



## Thanks and Dedication

Thank you, **LORD** – this book is Yours.

I want to further dedicate this book to:

- The Prophets

Isaiah,  
Jeremiah,  
Ezekiel,  
Daniel,  
Zechariah,  
Malachi,  
Hosea,  
Amos,  
Obadiah,  
Joel,  
Micah,  
Haggai,  
Zephaniah,  
Habakkuk,  
Jonah,  
Nahum

- All the Saints who lost their lives for speaking out the truth

and

- Everyone who takes up the cross and follows the LORD in spreading the truth as it is written in the Holy Scripture.

**Samantha Hewavitharana**

# **Meet the Prophets**

**A Journey through the Lives and the Visions of the  
Old Testament Prophets**

© 2016 Samantha Hewavitharana  
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Includes bibliographical references

Editor: Buchschmiede von Dataform Media GmbH, Wien  
*www.buchschmiede.at*

978-3-99057-210-8 (Paperback)  
Printed in Austria

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## Introduction

Hello, my dear readers and a warm welcome to my brothers and sisters in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, we are *One Family*.

I thank you for your interest in this book.

*“Meet the Prophets”* is written from a Christian perspective, but is for anyone who would be open-minded toward Bible-truth and willing to consider that Jesus Christ was more than a “good person” or a prophet.

As Christians, we believe that He was and is the Son of God, the Messiah and God.

*“Why is she starting her “Introduction” with Christ, when this book is about the Prophets?”* - You might be asking yourselves. Well, it is because everything the Prophets of the Old Testament said, somehow revolves around Jesus, including our common future on this planet and our destiny.

But first, please let me introduce myself to you briefly:

My name is Samantha; I’m a child of the 1980ies and a doctor by profession. I converted to Christianity (I come from a Buddhist family background) in 2008.

When I was a child (and had not read the Bible yet, but knew most of the stories from children’s programs on TV and movies), I had a completely different understanding of what the Bible actually is.

I thought it was simply a collection of stories from the times before Jesus (Old Testament), followed by Jesus’ life story (New Testament) itself. So I basically imagined it to be a spiritual book with moral teachings and a historic background.

History is an interesting subject and one can learn lessons from it, but to most people, it is just not as appealing as knowledge that can be applied to everyday life and the future (e.g. science). The same goes for moral teaching; once you have discov-

ered the principals of a religion, you would probably not devote more of your time to it, unless you are in a particular life-situation and seeking advice.

Little did I know back then, that the Bible, inspired by the “*living God*” (e.g. Jeremiah 10:10) is a “*living book*”!

I read the Bible for the first time when I was 19 years old; just out of interest and to educate myself (this was many years before I converted).

I re-read it in the following years and always discovered something new and you can be sure to find ninety year-old grandmothers and grandfathers who, despite having read the Bible in their youth, still keep finding new things!

The Bible describes the past, present and future of God’s story (His story).

The reason why we may constantly discover new things in the Bible is not only that, given the massive amount of information contained in it, it is only human to miss out on details, but also that, as time goes by, interpreting certain passages becomes easier because the world itself keeps changing, increasingly showing similarities to what has been predicted in the Bible.

Examples: Cashless payment (Revelation 13) or “increased travel and knowledge” in the end-times (Daniel 12:4). Conditions that may have been practically unimaginable to the prophets and so hard for them to describe (the knowledge of the future was given to them by God in pictures, but then “*sealed*<sup>1</sup>”) are part of our daily lives today (the “*seals*” are now slowly being “*opened*<sup>2</sup>” because we are in the end-times). As history progresses, our interpretations of the prophets’ visions come closer and closer to what was really meant.

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<sup>1</sup> The prophet’s understanding was limited and so did interpreters over the centuries feel; they could only accept the word as it was written, but were not able to grasp the symbolism behind it.

<sup>2</sup> See also the “Afterword”.

I wrote this book for a better understanding of the 16 Prophets of the Old Testament. My original intention had been to write a book on the entire Old Testament, but we are so evidently in the end-times that, by the time I got to the Prophets, changes and/or events may have already taken place, making the book lose its relevance.

Every one of us, who loves God and communicates with Him daily through prayer, only needs to wait for divine inspiration. The LORD can communicate with us through words or non-verbally.

Non-verbal communication with the LORD works through divine impulse (motivation, coming from above, to do something) or inhibition (a sense of unease, if we're on the wrong track); it is a "whispering into the heart."

