

# **Biblical Prophecy**

**A Primer**

# **Prophet – A Definition**

**A prophet is one appointed by  
God Himself to be His  
messenger**

# Prophet – A Definition

**Biblical prophets rarely speak about future events as if they were inevitable, but much more often transmit various kinds of messages on behalf of God to the people, conveying God's interpretation of the *past, present, and future* aspects of people's lives.**

# **Prophet – A Definition**

**Thus, a "prophet" in the Bible is primarily a "spokesperson for God," someone who receives messages from God and conveys them to other people. If a prophet speaks words that are not from God, he or she is considered a false prophet or sometimes called a prophet of another god (e.g. "prophets of Baal" in the OT).**

# **Is Prophecy Only Biblical?**

**Prophecy was not unique to ancient Israel. It was common throughout the Fertile Crescent. In Mesopotamia, for instance, kings regularly consulted prophets when making decisions of national importance.**

# **A Biblical Reference**

**Deuteronomy 18:9-22 King James Version (KJV)**

- <sup>9</sup> When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.**
- <sup>10</sup> There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.**
- <sup>11</sup> Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.**
- <sup>12</sup> For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.**

# **A Biblical Reference**

**<sup>13</sup> Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.**

**<sup>14</sup> For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.**

**<sup>15</sup> The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;**

**<sup>16</sup> According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.**

**<sup>17</sup> And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.**

# A Biblical Reference

**18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.**

**19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.**

**20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.**

**21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?**

**22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.**



# **New Testament References**

**Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. (Matthew 10:41)**

# **New Testament References**

**Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.**

**(1 Thes 5: 19-22)**

# **New Testament References**

**Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)**

# **How Are Prophets Judged?**

**The prophet's word is subject to the community's judgment:**

**“the others should weigh carefully what is said”**

**(1 Corinthians 14:29)**

# **Are Prophets Important?**

**“Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7)**

# **The First Prophet**

**The first person in the Bible to be called a prophet was Abraham, the “Father of the Faithful.” It is important to notice also, that it was God who gave him this title.  
(Genesis 20:6-7)**

# **Common Characteristics**

**A prophets influence and authority did not come from their rank, education, wisdom or wealth, but entirely from the fact that God chose them to be His messengers.**

# **Common Characteristics**

**Some prophets were called to  
challenge the whole nation  
(1 Kings 18:21),**

**or to rebuke evil kings (1 Kings 21:17-  
24; Daniel 5:17-28)**



# **Common Characteristics**

**Many prophets were given power to perform miracles to support their authority.  
(Exodus 17:5-6)**

# **What Does A Prophet Do?**

**1. To reveal the nature and attributes of  
God to men.**

**(Deuteronomy 5:4-10)**

**2. To make known to men the laws of God.**

**(Exodus 20:1-17)**

# **What Does A Prophet Do?**

**3. To call the people back to obedience to  
God's laws.**

**(2 Chronicles 24:19)**

**4. To exhort the people to sincerity in  
worship.**

**(Jeremiah 7:1-11)**

# **What Does A Prophet Do?**

**5. To warn them of Divine judgment upon sin, both personal and national.**

**(Jeremiah 36:30-31)**

**6. To foretell future events which God had willed.**

**(Jeremiah 30:1-3)**

# **What Does A Prophet Do?**

**7. To foretell the coming of the Messiah,  
the Savior.  
(Isaiah 9:6)**

**8. To record the history of God's dealings  
with men.  
(Deuteronomy 31:9-13)**

# **What Does A Prophet Do?**

**9. To record the Word of God in the Holy  
Scriptures.  
(Exodus 17:14)**

# **Credentials Of A True Prophet**

**God, speaking through Moses, made it clear that only those prophets who spoke in the name of Jehovah were to be accepted. (Deuteronomy 18:9-22)**

**A true prophet will be chosen by Jehovah from one of the tribes of Israel (Deuteronomy 18:9-22)**

# **Credentials Of A True Prophet**

**A true prophet will speak the words which  
Jehovah puts into his mouth  
(Deuteronomy 18:18)**

**A true prophet will be vindicated by the  
fulfillment of his message  
(Deuteronomy 18:18)**



# **Penalty For A False Prophet**

**A false prophet must be put to death  
for teaching rebellion against  
Jehovah, the god of the Israelites  
(Deuteronomy 13:1-5)**

# Prophetic Books Of The Bible

Book of Isaiah

Book of Jeremiah

Book of Lamentations

Book of Baruch

- Letter of Jeremiah (Chapter 6 of Baruch in most Catholic Bibles, its own book in Eastern Orthodox Bibles)

