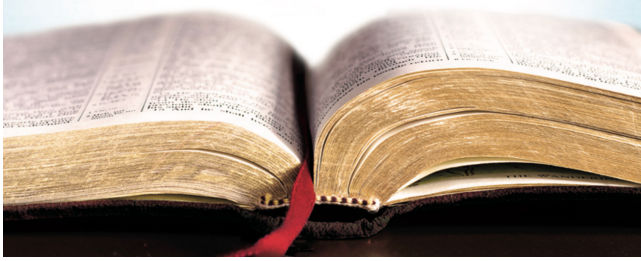


# The Good Book

4: Prophets - God's Messengers



Have you ever had to stand up for what's right when no one else would? Today we take a look at folks who were in a much more difficult situation than most of us have faced. The prophets were God's messengers, who confronted people's sin and challenged them to change.

**The Prophets were God's messengers to people.** God told Jeremiah, "I have now filled your mouth with my words." (Jer. 1:9) *Roughly 1/3 of the Old Testament is dedicated to the writings of God's prophets.* (Some of the prophets' writings are difficult to read all the way through. Consider reading them along with one of the Gospels).

**Prophets confronted people with their sin and challenged people to change.** Since very few people like to be confronted with their sin, the prophets weren't the most popular people on the planet. Prophets were less known for predicting the future and more known for *probing the heart*.<sup>1</sup>

OT prophets usually communicated **1 of 3 messages: Prosecution, Persuasion, & Prediction**.<sup>2</sup>

## **PROSECUTION → You are guilty and here's the evidence.**

**Isaiah 1:2-4** (CSB) <sup>2</sup> Listen, heavens, and pay attention, earth, for the LORD has spoken: "I have raised children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. <sup>3</sup> The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's feeding trough, but Israel does not know; my people do not understand." <sup>4</sup> Oh sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, brood of evildoers, depraved children! **They have abandoned the LORD; they have despised the Holy One of Israel; they have turned their backs on him.**

God's courtroom calls the witnesses of **heavens** and **earth** against the Jewish people. God has raised them, provided for and protected them, yet they have abandoned Him. They are GUILTY and deserve judgment. The people continued their religious ritual with their lips, but their hearts were far from God. As you read through the prophets, you will see this is the case over and over again.

In this passage, Judah had just suffered a major military attack by an enemy (1:5-7), and only Jerusalem was spared (1:8-9). You would think this would cause the people to repent of sin & seek God, but often it did not.

## **PERSUASION → Turn away from your sin before it's too late. God is gracious. Trust Him.**

**Isaiah 1:16-18** (CSB) <sup>16</sup> "Wash yourselves. Cleanse yourselves. Remove your evil deeds from my sight. Stop doing evil. <sup>17</sup> Learn to do what is good. Pursue justice. Correct the oppressor. Defend the rights of the fatherless. Plead the widow's cause. <sup>18</sup> "Come, let us settle this," says the LORD. **"Though your sins are scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are crimson red, they will be like wool.**

The prophets attempted to PERSUADE the people to turn back to the gracious & forgiving God. Remember Jonah? Jonah hated his enemies and would have loved to rub their noses in their sin, but he didn't want to go. Why?

## **Why Jonah Ran**

**Jonah 4:2** (CSB) He prayed to the LORD: "Please, LORD, isn't this what I thought while I was still in my own country? That's why I fled toward Tarshish in the first place. I knew that **you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and one who relents from sending disaster.**

<sup>1</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* (IVP Academic, 2002).

Finally, the prophets were told by God to warn or encourage about what was coming in the future.

### **PREDICTION → Deliverance or destruction is on the way.**

**Isaiah 1:19-20** (CSB) <sup>19</sup> If you are **willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land.**

<sup>20</sup> But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

The greatest predictions of the prophets are about the ULTIMATE FORGIVENESS that was yet to come, specifically from **Isaiah 53**.

🕒 **TaNaKh is the Hebrew word used to refer to the Hebrew Bible.**

[TaNaKh = *Torah* (Hebrew for Teaching), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), & *Ketuvim* (Writings)].<sup>3</sup>

### **Prophetic Prediction**

**Isaiah 53:4-6** (CSB) <sup>4</sup> Yet he himself bore our sicknesses, and he carried our pains; but we in turn regarded him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and **we are healed by his wounds.** <sup>6</sup> We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and **the LORD has punished him for the iniquity of us all.**



**The Forbidden Chapter - Isaiah 53** (see it here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGz9BVJ\\_k6s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGz9BVJ_k6s))

### **The Messiah is the King of ALL NATIONS!!!**

**Daniel 7:13-14** (CSB) <sup>13</sup> I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a **son of man** was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. <sup>14</sup> He was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; so that **those of every people, nation, and language should serve him.** His dominion is an **everlasting dominion** that will not pass away, and **his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.**

**Hebrews 1:1-2** (CSB) <sup>1</sup> Long ago God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times and in different ways. <sup>2</sup> In these last days, he has spoken to us **by his Son.** God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe through him.

\* Next week we see Jesus, the "son of man" enter the world, but many from all over the planet could tell the story of turning from their sin to **serve him.**

- 🕒 Have YOU responded to God's **prosecution** in YOUR life? Have you been convicted of YOUR sin?
- 🕒 Have you listened to the **persuasion** of God through the Scriptures or through His people - reminding you of God's gracious offer of forgiveness through the crucifixion of Jesus?
- 🕒 Read John 3:18 to predict YOUR future as of today.

\* *If you want to talk further, please contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), or another follower of Jesus soon!*

**Reading Plan this Week:** "The Good Book" - chapters 16-20 (Scriptures: Is. 53, Jer 1, Dan 3, 6; Jon 1)

<sup>3</sup> Mark Allan Powell, "Tanakh," ed. Mark Allan Powell, *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (Revised and Updated) (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 1010.