

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 1B, Session 2, Prophetism in Ancient Israel 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 1B, Session 2, Prophetism in Ancient Israel, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Robert Vannoy's lecture explores the unique phenomenon of prophetism in ancient Israel. He asserts that unlike other nations' aptitudes, Israel's prophets were distinct due to divine revelation, acting as servants of God endowed with a prophetic function. **Some prophets received specific calls, while others demonstrated an awareness of their divinely-given role.** Vannoy emphasizes that the prophets' function was to proclaim God's word, distinguishing it from their own thoughts. **This divine mandate compelled them to deliver God's message, regardless of personal feelings or the message's pleasantness.**

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 1B, Session 2 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Foundations).



**Vannoy_FoundProp
hecy_Session02.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 1B, Session 2, Prophetism in Ancient Israel

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Robert Vannoy's "Foundation Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 1B."

Briefing Document: Robert Vannoy, "Foundation Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 1B"

Main Theme: The unique nature of prophetism in ancient Israel as a form of divine revelation, emphasizing that prophets were servants of God invested with a prophetic function, tasked with proclaiming God's word rather than their own.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Prophetism in Israel is a Unique Phenomenon:** Vannoy argues that the prophetic movement in ancient Israel (spanning roughly 835-435 B.C.) stands apart from other instances of human genius or achievement. It is fundamentally different due to its nature as *divine revelation*.
- "The prophetic movement of ancient Israel constitutes a unique phenomenon, not only in the history of Israel itself, but also in all human history..."
- "It seems to me by virtue of its character as divine revelation, prophecy in ancient Israel must be defined as a unique phenomenon."
- **Divine Revelation vs. Human Genius:** He contrasts Israel's prophets with the achievements of other cultures, like Greek philosophers or German composers. While other cultures excel in certain areas through human talent, Israel's prophets delivered messages directly from God.
- "In the same way that Germany produced these great composers, Israel showed genius at producing prophets. Then that phenomenon of prophetism you see is put on the same level as these products of human ability and genius that are found among other peoples. I think what that kind of approach loses sight of is the principal difference..."
- "I will put my words in your mouth... It wasn't Jeremiah so much that was speaking. It was God that was speaking through Jeremiah."
- **Prophets as Servants of God:** A recurring theme is that the prophets were "servants of God," invested with a specific prophetic function. This is supported by numerous Old Testament references.

- "The reason he used that as a title is that this is a label you will find attached to the prophets in numerous references in the Old Testament, they are God's servants. God himself calls them "my servants.""
- Examples given in 2 Kings and Jeremiah are provided to illustrate this point.
- **The Call to Prophecy:** Some prophets, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Amos, received specific and dramatic calls to their prophetic task. These calls often involved visions, divine encounters, and a direct commission from God.
- Isaiah's vision in Isaiah 6 is described, where he sees the Lord and is cleansed before being sent to proclaim a message of judgment. "'Whom shall I send, who shall go for us?' I said, 'Here am I, send me.'"
- Jeremiah's call in Jeremiah 1 is recounted, where God says, "'Now I have put my words in your mouth. See today I appoint you to the nations...'"
- Ezekiel's vision of God's throne chariot in Ezekiel 1-3 is mentioned, along with the symbolic act of eating a scroll containing God's message. "'Son of man, eat what is before you; eat this scroll. (Now remember this is a visionary situation.) Then go and speak to the house of Israel.'"
- Amos's encounter with Amaziah in Amos 7 is cited, where Amos asserts that he was called by the Lord to prophesy despite not being a "professional" prophet. "'I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son... But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me: 'Go prophesy to my people Israel.'"
- **Not all Prophets Received a Recorded Special Call:** While some prophets had clear calls, the Bible doesn't explicitly record a call for every prophet. Examples like Balaam and David are provided.
- "I don't think there's sufficient biblical information to conclude that every prophet received some sort of special call to the prophetic task... They may have, but there's no record of it."
- Balaam, a heathen soothsayer who was compelled to bless Israel, is given as an example of someone who performed a prophetic function without a typical "call." "Now Balaam was a heathen soothsayer, but I think you can say at the same time he was a true prophet. God put his words in his mouth."
- David is cited as an example of someone who performed a prophetic function (writing Psalms) while primarily serving as king. "The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me. His word was on my tongue."

