

An Introduction To
Old
Testament
Study

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CHAPTER 7

ISRAELITE PROPHECY

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'Word' in the Pre-Exilic Reforming Prophets," *JBL* LIII(1934)199-227; *idem*, "The Prophetic Word in the Psalms and the Prophetic Psalms," in his *The Psalms in Israel's Worship II* (Oxford/Nashville: Blackwell/Abingdon Press, 1962)53-73; J. Muilenburg, "The 'Office' of the Prophet in Ancient Israel," *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, ed. J.P. Hyatt (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965)74-97; E.W. Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970); H.M. Orlinsky, "The Seer-Priest," *WHJP* III(1971)268-79, 338-44; G. von Rad, *The Message of the Prophets* (London/New York: SCM Press/Harper & Row, 1968); T.H. Robinson, *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel* (London: Duckworth, 1923, 1953); H.H. Rowley, "Ritual and the Hebrew Prophets," *JSS* I(1956)338-60 = his *From Moses to Qumran: Studies in the Old Testament* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963)109-38; *idem*, "The Nature of Old Testament Prophecy in the Light of Recent Study," *HTR* XXXVIII(1945)1-38 = his *Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965)95-134; J.A. Sanders, "Hermeneutics in True and False Prophecy," *CA*, 21-41; J. Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1922); G.M. Tucker, "Prophetic Superscriptions and the Growth of a Canon," *CA*, 56-70; M. Weber, "Warfare and War Prophecy," in his *Ancient Judaism* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1952)90-117; C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (Philadelphia/London: Westminster Press/Lutterworth Press, 1967); J.G. Williams, "The Social Location of Israelite Prophecy," *JAAR* XXXVII(1969)119-30; W. Zimmerli, *The Law and the Prophets: A Study of the Meaning of the Old Testament* (Oxford/New York: Blackwell/Harper Torchbooks, 1965/1967).

The historical-critical study of the nineteenth century concluded that "the prophets are older than the law and

the psalms are later than both" (Eduard Reuss writing in 1881). This attitude catapulted the prophets into the center of attention in the study of the history of Israelite religion (see Zimmerli, 17-30). The prophets were rediscovered as historical persons and their message was freed from the bondage of certain scholarly and pious shackles. Many late nineteenth-century critics no longer understood the prophets either as predictors of events in the distant future or as expounders of the Mosaic law. For the first time, the way was open to interpret the prophets in light of the internal evidence of the prophetic books unencumbered by assumed religious ideas and institutions which supposedly formed the background for prophecy.

To speak of the prophets as forthtellers rather than foretellers became fashionable. This sentiment finds expression in such statements as the following, written in 1929 by R. H. Charles: "Prophecy is a declaration, a forthtelling, of the will of God—not a foretelling. Prediction is not in any sense an essential element of prophecy, though it may intervene as an accident—whether it be a justifiable accident is another question." (*Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, xxvi)

Rather than being the products or the expounders of tradition, the classical prophets came to be considered creative individuals or religious geniuses. Julius Wellhausen spoke of them in the following fashion:

The prophets have notoriously no father, their importance rests on the individual. . . representative men are always single, resting on nothing outside themselves. . . The element in which the prophets live is the storm of the world's history, which sweeps away human institutions; in which the rubbish of past generations with the houses built on it begins to shake, and that foundation alone remains firm, which needs no support but itself. When the earth trembles and seems to be passing away, then they triumph because Jehovah alone is exalted. They do not preach on set texts; they speak out of the spirit which judges all

things and itself is judged of no man. Where do they ever lean on any other authority than the truth of what they say; where do they rest on any other foundation than their own certainty? (*Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, 398)

A third characteristic of the new approach to the prophets stressed the ethical quality in their preaching. Prophecy was seen as the pinnacle of Israelite religion since it was the prophets who were the great reformers seeking to bring about a transformation in Israelite faith. The preaching of the prophets was expounded as an ethical idealism which sought to shift religion from a cultic to an ethical orientation. Prophetic faith transcended the earlier subhistorical, semimagical, demonistic, and popular folk Yahwism and placed the relationship between God and people on a purely moral basis.

The prophets were viewed as innovators and initiators of major new impetuses in the religion of Israel. Addressing their contemporaries with moral earnestness, with ethical principles, with anticultic emphases, and with individualistic perspectives, the prophets proclaimed the ethical over against the cultic, the individual as opposed to the communal, the internal versus the external, the universal in opposition to the national, monotheism instead of polytheism, and the historical in place of the natural. The prophets were often viewed as reforming theologians and brave individualists proclaiming the primacy of morality and the indispensability of a personal relation with God.

If one had asked these nineteenth-century Old Testament scholars how the prophets came to be the teachers and theologians of true religious and ethical values, most would have pointed to the individual prophets' religious experiences. Heinrich Ewald (1803-1875), Wellhausen's teacher, wrote as follows:

There can be no true prophet of Yahweh who has not first viewed the full majesty and holiness of Yahweh himself, and who has thereby become so completely filled with the true

eternal life that it now lives on as a new life firmly established in him. (*The Prophets of the Old Testament*, 26)

In a similar vein, Wellhausen wrote:

It belongs to the notion of prophecy, of true revelation, that Jehovah, overlooking all the mass media of ordinances and institutions, communicates Himself to the individual, the called one, in whom that mysterious and irreducible rapport in which the deity stands with man clothes itself with energy. Apart from the prophet, in abstracto, there is no revelation; it lives in his divine-human ego. (*Prolegomena*, 398)

A. The Prophets and Ecstatic Experience

Focus on the prophet as a creative, inspired individual naturally led to attempted examinations of the personal experience of the prophet and even to efforts at remote psychoanalysis. If the prophets were conceived as isolated and unique personalities proclaiming a message peculiar to themselves, discovered in their lonely solitude, and contrary to the general faith and practice of their contemporaries, then the personal experiences through which they had received revelation and arrived at their beliefs and convictions must be all important. This issue of the prophets' personal and spiritual religious experience came to dominate prophetic research for over a generation (see Rowley, 1965).

