

# 31 Days

To a Better Understanding  
of Prophets  
and  
Prophetic Words

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Mark W. Weaver

# 31 Days to a Better Understanding of Prophets and Prophetic Words

by Mark W. Weaver

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# Introduction

"... Write the vision, and make it plain ...  
Habakkuk 2:2 KJV

**D**OWN THROUGH the centuries, the Church has struggled through the confusion of many dissonant voices claiming to speak on God's behalf. Ideas about prophets and the prophetic realm vary widely across the body of Christ. Some Christians believe that the ministry of the prophet ceased when the Holy Scriptures became canonized. Others believe that the ministry of the prophet continues today. The whole realm of prophets and prophetic words is a very controversial subject in the Church today.

Furthermore, the word "prophet" is defined in several different ways around the body of Christ. Some see prophets as visionaries, other view them as seers of future events. Some consider them to be personal exhorters, and still others as God's prosecuting attorneys.

In recent years, "schools of prophets" have emerged and have begun to teach that God is restoring the ministry of the apostle and the prophet in our generation. But not all Christians are convinced that this phenomenon is truly of God.

I make no claim that the ideas I present will be the definitive word on the subject. I cannot

promise you that I will have all the answers. What I can promise is that as you read through this series (one a day), you will find scriptures and ideas to challenge your thinking. Chances are, at the end of this series, you will view the realm of the prophetic in a fresh, if not invigorating way.

The series is divided into three parts:

1. **WHEN GOD SPEAKS** - What happens when God Himself speaks prophetically to creation and His people? (begins at Day 1)
2. **GOD'S PROPHETS** - a look at those who speak for God. (begins at Day 10)
3. **PROPHETIC VOICES** - a look at how prophetic voices can be both good and evil, and how they have shaped and continue to shape the world in which we live. (begins at Day 23)

Throughout the series, I will raise questions for you to ponder and consider. Each day (chapter) contains a 400-600-word article, about three minutes reading time for the average reader.

May God bless you as you consider this important theme,

Mark W. Weaver

"Ideas about prophets and the prophetic realm vary widely across the body of Christ."

# Begin Part I—Day 1: When God Speaks

"... There at Bethel he met God face to face, and God spoke to him "

Hosea 12:4 NLT

**W**HAT'S THE LORD SAYING TO YOU?

Has anyone ever asked you that question? How have you responded? No matter how long you have been a Christian, you have heard God speak to you—personally. Even if you were only saved yesterday, you invited Christ into your life because you heard His voice calling you.

God speaks.

For the next eight days, we will be looking together at the ways in which God has spoken to us down through the centuries. In fact, He has been speaking since before the world began. His Word formed the earth, the skies, the seas and all who inhabit them. His Word holds all of creation together. His Word instructs, restores, directs, corrects, brings judgment and tells us of the future.

In Old Testament times, God spoke mostly through His prophets. His written Word emerged slowly, from Moses' Pentateuch through the historic and prophetic writings. The primary message of the Old Testament prophets focused upon the coming Messiah—the One we now know as the Word made flesh. Then, in the fullness of time, God spoke to us through the promised Living Word which is Christ who came and lived among us here on earth (Heb 1:1-2).

Today, God speaks to us most clearly through His written Word—the Holy Scriptures. The Bible as

we know it has been around less than 2000 years, and God's Word for the everyday layman has only been available for a few hundred years.

Yes, God has been speaking. And He still speaks today. But is His written Word the only way in which He speaks to us? No. Because if the Holy Spirit does not make His written Word come alive in our own hearts, minds and spirits—through personal revelation (I John 2:27)—the Bible remains but a static and lifeless history book!

“Today, God speaks to us most clearly through His written Word - the Holy Scriptures.”

And doesn't God also speak to us through others? Have you ever heard the Word of the Lord spoken to you by a pastor, a friend, or a family member? Of course! But the question which is so controversial in the Church today is whether or not God still speaks to us through prophecy and prophetically gifted people. That is,

in essence, what this study is all about.

For the next 30 days, we will be looking together at some of the ways in which God has spoken to us throughout the centuries. We will look specifically at how He has spoken and still speaks to us today through His prophets. We will also be exploring how true and false prophetic messages shape our world.

Oh, by the way, what's God saying to you?

The But for the next eight days, to help establish the thesis that God still speaks today, we will be looking at historical examples of how God has spoken directly **to** His creation and **to** His people.

# Begin Part I—Day 1: When God Speaks

In this first section of our study, *Part I—When God Speaks*, using Scripture as our guide, we will be specifically examining one aspect of God's Word to us, and that is: How has God Himself spoken **to** us, and what happened, when He did?

- How did God speak in ancient times, before His written Word was fully developed?
- How did God guide, direct and correct His people, and the errant nations of the world?
- How did God communicate to the patriarchs and prophets?

How did God speak  
in ancient times,  
before His written  
Word was fully  
developed?

*Part I* will lay the groundwork for *Parts II* and *III* where we will discuss how God has spoken and still speaks His messages **through** His prophets. We will look at *what happens* when God speaks through His prophets. We will establish that our God is a very personal God, not a distant one, and speaks to us regularly and intimately, and possesses a very real interest in every aspect of His creation and our lives. We will also look at the whole realm of false prophets and false prophetic words.

## Day 2: Creative Power

"...And God said ... and there was ...  
Genesis 1:3 KJV

**C**ONSIDER THE CREATIVE POWER of God's prophetic Word. Amazingly, all of creation poured forth from only three—"Let there be..."

The prophetic power in these words flung galaxies across space, spun out planets and solar systems, pierced the darkness with brilliant light, thrust the dry ground from the waters, and burst open tiny seeds, popping their shoots up through the soil. God spoke and populated the waters, the forests and the skies with millions of species, and then fashioned an extravagant garden for the first man and woman.

When it came time to create the human race, the One Who is Three paused briefly to discuss matters. "Let us make man in our image," He said, "after our likeness." Then, from the dust of the ground and God's own breath, man appeared—a living soul—the crown of His creation.

Human language cannot begin to illustrate the creative power in God's prophetic Word. Scripture tells us "... that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Heb. 11:3 KJV

Our words also possess creative power. Jesus' followers wrote accounts of His life, the story of early Church life, and numerous letters. Their prophetic words became canonized into Holy Scripture. Even-

tually they served, along with the Hebrew Scriptures, to create the seedbed of an entirely new culture for the western world.

But evil can be created from men's words as well. Over a hundred years ago, Karl Marx penned the *Communist Manifesto*. His words helped create the seedbed from which the Soviet Empire sprang!

Words are seed-like, pregnant with the genetic material needed to erupt into life. Whether a blade of grass, a flowering daisy, or a mighty oak, fruits are determined, in part by their seed.

"Our words launch marriages, form business partnerships, and establish governments. Our words can also bring destruction. They can tear families apart, destroy reputations, and start wars."

Only God can create something from nothing. But our words are far more powerful than we realize. Our words launch marriages, form business partnerships, and establish governments. Our words can also bring destruction. They can tear families apart, destroy reputations, and start wars.

What fruits do our words produce? Aren't we, in a sense, being prophetic every time we speak—every time we pen a letter or type an email? Aren't we sowing seeds that will create something new? What kind of world are we framing with **our** prophetic words? What events are we setting into motion? What future are we creating when we open our mouths to speak?

The *Creative Power* of God's Word is evident. But what about the Creative Power of our own words? Can you think of other scriptures that relate to this theme?

# Day 3: Sustaining Power

*... upholding all things  
by the word of his power ..."*

Heb 1:3 KJV

**Y**ESTERDAY we began *Part I* of our three-part series with a look at God's *Creative Power*, beginning our study of what happens *When God Speaks*. We marveled at God's breathtaking ability to create substance out of absolutely nothing. Today we will look at the power of God's prophetic Word to uphold His creation and all those who trust in Him. We will commence by looking at the Word's *Sustaining Power* in the natural realm, and conclude by looking at the Word's *Sustaining Power* in the spiritual realm.

## **In the Natural Realm.**

Late in the 17th century, Isaac Newton published his theory on gravity, postulating that all mass contains gravitational power. What then keeps the planets from "falling" in to the sun? Newton theorized that the planets' motion around the sun, in conjunction with the sun's gravitational power, sustains their orbits. Thus the twin forces of gravity and motion keep our solar system humming.

Newton went further. He said that gravity and motion not only hold the planets in their places, but that every celestial body in the universe attracts every other celestial body. Therefore in scientific terms, the entire universe is held in place by motion and gravitational power.

The word "upholding" in the passage above is taken from the Greek word *phero* and is trans-

lated several different ways throughout the New Testament. One meaning is "to bear up or keep from falling," a clear reference to our discussion of gravity and motion. But other places in scripture this Greek word is translated as "bring," "endure," or "carry."

The first chapter of the book of John leaves no doubt that Jesus Christ is God's Word (John 1:1-14). So, when Colossians tells us that "...by Him all things consist," (Col. 1:17 KJV) we conclude that it is by the Word that all things consist. In this passage, the word translated as consist is taken from the Greek word *sunivsthmi* and means to place together, to set in the same

place, to bring or band together. Other places in scripture translate this same word as "with" or "commend."

Through God's Word, all things are held together "with" one another and "commended" to each other in their order and dependencies.

"Have you found that  
at just the right  
moment, God's  
Word arrives and  
renews your faith?"

Job said, "... He hangs the earth on nothing" (Job 26:7 NKJV).

## **The Spiritual Realm.**

Not only does God manage and hold together His creation with His Word, His Word also sustains and upholds all who trust in Him.

*"... that I may know how to sustain with a word  
him that is weary..."* (Isaiah 50:4 KJV).

*"Your words are what sustain me..."*

(Jeremiah 15:16 KJV)

*"... may your laws sustain me..."*

(Psalm 119:175 KJV)

## Day 3: Sustaining Power

Have you ever been discouraged? Have you ever felt like you were just going to fall apart? Did you find that at just the right moment, God's Word arrived and renewed your faith? Your hope?

Like creation, we too are held together "...by the Word of His power ..." (Hebrews 1:3)

*"In Him we live and move and have our being."*

(Acts 17:28)

"Whether God is busy holding together a galaxy or simply nurturing one singular life, His prophetic Word is much like gravitational power. "

Whether God is busy holding together a galaxy or simply nurturing one singular life, His prophetic Word is much like gravitational power—it sustains all that exists so that He may be glorified.

Can you think of other ways that God sustains by His Word? Other scriptures that relate to our theme?



# Day 4: Incarnated Power

"God, who at sundry times  
and in divers manners  
spake in time past unto the fathers  
by the prophets,  
Hath in these last days  
spoken unto us by his Son ..."  
Heb 1:2 KJV

**Y**ESTERDAY WE LOOKED at God's *Sustaining Power*, a short follow-up to the previous day where we briefly examined God's *Creative Power*. After marveling at how God created substance out of absolutely nothing, we went on to discuss how God's Word holds all things together—both His creation and our individual lives.

Following the chronological course of events in our time-space world, the revelation of God's *Creative Power* came before the revelation of God's *Sustaining Power*. As we continue to look at what happens *When God Speaks*, we all should be able to agree that the most dramatic way in which God has spoken to man is through His Incarnate Son. But before we jump ahead chronologically to the advent of Christ, let's first look at a few instances of pre-incarnate appearances of Christ in the Old Testament. Perhaps we'll see that even before the wise men followed the star to find the baby Jesus in a manger, God was speaking prophetically through His pre-incarnate Son.

## The Pre-Incarnate Christ.

What did the prophets mean when they said, "*the word of the Lord came to me, saying ...*"? This phrase can be found more than 100 times in the

Old Testament. Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel used this kind of sentence construction. So did Nathan, Abraham, Solomon and many of the Minor Prophets. Close evaluation of the language leads one to think that the Word itself (Himself?) is speaking—as in "*the word said.*"

Here is an even more fascinating passage. The prophet Elijah, fearing Jezebel who had threatened to kill him, fled to a cave near Mount Horeb where he heard the word of the Lord. "... *and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?*" (I Kings 19:9 KJV). In this passage, the Word appears to possess a gender. Did God Himself appear to Elijah?

"What did the prophets mean when they said, "the word of the Lord came to me, saying ..."?"

Scripture provides several more, even clearer glimpses of the manifested, pre-incarnate Word, or as scholars call them, "Christophanies."

Scripture provides several more, even clearer glimpses of the manifested, pre-incarnate Word, or as scholars call them, "Christophanies."

1. Abraham encountered Melchizedech, a priest who, according to the writer of Hebrews, continues yet in his priesthood. He had no father or mother, no beginning of days, nor end of life. Melchizedech shared bread and wine with Abraham and received his tithe. He is also called the king of Salem, meaning peace. Jesus is, of course, the Prince of Peace. Many Christians believe that this mysterious Old Testament figure was in fact, Christ Himself (Genesis 14:18-20).

2. Abraham's grandson Jacob wrestled with the "Angel" of the Lord, a figure

## Day 4: Incarnated Power

many scholars believe to be Christ. The "Angel" touched him in the thigh which some say wounded him for life, gave him a blessing, and changed his name to Israel (Genesis 32:24-32).

3. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship Nebuchadnezzar, were seen walking around in the furnace with a mysterious, fourth man. The flames harmed none of the men (Daniel 3).

4. While in the midst of a prolonged fast, Daniel met and spoke with a man who could only have been the pre-incarnate Christ. *"His body was ... like ... beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude"* (Daniel 10:5 KJV).

### **The Word Made Flesh.**

Each of these Old Testament examples provide a mere shadow of the reality that is the Incarnate Word. But no Scripture writer expresses this mystery as eloquently as John. *"In the be-*

*ginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..."*

Next time you have opportunity, read John chapter one.

God's Word coming to earth in human form is inconceivable to the human mind. And the human heart can barely comprehend it either. But God has spoken! He has spoken powerfully, dramatically and completely through Christ, the Incarnate Word. Take time soon to ponder afresh upon this wonderful mystery.

"God has spoken  
powerfully,  
dramatically and  
completely through  
Christ, the  
Incarnate Word."

Can you think of other Old Testament examples of Christ's pre-incarnate appearance? How has Christ's incarnation spoken to you?

Here's an interesting question: When fiction writers create a character and that character embodies some Christ-like

qualities, might that be considered an incarnation (small i) of sorts? And what about when God's Word takes up residence in our own lives and transforms us? Might that also be considered a "small i" incarnation?

# Day 5: Restorative Power

*"He sent his word, and healed them,  
and delivered them  
from their destructions."  
Psalm 107:20 KJV*

**Y**ESTERDAY WE CONTEMPLATED the Incarnated Power of God's Prophetic Word—the Lord Jesus Christ. We looked at several "Christophanies" or pre-incarnated appearances of Christ in the Old Testament and concluded by marveling at John's account of the Word becoming flesh. Today we are looking into the *Restorative Power* of God's prophetic word.

Christ came to redeem the lost—to purchase back through His blood, man's broken relationship with God wrought by sin. He came to restore. His restorative work is not a paint job or a fix-up of our exterior shell, but rather the impartation of a completely new inside. His work makes us a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15). In the Old Testament we read about the prophetic promise of restoration. In the New Testament, we see the confirmation of the promised restoration through the life and ministry of Christ.

## **The Old Testament Prophetic Promise.**

The promise of Christ's redemptive or restorative work stretches across four millennia. But the story actually begins before time. Scripture calls Christ "*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" (Revelation 13:8 KJV) In the Old Testament, God promises to give us a new heart:

*"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."  
(Ezekiel 36:26 KJV)*

These stony hearts are what we inherited from Adam. Much of the Old Testament is devoted to speaking about the coming Messiah and His restorative work. Prophetic foreshadowings of Christ's restorative work are particularly visible in the writings of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). Here, the coming Christ is foreshadowed in the Tabernacle of Moses and the establishment of the Hebrew Priesthood. He is also promised prophetically in the Psalms and the prophets.

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*"He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions."  
(Psalms 107:20 KJV)*

## **The New Testament Prophetic Confirmation.**

Twice in the earthly ministry of Christ, Father God prophetically confirmed His Son's divinity.

- At Christ's baptism the Father proclaimed from heaven, "*... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" (Matthew 3:17 KJV)
- Later, at the Transfiguration, God used the same prophetic words and added the admonition "*... hear ye Him.*" (Matt 17:5, Mark 9:7).

## Day 5: Restorative Power

And Jesus Himself read scripture in the synagogue at Nazareth and confirmed His own fulfilling of God's prophetic word through Isaiah.

*"... This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."*

(Luke 4:16-21 KJV)

The Isaiah passage speaks specifically about Christ's promised restorative work on earth (see Luke 4:18, Isaiah 61:1).

### **Christ Restores Our Physical Beings.**

While he walked this earth, Jesus healed many people, restoring their broken physical condition. He often healed through His spoken, prophetic word.

- He restored a leper with a touch and the words, *"... be thou clean ..."* (Matthew 8:3 KJV).
  - He restored the withered hand of a man with the words *"... stretch forth thy hand ..."* (Matthew 12:13).
  - He healed two blind men: *"According to your faith be it unto you."* (Matthew 9:27-30)
- And he healed and restored many more with

His touch and a prophetic word.

On occasion, Jesus cast out evil spirits with a word, restoring the mental health of the ones tormented. (Matthew 8:16, 9:33, Mark 5:1-20, etc.)

**“Christ tore down the wall that separates us from our Creator God, and through His prophetic Word, He continues to heal and restore.”**

Jesus even restored respect and a sense of self-worth to a prostitute caught in sin with these words:

*"... He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."*

(John 8:7 KJV)

Praise God that ours is not an empty religion, compelling us to constantly try and restore our own broken lives. What futility! No, Christ has done it all. Through His death and resurrection, He tore down the wall that separates us from our Creator God, and through His prophetic Word, He continues to heal and restore.

Can you think of other ways that God restores through His Word? Has he restored something in your life through His prophetic Word?

