**True Prophets**

Noted Holocaust survivor and author, Elie Wiesel, in virtually all of his novels, introduces us to the notion of the “madness of prophets.” But, it is only a perceived madness, perceived by nearly everyone, except for the discerning few and God, Himself, who created such an apparent misfit. Among the many things Wiesel has written, and has had written about him, though, not a believer at the moment, he appears to have far greater insight into the nature of a true prophet than the vast majority in today’s professing church.

“*There are several kinds of madness. First, there is clinical insanity. Wiesel cautions, however, that what is often considered madness in this sense may not be insanity at all, but merely dissent from the "collective neurosis" of society. In a society gone "mad," the same person will be judged mad, even though it is society and not he that suffers from skewed vision. Just as a sane inmate in an insane asylum would be judged mad by the other inmates, so anyone whose vision is threatening or disturbing to "normal" society is considered mad.  It is the madness of an individual who has seen things inaccessible to others, and is therefore separated from other men by the very fact of his closeness to God.*

*Wiesel views this type of madman as a messenger of God and says, "God loves madmen. They're the only ones he allows near him." The strangeness of his tale renders the prophet an anti-social misfit, a madman, in the eyes of his contemporaries. Thus, prophecy has long been considered a species of madness. Like Wiesel, the Holocaust survivor, the prophetic madman is a lonely figure, separated from the world by the witness he bears and yet compelled to live in the world as a man among men.”*

Just as the Church or the Household of God existed by the Spirit in the Old Testament, so too, did the same Spirit dwell within the true prophets of God. I Peter 1:10 – “*As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time****the Spirit of Christ within them*** *was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.”*

One confirming example of this indwelling Spirit among the true Old Testament prophets of God can be found in Ezek. 2:2 – “*Then He said to me,* “Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!” *As He spoke to me the****Spirit******entered****me and set me on my feet; and I heard****Him****speaking to me.”* And again, in Ezek. 3:24 – “*The* ***Spirit*** *then entered me and made me stand on my feet, and* ***He*** *spoke to me…”* Psalm 51:10-11 – David appeals to the Lord, *“Create* ***in me*** *a clean heart, O God, and* ***RENEW a steadfast spirit within me****. Do not cast me away from Your presence. And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.”*

The phrase I have chosen to serve as the springboard for this message is taken from Jer. 23:28b - *“…but let him who has My word speak My word in truth.”* This brief phrase, which is only a portion of a verse taken from Jer. 23:28, states two fundamental requirements for the actual speaking on God’s behalf. In the first place, He must be certain that he has, in fact, received a word from the Lord. And, in the second place, he must deliver the word as received and to whom it is directed. He must not add to it, take away from it, compromise it, nor discredit it by his life.

As an example, the prophet Jeremiah, who is the main theme of this conference, receives a true, but hard word from God in chapter 18:15: *“For My people have forgotten Me, they burn incense to worthless gods and they have stumbled from their ways, from the ancient paths, to walk in bypaths, not on a highway…”* The true prophet of God will not shrink from speaking truth to lies, and he will rejoice when he has the rare opportunity to speak truth to truth, such as found in Jer. 5:19 **- *“It shall come about when they say, ‘Why has the Lord our God done all these things to us?’*** *then you shall say to them, “*(It is because) *you have forsaken Me and served foreign gods in your land, so you will serve strangers in a land that is not yours.’*

And, it is this failure of the Jewish People as a collective nation to have considered and formulated such questions over the generations that has prevented them from coming to a place of Godly repentance leading to salvation, and thereby, being reconciled to God and to The Land, permanently. But, that day is coming! And, timing is everything!

Is. 40:1-2 - *“Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God. “Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”* This passage has been invoked by Messianic Jews and Evangelicals for many years. But, there is one significant problem. There are three conditions, which must be met. Israel’s warfare must have come to an end. Her iniquity must have been removed. And, she has yet to receive of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins as described in the Scriptures? We must place human sentiment aside and believe what the true prophets have spoken.

Deut. 30:1-3 - *“So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the Lord your God has banished you,**and you return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the Lord your God will restoreyou from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you.”*

Is. 58:12 - “*Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will raise up the age-old foundations; and you will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets in which to dwell.”* The fulfillment and expression of this prophecy within the context of a prophet is essentially a ministry of recovery and restoration. What is recovery? The regaining of something lost. What is restoration?  To reestablish something to its original condition. Therefore, the primary focus of the true prophet of God will be that of the recovery and restoration of the House of God, according to His original purposes. This is the primary function and purpose of a New Testament prophet, not unlike, the Old Testament prophet.

What is Prophetic Ministry?
T. Austin-Sparks

*“The function of the prophet has almost invariably been that of recovery. That implies that his business was related to something lost. That something being absolutely essential to God's full satisfaction, the dominant note of the Prophet was one of dissatisfaction. And, there being the additional factor that, for obvious reasons, the people were not disposed to go the costly way of God's full purpose, the prophet was usually an unpopular person. But his unpopularity was no proof of his being wrong or unnecessary, for every Prophet was eventually vindicated, though with very great suffering and shame to the people.*

*If it be true that prophetic ministry is related to the need for the recovery of God's full thought as to His people, surely this is a time of such need! Few honest and thoughtful people will contend that things are all well with the Church of Christ today. A brief comparison with the first years, the Church's life will bring out a vivid contrast between then and the centuries since.” It is essentially a part of the ministry of a prophetic instrument to cause trouble. It is inevitable; it is the very nature of things. For the very function of the prophet came into view when things were not right.*

*If things had never gone wrong, had never needed adjusting, correcting, or bringing to some greater measure of spiritual fullness, there would have been no need of prophets. We should know very, very little about prophets if things had gone right on as they should have done. The function of the prophets was to keep and hold before the people of God His full thought concerning them, especially in the face of certain things that worked very definitely against it. And it is just because of that clash and conflict that the trouble arises.*

We Need Prophets! – A.W. Tozer

*A prophet is one who knows his times and what God is trying to say to the people of his times. Today we need prophetic preachers; not preachers of prophecy merely, but preachers with a gift of prophecy. The word of wisdom is missing. We need the gift of discernment again in our pulpits. It is not ability to predict that we need, but the anointed eye, the power of spiritual penetration and interpretation, the ability to appraise the religious scene as viewed from God's position, and to tell us what is actually going on. Where is the man who can see through the ticker tape and confetti to discover which way the parade is headed, why it started in the first place and, particularly, who is riding up front in the seat of honor?*