Gunkel was one of the first scholars to raise to prominence the issue of religious experience. His dissertation, published in 1888, dealt with the question of the work of the Holy Spirit in the popular thought of the apostolic age and in the teachings of St. Paul. In this work, Gunkel stressed the priority of the spiritual, pneumatic experience over theological formulation in understanding the life and faith of the early church and thus opposed the rationalistic interpretation of early Christianity widely current at the time. This approach brought the

irrational, extraordinary experiences of persons into the picture and these were subsequently used in understanding the prophets. Gunkel's views, which found expression in later writings, show many similarities to the interpretations of inspiration and inspired persons found in Plato (*Timaeus*, xxxii) and Philo (*De Specialibus Legibus* IV 49; *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres* 53). Since Gunkel originally worked in the area of New Testament and early Christian backgrounds, his familiarity with Plato and Philo is entirely possible.

Along with Gunkel, Bernard Duhm (1847-1928), Gustav Hölzcher (1877-1955), and others turned to the concept of ecstasy to understand and explain the unusual experience of the prophets and drew upon the developing science of folk psychology as outlined by Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920). Gunkel argued "that these strange men must ultimately remain unintelligible to us unless we understand these secret experiences" (1924, 356). The prophets were compared to ecstasies known from the general study of the history of religion.

When such an ecstasy seizes him, the prophet . . . loses command of his limbs: he staggers and stutters like a drunken man; his sensitiveness to pain is diminished or suspended: his ordinary sense of what is decent deserts him; he feels an impulse to do all kinds of strange actions and seems to have become insane: a feeling of infinite strength possesses him—he can run and leap more than an ordinary person can do: strange emotions and ideas come over him and mingle with what was already in his mind or what his surroundings present to his senses: he is seized by that sensation of hovering which we know from our own dreams. . . . (Gunkel, 1924, 428)

The British scholar T. H. Robinson (1881-1964) attempted to reconstruct a typical ecstatic experience undergone by a prophet:

We can now call before our minds a picture of the prophet's activity in public. He might be mingling with the crowd,

sometimes on ordinary days, sometimes on special occasions. Suddenly something would happen to him. His eye would become fixed, strange convulsions would seize upon his limbs, the form of his speech would change. Men would recognize that the Spirit had fallen upon him. The fit would pass, and he would tell to those around the things which he had seen and heard. There might have been symbolic action, and this he would explain with a clear memory of all that had befallen him, and of all that he had done under the stress of ecstasy. (50)

Evidence to support the argument that the prophets underwent abnormal experiences during which they perceived visions and heard sounds and voices and that they frequently spoke in mysterious and cryptic words was found in numerous Old Testament passages. Prophets associated with Samuel, and Saul who fell among their company, "prophesied" in ways certainly to be understood as unusual behavior (I Sam 10:1-13; 19:18-24). The prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel mutilated themselves (I Kings 18:28-29; see Zech 13:6), and Elisha was able to prophesy to the accompaniment of music (II Kings 3:14-15). Many prophetic texts refer to visionary experiences and Ezekiel's career is described with frequent references to uncommon experiences and to "spiritual" transportation from one place to another. The Hebrew verb "to prophesy" sometimes suggests "to behave in an uncontrolled manner" and the prophet could be referred to as a "madman" (II Kings 9:11; Hos 9:7; Jer 29:26).

If some prophets in ancient Israel underwent various phenomena characteristic of ecstatic experiences which were sometimes stimulated by rhythmic dancing, music, and other means (drink, Is 28:7; Mic 2:11; perhaps drugs?), does this hold true of all the prophets, especially the so-called classical, or writing, prophets? As a rule, scholars have hesitated to categorize all Old Testament prophets as ecstasies and thus to place them all under the same umbrella. Various ways have been used to distinguish the classical prophets (from Amos on) from their predecessors and contemporaries with regard

to the question of ecstasy and abnormal experiences.

(1) One approach argues that the classical prophets must be sharply differentiated from the others who were primarily diviners and thus craftsmen and technicians. "Both the seer [= diviner] and the prophet experienced the phenomenon of ecstasy; they differed only in that the former practiced several recognized techniques to induce it that the latter did not. Unlike the prophet, the seer employed music, dance, and group participation to work himself up into a state of ecstasy, even frenzy." "In general, both the seer-priest and the prophets received directives from God in much the same way, through dreams, objects, and sounds." "The prophet . . . opposed everything that smacked of the seer as a craftsman" (Orlinsky, 269, 270, 272). This position assumes that ecstatic experience (though perhaps different in intensity) was common to classical and nonclassical "prophets," but in the case of the former it was not the product of any technical craft.

(2) The difference between the classical and other prophets has been viewed not in terms of a radical differentiation but in terms of an evolutionary development. Here Gunkel's 1924 article can serve as an example. He argued that "the fundamental experience of all types of prophecy is 'ecstasy'" (358). Gunkel, however, distinguished various stages in prophetic ecstasy paralleling the historical development of prophecy: (a) "The prophets whom Saul meets coming down from the high place [I Sam 10:5-13] are in ecstasy—nothing more is said. We must not ask what sort of oracles they uttered. Such ecstasy had originally no purpose beyond itself: it was in itself regarded as the work of Jahweh" (25). (b) In the evolution of the prophetic movement, ecstasy ceased to be a phenomenon in and of itself and became the means for receiving oracular messages. "The first onward step was when the *nebiim* [= prophets] were applied to for oracles and gave them. . . . They now become the counsellors of their nation in all their difficulties, great and small" (25). (c) With the classical prophets, ecstatic

experience had become a subordinate phenomenon. "Out of the ranks of such 'prophets' there arose men of a nobler stamp, men of a loftier flight of thought and greater breadth of view" (26). "But even in the great men themselves the wild element is plainly perceptible, although its violence is somewhat less. In accordance with this we must take it that their speech was more rational than the 'crying' of the prophets of the oldest time" (27). "Even their strange experiences, their phantastic visions and their strange symbols are but externals. There is more in them than that. They proclaimed to their day the thoughts of God. . . . It is in this change of content that we find the reason why the vehement element in the outward form of their experiences subsides (although it never disappears), and is replaced by inward experiences which we can understand" (30-31). A similar perspective is represented in the following quote from the British scholar John Skinner (1851-1925):