- **Irresistible Endowment:** The prophetic function was an overwhelming power that prophets could not resist, even when they tried.
- "The Endowment of the Prophetic Function was a Power no Prophet Could Resist."
- Amos 3:8 is cited: "'The lion has roared, who will not fear? The Sovereign Lord has spoken, who can but prophesy?'"
- Jeremiah's struggle in Jeremiah 20:9 is mentioned: "'If I say I will not mention him or speak any more in his name, his word is in my heart like a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in, indeed I cannot.'"
- **Proclamation of God's Word:** The central function of a prophet is to proclaim God's word, not their own thoughts or ideas. This is the key difference between true and false prophets.
- "The true prophet does not bring his own words; he does not bring his own thoughts, his own ideas. When he speaks, he brings God's words and God's thoughts."
- "If you're going to ask what is the difference between the true prophets and the false prophets the fundamental difference between the true and the false prophets is that the true prophets, proclaim God's words and the false prophets proclaim their own words."
- Deuteronomy 18:18, Jeremiah 1:9, and Jeremiah 23:16 are cited as scriptural support for this idea.
- **Indicators of Divine Origin:** Prophets used specific expressions to introduce their messages, indicating that the words were from God.
- "Expressions with which the Prophets Introduced Their Sermons are Indicative that the Message is God's, not Their Own."
- Examples from Isaiah are mentioned, such as "This is the Lord; the Lord hath spoken," and "Thus saith the Lord of hosts."
- **Unpleasant Messages:** Prophets had to declare God's word regardless of whether it was pleasant or not. This is illustrated through the examples of Samuel anointing Saul, Balaam, and Jonah.
- "The Prophet Must Declare God's Word Regardless of Whether or Not It Was Pleasant to Him."

- **Awareness of Distinction:** Prophets were aware of the distinction between their own words and God's word. This point is left to be elaborated upon in the next lecture.
- "There is a distinction between the prophet's own word and the word of God that he spoke; and the prophets were aware of that distinction."

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 1B, Session 2, Prophetism in Ancient Israel

Biblical Prophetism in Ancient Israel: A Study Guide

I. Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Vannoy, what makes the prophetic movement in ancient Israel unique in human history?
2. What does it mean that prophets were "servants of God?" Provide one biblical example.
3. Describe Isaiah's call to be a prophet (Isaiah 6:1-13).
4. What was Jeremiah's initial reaction to God's call, and how did God respond (Jeremiah 1:4-9)?
5. Briefly describe Ezekiel's call to be a prophet (Ezekiel 1-3).
6. How does Amos describe his own calling, and how does it differ from Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel?
7. Explain how Balaam, a heathen soothsayer, can also be considered a true prophet.
8. Give an example of a biblical figure who performed a prophetic function alongside another primary role.
9. How does Amos (Amos 3:8) describe the irresistible nature of the prophetic call?
10. According to Vannoy, what is the fundamental difference between a true prophet and a false prophet?

II. Quiz Answer Key

1. Vannoy asserts that the prophetic movement in ancient Israel is unique due to its character as divine revelation. Unlike other forms of human genius, prophecy is attributed to God's direct communication, where prophets speak God's words rather than their own. This is exemplified in God's statement to Jeremiah, "I will put my words in your mouth."

2. The designation "servants of God" indicates that prophets were chosen and commissioned by God to deliver His messages to the people. An example is found in 2 Kings 17:13, where the Lord warned Israel and Judah through His prophets, calling them "my servants" through whom He delivered His commands.
3. In Isaiah's call, he has a vision of the Lord seated on a throne in the temple, surrounded by seraphs. Recognizing his own sinfulness, Isaiah expresses his unworthiness, but a seraph cleanses his lips with a coal from the altar. Then, Isaiah volunteers to go as God's messenger after hearing the Lord ask, "Whom shall I send?"
4. Jeremiah initially resists God's call, citing his youth and inexperience as reasons for his inadequacy. However, God reassures Jeremiah, commands him to speak what he is told, and symbolically places His words in Jeremiah's mouth, appointing him as a prophet to the nations.
5. Ezekiel's call involves a vision of God's throne chariot and a voice commanding him to stand and listen. God sends Ezekiel to the rebellious Israelites and instructs him to speak God's words, whether they listen or not. Symbolically, Ezekiel eats a scroll filled with lamentations, signifying his internalizing of God's message.
6. Amos states that he was not originally a prophet but a shepherd whom the Lord called to prophesy to Israel. Unlike Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, Amos does not describe a dramatic visionary experience but emphasizes God's direct command to leave his previous occupation and deliver His message.
7. Balaam was hired to curse Israel, but God intervened and put blessings in his mouth instead. Even though he was a heathen soothsayer, he became a true prophet when he spoke God's words instead of his own.
8. David, anointed as king and filled with the Holy Spirit, also functioned as a prophet, writing many Psalms and acknowledging that the Spirit of the Lord spoke through him. This demonstrates that individuals could fulfill a prophetic role alongside other responsibilities within the theocracy.
9. Amos uses the analogy of a roaring lion to illustrate the compelling nature of the prophetic call, stating, "The lion has roared, who will not fear? The Sovereign Lord has spoken, who can but prophesy?" This suggests that when God speaks, the prophet is compelled to deliver the message.

