

STRAIGHTWAY

And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him [Mark 1:18].

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

The Witness Outreach of Foundations Bible College
P.O. Box 1166 · Dunn, North Carolina 28335

VOLUME 30

JUNE/JULY 2002

NUMBER 5

The Need of Bible Prophets in Our Times

by Dr. H. T. Spence

How often we read in the Old Testament of God's sending a prophet to a man or a woman. Examples include such cases as Nathan to David (II Samuel 11), an unnamed prophet to Jeroboam (I Kings 13), Elijah and Elisha to Ahab (I and II Kings), or Jehu the son of Hanani the seer to Jehoshaphat (II Chronicles 19). These men were God's men, anointed men, the appointed mouthpiece of God to the people.

Biblical Perspective of a Prophet

The biblical role of a prophet was unique among those appointed as servants of the Lord. He was different from the priest who represented the people to God; he was different from the Levite who served in the House

of God; he was different from the rabbi who taught the Word of God; and he was different from the king who was to rule as a shepherd.

The prophet was the *nabbi*, the mouthpiece or the spokesman of God. This Hebrew word means "to boil over, to bubble up, to pour forth words." This boiling over or bubbling up was often visible in the animation of his preaching, his loud, direct-to-the-heart message, or his boldness. It was often manifested with candor about the sins and failures of his audience, a candor accompanied by an anointed authority. Because of this boldness he was sometimes mistaken for a mad man; in fact, the Hebrew word for *prophet* is also the word for *mad*. The

prophet was loved by the remnant of God's people; however, he was hated and despised by the carnal because he told the people the words of God, which often was against the heart of the people. Such a man was the one who brought forth "the burden of the word of the LORD" (Malachi 1:1). His very title was the embodiment of prophecy: the foretelling of things that would happen and the forth-telling with candor of "Thus saith the Lord!"

The New Testament term *prophetes*, from which our English word comes, means "before the face" or one who stands before the face of God. Paul made it clear in Ephesians 2:20 that we are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." The prophet was not only a man who was the mouthpiece for the burden of God's Word to the people but also a man who saw what others normally did not see—what they often refused to

see. He was called a *seer*. The word *seer* is tied up in the Hebrew words *roeh* and *hezeh*. I Samuel 9:9 states,

Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.

At times the prophets were so detailed in what they saw and bold in what they said, that those estranged from God would cry out, "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah . . . and prophesy there" (Amos 7:12). The professing people of God would cry rebelliously to the seers, "See not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isaiah 30:10).

Of all the servants of God, the prophets were the most hated. In Matthew 23:29-34 Christ was very strong in His condemnation of how God's people treated the prophets:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them

STRAIGHTWAY

Published 10 months of the year

O. Talmadge Spence, Founder

H. T. Spence, Editor
President

Foundations Bible College

**P. O. Box 1166
Dunn, NC 28335-1166
800-849-8761**

www.foundations.edu

Annual Subscription

USA - \$4.00 · Foreign - \$5.00

**CPF Members Excluded*

*shall ye scourge in your synagogues,
and persecute them from city to city.*

We must remember that in all Christ said of God and of Himself to the people, it was His office as prophet that ultimately brought His crucifixion.

Crucial Men for Crucial Times

Although the prophets were mortals, men of like passion of the very men to whom they were sent, yet they were crucial men with a crucial message in crucial times. They were a unique breed of men, saved men, redeemed, who had a holy heart that was sovereignly picked up by God to become His representative to the people. They came in times of drifting, neutrality, compromise, and apostasy. They became the screaming conscience of a people whose personal conscience was in apathy and insensitivity to the delicate things of God. Instead of God's leaving the people to their pursuit of a life without Him and His principles, He sent the prophets:

And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy (II Chronicles 36:15-16).

Where Are the Prophets for Today?