*What is needed desperately today is prophetic insight. Scholars can interpret the past; it takes prophets to interpret the present. Learning will enable a man to pass judgment on our yesterdays, but it requires a gift of clear seeing to pass sentence on our own day. One hundred years from now historians will know what was taking place religiously in this year of our Lord; but that will be too late for us. We should know right now.*

*If Christianity is to receive a rejuvenation it must be by other means than any now being used. If the church in the second half of this century is to recover from the injuries she suffered in the first half, there must appear a new type of preacher. The proper, ruler-of-the-synagogue type will never do. Neither will the priestly type of man who carries out his duties, takes his pay and asks no questions, nor the smooth-talking pastoral type who knows how to make the Christian religion acceptable to everyone. All these have been tried and found wanting. Another kind of religious leader must arise among us. He must be of the old prophet type, a man who has seen visions of God and has heard a voice from the Throne.*

*When he comes (and I pray God there will be not one but many) he will stand in flat contradiction to everything our smirking, smooth civilization holds dear. He will contradict, denounce and protest in the name of God and will earn the hatred and opposition of a large segment of Christendom. Such a man is likely to be lean, rugged, blunt-spoken and a little bit angry with the world.*

*He will love Christ and the souls of men to the point of willingness to die for the glory of the one and the salvation of the other. But he will fear nothing that breathes with mortal breath. We need to have the gifts of the Spirit restored again to the church, and it is my belief that the gift we need most now is the gift of prophecy.* And, what Tozer was referring to was not merely the gift of prophecy, but rather, the ministry of a prophet.

There is something of a soulish fascination with the notion of a prophet, and I am referring to those in the Church. However, for the more spiritually mature and sober-minded, the fact that prophets were raised up at all was an indictment to Israel's spiritual condition. And, the Church should not be delusional in its thinking that the need for the prophetic, corrective voice begins and ends with Israel. *“For, if God did not spare the natural branches* (from the prophetic voice)*, neither, will He spare the predominant Gentile Church,”* who will be required to be that corporate prophetic voice to Israel in the coming days.

Jeremiah's calling was *“to pluck up and to break down, to overthrow and to destroy, to build and to plant.”*  But, what we usually identify with, is the plucking up and breaking down, along with the overthrowing and destroying aspects. There is some validity to this, but we must understand that these first two steps were only a means to an end, the end being, ultimately, *“to build and to plant."* Old Testament prophets spoke primarily of the future in terms of the blessings of obedience or the dire consequences of rebellion. Repentance, restoration and God's ultimate purposes, though, not always, were usually expressed within a corporate context.

The true prophet of God is not merely gifted in the occasional exhibiting of a prophetic word, but rather, he is the prophetic word. The man and the message are one and the same. The man is the message. His whole life is the message, which has been birthed within. Both the man and the message are simultaneously hammered and chiseled over time. He is not careless about processing that which he has been given. You see, he wants to get it right. While many so-called prophets are willing to take the approach of “throwing enough mud on the wall in the hopes that something will stick,” the true prophet, imperfect as he is, feels he MUST get it right.

He understands his responsibility before God and man, and therefore, treats his calling and gifting as a “holy instrument” committed to him by God, and not as some play-thing. He is in travail until the time of its delivery. He does not have the option to merely roll it around in his mouth and savor its sweetness. He must swallow it, whole, so that it causes bitterness in his belly. It is part of the price he must pay prior to delivering the message God has given him.

T. Austin Sparks asks the question, “What makes a Prophet?” and gives the following answer: *"Prophetic ministry is not something you can take up? It’s something you are."  "No academy can make you a prophet. Samuel instituted the Schools of the Prophets. They were for two purposes. One, the dissemination of religious knowledge, and the other, the writing up of the chronicles of religious history. In Samuel’s day there was no open vision; the people had lost the word of God. They had to be taught the Word of God again, and the Chronicles of the ways of God had to be written up and put on record for future generations, and the Schools of the Prophets were instituted in the main for that purpose."*

*"But there is a great deal of difference between those academic prophets and the living anointed prophets." "The point is this: The identity of the vessel with its ministry is the very heart of Divine thought. A man is called to represent the thoughts of God to represent them in what he is, not in something that he takes up as a form or line of ministry, not in something that he does. The vessel itself is the ministry and you cannot divide between the two."*

The calling of a prophet comes exclusively by way of God’s appointing. It is based on the same principle as expressed in Heb. 5:4 – “*And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God…”* You cannot acquire this calling through conferences, Bible schools or seminaries, or rubbing elbows with men who profess to be prophets, genuine or otherwise. Oh! You can certainly be equipped, fine-tuned, matured and gain wisdom through experience by having been invested in by other mature prophets. But, you cannot acquire this calling by any human means. And, neither, can it be bought. Either, God has called you to it or He hasn’t. However, if in fact, you have been appointed to such a calling, it will be recognized by mature brethren and confirmed by the Holy Spirit.

Only God can plant the seed within those called to be a prophet. Men can only water and cultivate that seed, which has already been implanted. A man can go to so-called “prophetical schools” for a millennium, and still his seeking to become a prophet will be in vain. While a man can aspire to eldership based upon specified Biblical criteria, when it comes to prophets, as well as apostles and evangelists, those callings have nothing to do with personal aspirations.

I would even go so far as to say, that the very aspiration to become a prophet is probably a pretty good indication that the individual has no such calling, or in the very least, has little understanding of it. It could be argued that anyone who truly understands the essence of such a calling, the immense responsibility, and the heavy price one must pay in pursuit of fulfilling that calling, would never aspire to it upon being “*shown how much he must suffer.”*

It is quite significant that the prophet’s mantle in the Old Testament looked anything that might have been indicative of royalty, such as the finest of silk and the color of royal blue. In Biblical times, a mantle was typically a large, loosely fitting garment made of animal skin, probably sheepskin. In John the Baptist’s case, it was a garment of camel’s hair. When viewed in this context, we can more accurately understand the point Jesus was making concerning John the Baptist in Luke 7:25: “*But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are found in royal palaces!”*

He is despised by the religious system. Jer. 26:7-8 – *‘The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord.**When Jeremiah finished speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people, the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, “You must die!’* Going along just to get along is not in his spiritual DNA, and so, the uniqueness of his personal crossconsists largely of misunderstanding, misrepresentation, discrediting, and rejection, but for the right reasons and not for the wrong ones. And while being just as much a part of the Body as any other member, not to mention, foundational, he is often regarded as something of a spiritual misfit and even eccentric by man’s assessment, but not by God’s.

