

## THE PROPHET

In this session we will be teaching on the office of the Prophet. **1 Corinthians 12:28**: *“and God hath set some in the church, first apostles, SECONDARILY PROPHETS...”*

**Ephesians 4:11**: *“and he gave some apostles; and some, PROPHETS..”*

### A. Are there Prophets today?

1. Some would tell us that the office of the prophet has been done away with – that there were prophets in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, but there are none today.
  - a. There is no scriptural evidence that supports this.
2. The Word of God tells us that HE gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and some teachers (**Eph. 4:11**)
  - a. Some say the ministries we have today are evangelists, pastors, and teachers.
  - b. The Word of God makes no distinction! It seems to me that the list either stands or falls together.
  - c. For what purpose were these gifts given to the Church? *“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”* **Ephesians 4:12**
    1. Have the saints all been perfected yet? No!
    2. Is there any work of the ministry going on today? Yes!
    3. Does the Body of Christ need edifying? Yes!

So, the answer to all three questions is: all of these ministry gifts should be in operation!

- d. These ministry gifts will be necessary until Jesus comes for His Church!

B. What constitutes the office of a prophet?

1. Commenting on what the New Testament Greek says concerning the prophet, an outstanding Greek scholar said, “A prophet speaks from the impulse of a sudden inspiration, from the light of a sudden revelation at the moment.”

The idea of speaking from sudden revelation seems here to be fundamental, as relating either to future events, or the mind of the Spirit in general.”

A prophet speaks by direct divine inspiration, an immediate revelation – not something he thought of, but something given at the spur of the moment by sudden inspiration.

2. To stand in the office of a prophet, one is a minister of the gospel, separated and called to the ministry with the calling of God upon their life. The prophet is a ministry gift.
  - a. A prophet is first of all a preacher or a teacher of the Word.
  - b. There are no prophets among what we call the laity – because a prophet is one who is called to the full-time ministry.
  - c. A layman may prophesy, but you are not a prophet just because you prophesy.
    1. Paul encouraged the entire church at Corinth to covet to prophesy (I Cor. 14:1)

Then in verse 3 he gives the definition of what the simple gift of prophecy is: **“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort in.”**

2. Distinguish between prophesying – [though a prophet might prophesy] – and the ministry of the prophet.

**Acts 21: 8-11** **8 And the next day we that were of Paul’s company departed and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. 9 and the same man had four daughters, virgins, WHICH DID PROPHECY. 10 AND AS WE TARRIED THERE MANY DAYS, THERE CAME DOWN FROM Judaea A CERTAIN PROPHET, NAMED Agabus.**

***11 And when he was come unto us, he took, Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the gentiles."***

The four daughters of Philip prophesied. That means they were operating in the simple gift of prophecy, "speaking unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (I Cor. 14:3).

Agabus was a prophet. And although a prophet may prophesy what is revealed at the moment, Agabus is not prophesying here. He is just telling what the Holy Spirit had previously revealed to him.

3. To stand in the office of prophet, one must have a more consistent manifestation of at least two of the revelation gifts (word of wisdom, word of knowledge, or discerning of spirits) plus prophecy.
  - a. The three revelation gifts are:
    1. Word of wisdom: This is supernatural revelation by the Spirit of God concerning the divine purpose in the mind and will of God. It always speaks of the future.
    2. Word of knowledge: This is supernatural revelation by the Spirit of God of facts in the mind of God concerning people, places, or things. It is always present or past tense.
    3. Discerning of spirits: This is supernatural insight into the realm of spirits. It is seeing and hearing in the spirit realm.
  - b. Any Spirit-filled believer might have occasional manifestations of these gifts as the Spirit wills and as the need arises. But a prophet would also stand in the place of preacher or teacher of the Word and would have a more consistent manifestation of them. The difference is that the prophet has a ministry along this line. It becomes a ministry gift on a higher level.
  - c. A prophet is one who has visions and revelations.

- d. There are three types of revelations and three types of visions. The highest type of revelation and the lowest type of vision are similar and sometimes a person cannot tell the difference.

1. *A spiritual vision.* A person has a vision in his spirit or sees in his spirit. This is the first and lowest type of vision.

Example: Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-8). The Bible says about Saul that ***"...when his eyes were OPENED, HE SAW NO MAN..."*** Saul's eyes were shut when he had this vision and saw Jesus. Saul did not see the Lord with his physical eyes. He saw into the spirit realm with his eyes closed.

Actually, the Bible says Saul was blinded for a time, so he could not have seen Jesus with his physical eyes. Later Ananias prayed for Saul that he might receive his sight (Acts 9:17).

2. *A trance.* This is the second highest type of vision.

When one falls into a trance, his physical senses are suspended for the moment. He is not aware of where he is or anything that contacts the physical realm. He is not unconscious; he is just more conscious of spiritual things than he is of physical things.

Examples:

*Paul.* When Paul went to Jerusalem the first time, he said, ***"And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw him [Jesus] saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me".*** (Acts 22:17, 18)

*Peter.* The tenth chapter of Acts relates the story of Peter's vision in which the Lord told him to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Peter went up on the housetop to pray and there ***"...fell into a trance"*** (v. 10). When Peter fell into a trance, he ***"...saw heaven opened..."*** (v. 11). He was seeing into the spirit realm.