## Day 6: Directive Power

*"...Get thee out of thy country,  
and from thy kindred,  
and from thy father's house,  
unto a land that I will shew thee."  
Genesis 12:1 KJV*

**W**E HAVE BEEN LOOKING at some of the things that happen *When God Speaks*. Yesterday we discussed the *Restorative Power* of God's Prophetic Word. God's initial mission in our lives is redemptive in nature. Before He can fully establish His kingdom, people from all ages, nations, and cultures must first be restored to a right relationship with Him. As we work out our salvation (Phil 2:2), God works to restore our mental and emotional health. And sometimes He supernaturally restores our physical health as well.

Today we continue our series by looking at how God directs our lives through His prophetic Word. Because He loves us, God leads and guides us through all of our life's choices.

The very idea that God directs the course of our lives implies His personal, shepherding care over us. For just about every routine decision, God has provided His written Word—the Holy Scriptures.

*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."*

(Psalms 119:105 KJV—see also Proverbs 6:23)

In the Bible, we can find counsel, wisdom, principles, and direction. But what about those unique, personal, very specific decisions that the scriptures don't speak to such as where we should live, who we should marry and how and where we should specifically apply our gifts and ministerial callings? Can and does God speak His personal, Directive Word into our lives? We will look at three examples in scripture.

"The very idea that God directs the course of our lives implies His personal, shepherding care over us."

### **Abram.**

In the passage above (Genesis 12:1) we see God speaking personally and directly to Abram, instructing him to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house, and travel to a land yet unknown. This passage is one of the most oft quoted and well known in the Holy Scriptures, providing many lessons.

Fundamentally, we see God directing the course of a human life. Implied is a larger purpose or plan. Abram has a destiny and a call and God is removing him from the old and familiar and taking him on a course toward the new and untried. But not all who follow God are called to uproot themselves from their home and head off in faith toward an unknown destination. A personal Word from God for such radical change is critical. But does God speak personally, directly, and uniquely into every life He plucks from the devil's hand?

### **Hosea.**

*"... Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms ..."* (Hosea 1:2 KJV) Can God speak directly to us about our life partners? Hosea chose Gomer. Since He told Hosea to take a

## Day 6: Directive Power

prostitute for a wife does that make this passage a sound, guiding principle for all godly men to follow? Certainly not! What God is doing here is demonstrating the apostasy of Israel who had become a whore in His eyes. Gomer gave birth to three children and God instructed Hosea what to name each of them. Each name represented a message from God to the nation of Israel. The story of Hosea and his wife of choice is an extreme example of God's personal direction. Each of us should have a clear, personal word from God about our life-mate choice. This unusual example is offered to demonstrate the personal sovereignty of God as He directs us in our most unique and important life choices.

### **Paul.**

"... and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ..." (Acts 16:6 KJV) The Holy Spirit spoke to Paul and Silas, forbidding them

"Each of us should  
have a clear,  
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God about our  
life-mate choice."

from going east into Asia. What God's reasons might have been are, to this day, still discussed among Bible students and scholars. Subsequently, God sent Paul west to Rome, which eventually became the seat of western Christianity. Out of the Roman Church came the Protestant Reformation, and out of the Reformation came our own once-Christian nation. Could it all have begun with a directive word to Paul from the Holy Spirit? Does this passage mean that God is not at all interested in bringing the gospel to those in Asia? Of course not. What it means is that God had a personal mission for Paul, in his day and time, that did not include Asia.

Can you think of other examples from scripture which demonstrate God's personal directive power through His spoken word to individuals? How about your life? Has God ever given you a personal Word of direction?

# Day 7: Corrective Power

*"My child, don't ignore it  
when the Lord disciplines you,  
and don't be discouraged  
when he corrects you.*

*For the Lord disciplines those he loves,  
and he punishes  
those he accepts as his children."*

Hebrews 12:5 NLT

**Y**ESTERDAY WE EXAMINED three scriptural examples of God personally directing the lives of His saints through His prophetic Word. This week our series continues by looking at three more examples of God bringing correction through His prophetic Word. Bear in mind that in this first part of our newsletter series, we are looking only at situations where God Himself speaks personally to individuals.

Because God loves us, He corrects us. Whether young or old, we will always be children in His eyes. Because we will never reach perfection in this life, we must be prepared to receive correction at any time. A willing submission of the heart to the process of correction demonstrates that we are truly sons of God. *"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."* (Hebrews 12:8 KJV). Wise sons welcome correction. *"Do not condemn me, but show me wherefore thou contendest with me..."* (Job 10:2 KJV). The purpose of God's correction is to keep us from straying down the path toward destruction. *"But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be con-*

*demned with the world."* (I Cor. 11:32 KJV)

Following are three scriptural examples of God bringing correction to an individual soul.

## **Job.**

*"Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said ... 'Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?'"* (Job 40:6, 9 KJV) For millennia Job has been the poster boy for suffering. After all, not only did Job, a very wealthy man, lose everything but his wife, he also suffered physically and had to endure the torture of three "know-it-all" friends explaining the reasons for his calamity.

But in the end, God spoke personally to Job, reminding him afresh of his human condition. Even though the Bible calls Job a righteous man, he still needed to be reminded of his humanity and of the sovereignty of God. Job responded appropriately. *"Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."* (Job 42:6 KJV).

**"...God spoke personally to Job, reminding him afresh of his human condition."**

## **Nebuchadnezzar.**

*"...'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!'"* (Daniel 4:31 KJV) The king of Babylon had a dream. In his dream he saw a beautiful, flourishing tree suddenly cut down to the stump. (Daniel 4:10-17) He called for the prophet Daniel to interpret the dream. (Daniel 4:19-27) Daniel explained that the tree in the dream was actually the king himself, who would soon be cut down if he did not humble himself and recognize that God was the true King. Nebuchadnezzar did not re-

## Day 7: Corrective Power

pent and one year later the Lord corrected him, speaking the words quoted above. The king could no longer stand on two feet but was reduced to crawling on all fours and eating grass like a cow. After Nebuchadnezzar had learned his lesson, God restored him.

**Peter.**

*"And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." (Acts 10:13-15 KJV)*

Like most of us, Peter clung to certain prejudicial views against people not like himself. He just could not accept the idea that God wanted

the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles. But God corrected Peter, showing him in a dream that He intended the good news of His gospel to be preached not only to the Jews, but to the Gentiles as well.

“Would you rather  
that God correct you,  
or would you prefer  
Him to send one of  
His servants to do  
the job?”

How would you rather be rebuked? Would you rather that God correct you, or would you prefer Him to send one of His servants to do the job? How much sweeter it is when God himself deals with us personally!

Can you think of other scriptural examples of God personally correcting one of His children? Has God ever personally corrected you? Can He correct or rebuke an entire church? Can He chastise a nation?



## Day 8: Adjudicating Power

*"Who shall give account to him  
that is ready to judge  
the quick and the dead."  
I Peter 4:5 KJV*

**Y**ESTERDAY WE READ the stories of three Bible characters that God personally corrected through His prophetic Word. Today we will look at some examples of what happened to a few foolish souls who hardened their hearts against God, and how through His direct prophetic Word, through His acts, and through His prophetic servants, He brought the judgment of death.

The word adjudicate means to settle judicially or to render a judicial decision. Because of sin, whose wages are death (Romans 6:23); every human being awaits the judgment of God. *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."* (Hebrews 9:27 KJV) In the normal course of events, most human lives last several decades, and then terminate in old age. Some die young because of accident or illness. Every life concludes at God's appointed time (Heb. 9:27)—even those rare few who are struck down by God because of His wrath.

Moses, God's most honored prophet, was prohibited from entering into the promised land (Deuteronomy 32:48-51 KJV) because of an act of disobedience (Numbers 20:7-12). He died in the wilderness, on Mt. Nebo, alone with God (Deuteronomy 32:50; 34:5-7).

Below are several examples of the judgment of

death—Adjudicating Power. The first example reveals an incident that occurred when God spoke clearly, directly and profoundly.

### **God's Word Brings Death: Belshazzar.**

*"Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN."* (Daniel 5:24-25 KJV) Yesterday we looked at Belshazzar's father, Nebuchadnezzar, a king who, once dealt with by God, repented and honored God as his king. But his son, Belshazzar, did not follow his father's path. He did not repent of his sins. The prophet Daniel interpreted the strange, bold words. *".. MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."* (Daniel 5:26-28 KJV) Belshazzar was slain that very night. (Daniel 5:30)

Another example of death occurring from a direct Word from God occurred when Jesus spoke to the fig tree, cursing it for its lack of fruit. The tree withered and died. *"And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away."* (Matthew 21:19 KJV) Jesus cursed the fig tree for its fruitlessness. The disciples marveled at the fig tree's premature demise.

### **Other Examples of Death as God's Instant Judgment**

We can also find other examples in scripture

**"The word  
adjudicate means to  
settle judicially or to  
render a  
judicial  
decision."**

## Day 8: Adjudicating Power

where death is a direct result of an *act* of God, or a prophetic Word through one of His prophets as opposed to a direct *Word* from God himself.

### **Korah and his followers.**

Following the exodus from Egypt and what seemed like aimless wanderings in the Desert, Korah, Dathan and Abiram conspired against Moses. In their hearts, they held jealousy regarding of Moses' authority and claimed that he had promoted himself to become the leader of Israel. Unwisely, they challenged him. Moses instructed Korah and his followers to bring censers of fire and incense to present to the Lord. Aaron, God's priest, did the same. To which offeror would God draw near? Korah and his people gathered as Moses instructed. Then the Lord spoke. Moses commanded the crowd of onlookers to move away. As they did, God spoke by opening the earth! Korah and his followers fell into the deep chasm, swallowed in God's judgment.

### **Ananias and Sapphira.**

Ananias and Sapphira sold some of their prop-

erty and then conspired to deceive Church leaders by claiming that they had given all the proceeds to the Church when they really had not. Confronted by Peter, Ananias fell over

and died as soon as the Holy Spirit revealed his sin. Later that day, his wife Sapphira told the same foolish lie to Peter. She too fell to the floor and died instantly. (Acts 5:1-11) Does their story put the fear of God into your heart?

What can we learn from these examples? Could it be that God, full of mercy, grace, and compassion, can at times also

be moved to wrath? God's prophetic power fulfills many aspects of His multi-faceted purposes. Not only does His prophetic Word create, sustain, restore, direct, and correct, His prophetic Word can also bring judgment when necessary.

Can you think of other scriptural examples where God himself brought a soul to final judgment? Can you think of scriptural examples where someone's words brought judgment or even a curse upon another? How about words of life or blessing?

“Could it be that God, full of mercy, grace, and compassion, can at times also be moved to wrath?”

# Day 9: Foretelling Power

... For the LORD sees every heart  
and understands and knows every plan and thought...  
1Ch 28:9 NLT

**T**HIS IS THE LAST DAY in **PART I** of our series titled **When God Speaks**. Yesterday we looked at God's prophetic power in judgment. And over the past few days, we have been looking at scriptural examples of some of the various ways in which God spoke directly to individuals. Today we will conclude **PART I** by looking at the power of God's prophetic Word to foretell the future.

Some believe that prophecy is more of a "forthtelling" than a "foretelling." To forthtell means to put "forth" the Word, to proclaim it, to speak it forward into the stream and flow of human life and culture. In future articles, we will be looking at the "forthtelling" aspects of the prophetic Word more closely.

To foretell means to tell that something is going to happen before it actually occurs. Because of God's foreknowledge, He has the ability to reveal the future before it happens. He revealed the captivity of Israel, the return of Israel from captivity, and the collapse and destruction of many nations, before these events actually occurred. But nothing foretold in the Old Testament writings compares with God's prophetic foretellings of the coming Messiah.

Scholars claim that there are over 300 Old Testament prophecies foretelling and detailing the life and ministry of Christ. Christ the Messiah fulfilled both direct prophetic predictions and veiled foreshadowings of His life and ministry.

## Direct Prophetic Foretellings.

Many believe God's curse of the serpent in the Garden of Eden to be a direct prophetic foretelling of the coming Messiah. "... [the woman's] seed ... shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15 KJV) God foretold the Messiah's birthplace (Micah 5:2); the scope of His ministry (Isaiah 9: 6-7); the manner of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem prior to His crucifixion (Zechariah 9:9); and many details about His death (Psalms 22). There are numerous others.

## Foreshadowed Foretellings.

In addition to the many direct prophetic predictions of Christ's life, ministry, death, and resurrection,

God also provided numerous veiled foreshadowings of Christ in the Old Testament. In some ways, these prophetic foreshadowings reveal the glory and majesty of God even more clearly than the direct words of Messianic prophecy. Here are a few examples:

1. Abraham and Sarah, like Joseph and Mary, went into and came out of, Egypt. The birth of their son, Isaac, was miraculous. Later, God instructed Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Isaac complied without complaint and was later miraculously spared.
2. God's plague of death to the firstborn in Egypt passed over the Israelites when they sprinkled blood on the doorposts of their homes.
3. Moses created a bronze serpent on a pole (see scripture reference below).
4. Moses' wilderness tabernacle provides numerous, detailed pictures of Christ, His work and ministry, His death and resurrection. Can you think of other examples of Christ foreshadowed in the Old Testament?

## Christ's Foreknowledge and Revelations about His Death and Resurrection.

"Because of God's foreknowledge, He has the ability to reveal the future before it happens."

## Day 9: Foretelling Power

Christ Himself prophetically foretold many things. He revealed the manner of His death (John 3:14, see also Numbers 21:8-9); His time in hell between His death and resurrection (Matt 12:40); Peter's denial (Matt 26:34); and Judas' betrayal (Matt 26:21). Can you think of others?

### **Christ's Foreknowledge and Revelations of Future Events.**

Christ also foretold the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt 24). Today's popular interpretation of Matthew 24 is for a series of yet-to-be-fulfilled events. However, though not popular, nor widely published, there is also a not-so-modern interpretation of Matthew 24 which postulates that the events revealed or foretold by Christ in this chapter occurred in 70 AD when the Roman army conquered Jerusalem. Those not familiar with this in-

“God's Word overflows with predictions of future events.”

terpretation would likely be astonished at the accuracy of Christ's words in Matthew 24 in light of the historically documented events of 70 AD. When

Christ spoke these words, 70 AD was still in the future.

God's Word overflows with predictions of future events. And there are many interpretations of the prophetic words of Scripture. For example, there is a large body of Christians today who believe that all Old Testament prophecies

have already been fulfilled. These are not a widely held or popular beliefs today, though those who believe them are very much a part of the body of Christ.

What are your views on the topic of God foretelling the future through His prophetic Word?

# Begin Part II—Day 10: God's Prophets

*"The group of prophets from Bethel came to Elisha and asked him, "Did you know that the LORD is going to take your master away from you today?"*

*"Quiet!" Elisha answered. "Of course I know it."*

Hosea 12:4 NLT

**O**VER THE LAST NINE DAYS we have been reading about the power of God's prophetic Word and how He speaks directly into His creation and to His people. We've looked at His prophetic Word's **Creative Power**, its **Sustaining Power**, **Incarinated Power**, **Restorative Power**, **Directive Power**, **Corrective Power**, **Adjudicating Power**, and its **Foretelling Power**.

In each of these brief articles, we examined a singular aspect of what happens **When God**

**Speaks**. But God doesn't only speak personally and directly into His creation and to His people. Often, He delivers His message through a messenger.

Today's lesson launches **PART II** of our series. For the next twelve days, we will be looking at **God's Prophets**.

Who are **God's Prophets**? What do they do? What role do they play with God's people? Do they speak God's Word only to individuals and the Church, or do they also speak to the nations, the kingdoms, and the cultures of our world?

Can a prophet tell me something I wouldn't know otherwise? Can I come to a fuller understanding of God and His power through words He speaks through a prophet? Does God call

and equip different kinds of prophets for different kinds of tasks? How do God's prophets fit in with the other ministries that God has ordained? In trusting a prophet to hear from God, might I begin to focus on him or her instead of the Lord? Can a prophet "see" things even when God isn't showing him/her? Are prophets more vulnerable to some temptations than others are? How do Old Testament prophets differ from New Testament prophets? How do New Testament prophets differ from modern-day prophets? Do modern-day prophets even exist? And how does God prepare His prophets for His service?

Inherent with the idea that a prophet speaks for God is the fundamental idea that a prophet must first hear from God.

If God speaks a Word to a prophet that is not directly confirmable by Scripture, how can that prophet be certain that he or she has truly heard from God? Are there safeguards to keep **God's Prophets** from going astray? What is meant by the phrase "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets?"

Bear in mind, each of these lessons are merely broad-brush overviews. I am not attempting to produce the definitive word on the subject of *Prophets and Prophetic Words* but rather to create a "launch pad" for further individual study, contemplation, and discussion.

For the next two days, we will be examining the burden of the prophetic Word and defining the word "prophet" a little more carefully. Then we will look at the differences between

Does God call and equip different kinds of prophets for different kinds of tasks?

## Begin Part II—Day 10: God's Prophets

Old and New Testament prophets. From there, we will go on to explore some of the various ways in which prophetic ministry is expressed.

We will also be examining some of the dangers and pitfalls of the prophetic ministry, the means that God uses to prepare His prophets, and the

Who are God's Prophets? What do they do? What role do they play with God's people?

idea that because prophets are human, their messages tend to be slightly flavored by their own personal, theological viewpoints. Tomorrow, we will begin by looking at **The Burden of the Word of the Lord**.

# Day II: The Burden of the Word of the Lord

*"The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by  
Malachi..."*

Malachi 1:1 KJV

**Y**ESTERDAY WE KICKED OFF PART II of our series with an introduction to **God's Prophets**. Over the next twelve days, we will be looking more closely at those whom God has called and equipped to be His mouthpieces in the earth.

God's prophets carry God's burdens. And God's burdens for His prophets, though lighter than our own, are weighty, continuous, and inescapable.

