

Old Testament Prophets: God's Messengers of Judgment & Redemption



Questions?



Before we jump into individual prophetic books....

- **Why** are the prophets important?
 - **Who** were the prophets?
 - **When/Where** did the prophets minister?
 - **What** distinguishes the prophets?
 - **How** should we read the prophets?
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Why?

- **Size:** corpus equals NT (*less studied?* 2 Tim. 3:16)
- **Source:** important NT imagery (bride, Eph. 5/Hos; vineyard, Lk. 20/Isa. 5; water/Spirit, Jn. 3/Eze. 36)
- **Savior:** NT writers appeal to OT prophets to understand Messiah (Matt. 1-2/Isa. 7, Hos. 11)
- **Stump:** terse form, enigma (Isa. 20, Jer. 27, Ezek. 3)
- **Story:** covenant curses, *God does* [Kings] covenant enforcers, *God says* [Prophets]

Who?

- Prophets: **commissioned** by God (*thus says*) to **confront** Israel's sin (*idolatry, injustice, reliance on rituals*), **call** them to repent/obey covenant, **caution** them about coming judgment, **comfort** them with promise of better future
- Ancient Near East
 - Boundaries: Mediterranean (west), Black & Caspian Seas (north), Persian Gulf & Red Sea (south), Zagros Mts (east)

When?

○ Assyrians (8-7th c. B.C.)

- Jonah
- Hosea
- Amos
- Micah
- Isaiah
- Nahum
- Zephaniah

○ Babylonians (7-6th c. B.C.)

- Habakkuk
- Jeremiah/Lamentations
- Obadiah
- Ezekiel

○ Persians (6-5th c. B.C.)

- Daniel
- Haggai/Zechariah
- Joel/Malachi

What?

- **Form:** *prophetic books mainly contain poetry (lines- terse, parallel; language- figurative, emotive, theological; literary- irony, wordplay)*
- **Formation:** best understood as anthologies (collection of oracles, sermons, narratives) with *broad thematic unity*. They may have been written by the prophet (Dan. 12), an associate (Jer. 36:2f), or collected later.

