

Articles and Sermons :: Picture of an Prophet -ravenhill

Picture of an Prophet -ravenhill - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/8/8 2:26

Picture of an Prophet

The prophet in his day is fully accepted of God and totally rejected by men.

Years back, Dr. Gregory Mantle was right when he said, "No man can be fully accepted until he is totally rejected." The prophet of the Lord is aware of both these experiences. They are his "brand name."

The group, challenged by the prophet because they are smug and comfortably insulated from a perishing world in their warm but untested theology, is not likely to vote him "Man of the year" when he refers to them as habitués of the synagogue of Satan!

The prophet comes to set up that which is upset. His work is to call into line those who are out of line! He is unpopular because he opposes the popular in morality and spirituality. In a day of faceless politicians and voiceless preachers, there is not a more urgent national need than that we cry to God for a prophet! The function of the prophet, as Austin-Sparks once said, "has almost always been that of recovery."

The prophet is God's detective seeking for a lost treasure. The degree of his effectiveness is determined by his measure of unpopularity. Compromise is not known to him.

He has no price tags.

He is totally "otherworldly."

He is unquestionably controversial and unpardonably hostile.

He marches to another drummer!

He breathes the rarefied air of inspiration.

He is a "seer" who comes to lead the blind.

He lives in the heights of God and comes into the valley with a "thus saith the Lord."

He shares some of the foreknowledge of God and so is aware of impending judgment.

He lives in "splendid isolation."

He is forthright and outright, but he claims no birthright.

His message is "repent, be reconciled to God or else...!"

His prophecies are parried.

His truth brings torment, but his voice is never void.

He is the villain of today and the hero of tomorrow.

He is excommunicated while alive and exalted when dead!

He is dishonored with epithets when breathing and honored with epitaphs when dead.

He is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, but few "make the grade" in his class.

He is friendless while living and famous when dead.

He is against the establishment in ministry; then he is established as a saint by posterity.

He eats daily the bread of affliction while he ministers, but he feeds the Bread of Life to those who listen.

He walks before men for days but has walked before God for years.

He is a scourge to the nation before he is scourged by the nation.

He announces, pronounces, and denounces!

He has a heart like a volcano and his words are as fire.

He talks to men about God.

He carries the lamp of truth amongst heretics while he is lampooned by men.

He faces God before he faces men, but he is self-effacing.

He hides with God in the secret place, but he has nothing to hide in the marketplace.

He is naturally sensitive but supernaturally spiritual.

He has passion, purpose and pugnacity.

He is ordained of God but disdained by men.

Our national need at this hour is not that the dollar recover its strength, or that we save face over the Watergate affair, or that we find the answer to the ecology problem. We need a God-sent prophet!

I am bombarded with talk or letters about the coming shortages in our national life:

bread, fuel, energy. I read between the lines from people not practiced in scaring folk. They feel that the "seven years of plenty" are over for us. The "seven years of famine" are ahead. But the greatest famine of all in this nation at this given moment is a FAMINE OF THE HEARING OF THE WORDS OF GOD (Amos 8:11).

Millions have been spent on evangelism in the last twenty-five years. Hundreds of gospel messages streak through the air over the nation every day. Crusades have been held; healing meetings have made a vital contribution. "Come-outers" have "come out" and settled, too, without a nation-shaking revival. Organizers we have. Skilled preachers abound. Multi-million dollar Christian organizations straddle the nation. BUT where, oh where, is the prophet? Where are the incandescent men fresh from the holy place? Where is the Moses to plead in fasting before the holiness of the Lord for our moldy morality, our political perfidy, and sour and sick spirituality?

GOD'S MEN ARE IN HIDING UNTIL THE DAY OF THEIR SHOWINGFORTH.

They will come. The prophet is violated during his ministry, but he is vindicated by history.

There is a terrible vacuum in evangelical Christianity today. The missing person in our ranks is the prophet. The man with a terrible earnestness. The man totally otherworldly. The man rejected by other men, even other good men, because they consider him too austere, too severely committed, too negative and unsociable.

Let him be as plain as John the Baptist.

Let him for a season be a voice crying in the wilderness of modern theology and stagnant "churchianity."