When we look at prophecy, . . . as a human medium of revelation, we can trace a progressive emancipation of its spiritual essence from the ecstatic or visionary forms in which its earlier manifestations consist. At the lowest stage of prophecy . . . , inspiration and ecstasy are identified. Revelation was an occasional thing; the prophet or seer was a man endowed with a peculiar psychopathic susceptibility to divine suggestion or influence, who delivered his oracles piecemeal as they came to him. His message consists either of words uttered unconsciously in a state of trance, or of an announcement of what he has seen and heard in vision; his conscious mental powers playing no essential part in the process. . . . On the higher level represented by the great prophets of Israel this crude and fragmentary conception of inspiration is left far behind. Visions and auditions, mysterious inward promptings to speech and action, are still a part of the prophet's experience; but the field of revelation is no longer confined to them alone. The meaning of the vision passes into the prophet's thinking, and becomes the nucleus of a comprehensive view of God and the world, from which spring ever fresh intuitions of truth and calls to duty. That these again may clothe themselves

involuntarily in symbolic imagery is an act which does not in the least detract from the essentially spiritual character of the prophet's discernment of the mind of God. He reflects upon what he has seen and heard, and interprets its significance to himself and his hearers; and the substance of his revelation is not the mere vision or audition itself but the truth which it has evoked or symbolised in his mind. Thus his reasoning and moral faculties are actively engaged in the discovery and delivery of his message; and all that comes home to him with immediate certainty as the result of his initiation into the divine purpose is as truly the word of God to him as the content of the vision itself. (220-21)

(3) A third approach for distinguishing different prophets from one another points to the consciousness, inspiration, and endowment of the classical prophets. This has been done by Mowinckel in the following manner:

The pre-exilic reforming prophets [Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk] never in reality express a consciousness that their prophetic endowment and powers are due to possession by or any action of the spirit of Yahweh. . . . There is, on the contrary, another fundamental religious conception upon which the whole of the consciousness and prophetic message rest, the word of Yahweh. (1934, 199)

Whereas the reforming prophets emphatically stress the fact that they have received Yahweh's word, and are furnished with religious, rational and moral criteria for knowing what really is his word, they do not derive their power from or authenticate their prophetic call by the conception of Yahweh's *rû'h* [Spirit], which, in fact, they have rejected, but by their own consciousness of possessing his word. To them this means a word which is authenticated by expressing Yahweh's moral nature and demands, and the prophet's own knowledge of God and moral sense. Yahweh's word resembles Yahweh's law in being recognizable by its content rather than by its form. The test is religious and moral, an "apprehension" or "knowledge" of God—not the ecstatic *rû'h* and mystic union of divine possession. (1934, 225)

The following conclusions can be safely drawn from the research on the psychology and nature of prophetic experience. (1) Abnormality in experiences and activity was characteristic, to lesser or greater degrees, of all Hebrew prophets. (2) The ecstatic and religious experiences of the Israelite prophets are not unique but are typologically similar to those known from diverse cultures and times (see Lindblom). (3) While there are great differences in what the Bible tells us about the classical prophets and their predecessors, no radical differentiation should be made.

A basic continuity between the early prophets such as Ahijah and Elijah and the later prophets should be made quite clear. The prophets continue in their call and in their experience; they continue to be charismatic messengers who announce "thus says the Lord"; they continue to represent the old Yahwistic traditions; they continue to be "seized upon" from a wide variety of everyday stations and roles; and they continue to demonstrate the innovative capacity of the charismatic. That the innovations in understanding, appropriating, and modifying the tradition lead ultimately to new departures in the message does not separate in type the early and the later prophets. (Huffman, MD, 181)

(4) The ecstasy and the passion of the prophet means that they must be understood more as poets than as philosophers, and this is reflected in the form of their public address. "It accords with such a condition of excitation that the prophet's words, as soon as they pass from stuttering to actual language, automatically take metrical form" (Gunkel, 1924, 365).

B. The Diversity of Prophets in Ancient Israel

Old Testament prophetism clearly possessed a complex and variegated character both in historical and

phenomenological categories. This is evident even in the terminology used in the text when speaking of prophets. Four terms—*hoze*, *ro'e*, *nabi*, and *ish (ha) Elohim*—are frequently applied to prophetic figures (see Orlinisky, 342-43). The first two are generally translated as "seer" while the last simply means "man of God." *Nabi* is the most commonly used term and is the Hebrew word translated "prophet." The significance of two terms for "seer" can no longer be determined, and the phrase "man of God" probably carries no more special connotation than our phrase "a holy man." The term prophet seems to have meant something like "spokesman" (see Ex 4:16; 7:1) or "one who calls/is called," but the etymology here, as frequently, supplies no real aid to understanding the function or office of prophet. Our English word comes from the Greek *prophētēs*, which means "declarer, interpreter." Several prophetic figures are designated both seer and prophet, and Samuel is referred to as seer, prophet, and man of God. I Sam 9:9 suggests that seer was an earlier title for the prophet although later texts continue to use both terms (see II Kings 17:13, where seer and prophet seem to be distinguished).

In the narratives about early Israelite history, prophets are shown functioning in diverse contexts, sometimes as individuals and sometimes in groups. They are shown as functionaries in warfare, rallying the troops to battle (Judg 4:4-9), assuring the participants of victory, planning military strategy (I Kings 20:13-15), symbolically or orally announcing the defeat of the enemy (I Kings 22:10-12; see Is 37), and pronouncing curses and judgments upon opponents (I Kings 20:28). Times of crisis and threat often produce "a reallocation of social roles and the development of new roles" (Huffman, MD, 177) and some scholars have seen the early military crisis of the tribes as the context for early prophecy.

As war prophets the Yahweh *Nabim* appeared in Northern Israel with the beginning of the National wars, actually religious

wars, above all, in the wars of liberation against the uncircumcised Philistines. Ecstatic prophecy obviously made its appearance then though probably not for the first time, but it appeared in all genuine wars of liberation—of which the first was the Deborah war. This prophecy at first had nothing to do with any sort of “prediction” . . . but its business was, as with Deborah, the “mother of Israel,” the incitement to crusade, promise of victory, and ecstatic victory magic. (Weber, 97)

The connection of some prophets with warfare and strong nationalistic sentiment seems to have continued throughout Israelite and Judean history.

