

Does the prophetic word still apply today?

Prophecy and the prophetic word are synonymous. Those who are acquainted with the prophets of old (OT) will have noticed, I am sure, how God dealt with Israel in ancient times as the messages of prophets were on the whole direct. The word spoken by a prophet was also always done with a divine purpose in mind – meaning that God always intervened timely in order to influence the lives of those under His control, steering them away from self-destruction. God therefore raised, through a divinely appointed theocratic society, authentic worship and this of course implies that God had set a spiritual pattern for His people to stand and fall by.

Now what God in effect clearly had in mind with the prophetic calling was by and large to lay His word upon the tongue of the prophet. There were also prophetesses God used but on the whole the male dominance in prophecy is something we may perhaps view in a special light as this had little to do with sexism. What it did boil down to, was that God needed the voice of authority to be heard especially in times of gross spiritual decadence and men were of course more suitable to move around, bringing the message under difficult circumstances. But it clearly did not only revolve around gender only, as God especially demanded of His prophets a dedicated, sanctified lifestyle.

It should therefore be acceptable to most of us that the calling of a prophet was all about the purpose of God and not about man's preferences or prejudices. The purpose of God was then to keep the OT theocratic society on track and to lead and keep His people within the Path of Truth.

For this purpose God Himself did the election and the anointing of prophets (male and female) not leaving it to man's own whimsical choices as this would have meant that man was in charge and that, just as decadence was the result of disobedience and failure to keep faithful to God's prescriptions, natural man would have placed his own decisions above those of God. Fact is, the Almighty's purpose has always been clear: God needed faithfulness which in return required man's total obedience to God. And for this very purpose God chose prophets who could challenge the decisions of the leadership of their day and whose preferences were often imposed to condone the type of morality that God detested. We can just browse through the Book of Zephaniah, for example, to see how God thundered His judgements against malpractice but what often escapes our attention, is that the predicaments of the chosen prophets of God were on the whole enormous. It would then have taken immense courage and anointing by God's Spirit to execute God's instructions going directly against those of the mighty royals and other influential leaders of the day.

The prophets were then key to preserving God's directives, however, in order to achieve this divine goal, they were forced to trespass man-made rules and regulations, clearly instituted to put clamps on the free speech God had first and foremost demanded of His prophets. And this would have meant that, just as is the case today, the prophet of God had to prophesy against the norms of the day – norms raised by humans and which boiled down to breaking God's laws and setting aside His commandments. The prophet's main task was then to restore God's order, however, to have been able to achieve this goal effectively, it was demanded of a human being (!) to exhibit such confidence in his God – regardless of the word of God literally in his mouth and on his tongue – that what he was in effect doing was done to his own detriment. The true prophet of God would then, i.e. in order to conform to God's expectations of His anointed vessel, have positioned himself over and opposite the decisions of those powerful rulers who were openly defying God's instructions and who were of course held responsible for leading God's flock astray. This could then even have led to the death of the prophet and for this very reason prophets of God were hated and to the point where they were imprisoned and even killed by those in authority.

In the New Testament, the prophethood demanded the same dedication to God and His instructions, i.e. keeping in mind the cultural changes that had taken place since the birth of Christendom and the spreading of the Living Gospel in and through the risen Jesus. The prophethood was still bound to God's anointing, God's directives (through the Holy Spirit), God therefore demanding total dedication of the prophet and so that His word could prevail no matter the circumstances. Besides, the Holy Spirit poured out in the Upper Room (Acts 2) was that Spirit of Truth Jesus spoke of (Jn 15) and the nine Holy Spirit Gifts (1 Cor. 12), amongst which the prophetic word was salient, was then something that would have proven the existence of the Living God and His Son

Jesus. And for this very reason sinners would have fallen prostrate (they would have revered and feared the risen Jesus as His prophetic word would indeed have uncovered their sins (1 Cor. 14.24-25). God would then have proven in this way His eternal reality in the hearts of those who believed and who have put their trust in Him just as He would have done in Old Testament times. How come?

The sign of a “true” versus a “false” prophet would have been discerned in and through the anointing from above! A true prophet or prophetess was then anointed by the Holy Spirit and the results would have been similar to that of the prophets of old : their word would have been detested by the unfaithful and accepted by the faithful. The carnal ones in the community of “believers” would have rejected God’s reprimands, God’s desires and God’s purpose, whereas the faithful would have done the opposite, namely to accept God’s word and decisions with gladness of heart.

