



THE PROPHETS

Date: 6.16.24 | Title: What are prophets and how did God use them? | Scripture: 1 1 and 2 Kings; Isaiah- Malachi

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

PRESCHOOL:

The Bible is a book about God.
God tells people to obey Him.
People can show love for God by obeying Him.

YOUNGER KIDS (K5-2ND GRADE):

The Bible is a book about God.
People can learn about and recognize God's authority.
God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

OLDER KIDS (3RD-5TH GRADE):

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.
God deserves respect, obedience, and honor. God wants us to live for His glory.
God commands people to obey Him.
People can acknowledge and follow God's authority in their lives.



MEMORY VERSE

"Long ago, at many times and in many ways,
God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in
these last days he has spoken to us by his Son."

Hebrews 1:1-2a



THE PROPHETS



BUSY BIN

As the kids arrive, they will stop by the table to pick up a snack, a drink, and “The Minor Prophets” Word Search to work on until everyone arrives.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON

Tell your group that today we will be learning about the prophets. The prophets we will be studying lived during the times of the kings. They were given messages from God to share with the people. Work together to cut and paste the minor prophets in the correct order. These prophets are called “minor” prophets because of the length of their message. Use your Bible as a reference!



THE PROPHETS

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Throughout the Bible, God communicates with the people He created. This communication always has a purpose and calls for action. Sometimes God speaks directly to a particular person with a promise or a warning. Sometimes the hearer is told to take a message to another person or group of people. The prophets are God's spokespersons who deliver God's message to the Israelites. There are some early prophets, but the group that is normally referred to as prophets comes to prominence during the monarchy, or time of the kings. Traditionally the prophetic books are categorized by size (major and minor) and not significance. There are four Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; and the twelve minor prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

In Deuteronomy, God offers the Israelites a wonderful deal- they can live in the promised land with God himself in their midst, protecting them and blessing them bountifully. They can live the good life and have a close, meaningful relationship with Him. Unbelievably, Israel spits in the face of God and rejects God, chasing after the pagan gods of her neighbors. Solomon fritters away God's blessings, blatantly disobeying Deuteronomy, marrying foreign princesses, and worshipping their gods, even constructing worship sites for these gods in and around Jerusalem. Israel is sliding into idolatry, and the blessings of Deuteronomy are slipping away. Solomon conscripts many Israelites into forced labor in violation of Deuteronomy. When Solomon dies, his son Rehoboam, the new king announces that he will continue, even increase, the forced labor of Israelites. The people say, "enough is enough," and a civil war breaks out. The kingdom splits into two competing kingdoms- the Northern kingdom and the Southern kingdom- who once again spiral downward theologically and morally. Deuteronomy is ignored, and many of the kings and other leaders embrace idolatry. The splendor of Solomon's empire is dismantled, and his wealth is carried off bit by bit throughout 1-2 Kings. The book of Kings tells the grim story of how Israel and Judah, usually led by corrupt, sinful, and self-serving kings, severely disobey God, and abandon any attempt to obey Deuteronomy. The prophets act on God's behalf proclaiming the outrageously sinful violations of the covenant committed by the kings, the corrupt priesthood, the other leaders of the nation, the false prophets, and the common people. The prophets likewise proclaim the consequences that will come if the kings and the people do not repent and turn back to God. A few good kings in Judah including Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah try to stop the slide, but the momentum is too great, and their reforms are short lived and swept away soon after they die.



THE PROPHETS

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Though his prophets, God begs his people to repent and return to him, but both Israel and Judah continually refuse to acknowledge God and repent. The blessings from God soon disappear and God repeatedly begs them to repent and come back, but the continually refuse. A detailed and complex account is provided by the prophets, who show us the pain and agony that God goes through as Israel ignores Him and experiences the consequential judgment.

Because of his great grace, God gives his people additional time, waiting for them to turn back to him. In this regard, 2 Kings 13:23 inserts an important theological comment into the Story, stating, “But the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion and showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence.” Although Israel and Judah continually fail to obey the law- the Mosaic covenant, particularly as defined in Deuteronomy- rather than judge them immediately as the law warns, God graciously relies on his promise to Abraham and patiently endures their disobedience and waits for their repentance.

During the time of the prophets, there are two “superpower” empires, the Assyrians and the Babylonians, who rise to prominence during this era and conquer much of the region taking God’s people into captivity, or exile. Both Daniel and Ezekiel are part of the exiled population taken to Babylon. Most of the standard prophets preach their message just prior to one of these two invasions. When the prophets warn the Israelites and Judahites to repent and to turn from their idolatry or else judgment will come, the judgement they are usually referring to is the coming invasion of either the Assyrians or the Babylonians.