Prophets are also depicted as being closely associated with the royal court where they served as court advisers, assisting in the determination of the will of the deity and providing divine sanction for policies of state. The classical court prophet in the Old Testament is Nathan, whose career overlapped the reigns of David and Solomon. Gad is said to have been both David's seer and prophet (I Sam 22:5; II Sam 24:11; I Chron 21:9; 29:29; II Chron 29:25). The king and prophet often consulted one another (II Sam 12:1-15; I Kings 20:41-42; II Kings 3:11; Is 7:3-9; 38:1-8; Jer 37:16-17; 38:14-16). Groups of prophets are sometimes associated with the court (I Kings 18:19; 22:6).

Some prophets were connected with sanctuaries. I Sam 10:5-8 mentions prophets coming from the “high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying.” Samuel was pictured as a seer presiding over sacrificial meals (I Sam 9:11-14) and prophets could be consulted on special, holy days (II Kings 4:18-25).

Early prophets are shown operating as individuals and as groups. A band of prophets encountered Saul at Gibeath (I Sam 10:5-13) and a similar group was associated with Samuel at Ramah (I Sam 19:18-24). Elijah and Elisha are described as “father” to a company of “sons of the prophets” (II Kings 2:3; 4:38; 6:1-2) which seems to have lived a communal existence centered in various places (Bethel, II Kings 2:3; Jericho, II Kings 2:5; Gilgal, II Kings

4:38). Such groups may have formed guilds with membership denoted by special marks or clothing (I Kings 20:35-43; II Kings 1:8; 2:23-24).

This diversity of prophets is paralleled in references from ancient near eastern texts which speak of “prophetic” figures. The earliest of such references appear in about thirty letters addressed to the king of Mari, located on the upper Euphrates river, dating from the eighteenth century BCE (see Moran, Huffmon, and ANET, 623-25, 629-32). The correspondence, written by royal officials to the king Zimri-Lim, report on “prophetic” figures who primarily deliver messages for the king (see II Chron 21:12). Some of these figures bear titles; others were apparently “lay” persons, both males and females (see Judg 4:4; II Kings 22:14) are included, and sometimes groups of such figures are noted. The two most common titles used to designate those figures are *apilu/apiltu*; “answerer, respondent,” and *muhhu/muhhutu*, “ecstatic.” As a rule, these persons delivered their oracles in cultic services, however, in some cases it seems the message was proclaimed outside the cult. Since the letters preserved are royal correspondence, the prophetic messages are addressed to the king although two contain oracles spoken to the people. Some of the messages are critical of the king for his failure to perform certain duties and some contain commands addressed to the monarch; however, the majority are favorable to the ruler. Some of the messages were clearly unsolicited. Various gods are quoted as the sources of the messages and sometimes the speakers refer to dreams as the means of divine revelation. The prophetic figures frequently refer to the divine commission to make their proclamations and the letters assume that the king was expected to take their messages seriously.

Other texts include one from the Old Babylonian period from Uruk (see ANET, 604), a fourteenth-century Hittite text (see ANET, 394-96), an Egyptian text noting an eleventh-century Canaanite ecstatic (see ANET, 26), the eighth-century Aramaic text from Zakir (see ANET, 655-

56), and various texts from the Assyrian period (see ANET, 605-6, 625-26; and Huffmon, MD, 175-76). In these texts, the spokesmen are referred to with titles completely different from the Mari texts. A number of Egyptian texts contain statements of major social critique, denunciations, and exhortations, similar in many ways to Old Testament prophetic preaching; but these are not delivered as the word of any deity or under the sense of any stated special divine commission (see ANET, 407-10, 441-46).

The association of prophets with various Israelite institutions, the diversity of Old Testament prophetic figures, and comparative near eastern materials have raised an issue which has been widely discussed in recent research: Were prophets an established part of the cultic personnel in ancient Israel? A secondary problem related to this issue is the question of whether or not any or all of the classical prophets were members of the sanctuary staff (on prophets and the cult, see Berger and Rowley, 1963).

Wellhausen had already argued in the nineteenth century that the prophetic and priestly functions in early Israel were closely related and that prophets and priests were closely associated.

There is . . . a close relation between priests and prophets, i.e., seers; as with other peoples (I Sam vi.2; I Kings xviii.19, compare with 2 Kings x.19), so also with the Hebrews. In the earliest time it was not knowing the technique of worship, which was still very simple and undeveloped, but being a man of God, standing on an intimate footing with God, that made a man a priest, that is one who keeps up the communication with heaven for others; and the seer is better qualified than others for the office (I Kings xviii.30 seq.). There is no fixed distinction in early times between the two offices; Samuel is in I Sam i.-iii. an aspirant to the priesthood; in ix.x. he is regarded as a seer.

In later times also, when priests and prophets drew off and separated from each other, they yet remained connected, both in the kingdom of Israel (Hos. iv.5) and in Judah. In the latter this was very markedly the case (2 Kings xxiii.2; Jer. xxvi.7 seq., v.

31; Deut. xviii.1-8, 9-22; Zech. vii.3). What connected them with each other was the revelation of Jehovah which went on and was kept alive in both of them. It is Jehovah from whom the torah of the priest and the word of the prophet proceeds. . . . This explains how both priests and prophets claimed Moses for their order. . . . (Prolegomena, 396-97)

As a rule, late nineteenth and early twentieth century scholarship understood the priests and the prophets, priestly and prophetic religion, in strongly antithetical terms. Paul Volz (1871-1941), writing in 1938, declared:

Old Testament religion, the religion of the prophets, is a religion of the Word. Because of this, the religion of the Old Testament prophets stands in sharpest contrast to the religion of the priests, to cult religion. The religion of the priests is a religion of sacrifice. The priest carries the gifts of men up towards God. The religion of the prophets is a religion of the Word. It brings the voice of God down to men, the voice that creates life and that one must obey. While the cultic ritual is rigid, often remains the same for centuries and sometimes smothers new seeds of faith like a firm blanket, the Word is alive, acting, creating. (translated in Berger, 944)

Such a view of prophetism, as the Protestantism of antiquity, would scarcely see prophets and priests as cooperative functionaries working together in the same religious and cultic institution.

The theory of cultic prophets in ancient Israel has been most convincingly argued by Sigmund Mowinckel and A. R. Johnson. The following arguments are advanced by them.

