

Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 5, Hermeneutical Principles for Understanding the Prophets

Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Wilson, Prophets, Session 5, Hermeneutical Principles for Understanding the Prophets, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Marv Wilson's Session 5 lecture on "**Hermeneutical Principles for Understanding the Prophets**" explores the challenges of interpreting prophetic literature. He discusses two main evangelical approaches: **Covenantal and Dispensational theology**.

Dispensationalism emphasizes a literal interpretation of Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel, while Covenant theology views the church as the new Israel, interpreting prophecies figuratively. Wilson then presents **pre-millennial, post-millennial, and amillennial** views on Christ's reign and concludes by advocating for an approach rooted in the Old Testament perspective of the early church, emphasizing continuity between the Old and New Testaments, and honoring God's enduring promises to Israel.

2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Wilson, Prophets, Session 5 – 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 → Prophetic Literature).



Wilson_Prophets_Session05.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Wilson, Prophets, Session 5, Hermeneutical Principles for Understanding the Prophets

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Wilson_Prophets_EN_Session05.pdf":

Briefing Document: Hermeneutical Principles for Understanding the Prophets

Overview:

Dr. Wilson's lecture focuses on providing a framework for interpreting the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. He highlights the difficulties in interpreting prophecy and explores the two main evangelical approaches to prophetic literature, namely Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism, and their implications for understanding the future of Israel. He then goes on to discuss the three main millennial views: Premillennialism, Postmillennialism and Amillennialism. Finally, he outlines a hermeneutical methodology that emphasizes starting with the Old Testament as the primary basis for understanding prophecy, rather than the New Testament. He also gives his own theological position.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Challenges of Prophetic Interpretation:

- Dr. Wilson acknowledges that interpreting the prophets is not always straightforward. He shares a personal anecdote about being questioned on his qualifications to teach the prophets, which highlights the different approaches to interpreting prophecy within evangelicalism.
- He notes that some approaches emphasize the "future-istic parts of prophecy" particularly the end times, whereas others focus on the spiritual and present application of prophetic messages.

1. Two Main Evangelical Approaches to Prophecy:

- **Dispensationalism:** This approach emphasizes a distinction between Israel and the Church. It maintains that prophecies related to Israel should be interpreted literally, including the gathering of Jews to the land, a rebuilt temple, a revived sacrificial system, and a literal earthly kingdom ruled by Christ.
- *Quote:* "Basically, dispensationalism made or makes a distinction between Israel and the church. They are two separate entities."

- **Covenant Theology:** This approach views the Church as the "new Israel," arguing that the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament are fulfilled spiritually through the Church. They see the future of Israel and prophecies about its restoration figuratively.
- *Quote:* "The covenantal approach... sees the church as the new Israel."
- *Quote:* "Therefore, the details of any specific future for Israel...usually none of these things are in any way understood literally."

1. **Millennial Views:**

- **Premillennialism:** Believes that Christ will return to earth to establish a literal 1000 year reign, and then after that, will be the final judgement.
- *Quote:* "...Christ will return to this earth and physically reign and rule from Jerusalem."
- **Postmillennialism:** Believes that a gradual transformation of society through the Gospel will lead to a "Christianized" world before Christ returns.
- *Quote:* "Post-millennialism argues for the gradual leavening effect that Christianity will have on the earth."
- **Amillennialism:** Believes that the 1000-year reign in Revelation 20 is symbolic and that Christ is already reigning through the Church. They usually do not anticipate a literal earthly kingdom of Christ or specific earthly future for Israel.
- *Quote:* "Says there's no millennium--Amillennium. So, therefore, this reign and rule in the human heart of Christ which has been going on and will continue to go on until the end times."

1. **Dr. Wilson's Hermeneutical Approach:**

- **Priority of the Old Testament:** Dr. Wilson argues that the starting point for interpreting prophecy should be the Old Testament, as it was the primary scripture for the early Church.
- *Quote:* "Hermeneutically, we should do what the early church did. They only had one Bible. They only had the Old Testament. That was their starting point."
- **Continuity of God's Promises:** He believes that God's promises to Israel are not canceled out by the New Testament. He cites Romans 9-11, highlighting that the covenants still belong to Israel.

