

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 6, Session 7, Prophetism in 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 6, Session 7, Prophetism in Israel, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Robert Vannoy explores the nature and origins of prophetism in ancient Israel, as understood through the Old Testament. It examines Deuteronomy 18:9-22, which discusses the source of divine guidance for the Israelites after Moses and warns against false prophets. **Vannoy also addresses interpretations of the "prophet like Moses" passage, including collective, individual (Christ-centered), and combined views.** The lecture questions where prophetism originates, emphasizing God as its source and differentiating it from human will or pagan practices. **Additionally, Vannoy considers the role of the Holy Spirit in revelation to prophets and the concept of ecstasy, arguing against exaggerating the presence and influence of ecstasy and abnormal behavior among canonical prophets.**

2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 6, Session 7 – 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_Session07.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 6, Session 7, Prophetism in Israel

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Robert Vannoy's "Foundations of Prophecy, Lecture 6."

Briefing Document: Vannoy, Foundations of Prophecy, Lecture 6

Main Themes and Key Ideas:

This lecture focuses on the nature of prophetism in ancient Israel, its origins, and the means by which prophets received and communicated divine revelation. Vannoy explores the foundational text of Deuteronomy 18:9-22, examining different interpretations and discussing the role of the Holy Spirit in prophetic activity, while also cautioning against exaggerating the concept of ecstasy in relation to Israelite prophets.

I. Origin of Prophetism and Deuteronomy 18:9-22:

- **Divine Origin:** Vannoy emphasizes that prophetism in Israel originated with God. "Prophetism in Israel according to the witnesses of the Old Testament finds its origin in God and must be viewed as a gift from God to his people."
- **Deuteronomy 18:9-22 as Foundational:** This passage addresses the need for divine guidance after Moses' death. It forbids Israel from adopting Canaanite divination practices and promises a prophet like Moses. "Deuteronomy 18:9-42 is addressing the question of where Israel will find divine guidance after the death of Moses."
- **Distinguishing True and False Prophets:** The passage also raises the issue of false prophets and provides one criterion for discernment: a true prophecy must come to pass. "If what the prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message that the Lord has not spoken." However, Vannoy notes that this is just *one* way to distinguish true from false prophets.

II. Interpretation of Deuteronomy 18:15 ("Prophet Like Me"):

- **Multiple Interpretations:** Vannoy outlines three main interpretations of the "prophet like me" passage, acknowledging its complexity and the different ways it has been understood.
- **Collective (Succession of Prophets):** "Prophets" refers to the entire line of Old Testament prophets.

- **Individual (Jesus):** The "prophet" refers exclusively to Jesus Christ, based on Acts 3:19-23. "The second interpretation is an individual interpretation of that passage that the word "prophet," "The Lord will raise up for you as a prophet," has an exclusive reference to Christ on the basis of the Acts 3's reference to it."
- **Collective Fulfilled in Christ:** The prophetic movement is fulfilled in Christ, who represents the perfect realization of the prophetic office. "There is a third view, which is a collective interpretation but says that that collective interpretation is completely fulfilled in the person of Christ in whom the idea of the prophetic order was perfectly realized. That kind of combines the two."
- **Freeman's Typological Approach:** Vannoy cites Hobart Freeman, who views the prophetic movement as a *type* prefiguring Christ, the *antitype*.
- **E.J. Young and the "Double Reference":** Vannoy discusses E.J. Young's concept of a "double reference" in Deuteronomy 18, suggesting that the passage refers both to a body of prophets *and* to the Messiah. Young attempts to bridge the two using the idea of an "ideal person" in whom all true prophets are comprehended, with Christ as the focal point. "Deuteronomy 18, we learned seems to contain a double reference. One, there is to be a body of prophets, an institution, which would declare the words that God commanded. Two, there was to be one great prophet, who alone would be like Moses and might be compared with him, namely the Messiah."
- **Vannoy's Inclination:** Vannoy seems to favor Freeman's approach, which avoids a strict "double reference" by seeing the prophetic order as typologically pointing to Christ. He feels this approach presents the "easiest solution with the least problems."

