COVENANT JUDGMENT

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The Prophets-Judgment (Part 1) **November 1, 2026**

We come now to the third major section of our class, as we look to the Prophets:

"THE PROPHETS" (Luke 24:44)

- **Week 9: Covenant Judgment (The Prophets, Part 1)**
  God's indictment of Israel for its breach of covenant, w/ the promise of coming redemption.
- Week 10: Covenant Love (The Prophets, Part 2)
  Visions of the consummation of all things, a day of judgment and of glory, triumph & vindication.

1. THE CANONICAL ORDERS OF THE PROPHETS

Recall that the word for the aggregate Hebrew writings of the Old Testament is *Tanakh*, which is an acronym (*Ta-Na-Kh*) formed from *Torah* (Law), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings). The Nevi'im, or Prophets, is the second section in the order of the Hebrew canon:

***Nevi'im* ("the Prophets")**

The *Nevi'im* is a word that means "prophets," and it is the name given for the second section of Scripture consisting of the 8 books that followed after the 5 books of Moses, i.e., the Torah. The *Nevi'im* are divided into two main sections, the Former Prophets (4 books; the historical narratives that take us from the Conquest through to the fall of the Kingdom and to the 37th year of the exile, i.e., 856 years) and Latter Prophets (4 books; the ones we think of as properly the Prophets), which are in turn subdivided into the 3 Major and 1 Minor Prophets (our 12 books of the Minor Prophets, also known as "the Twelve," counted as 1 book):

The Former Prophets

1. Joshua
2. Judges
3. Samuel (i.e., 1-2 Samuel, counted as 1 book)
4. Kings (i.e., 1-2 Kings, counted as 1 book)

The Latter ("Major") Prophets

5. Isaiah
6. Jeremiah
7. Ezekiel

The Latter ("Minor") Prophets

8. "The Twelve" (i.e., our 12 books of the Minor Prophets – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi – counted as 1 book)

For Christians, the "Former Prophets" are included among the historical books, and the Prophets section (beginning with Isaiah), actually follows the Writings (i.e., the Psalms and the Wisdom Books), as we've seen. Thus, for us, the Prophets is the fourth and final section of the Old Testament, following the Law, the Historical Books, and the Writings. As for the prophetic books themselves, they are the same except for (1) the inclusion of the Jeremiah-authored book of Lamentations among the prophetic books rather than having it bundled with the "Five Scrolls" among the Writings, and (2) the inclusion of Daniel among the major prophets instead of having it grouped among the Writings. Thus, for our Christian Bible, we have the Prophets in the following canonical order:

The Major Prophets

1. Isaiah (23rd book)
2. Jeremiah (24th book)
3. Lamentations (25th book)
4. Ezekiel (26th book)
5. Daniel (27th book)

The Minor Prophets

1. Hosea (28th book)
2. Joel (29th book)
3. Amos (30th book)
4. Obadiah (31st book)
5. Jonah (32nd book)
6. Micah (33rd book)
7. Nahum (34th book)
8. Habakkuk (35th book)
9. Zephaniah (36th book)
10. Haggai (37th book)
11. Zechariah (38th book)
12. Malachi (39th book

2. THE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE PROPHETS

a. Non-"Writing" Prophets

Abraham (Gen. 15:1; 20:7; 1st uses of the word)
The Patriarchs (Ps. 105:14-15)
Moses (Deut. 18:15)
Miriam (Ex. 15:20) (Moses)
Samuel (1 Sam.) (Saul, David)
Nathan (2 Sam. 7, 12; 1 Kgs. 1) (David, Solomon)
Gad (1 Sam. 22; 2 Sam. 24) (David)
Iddo (2 Chron. 9, 13) (Solomon)
Shemaiah (1 Kgs. 12) (Rehoboam)
Ahijah (1 Kgs. 11, 12, 14) (Israel)
Jehu (1 Kgs. 16) (Israel)
Elijah (1 Kgs. 17 – 2 Kgs. 2) (Israel)
Micaiah (1 Kgs. 22) (Israel)
Elisha (1 Kgs. 19 – 2 Kgs. 13) (Israel)
Huldah (2 Kgs. 22:14) (Judah)