I do not consider myself a person with prophetic abilities. All the work put into this book is just a reproduction of what our honourable Prophets, of whom some even gave their life for the truth or were tortured, have said. This is why, whenever my friends and family asked me about this book, I always tried referring to it as "*the book*", not "*my*" book, because it is courtesy of the Prophets. We owe the Holy Trinity (Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit), the Prophets of the Old Testament and the Apostle John (who wrote the Book of Revelation) our entire knowledge concerning the future.

So listening to my heart, I suddenly felt that it was my duty to write a book about the Prophets and their prophecies before anything else; it was almost like a "command". Writing about the rest of the Old Testament would be optional, as it is now history and, despite being essential for a general understanding of the Bible (I would have never been able to write this book without having a profound knowledge of the Old Testament; besides that, the New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament and Jesus basically taught the Old Testament), its content does not concern the future in a prophetic way – only in a retrospective and moral way.

The order I chose for taking my readers through the Books of the Prophets is not necessarily according to their order in the Old Testament (I didn't pay much attention to this, because the order is not even chronological there), nor is it intentionally chronological. But this is the order I usually read the Prophets in and feel most comfortable with.

You won't feel lost concerning the historical background, because at the beginning of every prophet, you will find a short introduction including the political situation.

### **Historical background**

There is not much to know regarding the historical background of this book. The Books of the sixteen Prophets are all dated after Israel had been split into a Northern and a Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom consisted of ten tribes and was called "Ephraim" (named after the most prominent tribe Ephraim) or "Israel". Its capital was Samaria.

The Southern Kingdom, also known as "Judah" consisted of two tribes – Judah and Benjamin. Its capital was Jerusalem. The king's palace and the temple were here.

The division of Israel took place when the northern tribes opposed the tax-regulations of King Rehoboam (son and successor of King Solomon<sup>3</sup>). The northern tribes separated themselves from the Southern Kingdom (Judah) and made Jeroboam - the leader of their revolt - king over the "Northern Kingdom".

Jeroboam erected idolatrous altars (worship of the Golden Calf), ordained new priests of his own choice and talked the northern tribes into believing that it was

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<sup>3</sup> Kings of Israel before the division: Saul – David – Solomon (David's son).

now completely unnecessary to go to the south (Judah), where the temple was and where the whole land used to gather to worship the LORD.

The Northern and the Southern Kingdom were therefore like two separate countries now. The Northern Kingdom soon became very prosperous due to trade with other countries like Tyre. But their trade was not just limited to goods; they also adopted the culture (foreign gods and lifestyle) of their trading partners, which was detrimental to the development of Jewish society back then, because these countries were engaged in fertility cults and encouraged sexual immorality. Furthermore, increased prosperity corrupted the minds of many; they were becoming greedy for more and would stop at nothing, including murder (like for acquiring someone else's property). The rich were getting richer and the poor were becoming poorer.

The LORD, who is especially sensitive to the plight of the poor, did not like what He was seeing. He sent several prophets to warn the Children of Israel regarding their behaviour and what would happen to them if they carried on, but no one listened. Some of the prophets were even killed because people felt uncomfortable being confronted with their own, reprehensible lifestyle and were under no circumstances willing to change. They also hated "bad news" (i.e. God's warnings) so they hired false prophets to give them peace of mind.

Regarding immoral behaviour, the Northern Kingdom was far more notorious than the Southern Kingdom. Although latter was also slowly becoming like its northern neighbour, there was still hope for it.

The Northern Kingdom was warned by the prophets regarding an invasion by the Assyrians. No one believed it, but then it really occurred. The northern tribes were taken away in chains to Assyria and never came back as a kingdom.

The Assyrians were almost going to attack the Southern Kingdom (Judah) too, but an angel of the LORD literally "decimated" the Assyrian King Sennacherib's army in one night (II Kings 19:35).

But Judah's memory and gratitude towards the LORD were short-lived and they soon returned to their old wicked ways, ending up like Ephraim. Again, the LORD sent several prophets to warn Judah about a new, imminent threat if they didn't turn away from sin: The Babylonian invasion.

They were advised to surrender to the Babylonians, who would eventually come and conquer Judah, because the LORD had a plan for those who would obey Him and do so.

Some of the pious people indeed heeded the LORD's advice and deliberately went with the Babylonians. The majority of the population however, carried on with their sinful lifestyle and refused to go. They were later taken captive by the Babylonians - in chains and with nose-rings – and became their slaves. The Babylonians finally burnt down Jerusalem, and the whole city, including the temple, was destroyed.

