into nglish is "sated" to be sated to have enough not to be simply to be satisfied plus nd think that's an important point o od really wants people—when you look at the biblical images like the... in the ook of evelation—it's abundant verything is more than you want than you actually need should say o that's another point that needs to be stated. This is... od does not want people to live austere lives unless they choose it for for good reasons but for everyone to have plenty

God's interest in the world unleashes a drama.

nd the last point think is to me the most significant what ohlink calls "od's interest in the world unleashes a drama" nd this is think one of the main points that prize because it helps us get around what has been a critique of liberation theology that it leads to social unrest because the poor rise up against the wealthy. This is now again a caricature but when the poor become wealthy there will be a new... there'll be something new in the future—t's going to be the same kind of inequities in society—ut what ohlink is saying is that when we say in the prayer "Thy will be done" we are really asking that a drama begin that od—actually right now dealing with material things—begins to redress the imbalance in the world where there is a large number of people who have no food at all. We can see them in our own country in this country and then in other parts of the world where obviously the people who are hungry and the people who have no housing and the people who have such burdens on them—especially women and children—that it's very moving

o he says that what happens why is od on the side of the poor says ohfink nd the reason he says is because the poor are the people whose own salvation has not yet happened od doesn't hate the rich The rich may... The poor are no more lovable than the rich suppose or they're equally lovable Then some poor people are very hard to love ome rich are charming and delightful to be with t's nothing... That's not what the issue is The issue is why is God to be found among the poor, with the poor and that is because they have not yet experienced salvation in that sense of which spoke omething that is happening today something that involves the real world their material life their social life their...the fact that they have enough food and adequate housing something that brings joy into their lives whole families governments that work for the people and societies that really are functional That hasn't happened yet for these people and that's why odwho is interested in the flourishing of the human race not simply with the existence—but that the human race not only exist but live in joy and some security and so on nd that's why od is on the side of the poor nd think that's... ooking at it that way really gets rid of a con...view of society in which there's always going to be poor who are moving against the rich and so on That's... That's one of the things that think ohfink has helped us overcome and keep. We want to keep the basic elements of liberation theology but we don't want to allow it to become used politically for one gain or o wanted to put... wanted to put that forward The... Yeah that's one of the main points that ohfink makes and think it's a good one t's a good thing to keep in mind

just wanted to say something further about ohfink's book and this is...and 'm not going to go through the whole thing You can read it yourself and have the summary there ut he... ne of the points that offink makes is to show that the origin of srael is depicted in the book of xodus. The book of xodus is the central—in a certain sense—the central book of the ible as far as srael is concerned because that's the story of its origin We'll talk about origins in a bit but just wanted to say that's when it began o it's very important to see how the book of xodus runs t runs this way t shows a people who had really forgotten their heritage. They don't remember really very vividly with any kind of actualization where they came from the fact that their od has been with nd so they're pretty much run out of gas and they're pretty dispirited o when...when oses...when od calls oses to lead the people out oses could have done a couple of things as e could have opened a kind of gigantic Vincent de aul ociety that brought food and ohfink says clothing to the people ut instead what od did was to take them out of that place and to bring them into another place nd ohfink makes the... gives us the very useful phrase to "make them

into a contrast society " n other words od didn't simply alleviate their here and now needs but brought them out of the place where they were by defeating haraoh o there was a... they were liberated from haraoh's tyranny haraoh had become a virtual god nd that is only one step however. The liberation is only one step

The further step is they have to be formed into a new people —nd that's when you go to —inai and you find that they're given a leader —oses —They're given a land—that is a ticket to the land—so to speak—the proleptic —inai stands for an a —They're given a temple—a place where—od dwells —They're given a—od—and they're given a set of laws and traditions —This is what you need to be a people—o—od's way—the—ord's way of rescuing—srael is to make them—into a contrast people —They're going to be different—They're deliberately different—We like to be like everybody—else—teast—suppose—all of us go through this point in adolescence—where we really want to be like—everybody—else—you don't want to stand out—ut in this case—they're deliberately made to be—different so that they will stand out in relief—They will be visible and people can look at them and get some idea of what it means—what—od's love and fidelity and loyalty mean—how it affects human—flourishing and how it affects people—o—that's another... another point that—think—ohfink makes that would like to highlight because—think it's a—again—it's...—e's not the first to make it in some ways but he has brought it together in a way that does make sense to us

Justice in the Bible

ut just wanted to say a few further items about justice that we find in the ible These are not exhaustive but they are significant

The will of the lawgiver is important.

