A Prophet Among You

✚ Num 12:6 "Then He said, Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream."

Groups of Prophets

✚ 1Sa 19:20 "Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied."

Prophecy—Navah

- ❖ Practices leading to prophetic awareness were closely held and discussed in small, secret groups, then passed orally from a teacher to a student who had been deemed morally and spiritually worthy of receiving the teachings.
- ❖ The methods of prophetic study were complex, analytical, numerical, metaphorical, spacial, visual, relational, poetic, homiletic, etc.
- ❖ Several examples of these methods include *Pardes* and Gematria, which we will describe briefly.

Gematria

- ❖ Gematria is the careful examination and analysis of word and letter placement and numerical values to reveal relationships between words and letters, and to find higher meanings and mystical secrets hidden within the text.
- ❖ Jewish mysticism holds that all of creation issued forth from divine speech, and that the Torah contains the wisdom of creation.

Pardes

- ❖ *Pardes* means “orchard” and refers to the Garden of Eden or Paradise. *Pardes* is an acrostic (PRDS) signifying the four approaches to *Torah* study:
 - *Peshat* – is the simple, literal meaning of the biblical narrative. Other approaches must always align with the *Peshat*. Most biblical commentary is based on this method.
 - *Remez* – approaches the Torah from an allegorical or allusional perspective. We see this in types, shadows, symbolism, and numerology.
 - *Derash* – is the *Midrashic* or homiletic analysis of the text, or what we might call “story telling.” This may include prooftexting or narrative expansion of the biblical text. *Yeshua* often used this method to describe the kingdom of God.
 - *Sod* – is the esoteric and mystical approach to understanding the Torah. This may come through dreams and visions similar to those given to biblical prophets such as Ezekiel. Jewish mystics use meditative and prayer technics to encounter the spiritual realm.

Prophecy is for Believers

- α ^{1Co 14:22} “Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.”

α Rev 19:10 "Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

- The rabbis teach that the spirit of prophesy does not rest upon a person unless he or she is in a happy or joyous mood.
- Prophets would keep harps, drums, flutes, and lyres with them when seeking prophesy to create the requisite emotional joy.

New Testament Prophets

- ❖ Prophets continued to serve the New Testament church in accordance with instructions given by the twelve Apostles of Christ through what is called the *Didache*, translated as "The Way."
- ❖ The early church often referred to Apostles and Prophets in the same vein, often calling them Apostle–Prophets.
 - For example, Paul was called both an Apostle and a Prophet.
 - "And concerning the Apostles and Prophets, act thus according to the ordinance of the Gospel. Let every Apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord, but let him not stay more than one day, or if need be a second as well; but if he stay three days, he is a false prophet. And when an Apostle goes forth let him accept nothing but bread till he reach his night's lodging; but if he ask for money, he is a false prophet. Do not test or examine any prophet who is speaking in a spirit, 'for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven.' But not everyone who speaks in a spirit is a prophet, except he have the behavior of the Lord. From his behavior, then, the false prophet and the true prophet shall be known. And no prophet who orders a meal in a spirit shall eat of it: otherwise he is a false prophet. And every prophet who teaches the truth, if he do not what he teaches, is a false prophet. But no prophet who has been tried and is genuine, though he enact a worldly mystery of the Church, if he teach not others to do what he does himself, shall be judged by you: for he has his judgment with God, for so also did the prophets of old. But whosoever shall say in a spirit 'Give me money, or something else,' you shall not listen to him; but if he tell you to give on behalf of others in want, let none judge him." (*Didache* 11:3-12)

Mercy and Judgment

⚡ Hos 6:6 "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

α Rev 16:7 "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

- Amos 5:18 "Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! For what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness, and not light."
- ❖ The Divine "left hand" represents *Gevurah*, Judgement, the Supernal attribute of severity.
- ❖ The Supernal attribute of *Chesed*, Mercy is the right arm, and as Scripture states, "His right arm embraces me," which refers to the state of God actually bringing us close to Himself.
- ❖ These faculties—love and fear—are the arms and the body of the soul; love and kindness are the "right arm," fear and severity are the "left arm."
 - Judgement and mercy operate together, and are interwoven and inseparable. You cannot have mercy without judgment, and you cannot have judgment without mercy. These are not individual choices, nor do they contradict each other, but work together as a single unit of God's providence and sovereignty.
 - And so it is with the prophet, the man of God. We must and will administer these two together—mercy and judgement—according to the Lord's will and allotted time.
 - Jer 1:10 "See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant."
 - Mat 16:19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
 - 1Co 6:3 "Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?"