Walk into a Christian bookstore today, especially one in a large, indoor shopping mall, and what will you find? Aside from a small section of Bibles and reference materials, most of the non-fiction bookshelves will be brimming with material about individual Christian growth, devotional intimacy with God and how to deal with family, marital and personal problems. In the fiction section one will find all kinds of Christian romances, a few adventure stories, and a collection of apocalyptic, end-time thrillers.

But will you find much about God's work with the nations, kingdoms, cultures, and governments in the earth? If not, why not? Are those issues of less concern to Him? Or is it that His people are simply not hearing God's heart regarding these things?

Modern, western Christianity is primarily pas-

toral. For several generations, the American Church's main focus has been on individuals and their relationship to God. Evangelists win souls. Revivalists preach salvation and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Pastors care for their flocks. Even "prophetic" people behave pastorally when they minister to individual needs within a congregation. Emphasis generally focuses upon what God wants to do in us and for us or how He wants to release us to do the same things in and for others.

"Prophets do not naturally think like pastors."

But prophets do not naturally think like pastors. Because God's prophets carry burdens for nations, they sometimes must labor to see the immediate pastoral needs of individuals. God's prophets

carry His burden for the whole. God's prophets understand that God's plan and purpose extends beyond redeeming individuals, cleaning them up and getting them safely to heaven. To one with a prophetic call, God is not only a God of the individual, He is also a God who raises up and puts down kingdoms, who providentially directs the course of history and who calls nations as well as individuals into account for their deeds.

The Scriptures leave no doubt that God has a burden for the Church and for the nation of Israel. But beginning in chapter 13 of Isaiah, God begins to reveal His burden for the nations surrounding Israel—the heathen nations. *"The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah, the son of Amoz did see."* (Isaiah 13:1 KJV) Then in the chapters following, we learn of God's burden for Philistia

## Day II: The Burden of the Word of the Lord

(14:28-32), Moab (15:1-16:14), Damascus (17), Ethiopia (18), Egypt (19), Dumah or Edom (21:11-12), Arabia (21:13-17), and Tyre (23).

What insights can we gain from these passages? Simply this: that in addition to concerning Himself with individual souls, God also cares about nations, kingdoms, cultures, and governments.

Today, God's prophets are called to carry His burdens for the Philistias, the Moabs, and the

“... in addition to concerning Himself with individual souls, God also cares about nations, kingdoms, cultures, and governments.”

Edoms of our generation. Walking in the prophetic can oftentimes be lonely as prophets struggle to help pastors, leaders, and sometimes even their closest friends, to see the "Burden of the Word of the Lord" for the nations, kingdoms, cultures, and governments of this world.

What about you? Do you carry the "Burden of the Word of the Lord?" Do you have a grasp of God's purpose with the nations? Do you understand that His message



## Day 12: Defining the Word, Prophet

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,  
Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

Isaiah 6:8 KJV

**W**ORD MEANINGS ARE VITAL. Effective communication depends on clear understanding. So, as we begin to study and explore the whole realm of **God's Prophets**, let's first define the word. We will look at both the Greek and Hebrew roots, and the modern dictionary definition. As we proceed through the ensuing days and explore various aspects of the prophetic, it will be important to have a clear picture and a solid foundation in our understanding of the word.

The Greek word for prophet, *prophetes*, is derived from two root words. The first root word is *pro* which can mean "before," but can also mean "for." The second root word is *phemi* which means to make known one's thoughts, to declare, or to speak. In ancient Greece, a prophet was an interpreter of oracles and "hidden" things.

One New Testament application of the word *prophetes* is that by divine inspiration, a prophet can speak about an event "before" it actually occurs. Another New Testament application is that a prophet is one who declares to men what he has received by inspiration from God—thus he is speaking "for" God or on God's behalf. In all cases, prophets deliver divinely inspired

messages from God that relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation.

In Hebrew, the meaning of the word for prophet, *nabiy*, is less clear. Many scholars believe it simply means "a spokesman" or "one who speaks." The Old Testament word for prophesy is *naba*, and means "to flow forth."

Webster supplies four definitions for the word prophet. **a)** One who utters divinely inspired

“... self-appointed and self-directed "prophets" promote either their own cause and view, or the cause and view of some larger body they represent.”

revelations, often referring specifically to one of the writers of the prophetic books of the Old Testament. **b)** One who is gifted with more than ordinary spiritual and moral insight, especially a poet. **c)** One who foretells future events or a predictor. **d)** An effective or leading spokesman for a cause, doctrine, or group.

Yesterday we looked at Isaiah's many burdens. In one case, Isaiah actually "saw" God's burden for Babylon (Isaiah 13:1 KJV). Modern worldly poets, bards, and spokesmen often write or speak out regarding something they "see," or at least think they "see." Among others, common American themes include burdens of oppression, poverty, injustice, anti-war, anti-nuke, feminism, animal rights, and environmentalism. These self-appointed and self-directed "prophets" promote either their own cause and view, or the cause and view of some larger body they represent. Their messages are often laced with predictions of future revolution, class warfare, man-made

## Day 12: Defining the Word, Prophet

calamity, or in the case of the environment, natural calamity. Such "prophets," for good or for evil, are culture-shapers.

Of course God's spokesmen sometimes speak out about oppression, poverty, and injustice, and touch on many of the same themes that worldly "prophets" speak about (eg: Isaiah 58). But in contrast, God's prophets do not speak unless God has first spoken to them. To speak for God with clarity and accuracy, one must possess the ability to hear and understand the thoughts of God—to "see" God's burden. The clearest example of a prophet both hearing and speaking for God is found in the Pentateuch. Moses, the law-giver, communed with God on the mountain for days on end. During his time in God's presence,

Moses received not only the Ten Commandments but also God's instructions for the tabernacle and many lesser laws. Moses spoke with authority and commanded great respect among God's people. His prophetic ministry guided, directed, and shaped not only Israel's culture, but the culture of the entire western world.

**"Moses' prophetic ministry guided, directed, and shaped not only Israel's culture, but the culture of the entire western world."**

When God called upon Moses to speak for Him, Moses complained that he was slow of speech, unable to communicate effectively. God relented and assigned Aaron, Moses' brother, to be Moses' spokesman (Exodus 6:28 - 7:1). Aaron then, as Moses' spokesman, carried Moses' burden, which was in essence God's burden, to the people. We will be looking more carefully at this concept on Day 27—Officially Speaking.

As we ponder both the Greek and Hebrew definitions of the word prophet, we are left with a broad-sweep of possibilities. Are God's prophets only those who speak by divine inspiration, in advance, of things to come? Is a prophet always one who speaks for another? Is the act of speaking simply prophetic in and of itself? If an

evangelist stands in a pulpit or on a street corner and "flows forth" with God's Word, is His message prophetic in nature? If God speaks to us directly without a prophet, is His Word prophetic? Is all of God's written Word prophetic? Or are just parts of it prophetic?

Such questions leave us much to think about. Have you ever considered some of these questions? We will be exploring them in the days to

## Day 13: Old Testament Prophets

*"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of ... the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens"*

Hebrews 11:32-34 KJV

**P**ROPHETIC MINISTRY REVEALS ITSELF in several different ways. Yesterday we looked at a variety of different meanings for the word, including to speak "for" and to speak "before." We also considered how worldly prophets speak out of their own burdens regarding various causes and how God's prophets carry and deliver His burdens. Today we look at prophets in the Old Testament.

Prophets heavily populate the Biblical landscape. In days of old, God delivered His message to mankind through the mouths and pens of His prophets. They heard the word of the Lord, then spoke and wrote in faith. God's Old Testament prophets also performed many dramatic exploits with signs, wonders, and miracles. In Jesus' time, these prophetic writings were considered part of the Hebrew Scriptures. After Christ's earthly ministry, Church fathers canonized these prophetic books and made them part of what we now call the Bible.

Let's look at some basic facts. In the Old Testament, from Moses to Malachi, God did not fail to have His prophetic voice active in Israel.

Sixteen out of the sixty-six books of the Bible are named for Old Testament prophets. The story of Moses, Israel's first major prophet, fills four more complete books of the Old Testament. There are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament. So, twenty books out of thirty-nine means that over 50% of all Old Testament books are dedicated entirely to the stories and prophecies of the Old Testament prophets.

"Ezra and Nehemiah, two prophetically called souls, helped bring back Israel from captivity and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem."

But the counting does not stop there. The figures above do not include prophets like Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha who do not have complete books dedicated to their ministries and messages. Furthermore, Moses' disciple Joshua could easily be considered to have had a prophetic ministry among the people of Israel. He received direct instructions from the

Lord and delivered these instructions to the nation. The book of Judges tells of twelve prophetically called men and women. Unfortunately, most of them failed in their missions. And there are more. Esther and Mordecai subdued the Persian kingdom of Xerxes. Ezra and Nehemiah, two prophetically called souls, helped bring back Israel from captivity and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. And of course David, the Psalmist, gave us many prophetic pictures of Christ the Messiah in his writings. One can hardly turn a page of the Old Testament without finding some sort of prophetic activity.

## Day 13: Old Testament Prophets

What did Old Testament prophets do? Beginning with Moses, we see a wide array of ministry flowing forth from the prophets—all involving the Word of the Lord. Moses confronted Egypt's Pharaoh. He proclaimed God's judgment and then watched it come forth in the form of plagues and scourges. He brought forth miracles, signs and wonders, and as discussed yesterday, delivered the Ten Commandments and many other laws to the nation of Israel.

Other prophets confronted kings, both Hebrew and Gentile. They did battle with false prophets, waged war with false gods, and called nations to repentance. They accurately predicted future events in detail, especially the advent of Christ. Hebrews chapter 11, from verse 32 to the end, provides highlights of the many exploits of God's Old Testament prophets.

“Old Testament prophets confronted kings, both Hebrew and Gentile. They did battle with false prophets, waged war with false gods, and called nations to repentance.”

God's Old Testament prophets often stood against the tide of public opinion and suffered for their statements and positions. They were men of vision. When God called Jeremiah, He imparted to him a vision of his calling. *"See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant."* (Jeremiah 1:10 NKJV). Jeremiah clearly understood his calling. Old Testament prophets were often called "seers" because they could see things that others could not. Considering the opposition they often faced, they had to have a clear vision and an accurate picture—a solid word from the Lord.

What lessons can God's modern-day spokespeople learn from the prophets of old?

Might these Old Testament prophets be considered models for Christians today? How are modern-day "prophets" confronting the culture of our day?

## Day 14: New Testament Prophets

*"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"*  
Ephesians 4:11 KJV

**N**EW TESTAMENT PROPHETS served a somewhat different function than Old Testament ones. By the time God's New Testament prophets arrived on the scene, the ultimate prophet, Jesus Christ, had fulfilled His earthly mission and returned to the right hand of the Father. In the Old Testament, prophets were often God's only mouthpiece. But in the New Testament, prophets are seen as part of a five-fold ministry leadership team (see Ephesians 4:11 above).

Furthermore, twenty-first century "prophets" differ from both the Old Testament and the New Testament era prophets. Today, we benefit not only from the ministry of Christ, but also from the testimony of New Testament Scripture, a luxury that the early Church prophets did not have - for indeed, they wrote it! Unlike the prophets we read about in the book of Acts and the epistles, no one in our day could ever expect that their words, nor stories of their ministries, might become a part of the Holy Scriptures.

The Bible teaches (Eph. 4:11 above) that God has provided gifts to leaders to help them equip the Church for the work of the ministry. The Greek word used for prophet in the text noted

above is *prophetes* which, in addition to the definition provided in Day 12's lesson, can also mean a public expounder. Sometimes the word prophet is used to describe a preacher, or one who speaks from the pulpit for God—a person who proclaims or expounds upon the word of God in a public forum.

This description would certainly fit many New Testament figures such as Peter and Paul who publicly expounded upon the Hebrew Scriptures and explained how Christ fulfilled the prophecies of a coming Messiah. Other "prophets" of this era were also considered public expounders but on occasion prophesied future events. Let's look at a few examples.

“... the ultimate prophet, Jesus Christ, had fulfilled His earthly mission and returned to the right hand of the Father.”

A "prophet" named Agabus foretold of a coming drought throughout the world. The disciples responded, sending relief, but only to Judea, where apparently, the most severe area of the drought did occur. (Acts 11:27-30)

Paul warned the elders of the Ephesian church to guard, after his departure, against wolves who would come and seek to destroy the flock. (Acts 20:28-31) One need only look in Revelation 2:2 to see how the Church was attacked and how they bore up under the test.

Agabus again appeared in Acts 21, in a town called Caesarea, in the home of a man named Philip, who incidentally had four "prophesying" daughters, and foretold of Paul's

## Day 14: New Testament Prophets

potential imprisonment should he go to Jerusalem. Paul went anyway and was imprisoned.

Barring references made to Old Testament prophets, New Testament use of the word is sparse. We are told however, that the household of God is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20).

Some interpret this passage to mean the apostles of the New Testament and the prophets of the Old, with the "household of God" being both pre-Christian era Jews of faith as well as Christians. Others believe that modern day apostles and prophets are still actively constructing that foundation.

“God closed the book of His written Word centuries ago. But has He ceased to provide intimate direction and instructions to His Church on a day-to-day basis?”

God closed the book of His written Word centuries ago. But has He ceased to provide intimate direction and instructions to His Church on a day-to-day basis? Can modern day "prophets" still see what God sees? Does He still reveal the future to those who will listen? And is God still actively building His Church upon the foundation of twenty-first century "prophets?"

The balance of this series will continue to look at these questions and explore the role of the prophets of God throughout the last 2000 years of Christian history and into the present. Tomorrow we will look at Prophets as Visionaries.

## Day 15: Prophets as Visionaries

*"Prepare ye the way of the LORD ...  
Every valley shall be exalted,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low:  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough places plain ...  
Isaiah 40:3-4 KJV*

**P**ROPHETS ARE VISIONARIES. As they look out across churches and ministries, nations and cultures, times and events, God shows His prophets things that others sometimes miss. Prophets often see missing ministry components, obstacles to God's purposes, distortions and dysfunctions, and areas that need healing.

Isaiah's description of transformed landscapes conveys a prophet's vision of God's desired work in the Church and the world. His prophets see not only problems, they also envision solutions: Through their spiritual eyes, voids become filled and obstacles diminish. Dark, winding pathways become brightly-lit interstates. Craggy, rock-strewn fields are made smooth and plain. And if they are led to act on their vision, prophets can be troubleshooters in the body of Christ.

Over the last two days, we have begun our look at **God's Prophets** by briefly examining Old Testament and New Testament versions of God's spokespeople. Bridging the chasm between these two eras, we find an odd man, draped in camel's hair, wearing a leather girdle,

and eating locusts and wild honey. John the Baptist, it is said, was an Old Testament prophet in New Testament times.

Three of the four gospels quote the words of Isaiah as they tell the story of this unique Biblical figure (Matt 3, Mark 1, Luke 3). Assigned by God to prepare the way for Christ the Lord, we are told that John was to **1.** raise valleys, **2.** lower hills, **3.** straighten crooked things, and **4.** make rough places plain. Four examples of real-

life individuals or organizations are found below, each representing one element of this popular verse.

“Bridging the chasm between the Old and New Testaments, we find an odd man, draped in camel's hair, wearing a leather girdle, and eating locusts and wild honey.”

### **1. Every valley shall be exalted.**

In 1965, David L.C. Anderson looked out across his denomination, the Lutheran Church, and saw a ministry void. Lutheran youth, he determined, lacked opportunity to be impacted by the gospel. So, in that year, he launched Lutheran Youth Encounter, a para-

church ministry which took college-age young people, formed them into several small summer teams, trained them, and sent them out to Lutheran congregations all across the midwest. Each week, every team traveled to a different community and a different church. Their mission? To spend a week with the youth of a particular congregation, have fun, build rapport, establish friendships, sing, teach, share testimonies, and proclaim the gospel. In the thirty-five years since its inception, the organization Anderson began (now called Youth Encounter)

# Day 15: Prophets as Visionaries

has spread the gospel, internationally and interdenominationally, reaching thousands of young church people across the globe with the claims of Jesus Christ. Prophetic visionaries, like Anderson, see ministry voids and understand what is needed to fill them.

## 2. Every mountain and hill

**shall be made low.** In 1517, Martin Luther, an Augustinian vicar serving as overseer of eleven monasteries in Germany, learned that a man named Johann Tetzel was selling indulgences to his parishoners. To combat Tetzel, Luther posted 95 theses on the door of the Wittenburg Castle Church,

challenging some of the basic practices of the Catholic Church at that time. His bold action prompted an inquisition in which Luther was ultimately charged with heresy. In the midst of continued controversy, Luther wrote many books and sermons and became quite popular, collecting a group of dedicated followers, some of whom were martyred for their professions of faith. Out of Luther's work and ministry, the Protestant Reformation emerged, shaping the course of Western culture for centuries to come. Prophetic visionaries, like Luther, see obstacles and how to overcome them.

**3. The crooked shall be made straight.** Many of us remember the explosion of Church renewal during the 60's and '70's. Numerous independent and para-church ministries emerged in those dynamic years. But soon, questions arose regarding the handling and mis-handling of finances in many of these non-profit ministry

organizations. In the late 1970's, U.S. Senator Mark Hatfield met with a group of Christian leaders and challenged them to become financially accountable to one another. How could evangelicals present a solid, biblical testimony to the world when so many mis-managed God's money? In 1979, these leaders formed the

Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) to help Christian nonprofit organizations earn the public's trust through their ethical practices and financial accountability. Prophetic visionaries, like Hatfield, not only see crooked things, but understand how to straighten them.