The first thing is that the will of the lawgiver is very important think we tend to... as dean 'm kind of learning how to exert exercise authority 'm not... 'm not by nature a master of the universe and the reason have this job is because was... thought that the move to ambridge was very very good thought this was a great thing [voice from the audience] and the move from ambridge too to righton and becoming a part of etc thought there were more resources o ather eahy [the president of oston ollege] said "Well since you're so enthusiastic why don't you run it " o that's why 'm here not... not because applied for it ut ... ne of the issues when you're in this thing new is you have to when you make a change or when you do something you really want to have backing and explain to people by what authority you do this because they don't like you to do it on your own authority They don't like you to say " o it because say so " od can do it but not me

ut in the ible that...that need to show how reasonable something is that's why you should do it, you know we agreed to it, it'll help you, it'll make you a better person, therefore you should do it That isn't really there in the lible the...the authority of the lawgiver—and this is not only true in the ible it's true in that culture—the authority of the lawgiver is very important "the ord have spoken You shall be holy because am holy " That's very elliptical oit...it really rests in the lawgiver We would tend to say "Well there's a law code here and according to the law of the state of assachusetts you can't go miles an hour in a mile an hour zone ut in the ible the authority of the lawgiver is the authority od doesn't say there's a... "ccording to the statute it's..." od says "You shall do it because 'm there" o there's a very very prominent presence of the person in the authority of the lible t needs to be... it's a cultural issue that we need to accept but in connecting to a personal will o religiously it can have advantages. You're not doing it because it's reasonable or because you'll be a better person You're doing it because od has said this and you are related to od o that's an important point like to... ne friend of mine who has been teaching

this stuff for many years he said "Therefore in our culture it means it's a conclusion from priests with reasoning" n the... ancient world the term for "therefore" basically means it's a statement of will "am the ord therefore..." That's... that's a strange statement if you think about it ut if you think about it a little bit more you can see what's going on there t's very strongly the presence of the lawgiver in the law

Justice is relational.

nother point is well it's... this is the second point here that 've got is is very... very much related to that and that is that the justice of the ible is relational ow a thing act person relates to a stand of justice. That would probably be... We would probably agree to that too. This is legal if it agrees with the laws of the state of assachusetts or something. That's true in the ible but in the... but in the ible there is no order or fate beyond od to which things should conform in other words it conforms to what od wants o it's very... it's very very authoritarian in one sense not negatively necessarily but it's very authoritarian.

Law codes are statements of God's will.

couple of other things that think are just interesting not necessarily particularly of importance in preaching with them. There were the... You probably know there are many ancient law codes the famous being the aw ode of ammurabi from the the triangle in the ouvre—a beautiful thing. The king is there with the sun over him and he's taking... he's the guy that enforces the law ut those law codes are really not like modern law codes like the law code of assachusetts and the apoleonic law code. What they are is basically out there to be read and taken as od's statement and od's will and they are posted in a... kind of ancient move so that ordinary people who look—and can't read of course but they look—and see this beautiful statement. That's what od wants to happen in the world o it's a kind of an inter... it's another way of saying what 've been saying these these ancient law codes.

A judgment is more an intervention than a pronouncement.

nother point which think is very significant and that... and 'II talk about it more but 'II just say it now as a kind of general principle in the... in our world justice is usually a decision that a judge makes after hearing the arguments presented by both sides the plaintiff and the defendant of the... and in the... in the lawns in front of many merican small towns there is the statue of the oman goddess usticia ustice and she has the scales of justice and there's two pans and she's blindfolded because she is trying to hear the argument and not be influenced by the people who present it of it's supposed to be dispassionate it's supposed to be equal ut in the ible that is not how justice works of it's rather surprising to modern Western people that this isn't really the ideal

n the ible justice or a judgment is... is usually an intervention by od on behalf of the aggrieved party ee how that different... how different that is from a... modern judge modern judge is supposed to be impartial and then if a judge says "kay award you this this money" a court officer will make sure that that money is paid to the plaintiff ut in the ible od is both the judge and the intervener e intervenes so that if... a poor widow cries out to od that her savings have been taken by some heartless tyrant she hopes that od will directly intervene punish publicly the person who wronged her and uphold her publicly so that people will know that her... that she was in the right and that he the persecutor of her was in the wrong n other words you want the world to know you are in the right and that your enemy is in the wrong and you want od to do it now no so when people talk about the od of vengeance and so on it doesn't really mean... it doesn't mean revenge in the modern sense t means a od who will in fact act for me now o justice therefore judgment is more an intervention than it is a pronouncement not we'll talk about that a little bit

later but think it's a...it's a real difference between the way the ible conceives judgment and the way we in our modern legal system conceive judgment