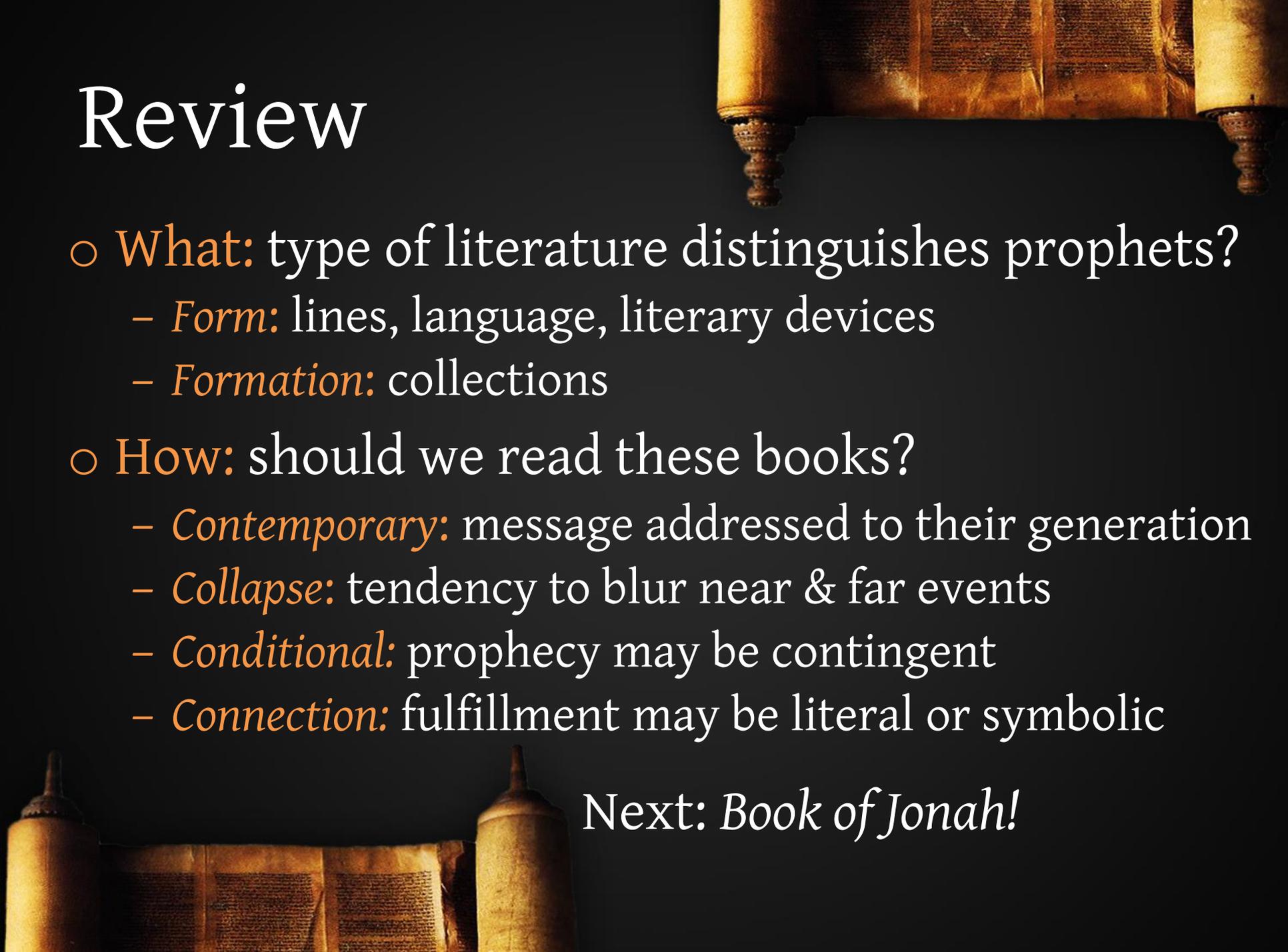
How?

- **Contemporary:** more present than future, 10%
(validate message: *then they will know*, Ezek. 27x)
- **Collapse:** prophets may combine near/far events,
judgment-restoration (*mountains*, Isa. 61, Joel 2-3)
- **Conditional?** prophecy may be contingent
(1 Kgs. 21; Jonah; Mic. 3:12//Jer. 26:17f; Jer. 18:7f)
[Chisholm, “When Prophecy Appears to Fail, Check Your
Hermeneutic,” *JETS* 53 (2010), 561-77]

How?

- **Connection:** How are prophets related to Jesus?
 - *Literal:* prophets one-to-one fulfilled in Jesus
 - Messenger prepares way (Mal. 3:1, 4:5; Matt. 11:7f)
 - Messiah born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:6=Mic. 5:2)
 - Jesus as Isaiah's servant (Isa. 42; Matt. 12:18-21)
 - *Symbolic:* prophets relate Israel's history to Jesus
 - Escape recapitulates exodus (Hos. 11:1; Matt 2:15)
 - Infant deaths repeat exile (Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:18)
 - Response repeated (Isa. 6:9-10; Matt. 13:14-15)

Review

The background of the slide features several ancient scrolls, likely made of papyrus or parchment, arranged in a way that suggests a library or a collection of historical documents. The scrolls are illuminated from above, creating a warm, golden glow and casting soft shadows. The text is overlaid on this background.

- **What:** type of literature distinguishes prophets?
 - *Form:* lines, language, literary devices
 - *Formation:* collections
- **How:** should we read these books?
 - *Contemporary:* message addressed to their generation
 - *Collapse:* tendency to blur near & far events
 - *Conditional:* prophecy may be contingent
 - *Connection:* fulfillment may be literal or symbolic

Next: *Book of Jonah!*