

Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 2, Introduction Continued

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This is Dr. Marv Wilson in his teaching on the Prophets. This is session 2, Introduction Continued.

All right, let's begin class with a word of prayer today, please. Lord, it's good to be your children to know that you're always with us. If we understand the heartbeat of the Prophets of Israel, we know there is the kabod Adonai, the divine presence, the glory of the Almighty, who indwelt his people that was experienced in many ways.

We thank you that your glory has come and flooded into our lives through the ultimate outworking of the presence of God on this earth in the person of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you that you have become manifest to us as the Prophets longed for a day when righteousness and justice would come together and be experienced in the ultimate. We pray that we will further that task of redemption.

We can count on you to complete that work and help us to be involved in what was so important to the God of Israel who called his people to change the world, to be concerned with mercy, justice, and steadfast love. I pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Alright, today, I want to move on and touch on a number of other preliminary things. Last time I made the statement that we're in popular understanding of prophecy today. There's often that idea of future events and predictions.

It's forward looking. For the Prophets it was far more a message in the here and the now. And I'll talk more about that.

I said when we open our Bibles when we open the Hebrew Bible, the Hebrew people gave us the Prophets. They put the Prophets right smack dab in the center of the Bible. Last time, we used the word Tanakh.

You go to a bookstore and you want to buy a copy of the Hebrew Bible. In translation it's typically called the Tanakh. And while some are interlinear with English and Hebrew, it refers to the Torah, the Nevi'im, and the Ketuvim.

Three words, the acronym for Tanakh. In the Tanakh, I said there were two main sections: the former Prophets--Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, four.

Then, the latter Prophets, starting with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve—called the Twelve only because of their size, the Minor Prophets as we refer to them.

There's nothing minor about their message. While we'll be spending quite a bit of time looking at minor Prophets, it doesn't mean they are inferior to or more insignificant to that message or messages found in the major Prophets. Now, moving further on, just a few things about possible stages of the transmission of the Prophets' message.

There's enough evidence in the Old Testament itself to indicate the Prophets sometimes wrote down their own messages. Certainly, Isaiah 30, verse 8 implies the Prophets could write and often did write that down. Moses himself, the greatest Prophet by Old Testament definition, certainly recorded various things as the Torah indicates.

Also, not only did the Prophets sometimes write down their own message, but sometimes they would use a scribe or the \$10,000 word in Biblical studies, the amanuensis. And you hear that word, manual means by hand. And so, exhibit A of this, of course, would be Jeremiah, who used Baruch as his personal secretary and scribe.

The scriptures tell us about Baruch in chapter 36, verse 4, which says, Jeremiah called Baruch, and while Jeremiah dictated all the words the Lord had spoken to him, Baruch wrote them on the scroll. Jeremiah 36, verse 4. Paul, of course, employed a scribe on certain occasions. Paul says in one of his letters, look with what large letters I have written to you.

Maybe Paul had an eyesight problem. Some speculate that was his thorn in the flesh. We don't know for sure.

But, do you recall the name of one of Paul's scribes mentioned in the New Testament? Sylvanus is one who is mentioned. So, Paul in this Jewish tradition did make use of a secretary or scribe. We also hear in the process of how these prophetic literature materials came down to us, the disciples of the prophets must have had some responsibility in shaping these prophecies.

Just like in the modern world you have a great internationally known evangelist like a Billy Graham who has people on a team who sit and they listen. They are part of the crusades and they do this many times a year. They become very much familiarized with words and stories and so forth.

These Talmudim, as they are known in a few places in the Hebrew Bible, where Talmudim can be translated disciples or even scholars. What is behind the word is LMD, those three letters. The root means to learn, to train.

And when it is put in a more intensive stem in Hebrew it means to teach. But these were learners or disciples who hung on the prophet's words and may have recorded some of those words. Some scholars would go so far as to say the prophets sort of have an expanded message as the corporate personality as some scholars in the prophets have spoken of the role of these disciples who may have been instrumental in writing and even adding certain things after the prophet's death.

A third stage of transmission may have involved collections whereby the collectors probably after the prophet's death, sometimes immediately in other cases, maybe even being shaped within the community of faith over a number of centuries. These collectors may have said, Hey we got to get some balance here. Let's not make it all judgment.

Let's interweave hope and judgment. They would arrange oracles and various prophetic teachings in the collection. Others might arrange materials chronologically.

