

NATURE OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY (2 PETER 1.20-21)

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ABSTRACT

The study of prophecy is one of the truly challenging, yet rewarding areas of biblical investigation. It is believed that understanding the nature of prophecy is important to our relationship with the God of prophecy. The purpose of this study is to bring to our understanding the nature of Old Testament prophecy. The methodology for this study is descriptive. The study affirmed that the passage of 2 Peter 1.20-21 highlights three aspects of Old Testament prophecy, namely reliability, divine origin and inspiration. It also affirmed that the Old Testament prophecy is theocentric, religious and ethical, absolute and conditional, and messianic. It has been equally affirmed that there are guidelines for interpreting prophecy. These are: a passage of prophecy must be seen in its own historical and cultural context, look for different kinds of language and that the New Testament should be the guide to the interpretation of the Old Testament prophecy. It is recommended that in order to ascertain the genuineness of a prophecy, certain criteria must be followed such as, the utterance must be beyond the realm of reasonable calculation so as to preclude the possibility of an “educated guess, the utterance must be free from ambiguity and the prophecy must be characterized by exact fulfilment, not merely a high degree of probability.

KEYWORDS: Old Testament, prophecy, Messianic, prophet.

INTRODUCTION

The study of prophecy is one of the truly challenging, yet rewarding areas of biblical investigation. It is also a theme that is grossly abused. In a broad sense, Israelite prophecy arose in connection with the Exodus, when God not only delivered the Jews from servitude but also raised up a leader to proclaim the meaning of that historical experience. Thus, Moses was called a prophet (Deut. 18.18). But while the patriarchs in general (cf. Gen. 20.7) and Moses (Deut. 18.15; 34.10-11) were called prophets, it is not until the time of Samuel that prophecy begins in earnest. At this time there appeared groups of prophets. At the time of Elijah and Elisha, groups were called “sons of the prophets” (1 Kgs. 20.35; 2 Kgs. 2.5). From this period, many distinct personalities are seen. Because of God’s relationship with the Israelites, He favored them with His revelation. They received His covenants, oracles, promises as well as the manifestation of

His glory (Rom. 9.4-5). All of these were revealed through the prophets. The prophet therefore, is one through whom God speaks to his people. God placed His oracles in the prophet's mouth (Ex. 4.15; 7.1; Jer. 15.19), and the prophet spoke to the people.

An examination of the lexical literature shows that scholars are divided as to the etymology of the term "prophet." Smith thinks that the term is from Arabic meaning "spokesman" (10), whereas Girdlestone contends that the root is a Hebrew form which signifies a "bubbling-up" as when water issues from a hidden fountain (239). This would suggest the idea of the inspiration behind the prophet. However, it is now more commonly believed that the word may be of Akkadian origin which denotes "to call," "to announce," "to name" (Anderson et al, 229).

Perhaps, the best way to understand the meaning of the term "prophet" is to examine the manner in which the Old Testament employs it. There are two passages that stand out. The first is Exodus 4.15-16 where God says Aaron will be Moses' spokesman: "Now you shall speak unto him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God." The second instance is Exodus 7.1-2, "So the LORD said to Moses, 'See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land.'" These passages use a figurative language to describe the relationship between Moses and Aaron. Moses was to act as "God" to Aaron, by telling him what to say. Aaron in turn was to be Moses' "mouth" by articulating Moses' words to Pharaoh. This analogy makes clear the view that prophets are persons through whom God speaks. A prophet was simply a spokesman for God. He was also called a "seer" (1 Sam. 9.9), "a man of the spirit" (Hos. 9.7), "a man of God" (1 Sam. 9.6; 2 Kgs. 4.9), a "servant of the LORD" (Eze. 38.17), and a "messenger of the LORD" (Mal. 2.7; 3.1). As a spokesman, the prophet has a message to give to the people.