(1) In early Israel, the difference between priest and prophet was not very great since both responded to inquiries, offered instruction, and performed "sacramental" (representing men before God) and "sacrificial" (representing God to men) functions.

The role of the priest was . . . a dual one. He was not only the

Yahweh's spokesman. At the same time, . . . such divine knowledge as he possessed was derived either from a form of divination or from his training in the accumulated experience of the past. (Johnson, 8-9)

The early *nabi* or 'prophet' . . . had at least this much in common with the priest (including the Levite) and the seer: he was consulted for the sake of securing oracular guidance. (Johnson, 25)

The intercessory aspect of the prophet's role has been more or less overlooked. Yet it is undoubtedly true that the . . . 'prophet,' as a professional figure was as much the representative of the people as the spokesman of Yahweh; it was part of his function to offer prayer as well as to give the divine response or oracle. (Johnson, 60)

The role of the prophet as intercessor is suggested by a number of passages (Gen 20:3,7; I Kings 18:41-46; II Kings 6:17; Jer 37:3; 42:1-4; Amos 7:1-6; see Mowinckel, 1962, 62-63).

(2) Prophets are frequently closely related to the priests and the temple, especially in Jerusalem. Elijah, like the prophets of Baal, offers sacrifices (I Kings 18:20-40). That priests and prophets are frequently mentioned together suggests that at least some prophets were cultic personnel (Jer 23:11; 26:7,16; 27:16; 29:26; Lam 2:20; Zech 7:1-3). Prophets associated with the sanctuary served under the supervision and jurisdiction of the priests (Mowinckel, 56; see Jer 29:26) or with a status "at least as high as, if not actually higher than, that of the priests" (Johnson, 63; see Jer 5:30-31).

(3) The cultic prophets were later absorbed into a subordinate order of the Levites as temple singers but still possessed the power of prophecy (compare II Kings 23:2 with II Chron 34:30; see I Chron 25:1-6; II Chron 20:13-19; 29:30; 35:5). According to Johnson, the cultic prophets lost their prestige and status because they continued to proclaim peace and good times in face of the Babylonian threat and were thus proved false (according to the rule of

Deut 18:22) when foreign armies overran Jerusalem and the people were subjected to exile. The cultic prophets were then "brought into definite subjection to the priesthood—and so disappeared" (75; see 66-76).

(4) Mowinckel pointed to the divine speeches and oracles in the psalms as further evidence of prophetic functions within the cult.

It is very possible that the ritual . . . would provide that at a certain point the prophet was to announce Yahweh's answer to the prayer, and that the substance of the answer was prescribed by the ritual, whereas wording and composition were left to the free and instantaneous inspiration of the prophet. But it is just possible that even the wording of the promise would be prescribed by the ritual, as is the case with, for instance, the formula of absolution in present-day divine services. (1962, 57)

Mowinckel argued that prophetic oracles were spoken to the worshiper(s) during rituals of national and personal lament (see Pss 12:6; 60:8-10; 108:8-10; 91:14-16) and the coronation of Davidic rulers and other royal occasions (Pss 2; 20; 21; 45; 89; 110; 132). Others were used during the great festivals (Pss 50; 81; 95).

The concept of cultic prophets has been subsequently expanded by some scholars to argue that even the canonical prophets were actually cultic prophets and thus members of prophetic guilds. The Swedish scholar, Alfred Haldar, has argued that in Mesopotamian cultures there were two classes of diviners, the *bārū* and *māhū*. The former, which corresponds to the Hebrew "seer," divined through technical means while the latter, which corresponds to the Hebrew "prophet," received oracles in a state of ecstasy. These groups in Israel as in Mesopotamia were organized into corporations centered around the sanctuaries. Going even farther, one scholar has recently argued that Amos was a hepatoscoper, one skilled in using livers to divine oracles (see Rowley, 163, 122-23).

Haldar and others have utilized a comparative ap-

proach to the question of prophecy and cult (see Berger and Williams). A different method has been followed by some scholars who interpret the prophets against the background of an annual or periodic renewal of the Sinai covenant in the Israelite cult (see Clements, 1975, 8-23). In the original making of the covenant at Sinai, Moses fulfilled the role of covenant mediator. In the festival of covenant renewal, it is assumed that the role of Moses was taken by the prophetic spokesman—the covenant mediator—who proclaimed, interpreted, and applied the covenant law to the community and announced judgments against the people in the form of covenant lawsuits. This assumes that the prophets occupied an "office" like that of other regular offices in Israel. Some scholars even speak of a succession of prophets who filled the office of covenant mediator. A moderate position on the issue is reflected by Muilenburg.

It does not seem to me to be out-running the evidence to say that there were indeed prophets like Moses (see Deut 18:18; Yahweh's messengers, his covenant mediators, intercessors for the people, speakers for God. They are sent from the divine King [Yahweh], the suzerain of the treaties, to reprove and to pronounce judgment upon Israel for breach of covenant. . . . So today we no longer speak of Moses or the prophets, or of the law or prophecy, but rather of Moses and the prophets. (97; see also Bergren)

Those who advocate a close relationship between prophets and priests break with one of the central pillars of older prophetic research: the assumption that the prophets totally condemned cultic religion (see Amos 5:21-24; Hos 6:6; Is 1:10-17; Mic 6:6-8; Jer 6:20; 7:21-26).

The denunciation of public worship as practised in the sanctuaries of their time had always been a prominent feature in the preaching of the pre-exilic prophets. . . . Ancient worship culminated in animal sacrifice, and apart from sacrificial worship religion could not exist. . . . The bond uniting the deity

and his worshippers was conceived as a physical one, and nothing was needed to keep it intact save the due observance of the stated ritual. Morality might be important, and transgressions of the divinely appointed order might be punished by judgments more or less severe; but the threatened breach could always be healed, and the anger of the god appeased, by enhanced zeal in the performance of sacrificial rites. . . . [For the prophets] not only is sacrifice of no avail as a substitute for religious conduct, but a perfect religious relationship is possible without sacrifice at all. . . . Sacrifice, therefore, is no necessary term of communion between Yahwe and Israel: it does not belong to the essence of religion. And that the principle extends to the cultus in general. . . . is strongly suggested by the fact that they never demand a purified ritual, but always and exclusively the fulfillment of the ethical commands of Yahwe. (Skinner, 178-81)