But that's very problematic in the prophets, especially in the book of Jeremiah. Because if you try the strictly chronological approach, the way we might read a history book today, it doesn't always work. In fact, exhibit A of this, for those of you who at least have a cursory understanding of the prophets, where do you read of Isaiah's call, commissioning? It's in chapter 6, isn't it? You might think it would be in chapter 1. On the other hand, when you want to read Jeremiah's call and commissioning, you do go to chapter 1 of Jeremiah.

But in Isaiah's case, you're already five chapters into the book, and then he says, in the year the king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. And so, he is commissioned to that prophetic task. A fourth stage of the transmission of prophetic literature may have involved finally editors or redactors, as they are sometimes called, who would put the collections in their final shape.

Maybe adding some additional historical material. Certainly, you're familiar with this kind of thing from the Pentateuch, where, for instance, in the lesson in international politics recorded in Genesis 14, of the four kings against the five. And you remember the kings around the Dead Sea rebelled, and so Chedorlaomer and other kings came over from Mesopotamia.

They defeated the local Canaanite kings. They grabbed Lot and headed north. And where do they end up? They take Lot all the way up to Dan.

And that's where Abram rescues him, up in Dan. Well, in Genesis, as you know, Dan hadn't been born yet. There would be Abraham, there would be Isaac, then there would be Jacob.

Jacob had Dan as one of his children, but the place certainly was not called Dan when Abram rescued him. So, these redactors might have shaped or added certain additional historical details.

The account of Moses' death, obviously Deuteronomy 34, is a post-Mosaic addition. And even one who would hold with great fervency the Mosaic authorship of the Mosaic. Most of us do not write up our own funeral in advance and everything that happened.

So, we can't have a mechanical view of how the prophets came to us. There's dynamism and fluidity. These scriptures have come to us within the community of faith with a number of different hands involved.

That in no way should take away from their authority or, indeed, their divine inspiration. But the arrangement and the editing of these oracles, a lot of the materials we find in the Old Testament probably went through some rather large editing in Babylonian captivity where the Jewish people took those scrolls, arranged the order of the Psalms into five books analogous to the Pentateuch. Maybe Psalm 1 was just floating around with a bunch of other Psalms, and then people came together, and they said, let's look at an arrangement here, let's build to a climax.

So, this is a great one. We'll call it 150. That would be a great way to climax Israel's hymn book.

And so, the arrangement took place while the Psalm itself may have existed for many, many years prior to that time. So, editors or redactors are a part of biblical history. My personal problem comes with those who, with machetes in hand, chopped the Bible into confetti and undermined it in the end because of radical going through the text and, in the end, removing so much of it from being really something of integrity.

Much like the Jesus Seminar has done to the Gospel, see if you can come up with a few sayings Jesus might have said. Well, that doesn't leave you with it; it's a pretty loose-leaf New Testament reduced to virtually nothing. We have to be careful about that because the presuppositions with which we approach Scripture and how Scripture came to us can lead us to some very, very subjective conclusions.

It is the Word of God. And we want to take the Bible's own testimony to that fact that it is profitable, that is reliable, that it is trustworthy. A few of the general terms for profit.

There are a number of general terms that you will find in the Bible for profit. One is this expression: Man of God. The term is first used of Moses.

Again, most people don't think of Moses as a prophet, but it's used of him first in Deuteronomy 33:1. Moses is a man of God. The term continued until the end of the monarchy. You will find it used in 1 Samuel 9.6. Now, prophets certainly were men of God because God called them and they had to be people of character and ethics and high spiritual principles.

But at the same time, they were always conscious of their weakness. No one stood in line in terms of an employment agency, all would-be prophets will take your application over here. In fact, it's the opposite.

A lot of people shunned being a prophet. No one easily took it upon themselves. Moses had four excuses for God when God wanted him to be a nabi, to be a prophet, and to go to Pharaoh.

Isaiah had a difficult task. In that very passage from Isaiah 6, you know, these people, you're going to go to them, and their eyes are going to be blind, and their hearts are going to be stubborn and cold. There's not going to be a positive response.

Jeremiah was warned of the same thing. You know, it's like trying to crash through bronze gates or hit your head against a wall. It was never promised to be an easy task and most people, if they had their choice, would avoid it.

By the way, there were those who accepted it because, finally, it got through to them. The message was not to be theirs, and the one who would empower them for this very difficult task was going to be someone outside of themselves. And that was the only way they could really tolerate such a call because it was no easy or pleasant task. So prophets were conscious that they may be men of God because that's how they were often viewed by other people.

