



Links Players

The Prophets: Voices For Our Times

In the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways....(Hebrews 1:1 NIV)

During Ben Crenshaw's press conference on the Saturday afternoon of the 1999 Ryder Cup, at least four reporters asked him the same basic question about the U.S. team's seemingly insurmountable deficit when they trailed the Europeans by a score of 10-6.

Although he appeared a touch irked when the same question was asked a fifth time, he gracefully attempted to answer. But then he looked out over the audience, pointed his index finger, waggled it at them, and said: "I'm going to leave you all with one thought, and then I'm going to leave. I'm a big believer in fate...[PAUSE] I have a good feeling about this (continuing to waggle his finger), and that's all I'm gonna tell you."

He got up and walked out. We all know the outcome of the Sunday matches that resulted in a stunning U.S. victory. You might call Crenshaw's last words that took 11 seconds to deliver a prophecy or a prediction, but whatever it was, it will live in golf lore long after we're gone. In Scripture, we still have the words of sixteen men—the prophets—who spoke and preached to the people of Israel and Judah between 750 BC and 450 BC. These prophets were intermediaries between God and the people.

The prophets indicted the people for breaking the Mosaic covenant. They warned that if the people failed to repent, judgment would be upon them and the nations. Amidst these indictments, they preached that there was hope for a glorious future for Israel and all the nations.

Among the recurring themes found in the prophets' preaching are: 1) calls for social justice because the people neglected the poor, children and widows; 2) calls for repentance from sin, especially idolatry and from neglect of true worship; 3) warnings of coming judgment on Israel and Israel's enemies if they did not repent; 4) a promise of a suffering Messiah who was coming to save His people; and 5) the hope of a future kingdom in which righteousness would reign.

In their efforts to speak truth to power, the prophets were ignored, mocked, and scorned more often than they were heeded.

The warnings about the consequences of disobedience to God's laws, calls for repentance, and messages of hope and restoration transcend time and speak to the human condition and struggles in our nation and world today.

Many of the evils seen in the days of these prophets are evident today in society and culture: materialism, hedonism, violence, greed, immorality, and moral relativism. These evils affect our culture, political structures, families, values, moral codes, and even religion itself. The prophets' messages still challenge us to live more faithfully, justly, and compassionately.

Over the coming months, I intend to take us on a journey to a land where, for some 2700 years, the people were facing challenging domestic, economic, and social issues as well as international crises involving military aggression against them in the land where the prophets spoke and preached.

I invite you to join me on this journey as we study and examine the lives of these prophets, from Amos to Zephaniah, what they had to say, and how their message directly applies to the many challenges we face today as individuals, as a society, and as a nation. I hope that you will come alongside me on the journey.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we are so grateful that you sent prophets to speak to the people of Israel and Judah over 2,700 years ago. Please help us to apply their messages to our lives today.

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The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.