



# Preaching The Prophets

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## CONTENTS

- 1 *The Prophet* – 3
- 2 *The Test Of A Prophet* – 6
- 3 *Prophecy & Prediction* – 12
- 4 *The Major & Minor Prophets* – 15
- 5 *The Message Of The Prophets* – 16
- 6 *Preaching From The Prophets* – 17

For the sake of the present and future existence of our faith, Paul made one statement that should move us to search our Bibles and teach it to the world. He wrote, *“Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come”* (1 Co 10:11). We know that Jesus nailed to the cross the Sinai law that God had given to Israel. This is a common fact that must be understood in order to understand the Bible.

But in nailing the Sinai law to the cross, Jesus did not assume that we should discard Old Testament history and wisdom. God raised up preachers (prophets) in the days of Israel’s rebellion. From the Holy Spirit–recorded documents of these preachers, we have a historical account of things that happened to God’s people from the beginning of time. From these people to whom the prophets spoke, God expects us to learn in order that we do not follow any example of their rebellion, but follow after those who remained faithful. Paul wrote to Christians in Rome, *“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning”* (Rm 15:4). Those things that happened during the time of the Old Testament prophets are often so strikingly similar to things we experience today. They are so similar that we are

compelled as God's people to continually cry out for repentance. We not only cry out personally, but we also feel compelled to cry out to a generation today that seems to be bent on the repetition of history.

So we caution ourselves not to repeat the sins of the fathers. We see so many similarities between then and now that we should be on our knees in repentance in order to restore our souls to the Father who is bringing all things to a conclusion. Therefore, in order to keep ourselves in a spirit of restoration, we seek to listen to the dead preachers of the past who continue to live today through the record of their inspired documents.

It was the task of God's prophets in the Old Testament to keep Israel pointed in the direction of God's purpose for the existence of Israel. In times of rebellion and apostasy, it was especially significant that the prophets deliver a clear and distinct message of repentance and judgment to a people who seemed to be determined to go in their own direction, a direction of rebellion against the will of God.

Though the prophets ministered the word of God throughout the history of Israel, the "writing prophets" ministered primarily after the dividing of the twelve tribes into two nations. In this division into two kingdoms, the ten tribes of the north were commonly referred to as **Israel** (the northern kingdom). The southern two tribes were referred to as **Judah** (the southern kingdom). Their messages to both Israel and Judah are as relevant today as when they were spoken over 2,500 years ago. So the mission of the prophets then and now was the following:

*Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah by the prophets and by all the seers, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law that I commanded your fathers [at Mount Sinai], and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets (2 Kg 17:13).*

## Chapter 1

### THE PROPHET OF GOD

The term “prophet” is probably one of the most confused terms used by modern-day religionists. When the term is used today, most people believe that reference is made to someone who can tell us something that is going to happen in the future. And then there are those prophets today who presume to prophesy the end of the world. These religious charlatans come and go without their predictions of the end being fulfilled. Nevertheless, fickle people simply wait for the next prognosticator to step forward in order to tickled ears with “end-of-time” predictions (See 2 Tm 4:3). And thus, the religious world today is *“tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men in cleverness to the deceitfulness of error”* (Ep 4:14).

The presumptuous prophets of today find their validation in a misunderstanding of the ministry of the writing prophets of the Old Testament. When most people hear the word “prophet,” they think of one who is foretelling the future. This was certainly true with some of the prophets whose writings are part of the Old Testament. However, this was only a small part of their ministry as a prophet.

In the Old Testament, the word “prophet” meant “a spokesman for God.” And as God’s spokesman, it was the work of the prophet to do what God intended him to do, as is explained in the preceding statement of 2 Kings 17:13.

Prophets were to go among God’s people in order to teach the commandments and statutes of the law that God revealed to His people, Israel, on Mount Sinai and which were delivered through Moses. The ministry of the prophets was in preaching and teaching. In reference to their call for repentance in the times of Israel’s apostasy from the commandments of God, **they proclaimed the future captivity of the people if they did not turn from the error of their ways.** This was not a new message. The prophets

simply stated what God knew Israel would eventually do, and thus, recorded the warning of their captivity in the Old Testament law when it was initially given (See Dt 31:14-21).

