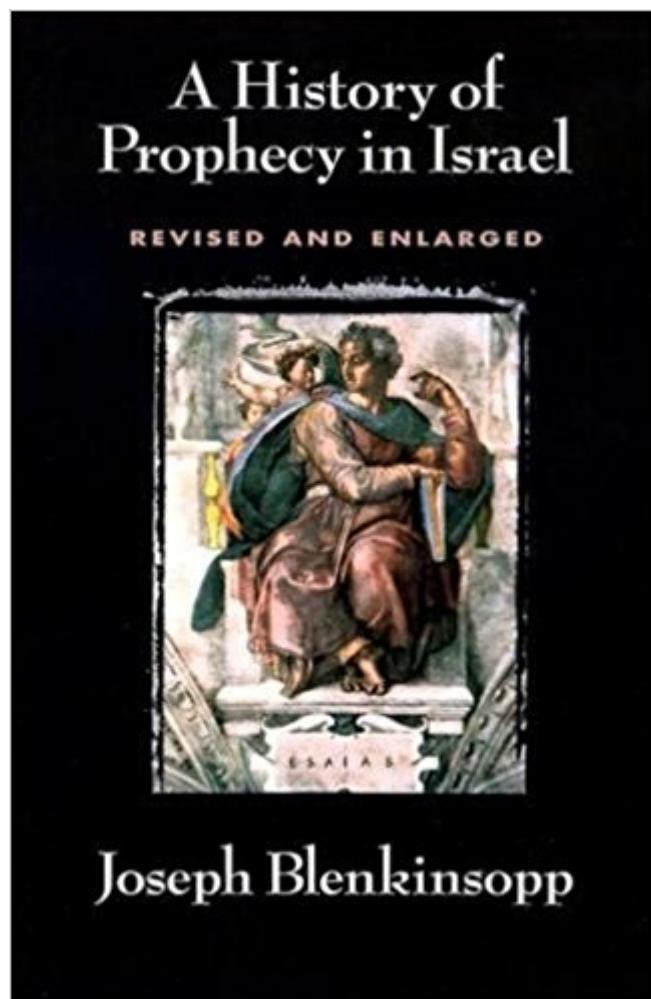


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# A History Of Prophecy In Israel



## **Synopsis**

This revised and enlarged edition of a classic in Old Testament scholarship reflects the most up-to-date research on the prophetic books and offers substantially expanded discussions of important new insight on Isaiah and the other prophets.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Joseph Blenkinsopp is John A. O'Brien Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, Indiana. He is the author of *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel* and coauthor of *Families in Ancient Israel*.

This is an excellent volume. I thoroughly enjoyed the author's presentation. I suspect some will wish it were more "academic:" Professor Blenkinsopp relegates most of the scholarly references to endnotes at the end of the book. I also suspect that some will wish that his argument required a less thoughtful reading of the prophetic and historical books: Professor Blenkinsopp's argument demands a careful, thoughtful reading of the texts to which he prefers. The reward of such a reading is a well-informed history of the prophetic movement.

loved it

Needed the book for class. Was perfectly new. The content is a bit difficult to skim read but is very

enlightening

This book had very good information in it but was difficult to read. Had to reread passages to get understanding.

Blenkinsopp's book is a classical introduction to the prophetic books of the Old Testament. This revised and enlarged edition keeps available an important work on the prophets of the Hebrew Bible. He leans heavily upon source analysis, especially P and D/Dtr, for his understanding of the development of the prophets. For Blenkinsopp critical scholarship is "unanimous" about the late authorship and collection of Deuteronomy, 116. There is less emphasis in the book on the original prophet or logia and more on what is from the Deuteronomic editors. Blenkinsopp still sees the prophets as real historical figures although well hidden by a later developed literature. The location of any unit as from the original prophet is then a product of scholarly argumentation. The first chapter provides a brief summary of the prophet in Israel, including a brief history of criticism, analysis of terminology and the role of the prophet. Discussion is informed by recent developments in social science criticism but little emphasis is given to the ancient Near Eastern data. The book then develops the phenomenon of prophecy with reference to historical developments in Israel. Blenkinsopp, like many modern biblical critics, is skeptical of Israel's history before the monarchy yet he sees hints of a prophetic tradition before the monarchy in narratives about people like Deborah or Miriam. The true beginning, however, is with Samuel and the rise of the monarchy as shaped by the Deuteronomists. The book is quite thorough in covering each prophetic book and provides extensive bibliographies (updated a little from 1983) at the beginning of each unit. The analysis of each book combines a discussion of structural units, shaped by source, genre, and redaction criticism, with significant points of the book's message. Blenkinsopp also develops each work in relationship to the flow of Israel's prophetic movement. Though heavily dependent upon source analysis it is a must for those reading about the Old Testament prophets.

Measured by his own narrow objectives and admitted limitations the book of the author is a success. The entire time span of prophecy is covered in one book and he develops convincing arguments for a tradition of prophecy in Israel. Blenkinsopp does not let us know who the intended audience of his book is. He could not have in mind the time -pressured human of today's high tech world. One cannot find a single chart or graphical overview in his book, maybe a modern scholar of his educational level considers charts and graphical overviews as unworthy of a scholar. The main

method Blenkinsopp uses is the analysis of literary development, or source criticism (=historical). In many aspects Blenkinsopp is influenced by the theology of Bernhard Duhm. Considering that Duhm was a personal friend of Wellhausen and a fellow professor in Goettingen it should not come to the reader as a surprise that source criticism is overemphasized at the cost of a more thematic approach. Like Gerhard von Rad in his preface to Genesis said, "source analysis is not the final conclusion of wisdom" the reader sometimes feels that he could draw the same conclusions as Blenkinsopp, but without all the detailed speculative source analysis. For the conservative Christian who believes in the inspiration, inerrancy or infallibility of scripture Blenkinsopp offers some unacceptable pills to swallow when he states that: biblical sources are confused and self-contradictory (p.199), this narrative appears to be a free composition (1 Kings 13:1-32; p.158), ideological reasons drove the composition of texts (p.151), Chronicles is not the most reliable of sources (p.119), failures of the biblical historian (p.117), and hyperbolic fantasies of Nahum (p.112) etc. However one wonders if the author leaves room for partial inspiration of texts when he talks about Isaiah 53 (p.192&193) In general though supernatural prediction are excluded as a possibility, so that a prediction about the fate of Bethel in Amos automatically leads to the assumption that this section has been added later in the light of Josiah's reform (p.164). The conservative Christian might ask himself what the critical view of the prophetic scriptures offers over a traditional or non-critical. It does not need a critical view of prophecy to identify one's social responsibility. But maybe the book offers solutions of dealing intellectually with prophetic phenomena in the Pentecostal or charismatic movement.

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