

THE DOCTRINE OF PROPHETS AND PROPHECY

- I.** Introduction:
- A.** Prophets and prophecy exist in both the O.T. and N.T. Num.11:29 cp.Mat.23:34; 2Chr.9:29; Rom.12:6
 - B.** Prophets can refer to the individuals that engage in acts of prophesying (Isa.38:1) or it can refer in the passive sense of certain segments of Scripture. Cf.Mat.5:17; 7:12 et al “the Prophets”; 2Pet.1:20 cp.Rom.16:26
 - C.** There is a distinction made between true Prophets (Deu:18:18) and false prophets (Mat.7:15; 2Pet.2:1).
 - D.** Prophecy looks to that which is prophesied. Dan.9:24; Rev.22:7,10,18,19
 - E.** This doctrine addresses the different aspects of Prophets and prophecy.
- II.** Vocabulary:
- A.** Hebrew:
- 1. נָבִיא - nabi; noun; used 314x; means a spokesman, speaker, prophet; translated prophecy, prophesy, prophet(s).
 - 2. נְבִיאָה - nebiyah; feminine noun; used 6x; prophetess
 - 3. נָבֵא - nabah; verb; used 115x; means to prophesy, raved.
 - 4. חָזָה - chazah; from prim. root “see, behold”; used 50x; behold, envisioned in visions, gaze, look, prophesy, to see.
 - 5. חֹזֵה - chozeh; a seer, prophets.
- B.** Greek:
- 1. profhteia, a – prophetia; noun, used 19x; prophecy, prophesying, prophetic utterance.
 - 2. profhteuo, w – propheteuo; verb; used 28x; to foretell, tell forth, prophesy, prophesies; prophetesses.
 - 3. profh, thj – prophetes; noun; used 144x; a prophet, a foreteller of divine will; prophet(s).
 - 4. profhtiko, j – prophetikos; adj.; used 2x; prophetic, prophets.
 - 5. profh/tij – prophetis; fem.noun; used 2x; prophetess.
 - 6. yeudoprofh, thj – pseudoprophetes; noun; used 11x; a false prophet(s).
- III.** Prophets and prophecy in the O.T.
- A.** Abraham is the first mentioned as a prophet in the O.T. Gen.20:7
 - B.** However, Enoch is said to have prophesied (Jud.1:14) indicating this gift preexisted the Noahaic flood. Cp.Gen.5:18-24
 - C.** The next mentioned is Aaron, whom God appointed as Moses’ prophet. Exo.7:1

- D.** Aaron represents the primary function of a prophet; to speak on behalf of God as a communicator. Exo.7:2
- E.** Further, the information to be communicated is revealed supernaturally from God Himself. Exo.7:2a
- F.** That Aaron was appointed by God indicates a divine commission of office attached to his function and constitutes the implementing of this office. Cp.Amo.2:11
- G.** Moses, as a type of Christ, was also a prophet. Deu.18:15,18
- H.** He is the only prophet to receive divine revelation from God face-to-face. Deu.34:10
- I.** He promised a line of prophets culminating in the ultimate Prophet that would instruct Israel as to God's directive will. Deu.18:16
- J.** Joshua became the next prophet inline after Aaron as implied in Deu.34:9-10
- K.** Others of the Exodus were able to prophesy; though there is no indication they were appointed into office. Num.11:25-29
- L.** This indicates that the act of prophesying came as a result of the filling of the H.S. and could occur at random as so intended by God.
- M.** The rules behind one prophesying was that the communication was to never violate the principles of Bible doctrine and/or if the things prophesied don't come true, the prophet was to be put to death. Deu.13:1-5 cp. Deu.18:20-22
- N.** Those violating these rules are determined to be false prophets. Jer.14:14; 23:32; Lam.2:14; Eze.13:9; 22:28
- O.** As these verses and Deu.18:20-22 makes clear, prophecy could be in the realms of doctrinal revelation or in a spatial and/or temporal sense of foretelling something of the past, present or future in which the prophet would have no previous knowledge.
- P.** False prophets arise as a test to +V in their adherence to the truth. Deu.13:3
- Q.** Balaam is an example of a prophet that went into reversionism. 2Pet.2:15-16 cp.Num.22
- R.** The prophesying came primarily with direct revelation, dreams and visions as vehicles for transmission.
- S.** However, it is noted that musical instruments could be used for prophesying, implying prophecy through the medium of song. 1Chr.25:1
- T.** Females could prophesy. Exo.15:20
- U.** Deborah was a prophetess that also held office as judge. Jdg.4:4
- V.** While the prophetic office was introduced by Moses, an official prophetic order is not seen to be in place until Samuel. 1Sam.3:20; 19:18-24
 - 1.** Samuel is seen as the presiding authority over the prophets mentioned insinuating an organized order or "school" for prophets. 1Sam.19:20
 - 2.** The phrase "sons of the prophets" came into being to indicate this institution and officiate distinction. 1Kgs.20:35; 2Kgs.2:3,5,7,15, et al.
 - 3.** These orders came to be located in Ramah, Bethel, Gilgal, and Jericho. 1Sam.19:18; 2Kgs.2:3,5; 4:38
 - 4.** Prophets were utilized by the laymen to inquire of God on their behalf. 1Sam.9:9

