



# The Problem of Bias in the Prophetic

## AND METHODS TO DESTROY IT

Perhaps 75% of prophetic utterance today are echoes, templates, even stencils of the doctrinal dogma of the flow they represent. Stencils .... spiritual stencils ...things that make precise copies ... precise replication of what is heard elsewhere. How much is the pure word of the Lord? How much is filtered through our bias? Too much prophesy is simply dissemination of *doctrinal propaganda*, loaded with bias. Yes, propaganda is a political term ... How do we break free from this scourge of 'vessel bias' of "theological stream biases of being bonsai's and caged birds? Prophets should speak the oracle of *God*, not our won oracle or others oracle ... we need to speak God's mind and heart. We need to pour out clean water into prepared ears.

"No man who cares about originality will ever be original. It's the man who's only thinking about doing a good job or telling the truth who becomes really original -- and doesn't notice it."

CS Lewis

Lewis hints at the path to originality ... the relentless pursuit of the Truth, of the objectivity in the Lord that comes from surrendering our ego's to God.

Rainbow's do not Exist

We only see them when our eyes are positioned between 40-42° to suspended water vapour while the sun shines behind us. Therefore, rainbows exist only in the eye of the beholder. that is why position is everything. If you are not filled with hope, adjust your position, you will eventually see it 40-42° Window (not Operation World 10-40 Window 😊) and see the rainbows of peace all over! They are there. They just need you to change your position, your way of seeing. Perception is about positioning.

How can we learn to prophesy free of our biases, or perhaps prophesy less biased?

Giants of church history, such as Watchman Nee (Bonhoeffer, others), also stressed the importance of developing the art of listening objectively, dealing with our subjectivity and unholy biases. Nee uses the word or derivatives of subjective 130X in his short book *The Character of God's Workman!*

"When someone comes to you, you yourself must be a quiet person whose heart is unperturbed and whose spirit is tranquil. You are like a piece of white blank paper having no prejudice, no subjectiveness and no inclination. Within you there is neither decision nor judgment. You place yourself in God's presence in a state of perfect stillness. As soon as that person opens his mouth and begins to talk, you learn to listen to his words. In quietly listening you are able to know and understand what he is saying. It is not an easy thing to listen." W.Nee – *Character of God's Workman*

"A subjective person is unable to know what others are saying. In the event you have a preconceived idea or a subjective opinion about a certain thing or person, you will not be able to hear what is said to you. For you are filled with your own thought on the matter or person in question. So firmly is your opinion lodged in you that another's idea cannot have room for consideration." W.Nee – *Character of God's Workman*

Never consider it to be too good a thing that people listen to you. For what will you do with them if they do listen to you? Where will you lead them? You ought to see the gravity of your

responsibility and learn not to be subjective. Here, the problem with subjectivity lies in your wish that people hear you. You may take delight in making your idea and opinion the direction and light of other people. **Let it be clearly acknowledged by you that your idea is not to be the direction of others, nor your opinion to be their light.** Humbly learn not to drag people along your way, nor to pressure them to follow you or even to obey the Lord. If brothers and sisters are willing to walk with you, thank God. But when they want to choose their own way, let them so choose. W.Nee – Character of God's Workman

## **Biblical Examples of Bias leading to error?**

Jeremiah 28 – Hananiah VS Jeremiah

2 years VS 70 years – both prophesied correctly but one was overly gracious and caused Israel to sin

“From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true.” Jer 28:8-9

How did he get it wrong?

Hananiah means "Yah has been gracious" ... was he predisposed from a child to be (overly) gracious?  
Jeremiah means "Yah loosens"

## **Contemporary Example of Bias leading to error?**

Donald Trump prophets make mistake, why?