10. Vannoy defines the fundamental difference as the source of the message. True prophets proclaim God's words, while false prophets speak their own ideas and visions.

III. Essay Questions

1. Discuss the uniqueness of prophetism in ancient Israel, comparing it to other forms of intellectual or artistic genius found in other cultures. How does the concept of divine revelation set it apart?
2. Explore the theme of the prophet as a "servant of God." What responsibilities and expectations are associated with this role, and how is it exemplified in the lives of specific prophets?
3. Compare and contrast the calling experiences of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. What common elements exist, and what unique aspects characterize each prophet's encounter with God?
4. Examine the idea that the endowment of the prophetic function was a power no prophet could resist. Use examples such as Amos, Jeremiah, and Balaam to support your analysis.
5. Explain the distinction between a true prophet and a false prophet, according to Vannoy. How can one discern whether a prophet is speaking God's words or their own?

IV. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Prophetism:** The phenomenon of prophets arising and speaking God's word to the people.
- **Divine Revelation:** The act of God disclosing Himself and His will to humanity.
- **Prophetic Function:** The role and responsibility given by God to a prophet to deliver His message.
- **Theocracy:** A system of government in which God is recognized as the supreme ruler.
- **Endowment:** The bestowing of a gift or ability, in this case, the prophetic function, by God.
- **Servant of God:** A title given to prophets, indicating their role as messengers and representatives of God.
- **Call to Prophecy:** A specific encounter or experience in which God commissions an individual to be a prophet.
- **True Prophet:** An individual who speaks God's words and is guided by divine revelation.
- **False Prophet:** An individual who speaks their own ideas and visions, rather than God's words.
- **Visionary Experience:** A supernatural encounter in which a prophet receives a message or insight from God through symbolic imagery.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture B, Session 2, Prophetism in Ancient Israel, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Prophetism in Ancient Israel

- **What makes prophetism in ancient Israel a unique phenomenon?**
- Prophetism in Israel stands out due to its consistent stream of God-inspired messages delivered through prophets over approximately 400 years. This is distinguished from other forms of human intellectual or artistic achievement as it involves direct divine revelation, where God puts words in the prophet's mouth, rather than the prophets' own creativity.
- **In what way were prophets considered servants of God?**
- The prophets were repeatedly referred to as servants of God throughout the Old Testament. This emphasizes that they were chosen instruments through whom God communicated His will to Israel, delivering warnings, commands, and judgments. God Himself calls them "My Servants."
- **Did all prophets receive a special call from God?**
- While some prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, experienced distinct and vivid calls from God commissioning them for their prophetic task, not all prophets have recorded instances of such a call. However, all prophets, whether explicitly called or not, demonstrated a clear awareness that they were endowed with the prophetic function, acting as God's mouthpiece.
- **Can you give a few examples of how some prophets received a call from God?**
- **Isaiah:** In Isaiah 6, Isaiah has a vision of God on His throne and acknowledges his sinfulness. He is then cleansed and volunteers to be God's messenger.
- **Jeremiah:** In Jeremiah 1, God tells Jeremiah that He knew him before he was born and appointed him as a prophet. God assures Jeremiah that He will put words in his mouth.
- **Ezekiel:** In Ezekiel 1-3, Ezekiel sees a vision of God's throne chariot. God tells him to speak His words to the rebellious Israelites, whether they listen or not. Ezekiel is symbolically given a scroll to eat, representing God's message.

- **Amos:** Amos, in Amos 7, was a shepherd who was called by God to prophesy to Israel.
- **Was it possible for prophets to resist delivering God's message?**
- The prophetic endowment was often an irresistible force. Prophets like Amos and Jeremiah expressed the compulsion they felt to speak God's word, even when they desired to remain silent or when the message was unpleasant or unpopular.
- **What is the core function of a true prophet?**
- The primary function of a true prophet is to proclaim the Word of God, not their own thoughts or ideas. They serve as a conduit for divine communication, delivering messages directly from God to the people. This distinguishes them from false prophets, who speak from their own minds.
- **How did prophets convey that their messages were from God?**
- Prophets frequently used introductory phrases such as "Thus says the Lord," "The word of the Lord came to me," or similar expressions to clearly indicate that their message originated from God and was not merely their personal opinion.
- **Were prophets always pleased with the messages they had to deliver?**
- No, prophets were not always pleased with the messages they were commanded to deliver. Often, they had to proclaim messages of judgment, woe, and doom, which caused them personal distress. Nevertheless, they faithfully conveyed God's word, regardless of their own feelings or desires.