NATURE OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

The passage of 2 Peter 1.20-21 highlights three aspects of Old Testament prophecy. First, Old Testament prophecies are completely reliable. Secondly, they have divine origin. This means prophecies did not come from human will but from God. Thirdly, because of their divine origin, prophecies are product of inspiration. Prophets spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament prophecies have the following characteristic features:

Theocentric

The focal point of prophetic message is God (*theocentric*). The prophets bear witness to God. To a striking degree, prophetic oracles use the same language. They often begin with the messenger formula "Thus says the LORD" (Exo. 4.22; 7.7; 8.20; 9.1; Josh.

24.2; 1 Sam. 2.27; 2 Sam. 7.8; Isa. 7.7; 10.24; Jer. 2.1; 6.9, 16; Eze. 5.5; 6.11; Amos 1.3, 6, 9). Other common formulae are, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me” (Isa. 61.1; cf. 1 Chron. 12.8), “the word of the Lord came to me” (Eze. 3.16), “the hand of the Lord was upon me” (Eze. 3.14), and “says the Lord” (Amos 4.6). This indicates that prophets understood themselves to be messengers sent to communicate the word of God to the people. “Their authority lay not in themselves—in their own religious experience or beliefs—but in the One who had sent them” (Anderson et al, 229). Prophecy is an “attestation of revelation proceeding from divine knowledge” (Strong, 135). The immediate object of prophets was “to preach righteousness, to reprove, exhort, especially urging steadfast adherence to Jehovah that calamity might be averted, that prosperity might be secured” (Curtis 141). This is unlike what is obtainable among the many modern “prophets” in the context of Christianity who are criticized for their integrity and the ethical implications of their teachings. Their focus is shifted in some instances from God to prosperity and individualistic interpretations of faith. This shows a significant shift in prophetic ethics over time. True prophecy is designed to promote the interest and unfold the ways of the kingdom of God.

The prophets testify to God’s holiness. David says of God, “But you are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel” (Psa. 22.3). Isaiah says, “And God who is holy shall be hallowed in righteousness” (Isa. 5.16). The prophets bear witness to God’s act. Moses writes, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen.1.1). The prophets testify to God’s revelation: “Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying” (Jer. 1.4; see also Isa. 6.1, 8; Eze. 1.1; Hos.1.2; Mic.1.1; Jon. 1.1; etc). The prophets also testify to human’s need of God’s full and free salvation. The LORD spoke to Ezekiel saying, “Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his ways! For why will you die, O house of Israel?” (Eze. 33.11; See also Eze.18.31-32; Psa. 37.39, Jer. 3.23). While Old Testament prophecy is theocentric, some of the modern day prophecies are not. Banda holds that many of the modern day prophecy “can be described as anthropocentric prophetism because it is primarily concerned with solving human problems in the present earthly life” (3). It is this anthropocentric view of prophecy that opens room for the questionable activities reported among them. Banda writes that, “Some of the reported controversial activities are blasphemous, abusive and dehumanising. These practices make a mockery of God, his people and the Christian religion in general” (1). According to M. S Kgatle, prophecy among some modern day “prophets is not just anthropocentric, it is also ‘celebrity cultic’ because prophets use it to advance their cultic egos and to control their followers” (3). There is therefore a need to return to the theocentric form of prophecy.

Religious and Ethical

The prophetic message is intensely religious and ethical in nature. The increasing ethical tone of the prophets can be traced in the work of Nathan, Elijah, Micaiah, and

