

WERE THE PROPHETS OPPOSED TO THE PRIESTS OR DID THEY STAND WITH THE PRIESTS?

A prophet might be of a priestly family, like Jeremiah, but his prophetic activity was not connected with a sanctuary or a temple. (Sandmel, p. 48)

Not one of the pre-exilic prophets says a single word in favor of ritual sacrifice. When they speak of ritual and ceremony, they speak in opposition to it. (Amos and Jeremiah are cited as examples) . . . In the pre-exilic prophetic literature, we do not get any reflection of a systematic cult or a systematic priesthood. We might conclude that prophet vied with priest, and vied successfully . . . The pre-exilic prophets are therefore able to oppose the as yet unauthoritative priest. (Sandmel, p. 150-151)

But the truth is that the prophets were gadflies.-- Elijah was called "the troubler of Israel" (1 Ki. 18.17) -- and it is difficult to construe them as standing within the priestly tradition. The books of the prophets are another matter. If we would retain historical perspective, we must not substitute the book for the event about which it speaks, but instead we must see the formation of a book as a new event itself, to be judged and reconstructed in its own right. (Buck, p. 442)

While there is no evidence that the early prophets made use of these priestly instruments of divination, it is to be remembered how closely the primitive prophets were associated with the priesthood. In the Pentateuch, Moses is represented not only as a prophet, . . . but as a (priestly) Levite by birth . . . Samuel . . . called a prophet, had ministered as Eli's assistant in the temple at Shiloh. . . . Elijah the prophet built an altar at Mount Carmel in the course of his contest with the prophets of Baal, and offered sacrifice. In later times, Jeremiah is introduced as "of the priests that were in Anathoth," and Ezekiel as "the priest." (Jer. 1.1; Ezek. 1.3) (Scott, pp. 42-43)

Many Protestants have tended to "play down" the priestly emphasis of Judaism, even to the point of affirming that prophetic religion was fundamentally opposed to priestly religion. There can be no doubt that prophets like Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah were radical in their criticism of the rituals of worship. But every religion must have a cultus - that is, forms in which faith and worship can find expression. A non-cultic-religion is a contradiction in terms. . . . Israel's prophetic movement emerged out of the cultus. Many of the early prophets were "cultic prophets"; intimately associated with the sanctuary. And it is no exaggeration to say that all the great prophets were dependent upon the cultus, even those who criticized it most radically. . . . We must, of course, be aware of the difference in emphasis between prophet and priest, but it is no more necessary to regard the two as fundamentally incompatible than to say that a "liturgical" and "prophetic" ministry are mutually exclusive in modern churches. (Anderson, 460-461) @

There has been a further emphasis upon the links between prophet and priest with the interesting identification of the person of the so-called cultic prophet. This should serve to keep us, while giving a large place to the prophetic criticism of the Israelite community, from falling to do justice to those who made of the Hebrew cult a real means of grace. The fact that the priest came not unjustly under the lash of the prophet's invective should not make us blind to the revelational value of the Israelite system of worship which, as above all the Psalter shows, can serve us as a guide in piety no less than as a warning. (Porteous, in Peake's, 155)