“Prophetic visionaries ... not only see crooked things, but understand how to

**4. And the rough places plain.** In the early 1980's, Glen Kehrein (white) and Raleigh Washington (black) began a relationship with one another that evolved into a unique partnership to fight racism and poverty in Southside Chicago. Kehrein, director of Circle Urban Ministries, an outreach and service organization in the all-black Austin area of Chicago's south side, had already been emotionally bloodied from cross-cultural relationships that had blown up in his face. Washington, fresh out of seminary, had just arrived as the new pastor of Rock Church, located adjacent to Circle Urban's facility. Over time, God wove these two hearts together and their relationship now stands as a sterling model for Christian reconciliation and cooperation. Prophetic visionaries, like Kehrein and Washington, see opportunities for healing and reconciliation in the midst of hatred and prejudice.



## Day 15: Prophets as Visionaries

Could it be that the "visionaries" described above, are in a sense, prophetic people? Like John the Baptist, these "prophets" surveyed the landscape and found valleys that needed exalting, mountains and hills to be brought down, crooked things that needed straightening and rough places to be made plain. In so doing, they have each "prepared the way of the Lord."

Do the stories of the prophetic visionaries described above enhance or conflict with your understanding of the ministry of the prophetic? Have you ever considered how God has raised up "para-church" ministries to meet unmet needs that local churches have not met—to fill unfilled voids? Are prophets truly visionaries? Are visionaries truly prophets?

## Day 16: Prophets as Seers

*"Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing,  
but he revealeth his secret  
unto his servants the prophets."  
Amos 3:7 KJV*

**C**AN MODERN-DAY PROPHETS see into the future? Yesterday we looked at four examples of prophetic visionaries who saw needs, gaps, and problems in ministry, and offered solutions. Today and tomorrow, we will be looking at two more aspects of the prophetic—ones with more overt supernatural overtones.

In recent years, several "Schools of Prophets" have bloomed into the American Church culture. Usually growing out of personal or collective intercessory ministries, these "schools" often emerge in the form of "para-church" organizations. Some have websites, publishing articles and prophetic words. Some have subscriber email lists which forward regular prophetic messages to any who sign up. Some produce printed newsletters, books, and audio and videotapes. And some also hold regular conferences.

Publications often include regular "words from the Lord" which sometimes begin with phrases such as "this is a time when" or "God is doing a new thing" or "in the next year, God will." These types of words are generally broad and sweeping and not meant for a particular group or region but for the Church at large.

But on occasion, their prophetic words focus in upon specifics, such as a word for a particular metropolitan area. Sometimes, a coming revival will be prophesied, and with the word, details of how the revival will be characterized and what mark it will leave upon the community and the nation. None of these groups claim 100% accuracy. But some of them are frequently on target with their predictions. Below are three related stories of "prophet-seers" which bear telling.

"In September of 1999, a prophet declared that the eyes of the world would soon be upon West Palm Beach Florida."

1. In September of 1999, a "prophet-seer" delivered a prophetic word about West Palm Beach Florida. In that prophecy, it was said that the eyes of

the world would soon be upon that Florida county. We all now know that that prophetic word proved quite accurate. But what is the benefit of knowing such things in advance? In this particular case, that next summer (2000) some local churches took the word to heart and began to intercede. In prayer they addressed powers, principalities, and demonic strongholds over that community. All of this took place prior to the dramatic events which began to unfold on November 7, 2000 and following.

2. For several years prior to this specific word, many "prophet-seers" shared a burden for the state of Florida, calling it a Gateway to the Nation. Historically, Florida does boast the first permanent settlement of Europeans in what is now the United States, with St. Augustine having been founded in 1565. Florida has also been the literal gateway to hundreds of thou-

## Day 16: Prophets as Seers

sands of Caribbean immigrants, particularly Cubans. In April of 2000, a group of prophetically minded Christians held a "High Place of the Nation" Conference in Tallahassee, believing that Florida would play a strategic role in the battle for the future of our nation and culture.

3. A third, related word, came to another "prophet-seer" in July of 1999. In a vision, the seer saw a stream of ankle-deep water. But within a very short period of time, the water level increased from ankle-deep to knee-deep. The rapid increase in the water's depth occurred between the time of the Presidential election and the Presidential inauguration. What the Church in America experienced in the days leading up to the election was a gradual increase in prayer activity, followed by a tremendous surge of passionate intercession in response to the election itself and the resulting chaos and confusion. Water in the Bible is often associated with the Holy Spirit. (for more insight, read Ezekiel 47 and John 7:37-39)

The book of Joel says, "*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.*" (Joel 2:28 KJV) Many Christians believe that the rise of prophetic ministry in our day is a sign that God is preparing to send a great revival to our land. Over the last few generations, as darkness crept slowly and quietly across the American landscape, the Church at times felt little power to

do much more than watch and pray. Accurate prophetic words such as the ones highlighted above, can give the Church hope and encouragement as well as strategic direction.

In ancient Israel God's Prophets spoke often of things to come. Part of their ministry focused upon providing hope, encouragement, and direction for the Hebrew people. Likewise, in the New Testament, we see prophets speaking to His Church in the same way, revealing future events before they happen. We read of several instances in scripture where Jesus told His disciples of future events. In our lesson

on *New Testament Prophets*, we discussed how Agabus and Paul were ones to whom God gave a glimpse of the future. And of course, John, the apostle, received *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, nearly an entire book of the Bible devoted to the future.

There can be no doubt that God sometimes reveals the future to His servants. Why does He do this? Is it so we can be better prepared? So we can pray? Jesus' disciples asked Him about the future (Mark 13:4). But Scripture provides stern warnings against seeking this sort of knowledge outside of God. (Deut 12: 19-32; 18: 9-14, Lev. 18:21; 19:26, 31). If we ask God and He shows us, it will be for a purpose. If we ask God and He does not show us, it will also be for a purpose. Either way, we must trust Him.

The future belongs to God. He reveals what He chooses to reveal and keeps the rest hidden for our own good.

"Why does God sometimes reveal the future to His servants?"

# Day 17: Prophets as Personal Exhorters

*"The Lord God has given Me  
The tongue of the learned,  
That I should know how to speak  
A word in season to him who is weary.  
He awakens Me morning by morning,  
He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.  
Isaiah 50:4*

**G**OD DESIRES for His servants to be encouraged. Yesterday, we looked at how God sometimes reveals the future to His people through His prophets. He does so for strategic prayer and encouragement. We even supplied some rather dramatic recent examples. The day before, we examined four aspects of God's work through prophetic visionaries who saw needs, gaps, and problems in ministry, and offered solutions. Today we will be looking at how God personally encourages His servants through prophetic exhortations.

## **Words to Churches.**

First we will look at God's personal prophetic word to churches. God has placed His people in many localities and each one is unique. Each church in the Shepherd's flock possesses a special purpose or destiny, a distinctive makeup, and a "one-of-a-kind" combination of gifts. Each church also suffers from its own brand of weakness. Chapters two and three in the book of Revelation contain specific prophetic words for specific churches. Speaking clearly, the Lord Jesus Christ identifies them by name: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Here's part of His

Word to the Church at Laodicea:

*"... I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. ... I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. ..."*

Revelation 3:15-18

Christ's message to the church at Laodicea is very specific. If we look at the Lord's Word to the other six churches we will

see how each one is custom fit, tailored to their individual situation.

Many of Paul's epistles are letters written to specific churches, with specific words of exhortation and direction. Look at his words to the church at Corinth.

*"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you."*

I Corinthians 1:10-11

**"Many of Paul's epistles are letters written to specific churches, with specific words of exhortation and direction."**

# Day 17: Prophets as Personal Exhorters

But does God still speak directly and personally to churches through His prophets today? In recent years, God has raised up prophetic voices to bring encouragement and direction to many congregations within the body of Christ. Below is an example of an actual "prophetic word" spoken over a church.

"As I have brought you all together here, I move and breathe upon this assembly. Do not lie prostrate upon the ground, but do the work that I've called you to do. And what is that work, you might ask? It is not just exercising your spiritual gifts, but it is in producing character. Some of you are new to my kingdom; stay here so that you might learn of Me. To others who have known Me for some time, I would say, to be one with your wives, for in being one with your mates, then you better understand my plans."

**S. Hanson (used with permission)**

Note how, just like Christ's words in Revelation and Paul's words in I Corinthians, this message is custom fit to a unique group of believers. God still cares for each part of His flock and knows exactly what He needs to say to encourage them.

## **Words to Individuals.**

Though growing in frequency and popularity in today's Church, personal prophetic words, or personal prophetic exhortations, are not easy to

find in scripture—particularly the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, the most pronounced occurrence is found in the familial blessing. For example, in Genesis 27:28-29, Isaac blessed Jacob, believing he was Esau, and promised him fruitfulness and honor among his family.

Familial blessings were commonplace in Old Testament culture.

We see a different type of personal prophetic word in the story of the prophet Nathan and king David following David's adultery and the murder of Uriah. Nathan told David a story about a rich farmer with many sheep who stole a poor man's only sheep. After David pronounced judgment

on the sheep stealer, Nathan pulled the proverbial ironic twist, "You are that man!" he said, (II Samuel 12:17), and led David to repentance.

In the New Testament, we find that the greatest example of personal prophetic words can be found in the stories of Jesus' ministry. Here is a familiar passage:

*Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."*

John 4:11

**"Personal prophetic words, or personal prophetic exhortations, are not easy to find in scripture—particularly the New Testament."**

# Day 17: Prophets as Personal Exhorters

Jesus knew precisely what the Samaritan woman needed. Later in the passage, Jesus told the woman that he knew about her five husbands and her current live-in lover. His prophetic word went straight to her heart, opening her to receive God's grace and love. She ran off to tell the town of her encounter with the promised Messiah.

Here are some more of Jesus' personal words to or about individuals:

To Peter and Andrew: *Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

Matthew 4:19

Regarding Nathanael: *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*

John 1:47

To Peter: *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.*

John 21:18

Of course we would expect this kind of ministry from Jesus. After all, He is God. But what about His followers? Are they capable of speaking personal prophetic words? Here are a few more New Testament examples of personal prophetic words:

Elizabeth, pregnant with John the Baptist, spoke a blessing over Mary, pregnant with Jesus.

Luke 1:41-42

Simeon, spoke to Mary about her newborn Son, Jesus. (Luke 2:34-35)

Peter commanded a lame man to walk. He did. (Acts 3:6)

Barnabas and Saul are singled out by the Holy Spirit for ministry together. (Acts 13:2)

During fierce storm, Paul, a prisoner, told the centurion that his men must stay in the ship to be saved. (Acts 27:31)

Beyond these few examples, and there are several more, there is little mentioned in scripture about personal prophecy. The most direct mention of personal prophecy is found in the book of Timothy.

*This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, ...*

I Timothy 1:18-19

*Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.*

I Timothy 4:14

“What about today?  
Does God still speak  
through prophetic  
exhorters into our  
personal lives?”

## Day 17: Prophets as Personal Exhorters

What about today? Does God still speak through prophetic exhorters into our personal lives? The best way for me to answer that question is to provide a personal testimony. To do so, I am going to briefly break with the established protocol and write in first person.

In 1988, while serving as a worship leader at Manassas Christian Fellowship, God gave me an unusual gift. That Sunday our church had invited a guest speaker, a man named Travis Thigpen. Due to a previous commitment, I had to leave the service right after worship. Following the meeting, Travis approached my pastor.

"Where is the man who led worship? I have a word from the Lord for him."

"Where is the man who led worship? I have a word from the Lord for him." Since I had left the building, arrangements were made for Travis to speak his message into the tape machine. The tape was later given to me. Here is an excerpt:

"... The Lord says, man of God, you have been called to be a prophetic voice in the land . . . And the Lord says, you will bring a word in season to him that's weary. The Lord says son, you will have my word, and you will have my heart . . . The Lord says, my son Mark, I've called you to be a prophet to the nations. I've called you with a prophetic voice ... "

T. Thigpen 1988

Can you imagine what happened inside of me when I listened to that tape? Let me tell you. My heart echoed with a resounding AMEN! Prior to hearing the tape, I already had a sense of a prophetic calling upon my life, even though I couldn't quite express it that way. What Travis' word did for me was clarify and confirm what I already knew deep in my heart.

And the most fascinating thing about it--the word sought me out, I did not seek out the word! In the years which have followed, I have not tried to make the word happen. I simply let the word reside in my heart and continue to ask God to fulfill it through me.

How can a man, a total stranger, know about another man's calling without ever even talking to him? Personal prophetic insights such as the one described above are possible because of a gift from the Holy Spirit called the word of knowledge (I Corinthians 12:8). The word of knowledge occurs when God supernaturally imparts specific facts from His mind into the mind of one of His servants--facts which the servant would have no way of knowing in the natural realm. Among other things, God does this to strengthen the faith of the recipient by revealing His personal and intimate shepherding care through the word.

What about you? Have you or your church ever experienced a personal prophetic word? Can you think of other New Testament examples of personal prophecy?

# Day 18: Prophets as Prosecuting Attorneys

"The LORD standeth up to plead,  
and standeth to judge the people"

Isaiah 3:13

**T**HUS FAR WE HAVE LOOKED AT three different expressions of the ministry of **God's Prophets**. We discussed how prophetic visionaries see voids, gaps and weak spots in ministries, and work to fill them. We examined the phenomenon of prophetic seers who had the supernatural ability from the Holy Spirit to receive and express a vision of the future as God permitted. We looked at another supernatural phenomenon—one where prophetic exhorters spoke words of encouragement and clarity to individual churches and people. Today we will conclude our study of prophetic expressions with a look at prophets as God's prosecuting attorneys.

Every culture or society is held together, in part, by laws that regulate relationships. Today, laws in most western societies are derived from the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic Law. Generally, two types of laws exist. *Criminal laws* define offenses against the state and prescribe specific penalties for those who break them. *Civil laws* regulate relationships between individuals.

When criminal laws are violated and the alleged perpetrator is arrested and charged, the government assigns a prosecuting attorney or a team of attorneys to build a case against the ac-

cused based upon evidence and testimony. Do you remember Marcia Clark and Chris Darden? They were the prosecuting attorneys in the O.J. Simpson murder trial who worked for Los Angeles County. Their mission was to convince the jury of Simpson's guilt in the murder of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman.

As the government's case against Simpson went before a jury—indeed the entire world—the prosecutors first explained the law, then attempted to prove that Simpson violated the law by murdering his two victims. The prosecutor's goal was to obtain a conviction and an appropriate sentence for the one convicted of the crime.

Years of film and television courtroom dramas have familiarized Americans with our system of jurisprudence. We know the players and their roles: the accused, the victim(s), the police detectives, the prosecutors, the defenders, the judge, and the jury. But what happens when a nation violates God's laws? Who are God's prosecuting attorneys?

In the Old Testament, God's prophets often performed these duties, bringing God's law to bear against the testimony of a nation's history. And, just as prosecutors are assigned to a case by the local government, so are God's prosecuting attorneys assigned by God.

Do you recall the story of Jonah and his nearly aborted mission to Nineveh?

"In the Old Testament, God's prophets often performed the duties of a prosecuting attorney, bringing God's law to bear against the testimony of a nation's history."



# Day 18: Prophets as Prosecuting Attorneys

*"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."*

Jonah 1:2

From Jonah's story we learn about the cost of avoiding God's call. Jonah did not want to go and prophesy against Nineveh. He tried to escape God's mission and wound up inside a big fish for three days.

But one of the most instructive lessons, and probably least discussed, is the fact that Nineveh was a Gentile nation. God cared not only about Israel but about all the nations. He cared enough about Nineveh to send one of His prophets to them. *"Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!"* Jonah cried. Nineveh's residents repented on the spot. Everyone from the king to the lowest pauper fasted and donned sackcloth. Even the animals did not eat.

In spite of Jonah's initial resistance, God used him to bring a charge against a wicked Gentile nation. Nineveh's people responded well and averted God's judgment. Though no specific

mention is made of God's law, the king spoke of his nation's evil and violent ways. Somehow, he and the people knew they had violated God's commands.

Here is one court case where the Judge had mercy and offered leniency to the lawbreaker nation. Jonah delivered but eight simple words to Nineveh. *"Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!"*

**"Numerous examples are found in scripture of prophets 'prosecuting' a wayward nation with a detailed list of their crimes against God."**

Numerous other examples are found in scripture of prophets "prosecuting" a wayward nation with a detailed list of their crimes against God, the nation's non-repentance, and God's subsequent sentencing through judgment.

What do God's prosecuting attorneys look like today? Abortion picketers? Christian radio talk-show hosts? Christian columnists and writers? Outspoken songwriters and other Christian artists? Can you think of examples of how God is using His Church and His prophets to prophesy to our own nation today? Are God's modern prophets called to warn our nation of impending judgment?

# Day 19: Three Safeguards for God's Prophets

*"... the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do ..."*

*I Chronicles 12:32*

**G**OD'S PROPHETS walk a precarious path. To serve as one requires a call from God, a "yes" response to the call, and the faith and willingness to endure difficulty. Like all in ministry, prophets must safeguard against operating in the flesh—according to their own whims and desires.

Over the last four days we looked at four different expressions of the prophetic ministry in the body of Christ. Each one struggles with unique challenges.

- **Prophet-visionaries** that seek to raise valleys and lower mountains (Isaiah 40:3-4) must make certain that they truly carry God's burden for the task.
- **Prophet-seers** must first see what God is doing (Jer. 1:10) and hear what He is saying (Isa. 6:8) before they speak.
- **Prophet-exhorters** must possess keen sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and the heart to speak without malice or ill-intent.
- **Prophet-prosecutors** must have a thorough knowledge of Biblical truth and principles before they take on the task of calling a nation to repentance and/or judgment.

Today we examine some of the safeguards God

has set in place to help protect us against the dangers inherent in prophetic ministry. To see or hear incorrectly, and thus deliver an errant message, or take an errant step, can be devastating both to the prophet and to the audience. Thus the prophet is best served by availing himself of as many possible safeguards as are accessible.

