

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 13B, Session 15, Hermeneutical Principles for Interpreting Prophetic Writings Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 13B, Session 15, Hermeneutical Principles for Interpreting Prophetic Writings, Biblicalearning.org, BeL

Robert Vannoy's lecture explores hermeneutical principles for interpreting prophetic writings, particularly focusing on Isaiah 11:10-12. The lecture examines varying approaches to interpretation, including those of John Oswalt and J.A. Alexander, and Vannoy offers his own perspective leaning towards a pre-millennial eschatology. A key theme is the concept of predictive prophecy as potentially conditional, illustrated through examples like Jeroboam, Ahab, and the story of Jonah. The lecture distinguishes between direct prediction and typological prediction, using examples like the Passover lamb and referencing scholars like John Stek and Vos to discuss the importance of keeping a proper perspective on the use of typological interpretation. Vannoy warns against the danger of falling into allegory, emphasizing the need to ensure the correspondence between type and antitype retains oneness of meaning. Ultimately, the lecture seeks to provide a framework for understanding the nuances and complexities inherent in interpreting biblical prophecy.

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 13B,
Session 15 – Double click icon to play in Windows media
player or go to the Biblicalearning.org [BeL] Site and click the
audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets →
Foundations).**



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3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 13B, Session 15, Hermeneutical Principles for Interpreting Prophetic Writings

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Robert Vannoy's "Foundations of Biblical Prophecy: Lecture 13b":

Briefing Document: Robert Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy: Lecture 13b

Overall Theme: This lecture excerpt focuses on hermeneutical principles for interpreting prophetic writings in the Bible, specifically addressing the challenges of interpreting Old Testament prophecies in light of the New Testament and the potential for both literal and figurative fulfillments. Vannoy explores different approaches to prophetic interpretation, emphasizing the importance of considering conditionality and distinguishing between direct and typological prophecy.

Key Ideas and Facts:

1. **Approaches to Interpreting Specific Prophecies (Isaiah 11:10-12):** Vannoy presents different viewpoints on the interpretation of specific prophecies, using Isaiah 11:10-12 as an example. He outlines the following approaches:
 - **Return from Babylonian Exile:** Some interpret the passage as referring to the return of the Jews from Babylon in 539 B.C. However, this interpretation raises questions about the Messiah's role in the event. As Oswalt notes, "If so, the Messiah had not yet been revealed and could hardly be the ensign around which the people rallied."
 - **New Israel (The Church):** Others, like Calvin and E.J. Young, see the prophecy as fulfilled in the gathering of believers to the Messiah from all over the world, representing the church.
 - **Future Restoration of Israel:** A third perspective, favored by Oswalt and aligned with a pre-millennial eschatology, suggests the passage points to a future "great

final ingathering of the Jewish people...in connection with their coming to Christ." This view connects the prophecy to the Zionist movement.

- **J.A. Alexander:** Alexander's commentary suggests that the prophecy was not entirely fulfilled in the return from Babylon or the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews and should be expected "when all Israel shall be saved."
 - **Vannoy's View:** He leans towards a future restoration of Jewish people to their homeland and advocates for looking for equivalents to places like Assyria in the end times but stops short of insisting on a strictly literal fulfillment. He questions the "spiritualization hermeneutic."
1. **Predictive Prophecy May Be Conditional:** Vannoy emphasizes that some prophecies are conditional, meaning their fulfillment depends on certain actions or responses. He uses examples from the Old Testament to illustrate this point.
 - **Jeremiah 18:5-10:** This passage is crucial for understanding conditionality. God states that if a nation repents of its evil after being warned of destruction, He will relent. Conversely, if a nation that is promised blessing does evil, God will reconsider the good He intended.
 - **1 Kings 11 (Jeroboam):** Ahijah's prophecy to Jeroboam includes a clear condition: "If you do whatever I command you...I will build you a dynasty." Because Jeroboam didn't meet the conditions, the prediction was not fulfilled.
 - **1 Kings 21:19-27 (Ahab):** Ahab's repentance, albeit partial, led to a modification of the judgment predicted by Elijah. The disaster was postponed to the time of Ahab's son.
 - **Jonah:** Nineveh's repentance led to the city's immediate salvation, though it was eventually destroyed later.
 - **Isaiah 38 (Hezekiah):** Hezekiah's prayer led to God adding 15 years to his life.
 - **Limits on Conditionality (J.B. Payne):** Vannoy references J.B. Payne's discussion of conditionality, warning against rendering all prophecy uncertain. Payne suggests that for a prophecy to remain conditional, it must be of "near application" and possess "elements capable of satisfaction by the prophet's contemporary." Essentially, conditional prophecies are not typically long-range prophecies connected to God's overarching redemptive plan. Vannoy adds that God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 is an example of a promise that is not explicitly conditional.

