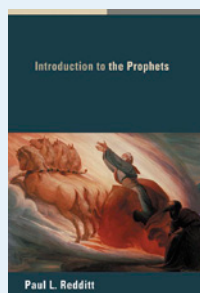


Introduction to the prophets

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Introduction to the Prophets

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Paul L. Redditt

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Review Title:
Introduction to the prophets

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In this introduction to the prophets, Redditt attempts to give people with limited knowledge of the biblical prophets a general overview of this phenomenon as well as a treatment of the so-called writing prophets in particular. This is done in a conversational type of writing understandable to the novice or layperson.

Redditt starts off by discussing what a prophet is; he prefers to refer to the biblical prophets as both 'Foretellers' and 'Forthtellers' – 'servants of God speaking to people of their own audiences on all kinds of subjects' (p. xiii–xiv). An overview is given of the phenomenon of prophets in the Ancient Near East and in the Old Testament, addressing topics like terms used for prophets, true and false prophets and their relation to kings, priests and wise men.

The individual writing prophets are then discussed in two parts, devoting a chapter to each. Part one deals with the Major Prophets and part two with the Minor Prophets. Redditt follows the canonical order generally found in English Bibles and treats Daniel as one of the Major Prophets. Lamentations is treated with *The Book of Baruch* and *The Letter of Jeremiah* in a separate chapter also as part of the Major Prophets, calling it *Lamentations and Other Deutero-Jeremianic Literature*. The section on the Major Prophets is introduced by discussing approaches to the Major Prophets. In this section a brief overview of the historical critical methods as well as the newer literary critical and reader orientated exegetical approaches is given. Part Two on the Minor Prophets is introduced with a cursory discussion of the Book of the Twelve.

In a concluding chapter some of the major themes running through the prophets, the process of canonising the prophets and the prophets' connections with the New Testament are treated. This chapter concludes with what the author calls 'Two Other Jewish Approaches to the Prophets', briefly touching on the Dead Sea Scrolls and Philo with regard to the prophets.

Each of the chapters and therefore of the writing prophets are discussed according to the following outline:

- Introduction to the Book and Its Times
- Place in Canon
- Setting (time and place)
- Structure, Integrity
- Authorship
- Main Genres
- Special Issues.

Subsequent to the above discussion the content is discussed using the following outline:

- Introduction to the Prophet
- Basic Themes
- Problems Raised by a Study of the Book
- Conclusion
- Questions for Reflection
- For Further Reading (a short annotated reading list).

In following this outline the author succeeds in addressing most of the major issues with regard to the study of each of the prophetic books. As can be expected in an introduction of this nature, no thorough scholarly argumentations are present. This is also evident from the fact that hardly any reference is made to the most recent studies from Europe and Germany in particular or is to be found under the list 'For Further Reading'. This being said, Redditt does not shy away from pointing out contentious issues though. The interested lay person and undergraduate student will benefit from this introduction.