**“The DANGER of operating without a thorough knowledge of scripture is the temptation to superimpose our own personal experiences over God's written Word.”**

## **Safeguard No. 1. Scripture Knowledge.**

The prophet's most important safeguard in understanding God's word for the moment is of course the Holy Scriptures. Not only must a prophet believe in the inerrancy of Scripture and submit himself to the standard of God's written Word, the prophet must become personally immersed in God's written Word. God's minister should have a sound

head knowledge of scriptural truths and principles drawn from thoughtful and long-term study, and also personal, first-hand experience of applying the truths of Scripture to all of life's situations. Such a solid framework enables the prophetic person to ascertain the legitimacy of the word that comes to him by the Holy Spirit.

The **DANGER** of operating without a thorough knowledge of scripture is the temptation to superimpose our own personal experiences over God's written Word. This practice eventually leads to the emergence of false doctrine, presently a serious problem in the body of Christ. (2 Timothy 4:3, 2 John 1:10)

# Day 19: Three Safeguards for God's Prophets

## Safeguard No. 2. Awareness.

The prophet's second safeguard is a practical understanding of the times in which he or she lives. During David's struggle with king Saul, he gathered an army to meet at Hebron. Among those who joined him were the men of Issachar. The scripture says that they were men who understood the times and knew what had to be done (I Chronicles 12:32). A prophet who carries burdens for and speaks or writes about nations, kingdoms, cultures, and governments, should have a reasonable grasp of the world in which he lives.

He should be able to frame his word for the moment into the context of history, geopolitical and economic forces, and human nature. But God also speaks to individual needs as well. In such cases, awareness is not always possible. Nor is it necessarily required. Sometimes, the Holy Spirit reveals a specific personal need or area through prayer alone. This kind of ministry involves great sensitivity and practice to hone to perfection.

The **DANGER** of operating with little or no awareness is that our knowledge of God remains provincial and narrow, limited by our own personal experience. Without a broad view, we tend to misinterpret events in light of our own limited sphere of understanding. The flip side of this problem, and one that reveals itself more in one-on-one ministry or personal prophecy (see Day 17), is that too much familiarity can also color or taint our word.

## Safeguard No. 3. Accountability.

The prophet's third safeguard is the body of Christ. No one called to be God's prophet can

afford to walk alone. The prophet can protect himself from most error by making himself accountable to other mature and supportive believers around him. In this context, the prophet can learn by taking small steps and testing his intuitive capabilities to hear God. **God's Prophets** are called as part of a team of five ministry gifts to the Church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers—Ephesians 4:11) and must learn to walk alongside and in harmony with the other four.

"No one called to be God's prophet can afford to walk alone."

The **DANGERS** of operating outside of the body of Christ are numerous. Many prophetically gifted people, not committed to walking in submitted and accountable relationships, have become prideful and arrogant, even laws unto themselves. Prophetically gifted souls and their followers who fail to integrate and flow with the body of Christ, often morph into cultic expressions, leading many astray.

A spiritual gift not yet mentioned in this series, one that is very helpful at times in this area of ministry, is the gift of discerning of spirits (I Corinthians 12:10). Those with this gift are supernaturally empowered by God to ascertain whether a word originates 1) within the speaker, 2) from a demonic source, or 3) is truly of God. This gift might also be considered as another safeguard for **God's Prophets**.

Has God called you to be one of His prophets? Do you think you might have the gift of "seeing" and "hearing" what is on the Father heart of God? Have you tested the waters? Is your burden for individuals only, or do you have a sense of what God is doing among the

## Day 19: Three Safeguards for God's Prophets

nations? How much of your sense of God's word for the moment is shaped by what others are saying around you? Are you really hearing from God on your own or are you simply echoing the words of others? Are you familiar with the principles of Scripture? Be careful. God warns us not to shoot off our mouths until He is ready for us to speak.

*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:*

James 1:19

God wants His prophetic word that goes forth in the earth to be pure and on target. That is why **God's Prophets** often endure great heartache and trial as He prepares them for ministry.

## Day 20: The Preparation of the Prophet

*"How long wilt thou forget me,  
O LORD? for ever?  
how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?"  
Psalm 13:1 KJV*

**B** EING ONE OF GOD'S SPOKESPEOPLE is a daunting responsibility. Hearing and communicating clearly are but two of the challenges that we face. Yesterday we looked at the imperative of safeguarding against error. Today we will be looking at the methodology that God uses to keep His servants in His hand.

God is gracious and patient. In His long-term plans to bring redemption to His creation, He has not rushed the process. Although he has provided support for His prophets in His Word and through the Church, He does not force them to comply or follow His guidelines. In fact, He has lovingly persevered with the wayward human race for millennia. He did not rush into sending His Son but waited for the fullness of time. (Gal. 4:4) Four thousand years of human history elapsed between the entry of sin and the entry of the Savior. So it is not surprising that in His way of doing things, He oftentimes leads His prophets through a maze of difficulty to prepare them for service.

God's work is rarely accomplished in short periods of time. Sometimes the waiting process is protracted over many years. The urge to rush into ministry must be avoided. We should wait patiently for our own "fullness of time" before we act.

**"God is gracious and patient. In His long-term plans to bring redemption to His creation, He has not rushed the process."**

Waiting often includes extended seasons of great trial and testing. Jacob, one of the three patriarchs by which God identified Himself to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:6), rushed ahead of God several times and paid a severe penalty. Having understood, even in his mother's womb, that he was to be the chosen one, Jacob grasped the heel of his twin brother, Esau, in an attempt to be the first-born. (Gen 25:26) He did not succeed. Desperately longing to possess his inheritance, he purchased his hungry brother's birthright with the price of a meal. (Gen 25:29-34) Later, with his prodding mother's assistance, he deceived his father into giving him the patriarchal blessing. (Gen 27:26-29) None of these efforts brought Jacob to where God had called him to be.

Twenty-one years later, after painful lessons under the hand of his uncle Laban, Jacob finally began to learn that God's release into the fullness of one's calling is not something to be grasped for but rather something to wait for with patience and faith. Jacob's preparation climaxed at his wrestling match with the angel. Defeated, yet victorious, Jacob experienced the angel's touch in his thigh, a touch that some believe lamed Jacob for life. His natural strength finally subdued, Jacob entreated the angel for a blessing before his departure. He finally understood that God's ways are not man's ways. (Gen 32:24-32) Did he walk with a limp for the rest of his life?

## Day 20: The Preparation of the Prophet

" ... this principle does not apply to lukewarm or cold-hearted believers. Such trials come only to those who walk in the Spirit and commune with the Lord. In fact, the greater a person's passion for Jesus, the more intense his wilderness trials will be."

David Wilkerson

Generations later, God set Moses aside for forty years before commissioning him for service. (Exodus 2:15-25) During that time in the wilderness, Moses learned not only to recognize the voice of the Lord, but also to wait for God's perfect timing before speaking and acting.

The scriptures refer to Moses' wilderness experience in Midian simply as a "process of time" (Ex. 2:23). Do you think in that "process of time" tending Jethro's flock, that Moses became familiar with God's voice? After all, he did not flee when God spoke to him out of the burning bush. During that 40-year preparation period, God no doubt taught Moses about human nature and relationships, kings and kingdoms, eternal principles and His very own heart.

In spite of the pain and heartache, there is no substitute for the wilderness experience, or the

"dark night of the soul" as a training ground for prophetic ministry. For it is in the "dark place" that we truly come to know God.

*And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.*

Isaiah 45:3 KJV

**"In spite of the pain and heartache, there is no substitute for the wilderness experience ..."**

God, in His Sovereign power, desires to strike a blow at our natural man so His pure ministry can flow unhindered by our own natural strength. He wants us to get out of His way. The best prophet is a

limping prophet.

In our microwave, high-speed, DSL-connected world, we often become impatient as we wait for a connection. We want our information and we want it now! Saints of God, let us all remember: His Word is precious and not cheap. It is sometimes very hard to come by.

How about you? Do you have the patience for the process of preparation? Are you willing to wait upon God? Has God taken you through that "dark place" to prepare you for the fullness of ministry? Are you, perhaps, yet in the midst of great trial? Be encouraged. Know that God is working through the "process of time" in your life too.

# Day 21: The Prophet's Soul Pain Filter

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
A broken and a contrite heart, O God,  
You will not despise.  
Psalm 51:17 NAS*

*"He has driven me and made me walk in  
darkness and not in light."*

Lamentations 3:2

**G**OD WASTES NOTHING in preparing His prophets for service. Yesterday, we discussed the value of the wilder-

Do those words describe something you think that God would do? What does Lamentations chapter three teach us about the sovereignty of God?

ness experience in the preparation of **God's Prophets**. All circumstances and relationships serve His goal. His mission is to strike at the very heart of His servants, conquer them, and secure them for His own. God often takes His prophets through "hell on earth" to carry out His sanctifying purpose. The result of God's dealings in our lives is "soul pain."

"Jeremiah left no doubt that he believed God to be the author of his heartache."

Because the preparation process involves so much pain and heartache, the prophet must understand that it is a sovereign God who is orchestrating the events of our lives—sovereignly keeping watch over the processes of temptation, sin, and failure. Though God does not tempt us, nor cause us to sin,

He allows the devil to tempt us in order to sift us and shake us.

*"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:"*

James 1:13

Part of the package that comes with God's call to prophetic ministry is a strong sense of right and wrong. For **God's Prophets**, the temptation to judge and criticize others is an easy trap. One reason why God often allows His prophets to endure injustice and hurt is to balance the prophet's tendency toward criticism with a sensitivity to the hurts of others. Because of his hurts, the prophet learns to forgive and to relinquish his bitterness—to come to a place of brokenness and surrender.

*"And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said*

Jeremiah learned of God's sovereign ownership of His life through much pain and heartache. Open your Bible and read Lamentations chapter three. Jeremiah left no doubt that he believed God to be the author of his heartache. What do you think about the following statement in Jeremiah's painful lament?

## Day 21: The Prophet's Soul Pain Filter

*unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life."*

Job 2:3-6

*"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:"*

Luke 22:31

Trials and tribulations, feelings of rejection and abandonment by God—even though He is really very near—and the accompanying difficulty, hurt our souls. Hurt can lead us down one of two roads. The road of unforgiveness takes us to bitterness. The road of forgiveness takes us to surrender and brokenness.

If the prophet in preparation does not understand God's sovereign purpose in his trials, he may be tempted to go down the wrong road—the one which leads to bitterness. Bitterness grows from unrelinquished ownership. The bitter soul hangs onto feelings that his life has been violated. The broken soul knows that his life belongs to God.

Even though God wants His prophets to discern right from wrong, He wants grace and compassion to flow from our hearts and our

words. When God determines that His prophet has been brought to a place of surrender, the prophet is deemed ready for service.

What happens when someone with a prophetic gift and calling is still suffering from hurt or rejection and has not yet chosen to forgive?

Their keen "prophetic" insights are often displayed in sarcasm or cutting remarks. Somehow the words seem right when they first come out, but later, they grow to become bitter bile in the mouth.

A church desiring prophetic ministry must be extremely cautious not to anoint or lay hands on anyone too quickly

(I Tim 5:22). To do so may abort God's training process and short circuit the long-term effectiveness of a budding prophet's ministry.

How about you? Have you been hurt by others? Do you carry feelings of resentment and bitterness in your soul? Do these areas of unforgiveness taint God's word spoken through you? When the word of the Lord comes out of your mouth, is it pure and undefiled? Have you relinquished your hurt to God, surrendered ownership of your life to Him? Or is the word spoken through you still colored by your personal soul pain?

**"A church desiring prophetic ministry must be extremely cautious not to anoint or lay hands on anyone too quickly."**



# Day 22: The Prophet's Theological Filter

*"And the spirits of the prophets  
are subject to the prophets."*

*I Corinthians 14:32*

**Y**ESTERDAY WE DISCUSSED how a prophet's "soul pain" might affect or color a message from God as it is delivered through His messenger. In the same way, a prophet's personal theology will color or affect a message as well.

Theology? Wait a minute! What does theology have to do with prophets and prophetic words?

Theology is an often misunderstood word among Christians. Some Christians have even been heard to say—"We don't need theology. We just need Jesus." But who is Jesus? Was he just a man? Or is He God as well? If Jesus is not God, then why do we need him? And if He is God, and we believe Him to be so, then, whether we like it or not, we have a theology.

Theology is inescapable in our lives. It is our belief system. Our theology is that which puts personal meaning into the facts of religious history. Jesus died on a cross and rose from the dead. Those are the facts. But through His death He bore the judgment for my sin. And through His resurrection He overcame death itself. That is theology—that which puts meaning into those facts.

Much like the many other "...ologies" we grew up with in school, theology is a science. When we think of biology, for example, we recognize

that this field of science catalogues and classifies living things into plant (botany) and animal (zoology) kingdoms. Beyond these broad categories, the study of life is then subdivided into numerous smaller categories. Cytology, histology, anatomy, physiology, and embryology are but a few.

Like the other sciences, theology classifies and separates knowledge about God into categories. Theology catalogues truth. For many centuries, theologians have been culling truth from the Holy Scriptures and neatly organizing it into categories. Open a pure theology book and you will probably find several different areas of concentration:

"Theology? Wait a minute! What does theology have to do with prophets and prophetic words?"

- The study of God
- The study of man
- The study of sin
- The study of Christ's atonement
- The study of death and resurrection
- The study of heaven and hell
- The study of end-time events
- The study of the Church

Every Christian operates out of a personal theology—a way of thinking about the topics enumerated above. Our ideas have been formed over time through personal study of scripture, through books and literature we have read, and through messages we have heard. In turn, all that we attempt to communicate, whether verbally or in some other form, is expressed in terms of the way we understand things to be—our personal theology. For our purposes here, we will call it a "theological filter."

## Day 22: The Prophet's Theological Filter

Thus, every "prophetic" message delivered by a human messenger has a slant or an angle based upon the prophet's "theological" perspective. Consider the following examples:

**Prophet No. 1:** This prophet holds the theological view that Christ's return is imminent—probably within the lifetime of most people alive today. So convinced is this individual that Christ is coming soon, that his messages are usually peppered with, and sometimes even prefaced with, language like "in these last days..." Because of this prophet's personal theological filter, the immanency of Christ's return is weighted with the same measure of certainty as more sure gospel elements such as the atonement or the resurrection.

**Prophet No. 2:** In contrast, this prophet is not as certain of Christ's imminent return, but is convinced that culture should reflect the glory of God. Because of this prophet's personal theological filter, his messages reflect the theme of bringing the government or kingdom of God to bear upon society and culture. This individual often frames his messages from God with such phrases as: "Western Society," "Christian World-Life View," and "Judeo-Christian culture."

"Just as we grow in our personal lives into God's grace and our knowledge of Christ and His kingdom, so we grow in our prophetic ministries."

These two prophetic voices, though both speaking for God, can almost at times appear to be at cross purposes. Prophet No. 1 is so convinced of Christ's imminent return, that winning the culture almost seems to be a waste of time. On the other hand, Prophet No. 2 is so consumed with winning and shaping culture that he might not be prepared for a dramatic shift or fresh move of the Holy Spirit. These of course are not the only types of prophetic voices. Actually, there are as many flavors and varieties as there are people called and gifted in the prophetic.

Just as we grow in our personal lives into God's grace and our knowledge of Christ and His kingdom, so we grow in our prophetic ministries.

Our understanding of God's Word increases and our burdens shift over time. And these gradual, subtle transformations in our thinking and perspective are directly related to our ever-developing personal theologies.

How about you? What is your personal theology? How does it affect or filter your views? Is your theological perspective growing, maturing, and expanding over time? Are your messages "colored" by your theological views of end-time events? By your burden for shaping and molding culture? By some other passion? Or do you, like some, believe that a pure prophetic word from God somehow bypasses our personal "theological filter?"

# Begin Part III—Day 23: Prophetic Voices

*... to open their eyes, in order to turn them  
from darkness to light,  
and from the power of Satan to God,  
that they may receive forgiveness of sins  
and an inheritance among those  
who are sanctified by faith in Me.'*  
Acts 28:18

ready been proclaimed countless times and he would not retract it. He died like the martyr Stephen, praying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

*Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His saints.*

**I**N 1528, 23 year old Patrick Hamilton was burned at the stake. Newly married, and with a young, pregnant wife, Patrick's martyrdom became the match which lit the fires of Reformation in Scotland.

As he was being tied to the post, he offered his garments to a disciple, saying, "These will not profit me in the fire, yet they will be thee some good." His murderers struggled to get the fire going. It flared up once, scorching him in the face, but then it died out. They tried more gunpowder but the green wood would not ignite. After three failed attempts to light the fire, a runner was sent to retrieve dry wood. All the while, Hamilton stood tied to the stake, partially burned, yet calm, quiet, patient, and still very much alive. How could a man so willingly surrender his young life to such a horrible form of death?

Awkwardly watching Hamilton as they awaited the dry wood, his accusers urged him to recant. "Heretic, be converted; call upon Our Lady; only say, Salve Regina."

But Hamilton refused. His testimony had al-

"Some said that the smoky residue from these martyr-burnings wafting across the surrounding countryside, infused the air with the Gospel."

Psalm 116:15

*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*

Revelation 12:11

In the wake of Hamilton's death came more martyrs. Henry Forrest, a Benedictine in the monastery of Linlithgow, was burned. David Straiton and

Norman Gourlay added their names to the list of those, changed from within by the power of the Gospel who gave their lives in willing testimony. Others followed. Many were set to blaze on hilltops. Their murderers believed that if others saw the flames, they would be struck with terror and cling to the mother church for safety. But their methodology produced the opposite effect. Some said that the smoky residue from these martyr-burnings wafting across the surrounding countryside, infused the air with the Gospel. In time, revival took hold in Scotland.

