

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 8, Session 9, Message of the Prophets:

Four Areas

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 8, Session 9, Message of the Prophets: Four Areas, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Robert Vannoy's lecture on the foundations of biblical prophecy explores the role and message of prophets, especially as it concerns political issues. The lecture explains that prophets often addressed internal and external political issues, such as the king's adherence to the covenant and foreign alliances, and discussed the rise and fall of nations. **Vannoy highlights eschatology and messianic expectations, noting prophecies related to Israel and the suffering servant, which relate to the two advents of Christ.** The lecture also discusses distinguishing between true and false prophets, suggesting criteria like moral character, signs and wonders, fulfillment of prophecy, and conformity to previous revelation. **Ultimately, Vannoy emphasizes that while individual criteria have limitations, their combined application, along with the enlightenment of God's Spirit, aids in discerning true prophecy.**

**2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 8,
Session 9 – 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).**



3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 8, Session 9, Message of the Prophets: Four Areas

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided lecture notes by Robert Vannoy on "Foundations of Biblical Prophecy," Lecture 8, focusing on Prophetic Message and True/False Prophets:

Briefing Document: Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 8

Main Themes:

- **Prophetic Message:** Prophets delivered messages in four main areas: Religious-Theological, Morality-Social Relationships, Political Issues, and Eschatology and Messianic Expectations. This lecture focuses primarily on political issues and the discernment between true and false prophets.
- **Political Role of Prophets:** The prophets played a significant role in both internal politics (king's adherence to the covenant) and foreign relations (opposing alliances with heathen nations).
- **Internal Politics:** Prophets confronted kings who strayed from their covenant responsibilities, as exemplified by Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, Hezekiah, and Josiah. The king's role was to lead the people in obedience to the covenant, and prophets held them accountable. Vos is quoted as saying, "The prophets were guardians of the unfolding theocracy, and the guardianship was exercised at its center, the kingdom. The purpose was to keep it a true representation of the kingdom of Jehovah. It sometimes almost appears as if the prophets were sent to the kings instead of to the people."
- **Foreign Relations:** Prophets denounced alliances with "heathen nations," urging Israel to trust in the Lord for security rather than foreign powers. Such alliances often led to religious compromise, as foreign deities were introduced. Isaiah condemned Ahaz's alliance with Assyria, and 2 Chronicles 16:7-9 illustrates how relying on the Lord brings deliverance, while relying on foreign nations leads to war. "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust

in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the Lord.”

- **Rise and Fall of Nations:** Prophets spoke of the destinies of nations like Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt, emphasizing God's sovereign control. These nations were seen as instruments in God's hands, even for judgment upon Israel.
- **Eschatology and Messianic Expectations:** Prophets envisioned a future "day of the Lord" with judgment for the ungodly and peace for God's people under a messianic king. Vannoy cites Freeman on the two streams of messianic prophecy stemming from Genesis 12:1-3: one focusing on the nation of Israel and a Davidic king, and the other on the Messiah as a suffering servant.
- **Discernment of True vs. False Prophets:** The lecture addresses the challenge of distinguishing true prophets from false ones, considering that both claim to speak for God ("thus saith the Lord").
- **Validation Criteria:** Vannoy outlines five criteria for discerning true prophecy, emphasizing that they function in combination:
 1. **Moral Character:** While true prophets are generally depicted as godly, it's not a definitive test, as some false prophets may appear moral, and even true prophets can have flaws. False prophets were often characterized by "low morality; hence, true and false prophets could be distinguished by a personal or extrinsic test. The false prophet was a mercenary who prophesied for hire...he was a drunkard...he was profane and wicked...he committed adultery, walked in lies and supported the evildoers...and he was generally immoral in life conduct."
 2. **Signs and Wonders:** Signs and wonders often authenticate the word of a prophet, serving as aids to belief. However, false prophets can also perform signs and wonders, as warned in Matthew 24:23 and Deuteronomy 13. Moses was given signs to prove that he was sent by God: "'This,' said the Lord, 'is so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, God of Isaac, the God of Jacob—has appeared to you.'"
 3. **Fulfillment of Prophecy:** Failure of a prophecy to come true indicates a false prophet. However, this can only be applied after the predicted event should have occurred, and even false prophets might occasionally make accurate predictions. "If what the prophet proclaims in the name of Lord does not take place or come true, that is the message the Lord has not spoken."

4. **Conformity to Previous Revelation:** New prophecy must align with and build upon previous revelation, not contradict it. (This point will be further developed in the next lecture.)
5. **Enlightenment by God's Spirit:** (To be discussed further.)