The role of law in the Bible

nother point again this is more of a random point but it's worth noting. What is the role of law in ne of the things that think most modern people have—and there's a strain think in a kind of ugust... ugustinian tradition and it's it's certainly true in a utheran interpretation of that—is that law really does not belong in the ible because it doesn't belong in the world of human relationships What you really need to do is to be spontaneous and free before od and then relate to od without the need of laws and so on When we speak of legalism and we speak of ... that's a ut in the ible there wasn't that bias that laws were meant to regularize relationships and people did not feel that putting developing a contract between two peoplewhether they be equals or whether they be od and the people—really spoiled the spontaneity and the love They did not feel that... o the...law really is right ingrained in the entateuch The entateuch ews call the entateuch the Torah and Torah can be...it's usually translated by hristians as "law" ut ewish scholars prefer to translate it as "teaching" because they...know the hristian accusation of legalism against udaism and they don't... want to play into it o they want to see it as teaching nd think it's important to see that the ible does not see any contradiction between the ecalogue and the legal codes and a loving spontaneous relationship to the ord They don't see it that way o we we tend to maybe have a little hang up there at least many many moderns do

ow what is the ecalogue for example the Ten ommandments any most of the Ten ommandments can be duplicated in other parts of the ible They're not original really The... coveting is perhaps original The coveting the neighbor's... The plotting to take the neighbor's wife rather than doing it just trying to do it That's a little original ut the rest-worshiping the ord alone—that's... standard throughout the ible What's different about it it's a... catalog of ten laws Ten ommandments rather—some in negative some in positive mostly in negative forms—that define the people of that and you're in on't do those and you're out. That's how you get in That's how you are a member This is the ... This is the club's rules so to speak to put it kind of crudely nd if you don't do it you're out You're just not there f you worship another god forget it You're not...a member of the people f you dishonor and disrespect your parents in a very aggressive way you're not in f you commit adultery you're out that sort of thing a kind of defining You say yes to it t's the only words that od spoke directly to srael at inai The rest of the words he spoke through oses but the Ten ommandments were given without intervention without mediation. They were given directly to the people, and they had to say yes, how could you say no suppose ut that makes you an sraelite o..there you could see then the law is there

kay finally the last point 'm going to make is is that the king had a role in implementing the law The king was kind of the patron You know od... the king represents to the people od's presence and he was the lieutenant so to speak You know od is not visible. You can't go into od's room and have a cigar and talk talk it out ow the king represents the ord to the people and therefore he's "the son" and the od is the father. That's father son language in the ew Testament uch of it comes from this this language of kingship and so on and so the king is responsible for the implementation of that and at times social justice could mean social policy almost of those are some general considerations about justice.

The Origins of Justice

o what 'd like to do now is to talk about justice in the context of the divine governance of the world mentioned before that wanted to talk about justice not only in social justice but justice in general as od's design for the world od's...intent for the world what od really wants the world... what od really wants to happen in the world That... his will be done and overcome human resistance and entrenched evil o 'm going to talk about it in... in that way nd when... o what 'd like to do is to take three foundation moments in the ible three moments... in which od founds or establishes or creates a reality because in... those instances the divine intent is going to be very visible

You've got to look at at a world that is pre arwin right. We think in a world in a post arwinian world things begin very simple ardly...you can hardly recognize them from what they... nd then they develop and become more complex and richer and they go as... when we experience them They're very very complex and we try to understand their complexity ut in the biblical world... it was pre arwin remember by a long shot nd so what in the ible and in comparable literatures of the time the moment of origin was extremely important. Why ecause it was that ... at that point people felt the impress of od was the clearest othing had yet happened o when od makes the man when he makes human beings ... When is that most clear t the very moment of of the o if you want to understand what marriage is you don't look at... you don't do a statistical survey of married couples or a psychological profile on them You go back to the first time when was the first time The man and the woman in the arden nd so you look at that and you look at the first time to see both the one the glories of marriage but also to see why it is that so many married couples seem to have problems

nd so also with language Why is it that people speak many languages Well you don't do a survey of languages by going around the world You...look more or less at the enesis and that gives you an insight about about language Why is it that people speak different languages and so on o you go back to origins Well if that's true if the thing is given whole and entire what od makes it then it might be worthwhile to go to three founding moments three key founding moments...portrayed in the ible and then to work to look at them for some clues to what justice means To know the origin of something is to know its essence and so tell people if you want to know the essence of something in the ible you go to its origin

o just took three founding moments in the ible as opportunities to understand what...justice means nd just look... nd the first founding moment is going to be the foundation of the entire world the world that we know the world that we human beings inhabit t's different from the world of heaven it's where the angels serve od in pure spirit and without disobedience ut we are more complicated o that period then the founding moment of srael the xodus nd then the founding moment the work of esus is a new xodus o want to just say a few words about each one of them