He is a watchman, a troubleshooter, an intercessor, a conscience, a man of keen discernment, who can see through the fog, the confusion, the clamor, the hype, through charismatic men and their supposed giftings and cut right to the heart of the matter, *“to the dividing of soul and spirit,”* to analyze a situation and know what needs to be done about it, to foresee when a man, a ministry, a doctrine, a church, is headed for a train wreck. He is a man who both *“understands the times* ***and*** *knows what Israel* (and/or the Church) *is to do.”*

He sees through men and the creations of men, and as a result, is often misunderstood and rejected, by insecure leaders who fear the legitimate function of the prophet, for the wrong reasons and not for the right ones. And, he suffers, not because he is some sort of masochist or has something of a martyr complex. He doesn’t enjoy it any more than the next man. It just comes with the territory. He has **grown** to accept it. But, it did not occur overnight nor did it come easily. You see, he also had to *“learn obedience through the things which he suffered.”*

Jer. 15:17 – “*I did not sit in the circle of merrymakers, nor did I exult. Because of Your hand upon me I sat alone, for You filled me with indignation*.” He is not part of some ministerial elite “good ole boys club.”He neither rejoices nor gets giddy over his confirming and sending as a prophet. There are no illusions or delusions of grandeur, for he has been tempered with the only sure prophetic promise he has been given, and that is, like Paul, *“I must show him how much he must suffer for My Name’s sake.”*

He suffers from God’s perspective and suffers on behalf of God’s people, most often, in silence and alone. You see, he just can’t help himself. Misunderstanding is among the worst of his sufferings, being accused of having a critical spirit, of being self-righteous, and being the recipient of total character assassination. But, this, too, comes with the territory.

And yet, because he is circumspect, he will also be in conflict within himself, taking great pains *“to discern between* (his own) *soul and spirit.”* He feels the burden and responsibility in getting the message and the timing of its delivery, right, because he knows the power of words, and has a healthy fear of the consequences of *“speaking that which the Lord has not spoken.”*  He knows what he is, and especially, what he is not.

And so, he doesn’t immediately discount the criticisms and accusations as some might perceive. He is willing to pose the question to himself, *“Is it I, Lord?”*  For the sake of integrity, before God and men, He is willing to hear that still, small voice, which penetrates like a knife, and speaks to his spirit, “*Thou art the man!”*

He doesn’t have to give a word in King James English in order to superficially enhance its authority or his, and neither does he have to begin a word with “Thus sayeth the Lord” in order to add credence to the word. For he knows that it is the substance and spirit of a word that establishes the credibility, and not the style or the fluff. And, if he happens to be one of those rare American breed of true prophets, don’t be surprised if he happens to deliver his message as a normal human being, speaking in plain American English, while at the same time, not losing any of the anointing, meaning and weight of the word.

He will not permit anyone to address him as “Prophet, so and so.” He will find such ecclesiastical titles repugnant to him. He will permit nothing more than to have his name preceded by the term, “Brother,” just like any brother. If being referred to as “Brother” was good enough for Paul, which was entirely consistent with the Lord’s admonition to His Twelve disciples, *“for you are all brothers,”* it should be quite sufficient for him.

Furthermore, from my own studies in examining Old Testament examples, any so-called prophet who invested an inordinate amount of time in individual prophetic words and within a predictive context, would be indicted as a soothsayer or a diviner, rather than a prophet. In practice, it was no different than a fortune-teller using tarot cards or a crystal ball to allegedly predict future events in a person's life.

Now, I have a theory, which by my own admission is virtually impossible to prove, although, I do have a crumb of basis for it. And, it is this, that for every true prophet of God, there are roughly 400-450 false prophets, many of whom can be conveniently found practicing their imaginative craft, and in some cases, witchcraft, through so-called “popular” ministries such as those associated with The Elijah List.

And, I find myself consistently coming away with this nagging question: “Have we lost our minds!?!” But, actually, the problem isn’t so much about having lost our minds as it is that we haven’t acquired enough of the *“Mind of Christ.”* What would the Prophet Elijah think of a ministry bearing his name as though he would approve of such an endeavor, implicitly asserting that it is carrying on his legacy, in character and function? Although, I can’t say for sure, I do have my suspicions.

II Peter 2:2-4 – *“****Many*** *will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you* (KJV*- will make* ***merchandise*** *of you*) *with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”* Coupled with this,false prophets are always "banking" (in more ways than one) on people having short memories. What did the Early Church Fathers in the Second Century have to say about discerning a true prophet of God? And, by the way, had the office of the prophet died out before the end of the First Century, I think it is reasonable to assume that they would have had nothing to say about it, or certainly would not have spoken of it in the present-tense. But, they did --- and, quite a bit!

Didache (80-140 A.D.) ch. 11 - *“But concerning the prophets, act according to the decree of the Gospel. ...If he asks for money, he is a false prophet. …And every prophet who teaches the truth, but does not do what he teaches, is a false prophet. …But whoever says in the Spirit, Give me money, or something else, you shall not listen to him. But if he tells you to give for others' sake who are in need, let no one judge him.”*

Irenaeus (180 A.D. ) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.1 pg. 508 - *(A spiritual man) shall also judge false prophets, who, without having received the gift of prophecy from God, and not possessed of the fear of God, but either for the sake of vain glory, or with a view to some personal advantage, or acting in some other way under the influence of a wicked spirit, pretend to utter prophecies, while all the time they lie against God.”*

There will be times when he will be compelled to publicly call out a false prophet -Jer. 28:15 – **“***Then Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah the prophet, “Listen now, Hananiah, the Lord has not sent you, and you have made this people trust in a lie.”* If you go back and look at the context of this verse, you will see that because this false prophesy was declared before the priests and the people, Jeremiah was compelled to denounce the false prophet and his false word before the priests and the people. Other prophets did it! Jesus did it! John the Baptist did it! The apostle John did it with Diotrophes! Paul did it with Hymenaeus and Alexander, and even Peter of all people. Local elders, when necessary according to Scripture, are instructed to do it!

Today, we would refer to it as “being called out.” Why and when was it was necessary to do that? Simply put, those in error were adding leaven to the Church, which, left unchecked, would compromise the written and living corporate testimony of the Lord, and secondly, whatever the error, it had been expressed and promoted, publicly, and therefore, it was required that it be addressed and corrected, publicly.

Rom. 16:17 - The apostle Paul wrote this to the Church at Rome: **“***Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on* (or,**mark, note, identify**) *those who cause dissensions andhindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and****turn away from them****.**For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their ownappetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.”*

There was a time, back in the day, where the statement, “Hide the women and children” was exclaimed in a spirit of humor.Subsequently, and rightfully so, it would be considered an insult to women to be included in that statement. These days, I am afraid, it is even becoming impossible to hide the children any longer. There was a time in our society where there truly was a “season of innocence” for our children. When that began to erode, we could at least rely on the Church to act as something of a “safe harbor” and a buffer from that loss of innocence in the surrounding society. The greater tragedy and indictment is that even the children are no longer immune to having their innocence taken from them at such a relatively early age.