That was a designation because *ko amar adonai* was often their formula, thus says the Lord. And so, their calling, of course, was from God, and they spoke as one of the divine representatives. Another expression you will find in the prophets is a general expression, my servant, your servant, the prophets.

One of the great Old Testament scholars of the 20th century, we have a number of his books in the library, Edward Joseph Young, E.J. Young. He wrote a book, *My Servants the Prophets*, where he picked up on this title and used it for a book for an introduction to the prophets. This word servant is really, really a great, great word because it very often is associated with the prophet.

Even when the mantle goes on Joshua, the hands have already been laid on Joshua. That commissioning you read of in the book of Numbers. And, of course, there's another one of the ways in which the Jewish roots of the Christian faith are so important.

The early church did not invent the laying on of hands, as you read quite frequently in the book of Acts, or as Paul writes, don't let somebody lay hands on you suddenly. Don't be a novice going into the ministry, but have some experience. Have other people there to really mentor you, or as somebody put it to me when hands were laid on me a few years after seminary.

Young man, is there anything else you could do with your life? Could you drive a taxi? Could you go into your father's business? Don't come here to have hands laid on you unless there's something, and there's a divine compulsion that you would be miserable if you were doing anything else. There is something in terms of that sense of call where you recognize that to serve is the way Moses was described—the way Joshua and those who would follow him.

And so, to be a servant of the Almighty is to be a prophet. It's not a time for empire-building or popularity contests. A third general expression for prophet, Malach Yahweh, is not to be confused with a word that sounds sort of close to that, Melek, the Hebrew word for king or ruler.

The Malach Yahweh is the messenger of God. Malach is sometimes translated as angel. What do angels do? They typically send forth a message.

That's why Angelos in the Greek New Testament, two gammas together equal NG in English, Angelos or Malach in the Hebrew, same idea. An angel or a messenger, the angel of the Lord or the messenger of the Lord. And the prophets were one of the Lord's spiritual messengers.

They presented His truth. And so, this title, which, by the way, is found in Haggai 1.13, describes Haggai as Malach Yahweh, the one who, like a postman, delivers the message of someone else. That's a fairly good, although all analogies break down somewhere; that's a fairly good modern analogy between the postman and the prophet.

The postman delivers a message not written by the postman but by somebody else. So, you don't shoot the postman, even though you may not like what he delivers. More about that later because, again, prophets did not win popularity contests.

The expression is also used in Malachi 3:1 of John the Baptist to Come, who, in many ways, is a prophetic voice. And there are two ways the Bible breaks that down. He's a voice in the wilderness saying, prepare the way of the Lord.

Or it's a voice crying, in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord. It's punctuated differently depending on what passage you look at and how that's broken down. But in any case, John was that messenger calling people to get into the mikveot, the

ritual immersion pools, to repent, be baptized, and do it in the Jordan where water is running.

It's a big announcement. The kingdom of God is nigh and in some sense going to be present when Jesus Himself arrives in some dynamic and real way. Those are some of the general terms.

Some of the specific terms used for prophet. Navi is the term that is most frequently used as a specific term for the prophet. In Arabic, just to show you the similarities between the Semitic languages, Nebi is the word for prophet.

Gordon College students who study at the Jerusalem University College have an opportunity to go sit on the roof of a building just a few miles north of Jerusalem called Nebi Samuel. The prophet Samuel. And from that point, see Jerusalem in the distance.

Etymologically, scholars have suggested different possible origins for the word Navi. Abraham Joshua Heschel argues that, and I think he's probably correct, that the word Navi comes from a Semitic root found in Akkadian. Now remember, there are many different branches of Semitic languages.

There's the land directly east of Jerusalem where they wrote on cuneiform in the Mesopotamian world, Babylonians and the Assyrians. And that Semitic language, Akkadian, gets its name from Akkad, which was a city-state in the lower Tigris-Euphrates Valley. But Nabu in Akkadian means to speak.

The noun form means speaker or spokesman. And so, Heschel suggests a prophet is one called by God and one who has a vocation. God calls him, and just as our word vocation refers to vox populi, the voice of the people, vocation, the prophet has a vocation from God, and that is, of course, to be God's spokesperson, a person charged with delivering a message, one whom Heschel suggests speaks with the authority of someone else.

