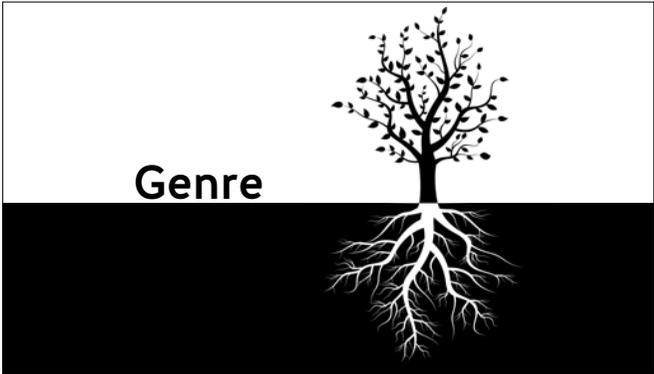
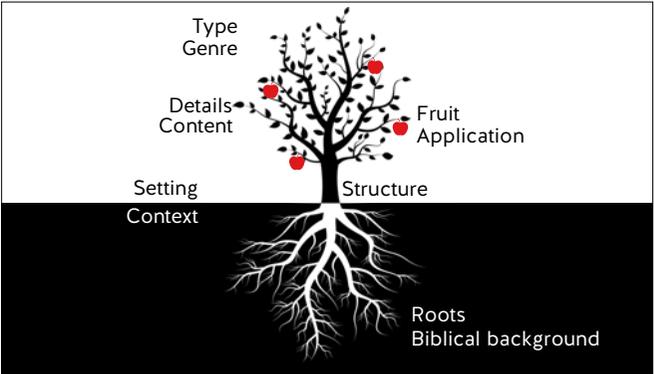


Formation SCHOOL

Understanding and Teaching an Old Testament Prophet: Zephaniah

1.17



What is a prophet?



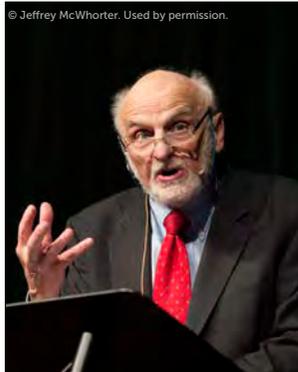
Prophecy is essentially a ministry of disclosure, a stripping bare. Israel's great prophets do not merely lift the veil of the future in order to destroy false expectations; at the same time, they expose the conduct of their contemporaries. . . . Prophets tear the masks away and show the true face of the people behind them.

Hans Walter Wolff



While the prophets are in a way future-tellers, they are concerned with the future as it impinges upon the present.

Walter Brueggemann
The Prophetic Imagination



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It is the task of the prophet to bring to expression the new realities against the more visible ones of the old order.

Walter Brueggemann
The Prophetic Imagination

Context



Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. His mother's name was Jedidah daughter of Adaiah; she was from Bozkath. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and followed completely the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left.

1 Kings 22:1-3

630s BC? Zephaniah

622 BC: Josiah's reforms

Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, following the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites. He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had demolished; he also erected altars to the Baals and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshipped them.

...

He built altars in the temple of the Lord, of which the Lord had said, "My Name will remain in Jerusalem forever." In both courts of the temple of the Lord, he built altars to all the starry hosts. He sacrificed his children in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practiced divination and witchcraft, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger.

2 Chronicles 33:1-6

609 BC: Battle of Megiddo



Babylonian Chronicle

This segment covers 605-594 BC

- Battle of Carcemish
- Accession of Nebuchadnezzar
- Appointment of Zedekiah
- Judean exile



Studying Zephaniah



Structure

- Read Zephaniah right through.
- Identify the structure and the kinds of oracles used.
- Extra information: tonywatkins.co.uk/prophets-resources



Content

- Identify features in the way Zephaniah uses language (repetition, parallelism, imagery, figures of speech, etc.)
- Summarise Zephaniah's message to his original readers in one sentence.
- Identify ways in which Zephaniah speaks into today's world.
- Extra information: tonywatkins.co.uk/prophets-resources



Jerusalem

