

MTC Dec 2015

Preaching from Old Testament prophecy

1. The prophets – real people speaking to real people in a real place and time

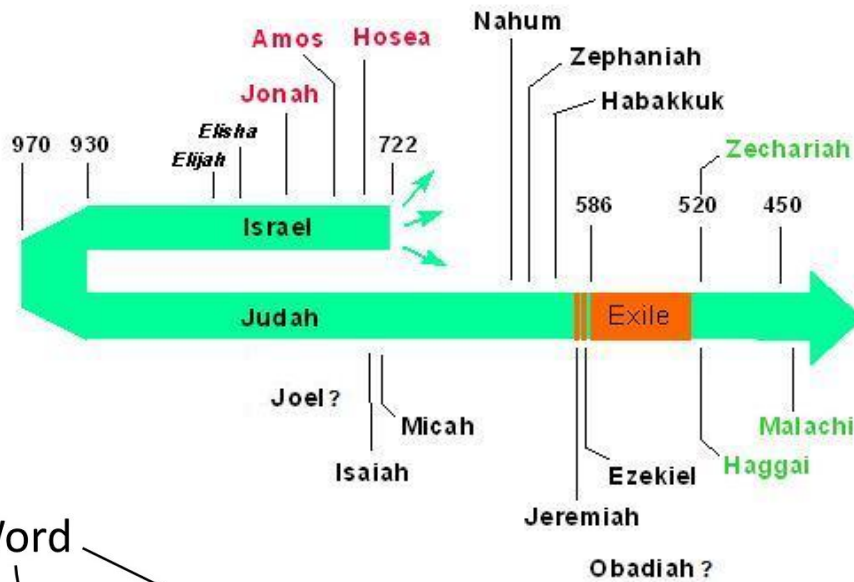
Former Prophets

Joshua
Judges
Samuel (1&2)
Kings (1&2)

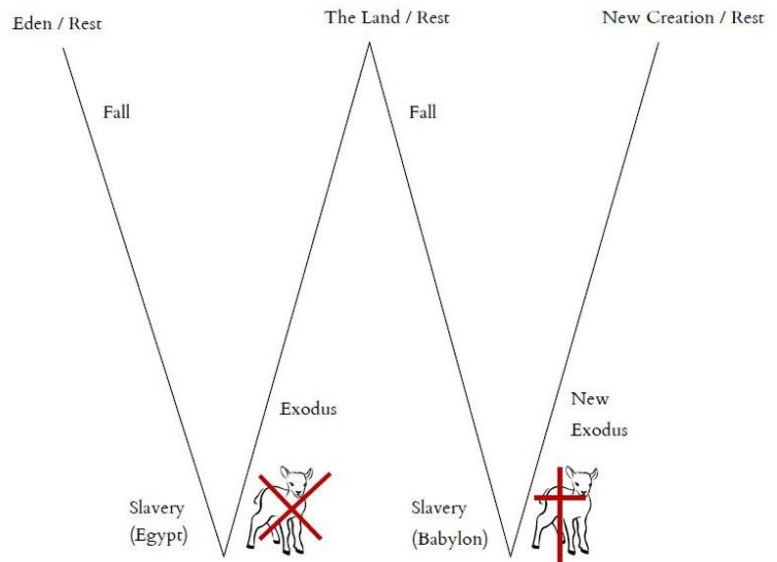
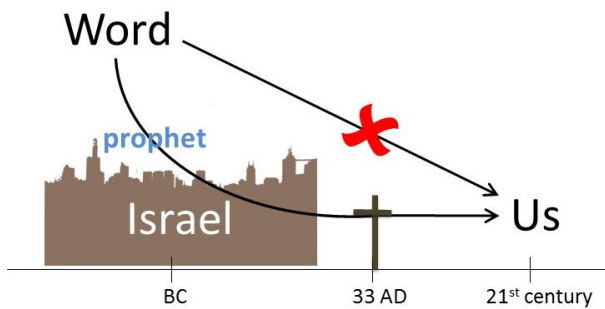
Latter (Writing) Prophets

(Major) Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
(Minor) Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah,
Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah,
Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

(Daniel included with the Writings)



Adapted from a figure by Bob Deffinbaugh, Community Bible Chapel, Richardson, TX



Why is it important to remember that these things are written for us but not to us (Acts 28:25; Rom. 15:4)? Why do we need to notice the original hearers, who, when and where they were? Look at:

