

Understanding the Old Testament Prophets

I. Encountering the prophets

- A. What is a “prophet”?—Num.12:6
- B. The purpose of prophets—1 Cor. 14:3
- C. Proof of a prophet—Deut.18:21-22/ 13:1-3/ 1 John 4:1-4
- D. The purpose of prediction—John 13:19/14:29

II. Why so difficult?

- A. Reference to obscure historical events
- B. Poetic imagery—Joel 3:18/ Ezek. 28:12-14; 31:3, 6, 9/ Isa.30:26; 22:23-25
- C. Apocalyptic language & visions—Isa.13:10; 34:4, 8-10/ Ezek.38:22/Zech.14:12
- D. Use of hyperbole—Isa.64:6-7/ Jer.25:33; 33:22/ Obad.4
- E. Spiritualized usage—Isa.28:16/ Micah 4:1-4/Zech.2:4-5
- F. Acted-out parables—Isa.20:1-6/ Jer.27:2ff/ Ezek. 4 & 5/ Zech.11:4-16
- G. Typological usage—Hos.11:1/ Mic.7:19/ Isa.11:15
- H. Messianic merging

III. Understanding the prophetic books

A. The New Testament as code-breaker—1 Peter 1:10-12/ 2 Cor.3:14/ Luke 24:45

B. Recognizing recurring imagery

1. Anthropomorphisms and animal images—Isa.55:12/ Jer.6:2
2. Agricultural images: vineyard, trees, desert transformation—Mic.7:1/ Jer.11:16/ Isa.32:15; 35:1
3. Images of divine wrath: unquenchable fire, darkness, seismic & cosmic disruption
4. Rivers and water—Joel 3:18/ Ezek.47:1/ Zech.14:8
5. The Exodus, the highway and gathering from the nations—Isa.11:11, 15-16/ Mic.7:15, 19

C. Recognizing recurring themes

1. God’s righteousness and sovereignty
2. God’s expectations
3. God’s complaint—covenant violation: primarily idolatry and injustice
4. God’s threat of judgment: usually invasion and conquest
5. God’s call to repent
6. Rescue of the remnant from impending peril
7. Ultimate salvation in the messianic kingdom

D. What the New Testament tells us about the messianic age (see chart on reverse side)

*Old Testament Descriptions of the Messianic Era (the Kingdom Age)
fulfilled in the New Testament*

chart prepared by Steve Gregg

O.T. Passage	Davidic Kingdom	Gentiles Subdued	Exiles return 2nd Exodus Highway to Zion	Peace and Prosperity	Temple Worship	Salvation Restoration	Everlasting duration	N.T. References and allusions
Psalm 72	verse 1	verses 8-11	verse 4	vs. 3, 7, 16	-	vs. 12-14	vs.5,7,17,19	-
Isaiah 2:2-4	-	verses 2-4	-	verse 4	verse 2	-	-	-
Isa. 9:1-7	verses 6-7	—	-	verses 3, 7	—	verse 4	verse 7	Matt. 4:12-17
Isa. 11:1-16	verse 1	vs.13-14	vs.11f, 15f	verses 6-9	-	-	-	Romans 15:10
Isa. 35:1-10	-	-	vs. 8-10	-	-	vs. 1-7	verse 10	Hebrews 12:12 Matthew 11:1-6
Jeremiah 30-33	30:9 33:15, 17, 21-22	30:16	30:3, 10 31:8-10, 21 32:37, 44	30:19-20 33:6	31:14 33:18, 21f	30:7-8, 17 31:11, 34 33:8, 16	32:39-40	Matthew 2:17f Luke 22:20 Hebrews 8:7-13 13:20
Ezekiel 34 and 37	34:23-24 37:24-25	34:28-29	34:11-13 37:21	34:14-16 25-29	37:26-28	34:22 37:23	37:26-28	John 10:11,14 Hebrews 13:20
Joel 2:28-3:21	-	3:4-7	3:1	3:18	-	2:32 3:21	3:20	Acts 2:16-21
Amos 9:11ff	verse 11	verse 12	verses 14-15	verse 13	—	-	verse 15	Acts 15:14-17
Zechariah 14	-	vs. 3, 14, 16-19	-	-	vs. 16-21	vs. 10-11	-	John 7:37-39
Additional Passages	II Sam.7:12ff Isaiah 55:3	Isaiah 66:20	Isaiah 10:21	numerous	Ezek.40:38f 43:18 Isaiah 66:21	Isaiah 45:17 59:20-21 Jer. 23:6	Daniel 2:44 7:13-14	
Fulfilled:	Acts 2:29ff 13:32ff	Romans 15:16	John 11:51f Romans 9:27	John 14:27 16:33/Eph. 2:14-17	Heb. 7:12 10:1-10,18	Romans 11:25-26	II Cor.4:18 Heb.5:9	