Genesis 1 and 2

When we look at enesis and we notice that there are two stories of origins ne is of course the famous seven day creation in enesis and the second one is a long creation story the creation flood story that goes from enesis to enesis basically think that's the way most people would see that today nd we see... a couple of things that are... that help us understand od's intent therefore od's justice how od wants this world to work nd one of the things we see here is especially pre flood we see... irst of all we see human beings endowed with freedom and od will never interfere with that ut we see also human beings inclined to evil nd when they sin od immediately shows up ow that's the pre flood period because that doesn't happen any more today r else would have... od would have shown up with the... house when the bad housing loans were

first starting to be made ut... in the pre flood world which is different from our world think the flood marks the difference ut in those days you could talk to od and so on t was... a different world a little more childlike in some ways ut we also find that od is... comes immediately on the scene when people are disobedient as in the man and the woman. They weren't satisfied with their status as material beings who are supposed to be... work in the arden and enjoy the arden but also to to be obedient to od's instructions od shows up when ain kills belend od shows up earlier though when ain was angry that his sacrifice was not accepted od comes and explains to him why not basically the reason seems to me to be because 'm od and don't... didn't want to accept your sacrifice not ain does not like that and what happens is ain's anger is directed—not to od which it probably should be—but to his brother not then when he kills his brother od shows up and tells him it's going to be redressed is deeds will be punished

n the flood generation there's a decline in morals and by the time of enesis the world is in a chaotic state and od decides to end the experiment t's... a mess and think that we have to realize how radical that statement is when od says "'m sorry made man". That is a stunning statement t's... shocking don't think most people could really handle that because it means that od didn't know what was going to happen because he did not want to interfere with human freedom ut at any rate od then sees one man who is just—oah—and one man is enough. The sight of one just person is enough to persuade od to try it again nd so the flood comes the evil is wiped out and then it started again this time with singling out a particular people rather than trying to do it all at once of the justice there is pretty clear and its punishment done immediately in the post flood generation though the punishment will be done not immediately but in a hidden way and somehow srael is going to have a role in implementing justice

ne of the other points that think is We see a lot about how the world is going to work because this is when the design is clear and everybody's clear about it is the is od's generosity "efertile and multiply" which means that I want you to exercise your procreative powers so that... there will always be people in the world. That's a a sign of od... is that he invites people to enter into the rhythms of the life giving rhythms of the universe and the second thing is "ill the earth and subdue it" which means it really relates to land because... if you didn't have land you couldn't live. There was no refrigeration no truck farms that because if you don't have land you can't live. When od says... "ill the earth and have land it means that he's giving it to each person each people ach group has a land to means that od wants that... people to have its land and to keep it and to draw food from it ater on when... nd so that's really constitutive. You're defined by these two huge imperatives procreate and continue in existence.

o in other words od wants people to live and you notice the corporate familial side of it t's not individuals but it's the family nd the other one is to live nd when we come to later on into srael you'll see a lot of fights between the king and the peasants. The king is going to take the land away from them and the peasants know in their hearts that this isn't the way it should be t should be every family should have the land and draw from it the land the food they need to live o..that gives us a glimpse..of od's of justice t shows od just and redressing but it also shows us a od who is going to—especially in the post flood generation the post flood world is our world that's the world of our experience the pre flood world is is different—that od will be working to effect that to bring it about o again...justice is a process

Israel: Exodus

The second founding moment is the book of xodus where od addresses the evil in a new way nd mention this with regard to orbert ohlink's book that he [od] removes the slaves and he takes them out of the gyptian system and he creates a society having all the usual institutions of a nation That is as mentioned before od they have their own od now they have their leader they have

their land and they have their laws and traditions Ind they are a contrast society In the ut before they can be so od insists that they assent to it that they agree to it nd so if you look at xodus oses runs up and down the mountain think three times if not four times to make sure that everyone is on board and that the people can say yes e's concerned that the people might not fully understand the implications of being od's people o poor oses is getting... his exercise by running running up and down the mountain between od and the people nd when they...do agree od says to them "You have seen what did to the gyptians how bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself ow therefore if you obey my voice and keep my commandment you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples The whole earth is mine to be sure but you will be special to me my priestly kingdom and a holy nation" o od forms their society and srael that is shaped by the just od will show the nations od's generosity and power o the holy nation the holy people here has a role in mediating od's justice emember...it was when od saw oah that he realized that one individual could or one family could affect the whole world therwise would have wiped out the nation t was oah's... t was the sight of oah that made od think again and devise the plan to use a single [person] o that's another moment the xodus. The people here are really given a role to show forth to the world what who od is and they are given a role in implementing od's justice

nd one of the points that later will come out in the prophets when they speak to the people is the people are supposed themselves to be a just society and that when they are not just to each other then it destroys their visibility and their credibility and that's an important point. There's this... orientation to the nations that is part of srael's... srael is a you could say contrast society to be sure but it's also a society with an inbuilt orientation to the *goyim* to the nations ews tend to read must say ews tend to sometimes read the ible to read the story as if srael was just srael ut if you read enesis and especially saiah and other texts you also have the impression that srael is always a relational nation. It's got a role to the... nations and it's... kind of... a clearer statement of what od asks of the human race

