

## INTERPRETING THE PROPHETS

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### Introduction:

- 4 Major prophets (Major regarding length)
- 12 Minor prophets
- All written between 760 and 460 B.C.

### The Nature of Prophecy:

#### A. Misunderstanding: "Foretelling or prediction"

Reality: Less than 2 % of OT prophecy

#### B. Prophets as "covenant executors"

- Spokespersons who Speak for God

Formula: "And the word of the Lord came upon..."

- Covenant enforcers who proclaimed the covenant blessing and curses to Israel.

The prophets message was not their own, but God's (Exod. 3:1; Isa. 6; Jer. 1; Hos.1:2,; Amos 7:12-15)

(See handout)

I.e. They didn't invent curses, blessing or message, but came from Mosaic Covenant, see especially Deut.

Blessings: See handout

Curses: See handout

- Example: Ezekiel

Formula: 1:3

Explanation: 2:7; 3:1-11

Illustration: 20:27-39 compared to Dt. 12:1-10, 13; Dt. 28)

#### C. Prophets were Preachers!

Text: God's Covenant as revealed to Moses

Message: Repentance and Faith in God's covenant provisions.

### Interpreting the Prophets

#### A. Historical Context:

Prophets lived in period which called especially for covenant enforcement mediation.

God leaving a "paper trail" of His warnings before judgment

God preparing for the salvation through the Messiah.

Political and Social History inter-weaved with religious history

#### B. Literary Forms:

Examples: Types of prophetic oracles

##### 1. Covenant Lawsuit (Is. 3:13-26; Hos. 3:3-17, etc.)

1. Court convenes: (13-14)

2. Indictment: (14b-16)

3. Evidence: context

4. Judgment sentence: (17-26)

##### 2. Woe oracle: A cry of "grief" when facing disaster or death like at a funeral.

Example Habakkuk 2:6-8; Micah 2:1-5; Zeph. 2:5-7

1. Announcement of distress
2. Reason for distress
3. Prediction of doom.

3. Promise Oracle: or "salvation oracle"

Example: Amos 9:11-15

1. Future mentioned "in that day"
2. Restoration described as a radical change
3. Blessing in covenantal categories (see redemptive historical chart)  
i.e. Temporal covenant = temporal categories = prefiguring  
blessing in Christ

spiritual

**C. Two Level Meanings: Present covenant and New covenant**