The Church, the one place where we were assured that our children would always be able to hide from the ever-increasing degradation of our secular society is now rapidly shrinking. In other words, due to internal and external negative influences, we can’t even count on the Church as a secure place to hide the children. And so, even there, their innocence is rapidly being lost, stemming from both moral and doctrinal decay. Judgment is already beginning at the Household of God.

As such, even the children must now be purposely taught the rudimentary elements of discernment, “*to know the difference between the holy and the profane*,” and “*to extract the precious from the worthless.”* And, the impetus and urgency is not due to what is happening outside the Church, but rather, what is happening within. And, furthermore, to our shame, a multitude of adults professing to have been Christians for many years will need to be taught, beginning at the same rudimentary level.But, regardless, we must make this investment in the generations coming up behind us, to whosoever will, by whosoever will and can.

I hope you won’t mind too much if I repeat a quote that you have heard from me many times as something of an introduction to what I am about to share as it so aptly reflects one of the chief maladies in much of the American Church. It has been said concerning the progressive history of Christianity: *“In Jerusalem, it became a religion, in Rome it became a law, in Greece it became a philosophy, in Europe it became a culture, in America it became an enterprise.”*

There will be some personal risk in what I am about to say, but after many months of agonizing over the appropriateness of such, I have come to the place where I am comfortably uncomfortable in proceeding ahead. Is it because of fearlessness? Forget about it! Stupidity? Certainly, can’t rule that out! Or, is it more likely that a relative *“nobody,” a man of no reputation*,” can afford to take such risks (in human terms) simply because, a man who has nothing to lose, has nothing to lose. But, don’t mistake it for boldness. I sure don’t! A Godly jealousy and indignation? Perhaps. Now, here’s your opportunity to exercise some discernment.

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**Father’s Heart Ministries** - Prophets Russ and Kitty are here to voice the FATHER’S HEART over your life. We minister to people around the world  and your giving helps make it possible for yourself and others to hear from God. What you make happen for others God will make happen for you.  The prophetic exists to produce breakthrough in your life. We are in a season that seeds planted produce a harvest before they hit the ground. We invite you to participate with us financially. Remember what Jesus said about the “Prophet’s Reward” and EXPECT BIG THINGS! Who is the Prophet in your life? Just as you need a pastor so you need a prophet in the circumstances and situations you face daily. For those committed to partnering with us on a monthly basis we provide the following (products and services)…

**Now is Your Moment:** Create Your Reality– The Ministry of Jeremy Lopez – Receive a Prophetic Word - We want to say 'THANK YOU' in advance for your love gift that comes from your heart to help us spread God's love to everyone. Jeremy always gives quality time to hear from God for you out of his busy schedule. Your gift of love of **40 dollars or more** helps us take care of the needs of others and our mission work. The gift of God is always freely given, **but** the labor and time is asked to please be honored. If you need Jeremy Lopez to hear God for you, just click on the paypal button below to make your love gift of **$40.00 or more**.

Since Jeremy is considered professional and anointed as a prophet of God in the body of Christ, many prophets highly recommend him to do dream interpretation for their friends, family members and church congregations. This is because Jeremy prays and gets the interpretation within minutes from the Lord. He wants to provide you with the best service possible and does not charge a high fee like many other prophetic voices. His fee for dream interpretation is **ONLY** $50.00.

But, back to the original point, merchandizing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and of all things, the gift of prophetic ministry, accepted by a large portion of the Church or not,is not the sort of *“equipping”* of which Ephesians 4 speaks! And, if anyone cares about how I, or rather, how God views this issue in more detail, you may wish to check out my session from the Glorious Church Conference website, free of charge, by the way. But, there is another side of the issue, which would include those who would seek to obtain the gift of the Holy Spirit, or a particular gift, such as prophecy, as if it were some sort of worldly commodity that could be purchased with money. Does this sound familiar? “Without you, this ministry would not be possible.” That, brethren, is the other side of the coin….. Pun, partially intended.

Acts 8:18-22 *- “Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, saying, “Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!**You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.**Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you.”*

Now, let’s take a look at a small sampling of what goes for “Prophetic Conferences” today:

Join us for **New Year 2015: Prepared for the Times**. This event is about joining the prophetic to the practical. Here is a special message from Rick Joyner: “As crisis after crisis is now cascading down upon the world, it has never been more critical for us to know the times and be prepared for them. Our goal is for everyone who comes to not only have much greater clarity about both the times and their purpose in them, but to be emboldened to take the authority they have in Christ to push the darkness back.” -***Rick Joyner***

**Presence Experience Nights!** In these times **we create** an atmosphere of God’s Presence through a combination of lively worship and soaking worship, teaching on intimacy, the prophetic, God’s Presence and the Holy Spirit. All of this together with times of community with each other in God’s glory makes this an unforgettable time. Other things to expect are truly life changing experiences with God through encounters, angelic activity, healing presence and miracles. Each session builds on another with a growing saturation of God’s glory.

**Blue Moon Rising Prophetic Conference 2015 -** Many in the body of Christ are longing for new beginnings in the Holy Spirit. The good news is there’s something refreshingly different stirring in God’s Kingdom! Is your heart hungry to receive the outpouring that God has promised our generation.

Join us for the Blue Moon Rising Prophetic conference 2015, and receive fresh insight, teaching, worship and spiritual direction. Encounter prophetic ministry from Spiritual fathers and mothers that are committed to navigate the dawn of a “supernatural renaissance.” Receive the tools necessary to prepare and posture yourself for a “spiritual awakening” that is coming upon the Earth. A "Blue Moon" by definition is an astronomical rarity signifying a 2nd full moon that occurs within one calendar month. Thus, the phrase "once in a blue moon." We believe our Blue Moon Conference is an uncommon gathering of an uncommon people. “An uncommon gathering of an uncommon people”?

That may be all well and good, but my hope, burden and prayer is that there would be true prophetic gatherings consistent with God’s purposes, which would not be “uncommon,” but rather, increasingly common in the Church, comprised not of perceived “uncommon” people, but rather, the “common” saint, to whom each one has been granted their own special measure of grace, according to the will and purposes of God.

Or, you can save time, money and the stress of travel by simply ordering a book, which is virtually guaranteed to have a positive prophetic impact upon your personal life. One interesting book I ran across is authored by Che’ Ahn, entitled, God Wants to Bless You: How to Experience the Unconditional Goodness of God. The description reads, “10 Biblical Decrees of Blessing and Favor to Speak Over Your Life.” If only the Egyptians could have had access to this book in order to counter the 10 plagues of Egypt…..

