

The Words Of The Prophets

The world is confused over the message of the prophets. Some argue that the writing prophets are more important than the non-writing prophets. Many today try to force present and future events into the prophet's writings. Some consider the Major Prophet's message more important than that of the Minor Prophets. Still, others see the different prophets having a different message. But all prophets speak the words of the one and only God; therefore, they must all be viewed as equally important as together they deliver God's message to humanity.

The unity of speakers and writers throughout the Bible is exemplified by the words of Hebrews 1:1-2, "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..." The message is the same and has not changed from individual to individual or method of presentation. As God's marvelous plan unfolded in the Old Testament, the various portions were given as needed for the people of that time. As the time of Jesus death approached, more of the plan was revealed until the entire plan of salvation was made clear through His disciples.

In the garden of Eden, God said, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17) The primary declaration, made by God in the Garden of Eden, remains the same today: God said it, obey it and enjoy the rewards or disobey and suffer the consequences.

Later, as Moses read The Law to the people before they crossed the Jordan River, he reminded them of God's word to them. "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you because you obey the voice of the LORD your God..." Deuteronomy 28:1-2. And also "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you..." (Deuteronomy 28:15)

As people multiplied during the days of the patriarchs, they forgot about God. Later, Israel was called out of Egypt and multiplied through the Promised Land. They also forgot about God. In each case, as they forgot God and His commandments, they committed all sorts and kinds of disobedience. Their sin caused them to be separated from God (spiritual death). God did not kill them physically but sent a message of mercy through the prophets. The prophets informed the people that they had failed to obey and had earned the sentence of death, but God would preserve their life if they would return and obey Him.

Notice several messages and the result of each.

- Nathan brought David's sin to light in 2 Samuel 12. After David admitted his sin, he repented and prayed earnestly for God's judgment and mercy. His life was not taken. David and his family suffered the consequences of the sin, but the family was preserved to bring forth the Christ.
- Elijah confronted Ahab and Israel in 1 Kings 18:18 with the words, "you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals." Shown the power of God on

Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18:20-40, Ahab and his house did not change and were, in time, destroyed.

- God sent Jeremiah to the rulers of Judah to declare them guilty because; "...they have forsaken Me, Burned incense to other gods, And worshiped the works of their own hands." Jeremiah 1:16. They burned the scrolls which God commanded Jeremiah to write, Jeremiah 36, and the people of Judah were either killed or carried into slavery in Babylon.

Today, the New Testament states, "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23. But also there is a statement of mercy and grace; "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

The words through Jesus offers salvation from sin to all. Matthew 28:18-19 says, "...Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;" And also, Mark 16:15-16 "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned..."

Those convicted of their sins as the church was coming into existence asked: "What they must do?" Peter told them: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38-39)

Have you obeyed?