During the days of Saul and David, there was a “company” of prophets who ministered the word of God to the people (See 1 Sm 19:20; see 1 Kg 20:41; 2 Kg 2:3). It was the work of the “sons of the prophets” to go among the people in order to teach, exhort and admonish. **It was not their primary work to foretell the future.** They spoke of destruction in the future only if the people moved away from the law of God (See Dt 31:14-21).

Because many today have determined that their ministry as a prophet is taken from the example of a few Old Testament prophets who wrote of future events, they conclude that the primary ministry of the prophet is to speak of future events. But this is a twisted understanding of the ministry of the Old Testament prophets. Though God gave “short term” prophecies to be fulfilled in order to confirm a prophet, the prophet’s ministry was not in foretelling the future. It was in preaching the word of God to the people in order to encourage repentance.

Those who did not know the Sinai law were not, and could not, be prophets of God. The same would be true today. Anyone who would presume to be a prophet/preacher today, but does not read and study his Bible, cannot be a prophet/preacher. If he presumes to be such, then he is speaking ignorantly to the people. Too many churches today are composed of those who do not know the Bible, but are only good speakers who hold the attention of the people.

**Almost all the prophets who moved among the people of God throughout the history of Israel never wrote one inspired piece of Old Testament literature.** Throughout the history of Israel, there were hundreds of prophets. We have only a few whose prophecies of future things in the history of Israel were recorded. These written prophecies are a part of our Bible. But we should never think that

this was the extent of the prophet's work in order to keep the people of God directed to the Messiah who was to come. Therefore, when considering the recorded prophets of the Old Testament, we must not conclude that what is stated in the writings of the recorded prophets was the primary message of the prophets. If we do this, then we will have a distorted view of the ministry of the prophets (preachers) as they worked among the people of God throughout the history of Israel.

It is interesting to note that most of the prophets were products of rural Palestine. When the twelve tribes entered the land around 1,400 B.C., every tribe was allotted a portion of land that they were to put into production for the livelihood of their families. God intended that Israel be a rural-farming society in which every person was to live off the land from the fruits of his own labors. The Levites were given the villages that existed at the time the Israelites entered the land. The farmer/herdsman supported the Levites in their allotted villages. The rural economy of Israel did well for over 500 hundred years after the Israelites first settled in the land.

God called many of His prophets from their farms. He knew that the farmers and herdsman had remained close to Him in nature, and thus, the farmer/herdsman had the spiritual heart of where He wanted the people to be in their relationship with Him. The solitude of the farm culture produced a person whose focus was more on spiritual things, than the social-material overload of the city. And as this author has experienced, there is a connection with God through nature that is unique in farm life, and not available in the concrete jungles of urban centers. Urban centers produce a social and material overload that distracts from the simple life of the farm.

The farmer/herdsman's connection with the Creator is not something that can be produced as effectively in a complex social/business urban environment wherein inhabitants are struggling to survive. We feel that the unique rural personality that was developed

in the solitude of nature was more suitable for God's use in representing Him before a people who had disconnected with Him. We affirm, therefore, that most of the prophets originated from the rural areas of Palestine. They were men and women who could write material as Psalm 23. These were words that could only come from a herdsman prophet, and thus, explain the relationship that God intends for each of us to have with Him.

## Chapter 2

### THE TEST OF A TRUE PROPHET

God knew that there would always be those who would rise up among His people and presume to be prophets for the people. Since the people would have a difficult time separating the false prophets from the true prophets, He gave two tests that would determine if one were a true prophet of God, or simply some self-proclaimed religionist who wanted to be someone special among the people. Since there are always too many of those who have too much pomp and pride, and thus, want to proclaim themselves to be a prophet of God, the people of God must always resort to these tests by which they can determine if a self-proclaimed prophet is a fraud, or truly one who is sent from God. If people today would simply use these two tests of a prophet, then there would be few problems in sorting out the assortment of self-proclaimed prophets who stand up today and assume that they are speaking for God:

#### A. True Prophecies Come To Pass

As we read through the following test by which a prophet was to be judged a true prophet, we must consider all those modern-day, self-proclaimed prophets whose prophecies of future events never came to pass. According to the following test of a prophet, they would be judged false prophets:

*But the prophet who will presume to speak a word in My name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who will speak in the name of other gods, **even that prophet will die.** And if you say in your heart, “How will we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?” When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, **if the thing does not follow or come to pass, that is the thing that the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously.** You will not be afraid of him (Dt 18:20-22).*