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

In regard to content, it is helpful to group the Prophets according to where they stand in time in regard to the exile. The prophets who lived and wrote before and during the exile are called pre-exilic/exilic prophets. A group of them have similar content- the standard prophetic message. These prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. Nonstandard or unique preexilic/exilic prophets include Daniel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Nahum. There are three prophets who live and write after the exile is over: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

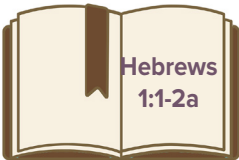
The standard, basic message of the prophets can be synthesized down to three points:

- 1) You- Israel and/or Judah- have broken the covenant (Deuteronomy). You must repent! The prophets spend a great amount of time detailing the specific and consistent ways in which the kings and the people have broken the covenant agreement, usually defined in Deuteronomy. The prophets call these actions “sin,” “rebellion,” “hardness of heart,” “iniquity,” and “turning away from God,” among other things, and they list these out as “indictments” or “charges.” The major covenant violations that the prophets charge Israel and Judah with repeatedly are idolatry (a right relationship with God), social injustice (a right relationship with each other), and religious ritualism over close relationship.
- 2) No repentance? Then judgement is coming! The tragedy is that neither Israel nor Judah does repent. Even as the prophets beg and plead for repentance, God informs them that the Israelites and Judahites will not repent.
- 3) Yet there is a glorious future time of restoration coming after the judgement through a righteous King, the Messiah. The kingdom of Israel crumbles, underscoring the failure of the many human kings, priests, and other leaders, as well as the people in general, to obey even the most basic components of Deuteronomy (the commandments). The prophets describe the coming destruction in detail, yet sprinkled throughout the books of the prophets are passages of hope. They look behind the present “human-led” kingdom and describe a glorious future kingdom ruled by a wonderful and righteous Messiah. This glorious king will answer the worldwide problem of sin.



THE PROPHETS

LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY



TELL THE STORY

Tell the story: Use Hebrews 1:1-2a and the Background Info for Leaders

Read directly from Scripture, use The Jesus Storybook Bible, The Biggest Story Bible, or the summary provided in the lesson

Re-tell the Bible Story: put events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc.

Attributes of God: Use the attributes of God list and determine the characteristics of God that we see in today's story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true, change the way we live in Christ?

Share the GOSPEL: The prophecies about the Messiah were fulfilled at Jesus' birth. In the past God gave revelation through the prophets, but beginning with the birth of Christ, God spoke the message of redemption through His Son.



Put the events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc...

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.


WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.

QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

“Storying” Questions: As you ask these questions, have your 2nd-5th grade kids find the answers in the actual verses of scripture instead of recalling them from your re-telling of the story. We always want to encourage all of our kids to go directly to God’s Word over a commentary on or summary of scripture.

1. What three kings ruled during the United Kingdom? How long were their reigns?
2. Why did the United Kingdom divide into two kingdoms?
3. What were the two kingdoms called? How many tribes made up each kingdom?
4. What were some of the problems in the kingdoms?
5. What messengers did God send to give messages to the people?
6. Can you name any of the prophets?
7. Why are some prophets called Major Prophets and some called Minor Prophets?
8. How many major prophets are there? How many minor?
9. What was the basic message of the prophets?
10. Did the people heed God’s warnings? How does God respond to this?
11. How does God reveal Himself to believers now?



THE PROPHETS

PRAYER PROMPTS

God thank you for constantly pursuing your people! We do not deserve Your relentless love! You are merciful and gracious and never give up on us! Help us to follow You and love You with our thoughts, desires, and actions.

IF TIME ALLOWS:

Help the kids in your group practice memorizing the books of the Bible by singing through the Books of the Bible song on our Books of the Bible Spotify playlist. Use the printed copies of the books of the Bible in your classroom to follow along. 3rd-5th graders, practice putting the books of the Bible in order using the popsicle sticks. Have several groups of kids compete against each other or work together to see how fast your class can order them.

MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

We will have no mission focus for the remainder of the school year. As we pray through what our next focus will be, please continue to give generously.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Work on memorizing this weeks verse with the kids in your group. Use the Memory Verse Idea Handout for some fun ways to work on the verse together.



THE PROPHETS



Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?



Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?