III. Means of Revelation and the Role of the Holy Spirit:

- **Revelation from Without (*ab extra*):** Vannoy asserts that prophetic messages originate from God, *outside* the prophet, and are not merely the product of the prophet's own thoughts or psychological state. "The prophets make it clear at the outset that what prophets say does not originate from themselves, but they speak God's word. They are not giving their own thoughts or ideas; the message they give is a very word of God." He rejects psychological explanations that suggest prophecy originates *within* (*ab intra*).

- **Seeing and Hearing:** Prophets both "saw" and "heard" the word of God. Examples are given from Isaiah (7:3, 22:14, 5:9), 1 Samuel (9:15, 3:4-10), Amos (1:1), and Micah (1:1). While prophets clearly describe "hearing," Vannoy suggests that the mode of this hearing is not necessarily through an audible voice; God may speak directly to the prophet's consciousness. He concludes, "So, as far as the ways and means of God's revelations to the prophets, there is this prophetic seeing and hearing of the word of God."
- **The Holy Spirit's Function:** The Holy Spirit is linked to prophesying in several passages, including Numbers 11:25-29 (Eldad and Medad), 1 Samuel 10:6-10 (Saul), 2 Samuel 23:2 (David), Micah 3:8, and various passages in 2 Chronicles. "If you look at texts of this sort, it seems quite clear there is a connection between prophesying and the Spirit of God. It's by God's Spirit one prophesies."
- **Ecstasy and Prophecy:** Vannoy addresses the concept of ecstasy in relation to prophetism, noting Mowinckel's view that the Spirit and ecstasy always belong together. However, Vannoy argues that while the Holy Spirit *sometimes* produces abnormal behavior (like Saul stripping off his clothes), this is the exception, not the rule, and should not be exaggerated or used to define the essence of prophetism. "We must not exaggerate this into more than what the Bible says." He cautions against assuming that abnormal behavior necessarily implies a derivation from heathen practices.
- **Rejection of Mowinckel's Contention:** He disputes Mowinckel's argument that the great writing prophets rejected the work of the Holy Spirit in favor of the word, citing Micah 3:8 as evidence to the contrary. He says that those like Mowinckel "amend the text to force the text to fit a pre-conceived theory that the Spirit did not function in the time of the great writing prophets?"
- **Nuances of Ecstasy:** Vannoy then tackles the various notions of "ecstasy," particularly citing Lindholm's distinction between "absorption ecstasy" (fusion with God) and "concentration ecstasy" (losing normal consciousness through intense focus). He rejects "absorption ecstasy" as foreign to the Old Testament's emphasis on the distance between God and humanity and challenges "concentration ecstasy" as just another psychological explanation for prophecy when "the biblical text says the function of a prophet is something that comes from without not from within, it's the Holy Spirit that brings something from without." Vannoy says "it is not just something that arises from virtue or concentration or anything else from within." He then claims symbolic acts,

emotional outbursts, and first-person speech have often been misconstrued as evidence of ecstasy among prophets.

Quotes of Significance:

- "Prophetism in Israel according to the witnesses of the Old Testament finds its origin in God and must be viewed as a gift from God to his people."
- "If what the prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message that the Lord has not spoken."
- "We must not exaggerate this into more than what the Bible says."
- "The prophets make it clear at the outset that what prophets say does not originate from themselves, but they speak God's word. They are not giving their own thoughts or ideas; the message they give is a very word of God."

Areas for Further Consideration:

- The specific nature of "prophesying" in passages where the Holy Spirit produces abnormal behavior.
- The relationship between the "word" and the "Spirit" in prophetic revelation.
- The influence of ancient Near Eastern concepts of prophecy on the understanding of Israelite prophetism.