The preceding was written by Moses **before** Israel went in to possess the land of promise. Before any prophets were raised up among them, they were given this test of a prophet. Many years later, after Israel had listened to hundreds of presumptuous false prophets, who eventually led them into captivity, God again reminded the people that the fulfillment of prophecy was the real test of a true prophet:

*“**The prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet will come to pass, then will the prophet be known that the Lord has truly sent him**” (Jr 28:9).*

The historical context of this statement occurred when the false prophet Hananiah said there would be peace in the land. However, Jeremiah was saying that the Babylonians were about to conquer the city of Jerusalem. The people had listened to the false prophets for so long that it was too late to repent and escape the impending termination of the theocracy of Israel in the land of Palestine. Because they listened to the false prophets, they would never again reside as an independent theocratic nation in the land of promise. They would not because they listened to self-proclaimed prophets who spoke well of their rebellious behavior and beliefs.

We believe the same religious environment exists today among those who are obsessed with prophecies upon which to base their faith. There are too many self-proclaimed prophets today who presumptuously speak of future events. And because the people are so fascinated with these predictions, they will not, as the Israelites, turn away from the exciting stories

about end-of-time predictions. When our faith is based more on what could happen in the future than what happened in the past on the cross, then we will go from one prophet to another in search of some validation for our faith.

The test to determine a true prophet is so simple. Regardless of the simplicity of the test, however, the test is ignored in the religious world today as it was ignored among the apostate Israelites during the latter years of Israel. The true prophets of God were given short-term knowledge of future events in order that they be validated as true prophets of God. But this opportunity was not given to self-proclaimed predictionists who claimed to be prophets. Nevertheless, the people still listened to the false prophets, rather than the true prophets of God.

When the people did accept false prophets who presumptuously spoke their predictions, God challenged these prophets to be brought forth before the people in order that their claims be tested (See Is 43:9,10). If what was spoken by a certain predictionist did not come to pass, **then that person was a false prophet.** And to emphasize the seriousness of presuming to be a prophet of God, false prophets were to be put to death (Dt 18:20-22).

Some will wonder why the people were so eager to listen to the false prophets. There is a simple answer to this problem about which the apostle Paul wrote:

*“For the time will come when they will not endure sound teaching. But to suit their itching ears, they will surround themselves with teachers who will agree with their own desires”* (2 Tm 4:3).

“Itching ears” means that the people seek to create a religion after their own desires. And in order to feel good in their religious behavior, they seek those who will condone their beliefs and behavior. Therefore, the people will surround themselves with those who proclaim that they are the prophets of God, and thus, these false prophets will speak those things the people want to hear. What Paul is saying is that



presumptuous men will simply take advantage of the opportunity that is presented by people who no longer have a desire to be taught the sound teaching of the Bible.

We know when we are in apostasy as a society, therefore, **when there arises among us so many prophets (predictionists) who presume to be speaking for God.** The presumptuous false prophets are only the manifestation of the apostate state of the people who no longer study their Bibles. The people find it easier to listen to some self-proclaimed prophet, than to open their Bibles and be noble-minded as the Bereans who daily searched the Scriptures (See At 17:11).

We must always keep in mind that there are some very crafty people in the religious world who have a great deal of skill in deceiving people. Therefore, in order not to be spiritually immature in the faith, and thus *“tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men in cleverness to the deceitfulness of error,”* we must open our Bibles (Ep 4:14).

Those who have a tendency to be tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of teaching concerning prophecy must remember one very important point: **If a Bible interpreter develops from his own interpretation some calculated theory that is unique concerning the signs of the times, or end of time, then we can be assured that he or she is wrong.**

Understanding prophecy has always been a group matter, not an individual opportunity. Though the people of the Old Testament did not understand all that was revealed in a particular prophecy, they as a group at least knew that no one individual had an advantage to understand any particular prophecy. Prophecy was given for the benefit of the group to understand, **not for any particular individual to interpret.**

There was no such thing as inspired interpretation of the prophecies of the Old Testament (See 1 Pt

1:10-12). Neither does such exist today. If one would presumptuously assume that he has a particular insight into prophecy that others do not have, then we know that such a person is not interpreting prophecy according to the common means by which God intended the common person to read the prophecy and understand. Again, there is no such teaching as “inspired interpretation.” The Bible was written to common folks, who, upon study can understand the word of God (See 2 Tm 2:15). Some things may be hard to understand, but they are not impossible to understand (See 2 Pt 3:15,16).