So what is false and what is true prophecy? The sign of a true prophet is faithfulness to God and His prescriptions! The sign of a false prophet or prophetess is rejection of God’s directives and fabricating his or her own ideas in order to impress. A true prophet of God will never promote his or her own vainglory! The truly anointed of God will often be called “false” prophets as their word sometimes, just as it went with the Old Testament prophets, may take time before fulfillment thereof (Many are therefore quick to jump the gun, demanding immediate fulfillment instead of waiting upon the Lord in faith and so that God can accomplish His promises, or what He has revealed, fully in due season).

A true prophet of God is neither a horoscope reader, a fortune teller, nor somebody who only brings forth “good”, messages. It is indeed this type of message that is always welcomed whereas a true prophet of God is compelled to speak God’s message no matter the cost. This would mean that sins will have to be addressed (Isa.58) and this is then the sign forever of a true over a false prophet. God will address the decadence of the relevant day and age and this type of Holy Spirit anointed prophet or prophetess will therefore always be rejected by the carnal so-called teachers and “true” adherents of the faith.

It seems too many true prophets and prophetesses of God – coming in a variety of ways to us even to this day – are still silenced by carnal pastors and this is the very reason why the Body of Jesus has lost its spiritual power to a very large extent. Spiritual decadence has taken over in the Body of Jesus, and especially meaning here those who believe in the “charismata” (the Gifts of the Spirit). Therefore take care not to kill God’s anointed through gossip and slander – a disease that is rife among the flock of God and which has been the case since time immemorial. Be also careful not to approach the charismata and the application thereof too academically, laying down hard and fast rules and so that everything will be made “plain” and “intellectual” to everybody. This type of scholastic approach has been a death knell to the Gifts as the practiser of the Gift is often judged by his jacket in stead of the word that is coming from his/her lips (we are apt to categorize anointed of God applying church membership as a criteria in stead of searching the Scriptures properly and so that we can know that God chooses a prophet and God anoints from the womb His spokesperson, determining his destiny and this very elect position from the word go! For this reason there are FEW prophets. In fact, those posing as “prophets” are often the very ones who should be rejected.

I want to venture it here that we are indeed in dire need of a new Holy Spirit revival before any new prophets will be raised again for God will have to first and foremost cleanse His Body of much spiritual and moral filth before He will be able to re-establish the prophethood in our midst again!

Be careful then how you judge those who are indeed and truly anointed! Rather put a watch before your mouth and go first and foremost to God, enquiring of Him instead of following in the pattern of carnal Christendom (carnal Churches and especially those going after the majority – these ones often have been in a position to easily expand their borders and just because they have deviated from God’s requirements!)

Directive : How to consider Prophecy and the Prophetic Word:

1 When adopting a critical approach: Rather be specific than to merely criticize “false” prophecy, giving examples and so that it can alert the attention of Christians in general.

2 Be specific about the quotation of prophecy. My advice is that any prophet or prophetess used by God in this way, must back up the prophetic word God gives using a recorded message (cassette recorder, digital recorder, etcetera) and so that the prophecy going forth can be verified. This is especially necessary when one is used by God to give a personal message as people's memory is short and they are often soon confronted with a challenge to validate the “correctness” of the prophecy. Besides, prophecy is for the believer (Paul, 1 Cor 14) and therefore those receiving a message must not discuss a prophecy lightly but hide it in their hearts, bringing it into fulfilment through faith in the One who has given the prophetic word (Rev. 19.10 : The Spirit of Jesus is linked to the prophetic word). If you reject the prophetic word, you are stripping it of its fulfilment for God is not to be mocked! Therefore Paul clearly states that prophecy is for the believer! If God, e.g., reveals something to you in prophecy, something demanding you to act, and you decline its validity opting to do your own thing, then you yourself have made the prophetic word null and void. Should you mock it, or not exactly do what God has advised, the same applies here. You have then proverbially speaking, made your own bed, opting to lie on it not needing advice from the Lord. You yourself will then have to pay the consequences.

3 Many are not acquainted in these days with the prophetic word: Be prepared to discuss the prophecy (the instrument who has given the prophecy can take the one who does not understand everything mentioned in the prophecy aside applying patience in the love of Christ. But remember God often gives a future fulfilment of the words given through His Spirit and therefore, and again, prophecy is for the BELIEVER! The one used by God in prophecy does not know everything! I have often seen that things said in prophecy seems to be strange but in due season, when God fulfils the prophetic word, then only will the puzzle fall coherently in place. So listen and hide the message in your heart as Mary too had to do (when she was given prophecies concerning her Son's future death and resurrection). Sometimes God will reprimand in prophecy but this is fully in line with Paul's directive namely to rebuke those who sin “and so that the others can fear” (1 Tim 5.20; Isa. 58.1). Keep in mind, and we must train our minds this way, that a true prophet or prophetess of God will of necessity, and in accordance with their anointing, address sin and a sinful lifestyle as the blood of those whom God sends on the path of a prophet is to be upon the prophet should he fail to warn the sinner (Ezek)! God, in other words, will keep the prophet or prophetess responsible for not snatching the sinner like a burning log from the fire. And this is something carnal teachers who are quick to judge, also to without much thought label prophets as “false” or “true” - and often in accordance with their own likes and dislikes - often forget to apply.