We are living in such times when Neo-Christianity has become the

public face of Christianity. Even the most conservative of biblical movements are facing driftings, neutrality, the powers of compromise, and the encroachment of apostasy. It is true, we need pastors (shepherds) and evangelists and teachers; but the greatest need in days of apostasy is the voice of biblical prophets heralding the needed message and burden of God's Word to the people—God's people.

We need men who will stand before the face of God in deep communion. We need men who will tell us what God wants us to hear rather than what we fancy in our carnal hearts. We need men who will give us God's Word strong enough to convict us, to convict our sins, and to never leave us alone without telling us how we should live. We need men who have sight to see the end of decisions made and the outcome of subtle choices and changes. We need men who will warn about the power of cares and money and how such things will rise up as thorns to choke the Word of God in our lives. We need men who will not wither to the intimidating pressures of backslidden church members and ecclesiastical leaders. We need men who will refuse to be silent when they see sin taking over a nation, a community, a movement, a Christian school, a church, a family, or an individual.

Some will call such men naggers, picky, preachy, contentious, "clothesline preachers," legalists, and even the lunatic-fringe of preachers. There will be those who will try to

vote them out of office and church, starve them out, intimidate them out, and even talk about them behind their backs in order to destroy their reputations. Carnality, worldliness, and apostasy hate such men in their churches and movements. They are viewed as the “thorn in the flesh” to prevent progress and growth. But we had better thank God for every pastor, parent, grandparent, or teacher who becomes a voice of a prophet to our mortal lives. As we near the secret coming of Christ for His true saints, as we witness the apostasy fast laying hold of the global, institutional church, we must pray that God will awaken young men early, like Jeremiah and Zechariah, and grant them discernment concerning the enemies of God and the spiritual needs of God’s people.

Such men are becoming few and far between. It is sad but true that a number of preachers, who in earlier years stood strong for God and dealt with the issues arising when Fundamentalism veered into harm’s way, are now growing weary because of ecclesiastical pressure. My dear father, Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, often said that the tendency of older men is to grow softer in their preaching and in their stand for God. It truly is a common trend everywhere today.

The Life and Heart of a Prophet

What kind of men were prophets, and what were their responses in life and to their calling from God? Although they were different from one another in disposition, they

were alike as men consumed and anointed by God in their lives.

Moses, in his private life, was a man given to timidity, meekness, deep feelings of unworthiness, and concern over his inadequacy in speaking. He needed much from God to even enter the prophetic calling. Yet publicly, he was bold, aggressive for the principles of God, and even baptized with a holy anger when having to deal with Israel’s carnality and waywardness. The zeal of the Lord truly consumed him.

Samuel came to God early in his prophetic office by telling the backslidden priest Eli of the judgment that would come upon his home because of his failure with his sons. Samuel was also the man who later set the record straight concerning King Saul’s incomplete obedience. And Samuel was the prophet who slew Agag in the sight of the people.

Nathan was the prophet who told a king when he sinned secretly, “Thou art the man” and informed him of what God would do with him and his wives. Yet David loved Nathan, even naming a son after him.

Isaiah, in chapter three of his prophecy, condemned how the women were dressed during his day. His description was detailed. Church people would despise such a sermon today, but it was part of the prophet’s message from God.

Haggai dealt with the Lord’s people building their costly homes and the investment of their money for their materialistic possessions

without having a burden for the House of God. Even when the people finally turned to build the temple, Haggai condemned them for building with polluted and defiled hands and carnal and sinful hearts.

Zechariah, the young prophet, told the people they had no vision of the coming Messiah and therefore no concern for the House of God.

Jeremiah was so strong in his words to call God's people back that he was viewed as a contentious man and a troublemaker even by his own family members. The people talked about various ways to silence him. Yes, carnal and worldly Christians believe such men are hard-headed and mean. Such people do not know the sensitive, true heart of God's prophet.

Ezekiel used vivid visual aids to express the deep sins of God's people. He dealt with both their open and their secret sins. He seemed to be the madman. They talked well about his preaching and singing in his presence but attacked him in his absence.