How radically interpretations have changed can be seen in the following statement of Engnell:

No fundamental declarations of anti-cultic principle are to be found in the prophets, no matter how diligently scholars persist in their attempts to find them. In an unprejudiced, true exegesis, which takes the context of the sayings into consideration, it is evident that, in reality, these so-called anti-cultic sayings refer to special cases: they are directed either against certain definite forms of the cult (foreign types, or types which claim to be Yahwistic but are not acknowledged as such by the prophet in question—which first of all is true of all North Israelite cults without exception), or against a cult whose advocates are incriminated in one way or other, especially in their inferior ethical and social practices. The polemical sayings which have been interpreted as essentially anti-cultic (for example, Amos 5:21ff.; Hos. 6:6; Isa. 1:11ff.; Jer 7:21ff.) fall into one of these categories. (139)

Many passages within the prophetic books and regulations in Deuteronomy testify to controversy and conflict among various prophets in ancient Israel. The first appearance of such conflict is found in the narrative of I Kings 22 where the prophet Micaiah prophesies

differently from four hundred prophets and attributes their message to an evil spirit sent from Yahweh (1 Kings 22:19-23; see Ez 14:9). Many of the canonical prophets denounce other prophets, accusing them of leading the people astray: by prophesying for money (Mic 3:5-6, 11; Ez 13:19), by lying (Is 9:15; Jer 8:10; 14:14; and elsewhere), by proclaiming visions of their hearts (Ez 13:2; 22:28), by preaching peace when there is no peace (Ez 13:10; Jer 6:14; and elsewhere), by not having "stood" in Yahweh's council (Jer 23:18), by having no divine commission (Jer 29:8-9; 14:14; and elsewhere), by prophesying in the name of Baal (Jer 2:8; 5:31; 23:13; 32:32-35), by practicing sorcery (Ez 13:1-7), and so on (see Crenshaw, 1971, 1-4). In several passages, where the canonical prophets speak against their prophetic opponents, the Greek translators used *pseudoprophētēs* to render the Hebrew *naḇi*. This has led to speaking of these opponents of the classical prophets as "false prophets."

The canonical prophets and Deuteronomy sought to lay down certain criteria by which one could know which prophet spoke the genuine word of Yahweh (see Crenshaw, 49-61). Some criteria focused on the message and its mode of receipt: it must come from Yahweh and not other gods (Deut 13:1-5), the word must be fulfilled (Deut 18:22; Jer 28:9) it must not be the result of dreams or visions (Jer 23:25-28), and the message must not delude the people (Jer 13:10; 28:8). Other criteria focused on the character and person of the prophet: the prophet must not be immoral (Jer 23:14; Is 28:7), must not prophesy for money (Mic 3:5-6; Ez 13:19), and must have experienced genuine revelation and been privy to Yahweh's council (Jer 23:18, 21-22).

Various attempts have been made to identify and/or to characterize the antagonists of the classical prophets (see Crenshaw and Sanders). They have been seen as ecstasies, as professional *nebiim*, as Zionist and nationalistic spokesmen, as cultic personnel, as sounding boards of popular opinion, as pro-establishment propagandists,

and as persons who failed to meet any or all of the above noted criteria. More recent study has suggested the following about these prophets. (1) An evaluation of them as false prophets is based on the designation of the canonical prophets as true prophets. (2) Those prophets who preached peace and nationalism in the final days of Judah, for example Jeremiah's opponents, were proven wrong and unrealistic by the course of historical events. (3) The opponents of the classical prophets were probably perceived by their contemporaries as having the same (or better) credentials as the canonical prophets, perhaps drew upon the same theological traditions, and used similar forms of address.

What constituted the difference between the classical prophets and their opponents? Obviously the difference was one of degree rather than kind: the classical prophets employed a radically different hermeneutic from their opponents—they "read" the earlier traditions (texts) and the contemporary situations (contexts) and perceived a radically distinct understanding of God and his relationship to his people.

What seems quite clear is that the so-called false prophets did not refer, in times of threat, to God as God also of the enemy. Such an affirmation of God the creator of all peoples is a part of the canonical monotheizing process . . . to which, apparently, the so-called false prophets did not, like the true prophets, consciously contribute. (Sanders, 40)

The most dramatic of the prophetic conflicts is narrated in Jeremiah 28. In this chapter, Jeremiah and Hananiah are shown debating the issue of the length of the exile. Sanders comments on the difference between the two prophets:

If the message of Hananiah as prophet can be viewed also as applying authoritative tradition to the context that he and Jeremiah both faced, the debate takes on a dimension beyond

what has so far been suggested in studies on it. If he used the traditions of "form" in delivering his message, as has often been noted, might he not also have used the traditions of "text"? Those who transmitted the record of the debate to the literary form we inherit in Jeremiah 28 do not suggest reference to authoritative "text" tradition. But with the constitutive hermeneutic of God as redeemer and sustainer with emphasis on his grace, he might well have preached in the following manner: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel [who brought Israel up out of Egypt, guided it in the wilderness, and brought it into this land]: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place all the . . ." (Jer 28:2-3 with insertion). He might have said, in the debate, "Jeremiah, it is a question of having faith in God that he is powerful enough to keep his promises. He is not whimsical. He who brought us out of Egypt and into this land is strong enough to keep us here. It is a matter of firm belief in his providence and sustaining power." And Jeremiah, upon returning with the iron yoke, might have said, "Hananiah, he who brought us out of Egypt and into this land is strong enough and free enough to take us out of here. It is a matter of belief in God not only as redeemer and sustainer, but also as creator of all." (38-39)

That major distinctions must be drawn between the judgmental and classical prophets from the eighth century onward and their opponents and contemporaries seems clear. To determine the basis upon which such distinctions rested is difficult if not impossible. Some interpreters have pointed to the experiences of the prophets which gave them an empathic identity with God (so Heschel). Sanders has spoken of the classical prophets' participation in the monotheizing process and reliance upon a view of God as creator. Von Rad viewed the prophets as engaging in a dialogue with older Israelite traditions in light of the new events which they saw already on the horizon. Gunkel, Mowinckel, and others have pointed to the more reflective and penetrating character of the content of the classical prophets' preaching. Holladay has seen the shift in Assyrian statecraft—from a policy of dealing with subordinate

rulers to dealing with the populace as a whole—as the basis for the rise of prophets that condemned the entire nation. Perhaps not one but several of these factors were influential in the rise of the classical prophets with their messages of radical divine judgment. They certainly appeared on the scene when Israel and Judah were confronted with major stress and were at the point of being sucked into the maelstrom of international affairs. Years ago, Wellhausen wrote:

