“PERHAPS THEY WILL LISTEN”
PROPHECY AND THE ART OF PERSUASION

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“The prophet’s use of emotional and imaginative language, concrete in diction, rhythmical in movement, artistic in form, marks his style as poetic...Far from reflecting a state of inner harmony or poise, its style is charged with agitation, anguish, and a spirit of nonacceptance. The prophet’s concern is not with nature but with history, and history is devoid of poise...[The prophet] does more than translate reality into a poetic key: he is a preacher whose purpose is not self-expression of ‘the purgation of emotions,’ but communication. His images must not shine, they must burn.”
WORDS FOR PROPHET IN BIBLICAL HEBREW

נביא Нави
Literally ‘speaker’

Ḥozeh חוזה
Literally ‘seer’

Ro’eh Роэה
Literaly ‘seer’

Prophet: from Greek prophētēs = pro [before] + phesein [to tell]
(3) But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, “You are to die because of the woman that you have taken, for she is a married woman.” (4) Now Abimelech had not approached her. He said, “O Lord, will You slay people even though innocent? (5) He himself said to me, ‘She is my sister’! And she also said, ‘He is my brother.’ When I did this, my heart was blameless and my hands were clean.” (6) And God said to him in the dream, “I knew that you did this with a blameless heart, and so I kept you from sinning against Me. That was why I did not let you touch her. (7) Therefore, restore the man’s wife—since he is a prophet (navi), he will intercede for you—to save your life. If you fail to restore her, know that you shall die, you and all that are yours.”...(17) Abraham then prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his slave girls, so that they bore children; (18) for the LORD had closed fast every womb of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, the wife of Abraham.
(1) The LORD replied to Moses, “See, I place you in the role of God to Pharaoh, with your brother Aaron as your prophet. (2) You shall repeat all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart from his land.
AFFAIRS OF STATE

- Judgment
- Lawgiving
- War
- Choosing the king
- Advising the king
- Criticizing the king
PROPHETS AS MIRACLE WORKERS

Brenda Wright, “The Double Portion,” 2012
“LATTER PROPHETS” –
A.K.A. CLASSICAL / LITERARY / WRITING PROPHETS

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
Hosea
Amos

Joel
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum

Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi
(12:33) On the fifteenth day of the eighth month—the month in which he had contrived of his own mind to establish a festival for the Israelites—Jeroboam ascended the altar that he had made in Bethel. As he ascended the altar to present an offering, (13:1) an agent of God arrived at Bethel from Judah at the command of GOD. While Jeroboam was standing on the altar to present the offering, (2) he—the agent of God—at the command of GOD, cried out against the altar: “O altar, altar! Thus said GOD: A son shall be born to the House of David, Josiah by name; and he shall slaughter upon you the priests of the shrines who bring offerings upon you. And human bones shall be burned upon you.” (3) He gave a portent on that day, saying, “Here is the portent that GOD has decreed: This altar shall break apart, and the ashes on it shall be spilled.” (4) When the king heard what the agent of God had proclaimed against the altar in Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his arm above the altar and cried, “Seize him!” But the arm that he stretched out against him became rigid, and he could not draw it back.
When Jezebel was killing off the prophets of GOD, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and provided them with food and drink.
Then Jehoshaphat asked, “Isn’t there another prophet of GOD here through whom we can inquire?”

