

SCHOOL OF THE WORD
PROPHETS
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Prophets 1

Programme

- What's a "prophet"? Oct 11
- Amos: Justice (i) Oct 18
- Amos: Justice (ii) Oct 25
- Who is/are Isaiah? Nov 8
- Isaiah and justice Nov 15
- Isaiah and liberation Nov 22
- Isaiah and hope Nov 29
- Isaiah: New Testament Dec 6

Sequence

- ▶ Importance of prophetic voices
- ▶ Examples from our time
- ▶ Use in the Lectionary
- ▶ Who are the prophets in the Bible?
- ▶ Where do we find them?
- ▶ Royal "system" v. Prophetic "system"
- ▶ Cultural and historical contexts: Amos
- ▶ Reading the prophets today
- ▶ Conversation

Importance of prophetic voices

- ▶ In society
- ▶ In politics
- ▶ In faith communities

Examples from our time

- Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez (15 August 1917 – 24 March 1980) was a prelate of the Catholic Church in El Salvador, who served as the fourth Archbishop of San Salvador.
 - He spoke out against poverty, social injustice, assassinations, and torture. In 1980, Romero was assassinated while offering Mass in the chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence.
 - Pope Francis stated during Romero's beatification that "His ministry was distinguished by his particular attention to the most poor and marginalized."
 - Hailed as a hero by supporters of liberation theology inspired by his work, Romero, according to his biographer, "was not interested in liberation theology" but faithfully adhered to Catholic teachings on liberation and a preferential option for the poor,[4] desiring a social revolution based on interior reform. Up to the end of his life, his spiritual life drew much from the spirituality of Opus Dei.
 - While seen as a social conservative at his appointment as Archbishop in 1977, he was deeply affected by the murder of Rutilio Grande a few weeks after his own appointment and became more of a social activist from that time forward.
- ▶ Also: Jorge Bergoglio

Use in the Lectionary

- ▶ Genesis: Lent 1, Lent 2, Easter Vigil 1, Easter Vigil 2, Pentecost Vigil,
- ▶ Exodus: Lent 3, Holy Thursday, Easter Vigil 3, Pentecost Vigil, Trinity, 11A, 30A
- ▶ Leviticus: 7A
- ▶ Numbers: Jan 1

- ▶ Deuteronomy: Corpus Christi, 9A
- ▶ 1 Samuel: Lent 4,
- ▶ 1 Kings: 17A, 19A,
- ▶ 2 Kings: 13A
- ▶ Proverbs: 33A
- ▶ Wisdom: 16A, 32A
- ▶ Sirach: Christmas 2, Holy Family, 6A, 24A

- ▶ Isaiah: Advent 1, Advent 2, Advent 3, Advent 4, Xmas Vigil, Xmas Midnight, Xmas Dawn, Xmas Day, Epiphany, Baptism, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil 4, Easter Vigil 5, 2A, 3A, 5A, 8A, 15A, 18A, 20A, 21A, 25A, 27A, 28A, 29A
- ▶ Jeremiah: 12A, 22A
- ▶ Baruch: Easter Vigil 6
- ▶ Ezekiel: Lent 5, Easter Vigil 7, Pentecost Vigil, 26A, 23A, 34A
- ▶ Hosea: 10A
- ▶ Joel: Pentecost Vigil
- ▶ Zephaniah: 4A
- ▶ Zechariah: 14A
- ▶ Malachi: 31A

- ▶ Pentateuch: 17
- ▶ Historical books: 3
- ▶ Prophets: 40
(*Isaiah*: 26)
- ▶ Wisdom: 7
- ▶ Total: 67 readings from the Old Testament

Who are the prophets in the Bible?

- ▶ Canon: 2 Kings, affirms that God had “warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer” (2 Kgs 17:13).
- ▶ Author: the actual written books which have come down to us. “Thus says the Lord...”
- ▶ Redaction: who wrote down, edited and represented the words of the prophets?

- ▶ “Prophet” — A Greek word = to speak on behalf of
- ▶ Nabi - etc (see next slide)
- ▶ Samuel, Elijah, Elisha - eventually David, Moses, Abraham
- ▶ Also women prophets: Miriam (Exod 15:20), Deborah (Judg 4:4), Isaiah’s anonymous wife (Isa 8:3), Huldah (2 Kgs 22:14), and Noadiah (Neh 6:14)
- ▶ Finally, “our” writing prophets (overleaf)

- ▶ הֹזֵה (hōzeh, “seer”) E.g. Amos
- ▶ רֹאֵה (rō’eh, “diviner”) E.g. chiefly Samuel
- ▶ אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים (’is ha’ēlōhīm, “man of God”) E.g. Elijah and Elisha
- ▶ נָבִיא (nābî’, “prophet”) Unclear in root meaning, but seems to function as someone called. E.g. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.
- ▶ cf. Now it used to be in Israel that whenever someone went to inquire of God he would say, “Come on, let’s go to the seer.” For today’s prophet used to be called a seer. (1 Sam 9:9)

- ▶ The four “major”: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, (Daniel)
- ▶ The twelve minor: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
- ▶ But what about... Daniel, Baruch and Lamentations?

