

# Introduction to Prophetism:

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- I. The Prophetic Period
- II. The Prophetic Personage
- III. The Prophetic Perception
- IV. The Prophetic Perspective
- V. The Prophetic Prediction
- VI. The Prophetic Presentation
- VII. The Prophetic History

# I. The Prophetic Period

- The period following the Mosaic Era was marked by decline and disintegration:
  - Private concern vs. national unity;
  - Religion became corrupt;
  - Ordinances of the Mosaic Law were neglected;
  - Heathen ideas;
  - Baal Worship;
  - Central place of worship was abandoned.
  - Judgeship failed.

# I. The Prophetic Period

- The judgeship having failed, prophetism arises to take its place. In view of the establishment of the monarchical kingdom, and the final captivity the prophetic order is instituted.
- The prophetic office was created as a necessary adjunct to the theocracy.
- Organization of the theocracy under a human ruler produced a new body of revelation known as prophetism.

## II. The Prophetic Personage:

### A. The Connotation & Conception of the Prophet:

1. Forthteller (Isaiah 43:27);

2. Seer (1 Samuel 9:11, 18, 19; 1 Chronicles 9:22);

3. Watchman (Jer. 6:17);

4. Man of the Spirit (Hosea 9:7), & a man of God (1 Kings 12:22; 1:12).

## II. The Prophetic Personage:

### B. The Commission & Call of a Prophet:

1. Not confined to one family;
2. Not confined to one external institution;
3. Chosen from the Covenant People;
4. Prophetic call came in the midst of crisis and so overwhelmed the prophet that there was no release until he had performed his commission.

## II. The Prophetic Personage:

### C. The Certification & Credentials of the Prophet:

1. The clarity of the word which came to him indicated that it had come from beyond himself.
2. The compulsion to declare God's word even when it opposed his own will demonstrated that there was an objective communication present.
3. The consciousness of an enabling power from without, strengthening and supporting him, gave evidence of a divine commissioning.

## II. The Prophetic Personage:

### C. The Certification & Credentials of the Prophet:

4. The consistency of the revelation with the terms of an original commission and with Jehovah's previously revealed plan proves the authenticity of the commission.
5. The contradiction to what the people wished to hear pointed to the fact that the utterance came from a true prophet.
6. The crisis of the time bestowed an urgency amid moral and spiritual decline. This compelled the true prophet to speak the whole counsel of God.
7. The caution against divination and other forms of false prophecy brought a necessary contrast to genuine prophesying.

## II. The Prophetic Personage:

### D. The Classification & Connections of the Prophet:

1. Elijah & Elisha are “*oral prophets*” because they did not commit their prophecies to writings.
2. Daniel and David may be classified as “*unofficial prophets*” for they occupied another position or had another title yet spoke important prophecies.

## II. The Prophetic Personage:

### D. The Classification & Connections of the Prophet:

3. Some assert that the “*former writing prophets*” consists of the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, and Kings whereas the “*latter writings prophets*” consists of the books of the major and minor prophets. Daniel is listed among the writings rather than among the prophets because the book is apocalyptic and not purely prophetic.

## II. The Prophetic Personage:

### D. The Classification & Connections of the Prophet:

4. There is a prophetic succession in the history of Israel the like of which cannot be duplicated in any other nation. The formal prophetic tradition was continuous from Moses forward. After Moses the prophet appears as “actors” in the national drama. Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, Shamai, Ahijah, and others maintain continuity. The biographical or pre-literary prophets like Elijah appear first, then comes the classical prophetic literature of the Golden Age of prophecy in which the prophecies (oracles) were written down. Lastly, there are the prophets of the post-exilic era.

### III. The Prophetic Perception:

In determining the manner in which divine communication came to the prophets we are left to the statements of the prophets themselves, who sincerely believed that they were recipients of objective revelation.

Consider the following statements:

# III. The Prophetic Perception:

- The mode of reception remains one of the great mysteries of prophetism.
- Its inexplicable character is the result of a supernatural operation.
- The prophet is aware that the revelation is directly given and that is not the product of his own agency.
- He recognizes in himself an organ of revelation.
- He distinguishes between his words and the words of Jehovah. He knows he is under divine influence, entirely distinct from his own subjectivity.

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# III. The Prophetic Perception:

- A. Perception through the outward sense (1 Samuel 3:8-9; Moses' experience at the burning bush illustrates the perception of the eye).
- B. Perception through the inward sense (2 Kings 6:17); it has objectivity apart from his own thinking processes; it is an inner experience.
- C. Perception through ecstasy (i.e., enhancing the natural activities of the human mind); e.g., dreams.

# IV. The Prophetic Perspective:

A. Sees the future as past;

B. Near future;

C. Remote future.

# V. The Prophetic Prediction:

- A. Gentilic Prophecies: Four Kingdoms of the book of Daniel: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.
- B. Nationalistic Prophecies: Woe judgments against Edom, Damascus, Tyre, and Egypt.
- C. Hebraic Prophecies: 12 tribes of Israel and Israel's over-all destiny amid the nations.
- D. Messianic Prophecies reveal the truths of both advents

# V. The Prophetic Prediction:

- E. Ponerologic Prophecies announce the outcome of the enemies of the kingdom of God. The destiny of Satan is forecast.
- F. Personal Prophecies name individual men before their actual birth-Cyrus, John the Baptist, & Jesus Christ.
- G. Theocratic Prophecies anticipate the glorious kingdom.
- H. Municipal prophecies touch certain cities: Jerusalem, Nineveh, Babylon.

# V. The Prophetic Prediction:

- I. Ecclesiastical prophecies predict the course of the church (in the N.T.; church was never revealed in O.T.).
- J. Last-day prophecies describe the conditions before the inauguration of the kingdom age.
- K. Cosmic prophecies disclose the changes to take place both celestially and terrestrially.

# VI. The Prophetic Presentation:

A. The audience.

B. The Form:

1. Spoken Prophecies;
2. Written Prophecies;
3. Enacted Prophecies;
4. Symbolical Prophecies.

C. The Content:

1. Pleading;
2. Prediction;
3. Promise.

## VII. The Prophetic Philosophy:

- A. Prophetism is an interpretation of history, a philosophy of history.
- B. The account of Israel's doings are interpreted to be an account of God's doing (e.g., deliverance from the bondage of Egypt; Babylonian Captivity).
- C. Hebrews possessed a philosophy of history which related all events to an over-all transcendent purpose.

## VII. The Prophetic Philosophy:

- D. The former prophets were prophets of action.
- E. Moses was a legislative prophet.
- F. Joshua, Judges, and Samuel were executive prophets.
- G. David and Solomon were devotional prophets.
- H. Prophetism in the O.T. never degenerates into the mystical or metaphysical.