

Major Messages From Minor Prophets To Modern People

Most often when we think of the Old Testament prophets we think of them as God's spokesman for the future, however, I think that another way to look at them would be as God's spokesman for their generation. Nevertheless, they also were Proclaimers of Timeless truths about God, humankind, and critical issues concerning life.

Part 1 - Prophets: Yesterday and Today

Amos 3:7-8 CSB

Indeed, the Lord God does nothing without revealing his counsel to his servants the prophets. A lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who will not prophesy?

Amos 3:7-8 NLT

Indeed, the Sovereign Lord never does anything until he reveals his plans to his servants the prophets. The lion has roared—so who isn't frightened? ***The Sovereign Lord has spoken—so who can refuse to proclaim his message?***

The roll-call of Israel's prophets includes its most illustrious heroes from Abraham to Jesus. In one way all of God's leaders are Prophets since the Hebrew word nabi which is translated "*prophet*" comes from a Hebrew root word Meaning "*to speak*". In a large context anyone who speaks for God could be considered as a prophet. Therefore Abraham in Genesis 20.7 and Moses Deuteronomy 34.10 are Prophets; and prophetesses such as Miriam in Exodus 15.20 and Deborah Judges 4.4 are also members of this Noble succession.

On the other side of the coin; there is another group in Israel's history that Bible scholars call "*false prophets*". We see the term, "*false prophets*", used in the NT for the first time, by Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7.15.

The false prophets we read about in the Bible tend to have a common theme running between them; they were usually very nationalistic and overly optimistic about Israel's Destiny regardless of people's obedience to the Lord and His commands.

One thing that sticks out and really distinguishes **God's true prophets** from the "*false prophets*" is that they would proclaim their authority for preaching on God's behalf by saying things like "**thus saith the Lord**" (Isaiah 7.7 KJV) or "**hear the word of the Lord**" (2 Kings 20:16 KJV)

As we read the prophets, we can definitely identify their own personal individuality and the way in which they related to the time in which they lived. Amos used striking metaphors that related to his shepherding and farming experience like:

- A loaded wagon or crushing cart 2.13
- The roaring lion 3.8
- The mutilated sheep 3.12
- Fat cows 4.1 or
- A basket of ripe fruit 8.1-2

Amos had been shown the future and interpreted it in the light of God's will. Yet he was also shown what the present held and declared God's purpose for his own generation and time.

There is never need to debate whether the prophecy of the prophets were *foretelling* or *forthtelling*, in fact they were both! God's prophets were uniquely equipped and infallibly Guided by Him in regards to prophecy.

So, before we too far into things let's establish a baseline of understanding amongst ourselves by defining four well known, yet little comprehended words:

1. **Prophet:** Prophets were the immediate organs of God for the communication of his mind and will to men (Deuteronomy 18:18, 19). The whole Word of God may in this general sense be spoken of as prophetic, inasmuch as it was written by men who received the revelation they communicated from God, no matter what its nature might be. The foretelling of future events was not necessary but only an incidental part of the prophetic office... Any one being a spokesman for God to man might thus be called a prophet. - **Easton's Bible Dictionary**

2. **Prophecy:**

- a. an inspired utterance of a prophet
- b. the function or vocation of a prophet specifically the inspired declaration of divine will and purpose (forthtelling)
- c. a prediction of something to come (foretelling)

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

3. **Forthtelling Vs Foretelling:** As verbs the difference between forthtell and foretell is that forthtell is to tell forth; [or to] publish abroad while foretell is to predict; to tell the future before it occurs...

THE PROPHET AS A PERSON

God did more than just send messages to Israel. He sent people. An older preacher told a younger preacher that he would take him on a preaching expedition. They walked through town for several hours, Then finally the young preacher said "when are we going to start preaching?" The older Preacher replied "we have been preaching everywhere we have walked, people have seen us and I reflected on

the kind of life we live. You must always remember young man; that the greatest sermon you'll ever preach is in the life you live.”