And the king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, “There is one more through whom we can inquire of GOD; but I hate him, because he never prophesies anything good for me, but only misfortune—Micaiah son of Imlah.” But King Jehoshaphat said, “Don’t say that, Your Majesty.”
(1) At the beginning of the reign of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, this word came from GOD: (2) “Thus said GOD: Stand in the court of the House of GOD, and speak to [the inhabitants of] all the towns of Judah, who are coming to worship in the House of GOD, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not omit anything. (3) Perhaps they will listen and turn back, each from their own evil way, that I may renounce the punishment I am planning to bring upon them for their wicked acts. (4) “Say to them: Thus said GOD: If you do not obey Me, abiding by the Teaching that I have set before you, (5) heeding the words of My servants the prophets whom I have been sending to you persistently—but you have not heeded—(6) then I will make this House like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of earth.”
8) And when Jeremiah finished speaking all that GOD had commanded him to speak to all the people, the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, shouting, “You shall die! (9) How dare you prophesy in the name of GOD that this House shall become like Shiloh and this city be made desolate, without inhabitants?” And all the people crowded about Jeremiah in the House of GOD. (10) When the officials of Judah heard about this, they went up from the king’s palace to the House of GOD and held a session at the entrance of the New Gate of the House of GOD. (11) The priests and prophets said to the officials and to all the people, “This man deserves the death penalty, for he has prophesied against this city, as you yourselves have heard.” (12) Jeremiah said to the officials and to all the people, “It was GOD who sent me to prophesy against this House and this city all the words you heard. (13) Therefore mend your ways and your acts, and heed the ETERNAL your God, that GOD may renounce the punishment that has been decreed for you. (14) As for me, I am in your hands: do to me what seems good and right to you. (15) But know that if you put me to death, you and this city and its inhabitants will be guilty of shedding an innocent’s blood. For in truth GOD has sent me to you, to speak all these words to you.”
But any prophet who presumes to speak in My name an oracle that I did not command to be uttered, or who speaks in the name of other gods—that prophet shall die.
8) And when Jeremiah finished speaking all that GOD had commanded him to speak to all the people, the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, shouting, “You shall die! (9) How dare you prophesy in the name of GOD that this House shall become like Shiloh and this city be made desolate, without inhabitants?” And all the people crowded about Jeremiah in the House of GOD. (10) When the officials of Judah heard about this, they went up from the king’s palace to the House of GOD and held a session at the entrance of the New Gate of the House of GOD. (11) The priests and prophets said to the officials and to all the people, “This man deserves the death penalty, for he has prophesied against this city, as you yourselves have heard.” (12) Jeremiah said to the officials and to all the people, “It was GOD who sent me to prophesy against this House and this city all the words you heard. (13) Therefore mend your ways and your acts, and heed the ETERNAL your God, that GOD may renounce the punishment that has been decreed for you. (14) As for me, I am in your hands: do to me what seems good and right to you. (15) But know that if you put me to death, you and this city and its inhabitants will be guilty of shedding an innocent’s blood. For in truth GOD has sent me to you, to speak all these words to you.”
(4) The word of GOD came to me:
(5) Before I created you in the womb, I selected you;
Before you were born, I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet concerning the nations.
(6) I replied:
Ah, my sovereign GOD!
I don't know how to speak,
For I am still a boy.
(7) And GOD said to me:
Do not say, “I am still a boy,”
But go wherever I send you
And speak whatever I command you.
(8) Have no fear of them,
For I am with you to deliver you
—declares GOD.

(ד) יְהֹוָה דְבַר יִהְיוּךָ אֲלֵי לֵאמֹר:
(ה) בְּטֶרֶם יָדַעְתִּי אֶצְּרְךָ בַבֶּן נָבִיא לַגּוֹיִם
וּבְטֶרֶם תֵּצֵא מֵרֶחֶם הִקְדַּשְּתִּי נָבִיא לַגּוֹיִם.
(ו) אֲהָהּ אֲדֹנָי יֱהֹוִה הִנֵּ֥י אֲנִ֛י לְהַצִּלֶ֖ אֶת כׇּל־אֲשֶׁ֥ר אֶשַּׁלָּחֲךָ.
(ז) תֵּלֵ֔ב אֲנִ֛י לְהַצִּלֶ֖ אֶת כׇּל־אֲשֶׁ֥ר אֶשַּׁלָּחֲךָ
(ח) אֲנִ֛י לְהַצִּלֶ֖ אֶת כׇּל־אֲשֶׁ֥ר אֶשַּׁלָּחֲךָ
(ט) בְּכֶסֶף יִדַּעְתִּי אֲלֵלְהָם
(י) אֲנִ֛י לְהַצִּלֶ֖ אֶת כׇּל־אֲשֶׁ֥ר אֶשַּׁלָּחֲךָ.
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7) You enticed me, O ETERNAL One, and I was enticed; You overpowered me and You prevailed. I have become a constant laughingstock, Everyone jeers at me.
8) For every time I speak, I must cry out, Must shout, “Lawlessness and rapine!” For the word of GOD causes me Constant disgrace and contempt.
9) I thought, “I will not mention it, No more will I speak in God’s name”— But [the divine word] was like a raging fire in my heart, Shut up in my bones; I could not hold it in, I was helpless.
1) The word that came to Jeremiah from GOD:

2) Thus said the ETERNAL, the God of Israel: Write down in a scroll all the words that I have spoken to you.

3) For days are coming—declares GOD—when I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel and Judah, said GOD; and I will bring them back to the land that I gave their ancestors, and they shall possess it.
5) Thus said GOD: 
We have heard cries of panic, 
Terror without relief. 

6) Ask and see: 
Surely males do not bear young! 
Why then do I see every man 
With his hands on his loins 
Like a woman in labor? 
Why have all faces turned pale? 

7) Ah, that day is awesome; 
There is none like it! 
It is a time of trouble for Jacob, 
But he shall be delivered from it.
8) In that day—declares GOD of Hosts—
I will break the yoke from off your neck
and I will rip off your bonds.
Strangers shall no longer make slaves of them;
9) instead, they shall serve the ETERNAL their God
and David, the king whom I will raise up for them.
8) I will bring them in from the northland,
Gather them from the ends of the earth—
The blind and the lame among them,
Those with child and those in labor—
In a vast throng they shall return here.
9) They shall come with weeping,
And with compassion will I guide them.
I will lead them to streams of water,
By a level road where they will not
stumble.
For I am ever a Father to Israel,
Ephraim is My first-born.
(1) Thus GOD said to me: “Go buy yourself a loincloth of linen, and put it around your loins, but do not dip it into water.” (2) So I bought the loincloth in accordance with GOD’s command, and put it about my loins.