5. These men were also called “seers” to indicate the supernatural insight attributed to their gift of prophesying. Cp.1Sam.9:18-20
 6. Another primary function of prophets was to warn Israel to make reversion recovery. 2Kgs.17:13,23; Neh.9:30
 7. Moreover, they would proclaim impending judgment upon Israel. 2Kgs.21:10-15; 24:2
 8. Women could fulfill this role. Cp.2Kgs.22:14-20
 9. The O.T. prophet both proclaimed (a.k.a. forth-teller – bringing into view) addressing the current social, moral and theological issues and foretold (foreteller) making predictions.
 10. The purpose for addressing the current issues was in order to foretell the impending future in proclaiming judgment. Ex. Moses and Aaron
 11. No matter the message, the true prophet spoke as commanded by God via Divine revelation. Jer.26:12,16 cp.27:15; 29:9; Eze.4:7; 6:2; 11:4, etc.
 12. There is no indication that a prophet was ever limited to either one or the other aspects of prophesying, assertive or predictive.
- W.** It is evident that some prophets were endowed with the additional power of performing miracles.
1. Miracles were “signs” for confirmation and validity of the prophet in person and message as from God. Cp.Exo.7:1-3
 2. They were used as a tool of judgment against –V. Ex. The plagues on Egypt. Exo.7-12
 3. Abraham was associated with miracles validating his status as a prophet and confirmation of beginning a nation. Gen.17-18
 4. Moses and Aaron with too numerous of miracles to list. Books of Exodus, Numbers, et al.
 5. Examples of other prophets: Elijah (1Kgs.17:1-7, 17-24; 2Kgs.1:9-15; etc.), Elisha (2Kgs.2:14, etc.), Daniel (Dan.6:16-24), Jonah (Jon.1-2), etc.
 6. There is no indication that miracles were prerequisite to being a prophet or that another prophet could not perform miracles, only that miracles are recorded for some. Deu.13:1
 7. Miracles simply validated (ex..2Pet.1:17-19a).
 8. False prophets could perform miracles for deception, but were to be rejected and executed. Deu.13:2-3,5
 9. Men could be demon possessed to facilitate false prophecy. 1Kgs.22:23
- X.** Prophets to Israel were largely rejected and many faced martyrdom. 1Kgs.18:4,13; Neh.9:26; Luk.11:47; Rom.11:3; 1The.2:14-15
- Y.** Prophets comprise the majority of authors of the O.T. Scriptures. Moses (though his writings are seen distinct from prophetic writings; Luk.16:29,31, etc.), 1st & 2nd Samuel, David (Act.2:29-30), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.
- Z.** The O.T itself, though historical, is loaded with prophecy recorded for posterity and validation for future fulfillment of the Scriptures.