"The smoke from Patrick Hamilton infected as many as it blew upon" --John Lindsay James

## Begin Part III—Day 23: Prophetic Voices

Hamilton's death, and the deaths of countless other martyrs in Scotland, England, and Western Europe, opened the doors for a release of the true power of the Gospel, the power of God to change individual lives from within. For centuries, the established church had been the all powerful sole definer of godly things, managing, controlling, and distributing ideas about God to serve its own purposes. But now, the idea of a personal, intimate, redemptive, relationship with God began to take hold. One by one, souls became convinced by the Holy Spirit of their own individual sin, and of their need for the Savior. This Gospel led them down the path of forgiveness, delivered them from their bondage, and brought them into the place of true liberty. The Reformation brought fresh ideas about God into a world darkened by religious corruption and apostasy.

"The Reformation brought fresh ideas about God into a world darkened by religious corruption and apostasy."

The distribution of Wycliffe's Bible began in Scotland around 1525. But until the written Word mixed with the **Prophetic Voices** of many martyred Gospel preachers, the Reformation could not fully take hold. Hamilton's death, and the deaths of his successors, seeded the garden of Christianity for men like John Knox, whose ministries flourished in the years which followed.

These martyrs lived as true **Prophetic Voices**. Even their deaths became powerful prophetic messages. They were **God's Prophets**, not only proclaiming the Gospel, but pointing out the ideological heresies of the apostate Church of their time. Though their boldness cost them their lives, it awakened multitudes to the true

message of salvation, turned the course of human history, and marked a new direction for the Church.

But in this dynamic era known as the Reformation, as the Church began a resurgence in vibrancy and power, anti-Gospel forces also engaged the culture with their ideas. Like always, the enemy had his own set of powerful **Prophetic Voices** on the move. Here are three:

**Erasmus** (1459-1536) was a Dutch, Roman Catholic Reformer. He was a Humanist contemporary of Martin Luther and a close friend of Sir Thomas More (see below). He be-

lieved reform could be achieved by exposure to good works of literature. His most widely acknowledged trait was an unswerving trust in human reason.

**Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535) was an English statesman, scholar, and martyr for the Catholic faith. He is most widely known for his book entitled *Utopia*, taken from two Greek words meaning "not place" or "nowhere." The book criticized social problems of the day and painted an idyllic picture of a world where no such problems existed. More blamed the social ills on "the unreasonable covetousness of a few." Although More was devoutly religious, *Utopia* conveyed an anti-Gospel message, idealizing a non-Christian socialist society.

**René Descartes** (1596-1650), a French philosopher, is best known for the following statement: "cogito ergo sum," which means, "I think, therefore I am." Descartes questioned

## Begin Part III—Day 23: Prophetic Voices

everything, even his own existence. He set out to discover something he could be sure of. And after eliminating everything else—he even questioned if his senses might be lying to him about the corporeal world—he realized that he could be SURE he was thinking. He concluded that since he could be SURE he was thinking, he knew that one thing, at least, existed—himself. From that bedrock moment of discovery, he went on to develop an elaborate chain of reasoning to prove the existence of God. But Descartes' struggle to understand and define his own existence and the existence of God denied Scripture and the element of faith, and elevated human reason as the sole source or foundation of truth.

The phrase "sola scriptura" or "by Scripture alone" emerged as one of the key idea-earmarks of the Christian Reformation. For the Reformation Christian, God's written and Holy Word became the standard against which all ideas were to be judged. But in the parallel world of the anti-Gospel, as demonstrated by the men described above, the idea of human reason, and not the Holy Scriptures, became the standard.

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for re-*

*proof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

The kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light have been at war since the beginning of time. And the war has always been a battle over the idea of God—how He is to be defined, and how we are to relate to Him. During the Reformation era, the war between these two conflicting **Prophetic Voices** became accentuated. **Parts I** and **II** of this series set the stage for this last and final section of our daily study of *Prophets and Prophetic Words*. The balance of articles will explore and examine

the ongoing battle of **Prophetic Voices** and the conflict between truth and error. Over the next eight days, we will be briefly looking at this war—ultimately a war of ideas fought with words.

Have you ever considered that ideas have prophetic power? Have you ever considered the Gospel itself as an idea? Was creation an idea? How about the Father's decision to send His Son as a Savior? Where do our ideas about God, man, sin, family relationships, the world, and even civil government, come from?

"For the Reformation Christian, God's written and Holy Word became the standard against which all ideas were to be judged."

## Day 24: Everybody's Talkin'

"Beloved, believe not every spirit,  
but try the spirits whether they are of God:  
because many false prophets  
are gone out into the world."  
1 John 4:1 KJV

**W**HERE DO OUR IDEAS come from? Do they just pop mysteriously into our heads? Or do they come from an outside source? If so, who is speaking to us? Are we listening? Are our ideas even correct? Do they truly reflect God's perspective?

Yesterday we launched **Part III—Prophetic Voices**, in daily study of *Prophets and Prophetic Words*. We discussed the idea that the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light have been at war since the beginning of time. At its core, this war has always been a struggle over our ideas about God—how He is to be defined, and how we are to relate to Him. For the next eight days, we will be looking more closely at this war of ideas. But over the next two days, our theme will be "messages."

We live in a world of messages. Voices bombard us all day long, imparting their values and shaping our viewpoints. Writers, publishers, news people, marketing specialists, media handlers, and now political spin-doctors deliver their messages to us in rapid-fire succession. Satellites and cable lines relay signals into our homes on hundreds of media channels. Radio stations blast their messages into our cars as we travel to the store, work, or wherever we are

"We live in a world of messages. Voices bombard us all day long, imparting their values and shaping our viewpoints."

going—even while we're holding on the phone. Internet companies hammer us with online advertising every time we activate a web-search. Colorful magazine covers entice us in supermarket check out lines. Newspapers, books, newsletters, appeal letters, and junk mail invade our lives nearly every day. All push products to buy, philosophies to consider, and information to process. We cannot escape the world of messages.

From what source do you obtain your news? Do you watch the evening news on television?

Do you read the newspaper? Which newspaper do you read? How do you analyze the news? Do you read the commentaries and editorials? Do you listen to the radio and TV talk shows? How do you find out what is going on? Our world has grown increasingly interconnected. Reliable news and information is essential not only to those in business, but also to the millions of everyday people who invest their money in stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. But nowhere is accurate information so critical as it is in the highest levels of government. Our government and military have extremely sophisticated information gathering mechanisms to report on all kinds of intricate details. From this information, our leaders receive advice from experts who interpret the raw information and provide wisdom and counsel. Out of these councils come decisions which shape our world and our future. Accuracy is critical.

## Day 24: Everybody's Talkin'

Accurate news was no less important in ancient Israel. Government leaders and military commanders had to have sources they could trust. Whom did they choose? Where, for example, did Moses get his news? From whom did he receive counsel?

*This was their report to Moses: "We arrived in the land you sent us to see, and it is indeed a magnificent country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is some of its fruit as proof. But the people living there are powerful, and their cities and towns are fortified and very large. We also saw the descendants of Anak who are living there! The Amalekites live in the Negev, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and along the Jordan Valley."*

Numbers 13:27-29 NLT

Caleb provided another interpretation of the same information.

*But Caleb tried to encourage the people as they stood before Moses. "Let's go at once to take the land," he said. "We can certainly conquer it!"*

Numbers 13:30 NLT

Following God's instructions, Moses had sent out twelve spies to check out the land of

Caanan. They returned with two completely different interpretations of the same information. Ten feared the Canaanites. But Caleb and Joshua came back ready to conquer them.

**"The Scriptures warn us to test the prophets' messages. Are they born of the Spirit of God? Or do they originate with some other spirit?"**

Scripture reveals that these ten spies not only reported their findings to the community of Israel, but also imparted their own fears (Numbers 13: 25-26, 31-33). In response, the whole nation of Israel began to complain against Moses and plot for their return to Egypt. Angered, God considered destroying them all, but Moses pre-

vailed in prayer, and God merely decided that not one of that generation would enter into Caanan. The Israelites went on to wander the desert for another forty years.

Both groups had delivered their messages—one, a message of fear, the other a message of hope. One by one, Israel's collective mindset became infected with the message of fear. In the end, they shrunk back from the challenge.

Were the ten negative spies false prophets? Did they, like Joshua and Caleb, also speak with prophetic voices?

The Scriptures warn us to test the prophets' messages (I Thessalonians 5:21). Are they born of the Spirit of God? Or do they originate with some other spirit? The moment the Israelites bought into the vision delivered by the ten fearful spies—the false **Prophetic Voices**, they launched their lives toward an alternate destiny, away from God's highest and best plan.

## Day 24: Everybody's Talkin'

Like the Israelites of old, our thoughts today are shaped by the messages we hear. Whether a Sunday sermon, a book from the Christian bookstore, a television news broadcast, or a film at the theatre, we cannot help but be impacted by the continual barrage of messages we encounter every day.

Each human mind evolves over time into a complex web of thoughts, ideas, memories, philosophies, concepts, and much more. Our minds guide us and direct us. With informed minds, our wills make the choices which determine the course and destiny of our lives. Like never before in his-

“Our minds guide us and direct us. With informed minds, our wills make the choices which determine the course and destiny of our lives.”

tory, everybody's talkin' at the same time. Indeed, the world is filled with **Prophetic Voices**, each one clamoring for our attention.

On Day 12, we discussed how prophets are those who speak for another, or in some cases, simply those who speak. We also noted that to prophesy means to "flow forth." Could it be said that our airwaves, our Internet connections and our printing presses "flow forth" with messages? All messages, regardless of their source, come from somewhere. And all are, in regard to their power to shape, form, and mold our world, prophetic in nature.



## Day 25: Two Messages, Many Messengers

*"Ye are of your father the devil, ...  
there is no truth in him.  
When he speaketh a lie,  
he speaketh of his own:  
for he is a liar, and the father of it"*  
John 8:44 KJV

**A**S DISCUSSED YESTERDAY, every message is, by pure definition, prophetic. Whether in words, music, print, or some form of imagery, every message originates from a source and is directed toward an audience. And anyone who speaks a message, whether for himself or for another, can be called a prophet. Thus the world is filled with a multitude of prophets and a vast array of messages.

In the end, all messages are but one of two types:

**God's Message:** God is the center of all creation. He is worthy of praise and glory, filled with grace, mercy, and compassion. He reveals Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Redeemer Son. Yet He is also a holy and righteous judge to those who ultimately reject His gift of salvation. This is the gospel message.

**The Devil's Message:** While God's message declares Him to be the center of all creation, the devil's message denies this truth. In fact, the devil would have us question whether God even exists at all. He would have us consider a possibility that there are many gods. He would have us believe that good

people will go to heaven on their own merits, that there is no hell, and all kinds of other good sounding ideas. The devil's message comes in countless forms, one for each unredeemed life and many others for the multitude of demons on the prowl to seduce mankind and subvert God's purposes. This message, in all its forms, is the anti-gospel.

"In one sense, the Bible itself is a prophetic voice."

The Scriptures contain God's message to the human race. In one sense, the Bible itself is a prophetic voice. Every now and then, an individual is awakened to God's message without the aid of a human messenger, simply by reading the Scriptures. The Bible delivers truth, wisdom, and God's perspective for every area of our lives. Scripture contains the power of God to bring us new birth in Christ and to transform our lives into His image. Most often however, it is the Scriptures spoken through a friend, or a more formal message or teaching that God uses to quicken the heart of the unbeliever.

As they broadcast their messages to the world, both God and the devil draw from the same messenger pool—the human race. We humans are free moral agents, and because we hold and share ideas, we are, whether we like it or not, messengers. Following is a look at how these two opposing messages are communicated.

**Proclaiming God's Message:** The Church is God's prophetic voice in the earth. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Church distills the truths of Scrip-

## Day 25: Two Messages, Many Messengers

ture into principles, values, teachings, and wisdom. The Church then prophetically proclaims God's Word. Proclamations are made through pulpit messages, Bible studies, old-time tent revival meetings, street-corner preaching, one-on-one conversations, Christian concerts, tracts, books, the airwaves, and all sorts of media. As God's people proclaim His message, they deliver hope, comfort, direction—and even, on occasion, judgment—into the stream and flow of the cultures of this world.

Whether directly from Scripture or through God's messengers in the Church, the end result of the gospel message is new life in Christ. When proclaimed, the Word of God transforms us—changes us from glory to glory (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

### **Proclaiming the Devil's Message:**

But God's enemy speaks with a prophetic voice as well. Jesus called the devil a liar, and the father of lies (John 8:44). Satan's word speaks death, chaos, fear, discouragement, and confusion into our world. His mission is to keep us estranged from God. His primary methodology is deception.

The devil avails himself of every means possible to achieve his mission. To get out his false prophetic message, the devil, like God, also employs mes-

“... there are only two messages, filling the air, coming at us from every angle, and seeking to conquer and subdue our minds.”

sengers. Very few of the devil's messengers consciously cooperate with him. The nature of deception is such that those who are deceived actually believe that they understand the truth. Because he disguises himself so adeptly as an angel of light, we are sometimes unable to distinguish God's truth from the devil's lies. Thus, cooperation with the devil's purposes almost always occurs unwittingly.

So then, there are only two messages, filling the air, coming at us from every angle, and seeking to conquer and subdue our minds. Followers of Jesus

are to be “... casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ...” (2 Corinthians 10:5). But, though there are only two messages, there are many messengers—both those who willingly cooperate, and those who are beguiled and deluded. This is why we must always be careful to examine the messages **we** speak, comparing them with truths in the Bible, to be certain that we are speaking God's truth and not the devil's lies.

What about you? Are you familiar enough with Scripture to distinguish God's message from the devil's message? Can you discern truth from error? Did you realize that every time you open your mouth to deliver a message, you are being prophetic? What prophetic message are you sending today?

## Day 26: Officially Speaking

*"For I am a man under authority ...  
And Jesus said unto the centurion,  
Go thy way; and as thou hast believed,  
so be it done unto thee.  
And his servant was healed  
in the selfsame hour."  
Matthew 8: 9 & 13 KJV*

**O**VER THE LAST couple of days, we have been talking about how everybody's talking. Two days ago, we examined the fact that we live in a world of messages. In our fast-paced, highly sophisticated culture, ideas constantly bombard our minds from all sorts of sources. To the degree that we are shaped by these ideas, they possess prophetic power. Yesterday, we concluded that after all is said and done, only two types of messages ultimately exist—messages that are from God and messages that are not from God. Today, we are going to look at how messages follow a chain of command.

The Roman Centurion in the passage above understood the concept of authority. He said, "I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it." The centurion's orders were followed because the centurion possessed authority. His authority came from those above him in his military chain of command. All in the military, be they ancient Roman soldiers, or modern day servicemen, understand the power of the spoken word. Because the centurion recognized Jesus' authority to speak for God the Father, he was willing to settle for a simple

word from Jesus (Matthew 8:8). Jesus praised him for his faith. (Matthew 8:10)

All prophetic voices follow a chain of command. When our President sends his Secretary of State to a foreign nation, the Secretary speaks on the President's behalf. When a salesman for XYZ Industries speaks to a customer explaining his product's performance capabilities, pricing, and delivery schedule, he speaks with authority imparted to him by his company.

"The speaker is representing (read as re-presenting) the views of those above him in his chain of command."

Throughout the course of each day, we operate in various prophetic capacities. At work we speak to a client on behalf of our company. At the home dinner table, correcting or instructing our children, we speak on behalf of God. Later in the evening, as the church building committee chairman, we speak on behalf of the building committee to our church's board of elders.

In the examples given above, the speaker is speaking for someone else. In so doing, he speaks from a chain of command and possesses legitimate authority to deliver his message. The speaker is representing (read as "re-presenting") the views of those above him in his chain of command.

The concept of speaking for someone else touches on the Biblical principle of representation. Briefly exploring this theme, Adam "represented" the human race when he ate of the forbidden fruit. His sin was imputed by God to all who descended from him. In juxta-

## Day 26: Officially Speaking

position to Adam, Jesus, too, "represented" the human race when He offered himself as a living sacrifice for those very sins brought upon us by our father Adam.

Moses, Joshua, the Judges, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and all of God's spokespeople throughout the Bible, were God's representatives - His prophets. Saul, David, and those who followed, were also God's representatives as kings of Israel. The people we elect today to our state houses and U.S. Congress are our representatives, speaking on our behalf and with our voice. They are elected to "re-present" our views in the halls of government.

Chains of command are all around us—in homes, schools, businesses, governments, the military—everywhere we go. But beyond these obvious examples, consider what happens when you open your mouth to speak. Where are your words coming from? What is their source? Who are you speaking for? Technically, we all speak

with prophetic voices. We are all messengers. And we all disseminate ideas every time we speak.

Next time you hear someone speak, take this simple test:

- For whom is the speaker speaking? (authority)
- To whom is the speaker speaking? (audience)
- What is the speaker saying? (message)

“Chains of command are all around us—in homes, schools, businesses, governments, the military—everywhere we go.”

In every case above, the speaker's words shape the listener in some way. Whether a parent instructing a child or the Secretary of State speaking into the course of world history, we shape others and are ourselves shaped by words conveying ideas.

In conclusion, prophetic messages come through a chain of command and shape our world. What are your thoughts?

# Day 27: The Marketplace of Ideas

"...evil men and seducers  
shall wax worse and worse,  
deceiving, and being deceived."  
2 Timothy 3:13 KJV

**W**ELCOME TO twenty-first century American culture, where a myriad of voices speak a multitude of messages, through a multiplicity of media. Today, we will look at several media forms and their prophetic power.

## Film.

First, let's look at the Hollywood film industry.

Is Hollywood a mirror or a shaper of our culture? Hollywood's producers and directors would have us believe that their films merely reflect our own values back to us. But do they? Imagine yourself in a movie theater. The year is 1962. You and your family settle into your seats. Your left hand grasps a box of popcorn. Your right hand clutches a soda. The film *To Kill a Mockingbird* begins to roll. If you have any conscience at all, your heart will soon be pricked as you consider the ugly power of racial bigotry.