Jer. 5:30-31 – *“****An appalling and horrible thing*** *has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests ruleon their own authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?”*

Hermas (150 A.D.) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2 pg. 27 - *"These," said he, "are faithful, but he that sits on the chair is a false prophet who destroys the mind of the servants of God - I mean, of the doubtful-minded, not of the faithful. These doubtful-minded ones then come to him as to a soothsayer and enquire of him what shall befall them. And he, the false prophet, having no power of a divine Spirit in himself, speaks with them according to their enquiries [and according to the lusts of their wickedness], and fills their souls as they themselves wish.*

*For being empty himself he gives empty answers to empty enquirers; for whatever enquiry may be made of him, he answers according to the emptiness of the man. But he speaks also some true words; for the devil fills him with his own spirit, if so be he shall be able to break down some of the righteous…For he that consults a false prophet on any matter is an idolater and emptied of the truth, and senseless.”*

The Elijah List, considered by many as representing the vanguard of the modern-day prophetic movement advertises the following: *“Subscribe to The Elijah List Today and Receive Prophetic Words in Your Inbox Each Day.”* What a novel idea! Prophecy on demand! Prophetic words treated as a cheap commodity for sale, or like some product coming through a kind of vending machine, with God as the “Supreme Vendor.”

And, as an even more incriminating analogy, but possibly a more accurate one, soliciting so-called “prophetic words” through a kind of slot machine. Simply put in your coin and see what it spits out. And, if you don’t like the word you receive, just keep throwing your money into that money-hungry machine until you receive a “prophetic word” to your liking.

Furthermore, whether we recognize it or not, whether we outwardly admit it or not, we live in the age of “Silly Prophecy.” While Christians should be the most discerning of all people, we continually reaffirm to the world what it believes about the Church, anyway, that we must be the most gullible folks on the face of the planet. A church that cannot discern the difference between legitimately being a *“fool for Christ”* and simply being a fooled is headed for disaster. Prov. 14:15 says, *“The naive believes everything, but the sensible man considers his steps.”*

Col. 2:18 – *“Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind…”* The emphasis on visions and revelations and angels, and the ever-growing popular propaganda that revelation and experience now take precedent over Scripture has opened up a "Pandora's Box" to error, both in doctrine and practice. It is symptomatic of fruit which has been seriously tainted at the root. *"For if the root is holy, so also are the branches."*

Jer. 23:16 – ‘*Thus says the Lord of hosts,* *“Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; they speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord.”*

**Some Selected Titles of Recent Alleged Prophetic Words** (I won’t bother with the contents as you folks can use your imaginations just as well as these so-called prophetic voices can.):

“GOD ONLY KNOWS ONE WAY... TO DO ALL THINGS FOR YOU...REALLY GOOD!!”

“Five Prophetic Signs in the Super Bowl - This is the Start of the New Time of Breakthrough!”

“Fill Your Happy Tank!”

"America Shall be Free from the Accursed Thing"

‘[The Lord Says, "You've Declared It and I've Established It"](http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display_word.html?ID=14587)

["God is Singing Over the United States of America"](http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display_word.html?ID=14548)

“This is a Year of Double Doors!” Jesus said, *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.”*

“It’s Time to Dance,” along with the added comment, ‘Last night while I was at Church the Lord gave me a word that "There has been a time to STAND, now is the time for the VICTORY DANCE."

[‘Prophetic Word: "A New Thing! March 8 – April 8"](http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display_word.html?ID=14486) --- By the way, in case anyone missed it, that was to have occurred this year. We are at the end of August. Is it now, “The old thing”?

And, this one may have been the most unsettling of all: [“Saw an Army of Women!"](http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display_word.html?ID=14693)

And, somewhere, among the mindless mobs of the First Church of Fantasy Land, the impulsive “Amen’s,” the misguided “declarations of confirmation” and the presumptuous, “I receive that in the Name of the Lord’s,” is the faint sound of groanings, many even being too deep for words, by the true prophets of God. Prov. 20:25 – “*It is a trap for a man to say rashly, “It is holy!” and after the vows to make inquiry.”*

Charismatic buzzwords and terms, such as ‘decree,’ ‘alignment,’ ‘shift,’ ‘transition,’ ‘strategies,’ ‘taking your rightful authority,’ ‘claiming territories’ and ‘atmospheric changes,’ along with a host of many others, not unlike much of todays’ Biblical interpretations, have been abused and misused almost beyond recognition from their original intent and literal meaning. As one example, I’d like to consider the word, “decree,” which has been criminally misapplied in a spirit of acute presumption to suit our own human desires. We now have a variety of “Decree-themed” conferences that like to extract Job 22:28 out of context in order to justify pretext. We will get to this verse, momentarily.

For now, let me just say this, that individual snippets of verses are not birthed out of a vacuum, intended to be extrapolated and exploited for some personal gain or advantage. Isn’t this the exact same approach that Satan used to tempt Jesus in the wilderness? So let’s take a look at this particular word from a Biblical perspective, as if there were any other legitimate perspective, which is sadly, becoming an ever-increasing novel approach these days.

The most succinct Biblical definition I found was this: A decree represents the predetermined purpose of God; the purpose or determination of an immutable Being, whose plan of operations is, like, Himself, unchangeable. To be clear, a “declaration” is one thing, but a “decree” is quite something else. To “declare” is simply to make something known. But, to “decree” is to take upon oneself the judicial and executive authority, which can only come through a Sovereign, Almighty God.

**The Decree Prophetic Conference** – “The purpose of our conference is just that: it's to call forth that which is not as if it is for Southern California, as well as for the US and into the world. Job 22:28 says*, "You will decree a thing and it will be established for you; and light will shine on your ways."* As Believers, it is our mandate to see the heart of God, and then to decree His justice and His goodness on a hurting, dying world. Come out and discover God's purposes for your life, and begin to step into your God-given destiny of calling forth the prophetic promises into the earth for this time and day.”