70 years later, Babylon was conquered by King Cyrus of Persia and the Jews were allowed to return to Judah and rebuild the temple and the city. Back in Judah, they had to cope with difficulties during the restoration process, such as foreign enemies, lack of morale and financial problems. But somehow, the temple (the Second Temple), the city and its walls were rebuilt.

All in all, the prophets did not only speak of Israel (Ephraim and Judah), but also of the fate of neighbouring countries and everything they said, eventually came to pass. Many readers may want to skip the narratives of these foreign nations, but it is always interesting to know "*why*" God punished them in a way that they had to perish (considering nations today that might be behaving similarly); they give us insight into the LORD's way of thinking, as well as the certainty that when the LORD *says something*, He *does it*.

Special attention should be paid here to the fate of the two former world powers Assyria and (later) Babylon.

## How prophets preach

Prophets see images without any information regarding time, because to God, time is relative. It is less important whether an event would take place in the next 100 or 1000 years, but when the LORD says something, it will happen for sure.

This is why prophets often use the “past-tense” when speaking of future events and move back and forth between the immediate, distant and “end-times”-future. This can be confusing for a beginner reading the Bible, but the more familiar you are with the Bible, the easier it is to make a distinction, reflecting on whether events have already taken place or not.

Sometimes, prophets also preach in “*double-vision*”, i.e. the prophecy is valid for two eras – one event is now already history, the other is yet to come. Examples: The First and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ; or an Antichrist of the past (e.g. Antiochus Epiphanes) and the end-times (whoever that may be). When it is a double-vision, consider translating “*king*” as “*president*” and “*advisors*” or “*elders*” as “*ministers*”.

### Grammar Note:

When describing prophecies in this book, I intentionally used the past tense of the future (i.e. “*would*”), whenever it was certain that the prophesied event has (by now) already come to pass (e.g. the death of Alexander the Great) and the future tense “*will*”, if it is yet to come (e.g. the Second Coming).

Most parts of this book were written in the style of a novel, i.e. in the past tense, with dialogues (true to Scripture).

But the Prophets not only preached in *prose*; sometimes they also used *poetry*. *Poetic* passages are best presented in “*direct speech*”, in the present tense (otherwise the narrative would result in a myriad of “*He said that...*”- repetitions). Therefore, in order to improve the readability of certain chapters involving *direct* (poetic) *messages* of the LORD to His people, it made more sense to narrate these entirely

in the present tense (like a plot summary), so as not to switch between the tenses within a chapter.

In this book, well-known verses are presented in *italic type*.

Remember that in the Bible, “chapters” were only added centuries after the Bible (Bible Scripture consists of many books or rather scrolls) had been compiled. Unfortunately, some of the chapters have not been put in the right order by the scholars, but whenever they are, I would recommend reading continuous chapters as one. This is why I have, in most cases, written the numbers of the chapters in square brackets (i.e. [Chapter xy]) - just for orientation, so that you may find the chapter in your Bible, too.

Also in square brackets, you will find additional text not included in the original text; the words in these brackets are based on logical conclusions resulting from the text itself and were added to improve readability and for a better understanding of the context.

### **What is *idolatry*?**

Idolatry is the worship of a creation instead of paying homage to the Creator. An idol can be a person (dead or alive, e.g. ancient spiritual masters, philosophers, “pop-stars” and others), a statue/image/object, nature (latter is also one of God’s creations), imaginary “gods” or, in a broader sense, the obsession over an interest (e.g. football, internet, etc.). No one should be entitled to call himself a Jew, Christian or Muslim if he worships anyone or anything else but God/The Holy Trinity (for Christians), because he would be breaking what is known to us Christians and Jews as the first commandment:



*“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them...” (Exodus 20:1-5)*

### **What does it mean to “rebel against God”?**

Whenever we come across this phrase, we should remember the story of *Lucifer*, God’s most beautiful angel, who gathered together other rebellious angels and planned a “coup” against the LORD, who was fully aware of this and expelled him and one third of all angels (i.e. all who were involved in this plot) from heaven.

They have ever since been roaming the earth, with Lucifer being the “*Prince of this world*” and they are able to influence weak souls that have fallen away from the LORD (apostates and atheists). So whenever people seem to deliberately oppose the LORD’s commandments and express *pride* in doing so, we can imagine who is really behind it.