Daniel set the tenor and tone for the needed prayer of God's people during his generation: "We have sinned, O Lord!"

Ezra gave a message that certainly would be hated today. This prophet and priest condemned God's people for marrying wrongly and told them they had to separate from both the strange women and their offspring. Ezra even made God's people and their children to

stand out in the driving rain until God's wrath turned from them.

Nehemiah's preaching dealt with the people's businesses. Yes, this prophet told them how to run their businesses and use their money. How would this be viewed today?

Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise (Nehemiah 5:13).

And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levite and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. (Nehemiah 13:10-11).

What would we do today with the following actions of a prophet?

And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves (Nehemiah 13:25).

There is also John the Baptist who was called "The prophet of the Highest." John would *not* baptize the people unless he personally saw fruit proving their repentance. He

would cry, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matthew 3:7). He was a prophet who finally lost his head for meddling in the sinning business of a king.

Then there is Christ Jesus himself, the Great Prophet. He cried "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He would state, "The law says . . . but I say" (Matthew 5). Because of His gift of grace to all men, He made man even more accountable to righteousness than what the law demanded. He was looking beyond the actions and into the heart and motive of the individual.

Conclusion

This account of history bears witness that when God begins taking such voices away from a people, it is the sign of God's leaving the people. Ezekiel 3:26-27 states,

And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house.

God warned through the prophet Amos,

And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the

LORD. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not (2:11-12).

More and more conscientious preachers are being told by religious leaders not to deal with certain issues in the pulpit, not to deal with the music, not to deal with the multi-version issue, not to deal with consecration and a deep love for God. Those who once believed and preached personal and ecclesiastical separation are now making light of those young men who are asking, "Why are we changing, why are our dress and music standards changing?" They are forcing such young men, by threatening isolation, to give in and drink the "wine" of compromise and conformity.

Some may say that the office of the prophet is an office of the past. But if the Bible states that in the last days that "there shall arise many false prophets" (Matthew 24:24; I John 4:1), are there not to be any true prophets to rise to warn the righteous? There may not be a *foretelling*, but there must be a *forth-telling* of God's Word to the people. An end-time prophet is a man whom God has raised up and placed upon a wall so that he could see over both its sides: the enemy coming from without and the backslidings and compromises of God's people within. (Paul warned of both in Acts 20:29,30 to the Ephesian elders.)

Such a man that God chooses must know communion with Him; he must stand before the face of God; he must be able to see where

his generation is in accordance to Bible prophecy. He must be able to stand and proclaim “Thus saith the Lord,” without fearing man or the world. It is imperative in these last days for every true Christian to have a prophet in his life to warn him. It is the “Neo” crowd that is adamantly opposed to such a voice.

Dear reader, pray that God will raise up a remnant of men to be prophets in the last days who will tell us to “Set thine house in order,” to “warn the righteous of their unrighteousness,” and speak forth the burden of the Word of the Lord when God’s people and leaders remain neutral and are sucked into the vortex of compromise. In Proverbs 29:18 we are told, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” The Hebrew reads, “where there is no prime vision preaching the people

become ungovernable.” Where are the men who have studied God’s Word, not for the homiletical professionalism, but for survival through their generation, gaining insight into the Word of God for their times? These men see what others do not see. They hear the sounds of contemporary music that others do not hear or care not to discern (Deuteronomy 32:18). They have a love for the heavenly Solomon that the daughters of the Jerusalem do not have or desire. The scarcity of such men bespeaks a coming judgment in the House of God (I Peter 4:17).

Thank God and pray every day for every prophet God has ever sent into your life to warn you of compromise and to call you unto a nobler life and love for Him.

