

General Topics :: Does God Use Prophets Today?

Does God Use Prophets Today? - posted by Rahman, on: 2004/5/14 17:25

Do you believe that God uses prophets today, and why?

Do you believe that God doesn't use prophets today, and why not?

Re: DOES GOD USE PROPHETS TODAY? - posted by Yodi (), on: 2004/5/14 18:04

Hmmm... that's a good question. I don't really know.

Didn't a lot of the prophets in the Old Testament prophecy about Jesus? So wasn't their purpose to kind of pave the path for Jesus' coming and prove that He was who He said He was when He was here and even when He died and rose again?

As far as the New Testament, the only prophets I remember reading or hearing about are the ones in Revelation. Don't they come to earth before Jesus returns? Again, their purpose is to kind of pave the path for His coming (His 2nd one).

Do we really have much use for prophets today? Aren't all the prophecies we need in the Bible? But then again, when the New Testament talks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, isn't prophecy one of them?

Well, anyway, if there are any prophets out there today, I just know you gotta test what they say to the Bible. And that's all I know, or what I think I know.

Re: DOES GOD USE PROPHETS TODAY? - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/5/14 18:04

Quote:

Do you believe that God uses prophets today, and why?

Yes, for the body of Christ exists, and His body has various members e.g. arms, legs, eyes, mouth, etc. Since Christ has not had a part of His body chopped off, prophets still exist. To say prophets do not exist is to say Christ has a severed limb.

Re: DOES GOD USE PROPHETS TODAY? - posted by Gideons (), on: 2004/5/14 18:27

Surely there is still a spiritual gift of prophesy.

It's sad that most believers don't even believe they have any spiritual gifts. How scriptural is that? As far as the prophetic gift yes, and it's listed in I Cor. 12:10a "To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy;" In this context, it means forth-telling.

The scriptures also say that words should also be tested against what is in the Word. Anything contrary to scripture should certainly be rejected. As one "prophet" (yes, I believe this man has a prophetic gift) there is no new truth, only fresh revelations of old truth."

There are also words of wisdom and words of wisdom and they can be forth-telling as well.

As long as my focus is on the gift giver (in this case the Holy Ghost) and not the gifts themselves, surely God would want us to use the gifts He has given us.

Re: Potential Prophets - posted by Yodi (), on: 2004/5/14 19:25

Oh, I wasn't saying that prophets don't exist, I just don't think I personally ever knew of one in a church I attended. Sadly the only ones I know of are the ones posted on the front of wacky tabloids prophecying the specific date of Jesus' return.

Yeah, like I was saying, I do know that probably in several places in the Bible, the gift of prophecy is one of the many gifts of the Holy Spirit listed.

Have you ever known a prophet "Preaching to Cannibals"?

Re: prophets - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/5/14 19:40

This will be interesting... :-D

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/5/14 19:59

Quote:

Have you ever known a prophet "Preaching to Cannibals"?

Yes, a few.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/5/14 20:10

Thinking on this subject I really feel that there has to be spiritual gifts if we are truly regenerated and become spiritual beings. When we become a Christian its not just a mental consent and a change of opinion but its a spiritual **transformation**. So truly if we are spiritual beings then we have to live and move and have our being in Christ. Speaking in the spirit , praying in the spirit, living in the spirit, walking in the spirit. A funny thing I have thought about is that there is such an emphasis on the bible and the words of Scripture but truly no-one will be changed and transformed without the Holy Spirit working in their lives.

Now that we are spiritual beings God desires to communion with us and speak His heart to us. We are all essentially priests before God knowing the mind and heart of God. Prophets are man of unique stature and character, that are given fully to God and desire truly to have people come to God. They are grieved and vexed over sin only because God is! they share the heart of God. Ravenhill says "Prophets are God's emergency men for crisis hours." We are living in a crucial hour where just clear bible exposition will not suffice, we need to hear the mind and heart of God in our day.

Re: Ministry of the Watchman (Prophet) - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/5/14 20:34

I have not read this in a while- now that I've gone back and read it again- it seems to make even more sense now then it did then.

Let us take up the topic of the ministry of the watchman with a text from Ezekiel 33:7

7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

The watchman is a prophet and intercessor called to bring the Word of God to Israel, the Body of Christ. We use the term watchman to include both roles of prophet and intercessor.

Most people liken the prophetic ministry to prophesying and speaking of visions and dreams from God. This definition is too narrow and opens us up to misunderstanding. The function of the prophetic intercessor, or watchman, is best defined as taking place in the course of four stages: Revelation, Intercession, Proclamation, and Restoration. We will discuss these areas more particularly in a moment.

We must use the Scriptures as our sole authority for defining and determining the job description of the prophet.

Whatever the popular thought or current practice may be, we are not interested in mans notions of what a prophet should be or what everyone else is doing. Taking the passage from Ezekiel as a springboard, we make the following observations:

1) "I have set thee a watchman." Prophets are not self-anointed. Prophets are not called by a denomination or installed by men. Prophets do not receive a prophetic ministry through the laying on of hands by another prophet (but it certainly may be confirmed by another prophet; that is not the same thing). One does not decide to become a prophet, neither may one volunteer their services to be a prophet.

God reserves the right to set His own watchmen, and this He will do according to His will, and according to His timing. We do not know why He chooses the ones He chooses. It is a work of grace. Many prophets are selected from birth or from childhood. John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit within his mothers womb. We dare not intrude into this holy work by setting up our own prophets or stepping into a place that God has not put us. It is Gods Hand, and no other.

2) "Unto the house of Israel." The prophet speaks primarily to Gods people, the house of Israel. The New Testament church is the spiritual Israel of God (Galatians 3:39; 4:21-31). Watchmen do not speak to the world writ large, casting their pearls before swine. They are called to exhort, edify, rebuke, and build the Church of God, building upon the foundation that is laid already in Christ.