“**I**, decree!” **I**, decree!?!” Folks! This is classic New Age doctrine! This is more than just a matter of semantics and of exercising one’s faith. This is *“a doctrine of* *demons”*! And, not only *“of demons”*, but of the chief demon, himself! Is.14:13-14 - *“But you said in your heart, ‘****I****will ascend to heaven;****I****will raise my throne above the stars of God, and****I****will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. ‘****I****will ascend above the heights of the clouds;* ***I****will make myself like the Most High*. It would serve us well to keep in mind the question posed in the Psalms, *“What is man?”*

Jude 8-13 *–* **“***Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.”* It brings to mind that well-known saying: *“Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.”*

Oh, and by the way, running concurrently with our humble, little conference, is another conference sponsored by Morningstar Ministries, entitled, **Wild Love Worship Conference.** Enough said…

The following is the personal profile of one of the main “prophetic voices” aligned with The Elijah List, taken from the promo of the Canadian Elijah List Conference:

**“Doug Addison** is a prophetic dream interpreter, speaker, writer, Life Coach, and stand-up comedian. His high energy prophetic messages have been shared on television, radio and the internet for over a decade. Doug brings laughter, fun and a unique prophetic style while empowering people to transform their lives, discover their destiny and understand their dreams, tattoos and piercings. Doug’s positive messages stay with his audiences long after hearing him.” By the way, he offers an online course in Tattoo and Piercing Interpretation for $79.

Spurgeon had this to say back in the 19th Century: *"A time will come when instead of shepherds feeding the sheep, the church will have clowns entertaining the goats."* Now, that, is a true prophetic word! In discerning anyone or anything, particularly purported to represent the Lord and His Kingdom, it's not the black and white that presents the primary challenge. It is far more subtle and insidious than that. It is always the mixture which promulgates confusion, error, and deception.

It is the mixture *of "soul and spirit"* which *"leavens the whole lump."* Along these same lines, I’d like to quote Spurgeon, once again, where he said this: *"Discernment is not a matter of simply telling the difference between right and wrong; rather, it is telling the difference between right and almost right."* Listen closely to the subtleties of this so-called prophetic word and the influence it could have on some people’s eschatological perspective:

**Chuck Pierce: A Black Dragon Is Attacking Israel And Only We Can Stop It** (published in Charisma Magazine, 12/1/14) “*When we were flying into Tel Aviv earlier this month, I saw an unusual sunset. The sun, though setting, looked like it was rising from the ground. Above the glory realm hovering on the ground was sky. In the sky was a perfectly formed black dragon! The message the Lord had me to deliver in Jerusalem was: “The dragon is hovering over Israel. There is a birth that is near and the enemy wants to stop what God is birthing. There will be much conflict in the next several months but you can stop the dragon from having his way.”  I went on to speak from Revelation 12. I called Rick Ridings, the leader of the 24 Hour House of Prayer in Jerusalem.*

*Rick had already planned to share an earlier vision of a great fire-breathing dragon circling the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.   He shared that when flames came from its mouth, violence was released onto the Mount (which has been the scene of increasing turmoil over the past several months).  Amazing! We must stand and turn the enemy from Israel. In the vision, Rick was made to be aware that the dragon’s real intentions were to ignite a much larger and more far-reaching conflagration of violence. Suddenly, he saw two words in the heavens, “NOT NOW!” His message was: “I saw a dragon on the Temple Mount, but God said, ‘NOT NOW!’” A great foot descended from Heaven, pinning the dragon to the ground.  Then the Lord reached down, placed shackles on the dragon’s feet, and imprisoned it in the underground mosque at the southeast corner of the Temple Mount.*

*As this was happening, in the worship room where Rick was having the vision (which has a view of the Mount), the leader was singing from Psalm 149 about the high praise of God’s people “putting kings in chains and nobles in shackles.”  In the days following this, conflict continued and many in the media were predicting an impending huge eruption of violence and the start of a new intifada (“uprising”).  In a second vision on November 4, Rick had a vision of the imprisoned dragon shrieking and attempting to break out of its dungeon in which it was imprisoned—demon spirits were going forth from its mouth out of the confines of the prison to incite terror.  Rick felt the Lord say we were to ask Him, as the Judge of the Universe, to give a “gag and restraining order” to silence the dragon for this time period.*

**HEAVEN IS LAUGHING AT THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS** by Kat Kerr - Note: Kat Kerr has had many visits to Heaven.  She speaks from that perspective - Steve Shultz, Founder of THE ELIJAH LIST:

*Heaven is laughing at the kingdom of darkness racing in terror to grasp what they can in the little time they have left!! The Kingdom of Light IS rising up against the kingdom of darkness, even if you are unaware of it. The manifested sons and daughters are being positioned even now to begin to execute the government of God on this earth.* *ARE YOU CONNECTED or are you still helping the enemy? Every word you speak is heard and noted by both sides and your words give permission for either side to respond. Why are you not laughing at the enemy's plans and weak attempts to take over?? Get OUT of the flesh and Get INTO THE SPIRIT!!!*

*Your Weapons of Warfare are NOT Carnal, Fleshly, but Supernatural, Spiritual, MIGHTY to the pulling down of Spiritual Strongholds of Darkness.* *One of our weapons IS the Hosts of Heaven also known as Heaven's Army! What you rule in the Spirit it WILL manifest in the natural realm and change things. So long as you are living in and speaking and advertising hell's plans which bring fear and hopelessness, you will continue to hold back Heaven's armies on your own behalf and you will only want to escape!”*

This is the concluding paragraph of a prophetic word concerning the Jews by **Kim Clement***,* considered by many in Charismatic circles to be one of the most accurate prophets in our day: *‘God said,****"Would they go through a holocaust again? No! It shall never happen again,*** *for," God said, "once is enough.****Now they have returned to My land, and because they've returned to My land, I shall rule from Jerusalem and I shall rule from Israel****," says the Lord.”*

I believe that both of Paul’s letters to the Church at Corinth could have just as easily been written today where he had a great deal to say concerning false ministers of Christ. One snippet taken from his second letter, II Cor. 11:19-20, reads like this: “*For you, being so wise, tolerate the foolish gladly. For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you; anyone devours you, anyone takes advantage of you, anyone exalts himself, anyone hits you in the face.”* It may sound like hyperbole, but it has proved to be prophetic. Welcome to Todd Bentley’s world!

And, the Prophet Jeremiah’s word of warning to those who listen and support such individuals and ministries is just as pertinent today, and even more so, than it was in his day*:* Jer. 27:9-10 *-****“****But as for you, do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your soothsayers or your sorcerers who speak to you, saying, ‘You will not serve the king of Babylon.’ For they prophesy a lie to you in order to remove you far from your land; and I will drive you out and you will perish.”*

The letter written by the Apostle Jude doesn’t merely address this issue, but attacks it, head on, in as strong a language as you will find anywhere in Scripture. Jude 11-13 *- “Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.  These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.”*

Now, there is a tendency to blow right by this unique passage without giving sufficient thought to the series of terms used and their meanings. It may well be that some of us may be quite surprised as to how much profitable information is contained in these few lines. So, let’s take a few moments to do just that.