b. Pre-Exilic "Writing" Prophets*

Joel (c. 850 BC) (some say much later)
Jonah (c. 800–760 BC) (Israel)
Amos (c. 780–755 BC) (Israel)
Hosea (c. 760–710 BC) (Israel)

b. Pre-Exilic Writing Prophets (cont'd)*

Micah (c. 740–690 BC) (Judah)
Isaiah (c. 740–680 BC) (Judah)
Nahum (c. 666–615 BC) (Judah)
Zephaniah (c. 630–620 BC) (Judah)
Habakkuk (c. 627–586 BC) (Judah)
Jeremiah (c. 626–580 BC) (Judah, Exile)

c. Exilic Prophets (i.e., Babylonian Captivity)

Daniel (c. 604–535 BC) (Exile)
Ezekiel (c. 593–570 BC) (Exile)
Obadiah (c. 585 BC) (Exile)

d. Post-Exilic Prophets

Haggai (c. 520 BC) (Persian Judea)
Zechariah (c. 520-518 BC) (Persian Judea)
Malachi (c. 450-400 BC) (Persian Judea)

3. WHAT IS A PROPHET?

The word for prophet in Hebrew is *navi*, and it signifies one to whom the word of the LORD has come, who has been specially called and commissioned by God himself to go and declare the message (or messages) given him to those for whom God intends to communicate. As such, he is God's authorized spokesman, his mouthpiece, a herald of the Great High King, declaring his word with the full weight of his authority behind it, for kings, priests, and prophets to hear it and obey.

Prophetic ministry is a matter of divine inspiration, not of human aspiration! "The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision," it says in Gen. 15:1. The LORD called to Moses from the burning bush and

commissioned him to his prophetic ministry (Ex. 3:1ff.). Indeed, Moses tried to argue that he was not qualified to do this, but the LORD overrode his objections:

Exodus 4:10-16:
But Moses said to the LORD, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue." Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else." Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him."

We see this pattern of divine calling met by initial human reluctance in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 1:4-10:
Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD." Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

And in Isaiah, we are given to see perhaps the reason for this human reluctance, which is being overwhelmed by the glory and holiness of God, and seeing one's utter unworthiness in the light of it:

Isaiah 6:1-8:
In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for. And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

In terms of background, prophets could be priests (as with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah), or officials connected to the royal court (Isaiah, Daniel) or to the temple worship (Habakkuk), or laymen pulled from their regular occupations to deliver the message given them (e.g., Amos, who as a sycamore fig grower and sheep breeder). Whoever it was and from whatever occupation, the prophets were those to whom the word of the LORD came, who were set apart and then directed to declare that word with the very authority of the LORD, whether it be to kings, priests, or people, neither adding nor subtracting anything.

4. HOW TO DISTINGUISH TRUE FROM FALSE PROPHETS

Two Tests for Those Who Claim to Be Prophets, Declaring God's Word with God's Authority:

(1) Deuteronomy 18:20-22:

"The prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?' – when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him."

(2) Deuteronomy 13:1-5:

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst."

Prophets Are to Be Neither Fortune-Tellers Nor Diviners Nor Crowd-Pleasers!

Deuteronomy 18:13-14:

"You shall be blameless before the LORD your God, for these nations, which you are about to dispossess, listen to fortune-tellers and to diviners. But as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do this."

Fortune-tellers and diviners pretend to see into God's will, directing human needs and concerns to the gods and supposedly extracting answers to how future events will come to pass on the basis of materials and methods. But prophesy is the communication of God to his creatures by means of his word sent to human agents then authorized to declare it.