1. **Kinds of Predictive Prophecy:** Vannoy distinguishes between two types of predictive prophecy:
 - **Direct Prediction:** A verbal assertion of something that will happen in the future. Micah 5:2, predicting the ruler coming from Bethlehem, is given as an example.
 - **Typological Prediction:** An institution, person, or event that finds its highest application of meaning in a later institution, person, or event in redemptive history. "A typological prediction is an institution, person, or an event that finds its highest application of meaning in an institution, person or an event of a later period in redemptive history." Examples given are the Passover lamb and the serpent on the pole, both prefiguring Christ. Typological prediction is accomplished by "pre-figuring or imaging" rather than verbal assertion.
 - **John Stek on Typology:** Stek defines a type as "a historical reality which served a significant historical purpose within its own historical horizon...but it was also fashioned by Providence in such a way as to contribute to the larger purpose of God."
 - **Mickelsen on Typology:** Mickelsen cautions against sensationalism in typological interpretation but acknowledges that interpreters can observe historical parallels while remaining aware of the differences between the type and antitype. He warns against allegory.
 - **Vos on Typology:** Vos emphasizes the connection between symbol and type. "The things symbolized and the things typified are not different sets of things. They are in reality the same things, only different in this respect that they come first on a lower stage of development in redemption, and then again, in the later period, is on a higher stage." The bond between type and antitype must be a bond of "vital continuity in the progress of redemption."
 - **Danger of Allegory:** Vannoy warns against falling into allegory, where the correspondence between type and antitype is lost, and gives the example of Chrysostom's interpretation of Herod's slaughter of the infants. He defines this as "bringing meaning to a text that has absolutely nothing to do with the text itself."

Quotes:

- (Re: Isaiah 11:10-12) Oswalt: "If so, the Messiah had not yet been revealed and could hardly be the ensign around which the people rallied."

- (Re: Isaiah 11:10-12) Calvin: "Certainly, believers were gathered to the Messiah from every part of the world..."
- (Re: Isaiah 11:10-12) Alexander: "The prophecy was not fulfilled in the return of the refugees after Sennacherib's discomfiture, nor in the return from Babylon, and but partially in the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews. The complete fulfillment is to be expected when all Israel shall be saved."
- (Re: Conditionality, Jeremiah 18:7-10) "If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down, destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned."
- (Re: Typological Prediction) "A typological prediction is an institution, person, or an event that finds its highest application of meaning in an institution, person or an event of a later period in redemptive history."
- (Re: Typology, John Stek) "In other words, a type is a historical reality which served a significant historical purpose within its own historical horizon (not merely a symbolic one), but it was also fashioned by Providence in such a way as to contribute to the larger purpose of God, namely, to reveal in successive stages and operations the very truths and principles which were to find in the realities of the gospel their move to complete manifestation."
- (Re: Typology, Vos) "The things symbolized and the things typified are not different sets of things. They are in reality the same things, only different in this respect that they come first on a lower stage of development in redemption, and then again, in the later period, is on a higher stage."

Implications:

- Interpreting prophecy requires careful consideration of historical context, literary genre, and theological themes.
- Recognizing the potential for conditionality in prophecy is crucial for avoiding overly rigid or literalistic interpretations.
- Understanding the difference between direct and typological prophecy helps to appreciate the richness and complexity of biblical revelation.
- Caution must be exercised when employing typological interpretation to avoid imposing allegorical meanings that are not supported by the text.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 13B, Session 15, Hermeneutical Principles for Interpreting Prophetic Writings