**The Way of Cain** – He wanted to serve God on his own terms and when God refused to play along, he became angry---angry at the wrong person for the wrong reason. It was an anger that ultimately far exceeded his first sin. It was an anger that he allowed to fester, having allowed it to turn into a *“root of bitterness,* It was as James wrote, a “*bitter jealousy that will lead to disorder… and every evil thing*,” including, murder, as was in this case.

**The Way of Balaam -** Peter warned against *“the way of Balaam,”* Jude against *“the error of Balaam”* and John against “the doctrine of Balaam.” God evidently considers these warnings necessary and appropriate for Christians, even today. Yet Balaam, in his day, was a genuine prophet who possessed great knowledge concerning God, and even received direct revelations from God. What, therefore, were his way, his error, and his doctrine?

*“The way of Balaam”* was a readiness to prostitute his high spiritual gifts and privileges for *“The wages of unrighteousness”* being willing to preach something contrary to God’s Word for personal gain. *“The error of Balaam”* was evidently his willingness to compromise his own standards of morality and truth in order to accommodate those of his pagan patrons.

Finally, *“the doctrine of Balaam,”* which even in John’s day was already infiltrating the Church, was to use his own teaching authority to persuade God’s people that it was all right for them also to compromise these standards, even *“to commit fornication”* with their idol-worshipping enemies.

**Rebellion of Korah** – Again, we see a different kind of jealousy, or more accurately defined, as “envy.” Korah envied the authority and influence among the multitudes and he wanted it for himself. He wanted a following, authority and power over others, not for the purpose of serving the people, but so he might be served by them. And, he was determined to get it, one way or the other, regardless of Moses’s authority, and even God’s, so warped was the deceitfulness of sin within Korah’s heart.

As we know, this episode did not end well for either, Korah, or for those who followed him in his rebellion. The instigator, his lieutenants, who assisted the leader in his dirty work, along with those who followed him, meaning, those who supported Korah in his rebellion, in reality, became accomplices and so were not immune to the judgment that came upon them by the Hand of God.

How similar this is to what Hitler instigated as leader of what became the Third Reich, with his Nazi lieutenants to assist and carry out his policies, which could not have ultimately been pulled off without the support and acquiescence of the majority of the German People, many of whom were well-educated professionals. It is not surprising then, that much of the Church has failed for one reason or another (and none of them good) to hold these individuals accountable. In other words, it continues because the Church allows it to continue. These things ought not to be.

Its result is the prophetic word made cheap, along with cultivating a breeding ground for confusion, error and deception leading to deadly consequences. True prophets, with the integrity befitting men of God, will welcome spiritual examination of their words, and their life. Moreover, they should be at the forefront of teaching and encouraging such discernment. It is God's reputation and interests that should consume them, and not their own. If they shy away from such accountability, it is a sure sign that it is they who “need to get right with God.”

No doubt, there are genuine prophets in our day, but Scripture instructs us to test them as to their authenticity, even if they should present themselves as *"an angel from heaven."* If the Church was more diligent in following this mandate, the ranks of so-called “prophets” would be significantly thinned out, and no wonder. Those who are called and gifted to a prophetic ministry, and especially those who are genuine prophets, are not as some would suppose, a type of Christian mystic. And, they don't have to prerequisite their supposed ‘words' with, *"Thus sayeth the Lord."* It is for the people to determine if it is truly the Lord who is speaking as I Cor. 14 instructs us.

Is. 30:9-11 – “*For this is a rebellious people, false sons, sons who refuse to listen to the instruction of the Lord;* *who say to the seers, “You must not see visions”; and to the
prophets, “You must not prophesy to us what is right, speak to us pleasant words, prophesy illusions. Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.”* In other words, “Get with the program!” or “Get out!”

History reveals over and over again that it is that notion that has consistently led us down the road towards its illogical and lethal conclusions. As Jesus said, *“They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.”* This persecution will not be confined to the synagogue, only. The paraphrased prophetic word, “*These are the wounds which I received in the house of my friends,”* in the future, will have been inflicted by men and in places we may not have previously suspected.

So, don’t be surprised to see the so-called New Apostolic Reformation folks have their own little part to play in this as well. Because, the true prophet of God also serves as a conscience to the Body of Christ, you will see a similar venom coming from these NAR false apostles, prophets and teachers, along with their followers, *“thinking they* (too) *are doing God a service.”* They will “*gnash their teeth, cry out with a loud voice, cover their ears and rush at him with one impulse.”* ***Impulse!***Without forethought. Without discernment. Without examination. Or, as Jude wrote, *“Like unreasoning animals reacting purely by instinct.”*

Until fairly recently, error was chiefly the result *of "twisting the Scripture unto their own destruction."* The doctrinal problem was considered to be, essentially, "unbiblical." But, today, much of the doctrinal malady in the Church, particularly among the Charismatic wing, is what I would refer to as, essentially, "extra-biblical." At one time, like so many of us, I used to quip, “They sure don’t read the same Bible I do!” until it finally dawned on me, the sobering and disconcerting reality, that these people, do, in fact, read the same Bible I do!” Even the human logic of man, if left to himself, will generally come up with a common thread of interpretation. It is all the more reason to be convinced that there is something far more subtle, insidious and deceptive at work in the spiritual realm.

“*But a natural man* (*or, a naturally minded man*) *does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”* And so, this becomes the Achilles Heel to Godly spiritual reception and interpretation.Folks! This just isn’t referring to non-believers, which is why we have such a glut of false prophets and prophetic words and false teachers and false teachings. Spiritual warfare indeed exists, but much of it these days is misdirected, applying a human mindset of warfare, of the taking of territories, of glory-seeking, of presuming upon power and of doing great exploits for God (and for themselves). It is all too often, Christless and Crossless, and therefore, devoid of the very power of which they boast.

Despite all of the spiritual semantics and gymnastics, the rebuking and the shouting and the foot stomping, apart from obedience to Christ and the Cross as our primary weapon of warfare, we are no better than the Gentiles, *“who think they will be heard for their many words.”* We may even unwittingly place ourselves in the same presumptuous position as did the *“seven sons of Sceva,”* and reap the consequences of their folly. It's important to keep in mind that within the New Testament context, the ultimate responsibility of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers is to *"equip the saints for the work of service*.” A true prophet prays for an increase in apostles and teachers, and true apostles and teachers pray for an increase in prophetic men as a joint complementation, and for the equipping of a corporate prophetic people.