The prophet does not usually bring a one size fits all generic sort of message that speaks to the universe. It is typically a surgical strike, directed and honed to penetrate a particular thing in the Body of Christ, with Spirit-led precision that cuts through the formalities and niceties to get to the guts of the task at hand. The very nature of the of message cuts to the quick and makes some gnash their teeth. Even so, God has set Watchman in the Church for its own edification, comfort, and protection.

3) "Therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me." Why doesnt God speak directly to His people? Why speak indirectly through a prophet? The prophet is called to speak warning. It presupposes that the house of Israel has sunk to such a low degree that God may no longer speak directly to the nation. He must use a man to speak to men.

We may argue that we are all priests and the Lord may speak to us just as He speaks to prophets. This is the spirit behind Korahs Rebellion:

Numbers 16:2,3

2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

Let us not quibble about through whom the Word comes. The watchman is on the wall and is looking at things from a different vantage point. He sees things you cannot or will not see. Since God has set him there, it would be a mistake to ignore the warning he brings. If God can use a donkey to rebuke the madness of Balaam, certainly we should pay particular attention to one who comes to us in the name of the Lord.

Let us receive the prophet in faith and judge the message he brings with righteous judgment, not murmuring because God chooses to warn us through someone else and not directly. Usually it is because God cannot get through to us directly that He is compelled to send a prophet to arrest our attention. Prophets are a last resort, not a primary expression for God or the preferable vessel God would use. If we will not obey the written Word, God will send a prophet to speak the Word to our face. Thus it is that if they will not hear the LAW and the PROPHETS, they will not believe even if Christ should rise from the dead and tell them directly (Luke 16:29-31). To reject the one that is sent is to reject the One who sends (Luke 10:16).

This in a nutshell is the ministry of the watchman. The discharge of the burden of the Lord through the watchman may be properly classified as falling into four areas, in chronological order.

First, there is revelation. True ministry must be based upon God-given revelation, not theological degrees of

head-knowledge. We may speak from knowledge but knowledge alone does not impart life. If it did only educated people would be saved. Christ says the Spirit quickeneth; the flesh profits nothing (John 6:63). That quickening is the operation of the Spirit to impart revelation to us. That, coupled with knowledge, is sufficient.

Prophets do not bring new truth. Revelation is simply a revealing of what is already true and bringing it to bear upon our heart and soul. Revelation is based upon insight into the written Word of God, not into visions and dreams and prophecies. These other things are simply tools for expressing the Word, they are not the Word; no more than the water hose is water, it simply delivers the water.

I am sure you have experienced revelation in the course of your Bible study. A passage may be read for years without making an impression upon us. One day the light of God shines upon the passage and we understand the meaning; we know the intent; we enter into the Spirit of the Word and it becomes exceedingly precious, meaningful, and real to us. This is revelation.

If it were simply a matter of study we could just say study your Bible more. But it is not more study that we have need of; it is prayerfully pondering and meditating upon the Word day and night until the Spirit bears witness with our Spirit and we discern the meaning by way of revelation. Christ spoke the Word, yes; but without the quickening Spirit mixed with faith in the hearers, it will not save. Hence, the prophet (and every minister of the Gospel) must have revelation into the Word to speak with authority and impart life to the hearers.

Let us only speak what God reveals to us by way of revelation. We will surely speak less, but our words will be all the more weighty and full of life. If an individual cannot wait upon the Lord and receive fresh insight into the Word and experience the quickening of the Spirit upon that Word, they cannot minister in any capacity and bear lasting fruit.

Once the prophet has received revelation, he must enter into intercession. We must pray for many reasons. For one thing, the revelation is known to the inner man but the mind is unable to express it. It is yet in an embryonic state and must be drawn out from the spirit. Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out (Proverbs 20:5). As we wait before the Lord He will begin to give us understanding and words to express what we have seen. This process cannot be hurried. It may take days, weeks, months, and sometimes years to give expression to what we have seen.

Perhaps you have risen to speak or share something God has shown you. You know what you are trying to say, it is near and real to your heart; but after two or three sentences you seem to hit a brick wall. You find yourself talking in circles and take your seat more burdened than ever. There seems to be no liberty in your ability to relate what you know. This occurs when we have not lingered in prayer and received from God words and understanding with which to properly express what He has shown us.

And, we must pray not only for the proper words, but for the proper timing. He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him (Proverbs 27:14). We must wait for God's timing in giving the Word. Many prophets assume that when we have a Word from the Lord we may then take it and shout it from the housetops. This is not usually the case. Most of the time we are simply called to pray and intercede. If the Lord sends us to speak, well; if not, we will pray. You may pray and pray and pray without outward change. Then one day the Lord tells you to arise, gird up your loins, and get thee to Zeraphath. Then let us make haste. Until then, we will wait for His timing as well as His method of expression.

When the timing is right, then the prophet moves into the third stage of action, which is proclamation. Some think proclamation means prefacing things with Thus saith the Lord and speaking out in an authoritative voice. While this does happen it is not the only way, and probably not the best way.

Here is the situation. God has planted a word in our heart. We will be uncomfortable until we find release through prayer or through proclamation or both. Let me explain. If you are burdened of the Lord to intercede for an individual, your spirit will give you no rest until you have prayed through (some of you older folks know what it means to pray through). Praying through is nothing more than making intercession until the Lord lifts that burden and heaviness off our heart. If we try to neglect or ignore the burden to pray it simply becomes unbearable. We must pray through to obtain release, just as opening the valve of a pressure cooker releases the steam and reduces the pressure.

The same is true of revelation. The prophets of the Old Testament referred to this as the burden of the Lord. Until we effectively discharge the burden we will be most uncomfortable. Jeremiah referred to it: Then I said, I will not make

mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay (Jeremiah 20:9).

How do we discharge the burden of the Lord? After we have received revelation, and made intercession, we will know the best course. Sometimes we will find release through writing, such as Isaiah. On other occasions we may compose a song, as David. Or we may write poems and verse, as Jeremiah. We may act out the word dramatically, as Ezekiel. Or we may thunderously speak the Word as Moses, Elijah, or John the Baptist. We may speak in parables as the Lord Jesus. The tools, methods, and ways are different, but the underlying principle is the same. God will give different expression to the proclamation of the Word, and He will be pleased to use the prophets differently in accordance with their unique gifts and personalities.