Key Ideas and Facts:

- Kings in ancient Israel were subject to the word of the prophet.
- Prophets frequently spoke on political issues, both internal and external.
- Alliances with foreign nations were often seen as a sign of lack of faith in God.
- The destinies of all nations are subject to God's sovereign power.
- There are criteria for distinguishing between true and false prophets, but no single criterion is foolproof.

Quotes:

- "The prophets were guardians of the unfolding theocracy, and the guardianship was exercised at its center, the kingdom."
- "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the Lord."
- "If what the prophet proclaims in the name of Lord does not take place or come true, that is the message the Lord has not spoken."

Implications:

- Understanding the role of prophets is crucial for interpreting Old Testament texts.
- Discerning true prophecy requires careful consideration of multiple factors.
- Trusting God rather than foreign powers was a recurring theme in prophetic messages.

Further Research:

- Explore specific examples of prophetic confrontations with kings (e.g., Nathan and David).
- Investigate the nature of "heathen" alliances and their religious implications.
- Examine the concept of the "day of the Lord" in prophetic literature.

- Research the various interpretations of messianic prophecy in the Old Testament.
- Continue with the next lecture to understand criteria 4 and 5.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 8, Session 9, Message of the Prophets: Four Areas

Prophetic Message and True/False Prophets: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What role did the prophet Samuel play in establishing the kingship in Israel?
2. How did prophets address political issues in Israel, both internally and in foreign relations?
3. According to the lecture, what are the two streams of messianic prophecy that develop from the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12?
4. What was the primary responsibility of the priests and Levites, and how did the prophets address their potential abuses?
5. What was the significance of the phrase "Thus saith the Lord" in the messages of the prophets?
6. According to Ezekiel 13:6, what did false prophets claim, and why were their visions considered false?
7. According to Deuteronomy 18:19, how were the Israelites accountable to the words of the prophet?
8. What role does the moral character of a prophet play in determining whether he is a true or false prophet?
9. How did signs and wonders function to authenticate the word of the prophet, according to the lecture?
10. How is the fulfillment of prophecy a criterion for distinguishing between true and false prophets, and what are its limitations?

Answer Key

1. Samuel, as a prophet, anointed the first king, Saul, and later anointed David after God rejected Saul. This established the idea that the king was subject to the word of the prophet and accountable to God's covenant.
2. Internally, prophets focused on the king's adherence to the covenant, confronting them when they strayed. In foreign relations, prophets often opposed alliances with heathen nations, urging Israel to trust in the Lord for protection.
3. The two streams are prophecies concerning the future of the nation of Israel and the prophecies concerning the messiah as the suffering servant. One focuses on Israel as a great nation ruled by a Davidic monarch, while the other emphasizes the messiah's atoning work and blessing to all nations through his suffering.
4. Priests were responsible for conducting sacrifices and traditions, while Levites were involved in instruction. Prophets addressed the dangers of wicked forms and rituals, emphasizing the need for a proper heart attitude toward God, such as in the case of Eli and his sons.
5. The phrase "Thus saith the Lord" was used by prophets to introduce their messages, claiming divine origin. It signified that the words were not their own but came directly from God, indicating authority and divine inspiration.
6. False prophets claimed to have a message from God, using the language "thus saith the Lord," even when the Lord had not sent them. Ezekiel considered their visions false because they prophesied out of their own imagination and followed their own spirits.
7. The Israelites were accountable to God to listen to the words of the prophet and to behave in the way the prophet instructed. Disobedience to the prophet's words, spoken in God's name, would result in God holding them accountable.
8. While the moral character of a prophet is an aid in determining if he is a true prophet, true prophets generally lived godly lives, and false prophets lived immoral lives. However, the moral character of a prophet should be taken into consideration, but in and of itself it is not sufficient to provide a basis for discerning between a true and a false prophet.
9. Signs and wonders function as authentication for the prophet's word, demonstrating that the message is truly from God. They serve as aids to belief, confirming the authenticity of the prophet's divine commission and message.

