Visualizing a Woman’s Journey Through the Old Testament Prophetic Books

Improving Female Study Methods Through Visual Supplementation

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Abstract

Christians are often less likely to read the Old Testament prophetic literature compared to other books in Scripture. This poses a problem within the Church for Biblical literacy and understanding Scripture as one complete narrative that points to Christ. The aim of this research was to discover what causes a struggle for Christian women understanding the prophetic literature, why Old Testament prophetic literature is important for women to study, and the best methods for communicating this information to a female audience. The following research questions were asked:

1. What is the standard perspective of an average Christian when studying Old Testament prophetic literature?
2. Why are the Old Testament prophetic books difficult to understand?
3. How does understanding the biblical definition of “prophet” assist in approaching prophetic literature with confidence?
4. Why does Old Testament prophetic literature matter to Christians under the New Covenant?
5. What resources already exist in teaching women Old Testament prophetic literature? Is there a gap in these resources that needs to be filled?
6. How does a resource best illuminate and explain a complex topic?
7. What makes content memorable and eye-catching to a female audience?

After researching these questions through a literature review, visual analyses, and content analyses, a solution was created to enhance study methods for women who desire to read the prophetic books of the Old Testament. A handbook was designed, with the target audience of women in mind, to lead women through important things to know when approaching the more difficult prophetic books. Research revealed how the design of the handbook directly impacts cognition and study methods; therefore, the handbook was designed according to that research to make maximum impact. In conclusion, this handbook is a way to solve the problem of Christian women not reading the prophetic literature of the Old Testament.
Chapter One
Introduction
Because the prophetic literature of the Old Testament has greatly impacted my personal perspective of God, His Word, and His purposes, I cannot help but wonder if that can be true for more women who have desired to study the prophetic books but can’t get past the poetic language, the odd visions, and so on.

As I worked towards my bachelor’s degree in college, I had the opportunity to work within a small women’s ministry role for three years. I was given anywhere from three to seven girls at one time and would lead them in prayer and Scripture, in addition to involving myself in their personal lives, whether that was showing up to a volleyball game, meeting for dinner, or going to the library to do homework. Through this position, I began to grow in loving women’s ministry and learning alongside them in godliness, biblical meditation and study, and prayer. I remember many times where I would meet with one of them and the first question asked was, “What are you reading in God’s Word right now?”

During my third year of this ministry opportunity, I chose to take a class on the Old Testament book of Isaiah with Dr. Ed Hindson at Liberty University. Through the course of this class, God showed me there are treasures within the prophetic books of the Old Testament that I had been missing my whole life. I realized the pieces of Scripture were coming together into one narrative. Not only did this impact the way I approached these books, but it transformed my perspective of the Word of God, and even God Himself. The redemption and grace-filled account of Scripture needs the prophetic literature to be complete.

I noticed when I asked the women I ministered to what they were reading, the prophetic books were hardly mentioned. I would explain to them what I was learning in my Isaiah class and, despite their seemingly eager response to what I was saying, there continued to be a lack of approach to those books. They would tell me they had a desire to read them, but it appeared as though there was a huge gap of knowledge that required a Master’s of Divinity degree to study such peculiar books. In fact, one girl tried to take on the book of Isaiah for her daily devotional time after I told her about my class. However, it did not last long due to confusion whilst studying.

Because the prophetic literature of the Old Testament has greatly impacted my personal
perspective of God, His Word, and His purposes, I couldn’t help but wonder if that can be true for more women who have desired to study the prophetic books but can’t get past the poetic language, the odd visions, and so on. Research shows that there is a general lack within the Church as a whole regarding understanding of the prophetic literature. The nature of these books is not easy to understand at first glance, so it makes perfect sense that they are often handled with confusion. However, this does not give excuse to avoid them altogether. Within these books are Messianic prophecies, accounts of God’s faithfulness, the depravity of man, consequences for sin, and much more. Once some historical and cultural contexts are learned, in addition to Hebrew literature basics, these books can be understood on deeper levels that draw one into deeper and wider understanding of God.

The goal of this thesis is to understand why Christians are less likely to study Old Testament prophetic literature and create a female-targeted solution that guides women through those books with visual supplementation. In order to fully understand what needed to be included in the final solution to address this problem, five research questions were asked:

1. What is the standard perspective of an average Christian when studying Old Testament prophetic literature?
2. Why are the Old Testament prophetic books difficult to understand?
3. How does understanding the biblical definition of “prophet” assist in approaching prophetic literature with confidence?
4. Why does Old Testament prophetic literature matter to Christians under the New Covenant?
5. What resources already exist in teaching women Old Testament prophetic literature? Is there a gap in these resources that needs to be filled?
6. How does a resource best illuminate and explain a complex topic?
7. What makes content memorable and eye-catching to a female audience?

The research questions above created a foundation to know the gap between Old Testament prophetic literature and women studying Scripture. Christian women today (1) are separated by centuries from the time these books were written, (2) are under the New Covenant rather than the Mosaic Law, and (3) have a lack of resources to truly understand and study these books in a way that is geared towards them. Research reveals how confusing these books truly are; therefore, answering the research questions was crucial to creating a deliverable that would truly solve the problem. In answering them, it was discovered that historical context, Hebrew literature, and prophetic signs and visions perplex women studying prophetic literature. Not to mention, Old Testament prophetic books are important to understand how the narrative of Scripture points to Christ holistically, which is why women under the New Covenant must study these books.

In the following chapters, this research is discussed and explained in further detail. The research includes a literature review, content and visual analyses, how to create memorable content that illuminates complex topics, and how design principles will effect cognition. In addition to the research, the design process of the final deliverable is provided with the final deliverable itself. Finally, a defense of the thesis and the final deliverable will be included in the last chapter.
Chapter Two
Research

- Research Questions
- Literature Review
- Illuminating Complex Topics
- Creating Memorable Content
- Foundational Design Elements
- Visual & Content Analyses
Research was conducted to understand what would best solve the problem of women not studying the prophetic literature of Scripture. The research questions that were utilized and are addressed in the research are the following:
1. What is the standard perspective of an average female Christian when studying Old Testament prophetic literature?

2. Why are the Old Testament prophetic books difficult to understand?

3. How does understanding the biblical definition of “prophet” assist in approaching prophetic literature with confidence?

4. Why does Old Testament prophetic literature matter to female Christians under the New Covenant?

5. What resources already exist in teaching women Old Testament prophetic literature? Is there a gap in these resources that needs to be filled?

6. How does a resource best illuminate and explain a complex topic?

7. What makes content memorable and eye-catching to a female audience?
The following research confirms the confusion with which the prophetic books are often approached from a Western mindset. It also explains how the definition of a prophet affects studying the prophetic literature and why studying prophetic literature is important for modern-day believers. It must be noted that not much research within the target audience of women in their twenties has been conducted. Therefore, the research presented is for the modern Western church as a whole.
Why Old Testament Prophetic Books Are Often Found to be Confusing

The prophetic literature of the Old Testament is often avoided when choosing a day-to-day book of Scripture to study, to preach, and to teach. It can be incredibly confusing and even terrifying when approached without any context, historical understanding, or background. In fact, Martin Luther, father of the Reformation, wrote, “The prophets have an odd way of talking, like people who, instead of proceeding in an orderly manner, ramble off from one thing to the next, so that you cannot make head or tail of them or see what they are getting at” (What Prophecy is For Transcript).

The prophetic literature is not easy and cannot be approached like other books of Scripture. “More time is required when approaching Old Testament prophetic books compared to the Gospels or Epistles because our pre-understanding of the text often isn’t there, we are not as familiar with their world, or their basic message” (Chalmers 146). The prophetic literature stands out a bit compared to the other books of Scripture. Within those books are men called by God saying and doing interesting things, sometimes even gloomy things, that just don’t make sense at first glance. Josh Philpot, a worship pastor in Texas who holds a PhD in Old Testament, writes, “When we pick up the Old Testament, we know intuitively its 39 books are not one and the same. This means the rules for reading one section may be different than the rules for reading another.” (Philpot) For example, to simply read through the book of Ezekiel like the book of Psalms, without any prior knowledge of the book or the context, is to throw oneself into the world of oracles, poems, and strange visions. However, just because the prophetic literature is not exactly comfortable to read at first does not mean it should be avoided. There is a reason these books were inspired by God.
and included in the Scriptures; the books contain God revealing Himself to man and speaking in a way man could understand. Prophetic books are more than strange visions, complex language, and cities being destroyed. Within these books, “God is revealing Himself more directly, proclaiming attributes of deity, declaring the agenda of eternity, divulging the passions of the Trinity, and do all of this through imperfect human language” (Sandy 27). These ancient texts cannot be avoided, for God is speaking in them.

If we fail to hear the communication as the authors intended and the hearers understood, it is because we are outside in the dark. When God chose to use the forms of communication and culture available in the biblical world, he simply left us with the challenge to enter into that world to understand his revelation. So if prophecy is problematic, whose problem is it? (Sandy 57).

That being said, there are important and seemingly “problematic” elements that need to be grasped to more fully understand prophetic literature. These elements have been narrowed down into the following: a gap of knowledge for the context, Hebrew literature, and sign acts and visions.

**Historical & Cultural Context Gap**

When approaching Old Testament prophetic literature, the history and culture of the time should be understood. Countless authors, theologians, and biblical scholars reiterated this fact when discussing how to study the prophetic literature. While this is true for all the books of the Bible, the history and culture, specifically during the prophetic books of the Old Testament, are more dramatic, a bit chaotic, and intertwined with surrounding nations. In the ancient days of Israel, the history and culture were incredibly different from the world today. “A span of 25 centuries
separates the modern reader from the world of the prophets...” (Chalmers 35). It’s impossible to approach these specific passages with only a modern mindset and grasp what the text has to say. Understanding the society in which Israel existed brings clarity to the prophetic literature in many different ways, even for believers under the New Covenant.

