

## **Prophetic Practice in Ancient Israel I**

Institute of Advanced Theology

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### **Deborah**

Judges 4:4-7

Deborah, a woman prophetess of Lapidoth was judging Israel at that time. She was dwelling under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel on Mount Ephraim, and the sons of Israel came to her for judgment. She sent and called Baraq, son of Abinoam, from Qadesh of Naphtali, and said to him, "Didn't Yahweh - God of Israel - command: Go, and you shall draw up to Mount Tabor, and you shall take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun! And I shall draw to you, to the River Qishon, Sisera the prince of Jabin's armies, and his chariot and his horde, and I will give him into your hand."

Judges 5:7-9, 21-22, 25-27

Peasantry ceased in Israel,  
ceased until I arose, Deborah,  
until I arose -- a mother in Israel.

He chose new gods --  
then, war at the gates,

not a shield or lance was seen  
among forty thousand in Israel.  
My heart is with Israel's commanders,  
inciting among the people. Bless Yahweh!

River Qishon swept them away,  
primordial river, River Qishon.  
My soul will trample: strength!  
Then beat the horse-hoofs—  
From the rushings, rushings of his warriors!

Water, he asked; she gave him milk  
in a warriors' bowl offered him thick cream.

Her hand reached for the tent peg,  
her right hand for the laborers' hammer.

She hammered Sisera, crushed his head,  
shattered and pierced his temple.

Between her feet he bowed,

fell, lay flat.

Between her feet he bowed, he fell;  
where he bowed there he fell, a ruin.

## **Samuel**

1 Samuel 9:17-19

Samuel saw Saul, and Yahweh answered him, "Look, the man I said to you - this man shall wield among my people." Saul approached Samuel right in the gate and said, "Please tell me: where is the seer's place?" Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer. Come up before me to the high place, and you shall eat with me today, and I will send you in the morning. All that is in your heart I will tell you."

1 Samuel 10:5-7

"After this you shall come to the hill of God, where there are watches of Philistines. When you come there to the city a band of prophets will meet you, coming down from the high place, and ahead of them lute, timbrel, pipe, and lyre, and they will be prophesying. Yahweh's Spirit will advance over you, and you shall prophesy with them, and you will be turned into another man. When these signs happen, go, do for yourself what your hand finds, because God is with you."

1 Samuel 15:16-19

Samuel said to Saul, "Remain, and I will tell you what Yahweh said to me this night." And he said to him, "Speak." Samuel said, "When you were small in your own eyes, weren't

you head of the staffs of Israel? Yahweh anointed you king over Israel. Yahweh sent you on the way, and said to you, Go and devote the sinners, Amalek; make war with him and root them out. Why did you not listen to Yahweh's voice? You approached the

plunder and did evil in Yahweh's eyes.

## **Prophetic Practice in Ancient Israel II**

### **Nathan**

2 Samuel 7:11b-17

Yahweh says to declare to you that Yahweh will make you a house. Because when your days are fulfilled and you lie with your fathers I will raise up your seed after you, which shall come forth from your innards, and he will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name and I will constitute the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me, whom when he does wrong I will correct him with the staff of men, with clouts of the sons of men. But my compassion shall not depart from him as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed before me. Your house and your kingdom will stand fast forever before you, your throne, Yahweh, is established forever. In all these words and in all this vision Nathan spoke to David.

2 Samuel 12:11-12

Yahweh said thus: Look, I am raising up evil upon you from your house, and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your fellows, and he will lie with your wives before the eyes of this sun. Because you acted in secret, but I will do this deed in front of all Israel and in front of the sun.

### **Elijah**

1 Kings 17:20-22

He called to Yahweh and said, Yahweh, God, have you brought evil to this widow with whom I stay, even to kill her son? He extended himself over the child three times and call to Yahweh and said, Yahweh, God, restore this child's breath in his midst. Yahweh heard Elijah's voice, and the child's breath returned in his midst and he lived.

1 Kings 19:15-18

Yahweh said to him, God, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus and you shall go and anoint Hazael as king over Aram and Jehu, son of Nimshi you shall anoint as king over Israel and Elisha, son of Shaphat of Avelmecholah, you shall anoint as prophet in your place. Whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill, and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. Yet I

have kept in Israel seven thousand, all the knees that did not bow to Baal and every mouth that did not kiss him.