This briefing document provides a detailed overview of the material presented in the lecture excerpts, highlighting the central themes and arguments for further study.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 6, Session 7, Prophetism in Israel

Prophetism in Ancient Israel: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Deuteronomy 18:9-14, what were the Israelites forbidden from doing when they entered the land of Canaan?
2. According to Deuteronomy 18:20-22, what is one way to identify a false prophet?
3. What are the three different interpretations of "a prophet like me" in Deuteronomy 18:15 discussed in the lecture?
4. According to the lecture, what is the central idea of Deuteronomy 18:15-19?
5. What is the origin of prophetism in Israel, according to the biblical text?
6. What is the role of a prophet, according to 2 Peter 1:21?
7. What is the significance of the prophets both seeing and hearing the word of God? Give an example of one prophet receiving a vision.
8. Describe the connection between the Holy Spirit and prophesying in Numbers 11:25-29?
9. According to Mowinckel, how is the Holy Spirit connected with ecstasy?
10. What are the two forms of ecstasy that J. Linbolm distinguishes?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The Israelites were forbidden from imitating the detestable ways of the nations there, including practices like sacrificing children, sorcery, interpreting omens, witchcraft, casting spells, being a medium or spiritist, or consulting the dead. They were not to seek divine revelation through these means.
2. One way to identify a false prophet is if what they proclaim in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true. If their prophecy fails to materialize, it indicates that the message was not spoken by the Lord, and the prophet has spoken presumptuously.

3. The three interpretations are: (1) a collective succession of prophets, (2) an individual reference to Jesus based on Acts 3, and (3) a collective interpretation fulfilled ultimately in Christ.
4. The central idea is that the Israelites are not to follow the ways of the Canaanites or false prophets. Instead, they are to follow the word of the prophets that the Lord will raise up, similar to Moses.
5. The origin of prophetism in Israel lies in God. It was God's gift to his people, a way for Him to communicate with them through chosen individuals who would function similarly to Moses.
6. The role of a prophet is not based on human will but to speak from God as they are carried along by the Holy Spirit. God puts His words in the mouths of certain individuals, raised up to be conveyors of His word to His people.
7. The prophets both hearing and seeing the word of God emphasizes that God revealed Himself through multiple means. An example of a prophet receiving a vision is when Samuel heard the Lord calling him and also saw the Lord standing, which the account refers to as "a vision".
8. In Numbers 11:25-29, the Spirit comes upon the elders, and they prophesy, suggesting a connection between being a prophet and the Holy Spirit coming on them. This suggests a relationship between the Spirit's presence and the ability to prophesy, whether it is interpreted as authoritative speech or some other manifestation of the Spirit.
9. Mowinckel asserts that the activity of the Holy Spirit always results in the person being brought into a condition of ecstasy. Spirit and ecstasy belong together.
10. J. Linbolm distinguishes between "absorption ecstasy" and "concentration ecstasy." In absorption ecstasy, the prophet is fused with God. In concentration ecstasy, the prophet intensely focuses on an idea or feeling, leading to a loss of normal consciousness.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Deuteronomy 18:15 in understanding the role and nature of prophecy in ancient Israel. Explore the different interpretations of the "prophet like Moses" and their implications.
2. Analyze the relationship between the Holy Spirit and prophetism in the Old Testament. How do different biblical passages contribute to our understanding of this relationship?
3. Compare and contrast the different views on ecstasy among Israelite prophets. How have scholars interpreted the role and significance of ecstatic experiences in the prophetic tradition?
4. Evaluate the claim that prophetism in Israel was derived from heathen practices involving ecstatic phenomena. What evidence supports or refutes this claim?
5. Examine the ways and means by which prophets received divine revelations. How did the prophets describe their experiences of seeing and hearing the word of God?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Prophet:** An individual chosen by God to speak His word to His people.
- **Prophecy:** A message from God delivered through a prophet, often involving revelation, instruction, or warning.
- **Deuteronomy 18:** A key passage in the Old Testament that discusses the role and origin of prophets in Israel, emphasizing that they are God's provision and not to be replaced with Canaanite practices.
- **False Prophet:** An individual who falsely claims to speak for God, whose words do not come to pass or who promotes other gods.
- **Messianic Prophecy:** A prophecy that refers to the coming Messiah, often identified as Jesus Christ in Christian theology.
- **Holy Spirit:** The Spirit of God, understood in Christian theology as the third person of the Trinity, who empowers and inspires prophets.
- **Ecstasy:** An altered state of consciousness characterized by intense emotion or spiritual experience.

