

**Barkley, Stephen D. *Pentecostal Prophets: Experience in Old Testament Perspective*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2023 Kindle Edition, pp. 172.**

Julia Owiti<sup>1</sup>

The introduction begins with a comprehensive exploration of the prophethood of all believers and the gift of prophecy. The author works at Master's College and Seminary in Canada as the Director of Pastoral Leadership and Campus Pastor. This book is derived from his doctoral dissertation in Practical Theology and is a product of his academic background and real-life work. He is also an Assistant Professor of Bible and Practical Theology and an ordained Pentecostal minister at the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

The book is divided into two sections: methodologies and research procedure. The first section discusses the four lenses used in the book: practical theology, practice-led research, phenomenological perspective, and theological reflection. Practical theology is seen as an intersection where belief, tradition, and practice of the religious faith interact with modern life, engaging in a dialogue that is enriching, critical, and transformative. Practice-led research is described as relatively new and developing but useful for theological studies, using the author's own acquired practice to provide new insights. Phenomenological research is a qualitative research method that aims to understand the essence of several individuals of a certain phenomenon of experience.

The author's geographical focus is Canada, specifically the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador. The second section is a literature review that examines the contributions of different scholars, divided into theoretical and empirical studies. The themes discussed under theoretical studies include intertestamental break and restoration of prophecy, Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and authority of prophecy. Josephus suggests that prophecy existed during Herod's besieging of Jerusalem in 37 BC. Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and both continuity and discontinuity of the Old Testament prophets. of the Spirit from Jesus to the Church (48).

Stronstad presents a parallelism drawn between the transfer of the prophetic from Elijah to Elisha and the transfer of the Spirit from Jesus to the Church (48). Jesus is seen as a prophet empowered by the Spirit. Concerning the authority of prophecy, he notes that

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although the Old Testament prophecies were viewed to have more authority than the New Testament prophecies, both should be evaluated. The theoretical studies emphasize a disconnect between the Old and New Testament prophecy, but empirical studies show a strong connection and similarities.

The third chapter introduces the prophetic experience of Hebrew prophets, specifically Jeremiah. The five textural constituents of phenomenological study used for analyzing Jeremiah's experience are: the prophet recognizes the presence of God, receives the prophetic impulse, discerns the source and recipient of the message, releases the prophetic message, and experiences attendant physical and emotional sensations (68). Jeremiah carried a message of judgment and hope greatly inspired by the Deuteronomists. This message included breaking the Covenant, which resulted in judgment, and the element of God's pathos, which opened room for forgiveness and mercy. Jeremiah's language was deep and expressed a sense of urgency, transcending emotions and egos.

Chapter Four of the book explores the prophetic experience of Pentecostal prophets, focusing on the author's personal experience and the experiences of eight participants who practice Charismatic Prophecy within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. The author emphasizes that not all prophecies are divinely inspired, but sometimes, they are out of personal devotion and have the potential to impact people's lives. Barkley introduces 8 participants who practice Charismatic Prophecy within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and share their experiences with prophecy, shaping his phenomenological study.

Chapter Five focuses on similarities between the Old Testament and modern charismatic prophets. The author notes the importance of recognizing God's presence before a prophetic move in Jeremiah, who simultaneously experienced both the presence and prophetic impulse. The structural components of the prophetic phenomenon include the prophet's mentoring, the prophet's location, and the response to failure.

The author also discusses the differences between the structural setting of contemporary prophets and the Old Testament prophets, such as the organized atmosphere of worship experienced by CP practitioners. Discussions of discernment arise in the era of contemporary prophets compared to the Old Testament prophets, as well as the reverence of the word received and the overwhelming feeling experienced by message carriers.

The last chapter is a dialogue between the Old Testament and contemporary prophets, with the author challenging Pentecostals to view prophecy with a broader perspective. Prophecy is another critical concept of salvation, and Bradley adds his rich experience from years of ministry to broaden one's understanding of the prophetic in Canada and modern-day prophets.

The combination of practice-based research with theology is well executed, providing readers with scholarly and practical insight into what it means to be a prophet. Through evidence from various scholars, the author tactfully weaves the connection between Old and New Testament prophets (including contemporary ones), demonstrating prophetic continuity across different eras.

The book explores God's pathos through the language used to describe the prophetic event and the surrounding emotions. The participants' insights provide a deeper insight into what it means to experience the prophecy.

The author explains his bias towards Pentecostal circles to dispel any assumptions therein. He also addresses any issues that arise from readers who may not necessarily have a Pentecostal background and question the legitimacy of modern-day prophecies. Although the book bears the title of experience from an Old Testament perspective, there is much focus on Jeremiah, who is the critical prophetic figure. Readers need to fully experience the rich perspective that the other prophets would have brought.

In conclusion, the book connects the historical background of a concept to present-day implementation, thereby improving the understanding of the prophetic ministry within the church. It can guide those new to prophecy, especially those who have had a prophetic experience. This scholarly work is suitable for academic research, church leadership, and anyone interested in matters of prophecy.