- IV.** Prophets and prophecy during the 1st Advent.
- A.** The N.T. rightly recognizes the validity of O.T. prophets and prophecy. Mat.1:22; 2:5,15,17,23; 3:3 et al cp.Mat.11:13
 - B.** Further, prophesying continued to exist during the incarnation. Luk.1:67ff
 - C.** John the Baptist was declared to be a prophet. Mat.11:9; 14:5; 21:26; Mar.11:32; Luk.1:76; etc.
 - D.** John the Baptist's birth might be viewed as a miracle in validation of his destiny as a prophet and forerunner. Luk.1:5-25,57
 - E.** His office is likened to the prophet Elijah. Luk.1:17
 - F.** He both brought into view the reversionism of Israel (Mat.3:2; Mar.1:4) and foretold of the coming Messiah in both a spatial and temporal sense. Joh.1:26-27
 - G.** Jesus Christ was the Prophet fulfilling the highest order of this office. Mat.13:57; 21:11; Joh.4:19; 6:14; 9:17 cp.Deu.18:15,18
 - H.** Christ proclaimed that prophets would follow Him in His ministry. Mat.23:34; Luk.11:49
 - I.** Further, He warned against false prophets. Mat.24:11; Mar.13:22
 - J.** Christ's miracles were associated with His rank as Prophet. Joh.6:14; 9:17
 - K.** Further, His prophecies occurred in both a predictive spatial and temporal sense. Joh.4:16-19; 11:3-4,11-15
 - L.** Again, there is no documentation that one's prophesying is restrictive in this way.
 - M.** Female prophetesses are also present during this time. Luk.2:36
- V.** Prophets and prophecy during the Church Age.
- A.** Upon the institution of the Church Age, God provided the Church with certain spiritual gifts and offices. *See Doctrine of Spiritual Gifts*
 - B.** Among the list of gifts and offices are prophets and prophecy. 1Cor.12:28-29; 14:29,32,37; Eph.2:20; 3:5; 4:11 cp.Rom.12:6; 1Cor.12:10; 13:2; 14:6, etc.
 - C.** This gift and office (as with all gifts and offices) were designed to only truly function under the FHS as taught under the principle of Divine love (*See Doctrine of Love*). 1Cor.13:1-8a; cp.2Pet.1:20-21
 - D.** Prophetesses and women prophesying are seen to exist. Act.21:9; 1Cor.11:5; Rev.2:20
 - E.** Prophets and teachers are mentioned together by name in the list of Act.13:1, with Judas and Silas (Act.15:32) and Agabus (Act.21:10) identified specifically as prophets.
 - F.** The spiritual gift of prophecy is associated with the office, hence the references to offices as spiritual gifts denoting the necessity for certain gifts to qualify one for office (a prophet that couldn't prophesy?), though a distinction between office and gift is noted. 1Cor.12:10 cp. vs.28; Eph.4:11
 - G.** The primary function of prophets and prophecy in the early Church was to communicate Bible doctrine supernaturally through direct divine revelation instructing the Church in lieu of a yet to be written N.T. 1Cor.14:6 cp.22-25

- H.** Only males had the authority to prophesy in the general assembly of the local church. 1Cor.14:34
- I.** Again, there is no documentation that prophesying is restrictive spatially or temporally or any predictive elements removed.
- J.** As 1Cor.13:8 makes clear, the gift of prophecy (and hence, the office) was a temporary gift to be “done away” at the coming of the “perfect”. 1Cor.13:8-10.:
1. The two verbs translated “*done away*/katarge, w – katargeo” (to be idle or useless/nullify/void/abolished) and “*cease*/pau, omai – pauomai” (stop/ finished) are used to indicate that prophecy and knowledge simply become idle/disengaged/nullified/no longer useful in present form, while tongues will cease completely. Exs. For “done away”, Luk.13:7; Rom.6:6; 1Cor.6:13; for “cease/stopped” Act.21:32
 2. This points to the principle that prophecy will reemerge in later history, where as tongues will not. Cp.Joe.2:28
 3. This indicates the temporary gift of tongues was unique to the early Church with no future resuscitation.
 4. Vs.9 indicates that only a portion of the function and gift of prophecy and knowledge of Scripture had been revealed at the time of writing.
 5. When these gifts are put aside is said to be at the coming of the “*perfect*/te, lioj – telios” (the full measure/finished/completed) that contextually is in reference to the missing part of prophecy and knowledge that has yet to be completed for the Church.
 6. This is none other than the N.T. canon of Scriptures.
 7. Only then can the manifestation and function of this gift be viewed in its completed form as intended for the Church as all of the prophesies and knowing done in part are compiled together in its written form.
 8. The N.T. is God’s directive will and revelation given to the Church. Cp.Rom.12:2 (note, God’s will is said to be “perfect/telios” cp.2:17-18; Eph.1:9-11
 9. God’s perfect will is synonymous to the “perfect law of liberty”. Jam.1:25
 10. God’s will (qe, lhma – thelema; neuter noun) satisfies the use of the neuter noun “*perfect/telios*” in 1Cor.13:10.
 11. The “done away” gift of prophecy is the same gift mentioned in the lists of spiritual gifts in Rom.12:6 and 1Cor.12:10 (both references use the same Greek word in 1Cor.13:8).
 12. Some have noted a difference of nuances in the Greek family of words for prophets and prophecy and are as follows:
 - a. The nouns “prophet/profh, thj – prophetes” and “prophetess/profhtij – prophetis” emphasize the agent (human or passive) as the instrument used by God as His spokesperson, mouthpiece or agent in all uses.
 - b. The noun “prophecy/profhteia – propheteia” emphasizes the manifestation of that which is prophesied, expressed verbally or