But the work is not finished when the word is proclaimed. For the prophet is not merely interested in proclamation, but in the fourth stage of his ministry: restoration. Our mandate is to tear down, destroy, and level; afterwards we must rebuild and raise again. We must pray in the promises of God and keep watch over Gods people, encouraging them to full and complete obedience, standing in the gap to avert the very judgment we may have just pronounced upon them.(my note: this is very interesting to me!)

We should readily see that the ministry of the watchman is primarily one of hidden, secret prayer and fasting. The true test of the watchman is in the prayers that he utters privately, not the prophecies that he utters publicly. Let him fail or make a fool of himself in public and God will still use Him; let him fail in the prayer closet and he will be discarded as a prophet. Those who think the prophetic ministry is all about visions, dreams, prophecy and spiritual gifts had better rethink their position. It is self-denying, thankless, often unseen and unappreciated labor in secret prayer.

In summary, we conclude that if the Lord was pleased to set watchmen over Israel of old, He is certainly pleased to set watchmen over the Church today. But as we have seen, the ministry of the watchman is more likely to be found in the prayer closet than the pulpit.

May God give us grace and increase the ministry and operation of the watchman!

-C.Brogden

Re: - posted by 5nva (), on: 2004/5/14 21:13

I believe that there are prophets to the church today. Ephesians 4:11 sums it up. God has given them for the building up and equipping of the saints for the work of service. That service is the building up of the body of Christ to the fulness of Christ.

I really like what Leonard Ravenhill says of the prophet when he lists the characteristics of the prophet. I don't have it handy but I have read it in a couple of books and will post it if nobody else does.

Also, Art Katz says it well in his book True and False Prophets. I think you can read it on his website. It is also in audio format.

Obviously to the discerning Christian there are only a few true prophets and not the multitude of those that claim to be. I also don't think a prophet needs to tell anyone that he is a prophet but rather his life and the words he speaks will proclaim it. One thing for sure is that the true prophet is humble, unwordly and points to Jesus Christ.

For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Rev. 19:10b

In Christ,

Mike

Re: - posted by 5nva (), on: 2004/5/14 21:24

Picture of a Prophet

By Leonard Ravenhill

The prophet in his day is fully accepted of God and totally rejected by men.

Years back, Dr. Gregory Mantle was right when he said, "No man can be fully accepted until he is totally rejected." The prophet of the Lord is aware of both these experiences. They are his "brand name."

The group, challenged by the prophet because they are smug and comfortably insulated from a perishing world in their warm but untested theology, is not likely to vote him "Man of the year" when he refers to them as habitués of the synagogue of Satan!

The prophet comes to set up that which is upset. His work is to call into line those who are out of line! He is unpopular because he opposes the popular in morality and spirituality. In a day of faceless politicians and voiceless preachers, there is not a more urgent national need than that we cry to God for a prophet! The function of the prophet, as Austin-Sparks once said, "has almost always been that of recovery."

The prophet is God's detective seeking for a lost treasure. The degree of his effectiveness is determined by his measure of unpopularity.

Compromise is not known to him.
He has no price tags.

He is totally "otherworldly."

He is unquestionably controversial and unpardonably hostile.

He marches to another drummer!

He breathes the rarefied air of inspiration.

He is a "seer" who comes to lead the blind.

He lives in the heights of God and comes into the valley with a "thus saith the Lord."

He shares some of the foreknowledge of God and so is aware of impending judgment.

He lives in "splendid isolation."

He is forthright and outright, but he claims no birthright.

His message is "repent, be reconciled to God or else...!"

His prophecies are parried.

His truth brings torment, but his voice is never void.

He is the villain of today and the hero of tomorrow.

He is excommunicated while alive and exalted when dead!

He is dishonored with epithets when breathing and honored with epitaphs when dead.

He is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, but few "make the grade" in his class.

He is friendless while living and famous when dead.

He is against the establishment in ministry; then he is established as a saint by posterity.

He eats daily the bread of affliction while he ministers, but he feeds the Bread of Life to those who listen.

He walks before men for days but has walked before God for years.

He is a scourge to the nation before he is scourged by the nation.

He announces, pronounces, and denounces!

He has a heart like a volcano and his words are as fire.

He talks to men about God.

He carries the lamp of truth amongst heretics while he is lampooned by men.

He faces God before he faces men, but he is self-effacing.

He hides with God in the secret place, but he has nothing to hide in the marketplace.

He is naturally sensitive but supernaturally spiritual.

He has passion, purpose and pugnacity.

He is ordained of God but disdained by men.

Our national need at this hour is not that the dollar recover its strength, or that we save face over the Watergate affair, or that we find the answer to the ecology problem. We need a God-sent prophet!

I am bombarded with talk or letters about the coming shortages in our national life: bread, fuel, energy. I read between the lines from people not practiced in scaring folk. They feel that the "seven years of plenty" are over for us. The "seven years of famine" are ahead. But the greatest famine of all in this nation at this given moment is a FAMINE OF THE HEARING OF THE WORDS OF GOD (Amos 8:11).

Millions have been spent on evangelism in the last twenty-five years. Hundreds of gospel messages streak through the air over the nation every day. Crusades have been held; healing meetings have made a vital contribution. "Come-outers" have "come out" and settled, too, without a nation-shaking revival. Organizers we have. Skilled preachers abound. Multi-million dollar Christian organizations straddle the nation. BUT where, oh where, is the prophet? Where are the incandescent men fresh from the holy place? Where is the Moses to plead in fasting before the holiness of the Lord for our moldy morality, our political perfidy, and sour and sick spirituality?

GOD'S MEN ARE IN HIDING UNTIL THE DAY OF THEIR SHOWING FORTH. They will come. The prophet is violated during his ministry, but he is vindicated by history.

