

Appendix to Lecture Note Part IV

Prophet (Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, LaSor, OT Survey)

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1. Introduction

1. The person of the prophet and his function

Unparalleled significance in the literature and the tradition

2. Two definitions

1) Broad: Begins with historical Moses

2) Narrow:

The function of a concentrated succession of men, notably Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, appearing in a brief span of about two centuries; 8'th c. to 6'th c.

3. Hebrew canon of scripture

1) Three divisions: The Law, the Prophets, the Writings

2) Prophets: In Center

Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings

Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and twelve prophets from Hosea to Malachi

II. Terminology

1. In Hebrew

1) Occurrences: Over 300 times in the OT

2) Etymology

Its root is related to the cognate Akkadian and the Arabic words "to call," "to announce"

3) Seer

1 Sam 9:9: Prophet was formerly called a seer.

RSV 1Sa 9:9 (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer"; for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.)

2. In Greek: Two aspects

- 1) Forth-telling: One who speaks and interprets a god's will to man
- 2) Fore-telling: One who speaks beforehand

III. Major and often controversial relationships of the prophet

1. To the seer

- 1) Prophet = seer

Prophet Gad = David's seer (2 Sam 24:11)

RSV 2Sa 24:11 And when David arose in the morning, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

- 2) The role

A. Both alike: To warn Israel and Judah (2 kgs17:13)

RSV 2Ki 17:13 Yet the Lord warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets."

Amos = seer (7:12)

RSV Amo 7:12 And Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there;

The seer's function: To act as prophet

B. Not alike but the same essential function

Parallelism (Isa 29:10)

RSV Isa 29:10 For the Lord has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes, the prophets, and covered your heads, the seers.

C. Seer and diviner coupled (Mic 3:7)

RSV Mic 3:7 the seers shall be disgraced, and the diviners put to shame; they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer from God.

- 3) Conclusion

A. Common function of seeing and speaking forth

Prophet and seer exercised common function of "seeing"-i.e., apprehending that which is not normally accessible, and "speaking forth," proclaiming, that which is thus seen and apprehended.

B. The seer: Earlier title

2. To contagious (ecstatic) prophetism

1) Canaanite expression

1 Sam 9:1-10 "Is Saul also among the prophets?" became proverb (10:10-12). 1 Sam 19:18-24 ecstatic prophet

A. Total transformation in personality (1 Sam 10:6)

RSV 1Sa 10:6 Then the spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon you, and you shall prophesy with them and be turned into another man.

B. Created and sustained as a group phenomenon capable of being spread by contagion

C. Spirit of God

Different from the Spiritual gift

Not permanent but temporary

D. Frantic performance of the prophets of Baal on Carmel (1 Kgs 18:28-29): Not related to Israelite prophetism

2) Characteristic prophetic utterance

A. Two parts

a. The speech of invective, often extended and eloquent, commonly passionate and bitter, and always portraying, although in different ways, the mind, disposition, and personality of the prophet, the man the prophet

b. The second part, immediately following, consists of the word of judgment, brief, pointed, powerful, devastating, sometimes terrifyingly impersonal, and characteristically devoid of personal-human animus.

B. the OT prophetism

Restraint of persistent tendencies to over-stress the ecstatic element in the prophet

3. To the cult prophet

1) The function of OT prophetism

In association with the cult as institutionalized at a sanctuary or a court

2) Question

a. Extent of association, possibility that the great prophets of the OT lived out their careers in such associations?

Jeremiah and Ezekiel: Priests-->Prophets

Amos and Isaiah : Cult prophets?

b. Isaiah's call

Reflects living cultic conditions, the core of which is the institution of sacral kingship?

Not convincing.

3) Line of crucial and emphatic distinction

The great prophet: Always speaks in the name of Yahweh, whose will all the powers of history serve.

4. To the cultus

Yahwistic prophetism

1) Almost certainly remained in close rapport with the cultus.

2) Cultic orientation

A. Moses and Elijah: Prophet-priest

B. Several shorter prophetic writings

Strong suggestions of conscious or unconscious adaptation of cultic ritual

5. To the book

Distinction between the writing prophets and non-writing prophets.

