

**Joel 2:1-14**

How do you feel now?

These are not the sort of messages that most people want to hear.

And, yet, they comprise nearly a quarter of your Bible. Maybe, just maybe, they are worth listening to.

**Why should we listen to these guys?**

They are so strange... all the way from Moses, the first in this prophetic tradition...

to Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all of the smaller prophetic books...

all the way to the last of the OT prophets, John the Baptist... who actually begins the NT.

Why should we listen to them?

Most people in their own day did not listen to them. Why should we?

They are so odd, so different from all the people that we know today.

There is a NT gift of prophesy... but it is not quite the same thing.

It involves bringing God's words to bear on specific people or peoples... application of Scripture.

Every good preacher ought to have a little bit of this.

There are people today who call themselves prophets, but most of them are fools. Maybe this has always been so.

There are people who think that Biblical prophecy means predicting the future... but this is not quite right.

Sometimes these crazy men do predict the future, but never as an end in itself.

To the prophet, the future is a tool to impact behavior in the present.

"If you don't change, judgment is coming."

"If you seek the Lord, you can have great hope... in the future. The Lord is coming."

The prophet is very much in the present.

He keeps talking and won't shut up about the poor, and the widow, and the orphan

Oh, come on," say the people, "do you really expect us to take care of all these people?"

He says that God is concerned about cheating in business, and offerings, and how you treat your wife.

"Really," say the people, "I mean, people are dying in this world. Why get upset about such little things?"

He goes on and on about the corruption of judges and the greed of rich people.

"My goodness," say the people, "what else do you think people in power do?"

He criticizes how people worship and raves about idols.

"So what," say the people, "Is not religion a personal thing. What does God care what I do in private."

The philosophers of this world live in their ivory towers thinking that they are thinking the great thoughts of the universe.

The prophet takes us to the slums.

He is earthy, a man of the wilderness, different. He is unshaved and wears tattered clothes. He eats bugs, dry bread, and honey.

He has no money. He has no friends. If he has a family it is usually a disaster. These are not family men.

He is not easy to talk to, always raving on about God and sin and disaster.

He is hated by kings and ignored by people. They say, "Why can't you come up with something nice to say?"

What manner of man is the prophet and why should we listen to him?

**I. The Prophet is invited to empathize with God.**

God draws them in to feel how He feels... about sin, about His people, about their future.

Maybe this is the most significant thing about the prophets. Maybe this is what makes them so different.

And, maybe, just maybe... each one of us needs to do a little more of this. Feel how God feels.

**Ezekiel 2:1-3:3**

**Hosea 1:2. 3:1-5**

**Isaiah 6:1-7**

**II. The Prophet is serious about sin.**

We think of sin as a little thing... especially small sins. "After all," we say, "nobody is perfect."

But the prophet sees sin as a disaster... all sin... even little sins...

even acceptable sins... like ignoring needy people and fake worship...

**Isaiah 1:4, 10-15, 23**

**Amos 8:4-6**

**III. The Prophet is explosive and irritating.**

The prophet is not artistic... he is antagonistic. People don't want to hear him. They want him to shut up.

And, he won't. The prophet is never popular... because God is never popular.

**Amos 7:10-17**

**Jeremiah 7:9-15**

#### **IV. The Prophet is lonely and miserable.**

None of these prophets grew up wanting to be prophets. They were called.

A prophetic ministry was never an aspiration... it is a burden, a weight to be carried, a fire in the soul.

Those around the prophet do not understand.

**Jeremiah 20:8-9**

**Ezekiel 3:4-11**

**Isaiah 6:8-13**

#### **V. The Prophet finds his hope in God.**

Lest we think of the prophet as always negative... woven into the rebukes and talk of sin and judgment, there is another message.

It is a message of great hope... not in people and what they are going to do. not at all.

It is hope in God and what He is going to do... what only He can do.

**Jeremiah 33:1-18**

**Joel 3:9-12**

So the prophet, strange and alarming, always speaks of judgment and salvation.

This week, read Habakkuk aloud... if you can more than once... and see what it does to you.

#### Michael card. "The Prophet"

Reluctant ride in the middle of the belly of a whale

A wheel on fire in the middle of the sky

Abandoned baby kicking on the side of the road

And a wife has died but you're denied the right to cry

Three men walk out protected from a furnace of flame

One man cries out from a miry well

See a man in the myrtles and women with the wind in their wings

Understand what these seared lips can tell

I am the prophet and I smolder and burn

I scream and cry and wonder why you never seemed to learn

To hear with your own ears with your own eyes to see

I am the prophet, won't you listen to me?

I am the prophet, won't you listen to me?

I hold out hope to everyone who hears and understands

The Word of God can echo in the voice of a man

He's the shadow of a great rock in a dry and weary land

With the names of the ones He loved carved into His hands

I am the prophet and I smolder and burn

I scream and cry and wonder why you never seemed to learn

To hear with your own ears with your own eyes to see

I am the prophet, won't you listen to me?

I am the prophet, won't you listen to me?

The sorrow in His anger, my eyes weep His tears

His life alight in me

I am the sword that cuts His people apart

I speak the Word that comforts their faithless hearts

I am the prophet and I smolder and burn

I scream and cry and wonder why you never seemed to learn

To hear with your own ears with your own eyes to see

I am the prophet, won't you listen to me?

I am the prophet, won't you listen to me?