4 A prophet speaks words directly received from God! Therefore a prophet is first and foremost God's faithful servant and he may even go against prescriptive societal norms - forbidding free speech in many ways. Remember that prophets are God's prized possessions and because they are burdened with a special message which they are obliged to speak even “to the point of death” we as believers are called to back true prophets and prophetesses of God, not to slander them and making life miserable for them. A true prophet of God will, however, never doubt the word God had given him even though fulfilment thereof may tarry. I have known at least one outstanding prophet in my life-time and I thank God I therefore am well acquainted with carnal man's prejudices and sinful behaviour. We are called to get washed in the blood of Jesus and true prophets of God will help us get there should we walk in humility and submit to God's plan for us and so that we can ready ourselves for Judgment Day (Rev. 20.11; 1 Cor. 4.5). Be very careful when a prophet or prophetess only speaks words of comfort. This is the Hananiah type of prophecy (Book of Jeremiah) and it is useless in times of real trouble. Remember that a true prophet always stands in the gap, pleading for the people of God and their special needs as Samuel indeed had also done. True prophets of God take the brunt against mass Christendom who are often too carnal to discern “false” from “truth”. God watches over His truly anointed (“Touch not mine anointed!” Psalms) and if you want things to go well with you, rather be quiet before the Lord, lest, in the end, you too might have banded against and killed a truly anointed of God.

Let me give an example of what is often also called a prophetic gift and that is uncovering “the plans of the wicked” as David puts it to us in his Psalms : It is VERY difficult to bring something to the minds of the ignorant (the bulk of Christendom, e.g. when God reveals a “spirit of satan” at work). What happens in such case is that the occult is often applied against God's children and satan always shoots his arrows from the dark. However, in order to bring about healing, for instance, God will have to first and foremost uncover satan's ploys as even

death can be imposed on an innocent person through (e.g.) black art. There are anointed who have experienced this type of satanic operation and God's Spirit counteracting it. Once God reveals this type of evil practise that was set in motion by those who practise occultism, healing will set in. Without this type of Holy Spirit revelation things may have gone the wrong way. This is a precious Holy Spirit gift often misunderstood by carnal Christians. God can even through His Spirit power break evil spells that are cast and when an innocent "victim" is targeted. Wrong decisions are often made just because a spell of satan was cast not even knowing about this type of plot worked against him/her and of course having lifelong consequences. But, once again, only those led by the Spirit of God, will be able to understand the operation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the apostle Paul therefore contrasts the carnal Christian and the spiritual one neatly for us in his Letter to the Corinthians.

5 The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, therefore not only prophecy, can only function properly in an assembly that goes fully out for Christ and for spirituality! In other words, an assembly where the pastor himself is spiritual, being prepared to humble himself before the Lord, to fast periodically, keeping up a dedicated prayer life and of course always bent on leading his flock to Christ - therefore discarding the decadent spirit of the world rather opting for a dedicated walk with God for himself as well as the flock he is responsible for (Ja.3). Fact is, there are many Christian Churches today claiming spirituality, but just as many do not conform to God's Word. Therefore, we must rather seek the company of those who want to conform to God's prescriptions when it comes to spirituality, alternatively, beginning one's own cell group where one can encourage, also be encouraged, to return to the first-century Church's ways (Acts of the Apostles).

6 The Gifts of the Holy Spirit can only function properly, i.e. Biblically, where true Christian love is fostered! Brotherly love, treating one another as true siblings in Christ is then a necessity (Heb. 13.1; 1 Cor. 13) for only when the Perfect One comes then the Gifts will not be necessary any longer (1 Cor. 12 for the listing of the nine Holy Spirit Gifts). This is the Second coming of Christ Jesus who is Perfect and who alone will then bring things to total closure and perfection – 1 Cor. 13.10).

Forgoing one's selfish pride and carnal inclinations are therefore of the utmost necessity when it comes to following Christ Jesus (Messiah Jesus) wholeheartedly. And if we are fully spiritual, we will be able to put a watch before our mouths and so that we can patiently (in faith) await the fulfilment of truly anointed prophecy!

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