(3) And the word of GOD came to me a second time:

(4) “Take the loincloth that you bought, which is about your loins, and go at once to Perath and cover it up there in a cleft of the rock.” (5) I went and buried it at Perath, as GOD had commanded me.

(6) Then, after a long time, GOD said to me, “Go at once to Perath and take there the loincloth that I commanded you to bury there.” (7) So I went to Perath and dug up the loincloth from the place where I had buried it; and found the loincloth ruined; it was not good for anything.

(8) The word of GOD came to me: (9) Thus said GOD: Even so will I ruin the overweening pride of Judah and Jerusalem. (10) This wicked people who refuse to heed My bidding, who follow the willfulness of their own hearts, who follow other gods and serve them and worship them, shall become like that loincloth, which is not good for anything. (11) For as a loincloth clings close to a man’s loins, so I brought close to Me the whole House of Israel and the whole House of Judah—declares GOD—that they might be My people, for fame, and praise, and splendor. But they would not obey...
3) Thus said GOD:
For three transgressions of Damascus,
For four, I will not revoke the decree:
Because they threshed Gilead
With threshing boards of iron.
4) I will send down fire upon the palace
of Hazael,
And it shall devour the fortresses of
Ben-hadad.
5) I will break the gate bars of
Damascus,
And wipe out the inhabitants from the
Vale of Aven
And the sceptered ruler of Beth-eden;
And the people of Aram shall be exiled
to Kir
—said GOD.
ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS

1. Damascus (Aram)
2. Gaza (Philistia)
3. Tyre
4. Edom
5. Ammon
6. Moab
7. Judah
8. Israel
6) Thus said GOD:
For three transgressions of Israel,
For four, I will not revoke the decree...

9) Yet I
Destroyed the Amorite before them,
Whose stature was like the cedar’s
And who was stout as the oak,
Destroying his boughs above
And his trunk below!

10) And I
Brought you up from the land of Egypt
And led you through the wilderness forty years,
To possess the land of the Amorite!

11) And I raised up prophets from among your sons
And nazirites from among your young men.
Is that not so, O people of Israel?
—says GOD.

12) But you made the nazirites drink wine
And ordered the prophets not to prophesy.
...
3) Can two walk together
Without having met?
4) Does a lion roar in the forest
When it has no prey?
   Does a great beast let out a cry from its den
   Without having made a capture?
5) Does a bird drop on the ground—in a trap—
   With no snare there?
   Does a trap spring up from the ground
   Unless it has caught something?
6) When a ram’s horn is sounded in a town,
   Do the people not take alarm?
   Can misfortune come to a town
   If GOD has not caused it?
7) Indeed, my Sovereign GOD does nothing
   Without having revealed the purpose
   To God’s servants the prophets.
8) A lion has roared,
   Who can but fear?
   My Sovereign GOD has spoken,
   Who can but prophesy?
1) This is what my Sovereign GOD showed me: [A plague of] locusts was created at the time when the late-sown crops were beginning to sprout—the late-sown crops after the king’s reaping. 2) When it had finished devouring the herbage in the land, I said, “O my Sovereign, ETERNAL One, pray forgive. How will Jacob survive? He is so small.” 3) GOD relented concerning this. “It shall not come to pass,” said GOD. 4) This is what my Sovereign GOD showed me: Lo, my Sovereign GOD was summoning to contend by fire that consumed the Great Deep and was consuming the fields. 5) I said, “Oh, my Sovereign, ETERNAL One, refrain! How will Jacob survive? He is so small.” 6) GOD relented concerning this. “That shall not come to pass, either,” said my Sovereign GOD. 7) This is what I was shown: [God] was standing on a wall checked with a plumb line while holding a plumb line. 8) And GOD asked me, “What do you see, Amos?” “A plumb line,” I replied. And my Sovereign declared, “I am going to apply a plumb line to My people Israel; I will pardon them no more. 9) The shrines of Isaac shall be laid waste, and the sanctuaries of Israel reduced to ruins; and I will turn upon the House of Jeroboam with the sword.”
10) Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent this message to King Jeroboam of Israel: “Amos is conspiring against you within the House of Israel. The country cannot endure the things he is saying. 11) For Amos has said, ‘Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall be exiled from its soil.’

12) Amaziah also said to Amos, “Seer, off with you to the land of Judah! Earn your living there, and do your prophesying there. 13) But don’t ever prophesy again at Bethel; for it is a king’s sanctuary and a royal palace.”

14) Amos answered Amaziah: “I am not a prophet, and I am not a prophet’s disciple. I am a cattle breeder and a tender of sycamore figs. 15) But GOD took me away from following the flock, and GOD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel.’ 16) And so, hear the word of GOD. You say I must not prophesy about the House of Israel or preach about the House of Isaac; 17) but this, I swear, is what GOD said: Your wife shall play the whore in the town, your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be divided up with a measuring line. And you yourself shall die on impure soil; for Israel shall be exiled from its soil.”
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