Elisha. This ethical tone was climaxed, however, in the great writing prophets who came a few years later. The “primacy of morality” is seen in both the common and distinctive emphases in Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. T. B. Maston observes that religion and ethics, were interwoven in prophetic messages. “Morality for them had no basis outside of religion, and religion was vindicated by morality”(44). Jack P. Lewis writes, “As the prophets saw it, knowledge of God demanded ethical behavior” (3). The prophets’ insistence on right behavior was at its root always religious. This fact is of uttermost importance since it does not appear to be generally recognized. Many of the 21st century “prophets” in the context of Christianity seem to have diminished the idea of ethical behavior from religion. Ayodeji OlanrewajuOgidiolu holds that in the modern time, “People around question the possibilities of still having a 'man of God' without soiled integrity. Every goodness and godliness of the past has suddenly changed” (226). However, it must be recognized that the code of Christianity naturally believes that integrity is part of the religion. Norman Snaith holds that, “No man can talk about sin as being rebellion against God unless he is religious. Such a man realizes that religion primarily is a matter of relationship with God, and secondarily is a matter of ethics” (61). The prophetic ethical demands therefore, do not arise out of philosophical speculation, social reforms or humanitarianism. Their whole attitude was dependent directly upon their knowledge of God. Consequently, what is good is simply what God commands; and because He commands it, “it is of absolute obligation” (Eichrodt 362). The ethical life is then, seen as a walk with God (Gen. 5.22-24; 6.9; Mic. 6.8; Mal. 2.6), and to turn away from God is considered as evil. God’s judgment was coming upon the people because they had been unfaithful to Him (Amos 5.2; Hos. 4.12; 5.7; 9.1; 11.7; 13.16; Isa. 1.21). Transgression after transgression (Amos 2.6) made the judgment of God upon Israel inevitable (see Amos 4.12; 7.8; 8.2).

The prophets vehemently denounced social corruption. They emphasized social justice, calling for righteousness and moral conduct among the people and leaders. They often criticized the societal injustices of their time, urging the people to align their practices with divine expectations. Their role was not only spiritual but also political, as they influenced governance and societal norms, advocating for those who are marginalized. “The sins of the children of Israel against their fellow men were spelled out quite specifically” (Maston 45). The prophets were not just standing for the rights of man, but for the will of God, for in their view “man’s rights were sacred because they rested on the will of God” (Rowley95). Sins against the people were sins primarily against God Himself, because they violate His will for the people. While the ordinary Israelite in the time of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah saw sin as a neglect of ritual regulations, the prophets saw it as a violation of the moral law. The prophets contended that the substitution of the forms of worship for the reality of worship was an abomination to the God of Israel, who was an ethical Being. Prophet Amos reveals to the people what the LORD really wants: “But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty

stream” (Amos 5.24). Similarly, Hosea writes, “For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hos. 6.6). As the Old Testament prophets had an input in the polity of their days, so should the Christian leaders of this current dispensation. Ogidiolu lamented the fact that modern “prophets” who are close to the government never give a word of warning against their evil deeds because they have been muted with gifts that have closed their eyes (226). For that reason, godly impartation is far from those in leadership position by the religious leaders. There is a need however, for Christian leaders to speak against the corruption of the day.

Absolute and Conditional

The Old Testament prophets spoke with absolute confidence when they utter their oracles. They were sure that their message will come to fulfilment. They frequently employed a verbal form known as the perfect state, which suggests completed action. J. Wash Watts calls this verbal form as “perfects of confidence” because they “express the certainty the speakers felt about an event that was future to them” (17). In other words, the prophets spoke of the event as if it had already occurred (even though still in the future), thus stressing the certainty of its fulfillment. For instance, Isaiah could say, “For unto us a child is born . . .” (Isa. 9.6), even though the event was still centuries away. There was nothing conditional about the prophecies that were absolute. Such prophecies include the promise of “the seed of the woman” (Gen. 3.15); the covenant with Noah (Gen. 9.11); the promise to Abraham (Gen. 22.18); the Messiah is to come from Bethlehem (Mic. 5.2), to be of the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49.10), to be the Son of David (2 Sam. 7.12-16; Isa. 9.6-7); the kingdom of the Messiah is to be forever (Ps. 145.10-13; Dan. 2.44); the law to go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Isa. 2.2-3), etc. Nothing could change these prophecies. They were not based upon human responses.