There had subsisted in Palestine and Syria a number of petty kingdoms and nationalities, which had their friendships and enmities with one another, but paid no heed to anything outside their own immediate environment, and revolved, each on its own axis, careless of the outside world, until suddenly the Assyrians burst in upon them. These commenced the work which was carried on by the Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks, and completed by the Romans. They introduced a new factor, the conception of the world—the world of course in the historical sense of that expression. In presence of that conception the petty nationalities lost their centre of gravity, brute force dispelled their illusions, they flung their gods to the moles and to the bats (Isa. ii). The prophets of Israel alone did not allow themselves to be taken by surprise by what had occurred, or to be plunged in despair; they solved by anticipation the grim problem which history set before them. They absorbed into their religion that conception of the world which was destroying the religions of the nations, even before it had been fully grasped by the secular consciousness. Where others saw only the ruin of everything that is holiest, they saw the triumph of Jehovah over delusion and error. Whatever else might be overthrown, the really worthy remained unshaken. (*Prolegomena*, 472-73)

C. The Forms of Prophetic Speech

Although the classical prophets are referred to as the writing prophets, it has been widely recognized that they

were primarily speakers and not authors. Gunkel was one of the first scholars to attempt a systematic analysis of the forms of prophetic address (see above, chapter four, section D). He argued that the basic prophetic speech consisted of a threat, which proclaimed a coming act of judgment, and a reproach, which explicated the reason for the judgment.

Gunkel's analysis has been criticized, especially his choice of terminology (Westermann, 64-70, and Koch, 191-94), and attempts have been made to outline more definitely the basic prophetic forms of address. Developing the concept of the prophet as divine messenger, a point already stressed by Gunkel, Westermann has outlined the basic judgment speech as follows (using Amos 7:16-17 as example):

- A. The reason for the judgment
or Accusation: You say, "Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not preach against the house of Isaac."
- B. Messenger Formula: Therefore thus says the Lord:
- C. Announcement
of Judgment: "Your wife shall be a harlot in the city, and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be parceled out by line; you, yourself shall die in an unclean land, and Israel shall surely go into exile from its land."

According to Westermann, this form could be expanded in various ways. The following illustrates its more complex development (using Micah 2:1-4 as an example):

- A. Reason for the Judgment
 1. Accusation. Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil

upon their beds! When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in the power of their hand.

2. Development of the Accusation

They covet fields, and seize them; and houses and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.

B. Messenger Formula: Therefore thus says the Lord

C. Announcement of Judgment

1. Intervention of God

Behold, against this family I am devising evil, from which you cannot remove your necks; and you shall not walk haughtily, for it will be an evil time.

2. Results of the Intervention

In that day they shall take up a taunt song against you, and wail with bitter lamentation, and say, "We are utterly ruined; he changes the portion of my people; how he removed it from me! Among our captors he divides our fields."

Westermann assumes that the simpler form was characteristic of the prophetic judgment-speech addressed to individuals (see his discussion, 129-63). The more complex form was a later development of the announcement of judgment against the individual and was addressed to the nation or major groups within the nation (169-89).

Westermann offers an alternative to Gunkel's terminol-

ogy because he feels that Gunkel's term "threat" does not adequately characterize what the prophet said since a "threat" suggests a conditional speech or should contain conditional elements. These conditional elements do not appear, and therefore "threat" does not reflect the nonconditional prophetic address with its note of finality. Likewise, the term "reproach" is considered too weak to represent the judgmental charge with which the prophet accuses his audience.

Koch has criticized Westermann's interpretation of the prophets as messengers of God since they are never so designated and because the general messenger speech which consists of (1) the messenger formula, (2) an indication of a pressing situation, (3) the wish of the sender, and (4) a concluding characterization does not parallel what Westermann outlines as the prophetic speech of judgment. Instead, Koch proposes to speak of the prediction of disaster which has the following structure:

- A. An indication of the situation (or diatribe/reproach): "Here the religious, social or political situation is set out, and also the relationship between God and those for whom the prophecy is intended" (211). See II Kings 1:16; Jer 29:25,31.
- B. Prediction of disaster (or threat): This "comprises the real substance of the prophecy" and speaks of the coming disaster, the intervention of God, and the consequences of the intervention (211-12). See II Kings 1:4; Jer 36:30; 28:16; and so on.
- C. Concluding characterization: This "is the shortest part of the saying, rounding off the prophecy" (212). See II Kings 1:4, Jer 28:4.

For Koch, the prophecy of salvation has a similar structure (213-15): (1) indication of the present situation (which may be an exhortation: Jer 33:3; I Kings 11:31; II Kings 3:16; 4:43), (2) prediction of salvation or promise (Jer 28:3; 32:37; 33:6; 34:4-5), and (3) concluding characterization (Jer 28:4; 32:44; 34:5; 39:18).

The work of Gunkel and the criticisms and alternatives offered by Westermann and Koch point to a basic quandary of form-critical research on prophetic speech: there is no consistent, clearly definable structure to prophetic address which can be applied in a majority of cases. Those units of speech which conform to the patterns of Westermann and Koch are the exception more than the rule. Gunkel felt that the threat was proclaimed as the word of Yahweh, while the reproach was the prophet's word giving the reasons for the judgment. Even such a general scheme as this falls to the ground since frequently "reproaches" are presented as the word of God and sometimes the threat speaks of Yahweh in the third person. Even to distinguish between divine and human word in the prophets as separate genres is impossible (see Buss, 1969, 65).

The following generalizations may be made about prophetic speech. (1) The prophets addressed their contemporaries with words which spoke about the future. (2) The word about the future was generally proclaimed as a word of God and was announced in the first person. (3) The word about the future might be either negative—announcing judgment, disaster, or punishment—or positive—announcing hope and salvation. (4) The negative word about the future was generally grounded in wrongs related to the sinful condition of the individual, the group, or the nation: God's future negative action was proclaimed as divine reaction to a human predicament. (5) The positive word about the future was not grounded in or anchored to human activity: "The prospect presented therein is not the future arising from man but an occurrence based in God" (Buss, 1969, 126).

