

The Prophet: Caring for the City more than the Church

(cultic, clerical, sapiential, popular,
leadership, action and oracular)

Matt. 10:40-42
Prophets
Righteous Persons
Disciples

**Matt.
23:34**
Prophets
Wise Men
Scribes

1. Cities of
Galilee

2. Jerusalem

3.
Nations



The

Discourse

5-7

10

13

18

24-25

Jesus's Followers as Prophets

Matt. 5:11 “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matt. 10:40 “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴² and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

Matt. 23:34 Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town,

Jesus as Prophet

Others viewed him as a prophet: 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee' (21:11; see also 16:14; 21:46; 68)

He pronounces prophetic warnings and predictions

He died the death of a persecuted prophet: ‘shedding the blood of the prophets’, ‘murdered the prophets’, ‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it’, (Matt. 23:29-39)

False witnesses - ‘This fellow said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.” (26:61)

Preaching prophecy is not the same as being a prophet

Prophecy is to the nation rather than the church

1. The Prophetic Situation
2. The Prophetic Mindset
3. The Prophetic Message(s)

1. The Prophetic Situation (2 Chron. 15:1-4)

The Nation backs
away from God



**God & the
Nation**

1. The Prophetic Situation
(2 Chron. 15:1-4)



The Nation



God

Israel's Situation

1. Lawlessness rather legalism (Matt. 23:38; 24:12; cf. 7:23; 13:41)
2. Satan and demons claim Israel (Matt. 4:1-11, 24)
3. Capernaum compared to Babylon (“And you Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven” No, you will be brought down to Hades,” Matt. 11:23; cf. Isa. 14:12-15)
4. Jesus warns about serving mammon and invites Israel to seek first the kingdom (Matt. 6:24, 33; 7:7)
5. Israel suffers from idolatry sicknesses (“You become like that which you worship”; Ps. 115:3-8; 135:15-18; Isa. 6:9-10)

The Nation



God

Israel's Situation

Israel is physically post-exilic but spiritually pre-exilic

The LORD will scatter you among the peoples; only a few of you will be left among the nations where the LORD will lead you. There you will serve other gods made by human hands, objects of wood and stone that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. (Deut. 4:27-28; cf. 28:64-65; 29:4, 17-18)

From there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find him if you search after him with all your heart and soul. (Deut. 4:29; cf. Jer. 29:13)

Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks, receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matt. 7:7)

The Nation



God

Charles Taylor, *The Secular Age*
Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*

1. Disenchantment and the “Buffered” Modern Self
2. Living Social
3. The Carnival is Over: “Lowering the bar” for human flourishing
4. The Fullness of Time
5. From Cosmos to Universe

1. The Prophetic Situation (2 Chron. 15:1-4)

The Nation

Prophet



God sends a
prophet

2. The Prophetic Mindset (Matt. 10:19-20):

‘The Semi-Permeable Self’,
James Kugel, *The Great Shift*

3. The Prophetic Message: Good and Bad News

Repent (Matt. 3:2; 4:17)

Deeds of Power (Chps 8-9; 11:20; 13:57-58)

Oracles of Doom (11:20-24; 23:13-39)



The Lost Sheep

The Shepherds

Chapter I

5-7

10

13

18

24-25

28

3. The Prophetic Message: Good and Bad News

Walter Brueggemann, *Peace*

A Theology of Celebration for the 'haves'
A Theology of Suffering for the 'have-nots'
(A Theology of Warning for the Distant)

Implications

1. The focus is on the city/nation rather than the individual/church
2. Nations have an unfortunate tendency of turning into beasts and so need those who will hold them accountable
3. The *Parousia* is predominantly a day of judgement rather than liberation. The prophet's role is to postpone rather than hasten judgement
4. The missing prophetic motif?