- Jeremiah 29:11
- Isaiah 43:19

CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT

2. The Language of Prophecy

“They have a queer way of talking, like people who, instead of proceeding in an orderly manner, ramble off from one thing to the next so that you cannot make heads or tails of them or see what they are getting at.” (Martin Luther)

Often poetry – close relationship between psalms, singing and prophecy (1 Chr. 25:1-7; Acts 2:25-32)

- Think Oracles¹ - take a whole oracle at a time (e.g. Isaiah 13-23; Ezekiel 12-18; Amos 1-2)
- Think Parallelism – the unit (AB or ABC) is one thing – same or contrast or clarifying, intensifying, progression (Isaiah 1:2-9)
- Think Imagery / Metaphor – meant to move the heart not just interest the mind (Ezek. 1:28; 3:3; 43:10) - not code - what is the point of the image? Preach the images – don’t flatten them out.
 - Simile - (X like Y) – Isaiah 1:9, 30
 - Metaphor - (X is Y) – Isaiah 1:21; Zephaniah 3:3
 - (Y) – Isaiah 1:5-6; 10

Read Isaiah 53:5-6. How does an awareness of parallelism and imagery (and the use of that imagery earlier in the book – Isa. 1:5-6) affect our understanding of ‘by his stripes we are healed’? (see also 1 Pet. 2:19-25)

- Think Allusion / Echo - words that remind you of something...
 - e.g. Isaiah 34:9-10; Zephaniah 1:2-3
 - often Mosaic blessings and curses (Mal. 3:9-12 cf. Deut. 28).

3. The Message of Prophecy – Killing & Making Alive!

Compare the different commission narratives. What do we learn about the role and message of a prophet?

Exodus 3:1-6; 4:12-17

Jeremiah 1:4-19

¹ Gordon D Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide for Understanding the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981): 158-59.

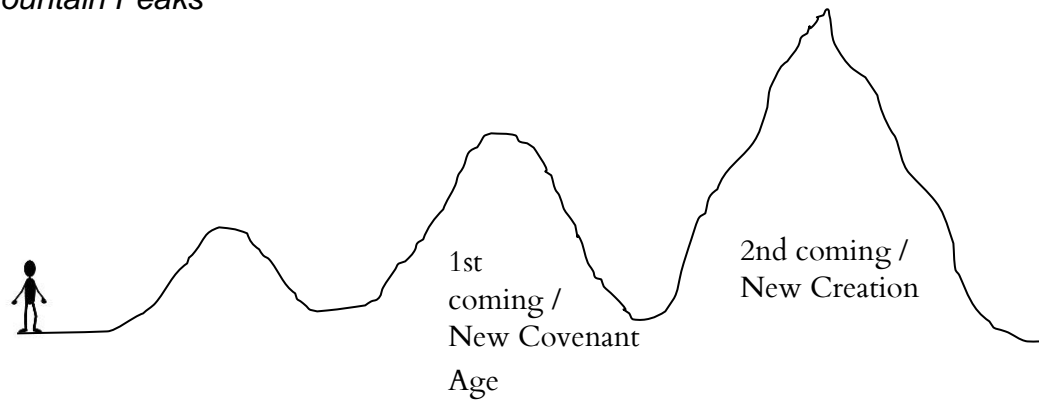
- Fallen men who encounter the LORD (Christ)
- And are commissioned by the LORD (Christ)
- To declare His (Christ's) word
- To His people (and the nations)
- To call them (back) to Him and his Father and his covenant
- To kill and to make alive

Be Christ-centred

Death	Life
Curse	Blessing
Judgment	Salvation
Law	Promise

- Death: You have done this, therefore...
 - (a) Accusation
 - Interpretation of the past – not own interpretation but God's (2 Pet. 1:20-21)
e.g. Ezek. 16-17; Amos 4:6-11
 - Law suit – Micah 6; Isaiah 3:13; 41:1, 21; 43:9-12; Jeremiah 2:1-3:5; Hosea 12:2
 - (b) Threat
 - Covenant enforcement
 - life, health, prosperity, agricultural abundance, respect, and safety.
 - death, disease, drought, dearth, danger, destruction, defeat, deportation, destitution, and disgrace. (Lev. 26; Deut. 28)
 - unconditional – e.g. Jer. 11:11-14
 - conditional – e.g. Jonah 3:4
 - a message of love – Jonah 4:2
 - a window of opportunity
- Or Life
 - Conditional – e.g. Is. 55:6-7; Joel 2:12-17; Amos 5:14-15
 - Unconditional – e.g. Isa. 2:1-4; 9:1-7; 11; 60; 65:17-25
 - New Exodus / Return from Exile / Restoration of Jerusalem/Temple / New Eden / New David (e.g. Isaiah 11)

Mountain Peaks



- Not all peaks always present

Read Isaiah [9:1-7](#) & [13:1-22](#). What are the peaks present in each of these passages?

