Part 13/33 – **Prophets Speak for God**

*11/29/15* – Prophets/Isaiah

Key thought: God does not desert His long-term plan despite Israel’s rebellion. The prophets He sends to His people - His remnant - continue to call for repentance and keep their eyes on the promise of salvation in the future.

*God chose special men to be His ambassadors, or representatives, in Israel. These men, called* ***prophets****, were spokesmen for God. God had spoken to Israel through Moses, the greatest prophet in the Old Testament. In the centuries which followed, He sent many more prophets as His servants to preach His Word and to call on His people to be faithful.*

*The prophets were especially endowed by God. He gave them His Spirit in special measure so that they could know and declare what God was saying through the events and happenings of the times. In many ways He spoke His powerful Word through them, warning the Israelites of His punishment, and calling on them to* ***repent****. Yet the message of the prophets was not all doom and gloom. God promised to forgive those Israelites who turned back to Him, and reassured the nation of His continuing love.*

*Most people did not heed the message of the prophets, but kept on in their sinful ways. Yet God kept a* ***remnant of believers*** *true to Him through the word of the messengers.*

*The prophets spoke, first of all, for their own time. But God also used them to give clear promises that He would send the* ***Messiah*** *– the Savior-King. They were of great importance in God’s plan. Through them, He kept alive the hopes that He would bless the world through His chosen people.*

1. What did prophets do?

2. Were the prophets revolutionary? What did they call for?

3. In whom was the hope of the prophets fulfilled?

4. What is a literary vs. non-literary prophet?

5. How can people be sure who is speaking the truth?

6. How is God's Word a powerful, creative Word?

Main takeaways:

* The prophets were God’s special messengers, who spoke His Word to the people, and called on them to be faithful.
* Most people took no notice of the prophets, but God kept a remnant of believers true to Him through the word of these messengers. The prophets spoke first of all for their own time. But God also used them to give clear promises that He would send the Messiah – the Savior King.
* The prophets were important in God’s plan. Through them, He kept alive the hope that He would bless the world through His chosen people.

For reflection

Read 1 Peter 1:10–13. When God spoke to the prophets, He was already thinking of you! Reflect on what the prophets’ message about sin and grace, forgiveness and godly living, means for you personally.

Part 13/33 – **Prophets Speak for God** – **Bible Study**

Bible search

1. **Deuteronomy 18:1-22**: God promised His people prophets, and told them how to judge whether the prophet truly spoke on His behalf.

*Why can we fittingly describe the prophets as “spokesmen for God?” How could the people know that a person spoke as a true prophet? How helpful was this criterion in practice?*

2. **1 Samuel 10:5–10**: God especially endowed the prophets with His Spirit, and led some of them into ecstatic experiences.

*What special gifts and abilities did God give the prophets?*

3. **Isaiah 6:1–13**: God gave Isaiah a vision of His glory and called Him to be His prophet.

*Talk about the vision God granted Isaiah. What was Isaiah's response to what he saw (v. 5)? What was his response to God's call? How did God prepare him for his work? (Compare Jeremiah’s call: Jer 1:4–10)*

4. **Isaiah 55**: God invited His people to come to Him, and gave them gracious promises through His powerful Word.

How does this beautiful chapter summarize the prophets’ message about sin and grace? Talk about the power of God's Word.

5. **Hosea 8**: The prophet warned the people in northern Israel of God's dire punishment.

*List reasons why God was so angry with the Israelites. What punishment threaten them?*

6. **Hosea 1**: God assured His repentant people of His love and promised them His forgiveness.

*How does the prophet picture the blessed results of the Israelites repenting and trusting God? Why did the people generally not heed the call of the prophets?*

7. **Isaiah 53**: God revealed how He would carry out His plan to save the world from sin through the Suffering Servant whom He would send.

*How will God's Servant suffer? What great blessing will the Servant bring?*

8. **Isaiah 11:1–9**: The prophet declared that God would once again act for His people through the birth of the child. This special child would rule as king forever.

*What would be special about the child to be born? Why would this child's birth bring joy to the nation?*

For discussion

1.  How does God speak to His people today? Read 1 Thess. 2:13. Talk about how we can be sure of God's will today as we face the difficult issues of modern society.

2. The prophets were spokesmen for God. Who are His spokesmen today? Compare the role of the pastor today with that of the prophets of Israel. How can we tell whether a particular preacher is a true spokesman for God?

3. “The message of the Old Testament is timeless – as relevant to our day as tomorrow's news.” Discuss. (Look up 1 John 1:1–3.)

For reflection

Read 1 Peter 1:10–13. When God spoke to the prophets, He was already thinking of you! Reflect on what the prophets’ message about sin and grace, forgiveness and godly living, means for you personally.