

The final chapter, entitled "Passages," is one of the most meaningful in the book, in this reviewer's estimation. The term "passages" refers to marriage, ordination, serious sickness, death. "These and other crisis points of life are marked by times when the community of faith gathers around individuals to express its love as they pass through various stages" (p. 237). The author proceeds to discuss the wedding, the ordination service, ministry to the sick, Christian burial. These are all services that illustrate the second part of the author's definition of worship—"touching in God's name."

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Wilson, Robert R. *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980. xiii + 322 pp. \$15.95.

The study of the OT with the methods of the social sciences continues to bear fruit. Wilson has now directed these methods to a study of the prophets, clarifying not only the tradition in which the prophets stand, but also the groups that supported or opposed the various views.

The first three chapters are concerned with a review of studies leading up to the present work, an in-depth study of prophecy in modern societies, and prophecy in the ancient Near East. Chaps. 2 and 3 establish the sociological characteristics of prophecy, provide controls for the study, and give us a sociological and comparative window for looking in at prophecy in Israel and in Judah, the subjects of chaps. 4 and 5. The study of the relationship between prophecy and society in Israel has implications for the history of prophecy in Israel, which is the subject matter of chap. 6.

Wilson's goal is to see, on the basis of the anthropological material, how Israelite society was involved in every aspect of prophetic activity. Thus, when we study Israelite prophecy we must look for evidence of various relationships between the prophet and society. Social groups were involved in both creating the prophet and shaping his behavior. Prophetic speech in turn reflects the expectations of the social group which supported the prophet's activity. Together the group and the prophet were located either on the periphery of society or within the central structure of the society, and closely related to their place in society is the question of the location of their prophetic activity. A final point to consider is how peripheral prophecy sought to reform the social order and improve the status of the peripheral group while trying to see, at the same time, how central intermediaries concern themselves with maintaining the social order and regulating the pace of change.

The materials dealing with prophecy in the Torah and the deuteronomic histories are not always clear on all of these questions; nevertheless, we may see these elements in a broad survey of the literature. We are

permitted to hear in various accounts disputes between prophets and prophetic groups over authority. In the Ephraimite literature the story of Miriam's and Aaron's challenge to Moses' authority is one such story, and the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal is another. The picture presented of Jeremiah coming to Jerusalem from Anathoth, prophesying against Jerusalem, being accused of treason, supported by various groups and threatened by others, provides a richer source for sociological studies of prophecy. Ephraimite prophets seem to have functioned centrally prior to the time of the monarchy, but operated on the periphery of society afterward.

Prophecy in the Judean tradition is not as cohesive as prophecy in the Ephraimite tradition. There is less stereotypical behavior and speech. On the other hand, Judean tradition is more fruitful in suggesting the social function of the Judean prophet. Judean prophets, for the most part, functioned within the central structure of society in order to assure orderly change and preserve the tradition. They may have been located in the royal court. Occasional peripheral prophets arose and some, like Isaiah, seem to have oscillated between a central and a peripheral function.

In the post-exilic period, Judean and deuteronomic types of prophecy became mixed, and individual prophets appeared less frequently. Eventually prophecy disappeared, to be replaced by apocalyptic.

Wilson's study has much to recommend it. Not everyone will agree that the methods of the social sciences should be applied to biblical literature, but the results do make the prophets and the social groups which supported and opposed them come alive. Unfortunately, Wilson has not attempted to relate his study to the question of the formation of the Hebrew canon. Because of this, Joseph Blenkinsopp's *Prophecy and Canon* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980) should accompany a serious study of Wilson's material. (Blenkinsopp's study is not mentioned in Wilson's work nor is it included in the bibliography, possibly because it was not yet available at the time of Wilson's writing.) Perhaps it is because of Wilson's all-inclusive approach to the prophetic material that a statement is not made on the relationship between the editing of texts and the formation of the prophetic canon and the tensions between prophetic types and those who held traditions where Moses was central and authoritative. But this question is too important to be omitted in such a work as Wilson's. Wilson's work does, however, provide materials in the form of reasons for the tendency to prophetic anonymity in the late period, for the practice of writing oracles instead of delivering them orally, and for the editing of prophetic books—all of which bear upon the question of the formation of a prophetic canon and the demise of prophecy.

There is certainly a mistake in the second sentence on p. 295, where the word "premonarchical" should read "preexilic."