1) Writing prophets

A. Theory of the 1'st half 20 c. OT scholarship

Writing prophets = literary prophets

They wrote while, before, and after preaching.

B. Theory of the 2'nd half 20 c. OT scholarship

a. Oral composition--> transmission-->Written form

b. The role of disciples

They cherished, preserved, and "edited" the utterances of the master orally, not only during the prophet's lifetime but also for an extended period after his death.

C. Questions: Relationship between

The book prophet and the book

The prophet and his disciples

Disciples and the book

D. Wrong assumptions

a. Prophet: Solidarity

Picture of the great prophet as an absolutely solitary figure who is, himself alone, his own community and his own scribe.

b. Actual Prophecy and Received form

The form that we now receive the words of the prophets in any consistency is precisely the form that it was initially cast by the prophet's own hand.

c. Prophet and the writer

The conclusion is that no prophet has ever written anything himself; that we cannot make contact with, or define an individual prophet because what is represented as his is in its indistinguishable entirety a tradition-historical creation, the product of decades, and even centuries, of a fluid, oral process.

E. Isaiah

a. The prophet himself wrote (8:1; 30:8)

RSV Isa 8:1 Then the Lord said to me, "Take a large tablet and write upon it in common characters, `Belonging to Maher-shalal-hashbaz.'"

b. On occasion he committed his message for subsequent delivery in oral form to a circle of disciples (8:16-17; 50:4)

RSV Isa 8:16 Bind up the testimony, seal the teaching among my disciples.

F. Relationship between Isaiah and Micah

a. Micah's own work: Mic chaps. 1-3

(with the possible exception of 2:12-13)

RSV Mic 2:12 I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob, I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men. 13 He who opens the breach will go up before them; they will break through and pass the gate, going out by it. Their king will pass on before them, the Lord at their head.

b. Strong affinity between Isaiah and the circle of his disciples:
Mic chap.4-5; 6-7

a) Eloquent anti-Assyrianism

b) Presence of an oracle, the so-called "floating oracle,"
common to two books

G. Two types of canonical prophetism

a. Liturgical type

Strongly influenced by the established, and probably recorded, liturgy, represented in such books as Nahum, Habakkuk, Joel, and Second Isaiah, produced by writers and experiencing a predominantly written tradition from the very beginning

b. The so-called diwan type

Seen in prophets like Amos and Isaiah of Jerusalem, coming down out of a process of transmission that was largely oral.

H. Chronological

The role of oral transmission may have been more prominent in the case of an Amos or an Isaiah because they were farther removed from the cataclysmic events of the sixth century.

IV. Pre-Amos prophetism

Core tradition of Yahwism maintained in an unbroken and fluid continuum from Moses to Malachi. The classical prophet, albeit proclaiming the new, was debtor, and certainly a conscious debtor, to a core tradition already long established

1. Essence of prophetism: Address to history

Presupposes the decisive impingement of Yahweh upon history.

2. Pre-Monarchic "prophets"

1) Five prominent names associated by tradition with title

Abraham (Gen 20:7), Aaron (Exod 7:1), Miriam (Exod 15:20), Deborah (Jud 4:4), Moses (Deut 18:18; 34:10; cf. Num 11:26-29; 12:5-8)

2) The term not applied until some time after Elijah's day, not earlier than the latter part of 9th c.

A. Abraham

The patriarchal saga imputed to Abraham a sense of divinely ordained history, that in Israel could only be post-Exodus. Awareness of Yahweh's radically purposive impingement on history, understands himself in an absolutely central role therein.

RSV Gen 20:7 Now then restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you, and all that are yours."

B. Aaron: Less significant but also instructive

a. Mouthpiece of Moses

b. Definition of a "prophet" as one who articulates the nature and the meaning of the divine impingement from a remarkably intimate and knowledgeable position.

RSV Exo 7:1 And the Lord said to Moses, "See, I make you as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet."

C. Miriam

Composition of the two lines that with brilliant economy convey the whole prophetic theology of the Exodus

RSV Exo 15:20 Then Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing.

