In this presentation, you will learn about the study of the prophets. One of the first things to realize is that it is not the purpose of the prophets simply to foretell the future. Rather, prophets are those who speak on behalf of another. In this case, the prophets on behalf of God himself. The purpose of prophecy is to call the people back to faithfulness to God and the covenant (Carvalho 243; Freeman 38-41; Boadt 268).

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that prophets are not always the most popular people in the community! They point out, on behalf of God, the shortcomings of the people, and they exhort them to turn away from their unfaithfulness to the dedicated love they are supposed to have for God.

Notice that the stories of the vocational call of the prophets usually feature great reluctance on the part of the person chosen to serve as a prophet. Once again, we see that the human actors in the drama are often reluctant, flawed individuals who are called to serve on behalf of God. The reason? So that through it all, God can be understood as the real “actor,” the One responsible for what is going on. This theme of flawed human instruments recurs throughout both Old and New Testaments: people like Moses, David, Isaiah, and others are not chosen for their perfection but because of their weakness. It is God who will work wonders, and that is the basic message (Ditewig 3).

The following salient points refresh the importance of the covenant in the prophetic message:
1. God reveals his true nature best in keeping covenant and loving-kindness
2. God demonstrates this nature in the covenant relationship to the Jewish nation
3. The covenant of the prophets envisions a broader expanse of God’s reign beyond the cultic limitations of a single nation
4. God’s rule is supra cultural in that it brings the nature of heaven to all cultures (McCuistion 5)

The prophets make their appearance in the time of the judges. Samuel and the school of the prophets were organized to strengthen and confirm Israel in its fidelity to the Lord (Keil and Delitzsch 5). Additionally, they were in constant protest against the Canaanite religion and culture (Freeman 29). Deuteronomy gave a case law example of a false prophet (13:1-5) and predicted the coming of a prophet like Moses (18:15-22). However, Deuteronomy ends with a reference to the level of efficiency of the prophetic office—”Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face” (34:10).

Brueggemann (15) and von Rad (126) maintain that Deuteronomy 26:5-9 is the earliest and most succinct expression of the cultic convictions of Israel. The central elements of this declaration of cultural memory are 1) the wanderings of the fathers, 2) the Exodus, and 3) the Promised Land. One and three are the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise, and they draw their vitality and power from the second, which is the true center of the confession (Brueggemann 15). This is the cultic (covenant) memory that the prophets were determined to restore.

Within this covenant framework, the prophets work in their various historical situations. Their mission is to restore the covenant liturgy in the life and destiny of Israel (Mueller 49; Brueggemann 24). Theirs is a “passionate championing of the exclusive worship of Yahweh” that rejects foreign influences, demanding unwavering submission to the covenant (Eichrodt 340).

Here, you will note the work cited information.

Works Cited

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