D. The Origin of Prophetic Books

The prophetic books of the Old Testament claim to present us with the words of Yahweh which came to the

prophets and which they addressed to ancient Israel and Judah (see the superscriptions to the books and the discussion of these by Tucker). The process by which the prophecies, delivered in oral form, came to be written down as well as the final composition of the prophetic books are matters on which only very tentative and hypothetical observations can be given.

The prophetic books contain a variety of literary materials: reports, speeches, and prayers. The reports may be subdivided into several types of material: (1) superscriptions which provide the opening verse or verses to the books, (2) brief notations which sometime specify the time and place of a prophetic experience or address (for example, Is 2:1; 13:1; Jer 21:1; Zech 7:1), and (3) various forms of narratives. The narratives may be stories about the prophets (Amos 7:10-17; Jer 26), sometimes reporting symbolic acts which they performed (Is 20; Jer 19), or first person accounts about prophetic activity (Hosea 3; Amos 7:1-9; 8:1-3). Many of these narratives also contain speeches by the prophets as part of the accounts. Other narratives report what has been designated the "call to the prophetic vocation" (Is 6; Jer 1:4-10; Ez 1-3). The prayers designate those prophetic words addressed directly to the deity such as Amos 7:2,5; Is 6:11; Hab 3; and the so-called complaints of Jeremiah (11:8-23; 12:1-6; 15:10-21; 17:12-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18).

This vast array of material in the prophetic books, plus the fact that the books frequently do not appear to be structured in either a chronological or logical order, raises the question of how the books came into being. Older scholarship sought to analyze this problem along literary critical lines similar to those involved in pentateuchal studies (see Robinson, 50-59). Generally three stages were postulated for the process. (1) There was initially the preaching of the prophet in short, oral sayings which were handed down by his hearers or followers and combined into small collections and written down. During this phase of development, autobiographical material may

have been written down or dictated by the prophet himself while biographical material was transmitted by the disciples or close followers of the prophet. This material about the prophet was put in writing and sometimes combined with written speech material to comprise small collections or booklets. Stage one therefore saw material move from an oral form to written collections. (2) The second phase witnessed the combining of the individual small collections. Units were combined on the bases of various principles: similarity of subject matter, catchwords, and theological outlook. At this stage, original sayings were sometimes given a new application or twist due to the editorial process or contemporary needs and interests. At this stage, additional material was added which frequently spoke of a restored people and a good future to come. (3) The final phase in the process saw the collections viewed and treated as books by editorial redactors at which time further materials may have been added from diverse sources. It has been generally assumed that the process reflected in these three stages may have involved a time span of decades or even centuries.

A frontal assault on this "literary" approach to the origin of the prophetic books was launched, especially by several Scandinavian scholars (see Knight, RTI, 215-59). Several arguments underlie this traditio-historical (or history of tradition) approach. (1) Literary criticism subjects the prophetic writings to a "modern anachronistic book-view, coupled with a doctrinaire evolutionistic outlook, and the literary analytical method, with its essentially negative attitude toward the distrust of the tradition" (Engnell, 169). (2) The prophetic traditions like most near eastern literature were originally transmitted orally among circles of traditionalists whose origins go back to the prophets themselves. (3) "Essentially, this oral transmission does not endanger the stability and 'intactness' of the tradition. On the whole, in the ancient Near East, oral tradition is not an inferior form of tradition

ment of the prophetic function and evaluation of the people's fatal history:

Yet Yahweh 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." But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in Yahweh their God. They despised his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and the warnings which he gave them . . . (II Kings 17:13-15)

This theological perspective was not dominated by a pessimistic view of the past but was motivated by an optimistic hope for the future (see Deut 30:1-10). Even the judgmental prophets and their warnings could be seen as contributing to this hope. The classical prophets, in this light, were seen not just as spokesmen of judgment but as harbingers of hope: they not only "revealed what was to occur at the end of time, and the hidden things before they came to pass" (Sirach 48:25) but they also "comforted those who mourned in Zion" (48:24); "they comforted the people of Jacob and delivered them with confident hope" (49:10). Thus most of the prophetic books are edited so as to have the prophet's last word be a word of hope.

E. Summary Remarks on Prophecy

In concluding this rather brief discussion of basic issues and problems in understanding the prophets, a few general statements seem in order (see Buss, 1969, 116-29). (1) Prophecy must be understood as one element among others in the larger whole of the religious and social culture of the ancient Hebrews. Prophecy functioned as a complement to priestly tradition and wisdom (Jer 18:18) and is not fully understandable when isolated from the

other components of Israelite life. (2) Prophecy is closely related to priestly functions and tradition in that both place emphasis on divine revelation. Thus prophetic speech and thought are closely related to priests and cult, and prophecy as a phenomenon no doubt had roots in and close ties to the cult.

Prophecy shares with priestly tradition a heavy emphasis on divine revelation, expressed stylistically by Yahweh's speaking in the first person. It differs from priestly word in that the priest presents above all the traditions of the sacred past which are believed to have general significance for Israelite life, while the prophet responds basically to particular situations. Since the priestly tradition is foundational, it forms the framework within which the prophet operates; in this sense, the content of the priest's word stands normally above the prophet's. (Buss, *IDBS*, 694)

Priestly functions dealt with human existence in light of a sacral understanding of existence based on past revelation, sacred practice, and routine conditions, and sought to provide salvation and peace through routine and regularized ritual. Prophecy, addressed to unique situations, demanded radical decision and action in light of a crisis assessment of existence. The classical prophets "saw present evil active in such a way that it culminates in doom still to come; in other words, they see an operation of evil even without being required to do so by circumstances" (Buss, 1969, 119). (3) Although the prophets could present their message infused with the rhetoric of persuasion, as in the case of Deutero-Isaiah, their address was generally in the form of divine or dogmatic announcements. Even this form of proclamation, with its strong denunciatory style and fate-creating intent, should be seen against the general principle that "the prophetic message by nature intends to awaken and arouse, to call the people of God back from their perverse ways" (Westermann, 11).