Is. 21:11-12 – “*Watchman, how far gone is the night? Watchman, how far gone is the night?” The watchman says, “Morning comes but also night. If you would inquire, inquire; Come back again.”* The individual calling out to the watchman isn’t simply asking for the time, to which, the normal response would be to simply provide what was asked for --- the time. While the false prophet, in order to please the people, declares only that, *“Morning comes,”* the true prophet of God is entrusted and compelled to declare, *“Morning comes, but also, night.”*

Furthermore, the true watchman-prophet, who is both, a seer and a guide, is looking at the “Big Picture,” by encouraging the individual to make further inquiry concerning the *“times*” in light of that“Big Picture,”which centuries later,Paul would refer to in terms of, *“the whole counsel of God,” “the eternal purpose”, “the mystery of Christ”, “the mystery of the Church”,* and *“the mystery of Israel.”*

Just as the man calls out to the watchman, *“How far gone is the night”,* the chief concern of a typical “prophecy conference” essentially focuses on the question, “What time is it?” This is the domain of a prophecy teacher, but not necessarily that of a prophet. In contrast, as the sons of Issachar,they are men *“who* (not only) *understand the times,* (but also possess the) *knowledge of what Israel should do…”*

They not only know what time it is, but understood the times in light of the Big Picture, and from such a prophetic standpoint, know what needs to be done, not only in terms of the present, which focuses on recovery and restoration, but how it relates to the future fulfillment of the purposes of God. He has come to the place where his popularity and how his message is received are no longer of concern to him. You see, He has come to the place of spiritual maturity where he both recognizes and accepts the fact that this is not about him.

Jer. 15:19 *– “And if you extract the precious from the worthless, you will become My spokesman.”* He is discerning in all respects. As was with the Tribe of Issachar, he not only can discern the times as a watchman, but knows what needs to be done in view of the overriding function of the prophet. He brings clarity to a situation. He is able to discern between soul and spirit, the false and artificial from the true and authentic.

However, he, himself, does not look upon this as something “cool”, something to glory in, gaining the sort of attention his ego seeks after, or a justification for maintaining a kind of “martyr complex.” But, the true prophet accepts it as part of his calling. “It just comes with the territory.” And yet, it is incumbent upon him to continue to pay close attention to himself and to his messages.

He knows how the Body of Christ is supposed to function, can recognize when it is functioning properly and when it isn’t. He is able to identify the problem and knows what needs to be done to correct it. He is not only able to identify gifts and callings of individuals within the Church, but is well aware that it is part of his God-given responsibility to do so, especially, as it pertains to the prophetic calling. In such cases, he will assume personal responsibility for that individual’s discipleship or entrust him to someone else’s care with whom he is familiar and confident, mature in their character and well-experienced in their calling.

If he is to suffer because of the messages God has given him to deliver, it is imperative that he be certain that the persecution he receives is not the result of being false, in message or personal life. You can suffer for doing wrong just as you can suffer for doing right.

There are times when he can be so overwhelmed with grief over the spiritual condition of the household of God, that it literally pains him in spirit, soul and body. Contrary to some of the doctrinal political correctness being taught in recent years, the true prophet of God has a propensity for times of such deep depression that he may even desire for the Lord to take his own life as the Prophets Elijah and Jonah did.

Even the apostle Paul freely admitted the following in his second letter to the Corinthian Church: “*For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life.”* And so, maybe you will forgive such men if they seem to find it difficult to utter the last few words of that old hymn, *“and now I am happy all the day.”*

But, in Jeremiah’s case, he not only suffers from deep depression, but, even worse, he is acutely bipolar –Jer. 20:7-18 (v. 7-10 he is in the depths of despair, v. 11-13 he regains his Godly perspective, v. 14-18 he immediately falls back into even deeper depths of despair). While we usually think of the prophet entering a type of death in delivering a hard word from the Lord, there is another type of death, not often considered as it pertains to a true prophet, and that is when he is taken out of the fight. It is during such times that his feelings of despair and failure are most acute, leading to such depths of depression that he wishes that his very life was taken away. We see multiple examples of this in Scripture.

Now, a word of caution, if you ever encounter a man known to be a true prophet of God and you happen to find him in such a state, the last thing you ever want to say to him is, “Brother! You shouldn’t feel that way!” But, I forewarn you that you do so at your own peril! You are likely to obtain for yourself a glare of such intensity that it will seem to burn a hole right through you, the smoldering of which, may remain as a more gentle reminder for quite some time.

But, I have my doubts that another mature, true prophet of God would, himself, pose such a question. On the contrary, it is more likely that he would say something along the lines of, “Brother! I know just how you feel!” But, unlike some others, the true prophet is likely to get away with it, because he has earned a credibility that relatively few possess. He can honestly say, “I, too, have known such times, having “*walked through the valley of the shadow of death.”*

And, he is likely to follow that up with, “Please, allow me to bear this burden with you, and let us walk through this time of darkness, together, until the Lord, once again, becomes *“a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path.”* “For there may come another time, when I, myself, will be in need of a kindred spirit to share my burden with, to help get me through my own *“dark night of the soul.”*

A Bible teacher named John Stevenson tells the following brief story: *“A little girl had been sent to bed for the night.  She called out to her mother from the bedroom, “Mommy, I’m afraid to be alone in my room!”  Her mother replied, “It’s okay, honey. The Lord is in your room with you.”  Came back the plaintive call, “But I want someone with skin on.” There are times when we need someone “with skin on.”  That is why Jesus came.  He was God “with skin on.”*

And, as *“Judgment must first begin with the household of God,”* so too, must it begin within the true prophet of God, until the man and the message have been fused together as one --- the message, not merely having become a significant part of his life, but rather, having become his life. For just as Jesus was “*the Word become flesh,”* conversely, the true prophet of God is the flesh become word, *“known and read by all men.”*

In closing, there is an old rabbinic tale taken from another Elie Wiesel novel, entitled, Witness, that causes me to wonder, if perhaps, the thought might have crossed Jeremiah’s mind towards the end of his life and ministry? It goes like this:

*“One day a Tzadik* (righteous man) *came to Sodom; He knew what Sodom was, so he came to save it from sin, from destruction. He preached to the people. "Please do not be murderers, do not be thieves. Do not be silent and do not be indifferent." He went on preaching day after day, maybe even picketing. But no one listened. He was not discouraged. He went on preaching for years. Finally someone asked him, "Rabbi, why do you do that? Don't you see it is no use?" He said, "I know it is of no use, but I must. And I will tell you why: in the beginning I thought I had to protest and to shout in order to change* ***them****. I have given up this hope. Now I know I must picket and scream and shout so that* ***they should not change me.****”*

Fred London