

Despising God's Message and Messengers

In the Bible, a "prophet" is a *messenger* that *speaks for God*. We tend to think of them as predicting the future. While many did so, others relayed God's message regarding the *past* or *present*. For example, in Stephen's sermon to the Council and High Priest, he spent most of his time reviewing Israel's *past*, cf. Acts 7:2-50, and the rest of it making a then *present* application, vv.51-53. He was surely a *prophet/messenger of God* (Acts 6:8), but he didn't really *predict* or *prophecy* anything regarding the future.

Thus, the defining characteristic of a *prophet* or *messenger* was not the *time relevance/aspect* of the message, but the *source*. Biblical *prophets/messengers* delivered messages from God! In this regard, they weren't necessarily either *godly* (Balaam, Numbers 22:2-22) or even *human* (Balaam's donkey, Numbers 22:23-35). It wasn't about the *messenger*, but the *Source* and *message*! Note 2Peter 1:20-21 on this point, "*But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*" In fact, some of God's messengers didn't even really understand the message they delivered, cf. John 11:49-53 and 1Peter 1:10-12.

We don't have the same kind of *directly* and *divinely-inspired* prophets today. We live in the time when such "*partial*" revelations have been "*done away*" and "*ceased*," having been replaced with the "*full*" and "*perfect*" (*complete*) *revelation* of the Word, cf. 1Corinthians 13:8-13. But we do still have *messengers* of God. Anyone that accurately quotes, teaches, preaches, or even demonstrates God's word through godly living serves as His messenger! Now that we better understand the importance of the message and role of the messenger, let's shift our attention to the *recipients*.

Just before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, 2Chronicles 36 records how Pharaoh Neco of Egypt and king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon were exercising control over the throne of Judah (cf. vv.1-10). Why were foreign powers allowed such control over Israel? Note carefully v.12 regarding Zedekiah, Judah's last pre-exilic king, "*he did evil in the sight of the Lord his God; he did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet who spoke for the Lord.*" And it wasn't just the king who rebuffed God's message either! Vv.15-16 record the reaction of *the people*, "*And the Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of God arose against His people, until there was no remedy.*" What a sad commentary! God *repeatedly* sent *messengers* and *prophets* with rebukes, warnings, and pleas of repentance, but they "*mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets... until there was no remedy.*" The result was that God "*brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand,*" v.17. What a terrible tragedy!

But before our incredulity toward Judah rises too high, are we likewise *mocking God's messengers, despising His words* and *scoffing at His prophets* today? Nationally as a people? Collectively as the church? Individually as "you" and "me"? Are we giving more earnest heed to "science" than God and His word regarding where we came from and why we are here? Are we putting our trust and placing our hope in political leaders and parties for our nation (or in the financial prosperity/security we hope they will safeguard for us) more than Him? Are we looking to sociological and psychological "experts" for answers and *despising God's message* regarding issues of life and society such as sex, gender, abortion, marriage, parenting, and how to live in peace with one another? Are we looking to and adopting the idolatrous practices of those around us

and calling it “worship” and “serving the Lord” thereby “*scoffing at His messengers*” who plead for Book, Chapter, and Verse authority for faith and practice? Remember the tragic lessons of Judah: God’s *compassion* can be exhausted and replaced with *wrath*; and, repeated rejection of God’s message leaves *no remedy*.

So please: read and study God’s word rather than *despising His message* for YOU! Get up and go to services where it is fully and accurately taught and proclaimed rather than *scoffing at God’s prophets*. Make friends of God’s children and spend time with them, watching and learning from their godly examples, and then emulate their faithfulness rather than *mocking His messengers*. Don’t allow the tragic history of Judah from 2Chronicles 36 to repeat in, through, or for you/yours! Heed the *message* before God’s *compassion* is exhausted and there remains *no remedy!* (Philip C. Strong;

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