

How to Study the Prophets

Instructor: Mark Miller

Time: Tuesdays 8:00-9:00 p.m. EDT

Class Size: Limit of 30

Course Description:

The prophetic books of the Old Testament contain some of the most awe-inspiring, confronting and compelling passages in the entire Bible. From their uncompromising proclamation of God's work in salvation and judgement to their incessant and pressing calls for social justice, they speak with a power and urgency which continues to challenge the Church and its witness in the world today.

Yet many Christians remain confused and frustrated by these works. They are full of dramatic imagery whose meaning is not always clear. Sometimes there appears to be little rhyme or reason in the flow of their thought. They include numerous references to events from Israel's history and life, the significance of which we do not grasp. It is perhaps little wonder, therefore, that the prophets are so frequently misunderstood and misapplied by many within the Church, conservative and liberal alike.

*(Aaron Chalmers, *Interpreting the Prophets*, 2015:1)*

This class is not a description or an overview of the Old Testament prophets. Instead, we will cover keys for *how* to read the prophets, giving us the tools and framework to discover the riches of the prophets for ourselves. This class is seeking to make fishermen, rather than merely giving the fish.

Syllabus (week by week):

1. Introduction
2. The Importance of the Historical Setting
3. Training Ourselves to Seek the Flow of Thought
4. "Who is talking right now?"
5. Repetition, Repetition, Repetition
6. Local Problems & a Cosmic Struggle
7. Telling the Future: Foretelling the Christ
8. Telling the Future: Foreign Nations
9. Poetry that Condemns and Restores

Form of Class

Each class will contain a lecture from the instructor on that week's topic. After this lecture, students will be given some time to ask questions and share their reflections with other students.

Homework

Students are encouraged to read the Old Testament Prophets for the duration of this class. Sometimes, passages in the Prophets may be given to students to read and consider outside of class time. The instructor will provide feedback to any submitted questions or assignments turned in.