

BIBLE 101 — Week 13

Truth Tellers, Not Fortune Tellers

Scripture Focus: Amos 5:24 · Zechariah 9:9–10 · Matthew 21:5

KEY VOCABULARY — scan this before you watch

Term	What It Means
Prophecy	Literally means to "speak _____ God's truth" — not primarily fortune-telling
Forthtelling	Prophetic preaching — confronting what's happening in the prophet's own _____: injustice, hypocrisy, idolatry
Foretelling	Revealing _____ events — mostly to show that God is ultimately in control of history
Foreshortening	An art term applied to prophecy — the prophet sees two future "mountain _____" but can't see the vast valley of time between them

I. THE PROBLEM: PROPHECY ≠ FORTUNE-TELLING

When most of us hear "prophecy," we picture someone predicting the _____, decoding symbols, or mapping out end-times charts.

But our modern obsession with predicting the future can make us miss what the prophets were really _____ about.

The core meaning: Prophecy literally means to speak forth God's _____.

If you asked a prophet like Amos or Jeremiah what his job was, he'd say: "I'm here to deliver God's _____ to this generation, right here, right now."

II. FORTHTELLING vs. FORETELLING

	FORTHTELLING (80%)	FORETELLING (20%)
What is it?	Prophetic _____ — confronting the present	Revealing _____ events
Focus	Injustice, hypocritical _____, idolatry	Showing God is in _____ of history
Think of it as ...	Social critics calling people _____ to God	Glimpses of God's ultimate _____

Roughly _____% of what you read in the prophetic books is forthtelling.

The prophets were way more like social _____ than fortune tellers.

III. FORESHORTENING: SEEING THE FUTURE LIKE A MOUNTAIN RANGE

Imagine standing on a hill looking at a distant mountain _____.

The prophet sees two peaks:

- **Peak 1:** The Messiah's _____ (first coming)
- **Peak 2:** His glorious _____ (second coming)

The catch: From the prophet's perspective, they couldn't see the vast _____ between the peaks — centuries of church history.

The two events look like they're right _____ to each other, much closer than they actually are.

IV. SEEING IT IN ACTION: TWO EXAMPLES

Example 1 — Amos: Pure Forthtelling

"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

— Amos 5:24 (ESV)

- Amos was a _____ called to confront the nation of Israel
- Israel was prosperous and powerful but full of _____
- They were going through all the religious _____ but oppressing the poor
- **God's message:** "I don't care about your empty worship — I want _____."
- Not about the future at all — a direct call to change _____

Example 2 — Zechariah: Foretelling with Foreshortening

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! ... Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey."

— Zechariah 9:9 (ESV)

- Zechariah prophesied a triumphant but _____ king riding into Jerusalem on a donkey
- Over _____ years later, Jesus did exactly that — a literal historical fulfillment
- But the rest of the prophecy describes a universal kingdom of _____ — not yet fulfilled

Foreshortening in action: Zechariah saw both peaks — the king's humble _____ and his final peaceful kingdom — but couldn't see the massive valley of time we're still living in between.

⏸ PAUSE & REFLECT

Think about the Amos passage. Is his challenge to Israel — worship without justice is empty — still relevant today? Where do you see the same tension in our world?

V. THREE STEPS FOR READING THE PROPHETS

Step 1: Always start with the original _____. Who was the prophet talking to, and why?

Step 2: Ask: Is this mainly forthtelling (a call to change things _____) or foretelling (a vision of the future)?

Step 3: Look for timeless _____ that still apply: God's passion for justice, His hatred of hypocrisy, His incredible faithfulness.

The big shift:

Prophecy isn't about cracking a secret _____ to figure out the future.

It's about hearing God's timeless call to live _____ right now.

The prophets hold up a _____, forcing us to ask if our own lives are marked by justice and true faithfulness.

The bottom line: When we stop reading the prophets as fortune tellers and start seeing them as _____ tellers, their ancient words become incredibly relevant.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Before this lesson, how did you think of prophecy? How does the 80/20 split between forthtelling and foretelling change your perspective?

2. Pick a prophetic book (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, etc.) and read one chapter this week. Can you identify which parts are forthtelling and which are foretelling?

3. The prophets held up a mirror to their society. If a prophet spoke to our culture today, what injustice or hypocrisy do you think they would confront?