The Work of Jesus as the New Creation, the New Exodus

ow the...third founding moment is—and can do this quickly—is the work of esus in the ew Testament which think is a new xodus and the creating of a new srael. This is sometimes overlooked by scholars who think downplay the xodus motifs in the ew Testament ut it is really a founding moment not as if srael the old srael is not replaced od is never... od is faithful to covenants made and the agreement was you are my people and you will always be my people of that's been made clear by ohn aule and many others—you know the covenant never revoked of it isn't replacing and displacing the is really... moment has come when the people are to be renewed and the renewal will take place in the same event by which the people were made in the first place by an xodus.

o esus comes as a new oses which he is portrayed especially clearly in the ospel of atthew as the new oses nd what does he do e chooses twelve Well obviously that is... the Twelve Tribes These... You've got to begin a new people with twelve o they're the twelve individuals who then later will become the foundations of the... people e feeds the people in the wilderness. This is pretty obviously... mean in the ible it tends to be a little indirect. They don't say "am now citing xodus." They just say "o it" o he feeds the people in the wilderness e gives the law authoritatively e teaches authoritatively not like the scribes and harisees which most people would take—most ew Testament scholars would take—as he does not cite rabbis as most rabbis would do. They'd say "s abbi osé said "etc. ut esus says "You have heard it said but say..." o again... the lawgiver comes right up there with the person e explicitly in the... ast upper associates his the shedding of his blood with the shedding of the blood in xodus nd this is a... meal as the meal in xodus was that seals the covenant t's a group of people who get together

make an agreement and ratify their agreement by sharing a meal ond so that takes place at the... ast upper o it's a...new covenant that's predicted by eremiah according to the... ew Testament

nd he also speaks about the kingdom of od e speaks about it in fact...that's the main theme "The kingdom of od is at hand" What esus there is speaking of is he's speaking of the reign of od the governing of od nd that would everyone would agree...that's the theme of the ld Testament That's the theme of the ebrew criptures ut what esus does is add something new he is at hand n other words there's a new phase in that history that has come to be The new phase is me embody that and this is a... am representative of the justice and the design and the plan that you have seen spoken of in the ld Testament or in your criptures they would call them briously they wouldn't have the ld Testament at that time nd so on o think that by looking at it that way three founding moments in which what is meant by justice becomes visible might be a way of looking at it

The Prophets

What would like to do now first of all is give a kind of overview of the prophets and a way of understanding them together ow obviously in the... atholic in the hristian ible there are four major prophets— saiah eremiah zekiel and aniel—and twelve minor prophets. The minor prophets are called minor prophets because their books are short not because they were unimportant as someone says—ut in the ewish canon—aniel is not considered to be a prophet he's considered to be a part of the later—criptures—ut we're not going to talk about—aniel so it really doesn't matter that much—ut how... s there a way of understanding the prophets—nd it seems to me—here's the way—do it and—think it's simple and it also clarifies what they're doing

A Crisis in Israel: 750 BC - 500 BC

uring... There was a huge crisis in srael that lasted from to revious to that time srael had a... relatively coherent understanding of itself and that basically was we were slaves in Egypt to Pharaoh and now we are slaves or servants to Yahweh in Cana, so that we went from there to here. And now what does God ask? God asks us to be faithful, to be loyal, and so on. ut about the middle of the the entury there appear on the scene two or three prophets who say that srael is going to be destroyed and the chief one who says that is mos "The end has come" says mos "and you've got to take that seriously "These...There's mos first then there's osea in the north the only northern prophet that we have the rest all preach in the south and then there's... icah and then there's irst saiah and they all agreed that the end has come

ow what does that mean Well if you look at what they're talking about it means that they are indicting srael for failing to live up to its call as od's holy people who worship Yahweh alone who worship the ord alone and because you have oppressed your neighbor..." In other words there's a vertical dimension and a horizontal dimension. The horizontal is you have oppressed your..neighbor. There are widows and there are orphans. There are people who have lost their land. Wealthy landowners have... taken their land etc. Individually not anyou have... you are worshipping gods other than the ord. What they're saying is therefore what is going to happen therefore is "The blessings that you have received because you were the ord's special people that would be very very practical ones—protection from enemies fertility of the land a flourishing of your social life all of those things are going to be finished because od... you have turned your back on od and you cannot receive the blessings that od is giving you because you've turned your back on him." In other words you can't get a present you can't get a gift if the person... if you turned your back on the gift giver. There's no way you can if your hands are not stretched out

The Crisis of Divine Wrath and Divine Process

ow the prophets see because they see od in highly personal terms they interpret it as divine wrath They interpret it as God is really angry because God has given you of God's very self You said, no. You dismissed Him. Therefore, God's anger is there. o they...raised the emotional stakes pretty high You could do it impersonally but that's not the way the ible runs od is personal and so has a personal relationship with the people o what the prophets then begin to do is there is a nd and let me just step back well just let me talk about the process sthe...prophets see it and especially as srael saw it later when they edited the...prophetic books because the books we have of the prophets are not verbatim reports. They are books, they are biblical books that have been edited in the light of the whole process kay What... f you step back and look at the process you can see something like this The first prophets particularly mos and osea indict snael for breach of covenant and they also say that... mos says "'m not sure that od is going to do anything 'm not sure that you have any continuity left " ut think what mos is really saying mos is really using hyperbole to tell them the end has come ut then he says " ut you can still repent " There's always the sense that od will change if you change o the... th century prophets are partly concerned are largely concerned with announcing the destruction in other words to a people who just don't get it nd that's even irst saiah—they don't get it