...For many centuries Christians read the prophets, and Old Testament in general, primarily as foretelling Jesus. Underlying such readings is the consistency of divine and human natures. The God who sent Jesus as teacher and Redeemer was already instructing and saving faith believers long before. Viewing the prophets as anticipating Jesus while ignoring their own societies’ struggles can obstruct their significance to us... But if we read the prophets expecting them to have much more to say about the dynamics of faith and faithful living, especially in chaotic times, we will enjoy the benefit of a much fuller reading of these fascinating figures” (Brueggemann 10).

The culture in which Israel lived had a lot to do with why the prophets were called by God in the first place. Pagan empires were conquering all of the land of ancient times, and with pagan empires came pagan gods and lifestyles. Israel and Judah, these tiny kingdoms next to the Mediterranean Sea, were under great temptation to fall into the trap of idol worship — which they did time after time. The culture surrounding them explains why they fell into idol worship and, combined with their lack of devotion to the Lord, explains why God called the prophets to remind Israel of their covenant with Him. It is all intertwined, and to understand it is to benefit further from studying these books, as Brueggemann mentioned above.

The prophets’ life was very different from life today, and by learning
about the context in which they lived and their ways of speaking, a deeper understanding can be gained of what God had to say through the prophets (Smith 52-53). One of the difficulties in reading prophetic literature is the prophets sometimes had an assumption that their audience would grasp what they had to say, whether it was a sign act, a poem, a chiasm, etc. However, when these passages are taken into the twenty-first century, a lot of the layers and depth are not seen quite as easily. The audience to which the prophets spoke had the background needed to understand the messages. “Part of it is these texts are designed for readers who have processed the Torah and historical books deeply. They assume you’re immersed in it and then they start at that level” (Mackie, *What Prophecy is For* Transcript). Unfortunately, the majority of the modern Western church does not have the background the Israelites did, which therefore, creates a knowledge gap in understanding the context of the prophets’ messages. That being said, hope is not lost when approaching these books!

*We must first try to understand the message of God given through the prophet to its original audience - Jews living in a time of overwhelming tragedy and destruction.... For the purposes of this study we will first try and look at what the message meant to its original audience.*

(Brueggemann 27)

Work has to be put into understanding the prophetic literature contexts. Will it require more time? Yes. But it will indeed be rewarding. In summary, the cultural, historical, and political context of Israel and the prophets is needed to fully understand and appreciate the books, which requires both work and time.
“Engagement in the prophetic books isn’t easy because their literature is strange to us. Their poetry can be difficult to catch onto” (Brueggemann vii.). Another issue that stands between understanding prophetic literature and the Western church is the lack of understanding for basic Hebrew literature, which is beneficial for seeing the parallelism and themes within the books. The way in which these books were written are not anything like the letters of Paul or even the Gospels. The Old Testament prophetic literature is layered and intricate, with poetry, chiasms, recursive patterns, and so on. The initial fear might be a lack of ever understanding Hebrew literature due to its depth and complicated nature. However, “students of prophecy do not have to become experts in analyzing Hebrew poetry in order to understand the basic message of the prophet. A basic ability to analyze the prophet’s skill in writing and a clearer understanding of the development of the ideas of prophecy will lead to a greater appreciation of what the prophets said” (Smith 49). One does not have to be a Hebrew scholar to grasp the beauty of the prophetic literature! However, it is important to note that there was a reason for using such rich language in the prophetic books. Prophecy was more than telling of future events; it was the Word of God spoken to a spokesperson for delivery to humankind.

Poetry was richer and more imaginative than prose and its structure and repetitions allowed a more persuasive force... Some modern readers have felt that reading Hebrew poetry was comparable to entering an unfamiliar land where people were speaking in a foreign tongue... In order to bridge this cultural gap and enter into the Hebrew way of expressing prophetic truth, one must gain some appreciation for how the Hebrew prophets used imagery in poetry and how they constructed different kinds of parallelism (Smith 46).
Poetry, though not easy to interpret, needs to be understood to break down and appreciate many of the prophecies. Much like context, one has to take time with the poetry of the prophetic literature to really understand it, which will be explained in greater depth later on in this thesis.

While stillness is not exactly promoted in the Western lifestyle, it is a required discipline when one truly wants to understand the prophetic literature. Prophetic literature can speak to both the things of the mind and the things of the heart; therefore, dedicating time is an important aspect. One who desires to study the prophetic literature needs to understand a few basic concepts, like parallelism, and devote time and effort into the poems and metaphors to gain appreciation for the rich literature.

Sign Acts and Visions

The same people who spoke these beautiful poems to audiences also did incredibly strange things and received confusing visions to act out the truth of their message. Whitney Woollard — a women’s Bible teacher in Portland, Oregon, as well as a biblical and theological scholar — wrote this about the sign acts of the prophets:

*The prophets were communicators, and like all great communicators, they utilized a wide range of verbal and nonverbal elements in their prophetic speeches. They didn’t merely speak out prophecy; they acted it out as well. Unfortunately, the nonverbal components don’t get much press today, so we often mistake these sign acts as yet another prophetic oddity when, in fact, they’re a key ingredient in the compelling, multi-sensory presentations that fill the prophetic pages. This means that*
if we want to understand the weird, wonderful world of prophetic communication, we need to understand the sign acts (Woollard).

Confusing visions of wheels and walking around without clothes for several years were compelling ways to make the Word of the Lord crystal clear to Israel. People love visual examples and often learn much more quickly when visuals are supplied, and the Lord and the prophets gave some unforgettable visuals. For example, in Isaiah 20 the Lord tells the prophet Isaiah to walk around without clothing and barefoot for a total of three years (Isaiah 20:2-3). God was using Isaiah as a symbol of the ashamed nations of Egypt and Cush when Assyria would capture them and lead them into exile, also naked and barefoot (Isaiah 20:4).

Because the sign acts and visions, like Isaiah above, are another element of confusion to readers, they can beget avoidance. “So where does the problem lie? Is prophecy itself the problem? Perhaps it is the imagery, language of judgment and visions... The question is, can we do anything to shed light on the apparent problem of prophecy?” (Sandy 34). Of course, prophecy is not a problem. Brent Sandy was making the point that people often identify the things they do not understand as a problem, when in fact, all it takes is further investigation and deeper understanding. Yes, the sign acts, imagery, and visions are strange. In fact, Walter Brueggemann points out, “In his Epistulae, Saint Jerome reports that the ‘beginning and ending of Ezekiel... are involved in so great obscuritry that like the commencement of Genesis they are not studied by the Hebrews until they are thirty years old’” (Brueggemann 7). Even in ancient days the prophetic books were noted for their obscurities.
But as mentioned above, the obscurities were used to make a very obvious point. “The visual nature of the prophet’s presentation made his message unmistakably clear to a people who were notorious for muddying the waters of God’s Word. The Israelites could choose to ignore the prophet’s words, but they sure couldn’t miss them,” (Woollard). The oddities of the prophetic literature are yet another reason to avoid the books. However, the Word of the Lord cannot be ignored. Yet again, these books require a sufficient amount of time to be understood. The longer one dwells on these images, understanding and appreciation can be obtained.

The Proper Perspective Of A Prophet

Throughout the years, the biblical definition of a prophet has become somewhat skewed. This misunderstanding of the word is quite pivotal, as people often associate the word prophet with telling the future, much like a fortune teller. This perspective of a prophet actually hinders a correct and full approach of the prophetic literature. This section reviews the biblical definition of a prophet and how that understanding assists in studying the prophetic books of the Bible. While prophetic books often point toward the future, that is not necessarily the role of the prophets.

These books, actually, along with the Torah and the narrative books are all part of the unified story of the Old Testament that’s pointing forward. That is part of their role. However, that is not what the word prophecy means in the Bible nor is that the primary role of prophets in the Bible. Future prediction is something that some prophets do sometimes, but it is not near the heart of the core biblical definition of prophecy (Mackie, What Prophecy is For Transcript).

While future prediction plays a part within the prophetic literature of
the Old Testament, there was a deeper meaning to the purpose of the prophets. These had to be men who had the character to deliver the Word of the holy God. Several authors refer to the prophets as part of God’s divine council; therefore, they could not be just anyone. Aaron Chalmers puts it this way: “Prophets could function as observers, advisers, and envoys for the divine council... A true prophet stands in the divine council — he or she has access to the transcendent workings of the Deity — and thus speaks Gods’ word,” (Chalmers 13). The prophets were the mouthpieces of God to the people of Israel.

Second, the prophets had to know and understand the Mosaic Law because they were under careful connection to the covenant God made with Israel. This is why the prophets are often seen calling out the sin and rebellion of Israel; Israel was breaking the Mosaic covenant with God, and God used the prophets to call them out and warn them. The Mosaic covenant God made with Israel, and Israel agreed to, was far greater than a promise. It was this incredibly powerful binding covenant, full of deep promises. God surely was not going to break it; however, Israel did — often. When they fell into the temptation to worship other idols and intermarry with other nations, God called up prophets to remind Israel of both their covenant with God and the judgment that would come if they continued in rebellion. “The primary role of the prophets was to proclaim the word of God as ‘covenant reinforcement mediators,’” preaching to the people a message of blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience, reinforced through fresh and sometimes shocking rhetoric. Although the prophets refined and extended the details of covenant fulfillment, the basis of their message was nothing new, rooted as it was in the promises of the Mosaic covenant” (Fuhr & Yates 20). Jon Collins, one of the hosts and creative minds behind BibleProject,
said the simplest way to remember what the prophets were is by thinking they were covenant watchdogs (Collins, *Prophets as Provokers* Transcript).