## **Disciplines Helpful to Destroy Bias in your Prophecy**

The below disciplines are described by worldly philosophers, yet they touch on subjects evident in scripture and by the giants of the faith. They help you become conscious of your subjectivity (while prophesying or any ministry to other) and assist in moving toward higher levels of objectivity or egofreeness ... "no longer I" ... "no longer ego":

“With Christ have I been crucified: I (Gk 2198 is Zoe) live; however, no longer I (Gk 1473 is EGO), but Christ lives in me; and the life that I (Gk 2198 is Zoe) now live in the flesh, I (Gk 2198 is Zoe) live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered himself up for me.” Gal 2:20

Thayer's Dictionary of two I's:

Good I - Zoe (Strong's 2198) - to live, experience God's gift of life.  
Evil I - Ego (Strong's 1473) - I only expressed when emphatic. Generally used with force and emphasis to indicate antithesis and often contrasted with God. Often in the possessive pronoun. {the problem 'I' ... like kids first words often "mine"}

GOD VS EGO ... two three letter words that mean the opposite.

Ego prophesies all about itself, Zoe can prophesy the mind of the Lord. From which "I" are you living? ZOE or EGO?

This is not the Buddhistic idea of emptying, it is the Christian idea of crucifixion of the flesh by faith, of surrendering your will, of allowing His will to be sovereign in your life. It's not the deletion of the richness of who you are, that tapestry God uses to enrich the message, it's the annihilation of EGO.

These disciplines can be helpful in growing in objectivity when prophesying and hearing God's voice. Perception is reality. How do we perceive more accurately?

## 1. Christian Psychology (The Psychologist) – understanding your 'own vessel'

1.1. Personality biases - optimists are idealists ... like only stories with happy endings – drawn to the 'Lattes' and "Irish Coffee" eschatology's?

1.2. Projection – Jesus calls it the log in the eye

1.3. Repetition Compulsion - is sometimes also called trauma re-enactment. It involves repeating physically or emotionally painful situations that happened in the past. The re-enactment may take the form of recurring dreams and may affect relationships in various ways... deal with your stuff.

1.4. Scandalon ie offences – "offence thresholds" ... what are your trigger points? Prophecy triggered through triggers are a loaded gun.

1.5. Victim mentality – abused by leaders? Let Jesus heal you otherwise you will rebel against any image of leadership/ authority, even good examples of authority – you prophesy against leadership if you carry this wound

1.6. Vengeance prophecy ... from a place of hurt?

1.7. Soul wound interferences that cause the 'puzzling reflections' in us beholding Christ ...get healed.

"Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely." 1 Cor 13:12

Our unhealed soul wounds interfere with our ability to see, hear, feel, taste and smell the Lord and the things of the Lord. We misinterpret messages, we see or 'filter' them through the impure spiritual glasses covering our spiritual ears and eyes ... higher levels of healing produce higher levels of clarity and accuracy in hearing the Lord.

## 2. Epistemology (The Thinker) – the study of 'how we know'

**Do consult commentaries and sermons to obtain your knowledge or do directly learn from the Word and Spirit???**

2.1. 'Understanding your past wounds and how they influence your judgement – eg like kids who have non-conformist parents, attracted to non-conformist future spouse ...

2.2. What do we consider 'real'

2.3. The need of unlearning of learnings gained during traumatic events – broken wire – transform the spirit of your mind by the word of God

## 3. Phenomenology (The Experienter) - study of 'how we experience' – our emotional subjectivity development

3.1. suspension of judgment while relying on the intuitive grasp of knowledge, free of presuppositions and intellectualizing.

- 3.2. "Hold the space" ... delay judgement
  - 3.3. Prophets wrestle with rejection complexes
  - 3.4. Dallas Willard leader in philosophy of who described the field of phenomenology (studied Edmund Husserl)
4. Semiotics (The Interpreter) – how we interpret the world around us
- 4.1. Study of the meaning of symbols, to us.
 