written or in reality (fulfilled). Mat.13:14; Rom.12:6; 1Cor.12:10, etc.; 2Pet.1:20,21; Rev.1:3, etc.

- c. The verb “prophesy/propheteuo, w – propheteuo” emphasis the act or function of the gift. Mat.7:22; 1Cor.11:4,5; 13:9; 1Pet.1:10; et al
 - d. Both the noun prophecy/propheta and verb prophesy/propheteuo are used back to back in 1Cor.13:8,9.
 - e. This emphasizes that the manifestation of the gift (prophecy) will be done away (vs.8) with vs.9 explaining that the function of the gift (prophesy) was designed only to function in part as necessary for the Church at the time of its infancy state (cp.vs.11), no longer necessary upon the written canon of N.T. Scripture (vs.10).
 - f. Further, there is no documentation that any portion of its verbal manifestation and function would remain extant throughout the Church Age.
 - g. The adjective “prophetic/prophetikos, j – prophetikos” is used passively to indicate that Bible doctrine is inspired by God. Rom.16:26; 2Pet.1:19
13. Though this gift and office is no longer extant, it can be said that in a sense, all communicators of Bible doctrine prophesy, since Bible doctrine is a direct result of former prophets.
14. However, prophesying in this sense is not effective, but affective (passive not active); the cause is not any manifestation or function of the gift today, only that the words spoken are influenced by prophets before us.
15. The book of Revelation in its entirety is a prophecy. Rev.1:3; 22:7,10,18,19
16. It is this book written by the Apostle John circa 96 AD that brings to conclusion the final book penned for the NT after which the gift of prophecy would eventually be nullified.

VI. Prophets and prophecy in the last days.

- A. Both the O.T. and N.T. include prophecy concerning the last days.
- B. The Bible makes clear that many false prophets will exist throughout Church Age history and beyond. 2Pet.2:1; 1Joh.4:1; Rev.16:13
- C. It is interesting to note that Peter’s future warning to the Church/church associates “false teachers” to “false prophets” that had proceeded in history. 2Pet.2:1
- D. This implies that the office and gift of prophecy is destined to become void per 1Cor.13:8-10.
- E. Yet, there will be false teachers that claim to be prophets. Mat.24:11,24; Mar.13:22; 1Joh.4:1
- F. The most notable example of any false prophet is the false prophet that accompanies the Antichrist during Daniel’s 70th week. Rev.13:11-18; 16:13; 19:20; 20:10

- G.** This Jewish male is the epitome of deception and betrayal towards Israel and God's elect during the tribulation operating in tandem with Antichrist. Rev.13:11-12
- H.** Supernatural miracles will accompany his ministry. Rev.13:13
- I.** He will lead astray the world en masse. Rev.13:14
- J.** He is to be viewed in conflict with the two prophets Moses and Elijah called the two olive trees and lampstands. Rev.11:4
- K.** They are resuscitated and too will perform miracles. Rev.11:5-6 cp.Mal.4:5
- L.** Together, the false prophet versus the true prophets is designed to note the great battle in the angelic conflict between truth and human or satanic viewpoint.
- M.** It highlights the issue behind all communicators adhering to the doctrine of the Importance of Bible Doctrine as their content of teaching. 2Tim.4:1-4
- N.** Apart from Revelation, the N.T. further provides prophecy as it applies even to the latter part (post temporary spiritual gifts) of the Church Age. 2The.2:1-3; 1Tim.4:1-5; 2Tim.3:1-7; 4:1-4; Jam.5:1-6; 2Pet.3:3-8
- O.** The gift and function of prophecy will again be distributed among believers correlating with the 2nd Advent of the Holy Spirit. Joe.2:28