And that, of course, is beautifully illustrated in the case of Moses who did not want to go to Pharaoh, and so Aaron is the guy who is tapped. So, you have Moses, who gives the word to Aaron, and Aaron then delivers it to Pharaoh. And that's the picture of the prophet, and the flow is down.

In this case, Moses is like God, Aaron is like the prophet, God gives the word to the prophet, and the prophet, in turn, delivers it to the people, much like Aaron was to deliver the word to Pharaoh. Now, the flow is opposite in the priesthood. Remember, the priest represented the people to God, so the people came to the priest, and the priest was the intermediary, if you will.

The best ancient version to describe the priest is the Pontifex, who was the bridge maker, literally, from Pons Pontus, Latin, to build or make a bridge is what a pontiff means. And the Pontifex Maximus was the high priest. So, he bridged the gap between man and God.

That's a very beautiful word picture, and probably the best word picture we have in any language that deals with Bible translation of what the role of the priest was. The flow is the other way. It starts with God, the message is His, He simply imparts it to the middleman or the postman, and that's the prophet.

So, in Exodus 4:15 and 16, when you see this text here, God says, what about your brother Aaron? You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth, and I will help both of you to speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. That's what you find in Exodus 4:15 and 16.

You have the same idea in Exodus 7:1. The Lord said to Moses, see, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your Navi. He actually uses the word prophet there in Exodus 7:1. So the flow is from the divine superior to the prophet who delivers the message to the people. That is the picture of the Navi.

When you look at Jeremiah, who comes from, of course, the classical period of the prophets, you have in the first chapter of Jeremiah the same kind of emphasis on what a Navi does. It says in Jeremiah 1:5, I have appointed you, Jeremiah, as a prophet to the nations, and he rejects that initially. He says, look, I don't know how to speak.

He seemed to know what a Navi did, but he said, look, I don't know how to speak. I'm only a child, and the Lord says you must go everywhere I send you and say whatever I command you, but don't be afraid, for I am with you. The same words you get at the burning bush that God said to the first Navi, Moses, I am with you.

So, the Lord reached out his hand, touched my mouth, and said to me, now I have put my words in your mouth. In Jeremiah 1.9 is that picture of what a Navi does. God puts the words in the prophet's mouth.

There is definitely a connection. So, the prophet then speaks forth a message. There's nothing here about a Navi, whether the message is good or bad, judgment or hope, Messiah, social justice, whatever it is.

It's just he's going to speak, and that's all a Navi is. He's a spokesperson for God. There are a few women prophets in the Old Testament.

Huldah is one of them, and she's remembered in Jerusalem. If you go up the southern terrace of the Temple Mount, there is the Huldah Gate. So, the prophet speaks in behalf of a divine superior.

You speak whatever the message is that God gives. Jeremiah is simply the human mouth for the God who speaks. There's a paradox every time we use expressions like the Word of God.

That talks about its origin, but it's also a word of man. That is, God used human instruments by human instrumentality, their education, their background, their knowledge of words, their historical setting, their investigation, their memory, and their own personal literary style; God harnesses that. And so we have this mysterious divine and human coming together.

The more liberal or to the left you move, theologically speaking, often people talk more and more about the Bible as being purely a human literary document. Conversely, there are other people who destroy the paradox of Scripture as being both divine and human. The further to the right they go, and at times in the history of the church, have made the writers of Scripture little more than stenographers sitting there in a court, writing down, taking it all in by dictation, with no appreciation of the individual writer.

I just pause to remind you, particularly in literary style, you see in the New Testament, who talks about money more than any other evangelist, it's Matthew. That was his life calling. He was a converted tax collector if you will.

Levi. It's Luke who talks about women more than anyone else, and he was a physician and probably came in contact with more women. It's Luke who tells you Peter's mother-in-law has a great fever.

He throws the word great in, where Mark is not really interested in that detail. God allowed the background and the interests in the situation of each writer and guided them in that selection. Alright, I've referred to a number of these passages for the Navi.

Quickly, two other terms, Roeh, not to be confused with Psalm 23.1, which begins, Adonai Roeh. It's a different word. Roeh means my shepherd.

This is Roeh. A word for seer, coming from a basic first-year Hebrew root, Ra'ah, meaning to see. What's a seer do? He sees.

What does an eater do? He eats. So, the emphasis here is on this participial form, one who sees it as an active participial form. It occurs about ten times in the Old Testament.

