

Study Guide for *Old Testament Prophecy*, by Frank Knight Sanders

**Extra Reading for the course:
"He Gave Us Prophets"**

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NOTE REGARDING LIBERAL TENDENCIES

As you read this text, you should be aware that the author shows liberal tendencies, and some of his comments express opinions that *Third Millennium* does not share. For example: 1) He sometimes gives the impression that he believes the prophetic books of the Bible contain errors and contradictions. *Third Millennium* clearly holds to the inspiration and inerrancy of all the Scriptures. 2) He also tends to give dates for some of the books much later than evangelicals tend to give. 3) Thirdly, he breaks up the book of Isaiah into many sections, spread over many years, by several different authors. 4) Finally, he places less emphasis on how the Old Testament points to Christ than evangelicals do.

Having said this, the reading has many valuable insights and a lot of helpful information. An important part of studying theology includes developing the capacity to read books that do not totally conform to our standards, and to discern what is valid and what is not valid. To help you in this process, we will quote some of the more liberal comments in the study guide so that you can learn to identify them.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction

1. According to the author, the prophets, at least the best of them, were not only preachers about God and His world, but also what?
2. How does the author define a prophet?
3. What was the primary task of a prophet?
4. Are the prophetic books in chronological order in the Bible?
5. The history of the development of the prophetic order among the Hebrews first becomes clear in the days of _____.

Chapter 1

1. Who was the first "literary prophet"?
2. "History writing, then as now, was a ready and important method of _____."

3. What was the economic situation at the time of Amos?
4. What was the concern of Israel and Judah regarding the international situation at the time of Amos?
5. Amos worked as a _____.
6. Amos preached his messages to _____.
7. How were Amos's messages received by the people to whom he preached?

Notice the comment on page 12:

"The declaration of 9: 8b-15 that the predicted exile would result in a sifting out of the good grain, of the true Israel which would be restored and blessed, must be regarded as a later addition to the original book of Amos, which closed with 9: 8a. It is out of harmony with the sweeping declarations of the prophecy as a whole."

How do you think this differs from the more conservative evangelical view?

Chapter 2

1. Hosea preached his messages to whom?
2. How did Hosea's married life illustrate God's relationship to Israel?
3. What was the name of Hosea's wife?
4. List some of the characteristics of Isaiah mentioned in the chapter.
5. What advice did Isaiah give to king Ahaz about making an alliance with Assyria?
6. Describe the spirit of Isaiah's messages.
7. When Hezekiah succeeded Ahaz as king of Judah, how did he respond to Isaiah's message?

Chapter 3

1. What is the name of the prophet who, along with Isaiah, preached in Judah during the reign of Hezekiah?
2. Summarize Isaiah's advice to Hezekiah regarding alliances with other nations.

Notice the comment on p. 28:

"These prophets were really predicting that the whole world would ultimately worship Jehovah. They erred only in specifying the exact method by which this was to be brought about."

How do you think this differs from the more conservative evangelical view?

Chapter 4

1. When Manasseh succeeded his father Hezekiah as king of Judah, what was his attitude toward the prophets?
2. Which prophet had much influence on king Josiah, son of Manasseh and grandson of Hezekiah?

Notice the comment on page 31:

"Many scholars regard Zephaniah as probably incapable of assuming the mood of rejoicing expressed in 3:14-17. Such think that these verses are, like 2:8-11 and 3:18-20, a post-exilic addition to Zephaniah's own prophecies."

How do you think this differs from the more conservative evangelical view?

3. How does the author describe Jeremiah?
4. What was king Josiah's attitude toward the Law of God?

Chapter 5

1. What was king Jehoakim's attitude toward Jeremiah?
2. Which prophet is known for announcing the fall of Nineveh, capital of Assyria?
3. What nation helped defeat Assyria at the time of Jeremiah, took Syria and Palestine as part of their share, and then also defeated Egypt?
4. Which prophet is known for teaching that a righteous man can wait, knowing that God is righteous and His cause will prevail?

Chapter 6

1. Describe important facts about Ezekiel.
2. What was Ezekiel's first principal message?
3. What did Jeremiah encourage Zedekiah to do with regard to the Chaldeans?
4. As Jerusalem was ready to be captured, what change did Jeremiah explain regarding how God would bless His people in the future?
5. What happened to Jeremiah when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in 586 B.C.?

Chapter 7

1. What happened to the remnant who had remained in Jerusalem when Gadaliah, their governor, was killed?

2. What was the tone of Ezekiel's messages in exile in Babylon?

3. What was Ezekiel's last prophecy?

Chapter 8

1. What is the name of the ruler who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. and allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem?

Notice the comment on page 54:

"The speaker or writer of Isaiah 40-48 was in all human probability a living prophet of the sixth century, gifted and educated like his great predecessor, whose writings or utterances came to be bound up at a much later date with the genuine Isaianic writings, because they interpreted so nobly and clearly, in the light of these new conditions, the ideals which the great Isaiah had cherished."

How do you think this differs from the more conservative evangelical view?

Chapter 9

1. When Cyrus gave permission for the Jews to return to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon, did they all want to return?

2. What did Haggai and Zechariah encourage the Jews to do in Jerusalem?

Notice the comment on page 64:

"Haggai and Zechariah seem to have been confident that God would speedily open the way for Zerubbabel to be the fulfiller of the Messianic hopes expressed since Isaiah's time. It seems very clear, one may say in all reverence, that in this respect they went beyond what Jehovah had revealed to them. Their God-given task was to build the Temple, and to reconstruct the community. It seemed to them that the next step must be the realization of dynastic hopes in Zerubbabel; but this turned out not to be a part of God's plan."

Do you agree or disagree? Why? Do you think this differs from the more conservative evangelical view? How?

3. After the Babylonian exile, when was the new temple finished?

Chapter 10

1. Obadiah deals with a disaster that has come upon what people?

2. Mention key themes of Malachi.

Chapter 11

1. Describe the key concept of the message of each prophet:

Joel
Jonah
Daniel

Notice the comments on pages 73 and 74:

On page 73, the author says that Jonah was written "about 300 B.C."

Also: "The book of Jonah is clearly a parable."

On page 74, he says Daniel was written in the "Third Century B.C."

Also: "The Daniel stories probably passed from mouth to mouth much earlier than the well-established date of the book of Daniel as a whole. Their inaccuracies regarding the events of the exile make it certain that the knowledge regarding those days was traditional."

How do you think these comments differ from the more conservative evangelical view?

Chapter 12

1. According to the author, how many centuries were spanned by the prophets?
2. The author says, "Each prophetic message started from some deep conviction about ____."
3. The author says, "During the exile and ever after, the Jewish community was a _____ rather than a nation."
4. The author says, "When the prophet Hosea grasped the wonderful truth that Jehovah's greatest attribute was not His power or His righteousness but his unquenchable, unchanging love, he really made the _____ idea inevitable."
5. The author says, "Hence Isaiah both proclaimed that there would be a repentant, righteous _____ and declared that Jehovah would give this _____ a fitting leadership, that it might become His true agent in blessing the world."

Notice the comment on page 85:

" One contribution of supreme importance to true religious thinking was the direct, definite insistence of the prophets of the eighth century upon character as the fundamental element in true religion, the distinctive element in God Himself, the essential expression of the Divine in life."

Do you agree? Why or why not? Do you think this differs from the more conservative evangelical view? How?

6. According to the author, what is the conception that unifies all prophetic thinking?