The person who has a tendency to be tossed to and fro should remember all the presumptuous seers of the past who based their interpretation of prophecy on some presumed date of fulfillment. The date came and went without the fulfillment of the prophecy of some end-of-time event. One should ask himself if he is now tossed to another prophet in order to believe his presumptuous predictions of the end of the world.

## **B. Speaking According To God’s Word**

This second test of a true prophet is **objective**. It is a solid foundation upon which one can determine if one is either a true or false prophet. **A true prophet would never speak anything that was contrary to the already revealed word of God.** A true prophet would always speak according to what Peter wrote: ***“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God”*** (1 Pt 4:11).

God is not a God of contradictions. He would never speak anything that contradicted that which He had already revealed. In the early church, and in absence of the yet-to-be written New Testament books, the disciples were given the miraculous gift of testing the word of those who claimed to be spokesmen for God (See 1 Jn 4:1). As a result of this testing, **some were proved to be liars** (See Rv 2:2). When Peter made the statement, ***“If anyone speaks, let him speak as***

*the oracles of God,*” He had in mind a list of false prophets who had throughout history led the people of God astray with their presumptuous predictions.

As in the first century, we will always have this most powerful test of anyone who would claim to be a prophet of God. This test is particularly in reference to obedience to the gospel. Paul defined the gospel (good news) as the incarnation, death of Jesus for our sins, His burial, resurrection for our hope, and ascension to the right hand of God (See 1 Co 15:1-4). He also revealed that disciples are immersed in water (baptized) in order to obey the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for the remission of sins (See At 2:38; Rm 6:1-6). And if one does not obey the gospel for remission of sins, then he will be separated from God for eternity (See 2 Th 1:6-9). **If one professes to be a prophet of God today, but does not teach this message of the gospel, then he or she is a false prophet!** We should then listen to the words of Moses: *“The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You will not be afraid of him”* (Dt 18:22). Any self-proclaimed spokesman for God who does not preach the gospel, and obedience thereof, **cannot be a true spokesman for God.**

We are blessed today with the written word of God. For this reason, every Christian can have a copy of the Bible by which to know the word of God and test those who presume to be teachers of the word. Having a copy of the Old Testament law was not always possible during the era of the Old Testament prophets. Therefore, the people could know the law only as it was taught them through the teaching ministry of the Levites and prophets. The preachers (prophets) were inspired to know the will of God, and thus, they preached to the people by inspiration. The Levites studied the law, and then they taught it to the people when the people came with their sacrifices.

In the first century, and before the writing and distribution of numerous copies of the New Testament Scriptures, the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to the early disciples by the laying on of the apostles' hands

(See At 8:18,19). One of these gifts was the testing of the spirits (See 1 Co 12:10). But when copies of the written Scriptures were circulated throughout the fellowship of early Christians, there was no more the need for the directly inspired New Testament prophets. And thus, there was no more the need for the miraculous gift of testing the prophets (See 1 Jn 4:1; Rv 2:2). Every Christian today has the privilege and opportunity to test any prophet (preacher) by the New Testament that he or she has in hand, the written word of God.

The fact that most people do not study their Bibles today has laid the foundation for many self-proclaimed prophets to arise and take advantage of the innocent. As long as people refuse to study the Bible there will always exist those opportunists who seek a following by leading others to and fro with their meaningless predictions. The only way to bring down the opportunistic prophet is to do what God's people of old did. They tested the prophets by the existing word of God. People today must be encouraged to study the word of God and test every self-proclaimed prophet. A frown on a passage and a smile on one's face will always lead to the vanquishing of false prophets.

### Chapter 3

## PROPHCY & PREDICTION

During the era of the Old Testament prophets, prophecy was generally unique with the faith of Israel. Buddhism, and those religions that are not focused on the Bible, did not resort to prophecy in order to gain supporters or validate the faith of the supporters. **The prophets of these religions were believed because the religion of the prophets was first believed.** But with Israel, the prophets existed **because the people had forsaken the law of God.**

In the religious world today, Christendom abounds with "prophets" who purport to pronounce teachings

and end-of-time events outside the clear teachings of the word of God, but according to the religion of self-proclaimed prophets. The people believe such prophets because they believe the religion of the prophets.