- *Quote:* "I cannot see the Apostle Paul saying all the promises God made to my ancestors in the flesh... all of that is called off now. God's changed His mind. No."
- **Rejection of Marcionism:** Wilson rejects the view (Marcionism) that the Old Testament should be dismissed or discarded. He is critical of approaches that ignore or downplay the Old Testament's importance.
- *Quote:* "Marian said the God of the Old Testament, thank you very much; we don't need anymore... Throw this God of the Jewish people, throw them out."
- **Expansion and Enlargement, not Contradiction:** Wilson emphasizes that the New Testament may build upon or expand the meaning of the Old Testament, but not contradict it.
- *Quote:* "Their bias was nothing in the New Testament can contradict what's found in the Old Testament. It may build on it, it may expand it, it may enlarge its meaning, but it's not going to contradict it."

1. **Dr. Wilson's Personal Position:**

- He cannot accept that God's plan with Israel was nullified with the advent of the Church, and sees a continuing significance and calling on the Jewish people. He finds that the apostolic writings build upon but do not negate the Old Testament and its promises to the ethnic, national people of Israel. He also states that the Kingdom of God is both a present and future reality with aspects that will be realized on earth at a future time.
- *Quote:* "The kingdom is sort of a two-phase spiritual already, but there's that not yet. And that does not yet brings particularly a lot of these Old Testament prophecies into the range of we will yet see them realized in some future day, in my opinion."

1. **Critique of Other Approaches:**

- He criticizes the allegorical approach, where the historical-literal interpretation of Old Testament prophecy is lost.
- *Quote:* "They tended to allegorize symbolic meaning in the Old Testament or they found Christological meaning in the prophets. That's how they saved parts of the Old Testament. But those parts of the Old Testament get their meaning now in the church."

- He also criticizes the "cherry-picking" approach of taking what is compatible with Christianity and ignoring the rest.

Conclusion:

Dr. Wilson's lecture provides a valuable introduction to the complex and varied landscape of prophetic interpretation within Christianity. He argues for a hermeneutical approach that prioritizes the Old Testament, recognizing its enduring significance and the continued relevance of God's promises to Israel, while understanding those promises in the light of the New Testament. He encourages a dialogical approach to theology, listening to different voices and approaches while holding convictions with an open heart and mind. He also gives his own personal views about the continuity of God's promises.

4. Study Guide: Wilson, Prophets, Session 5, Hermeneutical Principles for Understanding the Prophets

Hermeneutical Principles for Understanding the Prophets: A Study Guide

Quiz

1. According to Dr. Wilson, what are the two main approaches to interpreting prophetic literature within evangelicalism?
2. How does dispensationalism differentiate between Israel and the church, and how does this impact their interpretation of prophecy?
3. What are some specific elements of Old Testament prophecy that Dispensationalists emphasize as literal realities, especially related to the end times?
4. How does the covenantal approach view the relationship between Israel and the church?
5. Explain the concept of "millennium" and from what biblical text it originates.
6. Describe the post-millennial view of how Christ's kingdom will come to earth.
7. What is the amillennial view, and how does it differ from pre- and post-millennialism regarding the reign of Christ?
8. What is "Neo-Marcionism," and how does it relate to the Old Testament?
9. According to Dr. Wilson, what methodological approach should be used when interpreting prophetic literature?
10. How does Dr. Wilson suggest considering both the Old and New Testaments in their proper order when studying biblical prophecy?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The two main approaches are the Reformed or Covenantal approach and the Dispensational approach, which differ in how they understand the relationship between Israel and the Church.
2. Dispensationalism views Israel and the church as two distinct entities with separate programs; thus, prophecies concerning Israel are interpreted literally and not applied to the church.