While prophetic message was absolute, there were however some predictions that were conditional. This is especially true with reference to predictions that contained warnings of impending judgment upon wicked peoples. In this case, the judgment prophetically announced was dependent upon whether or not the people would turn away from their evil. For example, when God promised to give the land of Canaan to the children of Israel, their stay in the land was contingent on their loyalty to Him. Note what Joshua said:

Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things have come upon you which the LORD your God promised you, so the LORD will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which he has given you. (Josh. 23.15-16)

Similarly, Moses promised that the Israelites would be blessed for obedience or cursed for disobedience in the land which the LORD was giving to them (Deut. 28). Jonah also announced the overthrow of Nineveh (Jonah 3.4), however when the people repented and “God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way,” He withdrew the judgment and did not destroy them (Jonah 3.10; see also Jer. 26.13; 18.7-10). In conditional prophecy, predictions were threats, which might be revoked upon repentance.

Historical Particularity

While prophecies are divine revelation, they are characterized by historical particularity. This is because the Bible is the Word of God given in the words of people in history. It therefore, has dual nature: divine and human. Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart observe, “Because God chose to speak His Word through human words in history, every book in the Bible also has historical particularity; each document is conditioned by the language, time, culture in which it was originally written” (17). It is for this human aspect of prophecies that made God chose to use almost every available kind of communication. Hence, we have narrative history, genealogies, chronicles, poetry of all kinds, proverbs, prophetic oracles, riddles, drama, biographical sketches, parables, letters, sermons, and apocalypses. As a result of this diversity, prophets often employ different manners of speech (cf. Heb. 1.1). We therefore, have both literal and figurative terminologies. James D. Bales writes, “It is wrong to approach the Bible with the determination that all must be spoken alike and interpreted alike” (115). The actual fulfillment of prophecies will therefore, depend on whether they were meant to be literal or figurative.

Messianic

The prophetic oracle is Messianic in nature. This is the most important feature in prophetic ministry. In the beginning God created the human race in His own image in order to have a personal fellowship with them in a relationship of intimate love and communion. However, this purpose was thwarted by sin when Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s voice, and thus, a barrier was placed between God and man (cf. Gen. 3.22-23). But God was determined to have a people of His own anyway, if not by creation, then by new creation. This, however, is only possible in and through the Messiah. Consequently, the promise and hope of the Messiah became the theme of prophecy. From Genesis to Malachi the single aim of the Old Testament was to impress upon the national mind the need and nature of the Savior and the certainty of His coming.

The unity of the Old Testament is in Christ. He is the fulfillment of its longings. Philip said to Nathaniel, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1.45). Jesus said to the Jews, “If you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me” (John 5.46). Similarly, He says, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have

eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” (John 5.39). On the way to Emmaus, “beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,” Jesus “expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Lk. 24.27). Later on that same day Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples and said, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. And He opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (Lk. 24.44-45). In fact, it is an understatement to say that the Old Testament contained some prophecies about Christ. Christ is the theme of all prophecy. Granted this understanding, for convenience, the term “Messianic prophecy” will be used in a more restricted sense as indicating passages which more particularly and distinctly refer to the Messiah.

Predictions about the Messiah may be typical or univocal. Univocal has to do with only one meaning (cf. Trumpeter par. 4-6). In a typical prediction the “inspired speaker seems to begin to speak in view of his local situation and temporary environment; but as he proceeds his imagination advances from the near small and imperfect reality to the distant sublime and perfect ideal” (Ballantine 264). In this type of predictions, the language takes on a corresponding grandeur. The picture may be of David but then appears a figure superhuman in proportions and divine in its beauty (cf. Ps. 22). In this way the “History of Israel was fashioned to be typical of the history of redemption, as well as that of the individual Israelite to be typical of Christ” (Ballantine 264). In the univocal predictions “there never was but one reference” (Ballantine 264). In this case, by a more complete illumination the prophet was enabled to see the future in its unique and unexampled distinctiveness; or by a completely overmastering inspiration spoke words of enigmatic import which remained to be interpreted only in the light of history (Ballantine 264). To illustrate, when David says “For you will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will you allow Your Holy One to see corruption” (Psa. 16.10), he was not referring to himself at all. Peter observes that David, “being a prophet,” and “foreseeing,” “spoke of the resurrection of Christ” (Acts 2.30-31). Psalm 16 therefore, was not typically Messianic but univocally so (see also Psa. 110).