Let him be as selfless as Paul the apostle.

Let him, too, say and live, "This ONE thing I do."

Let him reject ecclesiastical favors.

Let him be self-abasing, nonself-seeking, nonself-projecting, nonself-righteous, nonself-glorying, nonself-promoting.

Let him say nothing that will draw men to himself but only that which will move men to God.

Let him come daily from the throne room of a holy God, the place where he has received the order of the day.

Let him, under God, unstop the ears of the millions who are deaf through the clatter of shekels milked from this hour of material mesmerism.

Let him cry with a voice this century has not heard because he has seen a vision no man in this century has seen. God send us this Moses to lead us from the wilderness of crass materialism, where the rattlesnakes of lust bite us and where enlightened men, totally blind spiritually, lead us to an ever-nearing Armageddon.

God have mercy! Send us PROPHETS!

Re: Picture of an Prophet -ravenhill, on: 2005/9/2 5:15

The Prophetic Savant

by Chip Brogden

sa-vant' (n.): 1. a mentally defective person who exhibits exceptional skill or brilliance in some limited field; 2. a person who is highly knowledgeable about one subject but knows little about anything else.

"...the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad..." (Hosea 9:7).

"What then is genius? Could it be that a genius is a man haunted by the speaking Voice, laboring and striving like one possessed to achieve ends which he only vaguely understands?"

A. W. Tozer

(*The use of the male pronoun in this writing is for convenience only. We mean no partiality to our brothers, and no disrespect to our sisters.)

The prophetic savant is a person afflicted with a heavenly autism, making him nearly incapable of normal relations with those around him. Accused of being aloof, cold, and distant, he is apt to hide himself from people, withdrawing into a world of his own. He never seems to be all "there". Even if he forces himself to come down to Earth for a moment, those around him may have the sense that there is an unspoken dialogue going on somewhere inside of him, a secret communion carried on beneath the surface that never allows him to be fully "in the moment".

How do we explain this? As a prophetic savant he sees, hears, and relates to the world differently than the rest of the population. They have not seen what he has seen; they have not heard what he has heard. And so he finds very little camaraderie, very little sympathy or understanding, no one with whom he can open his heart and share his soul, because he no longer speaks the same language, and they no longer speak his. Of course, he may have surface-level exchanges with

th anyone: he is approachable, not haughty, or high-minded. He may even be personable and likeable. Yet there is something so other-worldly in his demeanor that he is more often frightening than friendly, in spite of his best efforts. He is a spiritual autistic, and no matter how hard you try to know him, he is generally unknowable, and to a certain degree, he resists all attempts to know him.

If a prophet is anything, he is extra-terrestrial - above the Earth. He walks the Earth with others, but he is not of the Earth. He is from beyond; he is from above. If we trace his history we will find that he may or may not have had a normal childhood. He may or may not have come through extraordinary experiences. But at some point in his life, either as a child, or as a young adult, or as an old man, something from another realm broke through the thin membrane between Heaven and Earth and took hold of him. It may have been a burning bush, or a Voice crying out to him from beyond the veil, or a Heavenly Vision which brought him briefly into contact with something and Someone that he could not completely fathom.

However it happened, for one moment at least, the clouds parted and the veil was rent, and he saw something that is unseeable; he heard something that is unheard; Heaven itself was opened up to him, and he saw into another world. The thing he saw and heard now burdens him like a mantle that has been draped over his shoulders. He feels its weight, for it is with him day and night, whether he is eating or drinking, working or resting. It is the impression that everything around him is a lie, and what he has seen and heard is the Truth, and this Truth is not static, but it is living, growing, and increasing within him from the day it comes to him in the form of a seed.

For a long time he struggles to find words and vocabulary to express the inexpressible. He cannot explain why he feels the need to try and express it, but for some inexplicable reason something drives him to open his mouth, or take up his pen, and make it known. Whatever it is, it will not permit him to savor it or keep it to himself, and it seems intent on coming to the surface and interrupting the normal course of his life. This process can be frustrating and painful, so much so that he may give up several times, content to simply walk in what he has seen and heard and leave it at that.