Now, this perspective of the prophets creates a shift from confusion about foretelling to an understanding that the prophetic literature deals to a great extent with sin and rebellion, as well as redemption and restoration. This shows the audience two things: (1) Sin is serious, and man is depraved; therefore, consequences are deserved, and (2) God is gracious and kind, because despite mankind deserving judgment, God promised deliverance and hope — even in the midst of constant rebellion. That is the gospel of Christ, and it is woven into the prophetic literature. This leads into the next section: why does the modern day church need to care about Old Testament prophetic literature?

**The Importance Of Old Testament Prophetic Books To The Church**

It makes perfect sense that many believers in the modern Western church would pick up a Pauline letter or short letter of Peter for day-to-day studying, memorizing, and teaching. These books are relevant to the Church under the New Covenant because they were written to the people and churches after the New Covenant had been inaugurated. However, the Old Testament is crucial for the Church to study because the New Testament and the Old Testament depend on one another. The Old Testament as a whole cannot be ignored, which of course includes the prophetic literature. In fact, many books in the New Testament quote the Old Testament; therefore both should be read, meditated on, and studied. Hays and Longman write,

*The Old Testament prophetic books comprise a large portion of our Bibles.*
As part of the Word of God, they beckon us to study them— to analyze, to reflect, to listen, to obey. As you will see throughout this book, the prophets are integrally connected to the New Testament. The prophets provide the primary link between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Indeed, much of the theology of the New Testament is built upon the prophets, and the New Testament is difficult to understand apart from the message they proclaimed. In addition, most of Jesus’ colorful imagery (e.g., springs of living water, fishers of men, bride and bridegroom) is drawn from the imagery of the prophets. (Hays & Longman 33-34).

An example of this can be found in a link between the books of Hosea and Matthew. In Hosea chapter six, Hosea is speaking to the people of Israel, calling them to return to the Lord after rebelling against Him. They were worshiping false gods, following pagan rituals, pursuing adultery, and much more. The people participated in some religious events and offerings; however, their love for the Lord was compared to a morning cloud or dew that goes away early in the morning (Hosea 6:4). In response to their half-hearted ways, God says, “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:7 ESV).

In Matthew 9:9-13, Jesus not only calls the tax collector Matthew to follow Him, but He is found reclined at a table fellowshipping with tax collectors, sinners, and disciples. The Pharisees couldn't believe their eyes, so they asked the disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” (Matthew 9:11). Note here, the Pharisees were not involved in the pagan rituals Israel had been involved with centuries before when Hosea was speaking to them. These men were devoted to the Law and they upheld it with utmost dedication. When Jesus heard their question,
he answered by quoting Hosea, “I desire mercy [steadfast love], and not sacrifice. For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matthew 9:13).

What these passages teach believers is that the Lord’s desire has not changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Whereas one audience was whoring after other gods and the other was devoted to the Law to a fault, God’s message is that He desires steadfast love of man for Himself above the works and sacrifices of man. It’s easy to say and do the right things, but to truly love the Lord with all of one’s heart, soul, mind, and strength is the mark of real devotion to Him. The fact that Jesus Himself directly quotes from the book of Hosea shows there is relevance for the Church to study the Old Testament prophetic books. This example is simply one amidst many others in the Bible.

**The Unity of the Bible**

The Word of God, both Old and New Testaments, interact with one another to tell one narrative. Though not every single word of the Bible is Messianic, the story of Scripture holistically works together to tell of God’s plan for salvation for the world through His Son Jesus to the glory of His name.

*Like a play with many acts, the unity of the Bible is a drama that unfolds over time, forming a living and organic unity. What God reveals in the Old Testament is consistent with what he will disclose in the New, but clearly the latter is more clear, explicit, and full. This organic unity is necessary for seeing the unity of the Bible and appreciating the way the New Testament differs from the Old (Schrock).*

Understanding the Bible as one unified piece is further reason to study
all of it, including the Old Testament prophetic literature. Another
great point David Schrock — a pastor in Virginia who holds a PhD
from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary — makes is that,
“We must learn how to read the two testaments [the Old and the
New] together, with the Old informing the New, the New illumining
the Old, and both being held together in Christ” (Schrock).

**Prophetic Literature Points to the Messiah,
Which is Fulfilled in Jesus**

As Jesus spoke of the prophets, so the prophets spoke of Jesus, the
Messiah. Prophetic literature is extensively more than woes of destroyed
cities. The hope of a Messiah is woven into the prophetic literature,
which looked forward to the Christ and was fulfilled in Jesus. Isolated
verses cannot be read without the full biblical canon and vice versa.
While it is correct that not every verse (taken by itself) speaks of
Jesus, every passage — when read in its historical and literary context
— finds its end in Christ. As Jim Hamilton puts it, “the OT is a
messianic document, written from a messianic perspective, to sustain
a messianic hope” (Schrock). Many authors and sources discuss how
the Messiah was interlaced into the prophetic literature; therefore,
this will be looked into in further detail for defending the need for
Christian females to study the Old Testament prophetic literature.

In addition, the prophetic literature shows both the depravity of mankind
and what sin truly deserves. By seeing how sin both affects Israel and
is judged by the Lord, there is an obvious need for a Savior. Ian Duguid
says, specifically about Ezekiel, that, “You can’t make sense out of the
cross without the holiness of God and the utter offensiveness of sin. And
Ezekiel is a very good book for showing us the necessity of the cross.
That’s what sin deserves” (Duguid et al). These books open the eyes of
believers to show why the Messiah was/is needed by humankind and
shows modern day believers the great cost of sin and what it deserves.

Christ Spoke in Parables, Which Alludes
to Prophetic Literature
A third reason for the importance of studying Old Testament prophetic
literature is because Jesus Himself not only quoted from the prophets,
but many of his parables alluded to the prophets, especially Isaiah.

That’s what the parables are offering commentary on. Second layer of
depth, they are also adopted from the tradition of the Hebrew prophets,
and Jesus sees himself bringing that biblical story to its climax, which is
why he talks in these parables. The net result of this is that most of Jesus’
parables are loaded with Hebrew Bible hyperlinks, which unveils a whole
new kind of depth of meaning and significance to them... So the prophets
wrote mostly prophetic poetry... So Jesus is following in the tradition here,
so to speak” (Mackie, Jesus and the Parables of the Prophets Transcript).

These parables of Jesus were connecting points to the Old Testament
and, as Tim Mackie mentions, they bring a beautiful depth to the
Scriptures that would otherwise go unforeseen. Studying the prophetic
literature and connecting Jesus’ parables back to it can open one’s
eyes to the breadth, width, and depth of Scripture in a new way.

For example, there is a parable of Jesus in the book of Matthew that
parallels imagery seen in the book of Isaiah. In Matthew 13:3-9, Jesus
tells the story of a farmer who went out to plant seeds. Some fell on the path and were eaten by birds, while others were thrown on rocky ground. Other seeds fell among thorns, while others fell in good soil. Of course, the last seeds were the only seeds to grow and flourish because they were the only ones thrown in good soil.

“Jesus’ imagery is so unexpected that immediately after he concludes his parable (Matthew 13:10), his followers ask him point blank, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” Jesus’ answer is surprising. Drawing from the prophet Isaiah, he explains that his parables are intended to be ambiguous, at least for some people (Matthew 13:11-13)” (Josh Porter).

In the book of Isaiah, after the prophet is called, there is a similar idea happening. In Isaiah 6:11-13, the prophet Isaiah receives a vision of a desolate land where there is no good soil for growth. Despite how forsaken it appears, there was a tree stump remaining, and out of this stump a seed (offspring) would come forth. Both Jesus and Isaiah were using similar imagery to explain a bigger concept: the Kingdom of God. While Isaiah was pointing to the offspring God would preserve for the line of the Messiah, Jesus — the Messiah Isaiah was pointing to — was talking about His Church. This is simply one example of how parables in Scripture play off one another and why it’s beneficial to understand both those in prophetic literature and those used by Jesus.

**The Authority of Scripture**

Finally, the last point has to do with believing in the authority of Scripture as a whole. The prophetic literature was just as inspired by God as any other book, which can be seen in how often God spoke to the prophets
throughout their time. In fact, the phrase “thus says the Lord,” occurs 355 times in Isaiah through Malachi in the NASB translation. To open a prophetic book is to open the very Word of God spoken to man. “But if we claim to follow Jesus, we should adopt his view of the Scriptures — their completely divine origin, reliability, and authority in our lives” (Blomberg, Dykes). This point includes Scripture as a whole. The prophetic literature holds authority over the Church because it was divinely inspired, therefore, it must hold authority in personal lives which can be obtained through studying it and meditating on it. Masonheimer — a female theologian and Bible teacher — made an excellent point when she, in summary, said to not read, study, and meditate on the prophetic literature is to not believe in its authority and canonicity (Masonheimer 16:17). It is a part of the Scriptures; therefore, it must hold weight in the lives of Western Christians.

**Conclusion of Literature Review**

Many authors within the literature review express the need to understand historical and cultural context, to have a brief comprehension of Hebrew literature, and to have patience when approaching the Old Testament prophetic books. While these specific books are not the easiest in understanding, they are rewarding when time has been devoted to them.