Then as time goes on what happens. You begin to have the ssyrian invasion of the... foreign policy dissolves it used to be that snael was able to defend itself against the other the century enemies of the invariance ramean city states in the the... the century they meet the superpowers it is like inland versus in the earlier period. There's no way in which snael could stand up to so massive a power as ssyria of at this point it's being empirically clear that they're going down the tubes. There's also increasing social injustice. Whenever a people has social pressures on it from the outside things begin to fall apart inside. You know... king follows king dynasties change that's a sign of ill health.

y the time of the the century... when eremiah comes on the scene the... enemy has changed from ssyria to abylon but the same problem They... srael is trying to defend itself against a power it cannot really defend itself against and so by in the... abylonians invade the city. They destroy the They exile the king and the royal family and the city is destroyed and we enter the period of the exile ut that's not the end and that's

Then with... zekiel begins to show... what happens after the nadir what happens when things hit rock bottom Well zekiel says "There's still hope... because od... will remain faithful to the covenant t's not because of you it's because of od's fidelity " nd then in econd saiah saiah we begin to have prophecy go into the latter part of the "th century nd so at the end of... econd saiah says " od had changed and turned" and now the message is " omfort ye comfort ye my people because you've paid your price and now 'm going to bring you back and restore you as of old"

The Prophets Interpret the Process

o if you look from just step back a bit What do you see You see a people who were smug and who thought that life would go on forever just the way it was You have prophets saying "h that's not possible t's interrupted od is going to punish you and you must accept this phase of punishment f you do od will protect you "n other words see the punishment as an opportunity but the people didn't quite do it that way o they had to go through the ssyrians and then they had to go through the abylonians and they had to reach rock bottom which was the destruction of the whole world mean the promises—you consider how shattering that thing is—od's promise that will always deliver you etc it's all gone it's a total bankruptcy. Your whole

tradition is is absurd nd that's what they had to go through as well as the physical destruction and the deaths and all that sort of thing

o if you...just step back as think the final editors of the prophets do they see this as a situation in which srael dies that is srael as it was t dies and it comes to life again Why faithful o all of the books that we have—with the exception of one—all of the books the prophetic books that we have even onah which is a work of fiction but it basically deals with the exilic obody regards... onah is a work of...profound...but it's not a...historical report but the other prophets are Il of them deal with one phase or other of that huge process that just icah for example deals with the beginning phase e's a contemporary of irst saiah maybe osea was a little after mos They all deal with mos is the first of the prophets about the beginning of the process nd then in eremiah he's dealing with a little bit more complexity but it's still the people aren't doing what they should be doing nd zekiel is one of those people that talks about the destruction but also talks about the beginning of a renewal nd then the latter part... of saiah talks about the renewal and then the restoration chapters

ut there's one biblical book there's one biblical prophet that deals with the whole process not the beginning or the middle or the end o you know what that book that prophetic book is that deals with the whole process t's saiah irst saiah... The dates of irst saiah are something like or something like that to about and a little beyond and he is talking about the initial phase The ssyrians are at the gates What do you do o he's talking you can still convert but it doesn't look too good right now for you because of the way you're acting ut... some writer who wrote saiah -maybe there's more than one writer but let's just say one writer-picks it up in about dates back to think the end of the "th century—the" econd saiah" and then maybe the "Third saiah" too ut it makes the...book really the only book that deals with the beginning the middle and the end nd that's why saiah is so revered in hristian circles it's the most quoted prophet in nd when ugustine...he tells us in the... Confessions that when he was just the ew Testament beginning to be a hristian he went to t mbrose and t mbrose said "h you don't want to read the ospels ead the book of saiah That's the... biggest ospel of them all " nd saiah ugustine tells us that he... started to read saiah and he didn't understand what mbrose was talking about o... you've got to have a little help

