

03/10/21

The Writing and Non-Writing Prophets by Ben M **Hebrews chapter 1**

1. Prophets Wrote the Scriptures: Not all prophets wrote books but they all preached. "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The son is the radiance of God's glory." (Hebrews 1:1) In all the massive variety of ways, eras, personalities and circumstances the thing that unifies the prophecies over the centuries is that it is God who is speaking. Irrespective of the imperfections of a prophet like Jonah or the perfections of Christ, it is God who is speaking. Jesus didn't come to set aside the prophets of the distant past or to annul the law, he came to fulfil it. He held the words of the prophets in high esteem as the very word of God. Red-letter Christianity says 'the Bible is a big old book so I will concentrate on the important bits.' They discard the Old Testament and write the words of Jesus in red relegating the rest of the New Testament to a lower quality. But the whole Bible is the word of God. It has come about by the writings of the prophets. It's fair to say that the prophets who wrote are more prominent in our thinking than those who didn't. We get to know the writers first hand. We learn about the others second hand from those who wrote about them. But whichever way it comes to us, it is the word of God. God said, 'I will put my words in your mouth.' The first time God told a prophet (Moses) to write down what he said was after the battle of Rephidim, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it," (Exodus 17:14) Spoken or written it is still the word of God. Soon afterwards, the Ten Commandments were written 'by the finger of God'. God brought his word to us in written form through giants like Solomon, Jerimiah and Paul so that everyone everywhere can pick up the Bible and read the word of God. You can hear God speaking to you.

Prophets Spoke of Christ: Having said all of that, more important than all of their writing is their speaking. Before they were writers, they were preachers. 'I will put my words in their pens? No! in their mouths.' They brought the word of God in carnational form to Kings and despots, to people good and bad. They were living and speaking it out. Not all wrote but all spoke. These gutsy people, strengthened by God, looked the world in the eye and told them the truth. Jesus spoke of the blood of Able who brought the word of God to his brother Cain and stirred him up to such an extent that Cain killed him. When King Josiah cleaned up the temple they found the book of the law. They dusted it off and took it to the prophetess Huldah to enquire of the Lord. (2 Kings 22:14) She taught them the word of the Lord (v15-20) and they wept and humbled ourselves. Elijah never wrote a word but he shook the nations. He stood against hostile people baying of his blood. Jeramiah tells us how he and Elisha turned the nations upside down. They spoke the word and the word did its work to the glory of God.

There is a number of apostles who never wrote a book. Bartholomew spoke the word of God but it seems he never wrote it down. John the Baptist, the greatest of all the prophets, who was patterned on Elijah never wrote but he spoke to the nation and to kings. James was not an apostle, he was the first pastor of the first church in Jerusalem. He spoke and wrote the word of God because he was a prophet. The king of preachers, the chief of prophets never wrote a word. The Lord Jesus did not put a single word of scripture into written form. In some ways Elijah and

John the Baptist are so important because as non-writing prophets they act as a pattern for the Messiah in the way that the writing prophets are not. More than anything the Messiah, our King, Priest and Prophet comes as one who is coming to speak. Everything he says will come to pass. He speaks truth. Signs and wonders will confirm his words. You better believe Jesus. Jesus explained on the Emmaus Road what the prophets wrote about him: Jesus. The prophets wrote about the one who would bring the word of God and be the word of God. If you receive the word of God you will receive 'The Word of God'. You will receive Christ.

"I would that all God's people should prophesy": I am trying to deepen your appreciation of preaching that is Bible-centred and Christ-centred: the word of God. Some of the Bible is plain, easily understood. The preacher reminds us of the simple truths of the gospel. Some parts are less easily understood. The preacher helps us to compare scripture with scripture so that we can see Christ in all the scriptures. The scriptures are one message one voice speaking one clear thing to us. The Ethiopian Eunuch needed Philip to preach the gospel to him. Through Philip he learned from Isaiah how Christ set him free from the punishment for his sin by his death on the cross. We declare the message of God, the word of Christ, Paul charged Timothy to "Preach the word". Prophets wrote the scriptures; they wrote of Christ; they preached the word.

In Numbers 11 Moses and seventy elders were summoned up the mountain of God. As they approached the mountain they all began to prophesy. Two of the elders were still back in their tents. At the moment the Holy Spirit fell on the sixty-eight the other two also began to prophesy. Joshua asked Moses if they should stop them from prophesying. Moses replied, "I would that all God's people should prophesy." He said not just the preachers and prophets and evangelists but 'all God's people.' Moses would that God should put his word in your mouth and that you would speak the word of the living God.

Salvation belongs to our God
Who sits upon the throne
And unto the Lamb
Praise and glory, wisdom and thanks
Honour and power and strength
Be to our God, forever and ever
Be to our God, forever and ever
Be to our God, forever and ever
Amen

And we the redeemed shall be strong
In purpose and unity
Declaring aloud
Praise and glory, wisdom and thanks
Honour and power and strength
Be to our God, forever and ever
Be to our God, forever and ever
Be to our God, forever and ever
Amen