God's prophets were people of unquestionable integrity. There was absolutely no question about their moral standards. For one of God's prophets to be dishonest was completely out of the question. an old cliché often attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson says “**your actions speak so loudly, I can't hear a word you say.**”

THE PROPHET AS A CALLED PERSON

Old Testament Prophets shared one thing in common. Each was called of God. These calls did not all come in the same way.

Isaiah's call came within the dignity and refinement of the temple ritual. Hosea's call came in the aftermath of a broken heart and broken home when his wife had been unfaithful.

Jeremiah was called when he was a young lad hardly able to cope with the situation.

Habakkuk's call came as he pondered God's seeming indifference to the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous.

Amos was called in the bleak desert as he pondered the injustice that prevailed in the land.

Each of these calls has one unifying fact. The prophet was not to speak in his own name nor in his own strength. God vaccinated Isaiah against being overly optimistic when he volunteered for service. And on the other hand God immunized Jeremiah against discouragement when the reluctant young man hesitated to take on the difficult task ahead of him.

John Henry Jowett wrote about the call to be a prophet, saying: “the call of the Eternal must ring through the rooms of his soul as clearly as

the sound of the morning bell ringing through the valleys of Switzerland calling the peasants to early prayer and praise.”

When God's Divine calling rests on the would-be prophet they have no alternative; as Jonah clearly learned the hard way. Nevertheless, unless a person is called to be a prophet, they should remain a Christian lay-person and not attempt to do that which God has not called them to do.

A man once told a preacher: “I don't understand how someone can devote their full-time to being a preacher.” where-then the preacher replied: “I agree with you sir, you don't understand.” The thing is God's prophets understood; they had been called by God to a good work; they had no alternative, there was no plan B; they knew that they had to be what God wanted them to be - prophets!

THE PROPHET'S MESSAGE

If someone were to try and summarize the prophetic message in one phrase they would probably say something like: the Old Testament prophets were tasked with keeping the character and nature of God before the people. And in doing so, the prophet could then include every aspect of revealed truth to the people in order that they might fully understand God's will.

Three things we find in every prophetic message:

- 1. *God is Holy!*** I believe any definition of the Divine must begin with this indisputable truth. One of the more simpler definitions for holy is “set apart” or “other than” but, of course, it also means a lot more. The moral nature of God is included in His holiness. People will become like the god they worship. This is the reason the Canaanites were extremely immoral people. Their god was a sex symbol and their worship was tied up with physical immorality

even the rituals of their worship service itself was nothing more than an orgy. All glory and praise be to the Most High, the One true Living God has no such character flaws. In fact no matter whatever else the prophet may have said - their message was never inconsistent about this basic truth about God.

2. **God is active in history.** He punishes the wicked and vindicates the righteous. To a prophet the greatest heresy imaginable would have been to presume that God was absent from the world He created and incapable of intervening at any given moment. God established laws for how the world was to run, however He is never subject to those laws Himself. God is always keeping watch and always present to punish evil.
3. **God is merciful and Redemptive.** Both Old Testament prophets and modern-day preachers are responsible for condemning sin. However they must also communicate God's love and mercy for repentant sinners. A vital part of every Old Testament prophet's message was God's redemptive work. God chose the Jewish nation as an instrument to bring the Redeemer into the world - the promised Messiah! Each Prophet made his own distinct contribution concerning the Messiah and combined the message of the coming Messiah linked all the prophets by a common theme. Thank God was to intervene and the history of man and bring deliverance to sinful people.

Conclusion: The prophets of Israel, could be said to be that nation's greatest contribution to the world aside from Jesus Christ Himself.

No other group of people or organization can compare with God's prophets. And although we can't draw an exact line for line comparison between God's prophets of Israel's and today's modern preachers; but there are many similarities present between them.

True prophetic preaching is not merely predicting events. Those who strongly support and boldly proclaim God's will are prophetic men and women.

Prophetic preachers speak forth God's word for the day in which they live, they firmly yet lovingly warn a sinful world that sin will bring destruction and they make the world aware that forgiveness is available to those who turn to Jesus Christ in faith.

**May God bless you always and may
you always be encouraged in our
Lord and Savior Christ Jesus!**

Romans 10 NKJV

8 But what does it say? **“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”** (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

13 For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”