D. Deborah

Essential interpretation of victory. Both Miriam and Deborah are represented in celebration of what Yahweh is doing in a concrete relationship to the historical existence of Israel.

RSV Jdg 4:4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

E. Moses

Performing prophet, actively intervening in events. In the Deuteronomic perspective, Moses is the model, the ideal, prophet.

RSV Deu 18:18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

4. Prophets to kings

Six particularly important prophetic figures from the 11'th to the 9'th c. - Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah in the 10'th c.; Elijah, Micaiah, and Elisha in the 9'th c.

1) Their relationship to contemporary institutional prophetism and to subsequent classical prophetism

A. Institution of prophetism as a group phenomenon

a. Origin

monarchy.
nabi

Immediately before and during the creation of
b. First application of the term

seer

A singular figure, functioning as a judge or a priest or a

c. Samuel

Yahweh

a) Radical political implications of their fierce loyalty to
b) Allied with them in setting up the monarchy
c) Mutual influence between Samuel and the emerging
prophetic institution

B. Nathan

David brought the institution into the court

C. Ahijah the Shilonite

Membership in an association of prophets at or near Shiloh?

D. Elijah

Neither Ahijah nor Elijah was identified with any form of professional prophetic organization.

E. Micaiah and Elisha

Both appear in association with group prophetism.

a. Micaiah with Ahab's official court prophets

b. Elisha with the probably cult-related "sons of the prophets" at Bethel (2 kgs2:3), Jericho (2 kgs2:5), and Gilgal (2 kgs4:38).

*Sons of the prophets

Direct descent from the phenomenon of the "band of prophets" in the Saul narratives (2 Sam 10:5)

RSV 2Sa 10:5 When it was told David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return."

F. So Samuel was Samuel, or the Seer; Ahijah was probably simply Ahijah, or the Shilonite; and Elijah was Elijah, or the Tishbite-prophet. In truth they were, as subsequently seen from the vantage point of the matured form of classical prophetism, but hardly so conventionally identified in their own day.

But Nathan, Micaiah, and Elisha were contemporaneously known as a prophets, since to be a prophet was to exist in a professional association and relationship.

G. Amos

a. Amaziah's complaint

Reflects the common definition of "prophet" as denoting professional association, down to this time deemed neither bad or good.

b. Amos' answer

a) His origin

1. Not Group phenomenon

No contact with the professional,
associated prophets

2. His personal confrontation with Yahweh, not
in any group apprehension

b) Change of term "the prophet"

1. Men of prophetic temperament and function but without professional affiliation who preceded him came only to be called by this term after him.

2. This term retroactively applied to earlier prophets similarly confronted by the "word of Yahweh" without a group stimulation.

2) Their relationship to king and Word

A. Early prophets

Sure evidence of a prophetic continuum

a. From pre-Monarchic times and possibly even from the age of Moses to the decay and collapse of monarchy in Israel, and on into the days of Jewish reconstruction

b. Passionate conviction

Yahweh's existence impinges with radical effect upon the political institution.

c. Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Elijah, Micaiah, Elisha

a) Intimately related to the life of the state

b) Crucially involved in the most decisive crises of history

c) Psychologically naked contact with the king

B. Their relationship and responsibility to the Word of Yahweh, and their response and proclamation

a. Distinct from the prevailing institutionalized forms of prophetism

b. The address to history takes its content from the Word, and the divine impingement upon history is made articulate and is interpreted by the same Word.

C. Prophets of deeds: Performing prophets

a. Samuel: King-maker (Saul, David)

a) Tradition that ascribes to the person of Samuel a relationship to "the Word of Yahweh" as that Word was only subsequently emergent (1 Sam 1:23; 3:1,7,21).

RSV 1Sa 1:23 Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only, may the Lord establish his word." So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him.

RSV 1Sa 3:1 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

b) Prophet to king

b. Moses: Performer on behalf of Yahweh

c. Nathan: The Word to David

d. Ahijah the Shilonite: 10th c.

a) King and Word brought into radically effective concord through the prophetic function

b) Word through Ahijah to the king-to-be , Jeroboam I

Secession of the Northern tribes and the establishment of two political states in the place of one

e. Elisha: 9th c.