Book of Ezekiel

Book of Daniel

# Prophetic Books Of The Bible

Hosea (Osee)

Joel

Amos

Obadiah (Abdias)

Jonah (Jonas)

Micah (Micheas)

Nahum

# Prophetic Books Of The Bible

Habakkuk (Habacuc)  
Zephaniah (Sophanias)  
Haggai (Aggeus)  
Zechariah (Zacharias)  
Malachi (Malachias)  
Enoch

# **How Is A Prophet Contacted By God?**

**Sometimes they heard a voice (Deut 18:15-19)**

**Some saw visions (Ezek 1 and Amos 7),  
or had dreams (Dan 7).**

**Others were possessed by spirits  
(1Sam 10:10-12, 1Kgs 22:19-23).**

**Israelite priests could also cast sacred lots,  
called the Urim and Thummim, for decisions of  
national importance.**

# **How To Recognize A Biblical Prophet?**

**Prophetic messages were directed at specific historical circumstances, such as war, famine, and cultural threats.**

**The prophetic collections, however, usually do not explain the historical situation that prompted a given prophecy, and so this context is not always clear.**

# **How To Recognize A Biblical Prophet?**

**The stories of Elijah's spirit moving into Elisha (2Kgs 2) or the presumption that a medium could call up the spirit of the deceased Samuel (1Sam 28) show that Israelites felt a great prophet's spirit could pass to or through a living prophet.**

# How To Recognize A Biblical Prophet?

**Prophetic rhetoric can make us feel uncomfortable. The prophets' extreme statements, however, are really about trying to persuade an audience to change its behavior. Just as we may use hyperbole ("if you don't change, you'll ruin everything"), biblical prophets say and do things to get people to notice them.**



# **How To Recognize A Biblical Prophet?**

**A prophet is only a prophet if  
society deems him or her so**

# **How To Recognize A Biblical Prophet?**

**But even before this judgment could be made, prophets had to be heard by a large audience. The prophets whose words were collected into books were the most influential prophets of their day. It is not surprising, then, that their rhetoric was innovative, distinct, and at times deliberately shocking.**

# **How To Recognize A Biblical Prophet?**

**In several letters, Paul speaks of "prophecy" as one of the gifts given to some Christians for the benefit of the community:**

**Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10; 13:2, 8; 14:6, 22;  
1 Thess 5:20; 1 Tim 1:18; 4:14.**

# How Prevalent Is Prophecy In The Bible?

In the Hebrew Bible, the word for "prophet" is usually *nabi'* (lit. "spokesperson"; used over 300 times!), while the related feminine noun *nebi'ah* ("prophetess") occurs only rarely. Both words are derived from the root verb *naba'* ("to prophesy; to speak on behalf of another"). The root meaning of "prophet" is clearly expressed in several biblical passages, such as when God tells Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet" (Exodus 7:1).