But try as he might, he cannot run away from what he has seen and heard, and he cannot deny the compulsion to bring it forth. On the one hand he cries out for a "normal" life, while on the other hand he knows he cannot deny what has been revealed to him. When he does achieve some modest success in articulating something of Heaven he is pleased for a time, but soon grows impatient with it, and eventually is dissatisfied with it altogether, because it cannot do justice to what he has seen and heard. And so the process begins again, the continual search for words to more perfectly express what he is trying to communicate (and a subtle fear in the back of his mind that he may never be able to adequately express it), which leads him to invent words which may have never before existed, or to look for Spirit-inspired words in some unknown tongue that can be translated into something others can understand.

The prophets of old correctly called it the "burden of the Lord", for it is like a woman who must live the rest of her life being in perpetual labor, delivering the same child over and over again. What relief there is only comes in discharging the burden, but that is not to say it ever really leaves: it merely allows the prophet time to catch his breath until the next contraction doubles him over again. The burden is with him the rest of his life, and he never fully discharges it.

Even when he tries to be disobedient to the Heavenly Vision and flees from the presence of the Lord he is pursued and hunted down like some kind of a wild animal who has gotten loose, knowing it is only a matter of time before he is captured again. The Voice never leaves him, the Vision never lets him go. When he refuses to speak then the fire which is already kindled only burns hotter, until he ends up doing what he has resisted doing all along, just to relieve himself of the unbearable tension and inward pressure. He cannot extinguish or quench the fire no matter what he does, he can only be obedient and find temporary relief, until the next word comes, and then off he goes. He may beg God to send someone else, and may protest his inability to speak, or to write. But he is already ruined for anything else, and even when he denies the Lord Who called him and returns to his former occupation, it is all dull and lifeless, and he meets with nothing but frustration and failure. There is no way to escape it. He knows he is called to something Higher, even when he is clinging with everything he has to something Lower.

Like a wild horse, he resists the dealings of the Lord and must be broken before he will obey. Eventually he learns not to resist the Lord, but to cooperate with Him. He becomes pliable and bendable in order to survive. His very life now is bound up with what he has seen and heard. He cannot be disobedient to the Heavenly Vision, and if it means he dies, then he dies. If it means a renunciation of everything he once believed, then he renounces it - reluctantly at first, then cheerfully. If it means suffering the loss of all things, then he lets them go.

Over time the one who has seen and heard becomes the very essence of what he has seen and heard. The Man becomes

es the Message. He bears the Testimony in himself, and becomes one with it. He needs no preparation to speak; indeed, preparation does nothing to help the message he brings, and it often gets in the way. His whole life is the preparation, and since he is the Message, it is with him constantly. He can no more separate himself from the Message than he can separate his head from his body. If there is an "On/Off" switch then it was long ago turned on and then disabled so that it can never be turned off again. After many seasons of God's dealings he finally perceives that this is what the Lord has sought for all along, not just to GIVE him a Message, but to MAKE him a Message; to gain for Himself a Messenger and capture him completely, embossing the Message into his very being.

And so he goes about his daily business, constantly haunted by that Voice, torn between the menial task at hand which calls for his physical and mental exertion, and the Higher Calling which seeks his undivided attention. He knows he should do all things, great and small, as "unto the Lord". But he also knows that Heaven and Earth are locked in mortal combat over him while he stands there in the middle, torn between the two, desiring to depart the Earth altogether and be with Christ, but knowing that it is more profitable for his brethren if he remains. Heaven calls him to rise up, but Earth tells him to keep his feet firmly planted. His heart is constantly breaking and longing to go, to ascend, to rise up, to stop seeing through a dark glass, and see face to face, without the distraction of the natural, the fleshly, the temporal, because he knows the Earth is not his home. Yet he struggles with the fact that Earth is where he must live and work. This accounts for why he may sometimes seem difficult to be around.

As a savant he possesses insight and skill which others do not possess. But it is a gift, not anything of himself, nothing of which he could boast of. If you were to ask him if he considers this to be a blessing, he would probably say it is more like a curse, because it sets him apart from others even when he tries his best to be hidden and to blend in. He cannot read the Scriptures as others do, for after only a few verses the Heavens are opened up to him again and he is lost in its depths. A single passage may keep him occupied for months as Heaven unfolds it to him, and he cannot tear himself away from it.