Prophetic Interpretation: A Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Oswalt, what are the different interpretations of Isaiah 11:10-12?
2. How does J.A. Alexander interpret the references to nations like Edom and Moab in Isaiah 11?
3. What is the significance of Jeremiah 18:5-10 for understanding predictive prophecy?
4. Explain how the story of Ahab in 1 Kings 21 illustrates the principle of conditional prophecy.
5. How did Hezekiah's actions affect the prophecy concerning his death in Isaiah 38?
6. What are the two qualifications J.B. Payne suggests for a prophecy to remain conditional?
7. What is the difference between direct and typological prediction? Give examples.
8. According to John Stek, what is the role of Providence in typological prediction?
9. What danger does Mickelsen warn against in the interpretation of types?
10. According to Vos, what is the relationship between a symbol and a type?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Oswalt considers interpretations that see the passage as referring to the return from Babylon, the new Israel (the church), or a future ingathering of the Jewish people who come to Christ. He leans toward the latter, suggesting a connection between the return of exiled Israel and their conversion to Christianity.
2. Alexander acknowledges that the prophecy was not fulfilled in the return of the refugees after Sennacherib's discomfiture, nor in the return from Babylon, and but partially in the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews. Rather, he notes that these names refer to nations neighboring Israel, often enemies, and Christian

writers see them as representing enemies of God in general or the heathen world.

3. Jeremiah 18:5-10 illustrates that God's pronouncements of judgment or blessing are conditional, dependent on the actions of the nation or kingdom involved, demonstrating God's flexibility in responding to repentance or wickedness.
4. Ahab's repentance, though partial, led to a modification of the original prophecy; the judgment predicted was postponed to the time of his son, demonstrating an unstated condition of repentance influencing the timing of prophetic fulfillment.
5. Hezekiah's prayer and weeping led to God adding fifteen years to his life, illustrating the conditional nature of prophecy where prayer can alter a seemingly fixed divine decree.
6. Payne suggests that a conditional prophecy must have near application and possess elements capable of satisfaction by the prophet's contemporary.
7. Direct prediction is a verbal assertion of something that will happen solely in the future, like Micah 5:2 regarding the Messiah's birthplace, whereas typological prediction involves an institution, person, or event that finds its highest application of meaning in a later event in redemptive history, such as the Passover lamb prefiguring Christ.
8. Stek asserts that a type is a historical reality fashioned by Providence to contribute to God's larger purpose, progressively revealing truths and principles that find complete manifestation in the gospel.
9. Mickelsen warns against sensationalism in typological interpretation, urging interpreters to be historically accurate and aware of the differences between the type and the antitype, avoiding the abuse of finding unwarranted spiritual significance.
10. Vos explains that symbols and types are not different things but the same truth presented at different stages of redemptive history. The symbol represents a present spiritual reality, while the type is prospective, pointing to a fuller realization of that same truth in the future.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the challenges and potential pitfalls in interpreting prophetic passages like Isaiah 11, citing different commentators' perspectives and explaining the complexities involved.
2. Analyze the concept of conditional prophecy, using examples from the Old Testament, and evaluate the safeguards proposed by J.B. Payne to prevent the misuse of this interpretative principle.
3. Compare and contrast direct and typological prediction, providing biblical examples of each and discussing the significance of typology in understanding the unfolding of God's redemptive plan.
4. Explain Vos's understanding of the relationship between symbol and type, and discuss how this framework can help interpreters avoid the dangers of allegorical interpretation.
5. Drawing on the lecture material, argue for or against the continuing relevance of Old Testament prophecies to contemporary events, particularly concerning the nation of Israel.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Direct Prediction:** A prophetic statement that has its fulfillment solely in the future, a verbal assertion of something that will happen.
- **Typological Prediction:** An institution, person, or event that finds its highest application of meaning in an institution, person, or event of a later period in redemptive history.
- **Conditionality (of Prophecy):** The idea that some prophecies are dependent on conditions, either explicitly stated or unstated, such as repentance or prayer, which can affect their fulfillment.
- **Eschatology:** The study of the end times, or "last things," including beliefs about the final destiny of humanity and the world.
- **Hermeneutics:** The theory and practice of interpretation, particularly of biblical texts.
- **Allegory:** A method of interpreting texts by treating them as symbols with hidden meanings, often leading to interpretations that are not grounded in the text itself.
- **Symbol:** Something that profoundly portrays a certain fact, principle, or relationship of a spiritual nature in a visible form with present existence and application.
- **Type:** A person, event, or thing in the Old Testament that foreshadows or prefigures a corresponding person, event, or thing in the New Testament.
- **Antitype:** The fulfillment of a type in the New Testament.
- **Premillennialism:** The belief that Christ will return to earth before the millennium, a 1,000-year period of peace and righteousness.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 13B, Session 15, Hermeneutical Principles for Interpreting Prophetic Writings, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Prophetic Interpretation: An FAQ