We see from the Bible that both Peter and Paul fell into a trance and saw into the spirit realm.

3. An open vision. This is the highest type of vision. When this happens, one's physical senses are not suspended. His physical eyes are not closed. He possesses all his physical capabilities, yet he sees and hears in the realm of the spirit.

Example: In chapter one of the Book of Revelation, it appears that John saw the Lord in an open vision.

- e. The prophets of the Old Testament were called seers. They would see and know things supernaturally.

Example: In **I Samuel 9** Saul was looking for his father's donkeys that had strayed. When Saul inquired about them, someone suggested that he go to the prophet and ask him where to find the donkeys, for the prophet Samuel would know where they were. Samuel knew where they were supernaturally.

- f. The word "revealed" is used in connection with the prophet's ministry.

I Corinthians **14:29, 30**; ***"29 Let the prophets speak two or three and LET THE OTHER JUDGE. 30 If any thing BE REVEALED to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his piece."***

1. A prophet may speak forth his revelations through the gift of prophecy. This is on a higher level than simple prophecy.
2. A prophet may also bring forth his revelation just by telling what the Holy Spirit is saying.
3. Revelations are to be judged.

Comment: It is scriptural for others to judge prophecy (**I Cor. 14:29**). People who don't want their revelations – or prophecies – judged are wrong, and they could be walking in spiritual pride.

Someone might say, "Well, the Lord doesn't make mistakes." Certainly not, but these spiritual gifts are being manifested through human beings who are imperfect.

It is similar to water flowing through a pipe. Water can take on the same taste as the pipe it flows through.

Other people have the Spirit of God, especially those who are used in this area, so that's why the word says, "*...let the other judge.*"

- g. Sometimes the prophet does operate in the place of a *foreteller*. This is the gift of the word of wisdom in operation through the prophet.
  - 1. Agabus: He foretold a drought (Acts 11:28). He foretold what would happen to Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10, 11).
- h. Some do not believe that personal prophecy is scriptural. They do not believe that a prophet may have a message for an individual.
  - 1. Agabus did (Acts 21:10, 11). He did not tell Paul *not* to go to Jerusalem. He merely told Paul what would happen to him there, and it came to pass.
  - 2. God shows the prophet these things to bless and help individuals.
  - 3. God does show us things as He wills to prepare us and to get us ready for the future. But you cannot turn the ministry of the prophet on and off as you please. It only operates as the Spirit wills.
  - 4. God does use people sometimes to personally minister a message to someone else. Then sometimes they think they can give everyone a message. NO! Those people who are always going around handing out personal messages and prophecies to everybody are in error and it can lead to dire trouble.

SATAN CAN MISLEAD THEM, AND HE WILL DO IT.

- i. There is a similarity between the prophet's ministry of the Old Testament and the New Testament, however the prophet under the New Testament does not have the same status as the prophet of the Old Testament.

Remember, the Holy Spirit only came on the Prophet, the Priest, and the King in the Old Testament, not the rest of the people.

They had no tangible Presence of God in their lives. The Presence of God was shut up in the Holy of Holies.

- C. Under the New Covenant it is unscriptural to seek guidance through the ministry of the Prophet.
1. We have a better Covenant (**Hebrews 8:6**)
  2. We have the same Presence of God within us that was shut up in the Holy of Holies. He is living within us. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant (**I Cor. 3:16; 6:19; II Cor. 6:16**).
  3. The Holy Spirit is within us to lead us (**Romans 8:14**)
  4. Every believer needs to learn to follow the Spirit of God for themselves.
  5. There are people who endeavor to control people's lives through personal prophecy. It is unscriptural to do this.
  6. You will know in your own spirit when God is leading you. If what someone as a prophet speaks doesn't get confirmed with your spirit, then forget it. If a word does agree, then fine.
  7. When Agabus spoke to Paul what would happen in Jerusalem some think Paul missed it by still going to Jerusalem, but **in Acts 23:11**, it says, ***"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."*** If Paul had been out of the will of God by going, the Lord would have told him so.
- D. Put the Word first. Even though there may be supernatural manifestations in the life of a prophet, don't build a ministry on them. Invite them and have them, but a prophet's ministry must always be built on the Word of God.
- E. Misconceptions people have relative to the prophet's office.

1. Many think that a prophet is supposed to do nothing but prophesy, but the foremost ministry of the prophet is to preach or teach the Word.
  - a. The laying on of hands goes with the prophet's ministry.
  - b. A healing ministry goes along with the prophet's office.

Examples:

1. Elisha (Luke 4:27) Elisha had a healing ministry. (II Kings 5:3)
2. Jesus. Jesus stood in the office of prophet. His healing ministry exemplifies all the varied manifestations you would not see in just one person's ministry.

F. Many think that a prophet should always know everything about everyone and everything that is happening round them. *This is a false concept.*

**IN CONCLUSION:**

### **Prophets are Persecuted**

Luke 13:34 *"O Jerusalem. Jerusalem, which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent to thee.."*

2 Chronicles 36:16 *"But they mocked the messengers of God, and misused his prophets, until there was no remedy."*

1 Chronicles 16:22 **Warning!** *"Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm."*

### **Prophets are not Honored**

Matthew 13:57 *"And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house."*

Luke 4:24 *"And he said, Verily I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country."*