

A prophet meant something quite different from one who predicted the future, though it could include that for that's one thing he could do and often did when God gave him the ability to do it.

The word "priest" today means a R.C. clergyman. That's all it means to the average person. What's it mean that Jesus Christ had the office of priest? To the average person today it doesn't convey any meaning. When it comes to the word "king", the word has almost disappeared, from our vocabulary. Even in the new nations in which the man takes over completely and controls and kills anybody he feels like and everybody has to do exactly what he says, you'll find he does not call himself king. He may call himself president! But he's not going to call himself king. The word is only used any more for the survival of the last century --- people descending from in a few countries in Europe who officiate at State occasions and have absolutely no power in the government. I don't know of one that does today.

The word king to the average person today does not mean anything like what it means when you say Jesus was a king and has the office of king. It certainly doesn't mean he officiates on important occasions and then goes back to his palace and lets others do all the governing. It's something entirely different.

Well, we want to speak about the term prophet. When you want to know what a word or term means in the Bible it is tremendously useful to know the language in Hebrew and Greek and to see what that word meant. But one of the least useful things is simply to look at a dictionary and see that that word means this English word because the area of meaning is usually always different. Far more useful than a dictionary is a good concordance in which it gives all the uses of the Hebrew or Greek word, and you see all the ways it is translated in English.

When you find in KJV it is translated one way twice and another way 50 times, you can think that in the places where it is used twice it is rather unusual usage of that particular meaning of the word. It gives you a clue to its meaning. The only way we can tell what any word means in any language is by its use in context. So we look at the word in Scripture and see what the word prophet means, as used in the Bible.

Now I've heard people say there is the law of first occurrence. If you want to know what a word really means and how important it is, see what its first occurrence is! So we find that the first time the word prophet is used in the Bible is in Gen. 20:7. There we read "The word that God sent to Abimelech, Now return the man's wife for he is a prophet." What's a prophet then? Somebody whose wife has been stolen? Is that what it means? Somebody whose wife has been stolen? "Return the man's wife for he is a prophet and he will pray for you." Oh, a prophet means somebody who prays for you. Is that what it means? "And you will live." But if you do not return her you may be sure that you and all yours will die. Don't steal the wife of anybody who is a prophet. But if you need prayer go to somebody who is a prophet. That tells you absolutely nothing about the use of the word prophet in the Scripture.