Prophets as Commentators on God's Work

o..if you look at it in another way just look at another way of this thing not only see it as a process but see...the prophets as commenting on od's work that began about and ended about you look at it this way there was a process a continuous divine process that first of all announced unmasked the sin t...unmasked the evil situation that srael wasn't aware of II the while though it invited participation and it invited conversion nd...that process used...This is right out [of] saiah chapter and it's also the view of eremiah od used the ssyrian mpire and then od used the abylonian mpire to work his purification of srael nd then according to saiah used the ersian king yrus in the same way but this time not to punish but to bring the people back n other words this is basically saiah's theology and it's picked up and accepted by the other prophets but particularly by eremiah and by the econd saiah They saw this... whole process as an actual process as... od working in history to punish the wrongdoers but also to always offer the opportunity to repent and convert until the process was finished in the destruction of the city of erusalem and also the and the destruction of the traditions really nd then once that had come to kind of zero then od continued the process to rebuild and restore

o what the prophets are doing is monitoring the situation nother words they're interpreting what seems to be random violence—the ssyrians the violence of sraelite to sraelite the social

dislocation that comes when you're really ravaged from outside—ust think of what happens to people in wartime when the whole thing collapses—They're monitoring the situation and they're interpreting it all the while as divinely intended—nd they are helping people respond to each phase as it went along

o..that's what see the prophets as doing t's...really a variety of authors who comment upon and interpret for the people that are hearing them or reading them what is going on in the world what is going on in the world is...the word the word that like the best for it is called rectification Why do say rectification ecause think it's a word that we don't use very much and therefore it can be sort of reserved for this ut what od is doing is rectifying the situation irst you have the situation of complete unawareness but massive social injustice omehow od has to enter into history and rectify that nd how can od do it od has to use human beings zapping and supernatural means that... are not human they're not social o od uses human beings such as the ssyrian mpire such as social dislocation in order to rectify the situation but it takes a long time to rectify the situation because people are so obtuse and so resistant to the prophetic prophets Indisonal see it... ut when finally we hit rock bottom with the destruction of the Temple and of the city and the... exiling of the avidic king and the wrecking of the traditions that's when od turns...for that process of rectification now means restoration return encouragement and healing

The Importance of the Prophets for the New Testament

ow you can see why the prophets therefore are so significant for the ew Testament ecause what do you have in the ew Testament You have something similar You have a a message of od a messenger of od who undergoes destruction and what happens to him seems to negate the validity of what he has done e dies the death of a criminal and in that culture that means you... didn't have it after all you were wrong from the beginning o it helps the... community the hristian community to understand that... this is a way of interpreting death not as the end but as a prelude to life and so the prophets can... they help people understand that od can bring life from death

Jesus: The Eschatological Prophet

ow one of the things that think is... one of the issues as you know who is Jesus is a big question here verybody... in the world has given his own answer "he's a wisdom teacher... he just wanted to make people a little wiser than they were "e's been kind of the college professor without... the pipe ther people say "o e was an eschatological he was saying the end of the world is coming and he was mistaken "nd then... "We should just forget about him because he thought the end of the world was going to come" o everybody everybody has an opinion

ut T Wright and he's joined by a lot of atholic scholars and a lot of mainstream rotestant scholars who would say that one important perhaps the most important way of interpreting esus—and that's why ... gave you this and recommend it to you to look at—is to interpret him as an eschatological prophet nother words to interpret him... by word and deed interpreting what od is doing now in srael nd that's basically what the prophets were otice the prophets didn't only talk they acted zekiel is a good example zekiel wanted to show the people that the city that they had such confidence in would soon be destroyed nd so what did he do e got a little knapsack on his back and he took some bricks and he made... a little model of a... city wall. Then he broke down the city wall that was just a few bricks and he walked through with his little knapsack on he illustrated by what he did what was going to happen e said "This is what's going to happen"

ne of the things the prophets did too is they... anticipated in their own lives what would happen n other words eremiah was telling the people... Look at me. Look at my wrecked psychology. Look at my confessions, my laments, where I show, I reveal my inner world of betrayal, of anguish, of pain.

Look upon it, not because I want to bear my soul to you (in the modern confessional sense) but because I am offering you a model of what it will be like. And I'm also offering you a model, that even though it's painful, you can make it through. ut saiah did the same saiah says he went for three years naked— don't know what that means but he went through the city. What he was saying is... This city that you think is so grand is going to be destroyed, and you yourselves are going to be... led out naked as a prisoner of war... as you apparently were. And look at me and know that, first of all, that it's going to happen; but know also that if you keep your faith in God, you can survive.

o the prophets are... pastors really They're not only theorists who were interpreting what's happening in the world and what's happening in the world of the great empires and what's happening in srael but they're also people who who want to connect to their hearers and show them both by words and by actions what they have to do now to respond to this particular phase of the prophetic... of od's Word o that's why they've got to do deeds They've got to... act and they've got to speak ut we shouldn't see them only as speakers we should see them as actors

o what... T Wright does and...it's in there is to say "ow do you understand esus" she just a wisdom figure oes he just give you good advice r what nd T Wright suggests and...he's got loads of excellent biblical scholars— an arrington oe itzmeyer eed ohn onahue and a huge number of people—who...really do think...that he's got the right... approach on this thing is to see esus as first of all...like is a big turning point in the history of srael This is a huge turning point ow do you respond to this huge turning point in the history of srael Well you need a prophet You need somebody who can enact by his life what you need to know and how you... should respond not then you've got to have somebody interpret it for you