There is a terrible vacuum in evangelical Christianity today. The missing person in our ranks is the prophet. The man with a terrible earnestness. The man totally otherworldly. The man rejected by other men, even other good men, because they consider him too austere, too severely committed, too negative and unsociable.

Let him be as plain as John the Baptist. Let him for a season be a voice crying in the wilderness of modern theology and stagnant "churchianity." Let him be as selfless as Paul the apostle. Let him, too, say and live, "This ONE thing I do." Let him reject ecclesiastical favors. Let him be self-abasing, nonself-seeking, nonself-projecting, nonself-righteous, nonself-glorious, nonself-promoting. Let him say nothing that will draw men to himself but only that which will move men to God. Let him come daily from the throne room of a holy God, the place where he has received the order of the day. Let him, under God, unstop the ears of the millions who are deaf through the clatter of shekels milked from this hour of material mesmerism. Let him cry with a voice this century has not heard because he has seen a vision no man in this century has seen. God send us this Moses to lead us from the wilderness of crass materialism, where the rattlesnakes of lust bite us and where enlightened men, totally blind spiritually, lead us to an ever-nearing Armageddon.

God have mercy! Send us PROPHETS!

Re: - posted by laholmes, on: 2004/5/14 21:47

I too believe that prophets exist today. In the OT prophets did speak of Christ and his first coming. Even John the Baptist in the NT spoke of this. This foretelling is what is often thought of when the word prophet is heard. But most often it seems, the prophet was more of a forth teller. That is to say, he spoke a word from the Lord. Prophets were often unpopular people who had a burden from the Lord to share. Jeremiah, Habakuk, and Isaiah are just a few examples.

Many people claim to be prophets, that is, wanting the glamorous part of being on TV, selling books, and having a large church. A true prophet does not speak because he wants to, but because he has to. Lloyd-Jones said of preaching, and I believe the same is true of prophets. It is not that they want to, but that they have to. They see the awesomeness of the task that lies before them, but it is only the call of the Lord that moves them forward.

Re: DOES GOD USE PROPHETS TODAY? - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/5/15 1:17

Are there true prophets alive today? Yes.

Is God using them? I guess that depends on what kind of use you're looking for.

As far as I can tell, the primary prophetic message has always been "turn back to God!" I tend to distinguish this exhortative capacity from foreknowledge and the like. However, there are some with far more than an anointing to exhort, so I'm not sure which to call prophets, and how "used" they are right now.

Let us be careful to consider what it means to be so near to God's heart that one can speak from it. There's deep devotion in this group, but are we anywhere near that kind of Holiness... ?

I do not envy any set aside for prophetic ministry. One's words may burn and thresh, but one is first consumed in fire and threshed through.

Re: - posted by Gideons (), on: 2004/5/15 9:52

I'm getting ready to go to work but I saw this quote.

Quote:
-----Let us be careful to consider what it means to be so near to God's heart that one can speak from it. There's deep devotion in this group, but are we anywhere near that kind of Holiness... ?

I agree Keith. The purpose of any spiritual gift is always to bring the saints closer to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Any other purpose (e.g self-edification, etc.) would be questionable at best.

As far as this quote

Quote:
-----"I do not envy any set aside for prophetic ministry. One's words may burn and thresh, but one is first consumed in fire and threshed through."

Amen. If that is what God wants for some of us, surely He will give us that desire.

Re: prophets - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/5/15 10:06

Quote:
-----One does not decide to become a prophet, neither may one volunteer their services to be a prophet.

God reserves the right to set His own watchmen, and this He will do according to His will, and according to His timing. We do not know why He chooses the ones He chooses. It is a work of grace. Many prophets are selected from birth or from childhood. John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit within his mother's womb. We dare not intrude into this holy work by setting up our own prophets or stepping into a place that God has not put us. It is God's Hand, and no other.

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-----He is certainly pleased to set watchmen over the Church today. But as we have seen, the ministry of the watchman is more likely to be found in the prayer closet than the pulpit.

Re: - posted by riki (), on: 2004/5/15 16:04

Hmmm...

It seems to me that there may still be some confusion here between the *gift* of prophecy and the *office* of prophet. I believe it is vitally important that we make a clear distinction.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/5/15 16:15

Quote:

It seems to me that there may still be some confusion here between the gift of prophecy and the office of prophet. I believe it is vitally important that we make a clear distinction.

An elaboration is in order.

Re: - posted by 5nva (), on: 2004/5/15 19:45

Riki:

That is the very thing that was on my mind as I was driving today and when I got on the site to add to the post I saw what you had added.

There are prophetic gifts and there is the office of the prophet. I am probably not the one to try to define the two but it would be good for us all to continue on in this post and see what come out. Art Katz clears some of this up in his books *The Spirit of Prophecy* and *The Prophetic Call*.

Clinging to Jesus,

Mike

Re: The Difference between the Prophet & the Gift of Prophecy - posted by Rahman, on: 2004/5/16 14:00

Good Lord's Day Saints,

Hope this helps ... Amen

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GIFT OF THE PROPHET & PROPHECY

One of the reasons there is confusion in the church today about the prophet gift is the failure to distinguish between the "gift of the prophet" and "gift of prophesying". One is a "gift of the prophet" from Christ to the church and the other is a "gift of prophesying" given by the Holy Spirit to individuals within the church. Even though to the casual reader this may appear to be just a play on words, this fact is important in understanding the difference in the "gift of the prophet" and the "gift of prophesying".

According to Ephesians 4:11-16 "He(Christ: See v7) gave some... i.e., prophets...for the 1)perfecting of the saints, 2)for the work of the ministry, 3)for the edifying of the body of Christ...". In the Greek, this passage clearly states that these equipping leaders were themselves a gift of Christ to His church and it was not just the gift of prophecy that was given. I Corinthians 12:28 adds, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..."

Only the prophet, as an equipping servant-leader, is qualified according to Scripture to function in what the KJV calls the "office" of a prophet. However, it is important to qualify this word "office", for the connotation today is that "office" implies position or rank. In reality, the KJV's use of the word "office" does not accurately translate that Greek word in any of the three times it occurs.