Anointing of Jehu by the Word (2 kgs9:6): Elisha and his young man, the prophet

RSV 2Ki 9:6 So he arose, and went into the house; and the young man poured the oil on his head, saying to him, "Thus says the Lord the God of Israel, I anoint you king over the people of the Lord, over Israel.

f. Micaiah: 9th c.

Imposition of Word upon king Ahab (2 kgs22)--
>Radical historical effect

D. Elijah

In Elijah, the Word becomes more consciously an instrumental entity; and for the first time (1 kgs 17-19;21) we suspect a contemporaneous apprehension of the Word by a prophet that is in substance the Word of classical prophetism.

a. Relative frequency and consistency of the term "the Word (of Yahweh)"

b. The sense of a formula

As in the records of later classical prophetism, the Word here conveys the sense of a formula, a known formula, the content, nature, and potency that are widely familiar now.

c. Not only with the king, but with the people as well

d. Company of pre-Classical prophets from Samuel to Elisha

In the manner of the Word to Samuel (1 Sam 15) and Nathan (2 Sam 12), the instrumental Word is applied through Elijah in judgment of the king (1 Kgs 19:17f)

RSV 1Ki 19:17 And him who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. 18 Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." 19 So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing, with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him. 20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again; for what have I done to you?"

e. Forerunner of the classical prophets

Anticipation of the succession of prophets beginning with Amos

a) In Elijah, the Word has attained substantially full prophetic definition and form.

b) Mature prophetic expression and application: king-->king, nation, people

Divine life confronts the life of history. All men and all history are implicitly embraced. It remains the task and function of classical prophetism to make concrete the decisive involvement of Yahweh in existence.

V. The Content of faith of classical prophetism

1. Introduction

1) Newness

A. New external history

B. New internal prophetic mind of classical prophetism, 8'th c.

2) Assyria: Key figure

Aggressive ambition of Assyria with Tiglath-pilser III

A. Creation: Formed Israel out of Egypt, chaos

B. Uncreation: Nation-->captivity

3) Pre-Classical prophets

A. Israelite Yahwism:

Meaning of the present was taken primarily from the understanding and interpretation of the past.

B. Understands the past and present chiefly in terms of Yahweh's positive action on the behalf of Israel

4) Classical prophetism

A. First rises in the consciousness that Israel now stands between Egypt, that what she was, she will be again.

B. The prophets from Amos on are forced to reinterpret the meaning of the present in terms of an immediate future that will be charged with tragedy, but a tragedy no less the result of divine action than the great formative event of redemption from Egypt.

member scheme	a. Two member scheme	-->Three
again	Out of Egypt-Into this land	plus into Egypt

b. Understanding of a number of concepts

a) Word and symbol

b) Election and covenant

c) Rebellion and judgment

d) Compassion and redemption

e) Consummation

2. Thus says Yahweh: Word and symbol

1) The Word

A. An entity containing and releasing divine power to accomplish itself. Dynamic until 8'th c.

B. Classical prophets

c. Election with reference to Israel is perpetuated and realized in the covenant.

d. Covenant in the OT

The working contract between unequal parties, instigated, initiated, by the senior partner in the act of election. Suzerainty covenant

e. Analogies

Father/son (Hos 11; Isa 1:2)

Owner/vineyard (Isa 5:27)

Shepherd/flock (Isa 40:11)

Potter/Clay (Jer 18; Isa 29:16; 64:8)

Husband/wife (Isa 50:1; 54:5; 62:4-5; Jer 2:1-7; 3:11-22; Ezek 16:23; Hosea)

C. Interpretation of Israel's existence

Dependent upon the concept of election/covenant

a. Election/covenant ethic-->Social, economic justice

b. Motivation of prophetic ethic = election

c. Nature of that ethic

Determined by the covenant

d. All election/covenant theology

Rebellion-->Judgment-->Compassion-->Redemption-->Consummation

4. They went from me: Rebellion

1) Foreign nations vs Israel: God's relationship

A. Universality of Yahweh

All men and all nations are in rebellion against God, denying in multiple ways the appropriate terms of the human existence under the rule of the actively righteous Yahweh.