Even though prophetic literature resources, which can be found in the content and visual analyses section below, are available to women it is important to note that there is not a informative resource designed specifically for females.
In order to know how to best illuminate the complexities of prophetic literature, research was conducted to discover the best solution to achieve clear communication for women who want to understand the books in a deeper way. To explain complex topics first requires a deep understanding of the topic so one can know what he/she wants to communicate and how he/she desires to communicate it. An example of this is how Tim Mackie, a biblical studies scholar at the animation studio BibleProject, begins topical and thematic animations and illustrations through broad research. Mackie studies historical contexts, reads a wide variety of books on the topic or theme, and translates the biblical scholarship into something everyone can understand. From there, BibleProject utilizes Mackie’s research to explain complex topics and themes of Scripture through vibrant animations that get the main
point across. The research and design work together to communicate to all audiences. Having visual aids, like the animations of BibleProject, assists the brain in processing faster. In fact, research shows the brain processes visuals 60,000 time faster than text (“Imagery Vs Text. Which Does the Brain Prefer?”). In addition, visuals increase learning by almost 400% (3M Meeting Network). Through the dedicated research of Tim Mackie and the talented illustrators, writers, and animators of BibleProject, the complexities of Scripture are well explained to a broad audience in a beautiful way.

While books are a go-to for learning about topics, ideas, and people, the world is transitioning into a visual-driven over text driven learning style. “We are becoming a visually mediated society. For many, understanding of the world is being accomplished, not through words, but by reading images” (Lester 2006). Research suggests 65% of the population is comprised of visual learners, which is inevitably encouraged through televisions, computers, tablets, and smartphones (Amin, et al). The use of imagery, from educational YouTube videos to infographics to mathematic diagrams, helps reveal complex topics in an attainable way. In an article on the brain processing text versus imagery, the author writes, “Utilizing simplistic, recognizable imagery and a well-structured story can lead to the solid grasping of an otherwise confusing topic” (“Imagery Vs Text. Which Does the Brain Prefer?”). Within Scripture is the greatest storyline of all time therefore, pairing Scripture with recognizable imagery can indeed assist in illuminating the complexities of Old Testament prophetic literature. If the majority of the population is comprised of visual learners, then creating educational and helpful products that accommodate that is beneficial and necessary.

Another great example of simplifying complex topics and thoughts is
Warren Buffet, an American investor, businessman, and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway. Buffet is known for utilizing brilliant metaphors when breaking down complex questions, intricate ideas, and weighty thoughts. His use of metaphor illuminates difficult concepts. For example, when discussing the skyrocketing expenses of healthcare, he simply commented, “Medical costs are the tapeworm of economic competitiveness” (Gallo). This phrase became a hit on Google as he summarized the complex, weighty nature of healthcare into something relatable that just about everyone can understand. “Analogies are repeatable because they can help us to understand material we know little about. By comparing the abstract with the familiar, analogies give us a framework to explain and understand complex topics” (Gallo).

Interestingly enough, the Lord and the prophets of the Old Testament used metaphors to explain Heavenly things in a similar manner. The book of Jeremiah has several metaphors within it. For example, a vision of a boiling pot within the very first chapter. In Jeremiah 1:14, the prophet Jeremiah sees a boiling pot in a vision from the Lord, and it is not random by any means. The boiling pot symbolizes the coming terror from the north as judgment upon Israel for their sin against the Lord. Eugene Peterson - a professor of theology, pastor, and translator of The Message - takes this idea even further to say it was a metaphor for the cleansing of the land as the “boiling-pot vision named, located and limited the evil that was afflicting everyone with a kind of metaphysical paranoia” (Peterson 55). Metaphors explain complex ideas and they leave a strong impact. Both Warren Buffet and the Word of God have proven how metaphors make the complex, simple.

To take this idea of utilizing visual imagery and metaphors a step further, another example will be looked at. Jessica Helfand — a successful artist, designer, and theorist — wrote and designed a book called Design: The Invention of Desire. Within this work are visual metaphors to make each
of Helfand’s points more concrete, as well as easier to understand. She explores the elements of design — like compassion, humility, and identity — and pairs each element with a scientific image in order to make a point. For example, in her chapter on compassion in design, she opens the chapter with a painting of a heart ventricle. In another chapter, she pairs the design element of memory to the intestine, which she writes has a “direct correlation to brain activity including mind, mood, and memory” (Helfand 222). She utilizes scientific aspects of the human body in art form to break down the complex nature of design so people can understand it, including those not familiar with design. Because design is a wide and complex topic, Helfand is bridging a gap in knowledge by including visual metaphors and simplifying what is difficult to understand.

In conclusion, the research conducted will influence the design choices behind the final deliverable, which will be a handbook on the Old Testament prophetic literature. Rather than creating a handbook or manual that is text heavy, the deliverable will utilize conceptual imagery, specifically illustration and drawings, to explain the complexities of prophetic literature in a simplified and streamlined manner. Designing with many visual aids — for example, detailed maps that correspond with certain prophets — will foster concrete understanding throughout the deliverable.
It was important to research what kind of design and artwork stands out to the female audience in order to successfully create the final deliverable. Oftentimes florals, greenery, pinks, and soft colors are associated with a primarily female audience. Quite often Christian books for women, no matter the topic, include floral designs. For a few examples, *Word-Filled Women’s Ministry: Loving and Serving the Church* by Gloria Furman, *Risen Motherhood* by Emily Jensen and Lauren Wifler, *Missional Motherhood* by Gloria Furman, *The Life You Long For* by Christy Nockels, and *Beholding and Becoming* by
Ruth Chou Simons all include flower based book covers. However, Old Testament prophetic literature does not exactly match flowery design. The deliverable needs to be dynamic and conceptual, but not forget who it’s for. A great example of conceptual design for a female audience is She Reads Truth, which is also mentioned in the Content and Visual Analyses section. She Reads Truth is an organization that creates topical, thematic, and books of the Bible studies that reach beyond what is trendy in current design. In one article they write, “One of our goals at She Reads Truth is to pair the inherently-beautiful gospel with the aesthetic beauty it deserves. We believe in bringing intentional design to every resource we create” (“Design on Purpose: Women & Men in the Word”). For example, their Women & Men in the Word study was created with unfinished traditional figure drawings to correlate with the broken and relatable humans of the Old Testament. The books are filled with these drawings for each person studied and are paired with abstract paintings that symbolize the redemption coming for the broken world. The project came together conceptually and aesthetically, creating dynamic Bible studies that move the soul and beg to be purchased, even hung on the wall as art prints. This proves that flowers and a pink color palette do not have to be included in a product for women to buy it. When done well, creating meaningful work with intention behind every detail has the capability to move the target audience.

In addition to this example, Sara Fitch - a church graphic designer in California - wrote this regarding design for women’s ministry:

When designing for women’s ministries, for example, there is an opportunity to speak truth about biblical womanhood. If designs for women are exclusively, say, pink and flowery, I am tying biblical womanhood to a certain design
aesthetic that certainly not all women share. Femininity can—and should—look so many different ways; it’s important to reflect this truth in my designs. It would be unfortunate for a woman to exclude herself from women’s ministries, assuming she wouldn’t fit in because she was under the (wrong) impression that all Christian women share some stylistic preference.

The point Fitch is making here is that there is not a tried and true way to design for all women. Women are different with a variety of styles, personalities, likes and dislikes. Making a handbook on prophetic literature covered in flowers with a pink palette would not be dynamic and conceptual, nor would it extend to all women. She Reads Truth has proven through their 80 and counting studies that conceptual and dynamic design connects to women, and is adorned all the more by the message it carries: the story of Scripture and the good news of Christ.

From a different standpoint, in order to stand out on the shelf at the bookstore or in the countless books offered on the internet, the final deliverable needs to jump out from the generic. As mentioned above, flowers are often associated with female-targeted design, which is not wrong. Barry W. Enderwick - a brand and marketing executive who worked for Netflix - writes, “Whether it’s at the behest of the owner, creative director, or whomever, people tend to look outward to find inspiration when it comes to the look and feel of their brand. The problem with doing so is that a lot of other companies are also looking outward. They’ll also see a trend they like and think “let’s do that!” Unfortunately, this means that when you pull back, brands start to look nearly identical to each other. And that’s a problem” (Enderwick). It is fairly easy to find a trend and incorporate it into a design, especially
with platforms such as Pinterest and Instagram. However, trends don’t always successfully match and communicate the identity of the project. Keeping the integrity of the project within the design is crucial for communicating exactly what one wants to communicate to his/her target audience. Jessica Helfand writes, “This is what it means to be alive - to witness visually and respond viscerally to something, and thus to act not because your parents said so, or your professor mandated it; not because it is popular or viral or trending; but because you engaged as an individual with a deeper understanding of what it means to contribute to a world not merely of your own making” (Helfand 20). The goal is to add something to the world that extends beyond what is trendy and truly connect with the target audience of women in a way that inspires them to dive deeper into the prophetic literature of the Old Testament.

So, aside from pink and flowers, what causes women to buy one product over another equal product? A case study by Siripuk Ritnamkam and Nopadon Sahachaisaeree was conducted in 2012 to learn how packaging design affects cosmetic purchases for both young men and women, like lotion for example (Ritnamkam et al). Two-hundred university students from varying degrees were given questionaries and pictorial stimulus (graphs which included shape, color, and other design elements) regarding cosmetic packaging design. What the researchers discovered is that women are more inclined to purchase cosmetic products that have organic shapes with soft curves and warm color palettes. In addition, women were drawn to both symmetrical and asymmetrical design. Men, on the other hand, chose more angular shapes with darker and cooler tones as opposed to warm colors. This does not come off as a surprise, as many women’s product designs reflect the findings of this case study. Knowing that women prefer
softer design assisted in the design choices of the final deliverable.

In conclusion, the final deliverable — a handbook on prophetic literature — needs to communicate the content in a dynamic way that targets women. This can be accomplished through meaningful and conceptual design, all the while considering the organic, warm, and soft design elements that women are often drawn to. While the deliverable is not exclusively covered in flowers, it is still eye-catching for women and memorable by using visual metaphors and intentional detail.
There are several design principles that are crucial to creating successful design, which are implemented in the final deliverable of this thesis. These elements of design are the foundations on which good design is built. If they are disregarded, the final design could have been confusing, unorganized, not thought-through, and not meaningful.