The First Mentioned Prophet

- ⌘ Gen 20:7 "Now therefore, restore the man's (Abraham's) wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

The Lord Revealed to Israel

- ⌘ Amos 3:1-2 "Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying: You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

The Span of Time

✂ Exo 7:1 "So the LORD said to Moses: See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet."

α Act 13:20 "After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet."

- The age of the prophets came to a close with the destruction of the first Temple, Solomon's temple, in 586 B.C.

The Age of The Prophets

The United Monarchy				
Dates (BC)	Prophets of United Israel			
1020-1000	Samuel			
975-960	Nathan			
The Divided Kingdoms				
Dates (BC)	Israel (Northern)		Judah (Southern)	Dates (BC)
870-850	Elijah			
850-800	Elisha			
750-745	Amos		[Jonah]	[740-730]
750-745	Hosea			
			Isaiah of Jerusalem	742-700
			Micah	722-701
			Zephaniah	628-622
			Jeremiah	626-586
			Nahum	612
			Habakkuk	605
			Ezekiel	593-573
			Obadiah	c. 586/5
			Isaiah 40-55	540
			Haggai	520-515
			Zechariah	520-515
			Isaiah 56-66	515-500
			Joel	500-350?
			Malachi	500-450
			Jonah	450-400

Notes:

1. Daniel is not included because the book is not normally considered a prophetic book, but rather part of The Writings, the reflective and devotional literature of Israel.
2. There is little historical evidence to date the book of Joel, and it could fall anywhere between 500 B.C. to as late as 300 B.C.
3. The historical setting of Jonah is the Assyrian era of the 8th century B.C., but many scholars place the actual writing of the book in the middle 5th century B.C., shortly after Nehemiah's reforms. This suggests that the book uses much older traditions from the Assyrian era as a means to address a different set of problems in the post-exilic community.

Seven Female Prophets of Israel

1. Sarah—Wife of Abraham.
2. Miriam—Sister of Moses & Aaron.
3. Devorah—Wife of Barak.
4. Chanah—Mother of Samuel.
5. Avigail—Wife of King David.
6. Chuldah—Wife of Shallum.
7. Esther—Niece of Mordechai.

Time Period of The Sages

- ❖ The next era of prophetic revelation came during the time of the sages (*Tanaim* and *Amoraim*), and the writing of the *Talmud* which incorporated quotes of the rabbis dating from 100 B.C. to 500 A.D.
 - What great prophetic fulfillment was to come, and even came during this time period?
 - Of course, the Messiah of Israel!

✚ Amos 3:7 "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."

Israel at the Center of Prophecy

- ❖ Mat 24:32-33 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree [Israel]: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!"
- ❖ Rom 11:28-29 "Concerning the gospel they [Israel] are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."
- ❖ Luk 13:35 "See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you [Israel] shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!"

Israel the Land of Prophecy

- ❖ Israel is known as the primary place for receiving prophecy.
- ❖ Of all the Jewish prophets since the generation of the Exodus, almost all obtained prophecy only while in the Holy Land.
- ❖ With the exception of Isaiah, every Jewish prophet in the bible received his gift through his predecessors, and is part of a long, unbroken chain of prophesy.
- ❖ Many advanced Jewish mystics had their entire perspective in the *Torah* greatly altered after arriving in Israel.
- ❖ Many people today, even on a temporary visit to Israel experience a heightened sense of inspiration and insights into life and its meaning.
- ❖ This can be attributed to Israel's inimitable place in the fabric of creation.