4. The Heart of Prophecy – Jesus

Preaching which argues from the Prophets for the necessity and supremacy of Christ crucified

Look at Acts 2:14-41. What would you have preached from that passage of Joel? What does Peter preach? Should that be a warning to us?

See also Acts 8:30-35; 28:23.

- The God who deals with the prophets and speaks through them *is Christ* – e.g. Isaiah 45:23//Phil 2:10-11; Zech. 12:10//John 19:37; Is. 60:19-20//Rev. 21:23 – *Christ* is preaching the gospel of death and life to us.
- The prophets were preaching Grace, the sufferings and glories of Christ, a righteousness from God, a New Covenant (Luke 18:31; 24:26-27; Rom 3:21; 16:25-26; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; Hebrews 8; Acts 2).
- Probably less than 2% of OT prophecy is specifically Messianic² (e.g. Isaiah 9; Zechariah 12:10) but all the promises of the prophets are fulfilled in Jesus (2 Cor. 1:20). Less than 5% of OT prophecy specifically refers to the New Covenant age and maybe less than 1% specifically concerns events still future to us now³ but it all *anticipates* (is a foreshadowing of) the great gospel realities, especially the Judgment Day and the New Creation. The pattern of Judgment & Salvation we see in the prophets is fulfilled in the gospel.

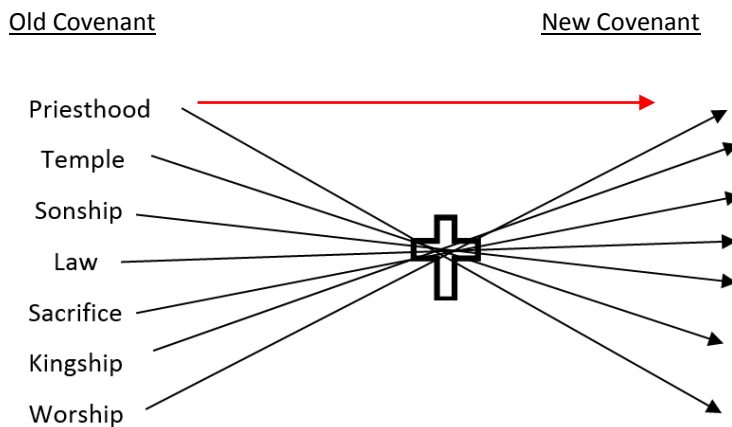
² Klein, Blomberg, & Hubbard, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 303.

³ The percentages are given by William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, & Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Word Publishing, 1993), p. 303.

The covenant curses and blessings are upped in the New Testament. There are still blessings and curses but they've been massively racketed up. The blessing is now perfect fellowship with our Lord in the New Creation (Rev. 21). The curse is now the lake of fire (Rev. 20). These are respectively far far better and far far worse than anything in Deuteronomy 28. When we are dealing with Old Covenant curses and blessings in the prophets we need to see them in the light of the Cross (Gal. 3:10-14) and transpose them into a New Testament key.

Think GOSPEL

- Look at how the NT uses OT prophetic texts and themes – e.g. land, temple, Jerusalem, Israel (cf. esp. Revelation).



- The focus is on the prophet's *words* not their lives – but their lives were in some ways prophetic of Christ – Matt. 12:39-41; Luke 13:33-34; Luke 20:9-15; cf. Jeremiah 18:18; 26:8-15, 20-23; 36:20-26; 37:11-38:13
- We should usually identify with the *hearers* of prophecy not the prophet. But the prophet's relationship with God/Christ is *in some ways* a foreshadowing of ours –
 Jeremiah – His relationship with God (e.g. ch. 1; 12; 15) → New Covenant (31:31-34)
 Ezekiel – Stood on his feet by the Spirit (2:2) → Restoration of Israel (36-37)
 Moses – Desire of Num. 11:29 → Acts 2 (cf. Jonah as preacher to Gentiles)

BIG IDEA: This is Christ's Word through his Prophets to bring them back to him and we should expect it to be full of Him, full of Christ