Other films, too, have explored the subject of America's unique struggle with racism. In 1967, "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?" burst open the taboo subject of interracial dating and courtship. Another 1967 film, "In the Heat of the Night," explored the changing relationship between a white, Mississippi sheriff and a black Philadelphia police detective, as they worked together to solve a murder. More recently, films like "Glory," "Mississippi Burning," and "A

*Time to Kill*," continued to examine the fragile theme of racism in the collective American psyche.

Hollywood has imparted many values to American moviegoers through the years. Sometimes American-made films reinforce our long-held values of family, hard work, and integrity. But quite often, Hollywood's offerings cut against the grain, foisting upon us a world view that runs counter to our traditional ways of looking at things. Sometimes this is good, as with Hollywood's mostly positive impact upon racism in our culture. But frequently, especially

in the last 35 years, the values which Hollywood has imparted have been anti-Christian and anti-gospel. Films can be a very effective outlet for **Prophetic Voices** to speak into the stream and flow

of our culture.

## Television.

If films are powerful voices, speaking into our lives, then television packs even more power, invading our homes and hearts with daily words, images, and sounds. In the fifties and early sixties, we watched, among others, "Leave it to Beaver," "The Andy Griffith Show," and "My Three Sons." Who could forget Ward Cleaver, Andy Taylor, and Steve Douglas, imparting their fatherly wisdom to their young charges? These first generation television programs reinforced wholesome family values.

As the medium of television matured, its messages slowly degenerated. Today, characters in

"Is Hollywood a mirror or a shaper of our culture?"

## Day 27: The Marketplace of Ideas

soap operas, sitcoms, and television dramas frequently engage in fornication. The act itself is rarely shown but often implied. And recently, homosexuality and lesbianism have been working their way into mainstream television programming. What's next? How profoundly have our values been impacted by television? Television programming is a powerful medium for **Prophetic Voices** to speak into the stream and flow of our culture.

### Literature.

For centuries before film and television began impacting our view of the world, literature has been shaping our values. In addition to many non-fiction works, written specifically to instruct and inform, many fictional works have dramatically impacted our culture as well. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the pre-Civil War classic by Harriet Beecher Stowe, fueled abolitionist passions in the North in the years preceding the war. During the conflict, Lincoln met Stowe and remarked about the power of her story: "So you're the little lady who wrote the book which started this big war!" Lincoln understood the power of a good story to shape and mold the values of a culture.

Charles Dickens' books portrayed the poor and underprivileged classes in England during the nineteenth century—particularly the children. His writing stirred hearts and fostered changes in child labor laws.

Have you read Frank Peretti's novel, *This Present Darkness*? Imagine again the writer's images of prayer warriors praying and angels in

battle. After reading Peretti's book, did you commit yourself to be more spiritually aware and prayerful? His book made a deep prophetic impact upon the evangelical Christian community in America. Like television and film, literature has also been one of the powerful media for **Prophetic Voices** in our land.

"President Lincoln understood the power of a good story to shape and mold the values of a culture."

### Music.

Music has always been an important part of the American cultural landscape. From early colonial folk tunes, to the music of Stephen Foster, to gospel, to jazz, to big band, to rock and roll, r&b, and rap, music has been both a reflection and a shaper of the American experience.

ence.

In the 1960's, a wave of singer-songwriters broke across the scene and helped to steer our nation toward a new course. In that decade, music seemed to pack more power than in any previous American era. The sixties witnessed a wave of supergroups—the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and the Beach Boys are but three of countless names that still ring in the minds of those who grew up in that period.

One writer in particular stands above the rest as a prophetic voice for his time. Bob Dylan, a prolific voice in the sixties, wrote many songs with a prophetic edge. His early albums especially, with tunes such as *Masters of War*, *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall*, *Oxford Town*, and *The Times They are A-Changin'*, set the tone for the decade. The sixties was a time of great change, a massive cultural shift. We moved away from the Judeo-Christian roots of our

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past and toward a nihilistic, relativistic world view.

Dylan, Joan Baez, and many lesser known figures, sang of civil rights struggles and anti-war protests. Later in that era, in the early seventies, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young wrote and popularized a song titled *Four Dead in Ohio*, a tribute to the four anti-war protesters slain at Kent State University in 1970. But David Crosby also said this about his cultural motivations in a *Rolling Stone* interview: "I figured the only thing to do was to swipe their kids, I still think it's the only thing to do. By saying that I'm not talking of kidnapping, I'm just talking about changing their value systems, which removes them from their parents' world very effectively."

His music, and other music of that generation, did just that, propelling our culture toward open rebellion, culminating in drug use, sexual freedom, and all sorts of ungodly philosophies. Music has done much to shape our society and in so doing, is one more means whereby **Prophetic Voices** deliver their powerful and potent messages into our society today.

We must not forget magazines, newspapers, and television news. They are also powerful media for **Prophetic Voices** in our culture. Everywhere we turn, people are speaking, communicating messages, and shaping values.

### Education.

The aforementioned areas are all voluntary and subtle. In our free society, no one is compelled to view films, watch television, read literature, or listen to music. But few of us have escaped some degree of formal education. Schools, be they public or private, exist for the sole purpose of shaping our minds. "Values-free education" is a myth. Education is, by its very nature, a mechanism created to impart values.

Where does the Church and its message come into play? Are we actively engaged in **The Marketplace of Ideas**? Christian education continues to grow in influence, in primary levels, secondary levels, and beyond. Christian fiction has come on strong in the last 15

years. And Christian music has been slowly gaining strides over the last 30 years. We do have a good share of magazines and printed literature. But we have been very weak in television and film. Should we be doing more? Why don't Christians produce programs with cultural emphases, like those on National Public Radio? And, in what we are already doing, do you think that the values promoted by Christian arts and education truly promote Christ? Or are they just another means of making money?

"Music has done much to shape our society and is one more means whereby Prophetic Voices deliver their powerful and potent messages into our world."

# Day 28: Voices Launch Nations

"And I will make of thee a great nation..."  
Genesis 12:2 KJV

**O**VER THE LAST FEW DAYS, we have been looking at a variety of **Prophetic Voices** and how they are projected into the world around us. We examined this noisy world of ours and concluded that the world is filled with messages and messengers. We discussed the fact that radio, film, television, magazines and newspapers, literature, and music all contribute to our personal collection of ideas, and shape our world view.

Today, we will continue to dig deeper, beginning a three-day foray into the idea of national prophetic seedbeds. We will begin the examination of this theme now by looking at how **Prophetic Voices** launch nations into existence.

Just how are nations formed anyway? Do they burst on the scene suddenly? Do they evolve slowly over time? Can one nation give birth to another? The answer to all of these questions is a resounding yes! Nations come into existence in at least three different ways.

## Appearing Suddenly.

The most clear cut example of a nation's sudden emergence is the nation of Israel coming into existence with God's prophetic proclamation:

"And I will make of thee a great nation..."

Genesis 12:2

How did God do it? He chose a man named Abram, called him out from his home and family, led him on a journey of faith to a distant

land, and birthed an entire nation of people for Himself.

And Israel has had not just one, but two births in history! On November 27, 1947, the newly formed United Nations voted to partition Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab entities. And then, on May 14, 1948 in Tel Aviv, David

Ben Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the state of Israel. We could almost say that the UN's 1947 vote represents modern Israel's conception, and Ben Gurion's 1948 proclamation

represents her birth. Nothing quite so dramatic has happened with nations before or since.

Or has it? Isn't the Church a nation? "*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation ...*" (1 Peter 2:9). Like His Father, Jesus, too, prophetically spoke His nation-Church into existence.

*"... I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

Matt 16:18

So, God has birthed at least two nations with His prophetic word—Israel and the Church!

## Emerging Slowly.

Most nations have emerged slowly over time. A comparison of old maps and new maps reveals many changes, both subtle and not so subtle, over the course of history. Great Britain evolved very slowly, wedding England, Scotland, and Wales over many centuries. And it seems as if the boundaries reflected on the

"Israel has had not just one, but two births in history!"



# Day 28: Voices Launch Nations

maps of Europe constantly change. Wars, disputes, alliances, all continually re-shape the nations they touch.

## One Nation Birthing Another.

The last 500 years have witnessed dramatic changes in world maps. The era of exploration gave rise to the era of colonialism. European superpowers funded voyages of discovery. New lands—entirely new continents—burst suddenly onto the European scene. Old, European nations invested money, time, and people, to colonize and civilize these new lands. In time, new nations were born. Nations in South and Central America are the offspring of Spain and Portugal. Nations in North America are the offspring of England and France.

What are nations anyway, and what do nations have to do with prophetic words? John Spanier and Robert L. Wendzel in their book, *Games Nations Play*, suggest five qualifiers for *political* nations.

**SOVEREIGNTY.** A nation's right to self-government within its borders without external interference.

**GEOGRAPHIC TERRITORY.** Natural and man-made borders which separate one state from another.

**POPULATIONS.** People who inhabit the same geographic territory and sit under the same governmental rule.

**WORLD RECOGNITION.** Occurs when a government establishes control

over its population and includes the exchange of diplomats with other nations.

**NATIONALISM.** Difficult to define but consists of the following qualities:

- A collective identity
- A shared history
- A common language
- The expectation of staying together.

**NATIONALISM** is a phenomenon intricately woven with **words**. Our collective identity is *defined* with **words**. Our shared history is *communicated* with **words**. And our common language *consists* of **words**. All unite and provide the expectation of staying together.

The Church, too, is a nation. The Scriptures say so (I Peter 2:9).

And we do meet the criteria in point five above—**NATIONALISM**. We experience 1) a collective identity, 2) a shared history, 3) a common language (the Holy Scriptures), and 4) the expectation of staying together forever. Yes, we too are a nation, birthed by the prophetic word of our Lord! Be they Godly or ungodly, prophetic words are indeed powerful—birthing nations into the earth.

We conclude then that nations are formed by ideas which are communicated through words. Greek and Roman civilizations were built upon ideas and philosophies, written, spoken, and put into motion. The USA came into existence

“What are nations anyway, and what do nations have to do with prophetic words?”

## Day 28: Voices Launch Nations

from ideas and words, penned and spoken, and put into motion. Even Nazi Germany evolved through ideas inscribed and spoken and put into motion. In the next two days, as we move toward closing out our study, we will be contrasting the idea-word seedbeds of the USA and Nazi Germany, and exploring how **Prophetic Voices**, both good and evil, birthed these two nations.

Are there other means by which nations come into existence—by which they are conceived and birthed? Have you

“The USA came into existence from ideas and words, penned and spoken, and put into motion.”

ever considered how nations emerge, evolve, and are born, through prophetic words? Could some nations be considered to have had an illegitimate birth? Are all nations, both good and evil, a part of God's sovereign plan?

# Day 29: America's Prophetic Seedbed

"... Go and make disciples of nations ..."  
Matthew 28:19

**W**E HAVE BEEN EXAMINING the power of **Prophetic Voices** not only to shape our world, but also to actually launch nations into existence. Today we will explore the ideas and words that formed our own nation. Stepping back and looking out across the vast plain of history, one can see a prophetic trail of truth and freedom, providentially working its way through time. To place the American story in true perspective, we must go back to early Bible times.

"The Old Covenant fell short because it did not possess the power to transform souls from the inside."

## The Old Covenant.

First we will look the power of the prophetic word to shape the nation of Israel. The first hint of God's prophetic Word setting events in motion came immediately after Adam and Eve's fall into sin in the Garden of Eden. There, God spoke His first promise of restoration and deliverance (Genesis 3:15). God began His actual "nation-creating" work with Abraham, promising to make him and his offspring into a great nation (Genesis 12:1-3).

Four hundred years after Abraham's grandson Jacob led his family into Egypt to avoid famine, Israel had grown into a nation of millions of souls held in the bondage of slavery. God sent Moses, the deliverer, to lead them out and into the promised land of Canaan (Exodus 3:10). While crossing the desert wilderness, Moses received the Ten Commandments from

God (Exodus 34:28) and a multitude of other laws. These laws—God's Word—became the prophetic seedbed—a garden of ideas communicated through spoken and written words—from which the Hebrew culture sprang. This unique collection of words is also called the Old Covenant or Testament. In the centuries that followed, God added to this seedbed through other anointed prophets, poets, and patriarchs.

But the Old Covenant fell short because it did not possess the power to transform souls from the inside, and it left men struggling to meet a high set of standards with little power to live up to those standards. The Old Covenant contained two

essential elements: 1) an impossibly high external standard for conduct and behavior, an "external government" pressed upon men from above, and 2) the promise of God to bring a Messiah or Savior to redeem and deliver from the bondage of sin—a restored "God-aided, internal government" made possible by being born again.

## The New Covenant.

Christ is the fulfillment of that promise. When He arrived, He ushered in the New Covenant built upon His own redemptive work and the work of the Holy Spirit. "He took away the first, that he may establish the second." (Hebrews 10:9) He said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). After His resurrection, His Apostles and Prophets continued to use words—both spoken and written—to tell the story of Jesus' ministry on earth and to

## Day 29: America's Prophetic Seedbed

communicate His ideas.

The New Covenant presents mankind not only with God's Word, but also with the power to be transformed into a new man, a new creation, with a "new birth" in Christ. And those with this new birth are no longer helpless in their struggle to live up to God's high standards. Christ's redemptive work, along with the aid of the Holy Spirit, provides us with a new "internal government" to help us live according to God's laws and precepts. This "God-aided, internal government" would, in time, become one of the foundational ideas upon which our own nation, the United States of America, would be constructed.

### **The Reformation.**

The collection of writings of both the Old and New Covenants makes up what we Christians call the Bible. This book represents the ideological groundwork—the seedbed—from which our own nation, the United States of America, has grown. Following nearly twelve hundred years of spiritual darkness in the western world—a time when the Church succumbed to an extended age of apostasy—a man named Martin Luther read the Bible and discovered that the scriptures proclaimed a radically different message than what the established church was teaching at that time. He boldly took a prophetic stand nailing his list of 95 theses or complaints to the doors at Wittenburg. It is almost as if Luther was acting as one of

“This "God-aided, internal government" would, in time, become one of the foundational ideas upon which our own nation, the United States of America, would be constructed.”

God's **Prosecuting Attorneys**, presenting a case against the organized, established church of his day. Luther realized that his own conscience was not meant to be controlled or manipulated by an ecclesiastical authority. His revelation and subsequent stand, based upon Biblical truth, became more seed for the slowly evolving road toward political freedom in the Western world.

Many followed in Luther's steps. Thinkers and writers distilled sound doctrine from the Holy Scriptures. But kings and leaders of the organized, established church resisted. Multitudes of believers surrendered their lives in martyrdom and their deaths became prophetic voices, testifying to the power of faith over fear. What emerged from this dark and bloody era of Western history was a new idea of man. People began to see themselves as free, individual souls, created in God's image and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. And the ancient idea known as "the divine right of kings" to rule and exercise unchecked authority began to be challenged.

**Prophetic Voices** continued their influence. Speakers spoke. Writers wrote. Ideas found expression. Chains of oppression fell to the ground and men claimed freedom of conscience from kings and potentates who had once held them in bondage.

### **The Law is King.**

## Day 29: America's Prophetic Seedbed

As it was in the time of Christ, kingdoms trembled at the power of the truth. In England, John Locke, William Blackstone, and others laid the ideological framework for the idea of civil, self-government under God's laws. Locke taught that "conscience is the most sacred of all property." Samuel Rutherford wrote *Lex Rex, the Law and the Prince*. In the New World, Jonathan Edwards and other preachers tilled the cultural seedbed. Then, in the fullness of time, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and other great thinkers and leaders, cast off the bonds of England's King George and formed a new nation, "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Though nearly lost in our generation, our system of government was built upon the New Covenant idea of "God-aided, internal self-government."

Think carefully and follow the prophetic idea strand through time.

- God laid the foundation of Christian culture through Moses, the law (or external government), and the Hebrew nation (Old Covenant).
- Christ the promised Seed (Gen 3:15), brought freedom through the truth (John 8:32), and established the possibility of God-aided internal self-government (New Covenant).
- After more than a millennium of the external law being re-imposed by kings and popes, Luther and others re-discovered the lost truths of Scripture and along with them, the idea of God-aided internal self-government (Reformation).

"Who or what is the guarantor of our freedom?"

- Christian thinkers wrote about the freedom that comes from God-aided internal self-government under just laws (Law is King).
- American colonists grew a new, self-governing system, a system of civil self-government, from this ideological seedbed of Christian, God-aided, internal, self-government (The US Constitution).

Many believe that America is the greatest political entity ever created by the human race. And all of this wonderful political freedom springs from godly ideas spoken and written—

prophetic words which changed the course of human history! America is not, however, the kingdom of God. But America, as a political nation, has enjoyed the presence of the kingdom of God—particularly

so in past generations. And hopes and prayers for a restoration of that kingdom in our generation and time are being renewed in our day.

Have you ever considered where the idea of our political freedom has come from? Who or what is the guarantor of our freedom? Has God's prophetic Word truly framed our nation's government and culture? Where are we today as a culture with the Christian idea of God-aided, internal self-government? What happens when internal self-government breaks down on a large national scale? Could that be why we now live under the weight of so many external laws and regulations? Is it possible that we, as a nation, need to rediscover the "truth that sets men free?"

# Day 30: Nazi Germany's Dark Prophetic Seedbed

"... He was a murderer  
from the beginning,  
and abode not in the truth ..."  
John 8:44

**Y**ESTERDAY, WE LEARNED that **America's Prophetic Seedbed** was cultivated over three millennia of time, resulting from prophetic words, both spoken and written. Today we will look into the ideas and prophetic words that formed the evil empire of Nazi Germany. We do this not only to draw the stark contrast between two world views, but more importantly, to demonstrate that prophetic-idea seedbeds foster both good and evil.

"The prophetic seedbed of Nazi Germany can be traced back to the Garden of Eden."