B. Qualitative difference

God-Israel vs God-nations

Intensity, intimacy (ultimately a purpose and mission) (Amos 3:2)

RSV Amo 3:2 "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

2) Israel's rebellion against Yahweh

A. Totality of her life. Willful and complete alienation.

Socio-economic-political malpractice

Cultic-religious-theological deviation

B. Rebelliousness = infidelity = pride

5. They shall return to Egypt: Judgment

1) "Shaphat" "to judge"

Much more than English term

A. Judgment: Wrong is righted by punishment of the aggressor, by restitution to the victim, or by both.

Judgment = the realization of justice

B. The sense of an impending negative judgment upon Israel:
Formative characteristic of classical prophetism

Fall of N. Kingdom on 722

Fall of S. Kingdom on 587/6

a. Temporal-historical-political event

= Divine judgment

= Creation and establishment of justice

= Re-balancing of the scales between Yahweh and

Israel

b. Yahweh = Judge

= Performer of the act of judgment

c. Object of the judgment = Israel

d. Act of judgment

Political death, a figurative return to Egypt

Return to an existence that is formless and meaningless:
Rights the wrong, provides the now rectified context for a resumption of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel obtained after the first Egypt, and before the conditions responsible for the threat and execution of the second

2) The character of the judgment

Conditioned by the character of Israel's rebellion

Judgment = Justice

God accuses, renders the verdict, and execute the judgment against Israel.

6. How can I give you up?: Compassion

1) Judgment = Love

A. The catastrophe itself is an expression of his love and faithfulness. In his negative action he seeks to bring about a reconciliation with prideful, rebellious Israel (Amos 4:6-11).

B. Rebellion/judgment in the context of the election/covenant at once calls forth compassion and redemption.

2) Compassion

"Raham" "A'hab" "Hesedh"

A. "Hesedh": Mercy, kindness, devotion, faithfulness, grace

a. Descriptively qualifies relationship- man/man or God/man

b. A strong faithfulness constitutes the very life of the relationship

7. I will return them to their homes: Redemption

1) Faith of prophets: Add fourth member in the scheme

Out-of-Egypt--> Into-This-Land-->Back-to-Egypt-->Return-again-to-the Land

Second act of divine redemption from chaos

2) Judgment-justice is never centrally punitive in intention and quality, but always itself redemptive in divine conception and function.

A. In the faith of Israel, the glorious survival and reconstruction of a remnant is Israel's glory and Israel's re-establishment

B. Ending of Amos: Hope of remnants

8. A light to the nations: Consummation

1) Point of view: Only by faith

A. Ultimate projection: history radically transformed

a. Israelite prophetism: Adheres to its own reasonableness.

b. Face of existence

Yahweh-given, Yahweh- ruled

Limited duration

c. Yahweh's promise (the Word) to Abraham

a) In Abraham/Israel all nations of the earth shall be blessed (Gen 12:3)

b) His Word shall accomplish that purpose to which he sends it (Isa 55:11).

RSV Isa 55:11 so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

B. Concept of Israel's historical redemption

Does not ultimately contain the prophetic faith or answer the questions of prophetism about the meaning of Israel's existence.

C. Prophetism as a movement was compelled to abandon any and all notions of divine purpose fulfilled in terms limited to Israel.

D. Even the terms of Israel's redemption, the intent expressed in intensity of feeling, conviction, and emotion, is universal.

2) Isaiah

Servant of the Lord

Israel personified, the remnant of Israel, someone out of Israel ...?

49:5-6; 53:4-5, 6; 11:1ff, 6; 2:2-4

RSV Isa 49:5 And now the Lord says, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength -- 6 he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

3) Micah 4:1-4

Same Isaianic circle of prophetism

The power, the faith, and the ultimate expectation of Israelite prophetism.

RSV Mic 4:1 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, 2 and many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide for strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; 4 but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.