Some people even knowingly give themselves to the dark side and serve the devil (Satan=Lucifer), thinking that they could gain power and become influential people (<cf> “*selling your soul to the devil*”).

The *Antichrist* (we will find out at the “end of days” who that will be) will also be a rebel against God, because he (or she?) is a human being controlled by his puppet-master Satan. But many, even Christians, will be deceived by the Antichrist (Satan is the deceiver of the whole world; Revelation 12:9), because he is a “copy-cat”; he will try to appear “Christ-like” in character - spreading love, promoting peace and helping the poor. This is how he will win the hearts of many, to implement the Sa-

tanic agenda, before revealing his true face regarding the saints<sup>4</sup>, who will be persecuted during the second half (the last 3,5 years) of his reign.

The *False Prophet* (a false religious leader) will be the Antichrist's right hand. Beware of false prophets as they mix doctrine with lies! The only way of escaping this snare is to study the Bible properly and stay true to the Word of God.

### **Keeping it honest**

The Bible is an honest book. It speaks of the heroic actions of biblical figures as well as their human shortcomings. No one except for Jesus Christ was and is free from sin (I John 3:5).

For this reason, I decided to cover the Books of the Prophets in their entirety, without skipping any topic.

### **How to read the Bible and how to understand the Prophets better**

The Bible should be read as a whole, from the beginning (Genesis) to the end (Revelation); only then, the right associations and connections within the story can be made. If you don't understand a certain part, don't despair – just keep on reading and soon it will become clear from the context. Sometimes there are also repetitions of accounts which can prove to be helpful.

To understand the Bible, you need to have read it at least once. The first round of reading the Bible will give you a rough idea of the biblical figures and their stories and how to find chapters. The Bible is a book (or rather a collection of books) that, no matter how often you read it, always makes you

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<sup>4</sup> Saints= Christian believers, God's people.

discover something new. It was inspired by God, and as our God is a *living, dynamic* (not a static) God, the Bible and especially the Books of the Prophets move on with time.

Once you have read the Bible from the beginning to the end and want to understand the Prophets better (i.e. what they said regarding the end-times), you need to read the "*Book of Revelation*" once again – I warmly recommend this because the Books of the Prophets and Revelation are closely linked. Furthermore, you could read Matthew 24 and Luke 17 for more detailed information.

I only recommend the *King James Version* (KJV, first published in 1611, Cambridge University Press). If you have difficulties understanding the old-fashioned English, you can selectively search for other, easier translations of *individual verses* and *passages* online (on the internet), but *never* use these as a primary source, because they are often flawed. Not uncommonly, they include the translator's own interpretations, omitting from and/or adding to content. What's dangerous about these translations is that new doctrines that have little to do with the LORD's Word in its original Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek form, have been created and are being taught by preachers who use these Bibles as their basis.

Concerning commentaries, they can be very helpful when it comes to historical background facts.

But I would avoid reading interpretations regarding content, as these are the scholars' personal opinions. The Bible is meant to be an inspirational book through which the LORD speaks directly to the reader. A scholar's view should therefore only be considered for comparison, after you have come to your own conclusion. Even the most famous and learned scholars don't necessarily have to be right with their interpretations. Your mind will show you the truth and give you confidence, so that you will automatically turn away from false interpretations; these will seem "wrong" to you. You may also check whether different scholars independently offer the same interpretation, which increases the chances of it being acceptable.

Eventually, you will even find a preacher or fellow saint who interprets a verse the same way you do. But as long as you are studying the Bible by yourself, reflecting on a verse and trying to *reason*<sup>5</sup> your interpretation of it will lead you to its true meaning.

Please remember to never rely blindly on anyone else's opinion, regardless of whether it is an influential clerical figure or a fellow saint like me.

I have written down my thoughts in this book, only so that you can compare your ideas with mine, but please do read the Bible (KJV) too and let God speak to you, directly.

If you have difficulties picturing visions of the Prophets that are not illustrated in this book, I would recommend searching the internet for images and videos to get a rough idea. Just keep in mind that the images need to comply with the Word of God in your KJV-Bible, otherwise they are not good representations. Nevertheless, with each vision, I tried my best to paint you a picture of the scenes, so that you may be able to imagine them even without an illustration.

I hope these tips were helpful and now we may continue with the Books of the Prophets (Hebrew: "*Nevi'im*").

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<sup>5</sup> Ask yourself: "Why have I come to this conclusion? Does it make sense? Does it comply with other facts and God's Law?"