All three uses of the word "office" in the KJV, which include Romans 11:13, Romans 12:4 and I Timothy 3:1, should not be translated as "office". In Romans 11:13 Paul said, "I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine "office" (Gr.diakonia=service, ministry). Romans 12:4 states, "For as we have many members in the one body, and all members have not the same "office" (Gr.proxis=work, action, use)." I Timothy 3:1 it says, "This is a true saying, If a man desire, the "office"(Gr.episkope=oversite) of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

In truth, the "office" is not a position nor a rank but rather a descriptive function. The different Greek names given to represent the various leaders in the church(i.e. apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, deacons, etc.), simply describe who these leaders were and what their function was in the church.

The servant leaders who are described in Ephesians 4:11 were themselves gifts to the church. Their primary purpose was to serve and lead by example. Their primary function was 1)"For the perfecting of the saints," 2)"for the work of ministry," 3)"for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

Those who serve in the function or "office" of a prophet, that is as a "gift" from Christ to the church, operate in this gift as their primary ministry and are known and recognized through discernment by the church as a result of the confirmation of the Holy Spirit. Because the prophets are a "gift" to the church, the prophets function in a continuing prophetic

c ministry and they consistently walk in that gift because that is who they are in the Body of Christ.

Now, concerning the issue of the "gift of prophesying". It is a gift of the Holy Spirit available to any believer in the Body of Christ. According to I Corinthians 12:7 "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. I Corinthians 12:8, 10 adds "For to one is given by the Spirit...i.e. prophecy..." In I Corinthians 12:11 it states, "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." I Corinthians 12:18 says, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." In I Corinthians 12:29 it says, "Are all apostles?(Gr. 'No')Are all prophets?(Gr. 'No')Are all teachers?" (Gr. 'No')

Thus we see that the "gift of prophesying" is available from the Holy Spirit to all believer in the Body of Christ. The "gift of prophesying" can be ministered by the Spirit through any believer in the Body of Christ at any time the Spirit chooses. The persons who minister in the "gift of prophesying" do so by the unction of the Holy Spirit. Persons who are moved by the Spirit to prophesy may be led to prophecy "only one time" or "many times" depending upon how the Holy Spirit leads. The "gift of prophesying" is exercised by any believer within the Body according to the order given in 1.

<http://www.churchrestoration.org/teach/more/>

Re: Does God use Prophets Today? - posted by Rahman, on: 2004/5/16 15:42

(((Praise God!

What a lively discussion! ...

I totally believe that our Lord still uses, and unfortunately still has to employ "prophets" today ... In fact I'd say especially TODAY! Today we're "techno-wicked". But have you ever noticed that in all of Israel's long history there really weren't that many prophets compared to the time period ... Prophets are not trotted out in masse as God's chosen like High Priests, priests and kings were in Israel's time, nor pastors, teachers and evangelist today ... To paraphrase Bro. Ravenhill, we (and I see no reason why we should deny our God given office) are God's emergency implements when people (mainly His own) are about to, or have already crossed over His invisible line where His grace ends and His wrath begins ... It does not bring joy to God, and certainly not to the poor soul that He calls to the office, to have to trot out a "prophet" ... Things are usually pretty foul when this happens.

At least in ancient times folk waited to "kill the messenger" when he finally arrived upon the scene ... Today, thru up front satanic inspired disbelief by some Christian denominations in the office, the "messenger" is killed before we're even called to arrive ... And for the denominations that do believe in "prophets" the devil has sown so many false ones that even His true ones are also tossed into the "flake" bin ... I've pulled some quotes from some of your post that really stuck out to me.)))

Greg (from your post):

They are grieved and vexed over sin only because God is! they share the heart of God. Ravenhill says "Prophets are God's emergency men for crisis hours." We are living in a crucial hour where just clear bible exposition will not suffice, we need to hear the mind and heart of God in our day.

(((We need to hear the mind and heart of God ... Amen to that! ... So apparently when the prophet is called out it's because we've become spiritually deaf, and blind, and a huge pit is just before us)))

Chanin (from your post):

The function of the prophetic intercessor, or watchman, is best defined as taking place in the course of four stages: Revelation, Intercession, Proclamation, and Restoration.

(((I don't like the word "revelation" when it comes to a New Testament prophet ... I think a better word would be "illumination" on what's already revealed ... There are no new revelations forthcoming in the entire Bible save for the two books spoken of in the Revelation that are to be opened in the future ... NT prophets receive further "illumination" from God on what's already revealed)))

Prophets are not called by a denomination or installed by men.

One does not decide to become a prophet, neither may one volunteer their services to be a prophet.

(((One would have to be nuts to do so, or very young and idealistic ... I say this because when I was 13/14 I used to pray to God that I could be one of the two witnesses spoken of in the Revelation ... My parents thought that was pretty weird)))

They are called to exhort, edify, rebuke, and build the Church of God, building upon the foundation that is laid already in Christ.

(((Especially exhort and edify ... These to me are the main function of the NT prophet in Christ church, to counter Satan's fear with God's faith! ... To be brought to a point where God uses one human to openly rebuke fellow humans is really very hard on the human, for we too are men of unclean lips, etc ... If you run across any human who likes to rebuke other humans they're sadist, and that ain't of God ... God Himself doesn't even like to rebuke ... But we leave Him no other choice, and since He still operates via "us", when it comes time for His voice of rebuke and chastisement some (saved) human is gonna become that voice)))

The prophet speaks primarily to God's people, the house of Israel. The New Testament church is the spiritual Israel of God (Galatians 3:39; 4:21-31).

The prophet does not usually bring a one size fits all generic sort of message that speaks to the universe. It is typically a surgical strike, directed and honed to penetrate a particular thing in the Body of Christ, with Spirit-led precision that cuts through the formalities and niceties to get to the guts of the task at hand. The very nature of the message cuts to the quick and makes some gnash their teeth.

