

THE PROPHETIC USE OF THE COVENANT

A Selected OT Timeline

- Abraham – about (c.) 2000-1800 BCE
- Children of Israel enter Egypt c.1875 BCE
- Exodus from Israel – c. 1446 BCE
- Moses death c. 1406 BCE
- Conquest of Palestine c. 1400 BCE
- Tribal confederation c. 1400 – 1050 – form of rule is called a Theocracy
- United Monarchy 1050 – 930 BCE – early prophetic movement
 - Saul – 1050-1010 BCE
 - David – 1010-970 BCE
 - Solomon – 970 – 931 BCE
- Divided Monarchy – Classical prophetic movement
 - North (Israel) – 931 – 722 BCE – (No Covenant Kings out of 20)
 - South (Judah) - 931 – 586 BCE – 19 Kings/ 1 Queen (Occasional Covenant King)
- Judah exile to Babylon beings c. 609 BCE and Jerusalem destroyed - 586 BCE
- Return from exile begins c. 539 BCE
- Last OT prophet – c. 400 BCE

I. The Prophetic Movement and the Covenant

A. For our purposes in this study, we will use “prophetism” in the narrow sense, particularly the job or activity of a concentrated succession of men – especially Joel, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel – who appeared in the brief span of only two centuries preceded by and followed by lesser prophets.

B. The basis for the prophetic movement is God Himself and His chosen method of further revealing Himself and His will to His people. This is the Covenant God, Yahweh, the one who lives in a saving relationship with His people.

C. These prophets were called by God (directly or indirectly) to address all aspects of life: the meaning of true worship, idolatry, social ills, national and international affairs. In addition to speaking God's Word and will to the King and to the people, the prophets also interceded for the people before God.

II. Examples of Prophets at work

A. Amos 2:6-8; 5:10-12

B. Hosea 6:4-10

C. Micah 6:6

D. Zechariah 7:8 - 10

E. Isaiah 42:1-6; 49:8 – 13

F. Jeremiah 31:31 – 34

- Highpoint of Jeremiah's prophecies contains only OT reference to a “new covenant.”
- v. 31 - “The time is coming” and v. 33 “after that time” connects new covenant to Messianic age. – To be continued...

SUMMARY THOUGHTS ON THE PROPHETS AND THE COVENANT

- In the face of Israel's apostasy and infidelity, they declare Yahweh's judgment by drawing on curses traditionally associated with the covenant;
- In this period of the divided monarchy, the prophets confronted the wayward kings with God's word of judgment lest the king and the people rely inappropriately on the Davidic covenant. We find prophets in the court of the kings, interfering in every way in the political life of their own land. In all eras, they enjoy great freedom to do so, and they berate kings for their personal lives and for their public policies.
- These rather sober figures framed their oracles and pronouncements that drew on a conventional stock of ideas and concepts with roots deep in Israel's covenant history.
- Their deep attachment to covenant traditions is reflected in their profound concern for Israelite society – for the poor, the downtrodden, widows and orphans, the stranger, and the prisoner.