

"When the Last Prophets Died" – Prophets and Prophecy Among Jews and Christians

"משמתו נביאים האחרונים" – נביאים ונבואה בספרות היהודית והנוצרית

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1) Traditional View(s)

Tosefta, <i>Sotah</i> 13.3 (mid-late 3 rd century CE)	
משמתו נביאים האחרונים חגי זכריה ומלאכי פסקה רוח הקודש מישראל ואע"פ כן היו משמיעין להן על בת קול	When the latter prophets died – Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi – the holy spirit ceased from Israel. Nonetheless, they made them hear through a Heavenly Voice.
1 Maccabees 4.45-46 (late 2 nd century – early 1 st century BCE)	
[45] And they thought it best to tear it down, lest it bring reproach upon them, for the Gentiles had defiled it. So they tore down the altar, [46] and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until there should come a prophet to tell what to do with them (μέχρι τοῦ παραγεννηθῆναι προφήτην τοῦ ἀποκριθῆναι περὶ αὐτῶν).	

2) Josephus and the Masses

Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i> 3.8.3, §353-3 (c. 79 CE)	
[Josephus] was an interpreter of dreams and skilled in divining the meaning of ambiguous utterances of the Deity; a priest himself and of priestly descent, he was not ignorant of the prophecies in the sacred books. At that hour he was inspired to read their meaning, and, recalling the dreadful images of his recent dreams, he offered up a silent prayer to God.	
Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i> 6.5.2, §286	
They owed their destruction to a false prophet, who had on that day proclaimed to the people in the city that God commanded them to go up to the temple court, to receive there the tokens of their deliverance. Numerous <i>prophets</i> , indeed, were at this period suborned by the tyrants to delude the people, by bidding them await help from God...	

3) Damascus Code

Damascus Code 3.12-16 (c. pre-110 BCE)	
אחרי שרירות 12 לבם לעשות איש את רצונו vacat ובמחזיקים במצות אל 13 אשר נותרו מהם הקים אל את בריתו לישראל עד עולם לגלות 14 להם נסתרות אשר תעו במ כל ישראל vacat שבתות קדשו ומועדי 15 כבודו עידות צדקו ודרכי אמתו וחפצי רצונו אשר יעשה 16 האדם וחיה בהם	Blank But with those who remained steadfast in God's precepts, 13 with those who were left from among them, God established his covenant with Israel for ever, revealing to them 14 hidden matters in which all Israel had gone astray: Blank his holy sabbaths and his 15 glorious feasts, his just stipulations and his truthful paths, and the wishes of his will which 16 man must do in order to live by them.

4) Contemporary Prophecy

Revelation 1.1-3 (late 1 st – early 2 nd century CE)	
1The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. 3Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.	

Ascension of Isaiah 1.10, 3.21-27 (late 1st – early 2nd century CE)

10. They were all clothed with garments of hair, and they were all prophets. And they had nothing with them but were naked, and they all lamented with a great lamentation because of the going astray of Israel.

21. And afterwards, on the eve of His approach, His disciples will forsake the teachings of the Twelve Apostles, and their faith, and their love and their purity.

22. And there will be much contention on the eve of [His advent and] His approach.

23. And in those days many will love office, though devoid of wisdom.

24. And there will be many lawless elders, and shepherds dealing wrongly by their own sheep, and they will ravage (them) owing to their not having holy shepherds.

25. And many will change the honour of the garments of the saints for the garments of the covetous, and there will be much respect of persons in those days and lovers of the honour of this world.

26. And there will be much slander and vainglory at the approach of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit will withdraw from many.

27. And there will not be in those days many prophets, nor those who speak trustworthy words, save one here and there in divers places

5) On Certainty

R. Aharon Lichtenstein, *On the Murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin*, November 13th, 1995

There are several points I would suggest as worthy of reflection. First: the self-confidence that arises from commitment and devotion to a world of values and eternal truths - whether in terms of Torat Yisrael or Eretz Yisrael - sometimes has led to frightening levels of self-certainty and ultimately to arrogance. This arrogance has sometimes led us to act without sufficient responsibility towards other people, and at times even without responsibility to other values. "We are good, we have values, and they are worthless" - this attitude has seeped deeper and deeper into our consciousness.