Where do we find them?

Different canons: Jewish, Protestant and Catholic (download charts from bibleidiagrams.com)

Royal “system” v. Prophetic “system” (Walter Brueggemann)

- ▶ Prophets emerge at critical moments
- ▶ Royal system v. the prophetic system
- ▶ Royal system: reassurance (power, taxes, soldiers)
- ▶ Prophetic system: unconventional wisdom (freedom of thought, integrity, truth-telling)
- ▶ Prophets are called to ministry
- ▶ Prophets use speech and gesture

Cultural and historical contexts

<i>Pre-exilic</i>	<i>Exilic</i>	<i>Post-exilic</i>
Amos (783-743)	Ezekiel (593-?571)	3rd Isaiah (?520)
Hosea (750-732)	?Obadiah (598-537)	Haggai (520)
1st Isaiah (747-701)	2nd Isaiah (550-539)	1st Zechariah (520-518)
Micah (721-701)		Malachi (500-445)
Zephaniah (640-630)		?Jonah (539-400)
Nahum (612)		?Joel (400)
Habakkuk (626-598)		2nd Zechariah (300)
Jeremiah (627-587)		3rd Zechariah (300)
		[Daniel (164)]

Reading prophets today

- Typically, across the prophets we find:
 - Stories (especially the very early figures)
 - Speeches in the form of poetry.
 - Poetic parallelism (the writing prophets)
 - Within that: biography, prophetic actions, prophetic utterances, oracles, hymns, law-suits, funeral dirges.
 - Many, many images are used: geographical, animal, social, plants, weather, legal etc.

Worksheets

- Hosea 14:2-7
- Isaiah 2:1-4
- Jeremiah 13:15-27
 - Notice the lines that are in parallel
 - Notice the kinds of images used
- Time to work
- Reports

Conversation

HOSEA (Jewish Publication Society version [JPS])

- Hos 14:2** Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God,
For you have fallen because of your sin.
- 3** Take words with you
And return to the Lord.
Say to Him:
“Forgive all guilt
And accept what is good;
Instead of bulls we will pay
[The offering of] our lips.
- 4** Assyria shall not save us,
No more will we ride on steeds;
Nor ever again will we call
Our handiwork our god,
Since in You alone orphans find pity!”
- 5** I will heal their affliction,
Generously will I take them back in love;
For My anger has turned away from them.
- 6** I will be to Israel like dew;
He shall blossom like the lily,
He shall strike root like a Lebanon tree.
- 7** His boughs shall spread out far,
His beauty shall be like the olive tree’s,
His fragrance like that of Lebanon.

ISAIAH (Jewish Publication Society version [JPS])

Isa 2:1 The word that Isaiah son of Amoz prophesied concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

Isa 2:2 In the days to come,
 The Mount of the Lord's House
 Shall stand firm above the mountains
 And tower above the hills;
 And all the nations
 Shall gaze on it with joy.

3 And the many peoples shall go and say:
 "Come,
 Let us go up to the Mount of the Lord,
 To the House of the God of Jacob;
 That He may instruct us in His ways,
 And that we may walk in His paths."
 For instruction shall come forth from Zion,
 The word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4 Thus He will judge among the nations
 And arbitrate for the many peoples,
 And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares
 And their spears into pruning hooks:
 Nation shall not take up
 Sword against nation;
 They shall never again know war.

JEREMIAH (Jewish Publication Society version [JPS])

- Jer 13:15** Attend and give ear; be not haughty,
For the Lord has spoken.
- 16** Give honour to the Lord your God
Before He brings darkness,
Before your feet stumble
On the mountains in shadow—
When you hope for light,
And it is turned to darkness
And becomes deep gloom.
- 17** For if you will not give heed,
My inmost self must weep,
Because of your arrogance;
My eye must stream and flow
With copious tears,
Because the flock of the Lord
Is taken captive.
- 18** Say to the king and the queen mother,
“Sit in a lowly spot;
For your diadems are abased,
Your glorious crowns.”
- 19** The cities of the Negeb are shut,
There is no one to open them;
Judah is exiled completely,
All of it exiled.
- 20** Raise your eyes and behold
Those who come from the north:
Where are the sheep entrusted to you,
The flock you took pride in?
- 21** What will you say when they appoint as your heads
Those among you whom you trained to be tame?
Shall not pangs seize you
Like a woman in childbirth?
- 22** And when you ask yourself,
“Why have these things befallen me?”
It is because of your great iniquity
That your skirts are lifted up,
Your limbs exposed.
- 23** Can the Cushite change his skin,
Or the leopard his spots?
Just as much can you do good,
Who are practiced in doing evil!
- 24** So I will scatter you like straw that flies
Before the desert wind.
- 25** This shall be your lot,
Your measured portion from Me —declares the Lord.
Because you forgot Me
And trusted in falsehood,
- 26** I in turn will lift your skirts over your face
And your shame shall be seen.
- 27** I behold your adulteries,
Your lustful neighing,
Your unbridled depravity, your vile acts
On the hills of the countryside.
Woe to you, O Jerusalem,
Who will not be clean!
How much longer shall it be?