We may argue that we are all priests and the Lord may speak to us just as He speaks to prophets. This is the spirit behind Korah's Rebellion:

(((I found this extremely interesting because I have often wondered how scholars determined that (two) elements of the five-fold ministry were no longer relevant to today ... So maybe the reason why God's church is in disarray is because pastors, teachers and evangelists have no one to reign them in ... And the ones that try (like Dave Wilkerson) are labelled crack-pots)))

The watchman is on the wall and is looking at things from a different vantage point. He sees things you cannot or will not see. Since God has set him there, it would be a mistake to ignore the warning he brings.

General Topics :: Does God Use Prophets Today?

(((There are two main advantages from being chosen a "watchman/trumpet blower" that offset the societal disdain usually suffered ... 1.) - The intensity of closeness experienced with God ... 2.) - The afore-knowledge of how/which way to maneuver your loved ones away from the impending danger to the best of ones ability within His blessing ...)))

Here is the situation. God has planted a word in our heart. We will be uncomfortable until we find release through prayer or through proclamation or both.

(((Ugggggghhhhhh ... It's a burden that has to be "laid down" by the action required of God)))

Jeremiah referred to it: Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay (Jeremiah 20:9).

Let him fail or make a fool of himself in public and God will still use Him; let him fail in the prayer closet and he will be discarded as a prophet.

5nva (all of what you posted about Bro. Ravenhill)

(((I agree ... Nobody (as of now) has hit the definition of "prophet" (to me) as concisely as Ravenhill and I love this one gem in particular "One thing for sure is that the true prophet is humble, unwordly and points to Jesus Christ ... For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Rev. 19:10b" ... This says it all!)))

laholmes (from your post):

A true prophet does not speak because he wants to, but because he has to.

KeithLaMothe (from your post):

Let us be careful to consider what it means to be so near to God's heart that one can speak from it. There's deep devotion in this group, but are we anywhere near that kind of Holiness... ?

(((Bro. Keith, none of us are ... That's why I think it's so difficult to be called to this office ... The first thought that should come to mind (I believe) is "Lord, who am I that I should be telling anyone I speak for you ... There are so many other better candidates other than me" ... Nobody in their right mind, on the human side of things, would want such a mantle ...)))

I do not envy any set aside for prophetic ministry. One's words may burn and thresh, but one is first consumed in fire and threshed through.

((Me neither ... but running from it is far worse, I know because I tried ... Bro. Keith you seem to be privy to thoughts of this office that very few others assess ... Am I perceiving that thou art a ... hmmm)))

Here's a site many of you might find interesting ...

<http://latter-rain.com/perspectives/> - select "prophets"

Because of Him,

R

Re: - posted by riki (), on: 2004/5/16 17:40

Mike (5nva) wrote:

There are prophetic gifts and there is the office of the prophet. I am probably not the one to try to define the two but it would be good for us all to continue on in this post and see what come out.

I feel the same way, there are others who have already written on the subject way better than I could ever do. I will add a few personal comments, though.

For me the case is the following: I had wondered for a long time what it really meant to be a prophet and wondered if I had ever met one. Sure I had heard people prophecy here and there, but the prophets in the Old Testament and John the Baptist (for example) seemed to be something else. There was something in their way of living that was so different. Then, I think it was when reading Art Katz's *The Spirit of Prophecy* (or perhaps *The Prophetic Call*), something within me said YES - This is what it's about! The difference seemed very clear and I felt something resonating somewhere deep within me when reading the book. No one had ever told me about the difference before and no one had ever shown me why it is so important that we do not only have the gift of prophecy among us but also real prophets! The Spirit can use anyone He wishes to deliver a specific message at a certain time, but that does not make that person a prophet. A prophet is something so much more.

I would recommend all of you to read one of the two books mentioned, to get a better understanding of these things. These are not just some dry books, I believe they are a cry from the heart of God.

(http://www.benisrael.org/OnlineBooks/prophetic_call/the_prophetic_call.htm) *The Prophetic Call*

(http://www.benisrael.org/OnlineBooks/spirit_of_proph/contents_sp_of_proph.htm) *The Spirit of Prophecy*

General Topics :: Does God Use Prophets Today?

Re: - posted by ArtB (), on: 2004/5/24 3:09

In this thread I see many people believe that there are Prophets in the church today. Yet I have not seen anyone name any Prophets who are Prophesying today. Can anyone name a few Prophets who are alive today? This would certainly clarify to me what you mean when you say there are Prophets Prophesying today.

Though the greek word for Prophet means to foretell, the Biblical meaning of a Prophet is: "One who speaks forth the word of God as if God Himself was speaking."

I love Billy Graham for the great Christian ministry and witness he has had, but I think of him as a teacher and expounder of the gospel, and not as being Prophet.

David Wilkerson may be a Prophet if his visions are indeed from God.

FYI, not all Prophets are particularly close to God. The Prophet Baalam was an unholy and sinful Prophet, yet God clearly spoke through Baalam.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/5/24 6:17

Quote:

In this thread I see many people believe that there are Prophets in the church today. Yet I have not seen anyone name any Prophets who are Prophesying today. Can anyone name a few Prophets who are alive today? This would certainly clarify to me what you mean when you say there are Prophets Prophesying today.

I personally know/have known several individuals I have no doubt that they had the call of a prophet on their lives. However, even if I said their names and where they live, that still wouldn't really mean much, as the ones I have known are vastly unknowns, as most prophets biblically speaking, have been.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/5/24 8:35

Quote:
-----I don't like the word "revelation" when it comes to a New Testament prophet ... I think a better word would be "illumination" on what's already revealed ... There are no new revelations forthcoming in the entire Bible save for the two books spoken of in the Revelation that are to be opened in the future ... NT prophets receive further "illumination" from God on what's already revealed

I'm sorry I can't attribute the quote; I lost the trail.

I can understand why you would want to avoid the word revelation. We would be anxious to ensure that we are not claiming extra-biblical revelation. However, I think 'revelation' is far the better word. There is a continuing insight which enables expositors to draw fresh light from old scriptures, but this is not the same as the prophetic gift.