The promise for the Messiah appeared immediately sin was introduced to the world. After a brief account of the creation of the world and man, the book of Genesis hastens to the theme of sin and promised salvation (Gen. 3.15). Whereas the promise in Eden was undefined, in Abraham’s day, “the doctrine of Messiah took a giant step forward” (Kaiser 81). God met with Abraham and narrowed the circle from which the divine blessing should emanate. God said to Abraham, “And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12.3; 22.18). Paul refers to this promise as the “gospel” preached to Abraham (Gal. 3.8). The same promise was passed to Isaac and Jacob respectively (Gen. 26.4; 28.14). When Jacob was blessing his children, he prophetically gave Judah the scepter of kingship “until he comes to whom it belongs” (Gen. 49.10; Eze. 21.27).

Prophecy talks of the Messiah as the coming prophet (Deut. 18.15, 18). While the expression, “I will raise up to you a prophet” (Deut. 18.18) is “doubtless general and refers to the whole prophetic order” (Ballantine²⁶⁵, see also Kaiser 84), yet Jesus alone perfectly fulfills the ideal of a prophet. Prophecy speaks of the Messiah as the “Servant of the Lord” (Isa. 41.8-10; 42.18-19; 44.1-3, 21; 45.4; 49.3; Eze. 28.25). While the term “servant” is generic or collective which according to Isaiah refers to “Israel,” but then this servant is to be distinguished from national Israel in that He is an individual who has a mission to Israel (Isa. 42.1-7; 49.4-10). Prophecy speaks of the Messiah as a Davidic King (2 Sam. 7.12-16). This king is to be especially anointed by Yahweh, and is to sit at His right hand (Psa. 110). All kings will fall down before Him, and all nations shall serve him (Psa. 72). His priesthood is to be eternal (Psa. 110.4, 6; 1 Sam. 2.35). He is “the Son of Man” (Dan. 7.13-14).

The prophets wrote so many things about the coming Messiah that when he came there would be no question about who He was. He was to come from Bethlehem (Mic. 5.2, see also Isa. 11.1-5; Matt. 2.1). He was to be born of a virgin (Isa. 7.14; cf. Matt. 1.18-25). There would be a messenger to prepare the way for the Messiah (Mal. 3.1; Isa. 40.3-4; cf. Matt. 11.1-14). His ministry was to be centered in Galilee (Isa. 9.1-2; cf. Matt. 4.12-17). The Messiah was to confirm His message with miracles of healing the blind, deaf and lame (Isa. 35.4-6; cf. Matt. 11.2-6). The prophets spoke about His suffering and death (Psa. 22; Isa. 50.6; 52.13-53.12). They also wrote about his resurrection from the dead (Psa. 16.10), and his ascension (Psa. 68.18).

Old Testament prophecy gives the hope of ultimate restoration in the Messiah. Amos says, “On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does this thing” (Amos 9. 11-12; cf. Acts 15.15-16). The ultimate restoration will present both the Gentiles and Israel as equal (Isa. 19.19-24). Jeremiah prophesies of a new covenant (Jer. 31.31-33). With this new covenant everyone will know God (Jer. 31.34). The ultimate restoration will present peace to the people (Isa. 11.7-9).

Old Testament prophecy also concentrates on the Messianic kingdom. Since the Messiah was to be a king, He also has a kingdom. His kingdom is to last forever. Daniel says, “His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7.14). Similarly, “In the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (Dan. 2.44). Thus, the Messianic kingdom will be characterized by peace, justice and righteousness (Isa. 9.6-7).

GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING PROPHECY

Since prophetic studies have presented a lot of difficulties in the religious world, a few guidelines for interpreting Old Testament prophecy seem in order. First, a passage of prophecy must be seen in its own historical and cultural context. “Before extracting the meaning for today, we must carefully attempt to understand what it meant to the original hearers in the life-setting of the prophet and his people” (Armerding 69). Secondly, look for different kinds of language such as figures of speech. The text of the Bible is replete with figurative language, it is therefore important to identify them and not interpret arbitrarily.

Thirdly, in prophetic passages one should be cautious about the extent and nature of any predictive elements that may be present. It is not always true that every prophecy is predictive and when there are predictive elements, the “fulfillment may occur shortly after the prophet’s utterance, or it may be something for the distant future” (Armerding 70). In some cases, the predictive element may be reasonably specific, whereas in others it may be expressed in the most general terms. Sometimes, there seem to be two or more fulfillments. In the question of multiple fulfillments, a student of prophecy should expect an “indirect fulfillment by a correspondence of historical events” (Armerding. 70).

Fourthly, the New Testament should be the guide to the interpretation of the Old Testament prophecy. If there is any theme that pervades the New Testament, it is the theme of fulfillment. The New Testament often gives or points to the proper fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy or the proper counterpart of Old Testament types. “That which have long been prophesied, which had been hoped for and anticipated . . . has now dawned upon mankind in the events recorded in the New Testament” (Hagner 89). Although, not all Old Testament prophecies are interpreted in the New Testament, but “enough are so interpreted to give a fairly clear idea of how to approach the rest” (Cottrell 460). It must be noted that the interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies given by Jesus and the apostles are the final interpretations to such passages.

Fifthly, the Old Testament was written for the sake of the church. The apostle Paul writes, “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning” (Rom. 15.4), that is, they were for the instruction of the church. The “whatever” of the Old Testament includes: history (1 Cor. 10.1-6), poetry (see Rom. 3.9-18), law (1 Cor. 9.9-10), types (Heb. 9.1-28), teaching (Rom. 4.22-24), and prophecy (1 Pet.10-12). Peter shows that to the prophets “it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven” (1 Pet. 1.12). This means first of all that the Old Testament Scriptures, including especially their prophecies, were pointing ahead to the coming of Christ, and especially to His first coming rather than His second coming. Furthermore, it means that God had the church age and the church itself in mind when He was inspiring the Old Testament prophets to foretell the works of the coming Messiah (Cottrell 460). Sixthly, it is important not to impose one’s theological

system on the prophetic text. Seventhly, the individual prophetic oracle is to be studied in “light of the whole prophecy, using both macro- and micro-exegetical techniques” (Osborne 271).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Prophetic studies is one of the interesting studies. The prophets show that God did not just create man but He created him for a purpose. He wants to have a relationship with man. But while sin tries to thwart this divine purpose, the Omnipotent is bent on achieving His goal. While all hope is gone for man, the Creator still creates hope for man. And more than that, He was determined to bring the hope to reality. And so the one continuous strand in prophecy is the message of the Messiah. It is only in Him and through Him that man can receive the abundant love of God again. But as the prophetic message was misunderstood in its days, so now is it also misunderstood. People look to the direction that God does not intent. They think what God has not thought. The Israelites thought that it was in sacrifice that God takes delight. The prophets rejected this philosophy. The one message of prophecy is: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deut. 6.4-5). It is believed that understanding the nature of prophecy is important to our relationship with the God of prophecy. It is recommended that in the 21st century, Christian religious leaders should attempt to speak where God speaks. It is also recommended that the integrity of the Christian religious leaders is as important as the integrity of the message they profess to proclaim. Finally, it is recommended that the modern day ‘man of God’ should attempt to speak out against corruption in the society.

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