

THE MINISTRY OF THE PROPHET

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*John 1:1 "In the beginning **was** the word and the word **was** with God, and God **was** the word."*

In this passage there are some peculiarities, which seem to be beckoning to the reader to see beyond the mere words. One of these is the word 'WAS' being used with 'IN THE BEGINNING'. This clearly says that the beginning must be referring to something specific, since something existed before the beginning. This of course speaks of the person of Christ who is absolute, complete and perfect. Although we have all that is His in the Blood of Jesus Christ and in the Holy Ghost, we have not experientially entered into this fullness and much is yet left to be revealed both to us and in us. In view of this very important fact the Spirit of prophecy and the ministry of the prophet must continue to work in the Church until this fullness comes.

THE NECESSITY:

In every age prophecy and prophets have come to the people in time of necessity. Since our God is in the saving business, prophets and prophecies come to us in time of grave darkness to illuminate the word, and before times of grave trouble to show us the way of escape.

THE HISTORY OF PROPHECY:

Adam was a prophet of a kind for he passed down the knowledge of God to his children. Enoch who was the seventh man of God from Adam and was a prophet who even prophesied things concerning the end of time before he was translated by faith in God.

We know little of the prophets of the antediluvian world, but one can easily observe from the Bible that much has been handed down through Noah and his family from those who walked with God before the flood.

After the flood, the first giant to come forth among the sons of God was Abraham. He came out of Ur a city of Chaldea (Iraq or Babylon), and his father was the priest of Baal. God called him away from his land and from his father's gods, unto himself and to a new land.

Genesis 12:1 "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

12:2 "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

12:3 "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

One feature of the prophet is clearly seen here; that the prophet must have an open line with God. This man Abraham did not know God, but God began to systematically reveal himself to him. We notice that as Abraham would obey the instructions of God, he would receive more instructions, and when he disobeyed or made errors even in a slight degree, that he would experience unpleasant repercussions. A good example of this is when he took with him not only his father but Lot, his nephew. The instruction was to leave his father's house, and the implication was that he should leave behind the practices of his kin and country. His father however, insisted on going with him, therefore he was in a bind and carried his father along. Abraham's action was humanly reasonable, but created a spiritual problem, in that he carried with him the very spiritual forces he was supposed to have left behind. His father died and that obliterated the problem, but he also had Lot his nephew with him, which caused him a good, deal of trouble, but was also dealt with by the Lord.

I am sure some of my readers will say that Abraham was not a prophet, he was a Patriarch. In his function as representing God to the world, he acted the part of the prophet.

Abraham's dealings with God revealed God to us, to a very large extent. His faith became the model for faith among all men and he obtained "*Justification*" not by righteousness, but "*because he believed God*". (Romans 4:9)

MOSES:

Again the prophets prophesied that a deliverer would come forth to deliver Israel from four hundred years of slavery under the Egyptian:

Genesis 50:24 "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land He swore to Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob."

Each of the Patriarchs made some major prophetic utterance. Moses of all the men of God was the most prolific in his prophecies. It is not apparent to the casual reader, but he prophesied by the word. The Word of God as contained in the types and shadows compasses the whole truth of the Bible from beginning to end. Moses prophesied of the coming of Jesus Christ and of the end of the world. The scripture records the following:

Deuteronomy 34:10 "And there rose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face...."

This is God's testimony of Moses as a prophet:

Numbers 12:6 "And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream."

12:7 "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house."

12:8 "With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

DAVID:

The identity of the prophet is always mixed with that of the Spirit of God. The Spirit speaks through the man, yet the man speaks.

Psalms 22:12 "Many bulls have compassed me: Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round,

22:13 "They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring lion."

David in the Spirit was prophesying of Jesus Christ, yet the man David was experiencing the same thing in his own life. The symbol of the Candlestick clearly typifies an operation in Christ where God and man participate with some dependence on each other. The Gold is Divine Nature, the Oil is the Spirit, but the lowly wick is humanity – that part which carries the fire and burns out, but the light would be impossible without the wick.

ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL, DANIEL -

And all the other prophets of the Old Testament had some common factors among them:

(1) They all prophesied the Word of God.

(2) Everything that was prophesied or written seemed to have a power of recurrence in which the prophecy in many instances was not only for that time, but seems to continue to maximize itself, even to the very fullness of the words spoken.

A very outstanding example of this is found in the prophecy of Joel pertaining to the end of time. At the end of speaking of the pouring out of God's Spirit upon all humanity, we see a verse thus:

Joel 2:30 "And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke."

On the day of Pentecost when Peter rose up in the Spirit to speak, he said, *"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel,"* Acts 2:16. He proceeded to quote the passage in Joel 2:23-32 and yet on examination of the circumstances one can clearly see that the prophecy was only fulfilled in part at Pentecost, and the Spirit of God speaking through Peter made a very important clarification by saying, **"IN THE LAST DAYS"**. We are still in the *"Last days"*, and we in the modern world are those who see the *"Pillars of Smoke"*. I am sure Peter himself did not know what it meant, and all the *"blood"* and all the fire of the past ages will not be able to match that which we the modern man is about to witness. In like manner all the outpouring of God's Spirit in all the ages will not be able to match this final outpouring which is soon to come upon us.

(3) The life of the prophet is exemplary. In obedience to God the prophets of old were unsurpassed by any. They represented the very cream of God's people. They forged a continuous link, through the ages, between God and wayward humanity.

(4) They always appeared with a saving message in time of grave need.