Some of the main elements of design, specifically in publication and editorial design, are the following: grids, hierarchy, contrast, typography, and color theory. Each of these elements and principles play key roles when it comes to successfully creating
work that visually communicates a message to an audience. The elements will be looked at more closely to see why they are important and how they help to effectively communicate. This research will create a thoughtful approach to communicating the complexities of prophetic literature in the handbook created for women.

The Grid & Layout

The grid system and layout design play a weighty role in the development of the final deliverable, which means the grid and layout must be defined before continuing. The grid in graphic design is a hidden structure or container that keeps consistency throughout the design, all the while organizing and communicating information to the audience. The grid then determines the layout of the design and how information, illustrations, photos, etc., will be placed on a page, a website, a poster, and so on. Richard Poulin, the co-founder of Poulin + Morris Inc. and professor at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, calls layout within design “one of the most powerful forms of visual expression and communications” (Poulin, 7). Again, the goal of this thesis is to assist women in understanding the Old Testament prophetic literature through visual supplementation. Therefore, the use of grids and layout must be maximized to communicate these complex books in Scripture to the best of their ability. Below, Amy Graver, the owner of a design and marketing agency, speaks into why the grid and layout can assist designers in communicating complicated topics:

When a graphic designer — whose primary goal is to communicate effectively — is faced with making the complicated easily understood and the conceptual visually realized, it becomes obvious that layouts and grids are the most basic and important tools to utilize. Putting information in a hierarchy, groups, or
columns, or utilizing any of the many layout and grid tools available, helps us, as graphic designers, design in a clear and useful way (Amy Graver et al, 10).

The final deliverable content is organized to assure the information is communicated as clearly as possible. As mentioned previously, the final deliverable is a handbook on the Old Testament prophetic books, complete with summaries, timelines, and maps, designed specifically for a female audience. There is a lot of information to communicate, some of it repetitive, which is placed intentionally throughout the handbook. For example, the grid is utilized in providing a consistent way to display the dates behind each prophetic book, where they prophesied, who they prophesied to, etc. to keep the information organized, consistent, and easy to look at.

That being addressed, lines of text that are too long can be boring, while lines of text too short can be distracting. Not to mention, “Large holes, excessive hyphenation, and short line measures create a strong vertical motion, [which] will cause the reader to rush through the text, hindering retention” (Amy Graver et al, 55). A strong grid system is important to communicating the prophetic literature effectively to women. If done incorrectly, it could hinder comprehension. If done correctly, the audience is communicated to in an organized, consistent, and visually interesting way.

An important thing to note is the use of negative space in book design and how it affects readers. The grid for the final deliverable incorporates a wide margin — or negative space — around the text and illustrations to keep a space for visual rest, as well as encourage note-taking to the reader. “Negative space provides paths for the eye to navigate through the content of the composition and can actually serve to move viewers
through the piece, directing them where to look and when.... Creating asymmetry with negative space activates the composition and can affect the weight, stability, and movement to draw the eye to something, or cause it to linger somewhere else” (Amy Graver et al, 77). Using asymmetrical negative space, as mentioned by Amy Graver, also aligns with the research done on what kind of design women prefer which concluded women appreciate asymmetrical design (Ritnamkam et al).

When it comes to wide margins for note taking, MA Reading Specialist Mark Pennington discovered when a reader interacts with a book through note-taking in the margins, there is greater room for comprehension (Pennington). He noted that “talking to the text” makes that text memorable and, therefore, more comprehensible, and that the reader is well prepared to discuss the information read (Pennington). Studies show that note-taking increases cognition; therefore, providing a space for it is helpful for women looking to understand the prophetic literature. According to Hetty Roessingh, a writer for BBC, taking notes with normal pen and paper as opposed to a phone can greatly increase retention (Roessingh). In an age where digital products are far more used, classic methods — like pen and paper — appear to be the most reliable. Note-taking creates opportunity for deeper understanding of a subject. “When deep understanding and remembering, making personal connection and sparking creative thought are important, hand-written notes matter and endure over time...Creating neurocircuitry for memory and meaning through the hand-brain complex is the key to understanding the value of hand-written notes” (Roessingh). By allowing negative space and margin in the grid and layout of the handbook, an opportunity opens for women to take notes on what they read and see, which can increase communication,
comprehension, and appreciation for the Old Testament prophetic books.

Allowing room within the grid and layout structure for larger margins is beneficial to the final deliverable, as margins provide opportunity for the audience to engage the text and remember more of what it says for longer term.

**Hierarchy**

Hierarchy, specifically in design, is having the most important information the most prominent, with everything else falling beneath it. An example of this is the use of headers, subheaders, and body text. A header would be the title of a magazine article; therefore, it would be the largest text on the page. Under that might fall a tagline or author’s name, which would be smaller than the header. The smallest text on the page would then be the body text, most likely between nine and eleven points. Hierarchy helps to guide readers through a page or through a website while also creating visual interest. It is an element that first needs to be functional, then visually interesting. Hierarchy, the grid, and layout need to work together to successfully communicate information.

*Hierarchy is the ordering system used for the elements controlled by the grid and provides an additional navigational structure. Visual consistency will be recognized by the viewer and will allow for easy access to all tiers of information efficiently by structuring information from most to least important…. The level of success to which a designer codes information will determine how clear and cohesive a layout is, allowing for easy retention of core messages (Amy Graver et al, 68).*
As mentioned previously, there is a heavy amount of information that is communicated within this one handbook. Not only does it cover all 16 major and minor prophets, but other topics are discussed as well, like Hebrew literature. Hierarchy helps communicate this information by being another form of structure within the grid that helps guide the audience by providing visual queues and interest. This is achieved through font variations and sizes, as well as different color options, the scale of illustrations, and more.

**Typography**

“Typography is the visual component of the written word” (Butterick). The letters that make up the words seen around daily life — from book titles to billboards to the text used on an iPhone versus an Android — have been designed by typographers, designers who specialize in creating typefaces and fonts. There is more to a letter, a word, and a paragraph than simply what it says. Typography is the reason people have been confused on presidential election ballots and why they know they’re taking a certain exit, indicated by a large green sign and stark white letters. Typography can make or break visual communication because of its direct correlation with the words that are being communicated. If a reader or the audience cannot read it, the communication is lost immediately. If the audience doesn’t want to pay attention to something because of the typography, then the typography has failed at its job. “Attention is the reader’s gift to you. That gift is precious. And finite. And should you fail to be a respectful steward of that gift — most commonly, by boring or exasperating your reader — it will be promptly revoked” (Butterick). In short, strong typography keeps the audience’s attention and communicates effectively.

Because of the amount of information that is communicated to the audience
when reading the final deliverable, typography plays a significant role. If a certain typeface looks beautiful but fails to read well, it does not maximize communication nor meet the end goal. For example, cursive and script typefaces are fairly popular amidst the female demographic; however, many illegible typefaces have been created within this trend. A heavily flourished and thin typeface does not properly communicate to the audience, nor will it match the content within the handbook. In addition to choosing the best typographic choices, the typography needs to work with the grid and layout structure. All of these elements must work together to successfully create design that best communicates to the female audience.

**Color Theory**

Color is another element of design, perhaps one of the more well known elements. The color used in design can quickly influence the audience’s reaction, making it an important element to be well thought through. Color often evokes an emotional response; therefore, it needs to be heavily considered when choosing a palette in design so the right emotion is being tapped into. The wrong color could evoke the wrong emotion, therefore, not successfully communicating to the audience. “Color has a tendency to create the most impact on viewers over any other design element. It creates an emotional response, and the response will vary depending on the subject of the design, the cultural context that it will live within, and the personal preferences of the viewer” (Amy Graver et al, 168).

Color can be used for organization in design, which can often be seen in publication and editorial design. When there is a large amount of information to be communicated, color can be used to break up the organization in smaller pieces. In addition to that, color can be a way
to create hierarchy in design. A simple example of this is how some people might use files to organize their papers and how colored tabs added to the files can add another level of structure and organization. The colored tabs assist in finding the correct paper more quickly, and are therefore, more efficient. The same idea works in design. Color can help in organizing design, adding yet another layer of structure for more efficient, as well as creative, communication.

Color can also be used to target certain audiences, thus bolstering communication and grabbing attention to the desired people group. If one were to walk down the toy aisle of a store, there would be an abundance of bright, bold colors. This design is intentional. Children gravitate toward what is brighter. A hot pink toy appears more exciting than a beige one. However, a spa will most likely not be designed with hot pink chairs and bright purple rugs because the wrong emotion and audience is being tapped into. Softer colors, like whites, blues, and grays, are more likely to be used by a spa because they invoke a sense of calmness and peace, which is what a spa is typically for. Color can make or break an atmosphere or a product for the target audience. That being addressed, the case study conducted by Ritnamkam and his colleagues concluded women were more drawn to softer and warmer colors, as opposed to the cooler tones men were drawn to (Ritnamkam et al). This doesn’t necessarily mean women only prefer pink and red. Greens, blues, and purples can have underlying warmth in them that attract women. In addition, several other case studies conducted by researchers, anthropologists, and scientists tested if men truly are drawn to cool tones while women are drawn to warm tones, like pink and red. The researchers studied large groups of men and women from different nations and collected data on their color preferences, utilizing
different types of methodologies. The conclusion in these case studies were the same: women preferred warmer tones like red and pink. Even across Polish, English, and Indian cultural backgrounds, the conclusion remained the same for both men and women (Sorokowski et al; Bonnardel et al).