3. Dispensationalists emphasize a literal regathering of Israel to their land, a rebuilt temple, a revived priesthood, a sacrificial system, and a final earthly kingdom in Jerusalem where Christ will reign.
4. The covenantal approach views the church as the "new Israel," and interprets Old Testament prophecies about Israel figuratively, as fulfilled in the church rather than literally.
5. Millennium means a thousand years, derived from the Latin words "mille" (thousand) and "annum" (year); the term originates from Revelation 20, which describes a thousand-year reign.
6. Post-millennialism believes that through the preaching of the gospel, society will be gradually transformed until a spiritually enlightened world emerges, at which point Christ will return.
7. Amillennialism does not believe in a literal thousand-year reign, seeing Christ's reign as already happening in the hearts of believers; they interpret prophetic texts figuratively rather than literally.
8. Neo-Marcionism refers to the idea of dismissing the Old Testament as irrelevant or inferior, similar to the heretic Marcion, who rejected the Old Testament because he viewed the God of the Old Testament as different than the God of the New Testament.
9. Dr. Wilson advocates for starting with the Old Testament, doing a thorough exegesis, and then looking to the New Testament for commentary, before returning to the Old Testament for a final solution.
10. Dr. Wilson emphasizes starting with the Old Testament as the primary Word of God, then viewing the New Testament as an expansion or interpretation of the Old, and finally going back to the Old Testament to apply what was learned.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the dispensational and covenantal approaches to interpreting biblical prophecy, focusing on their differing views of Israel's role and future.
2. Explain the various views on the millennium (pre-millennialism, post-millennialism, and amillennialism), detailing how each understands the timing and nature of Christ's kingdom.
3. Discuss the historical background and implications of the Marcionite heresy and how it has influenced views on the relationship between the Old and New Testaments in Christian tradition.
4. Analyze the hermeneutical approach suggested by Dr. Wilson for interpreting prophetic literature, including the significance of starting with the Old Testament and the use of a dialogical approach.
5. Evaluate how different understandings of the relationship between Israel and the church impact the interpretation of prophetic texts and views on eschatology.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Hermeneutics:** The theory and methodology of interpreting texts, especially biblical texts.
- **Dispensationalism:** A theological system that emphasizes a literal interpretation of prophecy, particularly regarding Israel, and sees history as divided into distinct periods of time called dispensations.
- **Covenantal Theology:** A theological framework that sees the church as the new Israel, viewing the Old Testament prophecies about Israel figuratively and as fulfilled in Christ and the church.
- **Eschatology:** The study of "last things," including death, judgment, heaven, and hell, and end-time events.
- **Millennium:** A thousand-year period, often referring to the thousand-year reign of Christ described in Revelation 20.
- **Pre-millennialism:** The belief that Christ will return before the millennium, and will reign physically on earth from Jerusalem with the resurrected saints.

- **Post-millennialism:** The belief that Christ will return after the millennium, which will be an extended period of Christian dominance on earth brought about through the spread of the gospel.
- **Amillennialism:** The belief that there will not be a literal thousand-year reign of Christ on earth; they often view the millennium in Revelation 20 symbolically or spiritually.
- **Rapture:** The belief, often associated with dispensationalism, that believers will be "caught up" to meet Christ in the air before a period of tribulation on earth.
- **Neo-Marcionism:** The view that the Old Testament is irrelevant or inferior to the New Testament, reflecting the views of Marcion who rejected the God of the Old Testament.
- **Exegesis:** The critical interpretation and explanation of a biblical text.
- **Midrash:** A form of Jewish biblical interpretation that seeks to explore the deeper meaning of scripture, often through storytelling or commentary.
- **Berit Olam:** A Hebrew term meaning "eternal covenant," often referring to the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants.
- **Israelology:** The study of the nation of Israel, especially in light of biblical prophecy.