Malachi 4:5 "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

4:6 "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

THE PROPHETS OF OUR TIME:

Approximately FORTY YEARS ago God began to sound a special message through His prophets to the Church, which mostly goes unheeded. This message has gotten so urgent and so desperate that to refuse to hear it is almost an act of suicide in our time.

In matters like this one cannot be specific, since there is so much on the subject that one does not know. I know that there was a stir of spiritual activity all over the world and that in the United States a man named William Branham, who had a very strong prophetic ministry came forth with astounding prophecies and great acts of miracles, but he was cut off suddenly. We will go into more details in another paragraph.

Since this time to our time (1982) many have been anointed, but very few have attained the distinction as prophets or survived the rigors of their profession.

At this point an explanation is necessary as to what is really meant by attaining to becoming a 'prophet'.

In the light of the New Testament there are three different functions in the church which go under the heading of prophecy.

(1) General prophecy – Acts 2:17 which declares that when the Spirit of God is poured out *"your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,"* - This is a common prophecy among those who are baptized in the Holy Spirit. Whenever one speaks in the Spirit it is a kind of prophecy. *"For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy."* Rev. 19:10 (last phrase).

(2) The Gift of Prophecy – I Cor. 12:10. *"to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy."* The person with the gift of prophecy, prophesies in the congregation and edifies the local church with a direct word from the Lord. The gift of prophecy differs from the ministry in that it does not have the scope nor authority of the ministry. On the other hand a person who is designated must have a high degree of holiness.

(3) The Prophet – Eph. 4:11. *"And he gave some Apostles; and some Prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers,"* At a glance we will notice that the ministry of the prophet is not an endowment but a way of life, in that it is mentioned next to the apostle ministry. The person who receives a gift uses the gift in the church as the Lord leads, but one who is ordained a prophet of God has no other life to live but to prophesy, if he would please the Lord. In seniority in the church (the universal Body of Christ) the prophet is next to the apostle. This means that he has the spiritual authority as an important finger on God's arm in the earth. Needless to say that many are called as prophets but few really make it in the Body. God does not call prophets to be sectarianistic or denominationalistic in their operations, but they must be free to speak to the Body of Christ and the Church and the world at large. When God calls a young prophet it is sometimes to take the place of an old prophet who was being distracted or disobedient. There is the case in the scriptures of the young prophet obeying the old prophet instead of obeying God, who was destroyed by a lion for his disobedience. I Ki. 13:24.

There is another scripture I would like to bring to the attention of my readers concerning the position of the prophet in God's plan for the church:

1Corinthians 12:28 "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

Let us return to consider the prophets of today. William Branham brought a word for the end time, but something went wrong, we know not what, and he was cut off by an untimely death through a motor vehicle accident.

In the modern world it takes a lot of nerves for a prophet to speak out in the name of the Lord, because generally, the first thing he would speak out against is his own theology and his denominational beliefs.

In recent years David Wilkerson spoke a word from the Lord pertaining to the things which are coming to pass in our time and in the Charismatic movement. The reaction in some quarters was violent. Some brethren who used to distribute his tapes threw them out. Others called him a fool. He was in the act of building a city by his name and he was being supported by some of the very people whom his prophecy hit hardest. He was hit from all sides, from Christians and non-Christians alike, and his own theology did not help him any, but he believed God, and most of the things he prophesied have come to pass and are yet coming to pass. His prophecy was mostly pertaining to the church and involved a dubious role that the Roman Catholic Church would play in our time. He proved himself to be a man of character, as he almost lost everything yet he did not waver from the word which he believed the Lord had spoken to him.

TRUE PROPHECIES – ARE THEY ALWAYS OF GOD ?

The answer is NO! Satan will sometimes prophesy things and through the power of auto-suggestion, create them and bring them to pass. HOW THEN CAN THE BELIEVER KNOW WHEN A WORD IS OF GOD OR WHEN IT COMES FROM THE ENEMY?

There is one simple test – Satan cannot glorify God neither can he speak in the Name (nature) of Jesus Christ. He cannot say Jesus Christ is Lord. We are not speaking of saying the words, but a prophecy that is not of God cannot uplift Christ. We find therefore that there are many prophecies concerning destruction and things of world happenings, which are not designed to bless the people of God but to create fear and panic, these are not of God. On the other hand, prophecies which alert the church to the nearness of the coming of the Lord, are of God.

We have had much experience of prophets who prophesied true things about the Movie Stars and other celebrities of kings and kingdoms, earthquakes and disasters, yet it only established the credibility of the prophet,

but never saved a soul. This kind of thing tends to make unbelievers out of everyone. This is the climate in which Satan flourishes, and I would venture to say this is where we are today.

A SUMMARY OF END TIME PROPHECY:

The question in the minds of every reader at this time would be: What are the prophets of today saying to the church?

- (1) The coming of Jesus Christ is very, very near.
- (2) The great revival far exceeding anything ever seen on the earth before is imminent.
- (3) Great earthquakes which will change the topography of the earth in which many will be killed.
- (4) A great third world war in which Russia will attack the United States, landing troops in the United States and causing much death and destruction and great consternation, before deliverance.
- (5) Revelation of the One World ruler coming forth from somewhere in Europe.
- (6) Persecution of the Saints.
- (7) Revelation of the false church.

These are mostly the prophesies which we hear from the end time prophets and we must admit that they are all scriptural. Let me quote a few scriptures;

Daniel 12:1 "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Matthew 24:7 "For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes, in divers places."

God has said in His word that He would surely tell his prophets of the things which He is about to do on the earth.

Dear Reader, I believe we are being told, but we must have ears to hear.