We live in an era of predictionists, who, through their practice of deceiving their adherents into believing their assumptions, are eager to gain an audience, often for the benefit of financial gain. The definition of two words will help clear up most of the confusion, and thus, aid faithful truth-seekers to make a distinction between the true prophet of God, and the opportunistic and self-appointed predictionist. As we venture through a study of the prophets of the Old Testament, we must keep the following definitions in mind as the Holy Spirit sought to make a distinction between the true prophets of God and the false prophets who stood against God's men.

### **A. The True Prophecy**

When forth-telling something in the future, the true prophet of God announced something that was often **totally new and without any hints by immediate surroundings**. In fact, when the Old Testament prophets announced events concerning the future, it was usually events that involved a new paradigm of how God would be working among His people. The new paradigm was so different, that the prophets' immediate audiences had a difficult time believing what the prophets were saying.

In the historical context of the writing prophets, the prophet usually proclaimed **(A)** that once the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel were terminated, a remnant of Israel would return to the promised land in order to identify again the people of Israel until **(B)** the new paradigm of the Messianic age of the Branch was revealed. The immediate audience could subsequently have hope in the prophecy of a remnant, but they had little understanding of the gospel age of the Messiah that was coming. And because they had little understanding of the coming

of the Messiah, they did not understand the details of Messianic prophecies. **The prophecies were fully understood only when they were fulfilled.** The New Testament, therefore, is our “dictionary” of fulfilled prophecies of the Old Testament.

## **B. Predictions**

**Prediction of future events is based on hints of surrounding events.** The predictionist bases his or her proclamations of future events around the present circumstances in which he or she is living. For example, in 1994 we could have made the prediction that the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa would win all the elections of the country for the next twenty years. But our prediction would have been based on the fact that the country of South Africa was at least 75% ANC, and would remain close to that percentage for the next twenty years. If we had made the prediction based on the advantageous percentage of the ANC, then would we now be proclaimed a “prophet”? Some have self-proclaimed themselves to be prophets in a similar manner. What is unfortunate is that people know their Bibles so little that they cannot make a distinction between true prophecy and prediction.

Now when a predictionist becomes bold and arrogant, he will often make proclamations of events outside the indicators of his present circumstances. He will take his calculator or computer and go to the Scriptures in order to calculate the end of the world. Multitudes upon multitudes of such predictionists have plagued Christendom for centuries with their presumptuous postulations in reference to the end of times. But the calculated dates of supposedly end-time events have come and gone without being fulfilled. Nevertheless, faithful, if not gullible adherents to their favorite predictionists, buy the books and wait for the next prognosticator to come along and excite their imagination. Such is the religious world in which we now live, which religious world has existed since people have refused to use the Bible as the

foundation of their faith.

In our study of the prophets, we must at least learn that the religious environment in which the true prophets of God lived in their day, is similar to that in which we live today. There were more false prophets in existence throughout Israel at any one time than there were true prophets of God. In fact, the situation was so dire at one time in the history of Israel that the false prophets outnumbered the true prophets by a ratio of 850 to 1. One true prophet, Elijah, stood alone against the proclamations of 450 Baal prophets and 400 Asherah prophets who were working against him (See 1 Kg 18). The opposition is no less today as true preachers of the word of God stand against the horde of false predictionists who pass themselves off as prophets of God. We are willing to work with such ratios of opposition simply because we know that the word of God will always prevail over those prophetic practitioners who seek to inflate pomp and purse at the expense of a “itching-ear” people who are willing to be led about by crafty men (See Ep 4:14).

## Chapter 4

### THE MAJOR & MINOR PROPHETS

The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel are considered the major prophets of the Old Testament. They are classified as major **only because of the length of their books**, and sometimes by the length of their ministry. The minor prophets were often contemporary with the major prophets. When the major and minor prophets ministered at the same time in history, both delivered their message from different locations and to either the northern or southern kingdoms, though Jonah directed his message to Nineveh and Obadiah to Edom.

The message of the minor prophets often complemented the ministry and message of the major prophets. The minor prophets had the task of delivering a short message to their God-ordained

audience in order to warn the people of impending doom because of their state of apostasy. The major prophets ministered over a lengthy period of time in order to preserve the people from further digression into moral and social apostasy.

