

Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church
Adult Sunday School
The Prophetic Call Narratives – Week 1

Introduction to the Prophets: Origin and Role of the Old Testament Prophets

1. Design of the Class

“Biblical prophecy is not a process in which God dislodges the mind of man. Its true conception is that it lifts the human mind to the highest plain of intercourse with God. And it is of the very essence of Biblical religion that its exercise lies in the sphere of consciousness.” (Geerhardus Vos)

“The prophets were not wont to build their persuasion on the favour and love of God on their being prophets, and having revelations; but on their being sincere saints.” (Jonathan Edwards)

As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. (James 5:10).

2. Origin of OT Prophecy (Deuteronomy 18:9-14)

a. Context (1-8) — The _____ priesthood.

b. Dark Background (9-14) – _____ practices in “*the land that the LORD your God is giving you ...*”

“Thus, there is seen to be a distinction between the people of God and the world. The world has its sources of information, but the people of God are not to use them. When the Church, discarding the Word of God turns to the wisdom of men, she does a heinous thing. The world, by its wisdom knows not God. The Canaanites, by their wisdom, became an abomination.” (E.J. Young)

3. The Role of the Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15-22)

a. The Prophet (15-19) “*And I will put my _____ in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.*”

b. Two-Fold Role – BOTH/AND

1) Prophetic office as OT institution (cf., Luke 11:50,51)

2) Prophetic office as Messianic promise (cf., Acts 3:22-23)

4. Prophetic Revelation—In General

- a. Authority (“*Thus says the LORD ...*”) (cf., Deuteronomy 18:18)
- b. Mode (vision, dreams, etc. ...) (cf. Numbers 12:6)
- c. Unity of Message – The **objective**, revelatory character of the prophetic word results in unity within prophetic revelation/message within the diversity of personalities and circumstances unique to the prophet.

5. Prophetic Revelation—The Theology of The Prophets

“... the shortest way of treating the subject is to trace the Prophets to the Law, from which they derived their doctrine, like streams from a fountain; for they placed it before them as their rule, so that they may be justly held and declared to be its interpreters, who utter nothing but what connected with the Law.” (John Calvin)

“So far as we know, the mission of all prophets was to enforce and vindicate the law.”
(Geerhardus Vos)

6. Call Narratives and “Prophetic Consciousness”

“... in giving his revelation to the prophets God did take the personal characteristics of the recipients into account.” (E.J. Young)

“Although no prophesy ever came by the will of man (1 Peter 1:21), yet the Holy Spirit has ordinarily adjusted the divine thoughts of revelation to one another and to some one central idea which was more congenial to the mind of his chosen organ. The prophet was not placed as a stranger in the midst of a mass of unassimilated material, but made home in a world of truth where he would discover on all sides the correlates and implications of the supreme thought that filled his soul. In this sense, then, it is entirely legitimate to ask what is the dominating thought in the mind of Isaiah and whether it may not furnish some explanation of the unrivalled breadth and depth of his teaching. What is there in the prophet’s peculiar point of view that will account for the grandeur and richness of the scene he unrolls for us?” (Geerhardus Vos)