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Hoffmeier's "The Prophets of Israel: Walking the ancient paths" (book review)

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Book Review



Hoffmeier, J. K. (2021). *The Prophets of Israel: Walking the ancient paths*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic. 400 pp. \$44.99. ISBN 9780825445729

Noted expert Old Testament scholar and field archaeologist James Hoffmeier presents biblical prophets and their lives in the ancient cultural contexts within this book. Hoffmeier utilized his extensive experience and knowledge so that readers can easily understand the prophets' messages through archaeology and geography. Major and minor prophets are covered in the book, and a few more obscure prophets like Huldah and Macaiah are included.

The bulk of the book covers the Old Testament prophets. Hoffmeier brings the prophets to life by using archaeological and cultural evidence to provide the reader with a better context for understanding the prophets' messages. The book contains high-quality full-color photographs and illustrations directly coming from personal collections. The book starts with a brief list of abbreviations used for reference sources and an introduction that maps out the logical progression in which the prophets are discussed. The book's first chapter begins by defining the term prophet. Then chapters two through seven discuss and cover the Old Testament prophets who left no writings, the eighth-century prophets of Israel and Judah, the seventh and sixth-century prophets of Judah, the prophets of the Babylonian exile, and the prophets of the post-Exilic period. The eighth and final chapter briefly looks at the prophets and prophecy in the New Testament. The book comes with discussion questions at the end of each chapter to facilitate further inquiry. Lastly, the book comes with an extensive bibliography.

Hoffmeier goes above and beyond the usual introductory informational books on the Prophets. He crafts a thorough account and thoughtful application of archaeology, geopolitical and cultural points of view, and includes the role of women prophets and their messages. This readable book could be used effectively for undergraduate students of the Bible, pastors, laypersons, and even Bible study groups. Overall, Hoffmeier has provided carefully researched information, fieldwork, and up-to-date insight into the Old Testament prophets and prophecy.

Reviewer

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