

Which of the prophecies most surprised or impressed you? How?

After reading both categories of messianic prophecies, did you find one type in particular most appealing to you? What does that imply about the difficulty many in Jesus' time had accepting him as the Messiah? How important is it to you to know the Bible in order to recognize God's activity in your life and in the world?

Prophets called people to account in the present and foretold God's plans for the future, both ominous and hopeful. Does the church still need prophets and preachers to do this today? Do you accept it when they do?

REFLECT

Prophecies are included in the book of Psalms; God's will and plans revealed through worship songs and poems. The most poignant one of all is Psalm 22, the first line of which was quoted by Jesus on the cross. Read it, taking note of other verses that describe Jesus' experience on the cross. And be amazed.

RESPOND

Take time to worship the Eternal God and our Suffering, Reigning King. In your prayers, thank Him for how He weaves all of time together for His ultimate purposes.



NAVIGATING THE BIBLE

Rejecting God means saying no thanks to His protection, ignoring God means saying no to His guidance. They did it. We do it. And the prophets serve us fair warning.

Jeremiah 7:22-28

For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you. But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward. From the time your ancestors left Egypt until now, day after day, again and again I sent you my servants the prophets. But they did not listen to me or pay attention. They were stiff-necked and did more evil than their ancestors.' ...'This is the nation that has not obeyed the LORD its God or responded to correction. Truth has perished; it has vanished from their lips.

Isaiah 1:16-20

Take your evil deeds out of my sight!
Stop doing wrong, learn to do right!
Seek justice, encourage the oppressed.
Defend the cause of the fatherless,
plead the case of the widow.
"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 as crimson, they
shall be like wool..."

The prophetic message had four major themes:

- 1.) The prophets courageously pointed out people's sin and earnestly stressed the need for repentance.
- 2.) They reminded people of God's law, how important it is to obey it and that God has a grand purpose for them.
- 3.) They warned of God's coming judgment as the natural and sure consequence of their arrogance and disobedience.
- 4.) They anticipated the coming Messiah and the fulfillment of God's Kingdom



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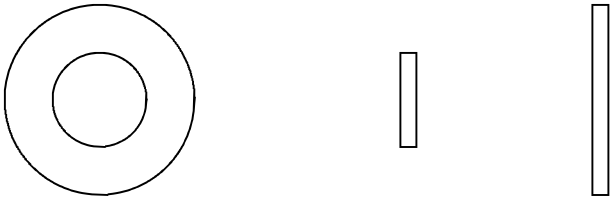


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FORETELLING: GOING BACK TO THE FUTURE



Imagine looking at two discs of different sizes as they face you. It will look like the figure at the left. Much of what God revealed to the prophets looked like this to them. The smaller disc was the here and now, the larger one the future-- providing background for the prophecy. The lines between the two weren't always clear to the prophet. The figure at the right shows things the way God might see them. Two parts of the puzzle that are perhaps thousands of years apart. Prophecies are no less valuable illustrated in this way, indeed they are given to us the way God intended. But understanding the complexities of foretelling prophecies can help us get the most from them.

FORTHTELLING: GIVING IT TO PEOPLE STRAIGHT.

Elijah casts a long shadow throughout Israel's history and was expected to miraculously come back and announce the coming Messiah. We know John the Baptist fulfilled Elijah's role as he prepared the way for Christ.

Dwight L. Moody
"Sin will keep you from
this Book or this Book
will keep you from sin."

1 Kings 18:16-39...Elijah on Mount Carmel

²¹"How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."

³⁶ At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. ³⁷ Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." ³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

³⁹ When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!"

What we learn about God:

He doesn't give up on us when we reject or forget Him.

What we learn about ourselves:

Our choices have consequences, but there is always hope.

What we're encouraged to do:

Return to God and remain in Him.

NAVIGATING THE BiBLE...Part Four: prophets LIFE GROUP STUDY

RELATE

Have you ever had an experience of foreshadowing, where you felt or "saw" something that later happened?

The Bible teaches that Jesus will return from heaven to earth. Do you think about this much? When you do, how does it affect you?

What new insight or idea made an impression on you from this week's sermon?

READ

Messianic Prophecies

Prophecies concerning the coming Messiah are found throughout the prophetic books and testify to the authenticity of God's Word and the eternal scope of his plans. Messianic prophecy can be placed in two categories. Read these examples from each category below and then answer the questions that follow:

Prophecies of a Kingly Messiah

Psalms 2:6 – 8

Psalms 68:18

Psalms 118:22

Isaiah 9:6-7

Isaiah 32:1-3

Isaiah 42:1-4

Jeremiah 23:5

Daniel 2:44

Micah 5:2

Daniel 7:13-14

Zechariah 6:12-13

Zechariah 9:9-10

Prophecies of a Suffering Messiah

Psalms 22:18

Isaiah 50:6

Psalms 69:21

Isaiah 52:14

Isaiah 53:1-12

Zechariah 11:12

Zechariah 12:10

Daniel 9:26

Zechariah 13:7