The classic link would be the biblical comment added in (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.) (1Sa 9:9 KJV) A prophet is someone who sees what others do not see. Their 'seeing' is not because they have acquired special skills but because it is 'revealed' to them.

When I am addressing younger folk and want to explain the continuing NT gift of prophecy within the church I usually say; "when someone suddenly knows what God is thinking, and speaks it out; that is prophecy". It a very simplistic definition I know, but it serves as an introduction to the subject.

How does an occasional gift become a calling? I think through regular exercise which builds faith in the user. It becomes almost second nature to lift the heart to God to receive His thoughts. The consequent expression of God's thoughts may relate to the past, the present or the future. 'Foretelling' is not an essential, or even primary aspect of prophecy. It is simply the God's eye view of any circumstance or event; linear time is irrelevant to this.

General Topics :: Does God Use Prophets Today?

The appropriateness of the word 'revelation' is also seen in Paul's instructions to the Corinthians; Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. (1Co 14:29-31 KJV)

There is also a vital link between a prophet and an intercessor, as is seen in God's word to Ablimelech; Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine. (Gen 20:7 KJV)

There's an easy way of recognising prophets; while they are alive people throw stones at them, but when they are dead people build commemorative websites for them. ;-)

Re: - posted by ArtB (), on: 2004/5/24 9:25

Quote:

PreachingToCannibals wrote:

Quote:

I personally know/have known several individuals I have no doubt that they had the call of a prophet on their lives. However, even if I said their names and where they live, that still wouldn't really mean much, as the ones I have known are vastly unknowns, as most prophets biblically speaking, have been.

Okay, you are personally convinced that you know some 'local' Prophets, who when speaking in God's name, it is God speaking and not them. Am I correctly understanding you?

If I am understanding you correctly, what new revelations have you received from these "Prophets". Two or three examples would be plenty. Of course, if these revelations were meant for you only, I will understand if you decide not to share such personal revelations that you received from these people.

Re: - posted by ArtB (), on: 2004/5/24 9:48

Quote:

-----I don't like the word "revelation" when it comes to a New Testament prophet ... I think a better word would be "illumination" on what's already revealed ... There are no new revelations forthcoming in the entire Bible save for the two books spoken of in the Revelation that are to be opened in the future ... NT prophets receive further "illumination" from God on what's already revealed

Illumination on what is already revealed is known as teaching. The greatest teacher we have is the Holy Spirit that God sent to us to dwell within us. Among other things, the Holy Spirit imparts in us understanding of that which has already been revealed, especially when we earnestly seek understanding.

In my view, an 'illuminator' of God's revelation is just another term for 'teacher', and not 'Prophet'.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/5/24 10:07

Hi ArtB

I think we are on the same track. I think illumination is vital to Bible teaching where the good scribe brings from his treasure things new and old in the power of the Spirit. Anything less than this is really 'bubble and squeak'. (an English delicacy composed of yesterday's food, refried. Who says we have no cordon bleu over here? :-?)

The essence of revelation is that something which had been specifically hidden is now unveiled. It is the taking away of the covering. Illumination is often needed for what has been unveiled. It is the adding of light to what may have become obscured. In this sense the ongoing prophetic ministry would always be extra-biblical, not in terms of an equal authority, but by its very nature. If it were already in the Book it would require illumination not revelation.

In that sense there would only be 'one revelation', the secret things belong to God but the things that are revealed are ours forever, whereas revealed truth may receive subsequent illumination; the reformation is a classic example of the latter

Re: - posted by ArtB (), on: 2004/5/24 10:11

Most agreed, philologos.

Re: Illumination vs. Revelation - posted by Rahman, on: 2004/5/24 10:14

philologos quote:

"I can't understand why you would want to avoid the word revelation. We would be anxious to ensure that we are not claiming extra-biblical revelation. However, I think 'revelation' is far the better word. There is a continuing insight which enables expositors to draw fresh light from old scriptures, but this is not the same as the prophetic gift".

If you feel more comfortable with the word "revelation" I of course have no problem with that as Amos 3:7 states clearly, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets " ... Revealeth equates to a God given "revelation" to men, via a man ... It's like me saying "po-tay-toe/illumination" and you saying "pa-tah-toe/revelation", as long as everyone else understands that we're both referring to that light brown tuber, with the dimples, from Idaho, it's ok by me '0)

I prefer the use of the phrase "illumination from what is already revealed" to bring a persons/groups attention to the fact that today we have a complete Bible, and if a modern "thus saith the Lord" that is coming forth can not be proved grounded in the already revealed Bible of God then it should be questioned, if not flat out rejected ... Same thing with Jesus ... If someone comes forth with a word about Christ that is brand new from anything that is already found in completed scripture, then I'd really question that word ...

Before the Word of God was a complete book, back when new "revelations" from God were still in progress, I personally have no problem with the word revelation ... But today, just to keep it in check, when I hear someone come forth with a "thus saith the Lord", for me, the new revelation must check out with the completed revelation (the Bible) ... This is why I say that today God is illuminating, shedding more light on what's already revealed, to His prophets ... So that I now view Amos 3:7 like this, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He (illumine) his secret (from what is already revealed) unto his servants the prophets " ...

That is why I stated "There are no new revelations forthcoming in the entire Bible save for the new books that will be opened in the future, spoken of in Daniel 12 & Rev. chapter 5 & 10 ... The Apostle Paul said presently that "we all see thru a glass darkly", but soon would come full illumination to what's already revealed in scripture ... NT prophets receive further "illumination" from God on what's already revealed is my personal way of keeping myself in check when I believe I have received a word from our Lord, and a way to convey to others that they must not take a word from me, or anyone else, unless it stands up to the litmus test of what's already revealed, and that it's always pointing to, and uplifting Jesus Christ ... Amen

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/5/24 11:08

Rahman

I actually said 'I can see why you would want to avoid the word revelation.

You also say...