Not only does color have an impact on the structure of a design, but it also impacts who the design is for. To assure the color palette works best for the target audience in the final deliverable, warm tones are used throughout. In addition, the color palette is large enough to be used for map and timeline illustrations, as well as organizing the information throughout the book.

**Illustration**

Illustration is a branch of design and is utilized in many areas of the design world. It can be used in website design, animations, advertising, book design, and so on. The world of illustration is broad, for there are endless designers and styles within illustration. One of the benefits of illustration is the infinite possibilities within it. Any idea, world, character, animal, etc. can be imagined and visually shown through illustration. Editorial illustrators are known for delivering witty and conceptual ideas through a single illustration. They can be used to accompany a written piece or they can stand alone.

In a case study on a book called the “Geometry of Pasta,” designers had to figure out how to visually enhance an informational book on the many shapes of pasta. Rather than trying to explain the pasta shapes through words or take photos of various kinds of pasta, they decided to illustrate every kind of pasta in the exact same style - flat and stark black with white details. They utilized a structured grid system so the various pasta shapes could accompany the text in a cohesive but whimsical format.
“The combination of the repetition of elements to create patterns, thoughtfully composed illustrations of the pastas to interact with the text on the spread, and interesting cropping added all of the visual interest anyone could ask for and creates a consistent look for the piece” (Amy Graver et al, 133). Through utilizing both the grid system and illustration, the book was visually stimulating. It called for attention because of how all of the design elements positively interacted with each other. Not only that, but the illustrations added communication value.

Illustration can be a dynamic and interesting way to grab the attention of the audience, as well as communicate with an audience. To enhance visual stimulation in the final deliverable, this element is used to inform women on the historical context behind the prophetic literature through use of illustrated timelines and maps. Because of the brain’s capacity to process images 400% more quickly than text, as mentioned in previous research (3M Meeting Network), the illustrations also serve to enhance cognition and memory. Therefore, women are not only visually stimulated by the illustrations, but they will also remember the content better, thus assisting them in the overall understanding of the prophetic literature.

**Other Design Elements**

There are several other design elements that play a role in the final deliverable, which assist in effectively communicating to the audience. These basic elements create a foundation for color, typography, and hierarchy to build on. While each of these elements are not looked at intricately in this study, they indeed play a large role in the overall construction of the final deliverable.
To gain understanding of the Biblical resources that currently exist for women in particular, several case studies were conducted. Because a female-specific Biblical commentary or manual does not currently exist, these case studies primarily cover Bible studies created for women or general Bible commentaries. The case studies review the following information: (1) the mission or goal behind each resource, (2) if Old Testament prophetic books were covered, (3) how the Biblical study guided through the prophetic literature, and (4) the overall graphic design style of the Biblical study.
She Reads Truth

Founded in 2012, She Reads Truth was created to get women in the Word of God daily. Throughout the years, many studies have been developed for women, from a book study to a theme or topic study, like hospitality, for example, in addition to Church calendar studies (i.e. Advent and Lent). Each study is specially curated and designed to best communicate the content.

A handful of Old Testament prophetic books are covered, often merged into one study, which are listed below. It should be noted, the study guides for the prophetic books do not provide much context when starting out. There is usually a sentence or two describing what’s going on, but aside from that, the online studies go directly into the books. The physical study guide provides a bit more context with maps and timelines as well, which are beautifully designed with illustrations and sometimes custom hand-lettering. In addition to that, these studies are successful in pointing things to Christ, however, there could be more depth to help readers fully grasp the significance of the prophetic books.

- The Lord is Our God (Zechariah and Malachi)
- God is Among You (Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai)
- Seek God and Live (Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah)
- Lent 2020 (Jeremiah)

The customer has the choice to buy the study guide, which includes the daily Scripture readings, timelines, maps, and memory cards, or simply follow along the online reading plan that includes a blog style post about the reading. The online portion is not required because She Reads Truth believes the Holy Spirit informs and directs throughout Scripture with or without a commentary. In addition to that, the study guide provides space to write out thoughts and ideas as one reads through the Scriptures. The studies are customizable in the sense that one can choose the study guide, the online reading, or both.

She Reads Truth has created countless studies that are well tailored to their target audience of women. Each study is carefully designed with intention and detail according to each specific study. There are timelines and maps included in the study guides that are created to match the study as a whole in an aesthetic way as opposed to the traditional style of maps and timelines one might see in the back of their Bible. Throughout each study guide is an abundance of inspiring images, photography, lettering, and color. Overall, the design of these study guides are well done.

The main takeaway from these studies is how they created meaningful studies that are correlated to the Biblical themes and topics within them. They modernized maps and timelines in a way that women will enjoy looking at and could even use as art pieces as well. While these books do not work specifically as in-depth manuals for women, their appealing designs are worth modeling after.
Well-Watered Women

These studies are mainly topic-focused, in addition to the Church calendar events like Advent. There are only four studies that are on a book of the Bible and none of them are prophetic literature. The studies are similar to The Daily Grace Co. There are daily readings, questions based on the readings, and places to take notes and “respond.” In addition to the study guide, the reader has the opportunity to go a little deeper with an online PDF that provides additional resources.

It is similar to The Daily Grace Co. in that all of the books are resources are created in a trendy fashion. There is a lot of use of photography, bold or muted color palettes, and script typefaces. Again, despite how trendy it might appear, these studies function for the target audience.

The main takeaway from the Well-Watered Women studies is their organic lettering. While hand-lettering and script typefaces are trendy right now, the organic nature of some of their typography is something that leans more into the calligraphy side of things, which is indeed fitting for a female audience. Much like the Daily Grace Co., the trendiness will not appropriately match the nature of this thesis, so the final deliverable leans away from that.
Precept Ministries offers studies on both books of the Bible and topics. The studies are designed with different levels of depth. For example, one can study the book of Proverbs at Level 2, which consists of 15-30 minutes of studying per day, as opposed to the book of Proverbs at Level 5, which is intensive and requires over an hour of studying every day. The way the courses are designed provides flexibility for the reader, as well as a system that accommodates different readers in different stages of their spiritual life. There are options for just males, just females, couples, youth, children, leaders, pastors and so on.

All of the Old Testament prophetic books are covered; however, they are covered at different depths. The major prophetic books are covered in two-part series, but they are only available in the intensive Level 5 studies. The minor prophetic books are often paired together for the Level 2 studies, while not all of them are covered in the intensive studies (as of right now, only Zechariah and Malachi are in the Level 5 series). In addition to this, there are Level 5 intensive study books on the Old Testament kings and prophets. For the Level 5 intensive studies, the reader purchases the study guide, found on the website. The study guide leads one through the specific book of the Bible or topic, starting with Scripture to read each day. The Scripture reading is followed by in-depth questions and analyses the reader must answer and think about. Oftentimes, the study guide provides cross-references for the reader to look up to fully understand how the book/topic fits into the narrative of Scripture. Overall, the study is interactive and pushes the reader to dig deep into Scripture to understand beyond the surface and get to the root of the passage.

Precept Ministries recently went through a rebrand in April of 2020, so the Level 5 intensive study covers look clean and cohesive with the same rich green color, typography, and layout throughout all of them. However, all the other book covers are outdated due to being created in the 1990s and not being updated since then. Not to mention, the inside of the newly rebranded study guides are fairly simple as well. They seem to simply be laid out on a Word Document, so there isn’t much designed content within any of the study guides.

While these series go in depth and there are many different options from topics to books of the Bible, the styles are not up to date nor female specific. There also appears to be no meaning or intention behind the simplistic layout, which is straightforward and to the point.
### Judges

#### Table: The Judges of Israel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Heritage (Tribe)</th>
<th>Physical Characteristics</th>
<th>Occupation and Weapons</th>
<th>Years Judged</th>
<th>God's Dealings</th>
<th>Reactions and Behaviors</th>
<th>Enemies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JAIR</strong></td>
<td>Gileadite</td>
<td>n/a healthy</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JEPHTHAH</strong></td>
<td>Gileadite</td>
<td>a valiant warrior, son of a Haranite</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>God and Jephthah in defeating the power of Ammon’s king Jabin</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IZRAN</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>Jephthah made a vow to the LORD that if he did anything good for the only child</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Daily Grace Co.

Much like She Reads Truth and Precept Ministries, The Daily Grace Co. has several options when it comes to studying the Scriptures. There are a handful of exegetical studies on the books of the Bible, in addition to topical studies. There are studies on overcoming anxiety, traditional hymns, Advent books, and even a few books for children and men. There are three prophetic books covered: Habakkuk (Even If), Haggai (The God That Comes Near), and Jonah (Mercy in the Storm). The studies seem to rely heavily on applying these ancient books to modern culture as well.

The studies are completed over a few weeks, typically 5-6, and the reader uses the study guides to go through the chosen book of the Bible or topic. “The book contains the daily study material as well as study suggestions and extra features, like word studies and charts, to help one dig deeper. Each week contains 5 days of study material, including daily study questions. Each week also has a memory verse day and a weekly reflection day to help dig deeper into Scripture” (The Daily Grace Co., Even If).

The Daily Grace Co. resources rely heavily on current trends. There is heavy photography in use, as well as script typefaces paired with modern, high-contrast serif typefaces. The designs for the resources work for the target audience.

The main takeaway from the Daily Grace Co. is the way they designed maps and timelines for female specific audiences, much like She Reads Truth. The covers and general layout of the books are too trendy for this specific thesis; however, the maps and timeline examples were indeed useful in creating the final deliverable. Due to the unique nature of this thesis tying women and prophetic literature together, the final deliverable needed to meet that unique nature design-wise as well, rather than be confined to the current trends.