1. How do different commentators approach interpreting prophetic passages like Isaiah 11:10-12?

Different commentators take varying approaches. Some see it as referring to the return from Babylonian exile. Others, like Calvin, interpret it as the gathering of believers to the Messiah from all over the world, representing the church. Still others view it as pointing towards a future great ingathering of the Jewish people, potentially connected to the Zionist movement and their turning to Christ, as suggested by Oswalt's commentary. J.A. Alexander sees the prophecy as not fully fulfilled in the return from Babylon or the preaching of the Gospel, but expects complete fulfillment when all Israel is saved, interpreting the mention of nations like Edom and Moab as figurative representations of enemies in general or the heathen world. The diversity reflects the challenges in determining whether passages are focused on historical events, spiritual realities, or future restorations.

2. What is meant by the "conditionality" of prophecy, and how does Jeremiah 18:5-10 illustrate this concept?

The "conditionality" of prophecy means that some prophetic statements are dependent on certain conditions being met. Jeremiah 18:5-10 illustrates this by stating that if a nation repents of its evil after God announces its destruction, God may relent and not inflict the planned disaster. Conversely, if a nation does evil after God announces its blessing, God may reconsider the intended good. This shows that God's pronouncements are not always absolute and can be influenced by the actions of those to whom they are directed.

3. Can you provide examples from the Old Testament where the conditionality of prophecy is evident?

Yes. 1 Kings 11 mentions that Ahijah the prophet tells Jeroboam that his dynasty will be enduring if Jeroboam obeys God's commands. Jeroboam did not, and his house was destroyed. 1 Kings 21 shows how Ahab repented after Elijah prophesied his death, and God modified the judgment, postponing it until the time of his son. In Jonah, Nineveh

repents after Jonah prophesies its destruction in 40 days, and it was not destroyed. Isaiah 38 illustrates that Hezekiah was told he would die, but after praying to God, 15 years were added to his life. These examples demonstrate how prophecy can be conditional upon repentance, prayer, or a change in behavior.

4. What are the potential dangers of emphasizing the conditionality of prophecy too much?

If the conditionality of prophecy is overemphasized, there's a danger that all prophecy could be rendered uncertain of fulfillment. This could undermine faith in God's redemptive plan and promises. To avoid this danger, some suggest that conditional prophecies are usually of near application and possess elements capable of satisfaction by the prophet's contemporaries.

5. What is the difference between "direct prediction" and "typological prediction" in prophecy?

Direct prediction involves a prophetic statement that has its fulfillment solely in the future, such as the prophecy in Micah 5:2 about a ruler coming from Bethlehem, which is understood to be fulfilled in Christ. Typological prediction, on the other hand, involves an institution, person, or event that finds its highest application of meaning in a later institution, person, or event in redemptive history. Examples include the Passover lamb prefiguring Christ and the serpent on the pole in the wilderness.

6. What is typology, and how does it function as a form of prophecy?

Typology is a way that God reveals truth by using historical realities in the Old Testament that prefigure or image greater realities in the New Testament. It functions as a form of prophecy because these earlier institutions, people, or events point forward to a fuller realization of the same truth in a later stage of redemptive history. These types aren't merely symbolic; they have a historical purpose within their own context but are also designed by God to reveal truths that find complete manifestation in the gospel.

7. What are some of the potential dangers or abuses in using typological interpretation, and how can they be avoided?

The primary danger in typological interpretation is falling into allegory, where interpreters assign meanings to texts that are not genuinely present, losing the correspondence between the type and the antitype. To avoid this, it's crucial to ensure that the correspondence between the type and antitype retains a oneness of meaning – that the same truth is embodied in both, with the antitype representing a higher or fuller realization of that truth. The interpreter must remain aware of the differences between the type and antitype and avoid sensationalism in interpretation.

8. How can we ensure that typological interpretation remains grounded in the text and avoids becoming purely subjective or allegorical?

To ensure typological interpretation remains grounded in the text and avoids becoming purely subjective or allegorical, interpreters must maintain a firm awareness of the historical context and original meaning of the type, and ensure that the antitype clearly embodies the same underlying truth. Limit yourself only to those examples that are explicitly identified as typological by later biblical statements or one that has historical correlation while being aware of the differences between the type and the antitype. The connection between type and antitype must be a bond of vital continuity in the progress of redemption.