Quote:
-----That is why I stated "There are no new revelations forthcoming in the entire Bible save for the new books that will be opened in the future, spoken of in Daniel 12 & Rev. chapter 5 & 10 ... The Apostle Paul said presently that "we all see thru a glass darkly", but soon would come full illumination to what's already revealed in scripture ... NT prophets receive further "illumination" from God on what's already revealed is my personal way

of keeping myself in check when I believe I have received a word from our Lord, and a way to convey to others that they must not take a word from me, or anyone else, unless it stands up to the litmus test of what's already revealed, and that it's always pointing to, and uplifting Jesus Christ ... Amen

I have no problem with this except for the hook you have chosen to hang it on. Cessationists head like hornets for this verse as their main scriptural justification for discounting all contemporary 'manifestations of the Spirit'. But we have been here before in these pages...

One main difference I would want to draw attention to is the permanent nature of Biblical revelation/prophesy as distinct to what I believe to be temporary and local of the contemporary gift. Contemporary revelation can add nothing to the closed canon of scripture, but that does not mean it doesn't fulfil an extremely valuable function.

I also think there is a fundamental difference between revelation and illumination which is not really covered in your illustration. I don't mind how you say potato, but we can't say potato if we mean carrot. ;-)

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/5/24 11:37

ArtB wrote:

Quote:

Okay, you are personally convinced that you know some 'local' Prophets, who when speaking in God's name, it is God speaking and not them. Am I correctly understanding you?

If I am understanding you correctly, what new revelations have you received from these "Prophets". Two or three examples would be plenty. Of course, if these revelations were meant for you only, I will understand if you decide not to share such personal revelations that you received from these people..

Yes, I believe these individuals I know to be prophets, who speak whatever it is God would have them to say.

As far as "new revelations", you are inferring I said something I never said.

First and foremost a prophet is one who speaks the words of God, just as Moses said they would. Deut 18 teaches us that God would put His words in their mouth, and they'd speak all that He commanded them to speak. The prophetic gift is not about "new revelations." Rather, the gift has always been to draw people to God and the covenant He has established. As one commentator said, we should think of the prophets as "covenant enforcers."

The prophet will speak whatever it is the Lord wants to say. He will either relate a dream or vision the Lord gave him, or he will speak whatever message God has to say, as the Spirit gives him utterance. Just because somebody has a "revelation" does not always mean that it is a "new revelation." In the message given, a deeper insight into the Scriptures as well as the character of God might be spoken. Perhaps the Lord will in the message expose some sin in the congregation, or provide direction for Church, corporately or individually. In the message given, God might speak of what will occur in the future, but always for the purpose of having some impact on how an individual lives their lives.

As Isaiah the prophet said, "to the law and to the testimony! if anybody does not speak according to them, then they have no dawn!" If what somebody says contradicts the Scriptures, or if their word fails, then they need to repent. As Revelation says, the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Christ. If some utterance does not further the testimony of Christ in some way, then it is in error.

Just because a prophet says something doesn't mean we need to consider stapling it to our Scriptures. If there is a genuine prophetic utterance given, we are to heed that message, otherwise, the Lord will require it of us (Deut 18). So it is important we be ever discerning. But once again, just because a prophetic message is given doesn't mean we need to say the canon of Scripture is open. If you closely study the Scriptures, you will find that there are hundreds of prophets mentioned by name individually, or belonging to a group, yet none of their utterances are ever preserved for sacred Scripture.

General Topics :: Does God Use Prophets Today?

For example, we are not told all the prophetic words Samuel gave during his ministry, that caused him to be confirmed by all of Israel as being a prophet. Some of his words are recorded, but not all of them. Another example is the prophetic words that king Saul spoke when the Lord gave him the prophetic gifts. All we know is Saul was prophesying with the prophets, but once again, we don't know anything prophetic Saul said, nor the prophets he prophesied with.

Also, in the New Testament, we are not told all the prophetic words of John the Baptist. Luke tells us he gave many more exhortations/prophecies than he recorded, but does not tell us what those were. John tells us that Christ did and said many other things, but once again, we do not know what they were. In Acts, there are several prophets mentioned by name, such as in Antioch, or ones that seemed to have some itinerant ministry, yet we are seldom told any of the words they spoke. For two prophets specifically, it simply says they gave a long message to the congregation. Paul mentions an epistle he wrote to the church of Laodicea, yet we do not have that letter.

Some things I have learned from the prophets I have known I am since forgotten. Some things I have not though. For example, one prophet I know showed me that God considers abortion child sacrifice, and that it parallels with "passing your children through the fire to the god of Molech." The same prophet also told me to stay away from something I was involved with, and I did not, and as a result, I suffered a small financial setback. For the most part though, the prophetic utterances I've heard given have been exhortive in nature, expressing the mind and heart and longings of God for a people that draw unto Him.

Granted, at the same time, I have heard many false prophetic utterances given by others, that in no way, shape, or form even expressed the mind and heart of God, and some have run contrary to Scripture.

Re: Hmmmmm - posted by Rahman, on: 2004/5/24 13:20

You guys have certainly illumined me ... "revelation" it is! ... I stand corrected ... '0)

Re: - posted by Yodi (), on: 2004/5/26 15:05

This prophet thing still kind of has me confused. I guess this is where I just have faith, right?

Yesterday morning in my devotions I came across this verse and was going to post it:

"Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. But now in these final days, He has spoken to us through His Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

I thought, "See, since Jesus has come into the world, we have no need for prophets today."

But then in this morning's devotions I read this:

"During this time, some prophets traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up in one of the meetings to predict by the Spirit that a great famine was coming upon the entire Roman world. (This was fulfilled during the reign of Claudius.) So the believers in Antioch decided to send relief to the brothers and sisters in Judea, everyone giving as much as they could. This they did, entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem" (Acts 11:27-30).

So... I guess that's why it's a good idea to try to remember the counsel of *all* of God's Word, not just bits and pieces supporting one side and view point.

But you know, whatever God decides to use to send His messages, whether through a prophet, an angel, the Holy Spirit, etc., that's fine with me as long as it's God's doing. I think God may choose His messengers according to who He's sending a message to.