10. Fulfillment of prophecy is a way to validate the true prophet, but it is only valid in a negative sense even though it is not from God, and it can only be applied in the future when whatever has been predicted happens or doesn't happen. Also, false prophets can still be correct sometimes.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the relationship between the king and the prophets in ancient Israel, providing examples from the text. How did prophets influence political decisions, both internal and external?
2. Explain the significance of eschatology and messianic expectations in prophetic messages. How do the two streams of prophecy, as outlined by Freeman, relate to the first and second advents of Christ?
3. Analyze the challenges faced by Israelites in distinguishing between true and false prophets. What criteria were available to them, and how effective were these criteria in practice?
4. Evaluate the validation criteria for true prophecy, including moral character, performance of signs and wonders, and fulfillment of prophecy. How do these criteria function together, and what are their limitations?
5. Discuss the tension between trusting in God and forming alliances with foreign nations, as addressed by the prophets. How did the prophets view foreign alliances, and what consequences did they foresee for those who pursued them?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Covenant:** A binding agreement or promise between God and his people, outlining obligations and expectations.
- **Eschatology:** The study of the end times, including judgment, the messianic kingdom, and the ultimate consummation of human history.
- **Messianic Expectations:** Beliefs and prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah, a future king who will bring salvation and establish God's kingdom.
- **Theocracy:** A system of government in which God is recognized as the supreme ruler, and religious leaders govern in his name.
- **Heathen:** A term used to describe those who do not believe in the God of Israel, often associated with foreign nations and their religious practices.
- **Oracle:** A prophetic message or utterance believed to be divinely inspired.
- **Validation Criteria:** Standards or tests used to determine the authenticity and truthfulness of a prophet's message.
- **Sign and Wonder:** Miraculous events or acts used to authenticate the word of a prophet and demonstrate God's power.
- **False Prophet:** An individual who claims to speak for God but whose messages are not divinely inspired or contradict previous revelation.
- **Suffering Servant:** A messianic figure described in Isaiah who would bear the sins of his people and bring blessing to all nations through his suffering and sacrifice.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 8, Session 9, Message of the Prophets: Four Areas, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided lecture excerpts:

FAQ on Biblical Prophecy

- **What role did prophets play in relation to the kings of Israel and Judah?**
- Prophets held a unique position, acting as guardians of the unfolding theocracy. They confronted kings who strayed from their covenantal responsibilities, addressing internal political issues. Prophets also advised kings and were sometimes sought out for guidance, but they also were willing to call out the kings when they went astray from God. They also spoke out against foreign alliances that compromised Israel's trust in God.
- **How did prophets address foreign relations, and why?**
- Prophets often opposed alliances with heathen nations, as these alliances were seen as a lack of trust in God for protection and security. These alliances often involved religious compromise, introducing foreign deities and compromising Israel's monotheistic faith. The prophets believed Israel's security should come from God, not from foreign powers. They also pronounced oracles on the rise and fall of foreign nations, emphasizing that the destinies of all nations are subject to God's sovereign power.
- **What is the significance of eschatology and messianic expectations in prophetic messages?**
- Prophets spoke of a future "day of the Lord" involving judgment on the ungodly and a future of joy and peace for God's people under a messianic king. This vision included the consummation of human history, the messianic king reigning over the earth, and the removal of the curse, bringing peace and harmony. There are two streams of messianic prophecy that speak of the work of the messiah, one which speaks of a future for the nation of Israel under a Davidic monarch, and the other emphasizing the work of the messiah as the suffering servant. The first refers to the second coming and the second is concerned with the first advent.

- **How could the ancient Israelites distinguish between true and false prophets?**
- Distinguishing between true and false prophets was crucial, as it affected how Israelites were to live and respond to the messages they heard. Deuteronomy 18 states that Israelites would be held accountable for listening to the words of a true prophet. When two contradictory messages both claimed to be from God, the Israelites needed a way to discern which was true.
- **What were the validation criteria for true prophecy, and how did they function?**
- There were multiple criteria that worked in combination:
 1. The moral character of the prophet: Generally, true prophets were godly, while false prophets exhibited low morality. However, this wasn't always a clear indicator.
 2. Performance of signs and wonders: These often authenticated the word of the prophet, but false prophets could also perform them.
 3. Fulfillment of prophecy: If a prophet's prediction did not come to pass, it was a sign that the message wasn't from God.
 4. Conformity to previous revelation: New prophecy could only build on what had come before and could not contradict it.
 5. The enlightenment by God's spirit.
- **How important were signs and wonders in validating a prophet's message?**
- Signs and wonders were significant as aids to belief and means of authenticating God's word, especially at crucial turning points in history. However, they were not decisive in isolation, as false prophets could also perform them, even counterfeiting them.
- **How reliable was the fulfillment of prophecy as a criterion for distinguishing true and false prophets?**
- While non-fulfillment of prophecy indicated a false prophet, fulfillment alone wasn't always reliable. Heathen soothsayers could sometimes give true predictions. Also, a prophecy being fulfilled could only be used as a validation method if and after it actually occurred, which often was not useful to the generation which heard it.

- **What role did the prophets play in addressing political issues?**
- The prophets addressed internal issues by confronting kings who violated the covenant, ensuring they fulfilled their roles as covenantal kings. They also addressed external issues by opposing alliances with heathen nations, emphasizing trust in God for security rather than foreign powers. The rise and fall of foreign nations were also viewed as being under God's control, with these nations sometimes used as instruments of judgment or redemption for Israel.