## **Eden and Beyond.**

As with America's seedbed, the prophetic seedbed of Nazi Germany can be traced back to the Garden of Eden. When God's enemy, Satan the serpent, spoke those infamous, three little dark prophetic words, "*hath God said,*" (Genesis 3:1) into Eve's ear, a chain of events commenced which plunged the entire human race headlong into a freefall toward an eternity in hell. From that moment forward, darkness has gripped all of humankind who have not yet been inwardly transformed by the redemptive power of Jesus Christ, the Deliverer. At the same time God was setting His covenantal plans into motion, Satan continued with his counteractive measures to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). He even attempted to annihilate the Son of God himself. But Christ "*spoiled principalities and powers, [and] ... made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in*

*it.*" (Colossians 2:15).

During the Dark Ages, the Devil held the established church in bondage for over a thousand years, and nearly succeeded in snuffing out the Living Word among God's people. Satan has always put forth false ideas to counter the true work of God in the earth. Prior to the Christian Reformation, the Western World began to emerge from the Dark Ages into an era known as the Renaissance. A fresh stirring began in the heart of man to know and understand truth. Renaissance thinkers sought to recapture the classical thought of the Romans and the Greeks. Philosophers elevated human reason and claimed reason capable of achieving all knowledge. Humanism originated in this time period. Influential thinkers and writers include Petrarch, a man who sought a blending of classic culture and Christianity. Another influential prophetic voice belonged to Machiavelli, a man who worshipped power and proclaimed, "to be feared gives more security than to be loved."

## **Humanism and Reason.**

By the time Luther and his fellow reformers were working to shape a new world with their ideas and words, the Renaissance was winding down. Among Luther's contemporaries were men such as Desiderius Erasmus, a humanist philosopher and critic of both the Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation, Sir Thomas More, a Catholic humanist who authored *Utopia*, a word meaning "not place" or literally nowhere, and René Descartes, a

# Day 30: Nazi Germany's Dark Prophetic Seedbed

French philosopher who based the certainty of his own existence upon the fact that he could think. "I think, therefore I am."

Like the Christian Reformers, Renaissance and post-Renaissance philosophers projected their prophetic vision into the stream of culture. They spoke with a prophetic voice—an ungodly prophetic voice, but a prophetic voice nonetheless. Each of these non-Christian philosophers fell prey to the subtle lie that "good and evil" could be known outside of a relationship with God. (Genesis 3:5) Each pursued some area of knowledge outside of the counsel of God's Word. As a result, their ideas were skewed from the truth and their **Prophetic Voices** spread false messages.

## **Clockmaker God.**

The Enlightenment followed on the heels of the Renaissance, reducing God to a "clockmaker" who had set the world in motion, then stepped back and let it run by itself. Prophetic seeds sown in the Renaissance came to fruition in the Enlightenment through violence and bloodshed. The bloody French Revolution capped the Enlightenment period with treachery and faithlessness. Enlightenment philosophers include Robespierre, a man, who through violence, seized power from the Catholic Church in France during the Revolution. His deeds included the murder of priests. George Hegel, a German philosopher, proclaimed that leaders of nations possessed total freedom to use whatever means necessary to propel their nation's "world historical mission" (national destiny). And Jean Jacques Rousseau is credited with the

founding of pure democratic thought—a flawed idea which places all power in the hands of a simple majority without regard for the standard of truth to guide and direct.

## **Survival of the Fittest.**

Later, Charles Darwin's work, *On the Origin of Species*, published in 1859, opened up the scientific world to an entirely new possibility of man's beginnings. With a seemingly plausible alternative to the Genesis account of creation, those who chose to adhere to Darwin's ideas could now cast off the restraint of God's laws and become laws unto themselves. The ideas of "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest" almost justify and call for aggressive behavior. Darwin's prophetic voice still speaks loudly today.

"Darwin's prophetic voice still speaks loudly today."

## **Aryan Supremacy.**

In 1853, Arthur de Gobineau penned *Essai sur l'Inegalite des Races*, an essay on the superiority of the Nordic-Aryan race. His work received no immediate response but became fodder for future writers and thinkers.

In 1888 Guido von List, a Viennese occultist and writer, published a novel titled *Carnuntum*. This romanticized tale of the Germanic victory over Rome, which ended the Roman Empire 1500 years earlier, catapulted von List into the Austrian Pan-Germanic movement of the late nineteenth century. Von List despised Christianity and espoused anti-Semitism. His writings, speeches and ideas seeded the Nazi movement and his contemporaries labeled him "the re-discoverer of ancient Aryan wisdom."

# Day 30: Nazi Germany's Dark Prophetic Seedbed

In this same time period, writers Ernst Krause, Otto Ammon, Ludwig Wilser, and Ludwig Woltmann touted the ideology of Aryan superiority—providing a foundation for the Nazi philosophy. They also practiced occultism.

## **Eugenics.**

Then, Francis Galton, a late nineteenth century scientist, fathered the modern eugenics movement. Eugenics is a philosophy that promotes improvement of the genetic makeup of the human species. The practice of eugenics can range from a thoughtful and studied mate selection to the mass annihilation of a race of unwanted people such as the Nazi's "final solution" and Jewish holocaust.

## **Nihilism.**

Frederich Neitzsche, remembered most for his statement "God is dead," sowed the idea seeds of meaningless and hopelessness in his writing. Neitzsche's false prophetic nihilistic ideas spawned many others to write with the same morbid themes. *Kragler's Drums in the Night* (1918) and Kazantzakis' *The Saviors of God* (1927) represent the spirit of literature that has arisen since Neitzsche's day.

Webster defines nihilism as "a viewpoint that all traditional values and beliefs are unfounded and that all existence is consequently senseless and useless . . ." Nihilism, simply put, is a belief in nothingness.

In summary, Nazi Germany sprung from a dark prophetic seedbed, rife with ungodliness. Consider the following historical and ideologi-

cal strand:

- Human reason can achieve all knowledge (Renaissance).
- God is not involved in His creation (Enlightenment).
- The Aryan race is supreme (von List).
- Life is a survival of the fittest (Darwin).
- The quality of life can and should be improved genetically (Galton).
- Life carries no real meaning or purpose—nihilism (Neitzche).
- Military and political power can be justifiably used to achieve a nation's world historical mission (Machiavelli and Hegel).

“Nazi Germany  
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With this ideological seedbed beneath it, is it any wonder that Hitler's war machine grew to become so evil and so obsessed with death?

America and Nazi Germany collided in WWII. Although America entered the war late

and with some reluctance, in the end, thousands of Americans gave their lives to stamp out Nazism. Some call them "The Greatest Generation." Winston Churchill characterized the war against Germany as the war to save "**Christian Civilization**" from annihilation.

Have you ever considered how nations emerge? If a true prophetic Word can turn a nation toward God, can the words of false prophets send a nation down the wrong path? Have you ever considered the power of the prophetic word to frame a nation's government and culture?



## Day 31: Ideas Have Consequences

*"Casting down imaginations,  
and every high thing that exalteth itself  
against the knowledge of God,  
and bringing into captivity  
every thought to the obedience of Christ"*  
2 Cor 10:5 KJV

**F**OR THE LAST SEVEN DAYS we have been reading about **Prophetic Voices**. We discussed how **Everybody's Talkin'**—both godly voices and ungodly ones, coming at us from all directions, all the time, shaping the world in which we live. We dubbed this cultural phenomenon **The Marketplace of Ideas** and examined how books, film, and even music, have prophetic qualities to them. We also explored the idea that there really are only **Two Messages** out there—to serve God or to serve ourselves (ie: the devil). And we talked about how, **Officially Speaking**, prophetic messages follow a chain of command, coming from a source, through a messenger, and to an audience.

Over the last three days, we have been investigating specifically how **Voices Launch Nations** and even bring them into existence. We discussed how **America's Prophetic Seedbed** finds its roots in Ancient Israel with God's call to Abraham. We then compared America's seedbed to **Nazi Germany's Dark Prophetic Seedbed**, where roots from Renaissance, Enlightenment and cultic thinkers developed into a culture of death.

Today's lesson will wrap up **Part III** of our study. Today we are going to examine how ideas delivered by **Prophetic Voices** carry with them attendant consequences. To begin our exploration of this phenomenon, we will look to Jesus and His disciples.

Shortly before He ascended into heaven, Jesus instructed His disciples to "go and make disciples of nations ..." (Matthew 28:19). Some translations read, "go and teach the nations ..." What came of His instructions, and what kinds of aftereffects did His teachings produce?

Clearly, the effects of Christ's words and ideas are beyond measure in human terms. In the 2000 years since His life on earth, Christianity has spread slowly, yet almost systematically, across the globe. After the Holy Spirit restrained Paul from going into Asia, (Acts 16:6) Paul's ministry, and martyred life, eventually concluded in Rome. Out of Rome came the Catholic Church which later hemorrhaged, spilling into the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation began in Germany but soon jumped the English Channel to the British Isles. God uprooted Protestant believers from Britain and Western Europe and sent them westward, giving them faith to brave the cold Atlantic and settle in North America. Meanwhile, Spain and Portugal, Catholic nations, conquered South and Central America. From the Americas, new missionaries spread out across the globe, especially continuing west, across the International Date Line. Finally, af-

"What came of Christ's instructions, and what kinds of aftereffects did His teachings produce?"

## Day 31: Ideas Have Consequences

ter almost two millennia, the gospel has begun to penetrate Asia.

How can we measure the consequences of Jesus' ideas (teachings)? His ideas, along with His redemptive work on the cross and resurrection, restore all who come to trust in and rely upon Him for their salvation to the status of sonship with the heavenly Father. Jesus elevated not only the woman and the slave, He exposed the hypocrisy of those with religious pretense. He still lifts up everyone who comes to know Him. Destroying the power of sin, He restores human dignity. As the centuries elapsed, human dignity and freedom of conscience gradually toppled kings and birthed new forms of self-government, bringing with them personal liberty. Personal liberty on a large scale eventually gave rise to entrepreneurship, which has moved us from ancient to modern, and slowly changed the face of everything in the world. These are some of the consequences of Christ's ideas.

Could we say then, that to a degree, the Church has partially fulfilled the Great Commission to disciple nations? Surely our nation was, at one time, a "discipled" nation. During those formative years, the Church confidently bore her prophetic mantle as the nation's counselor. But that day has passed. The modern Church struggles to be heard among the cacophony of **Prophetic Voices**. Today's Church has nearly become the scourge of modern culture.

“Nazi Germany sprung from a dark prophetic seedbed, rife with ungodliness.”

Even as good ideas inevitably yield good consequences, so bad ideas yield bad consequences. For example, when God created the universe and everything in it, He concluded that His idea to create resulted in good consequences (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). Conversely, when the serpent tendered the bad idea that by eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:5), the first couple would "be as gods" (Genesis 3:5), the consequences proved ghastly. Adam and Eve were cast out of Paradise, and the serpent was made to slither on the ground.

Two days ago we explored the concept of **America's Prophetic Seedbed**. We concluded that our American culture and system of government sprang up largely from the twin seedbeds of Judaism and Christianity. But things have gone awry. What kinds of idea-seeds have been sown over the last two hundred years to pollute our garden? What kinds of false prophetic ideas crept into the Church, lured her away from her high call, and stripped her of her prophetic mantle in the nation? Where did we compromise and allow our prophetic voice to be silenced? Have we permitted others to disciple our nation? Consider these few possibilities:

**Racism.** America's unique brand of racism should be considered as one of the forces that stripped the Church of her prophetic power in our nation. What kind of evil did our Christian forefathers invite in when they failed to lay

## Day 31: Ideas Have Consequences

the axe to the root of slavery early on? Who disciplined our nation during this era of history?

**Manifest Destiny.** This popular idea of the "white, Christian man's right" to possess this continent from sea to sea emerged in the mid-1840's. The Church stood by in silence, and in many cases either "amened" or participated as the white man systematically brought death and destruction to the Native Americans who had occupied our land for thousands of years before white, western European Christians ever arrived. What consequences followed these ideas?

**Darwinism.** In the mid to late 1800's, Charles Darwin's ideas "*On the Origin of Species*" brought great controversy into our Christian culture. Many churchmen embraced his pseudo-scientific theories of evolution, not only reducing the garden of Eden account to fairy-tale status, but also eliminating the Biblical idea of original sin. What ungodliness have Darwin's ideas wrought?

**Freudianism.** On the heels of Darwin came the ideas of Sigmund Freud, the father of modern psychology, who dis-

sembled the Biblical idea of man as "spirit, soul, and body," (I Thessalonians 5:23) and recreated man as "id, ego, and superego." Freud's new, non-Biblical version of man paved the way for what one preacher has called, "blame, bolt, and medicate," our modern day approach to dealing with sin. Why do we exchange God's solid ideas for inferior ones?

**Abortion.** Jump forward 75 years. Where was the Church when *Roe v. Wade* was made the law of the land by the U.S. Supreme Court? Who was disciplining the nation when murdering the unwanted unborn became legal? Have you considered the long-term consequences of the devaluation of human life? Is there any connection between abortion in the womb and kids shooting kids in public schools? Is there an ideological link between killing the defenseless, unwanted, unborn in the womb, and Darwin's ideas about the survival of the fittest?

Those are just a few of the devilish ideas that have been floating around our culture for the last couple hundred years—ideas delivered by **Prophetic Voices**. Can you see how they feed on each other and send us into a downward spiral?

**Prophetic Voices** come in just about every shape and size. They can bring the holy, pure,

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God.”

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and perfect Word of God, and set us free. And when they do, it is because they deliver God's ideas into our mind. God's ideas, sown into our thoughts, bring forth His life into our souls, remaking us, transforming us, imparting liberty, and moving us ever closer to the will of God (Romans 12:2). But wicked ideas can come to us and transform us just as easily. These ideas come at us through false **Prophetic Voices**, and drag us down and away from the will of God. Regardless, it is voices bringing ideas that shape and change us everyday.

A national leader can speak a word and turn the course of history. A Christian prophet can open his mouth, deliver a message from God, and shape the direction of a church congregation, an individual soul, or even a nation. A father can, with just a few simple words, shape a child's future for life—for good or evil.

Voices deliver words. Words deliver ideas. Ideas deliver consequences.

For over a generation now, the Church has been permitting the civil government to usurp her role in taking care of the poor, the orphans,

the widowed, and the downtrodden. Somewhere along the line, someone got the idea that the civil government could do a more effective job than the Church. Sadly, the Church went along with this concept for a while. But today, we can see that faith-based service programs in place are far more effective than the government run programs.

Another area where the Church is beginning to lead the way again is the area of racial reconciliation. All across our land, churches are working to break down longstanding, traditional barriers between races and cultures within the body of Christ. Forced busing did not do the job. Affirmative action may have had some measure of success, but it left many resentful and bitter. Perhaps the Church can achieve what the government could not.

“Is it too late to restore our Christian heritage? Can the Church yet reclaim her prophetic mantle?”

Is it too late to restore our Christian heritage? Can we undo the aftereffects of the many ungodly ideas that have crept into our culture? Can the Church yet reclaim her prophetic mantle?

Maybe God's ideas are making a comeback.

# Final Thoughts

*"The words of the wicked  
are like a murderous ambush,  
but the words of the godly save lives."  
Proverbs 12:6 NLT*

**W**ORDS, WORDS, AND MORE WORDS! How better could we characterize our 31-day odyssey titled *Prophets and Prophetic Words*? At the outset, I promised to challenge your thinking. I said, "Chances are, at the end of this study, you will view the realm of the prophetic in a fresh, if not invigorating, way." I hope I have fulfilled that promise.

**Prophetic Voices** do indeed assault us everywhere we go. We have learned that we hear prophetic words not only when we gather with God's people, we also encounter them on radio and television, in books, film, and music, on Internet websites, and even in supermarket check-out lines. Prophetic words are the words that shape and change us, both individually and collectively, and for better or for worse. Such words contain the amazing power to transform culture, and even launch nations, according to the ideas they contain.

God and the devil are engaged in a war for our minds. Their weapons are their ideas, embodied in their words, and delivered through the many voices that serve them respectively. Only two kingdoms, two cultures, two sets of principles, ultimately exist in this world. One

is the kingdom of this world, headed by Satan and promulgated through his words. The other one is the kingdom of God, headed by our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, and spread through His Word.

**God's Prophets** bear unique responsibilities in this world. Amidst the cacophony of so many voices clamoring to be heard, they must hear God's Word clearly, without distortion, and then deliver it to the hearers for whom the word is intended. This enormous obligation comes as a unique, individualized burden to each one who is called to fill this significant role in God's kingdom work. The task of being

God's messenger comes with a high price tag. Prophets must first hear the call, then submit themselves to a life-long process of preparation, all the while faithfully executing their assigned, personal missions from God.

Each of God's word-deliverers has been formed by God into a distinctive, one-of-a-kind, message-bearing envoy. No two of God's prophets look exactly alike, or speak exactly the same

message. Some prophets speak their messages primarily to the Church, while others speak into the broader, worldly, marketplace of ideas. Some prophets are so bold and outspoken that they end up becoming martyrs, surrendering their lives for the sake of the gospel. Others surrender their lives through quiet, humble service to others—a service with few words spoken, yet so powerful of a testimony that the

“Prophets must first hear the call, then submit themselves to a life-long process of preparation, all the while faithfully executing their assigned, personal missions from God.”

# Final Thoughts

prophetic, life-changing, Word of God is manifested through their yielded lives.

**When God Speaks**, holy, transforming, creative energy is released into creation. Nothing is more purely the Word of God than that Word spoken by Him without the aid of one of His messenger-servants. When God speaks, He creates, sustains, restores, corrects, directs, judges, and even on occasion, foretells the future.

“No two of God's prophets look exactly alike, or speak exactly the same message.”

Among other things, so far God's Word has created the physical universe, brought forth life (plant, animal, and human), birthed a nation for Himself, formed and shaped many other nations, and brought countless millions of individual souls who have personally heard Him speak into their hearts and minds into a saving relationship with Him. What future fruit of God's personally delivered prophetic Word yet awaits us? Oh, that we would long for and seek to hear His Word to us every day!