His preaching is affected, because he cannot decide in advance what he will say, and even when he would like to bring forth something new and exciting, he usually ends up saying the same thing, like, "Repent!" He often does not say what he wants to say, and does not say it in the way he would like to say it. If he wants to be serious, he finds himself laughing. And when he wishes to be friendly, he finds himself screaming at the top of his voice to a startled congregation of people, who wonder how this fellow was ever allowed access to their inner sanctum in the first place. When he leaves a place he almost never sees the result of his labor, and only eternity can reveal the true significance of what was said. For now, it is all hidden, and he has to live with the fact that his fruitfulness will never be measured in terms that human beings, including himself, can see and appreciate.

He cannot go through the motions of religion like most mortals. It is a dead, shallow thing to him because it cannot compare to the reality of what he has already experienced. He finds it difficult to listen to another person preach when he knows they have not yet ascended to the heights nor plumbed the depths that he has already navigated. And when he tries to lead them into these heights and depths himself he is often misunderstood or rejected altogether. So either he attends the meeting and suffers in silence, or stays home and suffers in solitude; but either way, he suffers.

His seeing is affected by a sort of "spiritual dyslexia". While others view things from a one or two dimensional viewpoint, he sees them through several dimensions at once - forward, backward, reverse, upside-down, right-side up: life and death, light and dark, Spirit and flesh, Heavenly and Earthly - which often puts him at odds with his more pragmatic and doctrinally-correct brethren. He is so at one with what he has seen that he speaks of it as having already happened, because he has, in essence, already experienced it and lived it. It is the Prophetic Tense, which calls those things that be not as though they were. In his world, the world of the Spirit, they exist already. We call it "prediction" because we cannot yet see it with our natural eyes, but he simply stands outside of Time and views Past and Future as one unbroken and continuous Present.

His hearing is affected so that he is increasingly sensitive to his surroundings, even though it seems as if he is not paying attention. He is listening, but he is listening inwardly. He no longer trusts his natural ears, because the Heavenly Voice and the inner witness are more reliable. Thus, he is able to hear God speaking, while the rest of the crowd says, "It thundered!" or "It was an angel!" He is also able to hear when God is not speaking, and does not get carried away with the multitudes who claim to speak, see, and hear things from God when they have not heard or seen anything from Heaven. He cannot bear to listen to them.

His concentration is affected in such a way as to make him appear obstinate and unyielding to others. The truth is that he is actually quite flexible and pliable before the Lord, but before man he is as solid and impenetrable as a rock. No amo

unt of persuasion or argument from man will move him - but the slightest touch from the Lord will bring him to his knees. Having discovered the One Thing that is needed, he will tenaciously and ruthlessly shun the "many things" which crowd i n to seek his attention, for he sees everything else as a distraction. Indeed, he is quite willing to sacrifice the good in fav or of the holy. And when the Lord has him focused on a particular thing he is as a beam of light fastened upon a singular point until everything melts before it.

Even his praying is affected, for he can no longer pray as he wills and for what he wants. He seemingly has no will of his own. Instead the Heavenly Voice bids him to pray with a Heavenly perspective, and all too often the Heavenly perspectiv e is at odds with the Earthly perspective. So when his brothers and sisters pray for blessing and increase, he finds hims elf praying for destruction and decrease; and when they are resisting and praying against something, he finds himself as king God to perform the very thing the rest of the world is against.

To the rest of the world, the autistic savant is a bit of a retarded genius, an unfortunate mixture of idiocy and brilliance, c aught up in a world of its own. The prophetic savant bears a similar stigma. But if you engage him at all, you soon discov er that he sees all of this as absolutely normal; the way it is supposed to be. He no longer wishes for a normal life, becau se the life he has now IS normal: he has lost his own life in exchange for a new life. He lives in the Heavenlies while he walks on the Earth. He does not think of himself as special, as anything other than a regular person, but often wonders a loud why others cannot see what he has seen when it is all so self-evident and plain. To him, maybe; but the rest of us a re blinded by the Light he exudes without knowing it.