# **How Prevalent Is Prophecy In The Bible?**

**Old Testament References to Prophecy**

**472**

**New Testament References to Prophecy**

**206**

## **How To Indicate That A Prophecy Is From God**

**"Thus says the Lord,..."**

**(used over 400 times in the Hebrew Bible!)**

**"The word of the Lord came to [someone],  
saying..." (over 100 times!)**

**"Thus shall you say to [someone],..." (43  
times)**

**"Hear the word of the Lord,..." (37 times)**

**"Speak to [someone], saying..." (14 times)**

# **What Are Prophetic Deeds?**

**Anointing people to rule as king  
(1 Sam 9:16; 16:13; 1 Kgs 1:34, 45; 19:16)**

**Showing unusual power over nature  
(1 Kgs 17:1-8, 41-46)**

**Feeding people by miraculous means  
(1 Kgs 17:8-16; 2 Kgs 4:1-7; 4:38-44)**

**Healing some people  
(2 Kgs 5:1-19)**

# **What Are Prophetic Deeds?**

**Causing others to fall ill  
(2 Kgs 5:20-27)**

**Rising the dead  
(1 Kgs 17:17-24; 2 Kgs 4:8-37)**

**Performing other miraculous and/or  
symbolic actions  
(1 Kgs 18; 2 Kgs 6)**



# Biblical Confirmation That There Are Prophets

- Abraham (Gen 20:7)
- Moses' brother Aaron (Exod 7:1) and their sister Miriam (Exod 15:20)
- *Seventy elders* in the desert, including Eldad and Medad (Num 11:25-29)
- Moses (Deut 34:10) and "a prophet like Moses" who is to come later (Deut 18:15-19)
  - Deborah (Jdg 4:4), also known as a "judge"
- Samuel (1 Sam 3:20; 19:20; 2 Chron 35:18; etc.), also called a "seer" (1 Sam 9:11-19; 1 Chron 9:22; 26:28; 29:29)
  - Saul, just after he was anointed by Samuel (1 Sam 10:5-13; 19:20-24)
- Gad (1 Sam 22:5), also called King David's "seer" (2 Sam 24:11; 1 Chron 21:9; 29:29; 2 Chron 29:25)
- Nathan (2 Sam 7:2; 12:25; 1 Kings 1:8-45; 1 Chron 17:1; 29:29; 2 Chron 9:29; 29:25)
  - Ahijah the Shilonite (1 Kgs 11:29; 14:2-18; 2 Chron 9:29)
    - Shemaiah (1 Kgs 12:22; 2 Chron 12:5-15)
  - An anonymous old prophet in Bethel (1 Kgs 13:11-29)
  - Jehu, son of Hanani (1 Kgs 16:7-12; 2 Chron 19:2; 20:34)
- Obadiah and *a hundred prophets* who hide from Jezebel (1 Kgs 18:4)

# Biblical Confirmation That There Are Prophets

- Elijah (1 Kgs 18:22—19:16; 2 Chron 21:12)
- Elisha, son of Shaphat and successor of Elijah (1 Kgs 19:16; 2 Kgs 2:3—9:1)
  - Micaiah, son of Imlah (1 Kgs 22:8-23; 2 Chron 18:7-22)
  - Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah (1 Kgs 22:11-25; 2 Chron 18:10-23)
- Groups of prophets at *Bethel* (2 Kgs 2:3), at *Jericho* (2:5-15), and associated with Elisha at *Gilgal* (2 Kgs 4—6)
  - Jonah, son of Amittai (2 Kgs 14:25)
  - Isaiah, son of Amoz (2 Kgs 19:2—20:14; 2 Chron 26:22; 32:20, 32)
    - Huldah, the wife of Shallum (2 Kgs 22:14; 2 Chron 34:22)
  - Iddo (2 Chron 13:22), at first called a "seer" (2 Chron 9:29; 12:15)
    - Azariah, son of Obed (2 Chron 15:8)
    - Hanani the "seer" (2 Chron 16:7-10; 19:2)
    - Eliezer, son of Dodavahu (2 Chron 20:37)
      - Obed (2 Chron 28:9)
  - Asaph and *his descendants* (2 Chron 29:30; 35:15)
    - Jeduthun, the king's "seer" (2 Chron 35:15)
      - Jeremiah (2 Chron 36:12)
  - Haggai and Zechariah, son of Iddo (Ezra 5:1; 6:14)
    - Amos (also called a "seer" in Amos 7:12)

# **New Testament Prophecy**

**Unlike prophecy in the Old Testament, prophecy in the New Testament is a minor theme, almost fading into the background.**

**Yahshua is THE prophet we are to shema (hear and obey).**

# **New Testament Prophecy**

**In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.**

**Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.**

**Joel 2:28 & Acts 2:17**

# **New Testament Prophecy**

**Still, there may be Prophets to come. The Bible says that that in the final three-and-a-half years before Yahshua's returns, He will give power to two people who "will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth"  
(Revelation 11:3)**

# **New Testament Prophecy**

**When Yahshua came to the Jews, He fulfilled all the conditions of the prediction in Deuteronomy 18 and thus His disciples accepted Him as the promised Prophet and Messiah.**

**So certain is this fact that the Apostle Peter said, *Every person who does not obey that prophet will be destroyed and thus removed from the people.* (Acts 3:23).**

**This is a solemn warning to those who reject the claims of Yahshua.**

# Warnings

**“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book”  
(Revelation 22:18-19).**

# **Review**

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**How Are Prophets Judged?**

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# **Review**

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# **Review**

**How Prevalent Is Prophecy In The Bible  
How To Indicate The A Prophecy Is From  
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**What Are Prophetic Deeds  
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Prophets**

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# Summary

**The Bible alone contains the authentic teachings of God's chosen messengers, prophets and apostles, and although the message of the Bible is not a popular one that appeals to the hearts of proud men, it is the Word of God and shows the way to eternal life.**

**In Two Weeks**

**Modern Biblical Prophets**