In creating the final deliverable, it was necessary to review the general structure and design of a preexisting handbook on prophetic literature. The target audience of this book differs from the resources above in that it is targeted towards anyone who desires to understand prophetic literature. The book covers the complex literature of the prophetic books, including the Old Testament books of Daniel and Lamentations. The handbook explores the content, theology, themes, and structure of each individual prophetic book. This handbook does not function as a Bible study, but is rather a guide through the books for assistance. It is 512 pages full of explanatory content and information.

This book was not created with the target audience of women in mind. It reads as a manual, not a Bible study like the other case studies. The design is simplistic and structured with classic sans serif and serif typefaces throughout the book.
“The Bible Expositor’s Handbook: Old and New Testaments” by Greg Harris

While this book’s target audience is not primarily women, but both male and female, the cover is very striking and one of the most intriguing designs when looking at Biblical commentaries and handbooks. It lays the foundation to understanding the ins and outs of Scripture both Old and New Testaments all in a Christocentric manner. Again, while this book includes the prophetic literature, it broadens across the scope of Scripture in a holistic way. It’s not a study with questions and notes, but rather a chapter book that leads its readers to learn how to approach Scripture and apply it.

As mentioned above, the cover is striking. The bold colors and modern typefaces work well together to grab attention amidst the pale yellow and orange realm of Biblical commentaries. To someone who is not familiar with the Scriptures, the imagery may appear confusing initially. However, for those who are, the imagery is great. Ultimately, the cover and binding grab attention.
The PROPHETS
Chapter Three
Visual Process

Visual Solution
Content Ladder
Sketches
Color Palette
Illustrations
Book Cover Design
Final Deliverable
Visual Solution

Because the solution needed to both inform, as well as include plenty of visual supplementation, the initial idea was to create a Bible study on the book of Ezekiel. After discussing this with the committee, the idea was simplified by narrowing down to a basic handbook. This handbook was created to include plenty of basic information, while also including plenty of visuals to assist in cognition and understanding.

Through use of interesting colors, illustrative maps, colorful time lines, and an integration of both old and new illustrations, the deliverable is full of visual supplementation for the prophetic books. This, in turn, not only keeps readers interested, but also assist them in their overall understanding of the more difficult prophetic genre.

The final deliverable is a 128 page handbook entitled “A Walk With the Prophets: A Women’s Guide Through the Old Testament Prophetic Books.” The title was created to feel casual and welcoming, so any woman would feel confident picking it up and reading through it.
Due to the amount of information that needed to be included in the final deliverable, in addition to the deliverable being a book, a content ladder was created. A content ladder is a way to lay out all the information of a book or magazine to plan out every single page. After several different failed content ladders, the one to the right was the solution. The plan was to create as much visual supplementation as possible, so every page would have at least one interesting visual to look at.
DESIGN GOALS
- Female Audience
- Ancient Textile Inspiration
- Stone Textures
- Grown Up Illustrations
- Sophisticated
- Warm Tones
- Colorful
Mood Board

A mood board is a way to collect visuals to create a general design direction for a project. This mood board includes many design aspects, from typography to illustration style to ancient textures to printed books. Throughout the design process of the solution, this mood board was constantly consulted to assure the design and visual supplementation stayed on track. In addition, the images heavily inspired the color palette, which will be discussed later on.
Sketches

One of the key elements in the design process is sketching. It assists in coming up with composition and layout issues before designing on the computer. The whole book was laid out in thumbnail sketches in order to figure out the best way to piece the book together visually. In addition to sketching the general layout of the handbook, all of the illustrations began as thumbnail sketches to come to a creative solution for each prophetic book. The following pages contain the sketches from the design process with the thoughts behind every sketch and ideation.
Color Palette

The color palette was based on inspiration from ancient stones, pigments, and architecture in addition to research that revealed females are more drawn to warmer tones. Even when developing green and blue values, the goal was to maintain a warm palette that felt inviting and approachable as opposed to cold and stark.

In addition to researching what colors and tones would specifically target a female audience, research was conducted to understand what color would best fit for large bodies of text in the final deliverable. The background color heavily influences the ease in which text can be read; therefore, in order to maximize readability, I utilized this research when choosing a color palette for the pages of text in the deliverable. A study by Luz Rello and Jeffrey Bigham revealed that warmer tones, like peach, orange, and yellow, increase readability, with the color peach being the most effective. Cooler tones required a longer amount of reading time, which shows that warm values are best for maximum readability (Rello, Bigham). The pages of the final deliverable have more peach colored pages to both maximize readability and to target a female audience.
illustration for the book of Jeremiah
Illustrations

To add visual interest, as well as to connect imagery with the text from the prophetic literature, 22 illustrations were handmade to go into the final deliverable. Each illustration was first sketched as a thumbnail, then created digitally on an iPad with an Apple Pencil on the app Procreate. Once the illustrations were finalized on the iPad, they were moved into Adobe Photoshop for final touch-ups, then placed in the deliverable document in Adobe InDesign.

The goal of the illustrations was to provide visual connections to key themes in each prophetic book, as well as show what the ancient empires of the time might have looked like. As mentioned previously, the brain processes visuals 60,000 time faster than text (“Imagery Vs Text. Which Does the Brain Prefer?”). It was important to include visuals that were cohesive with the final deliverable and targeted to a female audience so that cognition could be increased. These illustrations, in addition to the charts that were made, are the visual supplementation to the prophetic books to aide in understanding. On the following pages, you will find all of the illustrations and maps that were created for the deliverable, which maintained the chosen color palette. The concept behind each illustration is broken down with the accompanying theme/Scripture that it was based on.
Assyria
The illustration of Neo-Assyria was based on researching the architecture of ancient Assyria. This architecture often overlapped that of the Babylonian architecture, with large buildings and surrounding lush greenery. On the main architecture is the infamous Assyrian symbol of a lion and man merged, which is called Lamassu. It is one of the deities from ancient Assyrian culture.

Babylon
One of the Seven Wonders of the World is the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, so that is shown in the illustration for Babylon. The Hanging Gardens signify the wealth and luxury the Babylonians lived in. In addition, the structure in the illustration is a ziggurat, which was a sort of temple structure used by ancient civilizations.

Medo-Persia
One of the main cities of Medo-Persia was Persepolis. The ruins of part of the city still stand today, so this illustration was loosely based on those ruins. Because the Medo-Persian empire was less aggressive than Assyria and Babylon, this illustration is warmer with more homes and greenery. Some of the Jews were sent back home and they were permitted to worship their own God, so this illustration tries to capture a breath of fresh air after long years of exile.
**Amos**
The people of Israel are compared to a basket of ripe summer fruit in the book of Amos, which sounds better than what it means (Amos 8:1-2). The Lord compared them to this because their days of flourishing were coming to an end. Because of their sin, judgment was coming. In the illustration, there are brighter, ripe fruit atop more dull colored fruit, signifying the time running out for Israel.

**Jonah**
Many artists depict the account of Jonah through Jonah with a large fish; however, based on the theme of Jonah, that’s not the main point of the book. It’s about God’s extension of love and grace to the Gentiles and Jonah’s angry response. This illustration captures the moment of God’s grace for Nineveh and for Jonah (the plant shading him from the blazing sun), despite his desire to see the people destroyed. In addition, the red sun connects this piece to the Neo-Assyria illustration, because Nineveh became the Assyrian captial city.

**Hosea**
Hosea is about God’s steadfast faithfulness to Israel, despite their lack of faithfulness to Him. This illustration is taken from the passage Hosea 2:14-15, where the Lord leads the rebellious people to the wilderness to show them both mercy and hope. This image is specifically of the Valley of Achor, meaning a “door of hope.” The Lord offered this hope and redeeming love to the people, even when they rebelled.
Isaiah
Isaiah 25 reveals God’s plan to totally eliminate death by swallowing it and once that is completed, He wipes the tears from His people and prepares for them a plentiful feast on His mountain. In an effort to capture that scene, the Isaiah illustration shows a table on a mountain surrounded by fruit bearing plants, symbolizing the Lord’s provision of the feast for His people.

Micah
The book of Micah illustration focuses in on the New Temple of Jerusalem. It signifies the covenant faithfulness of God and His plan to establish a Ruler who would perfectly reign forever. In the foreground are vibrant and lush palm trees, signifying the life that this Ruler will bring.

Obadiah
In contrast to Micah, the book of Obadiah reveals the conflict between Edom and Israel, once brothers. This tiny book has a lot to say about destruction. The illustration is the temple in Jerusalem totally destroyed and in ruins, for Edom took great joy in the desolation of his neighboring nation. In response to Edom’s love of Jerusalem’s ruins, God promised that Edom would also end up in ruins.
Joel
The book of Joel is about the Day of the Lord, which is a day of judgment on the wicked. Joel warns of a locust famine coming because of the wickedness of Judah (Joel 1:4). That being said, the illustration is of a dry and empty land, signifying what would happen from the locusts, but also representing the dry and empty hearts the people had. They chose created things rather than the Creator, resulting in lifeless hearts and lifestyles.

Nahum
While Jonah is about the repentance of Nineveh, Nahum reveals that they eventually went back to their pagan ways. The illustration shows God’s judgment on Nineveh, which ultimately shows His sovereignty over all nations and all people. His sovereignty is signified by the idol’s cracked head in the foreground, showing the lack of power found in false gods.

Zephaniah
The illustration of Zephaniah was taken from Zephaniah 3:19-13, where people come from beyond the rivers of Cush and have one language to humbly worship the Lord. The overall feel of the illustration is full of life and beauty, signifying the beauty of a united people from all over the world worshiping their Creator. It almost has a Garden of Eden sense to it, which points to the restoration to come.
Habakkuk
Habakkuk is a dialogue between the Lord and the prophet. After wrestling with the Lord about some difficult news, Habakkuk ends the book by choosing to trust in God. Even when famine hits and the fig trees die, he promises to praise the Lord through it all (Habakkuk 3).