Of course, Samuel is referred to as the *Roeh par excellence*. God may very well have spoken to Samuel in dreams or visions, so there may be that emphasis on seeing the message in some way that God gives.

Another fairly close synonym to that is *hoseh*. *Hoseh* is another one of these active participles in Hebrew, meaning to see. And again, may, in certain situations, have reference to actually seeing the revelation. Now, there are a number of prophets who had visions.

You go to the opening part of Zechariah. He had eight visions of the night. You go to Amos 7-9.

You have five visions of Israel and the northern kingdom and their condition. So, the word certainly can be used in a more general way for a prophet. But behind the idea probably was the idea of not just being confronted by God, but actually understanding certain things through the so-called prophetic vision.

So, to sum up, then, prophecy is a message from God. It will come in different shapes and sizes. From a literary perspective, let me mention a number of ways in which the prophet set forth material.

One is in a straightforward narrative. Now, Jonah is one example of that. There are four chapters in Jonah.

The second chapter happens to be poetical, which is a reconstruction of the prayer that was probably uttered from the fish's belly. And so, it's poetry. But the rest, chapters 1, 3, and 4, tell a story.

Some even consider it parabolic. But it's a narrative that tells about a prophet who tried to flee from God and was not obedient in going to Nineveh. We have a little vignette in Amos 7, which I'll come back to when we talk about Amos, where Amos starts meddling.

He's a guy who's from Tekoa in the Bethlehem area, and God calls him to go up north and to go to one of the key shrines of the Northern Kingdom at Bethel. And there, he encounters a priest whose name is Amaziah. And he has a little confrontation with Amaziah.

And he basically confirms to Amaziah why he's there. He says, look, I'm not a prophet, and I'm not the son of a prophet. The Lord called me from following the flock and said, go prophesy to my people, Israel.

Those were his credentials. He didn't have a seminary degree he could present. He simply appealed to a divine call.

And he had some pretty bitter words because he talked about King Jeroboam, whose wife would become a prostitute, and he talked about the fall of the Northern Kingdom. Very, very difficult words to deliver at a shrine in the Northern Kingdom. I also include Jeremiah here.

Jeremiah is to the Old Testament prophets what 2 Corinthians is to the New Testament. 2 Corinthians is Paul's most autobiographical letter. We learn more about Paul's personal life from 2 Corinthians.

An example of that, well into 2 Corinthians, he talked about being shipwrecked, talked about being beaten on five occasions with 39 lashes. You know, this personal insight into Paul, we get more in 2 Corinthians. Paul doesn't reveal a lot of his personal life in his other letters.

A little bit in Philippians, named for King Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. Zealous as a young man in pursuing knowledge of Judaism, which he took great pride in. We don't know an awful lot about Paul as an apostle.

We get a lot of interesting experiences in the book of Jeremiah. He tells us a lot about himself. Tells us why he was a bachelor.

In fact, there's one little interesting line in that regard in Jeremiah, which is used by Orthodox Jews to this day. If you've observed an Orthodox Jewish wedding in a movie or even if you're living in Jerusalem or go to a hotel on a Tuesday in Jerusalem, you will see lots of Orthodox weddings. I had a tour group once in Jerusalem, and I said, watch out for weddings; it's Tuesday.

And we encountered eight separate wedding parties on that Tuesday, including four who had booked the hotel we were in. One of the things that happens is the bride surrounds the groom. Now, that little expression comes out of Jeremiah.

The bride encompasses the groom and goes around seven times. I asked an Orthodox rabbi, how come that happens in an Orthodox wedding? He said, well, you know, you're going to change many times, and it's very important you see a person from every angle. Get a good look one at the other.

It's Jeremiah who talks about that. I think he reflected somewhat reluctantly on the fact God prevented him from marriage because Jerusalem was going to be under siege and not entering into the normal things of life became a symbol and a sign to the fact, watch out, 586 is around the corner. Other literary forms of prophecy may not be in the Bible set up as narratives but more as dialogues.

That's an interesting approach. We'll be studying Habakkuk in this course and Habakkuk is set up in a sense as a dialogue. That's why Habakkuk is called the philosopher prophet by some, where he's sort of ready to arraign God, call God into the dark, and has a number of questions he wants to put to the Almighty, particularly in light of the fact that his own covenant people are getting clobbered by an enemy that's idolatrous and way out to lunch compared with his own people, as bad as they might be.