5. FAQs on Wilson, Prophets, Session 5, Hermeneutical Principles for Understanding the Prophets, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Okay, here's an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source, formatted with markdown:

FAQ: Understanding the Prophets

- **What are some of the main challenges in interpreting the prophetic books of the Bible?**
- The prophetic books are not always easy to interpret due to their use of symbolic language, complex imagery, and references to historical contexts that may be unfamiliar to modern readers. Additionally, there are varying viewpoints on how to understand prophecy, which can make it difficult to discern the intended meaning. The challenge is to avoid overly literalistic or purely spiritualized interpretations and to approach the text with an understanding of its historical and literary context.
- **What are the two main approaches to interpreting prophetic literature, especially regarding futuristic events, within evangelicalism?**
- The two main approaches are the Covenantal (or Reformed) approach and the Dispensational approach. Dispensationalism distinguishes between Israel and the Church, interpreting Old Testament prophecies about Israel literally, focusing on a future physical restoration. Covenant Theology, in contrast, views the Church as the "new Israel," often interpreting prophecies concerning Israel figuratively, as fulfilled in the Church and its spiritual kingdom.
- **How does dispensationalism view the future of Israel, and what key events does it anticipate?**
- Dispensationalism views Israel as a distinct entity separate from the Church with a specific, literal future. It anticipates the Jewish people's regathering to their land, the rebuilding of the temple, a revived priesthood and sacrificial system, and the rise of an Antichrist who makes and breaks a covenant with Israel. It also expects a physical, earthly, political kingdom in Jerusalem where Christ will reign after a period of tribulation, preceded by the rapture of believers.

- **How does Covenant Theology or a Millennial view approach the prophecies about Israel and the future?**
- Covenant Theology views the Church as the new or spiritual Israel, inheriting the promises made to ancient Israel. Prophecies related to Israel's future are often interpreted figuratively, seeing them as fulfilled in the spiritual reign of Christ in the church age. It emphasizes Christ's current reign through the Holy Spirit within the hearts of believers and does not typically expect a literal, physical restoration of Israel as described in Dispensationalism.
- **What is the significance of the "millennium" in prophetic interpretations, and what are the three major viewpoints surrounding it?**
- The "millennium" refers to the thousand-year period mentioned in Revelation 20. The three primary views on it are:
 - **Premillennialism:** (often associated with dispensationalism) Christ returns to earth and reigns physically for a literal thousand years before the final judgment.
 - **Postmillennialism:** Christ will return after a long period of the gradual spread of the gospel that results in a widespread Christian society, followed by Christ's return.
 - **Amillennialism:** The millennium is symbolic of Christ's current spiritual reign through the Church, and there won't be a literal thousand-year reign on Earth before the final judgment.
- **What is the "Neo-Marcionism," and why is it problematic when studying prophetic texts?**
- Neo-Marcionism is a modern form of the second-century heresy of Marcion, who rejected the Old Testament and its God as incompatible with the New Testament's God of love and grace. This approach is problematic because it marginalizes the Old Testament as unnecessary or inferior, failing to acknowledge its crucial role in understanding the New Testament and its context. A tendency to only preach from the New Testament or to prioritize the New over the Old can be a sign of this.

- **What did the early Church get right in its approach to the Old Testament and how can this approach guide modern readers?**
- The early church's approach, primarily composed of Jewish believers, held that nothing in the New Testament could contradict the Old Testament. They saw the New Testament as building upon, expanding, and enlarging upon the themes and prophecies of the Old. This approach reminds modern readers to take the Old Testament seriously as inspired Scripture, not merely as preparation for the New, and that its relevance should be acknowledged. It was used by them as the primary, if not only, source of scripture before the development of the full New Testament canon.
- **What methodology is suggested for interpreting prophetic literature, and why is this method preferred?**
- The suggested methodology is to begin with the Old Testament, perform careful exegesis, and then consider the New Testament's reflection and commentary on those Old Testament passages. Lastly, return to the Old Testament with a consideration of what has been learned. This approach is preferred because it takes the Old Testament seriously in its own right and avoids interpreting it solely through the lens of the New Testament. It attempts to interpret scripture in a way that respects its historical and theological integrity while recognizing the continuity between the two testaments.