Again, false prophets give people-pleasing prognostications, declaring that all is well when in fact things are definitively not well:

Ezekiel 13:9-10a:

"My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and who give lying divinations. They shall not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord GOD. Precisely because they have misled my people, saying, 'Peace,' when there is no peace." (See also Jer. 6:14.)

Rather, the LORD will raise up prophets who foretell aright and forthtell according to his word:

Deuteronomy 18:18-22:

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you [i.e., Moses] from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him."

5. THE FUNCTION OF THE PROPHET AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPHETIC OFFICE

(a) **Covenant Enforcement**: See the separate section on this below.
(b) **Prediction**: Foretelling ranges from immediate judgments to distant messianic prophecies (e.g., Isa. 53; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 12:10).
(c) **Intercession**: Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and Amos all plead for mercy (Ex. 32:11-14; 1 Sam. 12:23; 1 Kgs. 18:37; Amos 7:2-6).
(d) **Instruction and Edification**: Prophets often teach, both publicly (2 Kgs. 17:13) and privately (2 Sam. 12:1-15), shaping national conscience and personal holiness.

The Development of the Prophetic Office

(a) **Patriarchal Period**: Isolated appearances (Abraham, Jacob, Joseph) emphasize dreams and visionary guidance (Gen. 20:7; 37:5-11).
(b) **Mosaic Era**: Moses, "whom the LORD knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10), functions as paradigmatic prophet, the type of the prophets (and ultimate prophet, Jesus) to come.
(c) **United Monarchy**: Prophets such as Samuel, Nathan, Gad, and Ahijah counsel kings, ensuring the LORD's sovereign oversight (1 Sam. 15:10-23; 2 Sam. 12:1-14).
(d) **Divided Kingdoms**: A great flourishing of prophetic activity (Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, etc.), addressing covenant unfaithfulness in the form of the three "I's", idolatry, immorality, and injustice. These prophets were sent by the LORD to warn of coming judgment for egregious covenant breach and to call kings, priests, and people to repentance; they also often spoke of the eschatological glory that would come after this judgment.
(e) **Exilic and Post-Exilic Eras**: The prophets of this period (e.g., Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) continue to warn of judgment and call to repentance, even as they look to the eschatological hope.

5. THE PROPHET AS THE BRINGER OF GOD'S COVENANT INDICTMENT

We have mentioned that the prophets were sent by the LORD to warn of coming judgment for egregious covenant breach and to call kings, priests, and people to repentance. In this regard, their function was to boldly speak God's truth to entrenched power and to people (whether kings, priests, or common people) who didn't want to hear it.

The institution of the prophet in Israel is thus absolutely fascinating, in that it provides a strong counterbalance against entrenched human power doing whatever it wants. The prophet is the one called by God, speaking with the authority of the one to whom even the king owes his allegiance and obedience, who confronts those who are in breach of their covenant obligations to their sovereign LORD and calls them to turn from that path or face God's judgment. In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, the LORD had set forth the blessings for covenant faithfulness and the curses for covenant breach. And the prophets were those who, in a manner similar to lawyers reading an indictment, brought God's charges of covenant unfaithfulness to the ears of those who needed to hear it.

In this regard, prophets functioned independently of both palace and temple. While priests mediated the cultic worship and kings administered the civil authority, prophets stood as covenant prosecutors, authorized by God himself to rebuke both offices as required. It was thus the message of these prophets, not any institutional position they enjoyed, that granted them legitimacy.

Here are some examples of the prophetic rebuke and call of sinners to repentance:

Isaiah 1:1-20:
The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem
in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken:
"Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.
The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib,
but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."

Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly!
They have forsaken the LORD,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.
Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel?
The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.
From the sole of the foot even to the head,
there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds;
they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil.
Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire;
in your very presence foreigners devour your land;
it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners.
And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard,
like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.
If the LORD of hosts had not left us a few survivors,
we should have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.

Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom!
Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!
"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.
When you come to appear before me,
who has required of you this trampling of my courts?
Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me.
New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations –
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.
Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.
When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers, I will not listen;
your hands are full of blood.

"Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;
cease to do evil, learn to do good;
seek justice, correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.
If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;
but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Jeremiah 2:1-37:
Thus says the LORD:
“What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me,
and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?
They did not say, ‘Where is the LORD who brought us up from the land of Egypt,
who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits,
in a land of drought and deep darkness,
in a land that none passes through, where no man dwells?’
And I brought you into a plentiful land
to enjoy its fruits and its good things.

“But when you came in,
you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination.
The priests did not say, ‘Where is the LORD?’
Those who handle the law did not know me;
the shepherds transgressed against me;
the prophets prophesied by Baal
and went after things that do not profit.

“Therefore I still contend with you, declares the LORD,
and with your children’s children I will contend.
For cross to the coasts of Cyprus and see,
or send to Kedar and examine with care;
see if there has been such a thing.
Has a nation changed its gods,
even though they are no gods?
But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.

“Be appalled, O heavens, at this;
be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD,
for my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters,
and hewed out cisterns for themselves,
broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

Amos 5:14-24:
Seek good, and not evil, that you may live;
and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, as you have said.
Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord:
"In all the squares there shall be wailing,
and in all the streets they shall say, 'Alas! Alas!'
They shall call the farmers to mourning
and to wailing those who are skilled in lamentation,
and in all vineyards there shall be wailing,
for I will pass through your midst," says the LORD.
Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!
Why would you have the day of the LORD?
It is darkness, and not light,
as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him,
or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him.
Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?

"I hate, I despise your feasts,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals,
I will not look upon them.
Take away from me the noise of your songs;
to the melody of your harps I will not listen.
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

It is a warning of impending judgment for egregious covenant breach, and an urgent call to repentance and restoration.

Ezekiel 18:31-32:
"Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed,
and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!
Why will you die, O house of Israel?
For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone,
declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."

Ezekiel 33:7-16:
So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel.
Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me.
If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die,
and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way,
that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.
But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way,
that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul…
Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live,
yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice,
none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered,
but in his injustice that he has done he shall die.

Again, though I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,'
yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right,
if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery,
and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice,
he shall surely live; he shall not die.
None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him.
He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live. (See also Jeremiah 18:1-18.)

Indeed, the prophetic ministry entails a two-stage prosecution. There is (stage 1) the initial warning and call to repentance. And then, if that call to repentance goes unheeded, there is (stage 2) the declaration of judgment after the point of no return. God is slow to anger, but he is not never to anger.

These declarations of judgment for sin are not only directed toward Israel but toward the nations as well. Remember in our discussion of the law how all the earth is under God's sentence of death for Adam's sin, and all their own transgressions which proceed from it; and how in particular, it is the grievous violations of God's moral law in the form of idolatry, immorality, and injustice (as well as degradation of the created order) that bring down God's wrath (e.g., in Sodom, Egypt, Assyria, etc., etc.).

6. THE PROPHETS AS GOD'S MOCKED, IGNORED, AND PERSECUTED MESSENGERS

The Prophets as the Mocked Messengers of God:

2 Chronicles 36:15-16: The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy.

The Prophets as the Persecuted Messengers of God:

Jeremiah 38 documents when the prophet was cast into a cistern and left there to die by his enemies, who were angered by his constant warnings and negative messaging which contradicted their own more optimistic declarations. And we see that Micaiah was hated by Ahab for his truth-telling:

1 Kings 22:8:

"There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, Micaiah the son of Imlah, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil."

Matthew 5:11-12:

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

The Prophets as the Ignored Messengers of God:

Isaiah 6:9-13:

And he said, "Go, and say to this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled." The holy seed is its stump.

7. WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE PROPHETS WERE IGNORED

What Happened to Israel?

2 Kings 17:7-20:

And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced. And the people of Israel did secretly against the LORD their God things that were not right. They built for themselves high places in all their towns, from watchtower to fortified city. They set up for themselves pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, and there they made offerings on all the high places, as the nations did whom the LORD carried away before them. And they did wicked things, provoking the LORD to anger, and they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this."

