

The Prophets Volume II

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Abraham Heschel is a seminal name in religious studies and the author of *Man Is Not Alone* and *God in Search of Man*. When *The Prophets* was first published in 1962, it was immediately recognized as a masterpiece of biblical scholarship. *The Prophets* provides a unique opportunity for readers of the Old Testament, both Christian and Jewish, to gain fresh and deep knowledge of Israel's prophetic movement. The author's profound understanding of the prophets also opens the door to new insight into the philosophy of religion.

According to the popular definition, a prophet is one who accurately predicts the future. But in the Jewish tradition, as Abraham Joshua Heschel explains in *The Prophets*, these figures earn their title by witnessing the world around them with outstanding passion. Prophets are those whose "life and soul are at stake" in what they say about "the mystery of [God's] relation to man." They are "some of the most disturbing people who have ever lived," and yet they are also "the men whose image is our refuge in distress, and whose voice and vision sustain our faith." Heschel's book, one of the classic texts on the subject, contains sophisticated, straightforward discussions of each of the Hebrew prophets, the primary themes of their preaching, and comparisons of Israel's prophets to those of other religions'. Throughout, Heschel avoids the two great temptations in any discussion of prophesy: overstating the supernatural quality of a prophet's epiphany ("A prophet is a person, not a microphone"), and reducing prophesy to a merely human phenomenon. Instead, Heschel describes the prophet's peculiar status as God's spokesman in a way that does justice to its complexity: "He speaks from the perspective of God as perceived from the perspective of his own situation." --Michael Joseph Gross

Abraham J. Heschel (1907-1972), was perhaps the most significant Jewish theologian of the twentieth century. He was Professor of Jewish Ethics and Mysticism at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) from 1946 until his death. In addition to *The Prophets*, his most influential works include *Man Is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion*, *God in Search of Man*, *Man's Quest for God: Studies in Prayer and Symbolism*, *Who Is Man?*, *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence* and *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*.

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