

# **THE DYNAMISM OF HEBREW PROPHETS AND THE CHALLENGES OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHRISTIAN PREACHING**

An Essay

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## 4.5 Recommendation and Conclusion

It is inevitable to get involved in the prophetic teaching ministry called 'preaching of the inspired message' without being confronted with inexhaustible issues that may divert away one's focus and commitment from making public proclamation of demands and implication of sharing in the magnanimous grace of salvation in Christ Jesus. Every preacher is aware of thirst for the advantages of and deceits of power and wielding of influence, fame or popularity and acquisition of wealth. In spite of this, the prophets and preachers can be more focused, successful and enjoy fulfillment where certain cautions are taken. There should be right and proper understanding, recognition and respect of God as sovereign-ruler. God is not an instrument in the hand of humankind that may be used to approve every whim and caprice of human desire no matter how righteous it may sound. God is not a spanner to grip for twisting bolts or screws of human needs. Neither is God a fork-lifter for carrying heavy luggage. He cannot be compelled by anything including fasting and wearisome recitation of promises of the Bible to make requests. Humanity can only appeal to His mercy and grace.

Emphasis should be placed on implication of what God has done in the past as evidence of what He can do again to demand for human moral accountability. Commitment to anything among humankind is better facilitated when they can identify with how the object of devotion has been of help to them in ages past. S. Ola Fadeji comments that we should never lose our deep recognition of the holiness of God and our responsibility to respond by standing in silent reverence before Him as we await his divine response to the outpoured feelings of our hearts.<sup>11</sup> Attitude of the preachers and methods of preaching should be lined-up to conspicuously reflect the purpose of preaching which is communicating the understanding of how and in what circumstances God has revealed Himself (who He is) and what responsibility whoever God has demonstrated Himself to be is placed on humanity. Whatever be the pattern of preaching it is not the design that is meant to be preached. Theatrical or dramatic description and rhetorical display of logical reasoning that does not devalue purpose of preaching is acceptable. Character of the preacher builds integrity for his message. Consistency and perseverance after purpose of preaching builds creative moral force that causes change of life in people.

Preaching Ministry that is not a stooge of the complacent but financial members of the church must be one that has a bi-vocational attachment and could cater for the basic personal needs of life (feeding, clothing and shelter) and parenting. Where the preacher does not rely on stipend or salary from the church and pays for his/her accommodation, the fear of not hurting the slothful attitude of some members to Christian service and stewardship becomes minimal. Ministrying encouragement to felt needs is necessary in getting the attention of the congregation to the word of God. In Acts 13:15, the congregational ruler of Pisidian Antioch Synagogue invited Paul and Barnabas to give "message of encouragement" to the people in verses 42, 43, and 44, a tremendous numerical growth was recorded in synagogue attendance due to message that ministered to psychological and mental needs of the people. There was a joke of how the pharmacists held a meeting together on how to cure malaria with quine though the populace disliked the sour taste of quine. Hence, it was ground into powder and poured into a sugar-coated capsule for easier consumption. It later assumed the name cap-quine! This same approach may be used in preaching, by sandwiching the purpose of preaching between those solutions being offered to felt needs of the people with attractive contemporary method/mode of worship.

Dela Adedavoh adds that: the transforming effect of the gospel on an individual's life is very much dependent on the person's grasp and understanding of the significance of the gospel message to his or her life. Yet, such an understanding is only possible through explanation of the inspired message by evangelists and teachers. A lot of our evangelism today has very little explaining in it whereas if evangelism is to be effective the evangelists need to listen and observe long enough to know what their audience is seeking to understand. It is only then that they are able to offer explanations that will touch their lives where it matters and bring them to the point of total surrender to the saving grace and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Any pre-packaged evangelistic messages that are insensitive to the questions people are asking will not match the effectiveness that we see in the ministry of Philip where the targeted Ethiopian Eunuch asked to be baptized. Effective evangelism begins with people where they are. The starting point of evangelism is to respond to questions that people are already asking. It must describe aspects of the self-disclosure of God that they are seeking to understand by beginning from where they are in their spiritual quest for salvation.<sup>12</sup>

Acts 16:6-10 cautions that every person enjoys fame, but the ministry of preaching should not pursue that. If popularity accompanies ministering, it is palatable. Preachers should be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit concerning WHAT and WHERE to preach. No mouth-piece of God would love the world so much as give his only begotten son as sacrifice for sinners as God did yet determine that some people should not hear the gospel preached to them for any reason. May exuberance of standing to roll-out criticism against authorities, nations and people not block the hearing of preachers that they will preach where God has not ordained. Amen.