- **Absorption Ecstasy:** A form of ecstasy in which the individual feels fused or absorbed into the deity.
- **Concentration Ecstasy:** A form of ecstasy in which the individual intensely focuses on an idea or feeling, leading to a loss of normal consciousness.
- **Typology:** A method of biblical interpretation in which Old Testament events, persons, or institutions are seen as prefiguring New Testament realities.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 6, Session 7, Prophetism in Israel, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Prophetism in Israel According to the Old Testament

1. According to Deuteronomy 18:9-22, where should Israel seek divine guidance after Moses' death, and what practices should they avoid?

Deuteronomy 18:9-22 addresses where Israel will find divine guidance after Moses. They are not to follow the detestable practices of the Canaanites, such as sorcery, divination, witchcraft, mediums, or consulting the dead (Deut. 18:9-14). Instead, God will raise up a prophet like Moses from among the Israelites, and they must listen to him (Deut. 18:15-19).

2. How does Deuteronomy 18 provide a way to identify a false prophet?

Deuteronomy 18:20-22 warns against false prophets. A key way to identify them is that if what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not come true, the message was not from the Lord. Such a prophet has spoken presumptuously and should not be heeded.

3. What are the three main interpretations of the "prophet like me" in Deuteronomy 18:15, and what are the strengths/weaknesses of each?

The three main interpretations are:

- **Collective Succession:** "Prophets" is a collective noun, referring to the succession of prophets throughout the Old Testament period.
- **Exclusive Reference to Christ:** The "prophet" refers solely to Jesus Christ, based on Acts 3:19-23.
- **Successive Prophets Fulfilled Ultimately in Christ:** This combines the two, suggesting the prophetic order was perfectly realized in Christ.

The lecturer finds the second interpretation (exclusive reference to Christ) difficult because the context of Deuteronomy 18 is addressing the methods of divination of the Canaanites, and warning against false prophets. He finds the first and third approaches, which consider the prophetic order as either typologically pointing to Christ or a collective of which Christ is the fulfillment, stronger.

4. According to the lecture, where does prophetism originate, and what is the people's responsibility to the prophets?

Prophetism originates with God. God raises up prophets like Moses to communicate with His people. The people are responsible to listen to and obey the words spoken by these prophets in God's name; failing to do so carries accountability.

5. What does the lecture suggest about the prophets' claims to receive the "very word of God", and how does it relate to psychological explanations?

The prophets consistently claimed that their messages did not originate from themselves but were the very word of God. The lecture argues that denying this claim often stems from a presupposition against divine revelation from outside oneself (ab extra), leading to psychological explanations that attribute prophetism to internal processes (ab intra). However, such explanations contradict the prophets' own testimony.

6. According to the lecture, how did the prophets receive their messages, and what does it mean to say that the prophets both heard and saw the word of God?

The prophets received their messages from without, often describing it as both hearing and seeing the word of God. While it is unclear if the prophets heard an external, audible voice, the experience was as clear and distinct to them as if they had. Similarly, they received visions, seeing things that others present might not have.

7. How is the Holy Spirit connected to prophecy in the Old Testament, and what examples does the lecture provide?

The lecture cites numerous passages connecting the Holy Spirit with prophesying, including Numbers 11:25-29 (Eldad and Medad), 1 Samuel 10:6-10 (Saul), 2 Samuel 23:2 (David), and Micah 3:8. These passages suggest that the Spirit empowers individuals to speak God's message.

8. What is the lecture's perspective on the idea of "ecstasy" in relation to the Israelite prophets, and what cautions are offered regarding its interpretation?

The lecture acknowledges that some scholars emphasize ecstasy as central to prophetism. It discusses distinctions between "absorption ecstasy" (fusion with God), which it finds foreign to the Old Testament, and "concentration ecstasy" (losing normal consciousness), which it views as another psychological explanation. It cautions against exaggerating the role of abnormal behavior and emphasizes that instances of Spirit-induced abnormal behavior, such as Saul stripping off his clothes, are exceptional rather than the rule and not necessarily derived from heathen practices. The lecture also argues against the view that the pre-exilic writing prophets rejected the Holy Spirit, suggesting they simply emphasized the word itself rather than the means by which it came to them.