

Survey of the Bible - Prophets

February 8, 2015

Who are prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures?

Prophets, as religious intermediaries, are members of humanity who mediate between humanity and divinity

Common descriptions in scripture:

vessels of communication

intercessors

wonder workers

oracle makers

interpreter of dreams

interpreter of words of previous prophets

-not every prophet, named or unnamed, has “call story”

-the belief is that a prophet spoke “to” and “for” God

Related Vocabulary: Man of God, Seer, Visionary, Diviner

Synonyms: Sentinel, Messenger **Overlapping Role:** Judge

Major prophets include all of the following: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Ezekiel and Daniel.

Minor prophets (the Twelve Prophets) include all of the following: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Categories of Prophetic Activities:

Intercession; Composition; Wage War; Perform Miracles; Appoint Monarch;
Advise Monarchs; Executioner;

Archive Monarchies; Archive Oracles; Mediation; Construct & Guard Temple (2nd temple); Evaluate/Legitimize Torah; Divine Inquiry; Proclamation

Prophetic Activities:

1) **intercede with YHWH on behalf of human beings** – Abraham who is identified by Abimelech as a prophet in Genesis 20:7, Moses in Numbers 12:13

2) **performed musical compositions** – in Exodus 15:20 and the communities of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun in 1Chronicles 25:1-2

3) **commanded military forces** – Moses in Numbers 31:3; Deborah in Judges 4 & 5

- 4) **performed miracles** – Moses in Numbers 21:8-9; Elijah in 1Kings 17:13-16; Elisha in 2Kings 2:19-22
- 5) **appointed monarchs** – Samuel in 1Samuel 10:1; Nathan in 1Kings 1:34; Ahijah in 1Kings 11:29-31
- 6) **advised monarchs** – Samuel in 1Samuel 15:1; Gad in 2Samuel 24:11-13; Nathan in 2 Samuel 7:2; an unnamed prophet in 1Kings 20:13-15; Micaiah and prophetic community in 1Kings 22; Jonah ben Ammitai in 2Kings 14:25; Isaiah in 2Kings 19:6ff; Huldah in 2Kings 22:14; unnamed prophet in 2Chronicles 25:15; Jeremiah in 2Chronicles 36:12
- 7) **archived monarchal reigns** – Samuel and Nathan chronicled the reign of David in 1Chronicles 29:29; Nathan and Ahijah recorded the reign of Solomon in 2Chronicles 9:29, here Iddo is credited with keeping records of the reign of Jeroboam bet Nebat; Shemaiah chronicled the reign of Rehoboam of Judah in 2Chronicles 12:15; Isaiah ben Amos archived the reign of Uzziah in 2Chronicles 26:22 and Hezeian in 2Chronicles 32:32. (All of the annals of the Kings mentioned in the Book of Kings are anonymous, as are some records mentioned in Chronicles that are not delineated here.)
- 8) **mediated human disputes** – Oded in 2Chronicles 28:9-15
- 9) **archived prophetic utterances** – Iddo in 2 Chronicles chapters 9, 12, 13 and Baruch for Jeremiah in Jeremiah 36:4
- 10) **constructed and guarded the temple** – Haggai and Zechariah in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14
- 11) **inquired of the divine** – Moses in Exodus 18:15; seers and prophets in 1Samuel 9:9; the messengers of Ahaziah and Baalzebub instead of YHWH in 2Kings 1:2ff; Jeremiah in Jeremiah 37:7; David by means of the Ark of the Covenant in 1Chronicles 21:30. And Rachel in Genesis 25:22; Ahijah in 1Kings 4:5; Michaiah and the royal prophets in 1Kings 2:1ff (2Chronicles 18:6ff0; Elisha in 2Kings 3:11; anonymous man of God in 2Kings 8:8; Huldah in 2Kings 22:13 (2Chronicle 34:21; Jeremiah in Jeremiah 21:2; 37:7; Ezekiel in 14:7; 20:1ff
- 12) **and proclaimed the word of YHWH** – indirectly Aaron in Exodus 7:1, Directly Moses Exodus 12:8; (others too numerous to mention.

Prophetic Communities: Children/Disciples of the Prophets; Band of Prophets; Associate of Prophets

Seers – Charged Fees: Samuel – prophet & seer (identifies self as seer); Gad

Visionaries – via supernatural mechanism – Gad

1&2 Samuel – David’s cohort

Isaiah, Amos, Obadiah, Naham, Habbakak, Micah

Divination – Baalam – executed in Joshua

Isaiah 8:2 – warrior, Judge Prophet

Jeremiah 14:14 – synonym for prophet

Jeremiah 29:8 “Pay no heed to diviners”

Jeremiah 27

Associated with priesthood, with household Gods

Prophetic Communities

Elijah & Elisha

Isaiah & anonymous female (baby mama)

Community with/of disciples/children

Intercession

Abraham – Genesis 20

Psalmists – prophesying with musical instruments

Military

Performing miracles – prototypes for Jesus and John

Appointing monarchs

Advising monarchs

Archiving – Samuel & Nathan (reign of David) – less than 1% of population was literate enough to archive

evaluate and legitimize scripture

-hold accountable to former oracles – canon

constructing and archiving the Temple

David not a prophet – needs to go to the Ark of the Covenant

Rachel is a “prophet” – inquiring of God and God responds to her directly,
narrative is constructed as such

Mourner’s Guild – Jeremiah 9:16-20

Heman Family Singers – 1 Chronicles 6:31-33; 15:16-19; 16:40-42; 25:1-8

Elijah – 2Kings 1,2, 17-19, 21 “Elijah” = “Lord of the Hairy Ones”

Elisha – 2Kings; 3:9-20, 4-8