### **Prophetic Practice in Ancient Israel III**

#### **Abram**

Genesis 15:7-19

He said to him, I am Yahweh, who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land, to possess it. He said, My Lord, Yahweh by what shall I know that I shall possess it? He said to him, Take yourself a cow, three years old and a she-goat three years old and a ram three years old and a dove and a pigeon. He took himself all these and cut them down the middle and set each half against its opposite, but the birds he did not cut. When carrion birds came down on the carcasses, Abram shooed them off. The sun went in and deep sleep fell upon Abram, and look - terror, darkness fell upon him. And he said, Know, know that your seed will be alien in a land not theirs and they shall enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. Even the people that they serve I judge, and afterward they will come out with great wealth. You will go in to your fathers in peace; you will be buried in good old age. The fourth generation they shall come back here, because the wrong of the Amorites is not finished here. The sun went in and there was thick gloom and look - a fire pot of smoke and a torch of fire passed between these cuts. On that day Yahweh cut a covenant with Abram, saying, To your seed I will give

this land, from Egypt's river to the great river, the River Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Raphaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

## **Moses**

Exodus 24:9-14

Moses went up, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. They saw the God of Israel, and under his feet like sapphire stonework and the substance of the heavens in clarity. On the chiefs of the sons of Israel he did not send his hand: they saw God and ate and drank. Yahweh said to Moses, Come up to me on the mountain and be there. I will give you tablets of stone, and the torah and the commandment that I wrote to direct them. Moses arose and his assistant Joshua and Moses went up to the mountain of God. To the elders he said, Wait for us here until we come back to you. Look - Aaron and Hur are with you, if there is a claimant, he will go to them.

## **Prophetic Practice in Ancient Israel IV**

### **Amos**

Amos 2:6-8

Yahweh said thus:

For three transgressions of Israel, and for four  
I will not turn away punishment.  
Because they sell the righteous for silver,  
And the poor for a pair of sandals.  
They trample the head of the needy  
In the dust of the earth  
And turn aside the way of the afflicted.  
A man and his father go to the same young woman  
To profane my holy name.  
On clothes taken in pledge they turn aside  
By every altar,  
And they drink wine seized in suits  
In the house of their God(s).

Amos 3:2-7

You alone have I known  
Of all the families of the earth,  
So I will punish you  
For all your iniquities.  
Do two people walk together,  
except they are agreed?  
Will a lion roar in the forest,  
When he has no prey?  
Will a young lion cry out in his den,  
He has not taken anything?  
Does a bird fall in a snare on the earth  
Where there is not trap for it?  
Shall a person take up a snare from the earth  
And it has not taken anything?

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city  
and the people not be afraid?  
Shall there be evil in a city  
And Yahweh has not done it?  
For Yahweh will do nothing,  
Except he reveal his secret,  
To his servants, the prophets.

Amos 7:1-9

The Lord, Yahweh, showed me thus: Look, he was forming locusts at the start of sprouting of the latter growth (the latter growth after the king's mowings). When they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said,

Lord, Yahweh, forgive, please!  
How can Jacob stand  
When he is small?

Yahweh relented in this,  
It shall not be, Yahweh said.

The Lord, Yahweh showed me thus: Look, the Lord, Yahweh was calling for a dispute by fire, and it devoured the great deep and ate up the territory, and I said,

Yahweh, God, stop, please!  
How can Jacob stand  
When he is small?

Yahweh relented in this,  
This also shall not be, the Lord, Yahweh, said.

The Lord, Yahweh showed me thus: Look, Yahweh was standing beside a wall's plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. And Yahweh said to me, What do you see, Amos? And I said, A plumb line. Then the Lord said to me,

See, I am putting a plumb line  
In the midst of my people Israel.  
I will never again pass by them.

The high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,  
And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,  
And I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with a sword.

## **Hosea**

Hosea 1:2-8

The start of Yahweh's word to Hosea: Yahweh said to Hosea, Go get yourself a wife of fornication and children of fornication, because the land commits great fornication against Yahweh. He went and got Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. Yahweh said to him, Name him Jezreel, because in a little while I will visit the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. She conceived again and bore a daughter, and Yahweh said to him, Name her Lo-ruchamah, because I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel, because I have pardoned them. But I will have pity on the house of Judah and save them by Yahweh their God; I will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by horsemen. When she had weaned Lo-ruchamah, she conceived and bore a son. Yahweh

said, Name him Lo-ammi, because you are not my people and I am not your God.

Hosea 4:12-14

My people consult wood  
And their walking stick advises them.  
Because a spirit of fornication  
Has led them astray  
And they have fornicated  
Against their God.  
On the tops of mountains they sacrifice  
And offer smoke on the hills,  
Under oak, popular, and terebinth,  
Because their shade is good.