"Prophetic ministry is a much larger thing than the predictive. Perhaps it would be better if we said that the prophetic function, going far beyond mere events, happenings and dates, is **the ministry of spiritual interpretation**. That phrase will cover the whole ground of that with which we are now concerned. Prophecy is spiritual interpretation. If you think about it for a moment, in the light of prophetic ministry in the Word of God, I am quite sure you will see how true this is. It is the interpretation of everything from a spiritual standpoint; the bringing of the spiritual implications of things, past, present and future, before the people of God, and giving them to understand the significance of things in their spiritual value and meaning. That was and is the essence of prophetic ministry." TA Sparks
5. Geography and class
- 5.1. Prophesying through a poverty wound?
  - 5.2. Classism bias
6. Community Lens
- 6.1. Corporate weighing, need to see through other's eyes
  - 6.2. Group identity effect – ubuntu
  - 6.3. need for Midrash's (focussed group discussion on relevant texts) to expose our biases - holy community helps break biases, powerfully
7. Historical Development of Doctrines/ Eschatology (The Historian) in 12 main Church Streams in CT
- 7.1. If you know your history, then you would know where you are coming from, then you wouldn't have to ask me, who the heck do I think I am." Bob Marley
  - 7.2. Knowing the history of the church stream you are part of is extremely important to understand your own bias.
  - 7.3. Prophets must know their history because history is predictive because things work on major principles which create the cyclical nature of history... war... peace etc ... it cycles
  - 7.4. The 12 main theological / eschatological streams active in the Church of Cape Town – know your stream. Do you know your stream bias, relative to other streams? If not, find out.
  - 7.5. Understanding the historical development of the theology of your stream is hugely helpful to identify 'stream bias' – it effects how you build, why you build, when you build towards the kingdom. It shapes how you 'seek for God's kingdom' in dramatically different ways.
  - 7.6. Most crucial for last ... know your eschatology is a *silent but massive influencer* on the stream your local church is part and therefore, you. Some eschatology's promote "Maranatha" ... bridal appetites, preaching and preparing the Bride for The Return of the King. Others barely want the Lord's Second Coming because they have not built the kingdom up enough (some scandalously even do not want Him back so much or too soon because they have too much work to do).

# Coffee Eschatology

(Can I not show my bias and call it **Cortado Eschatology** 😊 ... need humour for this heavy subject).

'Coffee Eschatology' is a fun way to remember the very important four perspectives on the end game. How do you begin when you do not why you are in the race or where is the end?

Symbolism of types of coffee to eschatology's analogy:

- Coffee (black earth) – earth
- Milk (white clouds) – Heaven/ new-Eden

The Kingdom is now (white milk), but not yet (black coffee).

1. Espresso  
100% coffee – Pre-trib Rapture Bus
2. Cortado  
50% coffee 50% steamed milk – balanced Historic Premillennialism (orthodox view held by Patristic Fathers for first 300 years of early church doctrinal history)
3. Latte  
20% coffee 80% milk – 'Over-realised eschatology'
4. Irish Coffee  
Whiskey, milk, coffee flavoured, not coffee, something else – deny Rev 20 can be literal - Amillennialism

## The four eschatology's out there

NB \*\*\* Choose your bias – be aware of it at least at minimum - because it will dictate how your prophesy to people, the living stones of God's house, the subjects of the very Kingdom of God. \*\*\* NB

1. Dispensationalism
2. Premillennialism (first 300-year of early church Polycarp, John the Revelator's disciple)
3. Inaugurated eschatology (NT Wright) = Consistent eschatology (A. Schweitzer) + Realized eschatology (CH Dodd). Over-realized eschatology ... postmillennialism.

EG Isaiah 11, 'the millennium chapter'

Promises like the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea promises etc etc are held to be applicable this side of the The Return? What of the wolf lying down with the lamb?

NT Wright – very influential NT scholar presently

Wrights bias/ preference ... signposts to the messianic reign:

1. justice
2. love
3. spirituality
4. beauty
5. freedom
6. truth
7. power

NTW is optimistic as per his 7 signposts to the kingdom now on earth but where are signposts below evident in scripture ...

- Holiness?
- Righteousness?
- Purity?
- Repentance?
- Forgiveness?
- Wrath to come on the unrepentant.
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4. Literal millennial deniers – amillennial – anti-millennium

## TOOLS

Use the **Coffee Eschatology Tool** to help identify your eschatological preference or bias.

Use the **CHURCH BIAS BREAKER TOOL** to help identify where you are on the spectrum. You are somewhere on the spectrum of the 6 main streams of Christianity.

Awareness of you and your **stream bias** is half the problem solved to a clearer hearing the voice of the Lord for His Body and Bride.

Amen.