Jeremiah
Jeremiah 17 is about Jeremiah going to the potter’s house to hear from God. He revealed His position as a Potter of the people, molding and forming as He sees best. This account is foundational for the book of Jeremiah, for major political and spiritual events happen in the book. This analogy serves as a reminder that God is the powerful and sovereign King and Creator over all nations.

Ezekiel
In the last section of Ezekiel, chapters 40-48, Ezekiel receives a specific vision of the New Temple. In one part of this vision, he sees a river flow from the temple door all the way to the Dead Sea. The river is full of fresh water that brings life with it wherever it goes. Fish fill the Dead Sea, plants bear abundant fruit, and there is plentiful life. This imagery points to the Garden of Eden, symbolizing God’s plan for the plentiful future to come.
Daniel
Like the book of Jonah, there is typically a specific image that comes to mind for Daniel, namely Daniel in the lion’s den. However, for this illustration the goal was to show Daniel’s faithfulness to the Lord in a Gentile land. Daniel was devoted to the Lord in all of the circumstances found in Scripture, even during Babylonian and Medo-Persian reigns. This illustration is Daniel at his window praying, symbolizing his faithfulness to God in Babylonian days, Medo-Persian days, and even in the midst of all the strange visions and imagery he received. It’s a nod to God honoring those who do not elevate themselves above Himself.

Haggai
Because the book of Haggai focuses on the rebuilding of the temple, that is what the illustration focuses on. The returned exiles chose to build their own comfortable homes before restoring the Temple, which resulted in a famine (Haggai 1). The illustration is a simple reminder that neglect of worshiping the Lord results in little harvest.

Zechariah
The illustration of Zechariah is taken from one of his very first visions of the horseman and horses amidst the myrtle trees (Zechariah 1:7-17). This vision paralleled the last vision, found in Zechariah 6:1-8, which revealed God’s merciful protection over His people. Zechariah was a prophet right before the intertestamental period, so this illustration shows that God was working amidst His people, even when He seemed silent.
Malachi
The illustration for Malachi is based on Malachi 4:2, which says, “But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings” (ESV). Because this is the last book before the New Testament, this illustration needed to feel hopeful. The sun isn’t setting, but rising, because the Messiah was coming and He would bring hope and healing.

Spot Illustrations
Throughout the deliverable are many spot illustrations to further implement visual supplementation for understanding. These illustrations are simple, yet pulled from the prophetic books to offer a better understanding of the complex imagery going on. Even the maps of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Medo-Persian empires got illustration treatment to help the reader see the architecture and agriculture in those days.

In addition, there are several parts of the prophetic books where a prophet receives a dream or vision with interesting creatures. For example, Daniel had a vision of a lion with wings, a bear with three rib bones in its mouth, a four headed leopard, and a beast with 10 horns. To visualize these unique creatures not only creates visual interest, but provides the viewer with quicker understanding.

All of the spot illustrations throughout the book were created with a similar style. They are simple, but effective, and they match the color palette of the rest of the book for repetition and unity.
NOTES

If you look at the chart below, you can see how the events of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in chapter 3 lead to the events of Daniel in chapter 1, and the events of Belshazzar in chapter 5.

APPLICATION

While we wait for this storm, we can take the advice given in Daniel. "No one has ever lived to the end. And you, child, will live and stand in your glorious place at the end of time" (Daniel 12:1). Live thankfully in obedience to the Lord, excelling, waiting, and watching in the Kingdom of His love. Even if there seemed to be great opposition all around, choose to be steadfast in trusting the LORD God, who is sovereign over all people and all nations.

*CHEAT SHEET*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>605 to 537 BC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Exile of Judah</td>
<td>Sovereignty Over All People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God's sovereignty was primarily</td>
<td>Judah the southern kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main empire was</td>
<td>Assyria Babylon Medo/Persia Greece Rome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Old Illustrations

In addition to the colorful, handmade illustrations, old prophetic illustrations are also included in the final deliverable. The reason for these old illustrations is to bring in an older element, to further drive home the point of tying old and new together (modern day Christians reading and studying Old Testament prophetic books).

Each illustration was licensed from Adobe Stock and all are specific scenes from the prophetic books. To increase a modern appearance, each illustration received some sort of color treatment within a warm color palette. Some illustrations have color overlays, while others have organic shapes that help to draw attention, but also highlight certain things happening in the scene. For example, in the bottom right example, Jeremiah is delivering God’s Word to his scribe Baruch, so the scroll and Baruch’s pen are the center of attention.
The typography in the final solution was carefully considered due to it being a text- and information-heavy document. Four typefaces were chosen and used throughout the handbook to develop good hierarchy, as well as good legibility.

IvyPresto Thin was used primarily for headers or subheaders, due to it being a typeface with low contrast. Culture Regular was used sparingly; however, it was chosen due its modern yet ancient appearance. It was used mainly for subheaders throughout the book, as well as the cover’s title font. Future PT Demi was utilized quite a bit due to how easy it is to read. This bold and geometric typeface was used for subheaders, larger paragraph text, and the page numbers. Finally, Hightower TextRoman is a wide set serif typeface. This typeface is classic and easy to read, so it was utilized for the paragraph text throughout the entire book.
The Cover Design

The design of the cover of the handbook was important for the success of the thesis final deliverable. If it was too complex, it could turn away consumers, and if it was too trendy, it would not properly get the point across to those walking by it on bookshelves or browsing commentaries online. Helen Yentus, Penguin Random House art director of Riverhead writes, “If a book doesn’t do as well as hoped, you can worry that another approach to the cover might have produced a different outcome” (Yentus). That being said, the handbook’s cover needed to stand out amidst the endless amount of book covers found on the Internet and bookshelves within stores. It needed to be a proper balance between the complex content and the target audience. With such interesting content, the cover had to communicate that in a way that grabbed positive attention.

*Designing a book cover is the process of getting an author’s manuscript into the hands of a reader, by materializing it – giving it a form. A successful book cover needs to make a reader ‘feel’ the manuscript rather than ‘tell’ about it (Carton).*

Based on minimal research, some of the most important components for a book cover is the typography, the layout, the color palette, the imagery, and how all four components are interacting with one another (Carton). Each of these components were carefully considered when designing the cover, which can be seen to the right. The cover is made up of intriguing illustrations from the prophetic books and is paired with the peach color to target a female audience. In addition, the typography chosen needed to be easy to read. The color, illustrations, and typography for the cover work together to create a dynamic image that not only draws consumers in, specifically because of the unique imagery, but also beckons women to pick up the book to get a closer look. The cover summarizes the content of the book in a designed way, which was the overall goal of the cover.
A WALK WITH THE PROPHETS
A Women’s Guide to the Prophetic Books of the Old Testament

WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY OLIVIA SMITH
Historical & Cultural Gap

To address the historical and cultural gap, the final deliverable includes informative sections about important empires during the days of the prophets. There is content that covers Assyria, Babylon, and Medo-Persia. In addition, each section includes an illustration of that empire, a breakdown of which prophets were active during that empire’s timeline, and an illustrative map that shows the regions within each empire. These visuals and sections help the reader to understand the world in which the prophets lived.

In addition, the book includes two timelines that visualize how each empire came into power and where each prophet lived throughout history. The timelines were also designed within the warm color palette and with small illustrations to help guide the reader through the history easily.
Hebrew Literature

A small Hebrew literature lesson was included in the final deliverable to give the reader a brief understanding to equip them in studying the prophetic literature. The section begins with a breakdown of Hebrew literature and why it is important to know. Different forms of parallelism are then broken down with biblical examples to show the reader what to look for. To add in a visual element, each form of parallelism comes with a unique symbol that visualizes what its doing. Women can then take these symbols and write them in their Bible or notes when they are reading prophetic literature.

At the end of the Hebrew literature section, there is an interactive portion for women to put the Hebrew literature knowledge into practice. This section includes the warm color palette and simple typography to make it easy to read, as well as approachable.
Summaries of Prophets

Each prophetic book was broken down into its own section chronologically. An illustration was created based on the theme of each book, as well as imagery from each book. The summary begins with the background of each prophet so the reader can go back to the timelines or the ancient empire sections to better understand the world the prophet lived in. Then there is content that summarizes the book and its main points. The reader can read each summary before, during, or after reading a prophetic book to gain better understanding.

At the end of each summary is a cheat sheet with fast facts for the reader to get a quick idea of what the book is about. This cheat sheet includes when the prophet was active, who their audience was, the theme of the book, which empire was in control, as well as a reading tip. In addition, the summaries have a wide margin to encourage note-taking, which can increase cognition.
Informative Content

The final deliverable opens with informative content. There is an introduction, a section devoted to the position of a prophet, a breakdown of why the prophetic books need to be studied, and a section on Hebrew literature. Because these sections are content heavy, small illustrations, pull quotes, and the old illustrations were used to include visuals. These help to break up the content in a palatable way. In addition, each section is color coded to aid in organization. The largest section, which is “Why do we need to study the prophets?” includes peach colored pages, which was based on the case study by Rello and Bigham, to maximize readability (Rello, Bigham).
To not read, study, and meditate on the prophetic literature is to not believe in its authority and canonicity.

PHYLICIA MASONHEIMER


Duguid, Iain and Guthrie, Nancy. *Iain Duguid on Teaching*


Mackie, Tim, and Collins, Jon. *Jesus and the Parables of the Prophets Transcript | BibleProject™*. https://bibleproject.com/podcast/jesus-and-parables-


*The Ins and Outs of Cover Design | News for Authors.*