“The Appointment to Preach”

Sovereign's Selection: A Glorious Thought!
'Tis God Who Gives Forth the Call.
A Call to a Man Whose Soul Has Been Bought,
Whose Life: Redeemed from the Fall.
A Vision, a Harvest: Heaven's Insight!
Given by Sovereign's Decree.
A Man and a Life to Preach in the Night;
To Preach the Truth Valiantly.
The Word, the Spirit, and God's Providence;
This Witness We Are to Seek.
Revealing God's Will, a Life to Commence;
His Word Forthrightly to Speak.
Finding God's Will, We Desire to Do
And Follow Accordingly.
A Calling to Preach: The Calling for You?
You May Be God's Appointee.

— H. T. Spence

The Christian and the Spiritual

(excerpt from *The Human Spirit*, Vol. II)

by O. Talmadge Spence

What is a Christian? A Christian is one who has a right relationship with Christ. What is a spiritual Christian? A spiritual Christian is one who has not only a right relationship with Christ, but one who also has a right relationship with the Holy Spirit.

As far as a definition is concerned, that is about the best and simplest conclusion I have come up with in my time. Having read many, many men about these two subjects, I must admit that when we are dealing with spiritual things, it is not easy to be said. Too many times people just seem to get off-track when they speak of what is spiritual. There are many dangers that accompany "spiritual" discourses. It is so easy to become too subjective when we speak of spiritual things, and then in turn get away from the objective Christ. It is His spiritual relationship with the Holy Spirit that teaches us the most about spiritual realities.

Another window of light, hopefully, is the time element we emphasize in spiritual realities. Do we believe this can all be accomplished in our lives in one glorious moment? That would be a mistake to believe. Certainly, and usually, there is some outstanding crisis of the flesh that brings one to the consciousness of the need of spiritual fortification for the Christian to become a spiritual Christian. Every benefit of the Atonement is by the gift of grace in the divine depositum of regeneration, but we must draw upon that divine depositum after our regeneration. But yielding to that crisis experience which urges our search in God's grace for the spiritual for our lives, we should think of true spiritual realities as taking a long-term walk with the Lord Jesus.

In my own life, spiritual realities have been in need of considerable time in a number of scriptural truths. When we are considering the spiritual in the light of the holiness of God, there is a considerable time element involved. It takes time to be a spiritual Christian.

In the fifty years of my being a Christian, I must at least speak of this time as being a composite of two divisions of about twenty-five years each. I can only look back to see it, but that is better. Nobody can plan what it takes to be a spiritual Christian.

The Fall Foundations Schedule

Registration
The Foundations Schools
August 21

Special
Opening Services
August 22-24

Founder's Day
September 29
Sixth Congress of Fundamentalists
October 2-4

Thanksgiving Day
November 28
Winter Break for the Schools
December 21

Foundations Bible College

P.O. Box 1166
Dunn, North Carolina 28335-1166

JUNE/JULY
"TAPES OF THE MONTH"

RECENT SERMONS FROM
THE TWENTIETH MEN'S PRAYER CONFERENCE · JUNE 13-15, 2002
FOUNDATIONS BIBLE COLLEGIATE CHURCH
DR. H. T. SPENCE, PASTOR

"The Powers of Change in the End Time"

1. *The End Time Defined*
2. *The Powers Inherently in Change*
3. *The Powers of Change in Society*
4. *The Powers of Change in Global Religions*
5. *The Powers of Change in Fundamentalism*
6. *How to Live During Powers of Change*

This Set Comes in a Handsomely Bound Case

Price: \$17.75 postpaid

Foundations Ministries · P.O. Box 1166 · Dunn, NC 28335
info@foundations.edu · 800-849-8761 · www.foundations.edu

Fundamentalism:
Not A Cult

A Personal Testimony

by O. Talmadge Spence

Chapter One: Personal Introduction to Fundamentalism

Chapter Two: What is a Cult and Not a Cult?

Chapter Three: The New Testament "Christian"

Chapter Four: Fundamentalism and Separation

Sale Price - \$3.95 ppd

Scripture Commentary Society
P.O. Box 1166 Dunn, NC 28335 · www.foundations.edu