So your daughters fornicate,  
And your daughters-in--law commit adultery.  
I will not punish your daughters  
When they fornicate  
Nor your daughters-in law when they commit adultery,  
Because the men are with prostitutes  
And sacrifice with temple harlots,  
So a people without understanding  
Go down.

Hosea 6:1-2

Come, let us return to Yahweh: because he has torn, and he will heal us, he has struck, and he will bind us up. He

will revive us after two days; on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him.

11:1, 8-9

Israel is young, and I have loved him,  
and called my son from Egypt.

The more they called them,  
and more then went from them,  
they sacrificed to the Baalim  
and burned incense to idols.

How can I give you up, Ephraim?

How can I deliver you over, Israel?

How can I make you like Admah?

How can I set you as Zeboim?

My heart recoils within me;

My compassion warms.

I will not execute my raw anger,

I will not return to destroy Ephraim,

Because I am God, not man,

The holy one in your midst,

And I will not enter the city.

## **Prophetic Practice in Ancient Israel V**

### **Isaiah**

Isaiah 6:1-4

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his

robe filled the Temple. Seraphim stood before him; six wings, six wings to each - with two to cover the face, and with two to cover the feet, and with two to fly. Each cried out to the other, Holy, Holy, Holy, Yahweh of armies, all the earth is filled with his glory. The foundations of the thresholds shook from the sound of the calling, and the building was filled with smoke.

Isaiah 7:10-17

Yahweh repeated speaking to Ahaz, saying, Ask for yourself a sign from Yahweh your God, deep as Sheol or high as heaven. Ahaz said, I will not ask and I will not test Yahweh. He said, Hear, now, house of David, Is it small to you to weary men that you weary my God, also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look - the maiden conceives and bears a son, and will call his name God With Us. He will eat curds and honey before he knows how to reject evil and choose good. Because before the youth knows how to reject evil and choose good, the earth will be forsaken whose two kings you dread. Yahweh will bring upon you and upon your people and upon the house of your fathers days that have not come since Ephraim departed from Judah: the king of Assyria.

### **Sennacherib**

As for [Hezekiah the Judahite](#), who did not submit to my yoke: forty-six of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small towns in their area, which were without number, by leveling with battering-rams and by bringing up siege-

engines, and by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels, and breeches, I besieged and took them. 200,150 people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep without number, I brought away from them and counted as spoil. (Hezekiah) himself, like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city. I threw up earthworks against him— the one coming out of the city-gate, I turned back to his misery. His cities, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land, and to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Silli-bêl, king of Gaza I gave (them). And thus I diminished his land. I added to the former tribute, and I laid upon him the surrender of their land and imposts—gifts for my majesty. As for Hezekiah, the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him, and the Arabs and his mercenary troops which he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, deserted him. In addition to the thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, gems, antimony, jewels, large carnelians, ivory-inlaid couches, ivory-inlaid chairs, elephant hides, elephant tusks, ebony, boxwood, all kinds of valuable treasures, as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female musicians, which he had brought after me to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute and to accept servitude, he dispatched his messengers.

## **2 Kings 18-19**

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, went on an expedition against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish:

"I have done wrong. Leave me, and I will pay whatever tribute you impose on me." The king of Assyria exacted three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold from Hezekiah, king of Judah. Hezekiah paid him all the funds there were in the temple of the Lord and in the palace treasuries....So the Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he had heard that he had departed from Lachish...That night the angel of the Lord went forth and struck down 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. Early the next morning, there they were, all the corpses of the dead. So Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, broke camp and went back home to Nineveh. When he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adram-melech and Sharezer slew him with the sword and fled into the land of Ararat.

### **Micah**

Micah 1: 10-14

In the house of Aphrah [*bet le 'aphrah*]  
roll yourselves in the dust [*'aphar*] (1:10)  
Harness the chariots to the steeds [*rekhesh*]  
inhabitant of Lachish [*lakhish*] (1:13)  
The houses of Akhziv [*'akhziv*]  
will be a deception [*'akhzav*]  
to the kings of Israel (1:14).

Micah 3:11-12

Its heads for a bribe give judgment,  
Its priests instruct for a price,

Its prophets divine for money.  
Yet they rely on Yahweh and say,  
Is not Yahweh in our midst?  
No evil shall come upon us.  
Therefore because of you  
Zion shall be plowed as a field;  
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,  
and the mount of the house a wooded height.