So, he throws out his question, and God comes back with an answer. He throws out another question, and God comes back with an answer. It's sort of set up as a dialogue.

You have the same question and answer as any kind of thing from another point of view in Malachi, where you have a question and answer. Another kind of material and literary form is the oracle. Prophets are famous for letting the bombs fly, dropping their theological bombs, and then getting out of town, much like some evangelists sometimes go to churches, and pastors have to pick up the pieces.

Many of these oracles exhibit a, in 40 days Nineveh will be destroyed; one of your famous prophets said that quite dramatically; it's a very powerful speech. You take Micah, who gave an oracle to the leaders of his day. Should you not know justice, you who hate good and love evil, you tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones, who eat my people's flesh, strip off their skin and break their bones in pieces, you chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the pot.

He says you leaders are like cannibals in the way they treat their victims. The language is exaggerated; yes, it's over the top; yes, it's figurative, yes, but it's very powerful and very dramatic. These are oracles.

One other literary form of the visions, while apocalyptic, is a separate literary genre in the Hebrew Bible; you find it in Isaiah 12, 24-27, you find it in Zechariah, and some other sections of the Old Testament. The Valley of Dry Bones, Ezekiel 37, these visions which come, apocalyptic visions; by apocalypse, we mean God is revealing Himself because He's about to come and bring judgment to purge the earth, or in this case, His own people of evil. And there are visions that are given of the end times or the way in which this is done.

There are a number of different literary forms where a prophet might say, I saw this, and he describes it, like Israel in the graveyard of Babylon, and yet, there's a rattling of the bones. God puts sinews in the flesh, and they come to life, the resurrection. Two main aspects of prophetic teaching, just to sum up.

The fourth telling that's the main part of what a prophet did. He railed, he corrected, and he spoke by exhortation. The prophet is a herald of moral righteousness and improving; he was the reformer of his day.

His passion was to expose religious hypocrisy. There's another prophet you read of in the first four books of the New Testament who liked to do the same thing: expose hypocrisy. That's what the prophets did.

They called for spiritual reforms, and slavery, and drunkenness, and intermarriage. They called for the removal of idolatry because it meant you were a spiritual schizophrenic if you showed up at the temple, and yet, you had your own private thing going with Baal on the side. The prophets were the watchmen of Israel, the spiritual watchmen, guarding the legacy and calling people back to the high and lofty principles of Moses.

The prophets did not call people to march to a new drumbeat, and while their emphasis was far more on social reform and ethics than it was on ceremony ritual, and doing temple worship more exactly. Their words were bitter, because they often rebuked. That's how Isaiah sort of sets up his prophecy.

1-39, we'll take a look at that later in the course. Pretty much judgment. Then he starts chapter 40, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.

The Septuagint uses the word parakaleo for that word comfort. Same word used in John's Gospel for the Holy Spirit, who is the comforter. Literally, the one called alongside to aid or to help.

There are a number of different ways that can be translated. So, there's the fourth telling, as they sought to enforce the covenant, if you will. Not tear up the covenant and say, we got a better way.

There was some foretelling. The foretelling could be of imminent disasters, like the destruction of Jerusalem. But foretelling often was the sweet to balance the bitter.

And so, there was hope, I'll bring you home. You're not in captivity forever. Captivity will end.

Seventy years is it. You're coming home. There was hope.

The greatest hope, of course, came in announcing the removal of evil from the earth. Unrighteousness, to use the words of Habakkuk, the knowledge of God someday will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The words of Isaiah 2, swords will be beaten into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks.

In the messianic age, nations will not even train for war anymore. The very destructive art of war will be eliminated. Or, in the words of Zechariah, in that day, the Lord will be king over all the earth.

He will reign and rule over all the earth. Lions lying down with lambs, the imagery of Isaiah. Every man sitting under his vine and under his fig tree.

And none to make him afraid, the words of Micah. So, this was the sweetness that gave hope of a brighter future. So that harsh hand of correction and judgment was always balanced by encouragement and hope for those who would be the righteous remnant.

Alright, I think I will end there for today. Next time, I'll have a few other introductory things and then move on to talking about some of the characteristics of true or bona fide prophets as opposed to the phony boloney who are present, palming themselves off as prophets but actually what the Bible calls false prophets. They're still among us.

They're of a different ilk. But I'll have something to say about that on Friday, God willing.

This is Dr. Marv Wilson in his teaching on the prophets. This is session 2. Introduction Continued.