



SCHOOL FOR MINISTRY
The Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

HEBREW BIBLE 2

1. Introduction to Prophetic Literature & Case Study of Jonah

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Welcome to Hebrew Bible 2! It will be my pleasure to explore with you the Prophetic Literature and the miscellaneous “Writings” that compose the second part of the Hebrew Bible class at SFM.

During our first class we will be spending some time examining the historical, cultural and theological context of the world inhabited by the Hebrew Bible prophets – taking care to “demythologize” some of our basic assumptions about what prophecy *is* and what it *is not*. We will also be considering some of the basic generic characteristics of prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible, which will hopefully support a proper hermeneutical approach to the individual books of prophecy we will be studying over the subsequent seven weeks.

Assignment #1 for Class on Saturday 1st September 2018

Reading

Hopefully by now you should have read most or all of the assigned Pre-Semester Reading for this class: *The Prophetic Imagination* (2nd Edition: Fortress, 2001) by Walter Brueggemann. Please do your best to complete this wonderful introductory text. In this book, Brueggemann—perhaps the greatest contemporary theologian and exegete of the Hebrew Scriptures from a Christian perspective—traces the arc of prophecy back to Moses, through the rise and fall of the political kingdoms of Israel, right up to the vision of Jesus of Nazareth’s preaching of the “Kingdom of God.” He focuses on the prophetic critique of power, oppression and injustice; and shows how the Biblical prophets not only embrace the pain of the people, but also create an energy and amazement based on the new thing that God is doing. In all this, he skillfully intertwines his narrative with the challenges of prophetic ministry in the contemporary church.

Additionally, I would like you to read the perhaps all-too-familiar story of the prophet Jonah, which I consider the paradigmatic template of what a classic prophet is.

Thinking & Responding

Hopefully the Brueggemann text has provided you with much food for thought about what it means to be a “prophet”, and what prophetic ministry looks like. In approximately 350-400 words (12 point font, double-spaced, 1 inch margin, with your name at the top of the paper), please try to gather some of your responses and reflections concerning Brueggemann’s book. I suggest perhaps focusing on two or three specific topics or issues that you can explore in separate paragraphs. Try to avoid simply summarizing the author’s points and arguments – rather, focus on what you have learned, and how the text has revised and changed your understanding of “prophecy.” Type up and print your Reflections, and be ready to share and discuss your Responses. I will collect them in to review and grade at the end of the class.