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 that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets."

But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God. They despised his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false, and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do like them. And they abandoned all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made for themselves metal images of two calves; and they made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight. None was left but the tribe of Judah only. Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced. And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

What Happened to Judah?

2 Chronicles 36:13-19:

He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God. He stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD, the God of Israel. All the officers of the priests and the people likewise were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations. And they polluted the house of the LORD that he had made holy in Jerusalem.

The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place.

But **they kept mocking the messengers** of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy.

Therefore he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged. He gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the

treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon. And they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its palaces with fire and destroyed all its precious vessels. (See Ezek. 9-11 for the prophetic vision concerning the departure of the LORD's glory from the temple and from Jerusalem immediately prior to the fall of the city.

8. JESUS AS THE GREAT PROPHET

WSC 23: What offices doth Christ execute as our redeemer?
Christ, as our redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king,
both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

WSC 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?
Christ executeth the office of a prophet,
in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit,
the will of God for our salvation.

WSC 25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?
A. Christ executeth the office of a priest,
in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice,
and reconcile us to God; and in making continual intercession for us.

WSC 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?
Christ executeth the office of a king,
in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us,
and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

The judgments of which the prophets warned were two-fold: there was the warning of imminent judgment against Israel and Judah for their ongoing and egregious breach of the stipulations of covenant obedience, which, in the ignoring of which, would and did issue in catastrophe for the nation and exile from the land. But even this was typological of the larger judgment to come, i.e., the final judgment against the world for its sin at the end of the age. Jesus came and fulfilled in his person and by his words the office of the prophet (he being the promised prophet like Moses, in Deut. 18:15); then fulfilled all prophesy in his life and sacrificial death on behalf of his people, in which he embodied the person not just of the Holy One of Israel and the great "Son of David and greater than David," who fulfilled the prophesy of the Promised One (**Isa. 9:6-7**: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.) But also the Suffering Servant, who was rejected and persecuted and who gave his life as a ransom for many (**Isa. 53:3-5**: He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.)

9. PROPHETS AND PROPHESY TODAY

The extraordinary office of the prophet (along with that of the apostle) continued to exist in the New Testament church until the completion of the canon of Scripture, after which time it was no longer needed. Now we have only the ordinary offices of elder and deacon. The role of the prophet seems to have been to provide guidance by the Spirit concerning God's will for particular situations. Now that we have the fullness of God's revelation in Scripture, as well as the Spirit poured out both upon the church as a whole and in each of our hearts who receive and rest in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, there is no longer a need of that prophetic office. Indeed, claims of speaking with prophetic authority in a manner similar to that of the Old Testament prophets (i.e., as bearing the infallible word and will of God), must be rejected as undermining the authority of God's Scripture which alone is our infallible rule of faith and practice.

That said, while what we might call "capital P" prophesy and "capital P" prophets are no more, surely we can affirm that "small p" prophets and prophesy continue. For example, when the pastor preaches the word of God each Sunday, that is an example of "small p" prophesy: not infallible, to be sure, but a true forthtelling and declaration of the word of God with the authority of God, fallible to the extent that it is applied to the current situation of those hearing the word proclaimed, but even then guided by the Spirit in its proclamation and illuminated by the Spirit in its being received, such as to truly convert the lost and comfort and edify the saved.

And surely it's not just the pastors who preach, but all disciples of Christ – all of us – who have and believe and declare God's word and seek to apply it by the guidance of the Holy Spirit to our lives and circumstances, who are also "small p" prophets engaged in "small p" prophesy.

Indeed, as Christ is our Prophet, Priest, and King, so we his called and commissioned servants are called to be his word-bearing agents on earth, to faithfully proclaim and good news and declare the whole counsel of God's word to any and all; his holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, and his royal ambassadors, making his appeal to the world: be reconciled to God!

Amen.