Safed the Mystical City

- ❖ Located in the northern part of Israel, the history Safed dates back more than 2,000 years to the time of the second temple.
- ❖ Safed has always been an important city for the Jewish people and is considered the most mystical city in all of Israel.
- ❖ The city has remained an important learning center for Judaism and Jewish mysticism, including prophesy.

The Prophet

- ❖ Prophets are found to be of good character, wise judgement, and merciful hearts.
- ❖ Prophets are diligent in study, teaching, and practice of their faith.
- ❖ Prophesy is the overflow of the presence of the Holy One.

- ❖ Prophecy distinguishes itself from all other arts and intuitive talents.
- ❖ Prophecy delegates to prophets an unequalled status among their peers as the Creator's representative.
- ❖ Prophecy is how the divine will and presence are made known.
- ❖ Prophecy—as the supreme language of the soul—is the vehicle by which the creator instructs and guides His people to come closer to Him.
- ❖ Prophetic vision transforms the wilderness into ranks of order and fruitfulness.
- ❖ Prophecy occurs in different forms and in different intensities.
- ❖ Those gifted with prophetic talent are by their very presence performing the role of teacher and guide.
- ❖ Prophecy helps the created discern the relationships between the seen and unseen, the physical and the immaterial.
- ❖ The prophets told the future, pointed to the dangers of the past and present (watchmen), and gave others hope and faith in the meaning of life.
- ❖ Prophets helped interpret both world affairs and personal predicaments.
- ❖ *Echad*, the Hebrew word for "oneness," is the process and outcome of prophecy.
- ❖ Ultimately, this holy speaking unites humanity and God as one, *Echad*.

Prophets and Kings

- ❖ From study of scripture it is apparent that the office of prophet developed concurrently with that of the king.
 - We see an example of this with King David and Nathan the prophet.
- ❖ Most of the prophets in Israel came from the Aaronic priesthood, so we can also see the Lord establishing a correlation between the kingly and priestly lineages.
 - To be a priest and to be a prophet are synonymous—they function in the same office and capacity.
 - This to fulfill the Lord's promise that Israel would become to Him a kingdom of priests—a royal priesthood.

A Royal Priesthood

✠ Exo 19:6 "And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

✠ 1Pe 2:9 "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Firstfruits Given to the Prophets

- "But every true prophet who wishes to settle among you is 'worthy of his food.' Likewise a true teacher is himself worthy, like the workman, of his food. Therefore thou shalt take the firstfruit of the produce of the winepress and of the threshing-floor and of oxen and sheep, and shalt give them as the firstfruits to the prophets, for they are your high priests. But if you have not a prophet, give to the poor. If thou makest bread, take the firstfruits, and give it according to the commandment. Likewise when thou openest a jar of wine or oil, give the firstfruits to the prophets. Of money also and clothes, and of all your possessions, take the firstfruits, as it seem best to you, and give according to the commandment." (*Didache 13:1-7*).

Grafted into Israel

- Α Rom 11:17 "You [gentiles], being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them [Israel], and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness [spiritual blessings] of the olive tree."
- Α Eph 3:6 "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body [of Israel], and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel."

Many Kings and Many Kingdoms

- Σ Gen 17:6 "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you."
- Σ Gen 35:11 "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body."

Prophecy Sealed Up

- Σ Dan 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined For your people [Israel] and for your holy city [Jerusalem], To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

The Fullness of Time

- ❖ We need to understand that prophesy and the office of the prophet are a temporary stage until all prophesy is fulfilled in scripture, and until the one who is the spirit of prophesy returns to the earth to establish His kingdom—the Messianic age. For it says:
 - Eze 12:23 “The days are at hand, and the fulfillment of every vision.”
 - Jer 31:34 “No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord.”
 - Isa 11:9 “For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.”
 - 1Co 13:9 “For we know in part and we prophesy in part.”
 - 1Co 13:12 “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”
 - Eph 4:11-13 “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

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