The minor prophets, whose writings we have in the Bible, ministered between about 786 to 400 B.C. Their ministry began before the dividing of the twelve tribes of Israel into the northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms. They preached throughout the time of division after the death of Solomon, and then into the time when the Jews were taken into captivity. Their ministry extended through the Assyrian, Babylonian and Medo-Persian Empires. Their work among the Israelites concluded some time after the final return of captives to the land of Palestine in 444 B.C.

## Chapter 5

### THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS

There is a general pattern to the message of each book of the minor prophets. Within each book there is (1) a call for repentance in view of impending judgment, (2) a message of judgment and doom if there was no repentance, (3) a promise that there would be a remnant who would return to the promised land after the captivity, and (4) hope for a messianic future when God would consummate Israel with the coming of the Messiah.

Statements concerning these four points are scattered throughout the writings of the prophets. But one common theme of the message of the prophets permeates all the Old Testament. **That message is the Bright and Morning Star that would eventually rise in the future of Israel.** This would be the **Righteous Branch** who would signal the consummation of national Israel through the revelation of the eternal plan of God to save mankind. Though this theme was difficult to discover by the immediate recipients of the prophets' message



and ministry, the very reason for God's call of the prophets was to preserve an identity of Jews until the promises of the Blessing to the fathers was fulfilled in Christ (See Gn 12:1-4). If the children of Abraham, the Jews, did not exist at the time of the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, then God could be accused of not fulfilling His promises.

All the ministry of the prophets was to come to the climax of what Jesus stated to the apostles after His resurrection and immediately before His ascension to the right hand of God:

*These are the words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled that were written in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms, concerning Me* (Lk 24:44).

## Chapter 6

### PREACHING FROM THE PROPHETS

The apostasy of the people of God from His word that was given on Mount Sinai gave rise to the necessity of the prophets. The religious world today is not unlike the religious environment in which the prophets ministered.

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge [of the word of God], I will also reject you so that you will be no priest to Me. Seeing you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children* (Hs 4:6).

Because history often repeats itself in reference to our relationship with God through the knowledge of His word, what the prophets addressed during their day is often strikingly similar to situations throughout history. This is certainly true today. We believe, therefore, that the message of the prophets to God's people in the Old Testament should never be considered as simply good Old Testament literature. The prophets' message to those who are in rebellion against God will never be irrelevant in a world where

there are those who refuse to know the word of God. **When people stop studying their Bibles, then we know we are in the midst of a worldwide apostasy.**

As disciples of Jesus who are venturing through the message of the prophets, our first response is to immediately examine social and religious structures today that are parallel to those that led to the fall of Israel during the history of the Old Testament. In the immediate historical setting of the prophets in their time, however, God would bring judgment on Israel through captivity. But now, God is waiting for the final doom that will arrive with the coming of His Son. The application of the principal message of the prophets, therefore, is relevant today as preachers stand up before the people with a call to repentance. And thus, the dead preachers of the Old Testament still speak today because their message has not lost its relevance (Hb 11:4). Such is what Paul wrote to Timothy: *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (2 Tm 3:16).

When Paul used the word “Scripture,” **reference was directly to the Old Testament Scriptures.** It was true that he was writing Scripture to Timothy (See 2 Pt 3:15,16). But the New Testament was simply added Scripture to the canon of all the Old Testament Scriptures. So when Paul said that all Scripture is inspired, he was referring to the Old Testament Scriptures, which Scriptures were still profitable to Timothy for teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

Preachers today have the responsibility to remind themselves of the ministry of the preachers of the Old Testament because *“whatever things were written before were written for our learning, so that we through patience and encouragement of the Scriptures [of the prophets], might have hope”* (Rm 15:4). What happened to Israel as a result of their lack of repentance should be a warning to all

those today who have forgotten the word of God. *“Now these things happened to them [Israel] as an example, and they were written [by the prophets] for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come”* (1 Co 10:11).

If there is no repentance among those today who have followed after the crafty teaching of false prophets, then they too will go into the destruction of an eternal separation from God (See 2 Th 1:6-9). Israel went into a captivity from which only a remnant returned. Unfortunately, this is where the parallel message of the prophets ends for us today. There will be no remnant taken from captivity and returned to the land. What is coming for those today who have rejected a knowledge of the word of God is the following message of doom from Jesus: *“Depart from Me you cursed into everlasting fire that is prepared for the devil and his angels”* (Mt 25:41).



### ABREVIATIONS OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

### NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Cl**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pi**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**

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