esus as a speaker we are very familiar with because all of us preach... what esus says in our ut we also have to remember that esus does something sermons all the time nd what...he does really in the words of T Wright is to offer himself as an alternative to the Temple as the location of nd that's one of the reasons... people ask why was esus crucified and there's a lot od's presence of... t's a delicate ewish hristian thing because did...the hristians did...the ews kill esus or did ut let that leave that aside for a moment ut whatever he was crucified for the omans or what people had very strong feelings Ind T Wright says "What really brings up strong feelings in anybody "Well when you play with or interfere with the great symbols of one's life—you know somebody burns an merican flag or somebody burns a piece of cloth—who cares merican flag it represents something and it's symbolic and therefore people's emotions are... affected by it o also with esus and the Temple... f he offers himself as a new authority to replace the Torah in some ways and to replace the Temple as the privileged place of divine human encounter that is going to get people really angry ut in the hristian view and in esus' view a time has come in od's dealing with srael and that time is now and there are some new things that you must nd so that's why according to Wright esus is a new prophet because the time has come accept

ne of the great theologians of Vatican is a rench ominican named Yves ongar certainly some people say the most influential but one of the most...influential nd...he wrote a book in the 's...it's only being translated now t's called... True and False Reform is the... name of the book nd...he says there "The hurch has" he says "has two great temptations" ne he called—you couldn't use these terms today but 'Il just use them here—one is called "the temptation of udaism " and the other is called "the temptation of harisaism" ow we would never use that today because it s ut...the temptation of udaism is to assume that there are no turning points in the history of od's dealing with his people n other words it's just one day after another things were set and life goes on a linear path forever nd he thinks that's really a temptation of the hurch not to understand that there are turning points there are signs of the times there are times when something new happens nd obviously one would be the prophets in omething new happens and therefore you've got to be open to this new thing e would also say that in the ew

Testament you have to be open to a new thing and that new thing was the presence of esus the... new understanding of divine presence and of... a divine presence and obedience and so on the new founding of srael srael's been renewed

The other temptation of the hurch 'Il just mention but... 'm not going to deal with it t's harisaism where you move what is central to the margin and you move... what is marginal to the center n other words the hurch kind of locally for awhile kind of misses the point of what's really crucial That's the other

ut the major one is think here is to assume that the history of od's dealing with the people is a straight line without turning points and that means you'd miss... esus if you were... ewish and you had that viewpoint o... in that case you can say that esus is a prophet because... he is interpreting the work of od in the present world and he is talking about od's energy od's directing history even though we cannot see it and so on e's talking about that and you've got to be alert to it and the prophet is the one who tells you what's going on but more than that tells you how to respond and even in a certain sense in his own life models how to respond

Implications for Preaching

The Tasks of the Preacher

n the question of social justice it seems to me that the... preacher to come... nearer to the topic of our meeting today that... one of the tasks of the preacher is to understand the... work of od the energy in the world that's kind of directing things and to be able to point it out to people to help people respond to it nd there may be times when it requires one response and times when it requires another the response of acceptance the response of allowing od to build the response of allowing od to destroy in order to have more life to come ut... it's really kind of monitoring a process that is ongoing forever and think that's one of the ways in which one can understand preaching nd so preaching is... not only exhortation and helping people understand their personal lives but there's an element of trying to locate what's happening

Today's Signs of the Times

To me it is also like signs of the times What are some of the signs of the times to me Well one of them is certainly the biblical movement helping the number of atholics now who... have grown familiar with the ible and find it an enriching thing

think the place of women in the hurch as we are helping women to find their place in a way that really is productive for the hurch and productive for them

think lay ecclesial ministry there's a tremendous rise [of it] in atholicism ow do you...interpret that ow do you help people see what's important

think the sensitivity among atholics particularly now among social justice and the question of minorities in the United tates and elsewhere—helping to see where that's going what it means how do we respond in a way that's faithful to the tradition

nd the question of the distribution of wealth and gifts hould...not all people have access to decent...human life s it right that a huge amount of wealth is...hoarded by a small number of people nd so on These are the issues that think we know from the ospel and we know from the Id Testament an understanding of od's desire that all people be sated That is all people have plenty—more than enough—put it that way all people have more than enough ut those things are going to be important and therefore we should be monitoring how that happens nd that's why

think... to me to be able to do some of those things would think be really preaching social justice nd it's preaching justice because think the temptation for all preachers including most of all myself is to keep it personal and private rather than to at least sometimes to point to the work of od in the world that's going to be triumphant no matter what people do nd it's going to... come to its appointed end whether we... like it or not t's going to od's world od's will is going to... overcome human resistance and entrenched evil

Now, spend a few moments reflecting on the questions below.

[uestions from web page]

- What is most compelling to you in this presentation about having a justice dimension to your preaching
- What is most challenging to you in this presentation ow will you work on this challenge